

S·T·U·D·Y  G·U·I·D·E

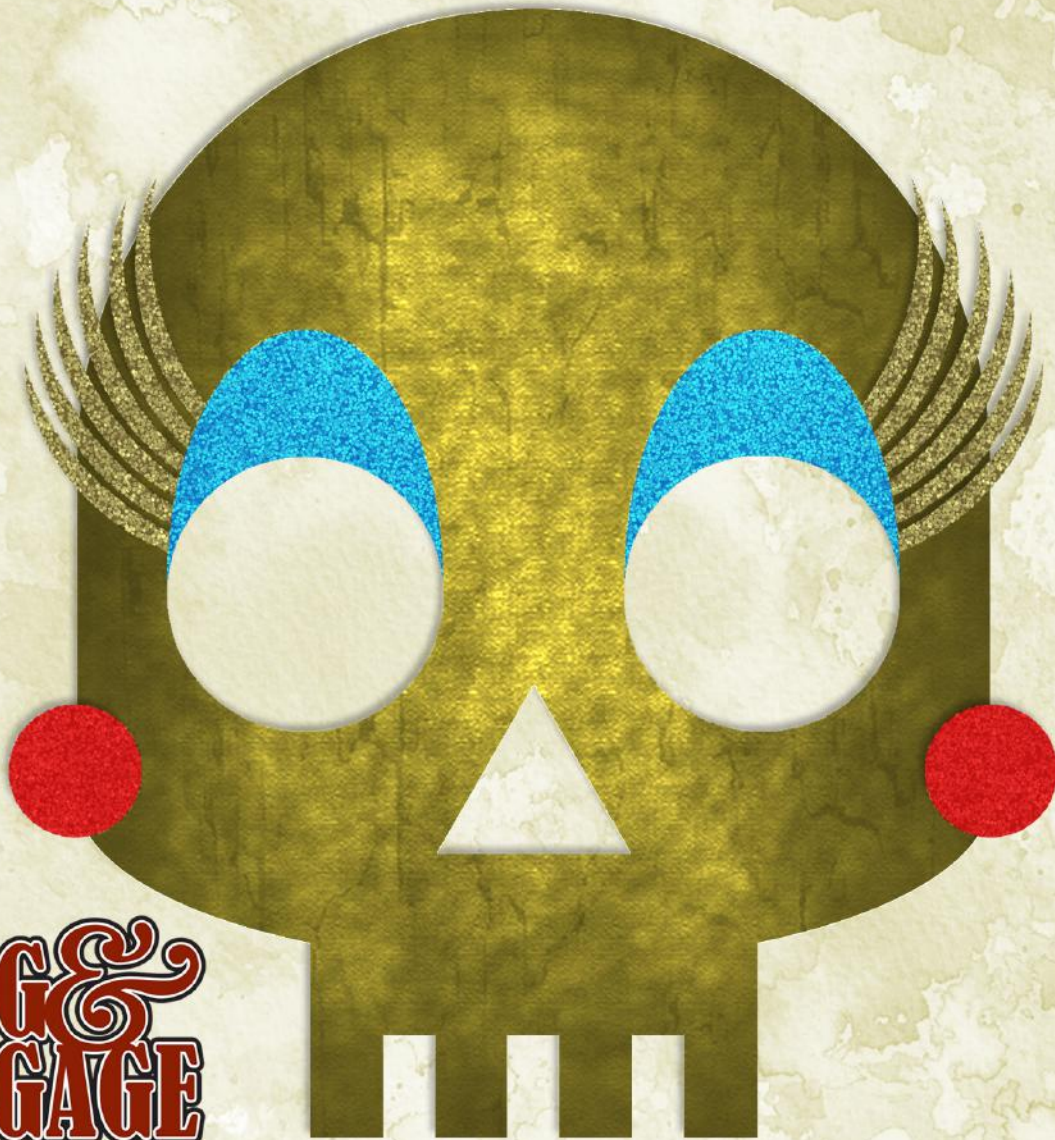
THE FARNDALE AVENUE HOUSING ESTATE  
TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD DRAMATIC SOCIETY'S  
PRODUCTION OF

# MURDER

AT

# CHECKMATE MANOR

by David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr.



