

Witty Wacky Plays

by

Michael Messmer

- ◆ a collection of nearly 40 comedies that are easy to produce
- ◆ many have relatively small casts (4 or 5 roles), none more than 8
- ◆ the majority of the plays have more women's than men's roles
- ◆ all require a single set (usually with several entrance points)
- ◆ all are set in the current era: easy to costume and furnish
- ◆ most of the language would rate a PG in a movie
(however, the characters often act more like children than children do...explain why that is funny to your children)

These are plays in the tradition of the Marx Brothers, Lucille Ball, Red Skelton and Carol Burnett. In other words: good, clean fun.

For more information about these plays, please contact the playwright, Michael Messmer via email at mzmr@surewest.net or wittywackyplays@gmail.com

Thanks...and here's hoping you have a few good laughs today.



Absolutely Honest

a farce in three acts 2m, 2w, unit set

Chris would like to get back together with his ex-wife, Liz. Unfortunately, the woman he supposedly had a one-night fling with, Marcy, shows up at his apartment to discuss problems she is having with her boyfriend, Rock, just as Chris seems to be patching things up with Liz. Misplaced keys, an amorous boyfriend (who may have plans to exterminate a rat), temporary amnesia, romantic dishwashing, back trouble and periodic power outages all add their complications to this wild, romantic farce.

The Agency Sent Me

a farce in two acts 3m, 3w, unit set

Alan is house-sitting for his brother, Hal, and has called an agency for a new house keeper. Rick is a photographer who wants to use the place to shoot pictures for a lingerie catalog. He has arranged with a talent agency for a model to come there. Hal returns early, after signing up with a dating agency. The model is mistaken for Hal's date; the house keeper for the model; the date mistaken for the house keeper. When unexpected relationships develop, it gets more complicated with so many chases that the characters have to stop and ask who is chasing whom. Surprisingly, the relationships turn out to be right for everyone.

Annie Twee

a mystery farce in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

Max has come to Matty's boarding house for women on an island off the coast of Maine to find a needle case that may contain directions to stolen treasure. He says he's from the State Dept. but after a fight, in which he is briefly knocked out, his identification disappears. He suspects that agents of the criminal world are looking for the missing item. Matty and Penny (her assistant) think he's telling the truth. Glenda, there working for the state redevelopment agency, is suspicious of Max. Stacy, doing research for the fishing industry, is suspicious but also finds Max attractive. Then Albertine arrives without having had her references checked and needs a place to stay, has an odd accent and is overdressed. As a storm routinely knocks out the power, shots are fired in the dark, people are drugged, end up in the wrong room, make bungled attempts at seduction, misunderstand attempts to explain who they are and generally confuse and complicate the situation until it is hard to tell who is doing what to whom. And more shots are fired in the dark. Is Albertine an agent or just a guy in drag whose sex-change operation turned out wrong? Is Glenda a criminal or just a man-hater? Is Penny as naive as she seems or a sex-maniac? And, who is Annie Twee?

Asylum

a farce in two acts 4m, 4w, unit set

Con-man Art and his pal, Debbie, are running a "new age" institute for people with emotional problems. Bart is trying to trick Art into having him declared incompetent so he can avoid jail. Art calls for a real psychiatrist to sign the papers. He's also trying to help a would-be starlet who suffers from a frustrating combination of nymphomania and narcolepsy (when she gets amorous, she falls asleep), but is trying not to get involved with her. Robert and Linda, a pair of actors who overheard some gangsters, hide in the institute. When Robert finds out that the psychiatrist isn't coming, he decides they'll pretend to be a doctor and nurse. Tyrone is a detective trying to find an actor or actress seen leaving the mob meeting. Robert and Linda think he's with the mob. Bart thinks he's there to serve a subpoena. When Evelyn, a wealthy widow, arrives seeking help for her disorder she is shocked by what she sees. But, relationships develop and chases abound as confusion, mistaken identity, amnesia and misused medications compound the complications.

Be Happy

a comedy in two acts 1m, 3w, unit set

Having twice failed to kill himself, Bruce is now on Plan C when he discovers Sally in his apartment (actually to steal but claiming to be from the gas company). She refuses to help him commit suicide, but engages him in conversation about why he is unhappy. They are joined by Sally's partner in crime (Kris) who is cynical about everything (including the idea of happiness) and provides an earthy counterpoint to Sally's philosophical views. Further complicating the situation, Bruce's ex-fiance (Marcy) arrives to find out what happened to his money (she's suing him for breach of promise). Although still angry at him, she provides details about Bruce and seems to be jealous of the relationship he's developed with Sally (seen in a battle over Bruce while he's stuck in the freezer). As various ideas about what happiness really is are explored (and mostly rejected) an idea from an unlikely source begins to change his views. Sally discovers that she wants something more from life, Marcy discovers that Bruce has changed for the better and Kris tries to steal what she can.

Birthday Mystery

a comedy in two acts 3m, 4w, unit set

Minerva Sutton, former mystery writer...and more, is having a few friends to her estate on the anniversary of her husband's accidental death (in the wine cellar). She has been planning the event for some time with the idea that one of her guests might have been responsible for Sir Charles' death...or at least they'd make great suspects for a murder mystery. Her butler, Albert, has been concerned for some time that Minerva is still depressed and he has decided to add some mystery of his own to the gathering. Each guest has his or her own troubles...which may or may not relate to Charles. Even before the first guest arrives we may have encountered a dead body, but then the guests claim to have encountered a body (that seems to disappear). And then a police detective arrives. Is he there to investigate the disappearing bodies or could it have something to do with missing national security documents? Is Minerva batty or brilliant? And, did the butler do it? This is a wild romp of fast-talking, witty, slightly nutty characters who scarcely take a breath before something wild happens again.

Designing Seniors

a comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Charlie and Kathryn Boone are living in a gated retirement village in southern Arizona. Other than dealing with the usual issues of aging (aided by Eve, a staff nurse who also serves as resident nutritionist and entertainment director), their big concern is their son, Doug. He is coming for a visit and bringing a girlfriend, Elan Olson. His parents worry that he is not happy with his job and Charlie wants to get Doug a job nearby. Kathryn thinks the girlfriend might not be suitable and wishes he could find someone sensible like Eve. Indeed, Elan is much younger than Doug and is really only interested in him for one thing. In order to make him more vigorous, Elan has been giving Doug some pills she ordered off the internet. Those pills become the source of very strange behavior. As it turns out, Doug has more in common with Eve but cannot bring himself to break off with Elan. Everyone seems to have an agenda to manipulate someone else. That none are willing to deal directly with the issues, leads to complications that are funny, a bit sad and all too human in this warm comedy.

Dexterity

a comedy in two acts 3m, 3w, unit set

Jerry is a literary agent who has taken an option on a new novel. If he can't make a deal with a Hollywood producer to pick up the option, he is out of a job. The producer, Gordon, asked Jerry to show him an authentic New England Christmas, so Jerry rented a farm house in Connecticut. Jerry's wife isn't happy about rearranging her life for the holidays but she's doing her best to make things go well by bringing in part-time help to cook. Complicating matters is a homeless man Jerry brought home from the train station. Dexter alters personalities from a barely verbal derelict who may be hearing voices to a seemingly well-educated, erudite and romantic assistant (who may suffer from narcolepsy). When the producer and his wife arrive early, Jerry and his wife provide a plausible explanation for Dexter's presence. When Dexter discovers that the producer isn't what he seems, information is supplied that appears to ruin the deal and Jerry's career. The cook thinks there's something familiar about Dexter and doubts he's really a homeless person, but a relationship begins to develop between them that adds both confusion and zest.

Flimflam Bedlam

a farce in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

The Whitworth's have been rich for a long time, but financial problems have Mrs. Whitworth worried. This is compounded by her younger daughter's (Anna) inability to find a wealthy husband and her elder daughter's (Jillian) failed marriage. Her financial worries may be solved if she can sell a large (and polluted) parcel of land to Rev. Sloan, who is coming to discuss plans to build a college on that land. Sloan is a con man who expects Whitworth to give him the land. With him is Ruth, presumed to be his assistant but actually his lover (and a former stripper). Before they start, Roger appears and threatens to blow everyone up unless he gets a ransom. Anna enters and grabs Roger in a hug, because he is the guy she recently dumped at her mother's insistence. Everyone attacks Roger and the first act ends with an explosion. Later, Roger explains that he is doing research on the wealthy. He is compelled to stay (from injuries he received in the attack) and starts to develop a relationship with Jill. She, however, is worried about the deal her mother wants to make with Sloan. She doesn't trust Sloan (not simply because of his roving hands, but also because of his frequent erroneous Biblical quotations) and enlists Roger's help. Meanwhile, Ruth is upset that the sleeping arrangements will keep her and Sloan apart. Confusion ensues as Roger and Ruth swap bedrooms, Anna decides to be more assertive in her relationship with Roger, Jill attempts to meet with Roger, and Sloan pursues his amorous interests. In all the confusion, Jill realizes a way to reveal what Sloan is really like.