**BAG &  
BAGGAGE**



## STUDY GUIDE CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE PLAYWRIGHTS:  
MCGILLIVRAY & ZERLIN

STYLE: COARSE ACTING

GENRE: THE MUDER MYSTERY

TERMS TO KNOW

OUR PRODUCTION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS &  
WRITING ACTIVITIES

SOURCES &  
FURTHER READING

## BAG&BAGGAGE STAFF

**Scott Palmer**  
Artistic Director

**Beth Lewis**  
Managing Director

**Cassie Greer**  
Associate Artistic Director

**Arianne Jacques**  
Patron Services Manager

**Jim Ricks-White**  
Technical Director, Resident  
Lighting Designer, The Vault  
Theater and Facilities Manager

**Alec Lugo**  
Marketing & Development Assistant

**Megan Wilkerson**  
Resident Scenic Designer

**Melissa Heller**  
Resident Costume Designer

**BAG &  
BAGGAGE**

Real. Provocative. Theatre.

Artistic Director Scott Palmer

THE FARNDALE AVENUE HOUSING ESTATE TOWNSWOMEN'S  
GUILD DRAMATIC SOCIETY'S PRODUCTION OF

# MURDER AT CHECKMATE MANOR

by David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr.

Directed by Scott Palmer

October 12-31, 2017  
The Vault Theater

## CAST

Mrs. Phoebe Reece ..... Patrick Spiket†  
Ms. Thelma Greenwood ..... Norman Wilson\*  
Mrs. Mercedes Blower ..... Jeremy Sloant†  
Mrs. Felicity Fortesque ..... Tyler Buswell  
Gordon, a Stage Manager ..... Arianne Jacques‡

## CREW/PRODUCTION TEAM

Director ..... Scott Palmer  
Stage Manager ..... Ephriam Harnsberger  
Costume Designer ..... Melissa Heller  
Scenic Designer ..... Megan Wilkerson  
Lighting Designer & Technical Director ..... Jim Ricks-White  
Sound Designer ..... Grant Thackray^  
Assistant Director ..... Cassie Greer  
Assistant Stage Manager ..... Grant Thackray^  
Props Master ..... Renée Zipp^  
Dramaturg ..... Carlee Whalen^  
Marketing Assistant ..... Tiffany Rousseau^

‡Member of the Bag&Baggage Resident Acting Company

†Bag&Baggage Associate Artist

\*Member of Actors' Equity Associaton, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage  
Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract

^Bag&Baggage Emerging Artist

## THE FARNDALE LADIES: AN INTRODUCTION

written for the U.S. Premiere of

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of 'Murder at Checkmate Manor'  
at Los Angeles' Colony Theatre in 1991, directed by David McGillivray



I think it's no accident that the Farndale Ladies, who can't seem to perform the simplest task without falling over or breaking something, were created in Great Britain, possibly the only country in the world which discourages personal achievement as vulgar and has made cult out of the heroic failure. Coarse acting, bad movies, and botched out-takes had a loyal following in the British Isles long before the rest of the world recognized their entertainment value, and when Walter Zerlin Jr. and I decided to make our mark on the Edinburgh Festival in 1975, it was perhaps inevitable that our production of *Macbeth*, in which the set was accidentally erected back-to-front and an incapacitated witch was pushed round the cauldron in a wheelchair, was an award-winning sell-out, later touring the country to similar acclaim for the next year.

Such was the impact of the Farndale Ladies that they had to make comeback after comeback, appearing in everything from a French farce to a science-fiction adventure. Earlier this year the ladies' most ambitious production to date, *The Mikado*, complete with full chorus and orchestra, completed a sold-out run in St. Albans, north of London, and in 1992 *Peter Pan* will be the 11th play to be desecrated by *Farndale Avenue* ineptitude.