Fool's Retreat

a farce in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

Chris, an accountant running from the mob, has been taken by Diane to hide in a women's health resort. Gwen, an actress with problems, is there for help. Magda manages the resort with the help of Maxine (really an undercover cop looking for drug deals). Rudy, the mob hit-man arrives disguised as a doctor. An overheard phone call leads Diane to think Gwen is the hit-man in disguise (and leads them to convince Rudy that Gwen is running from the mob). Another mistake convinces Maxine that Chris is a drug dealer. Gwen becomes convinced that Chris is there to sign her for a TV series. Rudy thinks Magda works for the mob; she thinks he's there to save them from some contagious disease. Then things get complicated as Chris dons another disguise to find out what is going on, then forgets who is he (thanks to a couple of slams from a lethal door) and becomes the object of affection of several women for very different reasons.

For Love or Money

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Amanda is rich, but she'd rather work. Her friend, Trisha, thinks a therapist (Jerome) she's seeing can help Amanda. Amanda agrees to meet the therapist. She also has to deal with a house keeper (Katrina) who has problems with romance. Paolo (really Paul affecting a wild Italian accent and arrogant demeanor) who dislikes the wealthy and uses his job to insult them, arrives to redecorate Amanda's apartment. Jerome uses hypnotism to make female clients desire him. He sees a chance with Amanda (despite his relationship with Trisha) but finds Paolo an obstacle. Amanda realizes Paolo is the artist she nearly married years earlier and has Trisha pretend to be her while she pretends to be Trisha. Jerome plants ideas in Paolo's subconscious that he hopes will get him fired. When he accidentally hypnotizes Katrina while trying to plant romantic ideas in Amanda's mind, he is over-whelmed by her. Trisha suspects Jerome is behind the increasingly strange behavior of everyone and plots her revenge with the help of Paul and Amanda after Paul reveals that he is on to Amanda's deception.

Harley's Lucky Day (aka: *Harley Sadoff is Depressed*)

a comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

He's seriously depressed. Hasn't kept a job in years because he exposed shady accounting. His psychiatrist fired him and his girlfriend has been gone for a month. He doesn't think things can get worse. When Crazy Maggie, famous for killing men who are attracted to her, escapes from a mental hospital she does more to shake up his life than anyone could have expected. Neither his girlfriend's attempt to regain his interest in romance or his friend's plan to rob him come anywhere close to the very different perception of reality he gets from Maggie. A little confusion about who is going to kill whom and an engagement proposal from an unexpected direction all add up to an off-beat look at the world of depression.

Have a Nice Day

a comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Marv and Mandy moved from the East to start a new life away from the constraints of urban life. They are building a home with the help of Jo, a local woman who is a marvel at construction (and a task-master with a penchant for using old sayings). When inspectors Bobby and Tina from the building department appear, they discover that, even in the wide-open West, there is no escaping government. When they discover that the inspections require some destruction of their home (and threaten plasterboards Mandy has so painfully installed), Mandy puts a halt to it with a gun. A history of trouble between Tina and Jo complicate things. Marv, Mandy and Jo come up with a plan to do the inspection without more damage to the house. Along the way, the source of the trouble is revealed to be a misunderstanding and Tina has a change of attitude.

Home Safety

a comedy in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

Sen. Grafton wonders why he got into politics. In a search for excitement he is having affairs. His chief of staff, Maggie, tries to control him (with sex if need be) so she can get money out of their deals. His wife, Faith, is tired of his philandering and regrets what politics has done to him. She's brought a Justice Dept. agent (Sam) to look into Willie's deals. A lobbyist, Dee, is also there to pitch a deal. Dee planted an intern, Grace, on the Senator's staff to get info to blackmail him. This hasn't worked and time is running out, so Dee insists that Grace get the Senator in a compromising situation so she can get pictures. Grace is reluctant but Dee has something on her. When the first attempt fails (in part because Grace won't wear her glasses) Sam begins to see what's going on and eventually gets Grace to work for him. Along the way we see that laws are made on the basis of political expediency, conning the public, greed, fear, blackmail and lust; everything but the public good.

Inn Sanity

a comedy of errors in two acts 3 m, 4 w; unit set

Business at the remote hotel Delores and Raul own is off. Most guests are people with problems: a clergyman (Rev. Ware) on extended sabbatical, perhaps because of misguided counseling of women; a secretary (Alyssa) in hiding so she won't testify about financial problems of a company she worked for; and a meddling, forgetful widow (Madeline). To get new revenue, Raul and Delores are bringing people to the hotel to scout locations for a scary movie. Unknown to them, however, the couple are really on the run from the mob (they swapped hotels with the movie people). After a couple of strange episodes of jealousy by the new guests, Delores concludes that they are doing scenes for the scary movie and involves Ware and Alyssa in her plan to make the place scary. Madeline has her own theory and tries to show Celia how absurd her jealousy is by proposing to kill all the men. Celia and Billy decide that there are plans to kill all the men and try to persuade Ware and Raul to leave. Instead, everyone thinks Celia and Billy are looking for even more frightening behavior. During all of this, Madeline is busy guiding Ware and Alyssa into a relationship...and getting rid of pigeons.

It's Complicated

a comedy in two acts 2 m, 3w, unit set

Chip Carver, a PR guy taking medication for shyness, has been staying at the penthouse apartment of his lawyer-friend, Dexter Dutton because his wife of a few months (Amanda Baxter) has thrown him out. He is awakened by the cleaning lady (Maria) to discover the apartment is a mess from a party the previous night. When Dex returns from his trip early (for an important business meeting soon to be held there) and tells Chip he has to get out, Chip discovers that Maria has sent his clothes to the cleaners. Dex's luggage has been lost and all of his other clothes have also been sent to the cleaners. When Dex tries to get the wrinkles out of his suit while he's showering, his suit mysteriously disappears. This leads Chip and Dex to discover an unconscious woman (Brie) in the guest room. When they find out that she's a lawyer investigating Chip's company, Chip is in a panic because he can't remember how the woman (whose clothes were also sent out by Maria) came to be there. Brie doesn't help matters by accidentally taking some of Chip's medicine (which makes her think everything is a dream). Maria, feeling sorry about sending the clothes out, brings a maid's uniform for Brie to wear (although Brie doesn't like it). When Amanda arrives, Chip goes into a major panic. However, Amanda is there for the business meeting and knows nothing about Chip being there. This puts Dex in a bind. He can't cancel the meeting or the deal will be ruined, but if Amanda finds Chip there, things could be worse. Chip's efforts to get out dressed as a maid, coupled with Brie's need to talk, Amanda's worries that Dex will get the upper hand in their deal and Dex's attempts to keep it all from blowing up lead to a madhouse of complications. And Maria tries her best to deal with it all the demands made of her while skeptically observing the shenanigans.

Jumping for Joy

a farce in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

Psychiatrist Ted Gaines has more than he can handle when a distraught Stanley Cooper climbs out on the ledge of Ted's office on the 15th floor. While his nurse prods him into action, Stanley's obnoxious fiancé arrives to make matters worse. An attempt to calm her with a tranquilizer only unleashes her libido. Then, an aggressive lawyer shows up, first to see who is going to sue who (and then to put a movie deal together about the event). A police officer arrives, initially mistaking the call for a domestic disturbance, then having to partially disrobe in order to talk to the would-be jumper. The nurse takes a special interest in Stanley, making the fiancé jealous. Battles ensue, first between nurse and fiancé, then between fiancé and lawyer, then nurse, fiancé and lawyer; everyone gets tangled in a safety cable; the cop and the doc begin to develop a relationship as do the nurse and the jumper.

Mervin's Magic

a comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Some people (including his sister, May) think wealthy Mervin Coleman can't run his company because he's staying away from the office. A psychiatrist has been retained to evaluate Mervin's competence. Meanwhile, Mervin's niece (Lisa) wants him to find out if her husband (David) is having an affair. When David shows up to talk about a problem he has with his new business and introduces a strange woman, Mervin thinks she's the "other woman" and does his best to scare her away. Which is not too hard, given Mervin's penchant for dueling with imaginary foes. May creates more complications, both for Mervin and her son's marriage. How he sorts out his problems, helps save a marriage, neutralize his sister and manage to keep the psychiatrist from having him put away make for a fast-paced comedy (with farcical elements) with lots of twists, sword-fights and surprising warmth.

Murder Rehearsal

a comedy of theater in two acts 2m, 2w, unit set

What happens when four actors of widely varying skills and objectives have a run through rehearsal without a director on a play that is going through several revisions? Lines are forgotten, cues are missed, blocking goes astray and the rehearsal frequently screeches to a halt as actors express their frustrations with the play and each other. And we get the frequent diversions into their own experiences in theater and some insight into why anyone might want to be in theater. Of course, there is the murder mystery to be solved in *An Appointment With Death* if the actors don't walk out.

My Late Love

comedy in two acts 3w, 1m, unit set

Roger's new wife, Amanda, wants to sell the mountain cabin he lived in with his late wife (Marsha) and has come with Roger's friend and real estate agent (Dede) to get an idea how much they could get for the cabin. Soon, however, they encounter a woman who looks like and claims to be Marsha. Amanda, as it turns out, was no friend of Marsha's and suspects a con job. Dede, on the other hand a good friend of both Marsha and Roger, starts to explore another set of possibilities.

When Roger arrives and explains how Marsha died in an accident, a search for the truth begins...much to Amanda's dislike.

Is it really Marsha or a fraud? Could she be a ghost or an angel? What role does the history between Amanda and Marsha play? And what about the history between Roger and Dede? What role did Morris play in Marsha's accident...and who is Morris? Will Roger ever discover the truth...and will he know it when he finds it?

All this and more are revealed in this funny exploration of who wants what for whom that comes to a satisfyingly comfortable conclusion.