Since the *Farndale Avenue* plays were first published ten years ago, they've proved surprisingly popular all over the world. It seems that, although the Townswomen's Guild, a group of mainly middle-class housewives who meet to learn skills and raise funds for charity, is uniquely British, there are equivalents, such as Countrywomen's Associations and Leagues of Women, in many other countries. With only minor adaptations made to the scripts, audiences are now taking that age-old, vicarious pleasure in misfortune throughout Europe and as far afield as Saudi Arabia, Zambia, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. 1991 saw the one thousandth production of a *Farndale Avenue* play.

The U.S.A., however, is in virgin territory for the Farndale Ladies. None of their plays has been seen here until now. I wonder how the ladies' hopeless incompetence will be received here in Los Angeles... You may think that no actors could possibly be as unmitigatedly awful as the Farndale Ladies. Perhaps they couldn't. But if they did exist, they'd come from Britain.

- David McGillivray



## THE PLAYWRIGHTS

*I have a special fondness for the second rate and the downright worthless.*

– David McGillivray



**David McGillivray**, born September 7, 1947 in London, is an actor, producer, playwright, screenwriter, and film critic. Originally a writer for *Monthly Film Bulletin*, McGillivray wrote his first film script, *Albert's Follies*, for his friend, filmmaker Ray Selfe, in 1973, which was intended as a vehicle for The Goodies - a trio of British comedians who had a surrealist comedy television show in the 1970s and 1980s - who turned it down. The film was eventually released as *White Cargo* and starred the English actor and comedian David Jason - one of the best-loved actors in British pop culture - in one of his earliest leading roles.

McGillivray was soon involved in the British sex film industry, writing scripts for *I'm Not Feeling Myself Tonight* (1975) and *The Hot Girls* (1974), two films produced by pornographer John Jesnor Lindsay. As would be the case with many of his films, McGillivray makes cameo appearances in both. He also gained attention for several horror film scripts he wrote in the mid-1970s, though he became the subject of much disparagement from his former film-criticism colleagues.

In collaboration with Walter Zerlin Jr., McGillivray has written a number of plays, including *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society* series of 10 plays spoofing local amateur dramatic productions.

\*

\*

\*

Born on December 11, 1949, the man who came to be known as **Walter Zerlin Jr.** was a lawyer, playwright, and actor, who delighted tens of thousands. Zerlin died in November of 2001, and the following is excerpted from his obituary, penned by his writing partner, David McGillivray.

*Walter Zerlin Jr, who died of cancer aged 51, was probably the only English barrister who regularly dragged up, tap-danced and conjured professionally on stage.*

*For 25 years, we wrote plays together, among them 10 in the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society series. These were comedies in which an amateur dramatic society murdered Shakespeare, Dickens and Gilbert and Sullivan. They have been performed around the world.*

*Zerlin also appeared in roles he wrote for himself, memorably as a lady pianist thumping out songs from The Sound Of Music, prior to a performance of Macbeth. In Running Around The Stage Like A Lunatic (1980), which won an Edinburgh Festival Fringe award, he played all 17 parts.*

*In real life, he was a barrister, mostly in the west midlands, and his geniality could soften the hardest judicial heart. He was also a legal adviser on A Fish Called Wanda (1988) – Zerlin had defended John Cleese over a parking offence – and the actor later recommended him to help Marlon Brando in courtroom scenes for A Dry White Season. The court was not a substitute for the stage, but Zerlin brought his tireless ebullience to both.*

*Born in Guildford, the son of Czechoslovak Jewish refugees, he read law at King's College London. When I directed him in an amateur production in 1972, I thought him the funniest man I had ever met. I knew him then as Robert Conway, although even that was not his real family name. His father had been Zerkowicz, and had sung in opera as Walter Zerlin.*

*Walter Jr was called to the bar in 1974, and, a year later, when we formed Entertainment Machine, he took over his father's stage name. We also co-edited the British Alternative Theatre Directory for 10 years.*

*In recent years, Zerlin had returned to amateur dramatics, writing, directing and performing near his home in Ewell, Surrey. He was working on a production of The Wizard Of Oz when he was taken ill last May. I find it difficult to envisage completing the script of the final Farndale Avenue play, Peter Pan, without his brilliant visual gags and choreography.*