A New Life

a comedy in two acts 3m, 3w unit set

Larry and Amy Smith are newly-weds with financial problems. After putting all their savings into buying a "fixer" of a house, Larry has been laid off. They are now getting calls from collection agencies and even face foreclosure on their house. Amy, in particular seems upset so, when a group comes ready to remodel their house and change their lives, she jumps at the chance. It's a cable show called A New Life but they don't seem very well organized. They didn't even have Larry's name right or know he was married. But, they rapidly charge into the project (in part because they are behind schedule) and start running into more problems (termites, crashing walls, smashed car, flooded kitchen just to start). When Larry finds one of the crew flirting with Amy (who was given something to help her calm down), it's too much for him and he gets a gun and orders them to leave. Then things really get complicated (compounded by the fact that they may be working on the wrong house). When Larry tries to tell the group about something important he's heard, they think he's talking about their mistake and decide to take care of the house. But, what Larry heard was something Amy had been trying to tell him some time. As it turns out, the show might have it wrong, but Larry and Amy are going to have a new life anyhow.

Non Scents

a farce in two acts 3m, 3w, unit set

Margaret is going through menopause. Aside from the irritation of unpredictable hot flashes, she feels her husband's (Harry) lack of attention is a sign she has lost her appeal. Harry has been desperately trying to keep his fragrance company from going broke. His major investor, a wealthy former model named Mindy, and a lawyer (Edward) representing another group of investors are coming to see a demonstration of a new product by Stanley, his chief chemist, that he hopes will make the company wildly successful. Stanley is going to test it on one of the women, which should make her irresistible to men. Mindy, used to getting what she wants by charming men, comes with her current toy, Dutton, an ex-professional soccer player. Edward is not as ambitious as his wife, Erica, would like. Deborah, the housekeeper, is tired of guys taking advantage of her and seems to think Stanley's shy persona is what she likes. There is bad chemistry between Erica and Mindy but everyone's chemistry goes haywire when Stanley, unknowingly, sprays the pheromone fragrance on himself instead of the women. The effect is entirely unexpected.

The Packham Job

a farce in two acts 2m, 5w, unit set

Susan has invited Marty to interview for a job with Walter, an eccentric financier. She is Walter's assistant and has run the household since Mrs. Packham died. She also tries to keep Walter's divorced daughter, Jennifer, under control and is secretly in love with Walter. The house is a mess because an obnoxious decorator (Helga) is moving things (especially the art work). Two house keepers (Gloria and Candy) have arrived. They are, actually, thieves who got details from Marty's briefcase after he drank too much at a club where Candy works. He doesn't remember her, but they plan to keep him from revealing who they are. Marty is enticed to stay by Jennifer, who finds him attractive. Meanwhile, the thieves take paintings out of the house but Helga finds the pictures and keeps returning them. The mayhem escalates when Marty is found (soaked in whiskey and unconscious) holding Candy's clothes (who hides behind a painting being fought over by Walter and Helga). Walter thinks that something strange is going on and it would be great fun to find out what it is. He enlists Marty in his scheme, finds out that Susan has strong feelings for him, and sets out to make everything right.

Panic Attack

a farce in two acts 2m, 4w, unit set

Thomas was head of a corporation, but has been in therapy at a clinic on an island in Canada for months. He has befriended a woman (Sam) who seldom talks and often sheds her clothes and runs away when frightened. Uncle Fred comes to persuade him to return to save the company. Then, a reporter arrives pretending to be a patient at the clinic in order to track down Thomas. She mistakes Fred for Thomas. The clinic director becomes convinced that the reporter is delusional; and enlists Fred's help to make Thomas ready to return to the world. Thomas (with information and help from Sam) enlists Fred's help to confuse the reporter. When Thomas, Sam and Fred go on the attack, the reporter can't keep up with the confusion. Adding to the mayhem is Kelso, a patient who also works as an orderly and has a tendency to tackle anyone who runs. Surprising relationships develop between Thomas and Sam and between Fred and the clinic director in this madcap look at the worlds of business, therapy and journalism.

Pranked

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w unit

Uncle Henry has been the master prankster in a once large family of pranksters. Now he has only two nieces and a nephew left and has decided on one last prank to get them working together. The nieces (sisters Liz and Cat) and nephew (Bobby) have held a grudge against each other since a childhood prank went terribly wrong. Henry tells the sisters they (with their cousin) are to inherit his estate. Immediately the sisters suspect a prank (especially since Bobbie has been reported as deceased). So they decide, separately, to pull their own pranks on Henry. Unfortunately it appears that their combined pranks have given Henry a fatal heart attack. Now, as they try to figure a way to keep it from looking like they killed him they have to work together as they work out their issues with each other. Add to this the early arrival of the housekeeper, the appearance of a mysterious stranger, a not so secret passage, a little romance...and ghosts who aren't and you have a warmly funny, rollicking farce that will keep you laughing as you wonder what could possibly happen next.

Pursuing Periwinkle

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

After his divorce, Perry retreated to a small island, leaving his job with his dad, a wealthy financier. Now his main interest is marine biology and fun. Although he lives alone, he sometimes has visitors (who may know that he is wealthy and divorced). Typically he acts crazy to drive them away. When Tammy's boat sinks, he rescues her (not knowing that she's there to get control of his assets for his ex-wife). He pretends to be preparing for a festival, but this doesn't deter her. Another woman (Sandy) arrives, whom he mistakes for a biologist who will help him identify his recently discovered little spiny. She, however, has made a career of marrying wealthy men and taking their money. As the two women pursue their schemes, Catherine arrives. She's an assistant to his dad and a childhood friend of Perry's, but he doesn't remember her. She needs Perry to take control of the company and has been transferring assets to Perry's accounts around the world. Interpol sends Jeff to find out what Perry is up to (and possibly arrest him). Attempting to get Perry alone, Sandy and Tammy end up drugging each other. When they overhear details about Jeff, they think he's after them and try to get him out of the way. Disappearing bodies, mistaken motives and considerable confusion add to the general insanity. Along the way, Perry realizes who Catherine is and they start an unusual courtship that sounds more like a business negotiation than romance.

Razzle Dazzle

a farce in two acts 2 m, 5w; unit set

Wealthy widow Louise Cabot plans to make her nephews heirs to her estate as her only surviving relatives. This is a problem for Kennedy Dolan, an attorney who has been slowly getting control of the trust Louise has created (using a variety of schemes including the services of a phoney doctor). Her attempts to persuade Louise's plan is wrong are frustrated by Louise's determination and the incessant interruptions of Louise's house guests (Carla and Mandy) who just want to have fun. When the nephews (Hap and Jeff, who had no idea they even had an aunt) arrive, Dolan tries to keep Louise out of the way long enough for her to convince them that they would be better off refusing Louise's offer. However, the guys are suspicious (given that they have some experience with schemes of their own) plus they've found Carla and Mandy to be very interesting. When Mandy accidentally drinks the sedative meant to keep Louise out of the way, she behaves strangely and ends up causing Kennedy to faint. Trying to keep the household running smoothly is the sarcastic and skeptical housekeeper Trina. As the nephews realize what Kennedy has been up to, they develop a plan to get the lawyer to release all control of Louise's estate. How they do this, with the wild assistance of Mandy and Carla, is truly a razzle dazzle.

Relative Insanity

a comedy in two acts 3m, 4w; unit set

Can relatives drive you crazy? Silly question. Burt is convinced that the government ruined him. He and his divorced daughter, Rolla, moved in with his sister, Claire, and her hyperactive daughter, Mel. He lives in the basement working on mysterious, sometimes explosive, projects. Rolla, who was once a financial wiz, now seems to be conducting strange business of her own with many men. Mel may have picked up on Burt's anger, but she's got a lot of her own and seems to take most of it out on a young man who is studying with her and attracted to her. Claire seems to be the only one with good sense, but she is returning from a stay in the hospital after what a psychiatrist thinks was an attempted suicide. When Burt decides that the doctor is really a government spy he knocks her out (with laughing gas) and has to find a way to get rid of her, while Mel finds an old rifle and readies for the attack of government agents. Meanwhile, Rolla finds a way to help one of her clients get financial freedom from his dominating dad. When the doctor revives and accuses them of being a dysfunctional group, they show that they're still remarkable people.

Revenge

a farce in two acts 3m, 3w, unit set

Successful take-over tycoon, Martin Burr, is about to have another birthday and he's feeling bored with life. His wife, Lydia, is planning a surprise for him. Meanwhile, Susan Chase has revenge in mind for him because she thinks he ruined her dad's life. She plans to trap Martin in a compromising position and have a photographer she's hired (Rick) get photos. At the same time, Arthur and Denise, a couple of accountants in the latest of Martin's corporate take-overs, think Martin has been raiding the company's pension fund. They think they'll scare him into leaving the money alone by pretending to be from the mob. Instead of being frightened or seduced, Martin thinks it's all part of Lydia's birthday surprise and he's having a great time. When Lydia finds out what is really going on, she and Martin carry out a bit of their own revenge.