David McGillivray  
published in *The Guardian*  
December 13, 2001

---

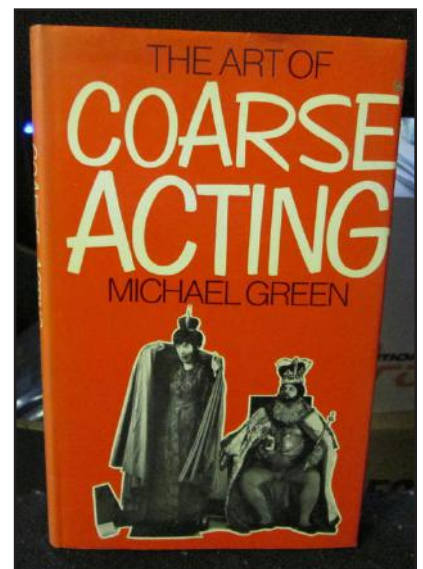
### STYLE: COARSE ACTING

What is "Coarse Acting"? Everything you need to know is in the aptly titled book *The Art of Coarse Acting*, written in 1964 by British humorist Michael Green. Most of Green's advice goes like this:

*The Coarse Actor's aim is to upstage the rest of the cast. His hope is to be dead by Act Two so that he can spend the rest of his time in the bar. His problems? Everyone else connected with the production.*

*The Art of Coarse Acting* was an ode to amateur theatre, and Green's unrefined style caught on in the decades following his book's publication. Two of Green's "Course Acting" shows were performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 1977 and 1979, and there is no doubt that Walter Zerlin and David McGillivray were familiar with his work as they began creating the *Farndale Avenue* series, falling easily into this genre.

Another main Coarse Acting influence on Zerlin and McGillivray was *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969), the original sketch-comedy show that rocketed the British comedy group to fame in the 1970s and 1980s. The Pythons pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable in comedy for television and film, influencing many other performance groups over the years, including the very popular *Saturday Night Live*.





The Murder Mystery genre which the ladies of Farndale take on in this show lends itself easily to Coarse Acting: from the ridiculous foreshadowing, to the over-dramatic death scenes, and the classic “it was the butler” cliché, *Murder at Checkmate Manor* is the perfect playground for Zerlin and McGillivray’s hallmark style. And because we’re Bag&Baggage, we give you the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen’s Guild Dramatic Society with our own special twist, aiming to create a fantastic and hilarious experience for the audience that would make Zerlin, McGillivray, Michael Green, and all the Pythons proud.

In the interview below, Michael Green talks about his Coarse Acting inspiration, as well as how difficult “good” Coarse Acting actually is. It takes a very skilled actor to perfect Coarse Acting in their craft - but don’t just take it from us, hear it from Green himself:



If your PDF reader does not support video, you can find Michael Green’s comments on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TIFWhShLHE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TIFWhShLHE)



*Norman Wilson, Patrick Spike, and Jeremy Sloan play Thelma Greenwood, Phoebe Reece, and Mercedes Blower in Bag&Baggage’s production of The Farndale Avenue...Murder at Checkmate Manor.*

## GENRE: THE MURDER MYSTERY

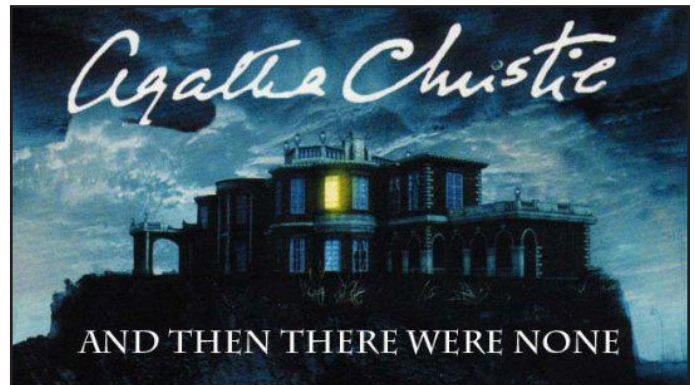
Despite its commitment to the Coarse Acting style and heavy use of parody, we can't forget that the ladies of Farndale Avenue are performing a Murder Mystery - or at least attempting to...