The Romantic Imagination

a farce in three acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Jack is so enamored of a character in his latest novel that he couldn't finish the novel. His pal and manager, Larry, tried to get his mind off the problem by taking him skiing. Unfortunately that led to Jack having a concussion and the conviction that his character, Linda, was real. While Jack has been in the hospital, Larry has been staying at Jack's mountain lodge and trying to develop a relationship with a young woman (Carly). When Jack and Larry return from the hospital, Jack believes that Carly is Larry's wife, Maureen. When Maureen arrives to check on Larry, she must pretend to be Jack's imaginary girlfriend so he can finish the novel. Larry tells Maureen that Carly is really Jack's girlfriend. Maureen thinks it might be fun to be Jack's inspiration and sets out to make him a more sensitive writer. Meanwhile, Larry convinces Carly to get Jack to forget about the imaginary Linda (and especially the Linda his wife is pretending to be). Maureen is more than a little suspicious of Larry and Carly and has her own plans for Larry. All the attention he is getting proves to be very stimulating, and not just to his ability to write. The imaginary Linda seems to go away as Jack turns his attention to work, but when a typist arrives, who also turns out to be a Linda, he decides the real thing is better anyhow.

Rules & Regulations

a comedy in two acts 3m, 4w; simple set

Art is tired of dealing with endless government rules and regulations, incessant inspections and the steady stream of government paperwork. He'd sell his business, but a deal made with some banks when he needed money to expand won't let him. Art has found a loophole. It requires the involvement of his son, who quit working for his dad several years earlier, and a lot of very strange behavior on the part of father and son. Complicating his life is the presence of a demanding OSHA inspector who seems to have a romantic interest in Art's finance man (Dennis). Meanwhile, his lawyer (Beth, a woman who has known his family since she was a childhood neighbor) is trying to get legislative relief by putting him in touch with a politician. Things get more complicated when the politician arrives early and starts acting very strange. Further complicating the situation, it turns out that Art's son (Charlie) once proposed marriage to Beth but was turned down and now is determined to have her accept his proposal. When the bank's representative arrives things get more wildly out of hand with spontaneous polkas, marriage proposals, Art's singing, caffeine highs and women fighting for Dennis' attention. Art and his son never really get their plan in motion because of everything else that happens but things still work out for them.

Say Uncle

a farce in two acts 3m, 4w, unit set

Gary and Darrell have been playing jokes on their Uncle Bill since they were kids. For his fifty-sixth birthday they enlisted the help of their girlfriends for a special surprise to help him quit thinking he's gotten too old. Bill has been interviewing a woman (Max) hired to run his company. An attempt to surprise Bill meets with disaster when Gary encounters the martial-arts skills of Max. Bill is fed up with the pranks (plus he's tired of his sister's complaints) and plans to teach them a lesson when he overhears a rehearsal for the surprise. He fakes his death and pretends to be a policeman investigating the death. A supposed corpse in a body bag keeps appearing and disappearing; Bill's sister arrives and gets involved in the scheme (and lays guilt on the boys while grilling their girlfriends about the nature of their relationships). Max becomes a major player in Bill's scheme and they develop an unexpected relationship in the process. The stress of the situation forces the boys to do some fast growing up with surprising consequences.

Sibling Schemes

a comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Joanne has been running the family business since her brother, Tad, left to join a monastery. Now she's got problems that she thinks require his help. He's coming for a visit but her plan is to have a young woman dressed as a sexy maid either prove that Tad isn't really becoming a monk or convince him that he'd be making a mistake to be one. However, Tad isn't really studying to be a monk, instead he's found a vocation in a think-tank. He knows his sister is better at business than he is, but he has to convince her that she can't ask him back. To do this, he has enlisted the help of a college pal to pretend to be a psychiatrist who's been treating Tad. The house keeper (Sidney) thinks Joanne's scheme is underhanded, doesn't like the maid and is offended by the outfit Joanne gave her to wear. Initially she is a disinterested observer trying to maintain order but she finds herself being charmed by Tad to the point that she is, unwittingly (and eventually, angrily) caught up in Tad's scheme. The maid, who isn't comfortable in her outfit, isn't able to wear her glasses or contacts, has a tendency to sneak drinks, accidentally drinks a tranquilizer and is none the wiser on how far she's supposed to go in teasing Tad, adds her own complications. When she and Tad discover that they both have a poison ivy rash, their attempts to treat the rash create more complications. At last, however, Sidney plays a pivotal role in putting an end to the sibling schemes.

Soap Solution

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Larry King thinks he's washed up as a writer. His wife recently left him in an attempt to shake him out of his depression. Now he's gone to a mountain cabin for a few weeks of peace and quiet and crossword puzzles. His wife, however, has other plans for him. She's hired some actors who've done bit parts on several soap operas. Her plan is for them to get him caught up in a crazy story they have concocted based on their experiences in the soaps. Keeping him confused is their objective and they seem to succeed for a while with situations that range from a potential suicide to a potential sexual orgy. Just when the wife thinks they've succeeded in rattling his cage, he turns the tables on them and (with a little help from the actors) convinces his wife that her plan may have gone awry.

Trust Me

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Siblings, Robert and Charlene have to delay the termination of their trust allowance while they put together a plan to take over their deceased uncle's company. In order to confuse the lawyer sent to have them sign off on the trust, they switch roles. Unfortunately, the backer for their takeover plan arrives first and they think it's the lawyer. When the lawyer arrives, the siblings are already up to their eyeballs in deception but now they have to create new cousins to explain why there seems to be two sets of relatives. Complications ensue when Charlene is attracted to the backer and Robert is attracted to the lawyer. Add lemonade that's been accidentally laced with pain-killer, a need to check a birthmark located on someone's derriere, a house keeper (who develops a passion for dancing) at her wit's end trying to keep up with who is who and it's easy to see why the guests get confused and frustrated.

Understand Jack?

a romantic comedy in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Jack Newhouse is a marketing genius who, while traveling the world in search of meaning for his life, has stumbled into an inn in a remote, mountain village. He persuades the owner, Max, that a video image promotion would bring new business to the inn. Max has just one requirement, he wants his daughters to be in the video. Jack thinks this will make things too complicated, but agrees if the daughters agree to follow his direction. The older daughters (Iris and Lily) who, not only find men generally attractive but Jack especially so, are thrilled to be in the video...and determined to know Jack better. However, Rose, the youngest daughter, wants nothing to do with the video or Jack. She suspects he is a con-man but is still intrigued. Rose agrees to be in the video but tries to impose her own rules on Jack. He, on the other hand, has been fascinated by Rose from the start...and only becomes more so as he encounters her sharp...painfully sharp wit. After further complications, they engage in a verbal battle of wits...in which it appears both win.

The Walter Problem

comedy in two acts 1m, 3w, 1either

Elderly sisters Abbie and Bea now residing in their large, old family home are trying to figure out how to help their nephew, Walter, get his life back together after a series of misfortunes that has brought him to living with them. One sister thinks he needs to get back to his old business and stop working in the local bank. She has planted an idea that they need more money for an upcoming surgery. The other sister thinks he needs some romance in his life and thinks their housekeeper (Charlie, who is disaster prone around Walter) would make a good match.

Meanwhile, Walter, in trying to quickly solve a computer problem at the bank, has diverted some odd interest payments to the sister's trust accounts and is now trying to remedy his mistake. Charlie makes him nervous because she seems to always have accidents around him that leave him in pain.

And then Pat Stickler, a bank examiner, arrives to talk to the sisters about the unusual account activity in their trust funds. Stickler is surprised to find Walter there and jumps to the conclusion that he is investigating the sisters for something having to do with national security.

All the mistakes, chaos and confusion ends up revealing that the sisters are surprisingly sharp, that there is a developing relationship between Charlie and Walter, and Stickler's evidence is just so much burnt beans.

Wise Guise

a comedy in two acts 2m, 2w, unit set

Jeff is a financial analyst whose wealth brings him no satisfaction. In fact, the closer he got to marrying into a wealthy family, the more unhappy he became. His fiancée (Tiffany) dumped him with the warning that he'd better get his head straight. He's come to see the wiseman of the mountain in hope of finding, if not the meaning of life, at least a clue as to why he's on this quest. The wiseman (Fred) is nothing like anyone's idea of a guru. He's sarcastic, likes the good things in life, has his own stock portfolio and has some very weird ways of looking at the world. His new protégé (Angela) seems to find Jeff a soul-mate which leads to a passionate encounter just as Tiffany shows up to save Jeff from joining what she thinks might be a cult. Aided (and frequently, challenged) by his new protégé (who is also a popular psychologist) Fred puts Jeff through an ordeal that leads Jeff to understand what is really important in his life. Major philosophical systems are assaulted as frequently as the characters assault each other.

The Witherspoon Waltz

a farce in two acts 2m, 3w, unit set

Hal Stine has his hands on a great musical. He needs the financial backing of Mrs. Witherspoon, but she's in the hospital for tests to find out why she no longer has energy. Aided by his cynical assistant, Cassy, he pretends to be a psychiatrist called in to evaluate Witherspoon. The doctor in charge, Dr. Butz, is suspicious of his methods but has heard that he's eccentric. Stine is trying to pitch his show while keeping up the pretense of being a psychiatrist. In the process he finds something that revives Witherspoon's energy and slowly gets the interest of Butz. Hal has trouble staying focused on the objective, switching frequently and rapidly from zany romantic, to serious psychiatrist, to hustling producer and back again. And, his would-be pigeon is a lot sharper than he realizes. Repeated attempts by Hal to have enough time with Witherspoon without Butz being around, leads to wild chases with a wheelchair, a waltz that gets out of hand and almost everyone trying to hide from everyone at one time or another.