Mystery fiction is a genre usually involving a mysterious death or crime to be solved, and is a relatively recent literary form, originating in the early 19th century. The invention of the printing press and the rise of literacy that came with the English Renaissance led to societies filled with more and more individualistic thinking; the Industrial Revolution meant that more people enjoyed prosperity and time to read; as cities became larger and crime became more rampant, formal police forces with detective units were created; and throughout all this, people developed a greater sense of individualism and self-sufficiency, and a new respect for human reason and the ability to solve problems. The mystery fiction genre owes its birth to countless factors, all coming together to create both writers and audiences who loved puzzles, suspense, and logic.

E.T.A. Hoffman's 1819 novella *Mademoiselle de Scudéri* is one of the earliest examples of crime fiction appearing in print, and influenced Edgar Allan Poe's well-known *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, written in 1841. In 1887, Arthur Conan Doyle introduced Sherlock Holmes, and the *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* mysteries were popularized in the 1920s. The 20s also saw the rise of mystery novelist Agatha Christie, one of the most popular mystery authors of all time.

Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* is a staple of the murder mystery genre, and a plot upon which "Murder at Checkmate Manor" in this play is (very) loosely based. The book, first released in 1939, is one of Christie's best selling novels with over 100 million copies sold. In addition to David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr., Christie's work has influenced countless others in the mystery genre, continuing to do so even today.



Some key elements of the murder mystery genre include:

1. **An unknown murderer.** The murderer is always a very important character, and while he or she isn't revealed until the end, they are generally heavily involved with the story throughout. Despite the murderer's presence, the reader or detective shouldn't suspect them - once they know the identity of the killer, the story is over, and the reader has no motivation to keep reading.
2. **Active reader involvement in piecing together clues.** A murder mystery must have clues that help the detective and the reader in solving the case, but often there are a mix of trustworthy and untrustworthy sources of information, and multiple plausible explanations are given. A murder mystery does not simply hand the story to the reader, but puts the reader in a position to piece together the information right along with those attempting to solve the crime.



3. **Red herrings.** A skilled mystery author includes “red herrings” - a concept coming from an old practice of using a type of fish called red herring to distract hunting dogs from the scent they were tracking. In this genre the “red herring” is used to throw off the reader and the detective, distracting them away from the actual culprit.



4. **A strong hook.** In the murder mystery genre, there can be multiple victims, but the first victim is usually murdered at the beginning of the story. This is the “inciting incident”, and it must create curiosity and keep readers wanting to know more. Clear, distinct characters can also be used to pull readers into the story, and unique ways of introducing them or giving the reader their backgrounds can be a subtle way of revealing clues.

5. **Suspenseful, descriptive dialogue.** Creating suspenseful dialogue throughout the story is a key way of adding to the reader’s enjoyment. Characters who lie, withhold information, or say bizarre or unexpected things can help heighten the suspense, and can also be another form of the “red herring” tool. Using language to help create the backdrop and the mood is also important; the more descriptive the writer is, the better the reader is able to be right in the middle of the story along with the characters.

6. **A satisfying climax and resolution.** The climax is typically never something the reader expects, but answers all the questions still lingering. A satisfying conclusion always provides answers to the primary questions “Who? Why? and What?” and should be an “a-ha!” moment for the reader, enabling them to piece together the rest of the information they have been given throughout the story. A compelling and satisfying ending answers any pressing questions that readers have been kept asking; reveals truths about characters falsely suspected; relates clearly back to the beginning of the story; and leaves the reader feeling inclined to seek out and read the author’s other novels.





## TERMS TO KNOW

**Parody:** Also called a spoof, send-up, take-off, or lampoon, a parody is a work created to imitate, make fun of, or comment on an original work—its subject, author, style, or some other target—by means of satiric or ironic imitation. The writer and critic John Gross observes in his *Oxford Book of Parodies*, that parody seems to flourish in territory somewhere between pastiche (“a composition in another artist’s manner, without satirical intent”) and burlesque (which “fools around with the material of high literature and adapts it to low ends”).

**Farce:** The word farce derives from old French, meaning ‘stuff’ or ‘stuffing’, and may have originated in the comic interludes of medieval French religious plays — serving as light-hearted stuffing in between more serious drama. Historically, the term meant a literary or artistic production of little merit. In the modern theatre, a farce is a comedy that aims at entertaining the audience through situations that are highly exaggerated, extravagant, and thus improbable. Farce is also characterized by physical humor, the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense, and broadly stylized performances. Farces are often set in one particular location where all events occur.

**Slapstick Comedy:** Slapstick is a style of humor involving exaggerated physical activity which exceeds the boundaries of normal physical comedy. The term arises from a device developed during the broad, physical comedy style known as Commedia dell’Arte in 16th century Italy. The name “slapstick” originates from the Italian word *batacchio* or *bataccio* — called the “slap stick” in English — a club-like object composed of two wooden slats used in Commedia. When struck, the *batacchio* produces a loud smacking noise, though little force transfers from the object to the person being struck. Actors may thus hit one another repeatedly with great audible effect while causing no damage and only very minor, if any, pain. Along with the inflatable bladder (of which the whoopee cushion is a modern variant), it was among the earliest special effects.



*A modern-day slap stick, used primarily as a percussion instrument.*

**Fourth Wall:** The Fourth Wall is a performance convention in which an invisible, imagined wall separates actors from the audience. While the audience can see through this “wall” (the convention assumes), the actors act as if they cannot. **Breaking The Fourth Wall** is when a character acknowledges their fictionality, by either indirectly or directly addressing the audience. Alternatively, they may interact with their creator (the author of the book, the director of the movie, the artist of the comic book, etc.) - this is more akin to breaking one of the walls of the set, but the existence of a director implies the existence of an audience, so it’s still indirectly Breaking The Fourth Wall. The trope of Breaking the Fourth Wall is usually used for comedic purposes.



*Late night television host Jimmy Fallon is notorious for being unable to get through bits on his show without corpsing.*

**Corpsing:** Corpsing is British theatrical slang for unintentionally breaking character by laughing. In North America, on TV, film, and the stage, this is commonly referred to as breaking, and it is generally categorized as a blooper. The origin of the term corpsing itself is unclear, but may come from (provoking an actor into) breaking character by laughing while portraying a corpse - or simply because the worst time to have the giggles is when one is playing a corpse.

**Self-deprecating:** To be modest about or critical of oneself, especially humorously so, is to be self-deprecating. Self-deprecation is the act of reprimanding oneself by belittling, undervaluing, or disparaging oneself, or being excessively modest; it is broadly used in humor and tension release. Self-deprecation is often perceived as being a characteristic of certain nations, such as in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, where “blowing one’s own trumpet” is frowned upon.

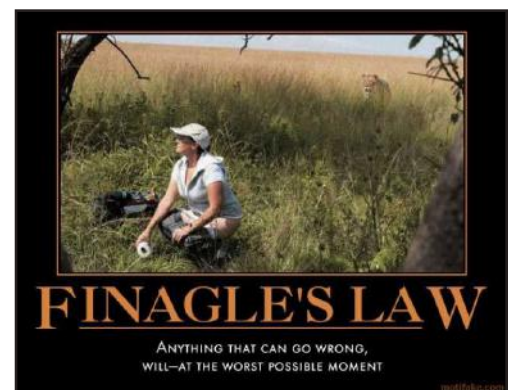
**Leading Lady:** The leading lady, or the lead, is a term often applied to the leading actress in the performance when her character is the protagonist. The word "lead" may also refer to the largest role in the piece, and the “leading lady” may refer to a female actor who typically plays such parts, or who has a respected body of work. In the *Farndale Avenue* series, Thelma and Phoebe are rival leading ladies.



**Ingénue:** The ingénue is a stock character in literature, film, and a role type in the theatre — generally a girl or a young woman who is endearingly innocent and wholesome. Ingénue may also refer to a new young female actor, or one typecast in such roles. The term comes from the feminine form of the French adjective *ingénu* meaning “ingenuous” or innocent, virtuous, and candid. The term may also imply a lack of sophistication and cunning. In the *Farndale Avenue* series, Mercedes, an actual ingénue type, rivals Felicity, an aging ingénue.

**British Pantomime:** Traditionally performed at Christmas with family audiences, British Pantomime (informally "Panto"), is a type of musical comedy stage production designed for family entertainment. Modern Panto includes songs, gags, slapstick comedy, and dancing; it employs gender-crossing actors, and combines topical humour with a story loosely based on a well-known fairy tale, fable, or folk tale. It is a participatory form of theatre, in which the audience is expected to sing along with certain parts of the music and shout out phrases to the performers. Panto has a long theatrical history in Western culture; dating back to classical theatre, it developed partly from the 16th century Commedia dell'Arte tradition of Italy, as well as other European and British stage traditions, such as 17th century masques and music halls.

**Finagle’s Law:** “The perversity of the universe always tends toward a maximum,” is Finagle’s Law, sometimes called “Finagle’s Law of Dynamic Negatives.” A simplified version, often called Murphy’s Law, is “anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.” There is another related Murphy’s Law — “If there are two or more ways to do something, and one of those ways can result in a catastrophe, then someone will do it.” The true Finagle’s Law is stronger than “anything that can go wrong will go wrong” — it allows for things going well, as the universe is merely lulling you into a false sense of security, before proceeding to screw things up for you. It also allows for things that can’t go wrong going wrong; some cases of this count as “Gone Horribly Right”.





## OUR PRODUCTION

*The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of 'Murder at Checkmate Manor'* presents four British dames as the lead actors: Chairwoman of the Guild, Phoebe; the lead actress, Thelma; an aging ingénue, Felicity; and an actual ingénue, Mercedes. Together they are truly... a complete mess. The ladies of Farndale arrive in "Hillsbottom" seemingly unimpressed (and probably a little bit buzzed - Felicity makes sure of that), while their stage manager, Gordon, follows along helplessly, and ultimately gets thrown on stage as an actor in the show.

The conceit is that the audience is here to watch the play *Murder at Checkmate Manor*; but what we really see is all the drama that unfolds behind the scenes, and the complete lack of professional etiquette the ladies possess... and a little bit of *Checkmate Manor* along the way. The ladies of the Dramatic Society produce an incredibly awful play, where lines are forgotten, cues are missed, and props are misplaced... and which somehow can only get better the more awfully it is performed and the more ridiculous the characters are.



Patrick Spike plays Phoebe Reece

Director Scott Palmer explains what exactly is going on, and why Bag&Baggage would even want to do a show like this:

*Walter Zerlin (one of the two madmen responsible for the Farndale series) is said to have taken his inspiration for the worst community theatre troupe in history from his mother. Zerlin said, "My mother had been in a local drama group for years. I always remember seeing her in shows with other women playing men's parts, and all of them doing it dreadfully." After seeing one of his mother's best (meaning worst) performances, Zerlin concocted an idea to have a group of four English housewives, all of whom were abysmal actors, attempting to mount a very serious production of Shakespeare's Macbeth, and butchering it so badly that it simply transcended serious theatre into farce. And so it began...*



Norman Wilson plays Thelma Greenwood

*All of the Farndale Avenue shows find their beginnings in a number of grand theatrical traditions, including Commedia dell'Arte; Shakespeare and Moliere; the ancient British version of Commedia known as "Italian Night Scenes" (which involved highly energetic comedy and complex stage business); Harlequinades (which were the birth place of the term and style of Slapstick comedy); British-style Pantomime (or just "Panto"); Michael Green's "Coarse Acting" style; and modern day drag performances. I know, I know...it feels a little precious to say that this over-the-top farce has any kind of connection to grand theatrical traditions, but it is true....seriously.*

*This connection is particularly true of the British Panto tradition, which includes some of the funniest, most overblown characters you will ever see on stage. These "Panto Dames" – male comedians dressed up as hideously ugly women with names like The Widow Cranky – are a staple of English holiday traditions. Enormous handbags, dresses made of thousands of yards of chiffon, ill-fitting wigs, an inability to walk in heels, and grotesque makeup are the hallmarks of these stock British stage characters. They are a hilarious and beloved part of British holiday theatre...as crazy as that sounds.*

This is not good theatre. This is bad theatre, done incredibly well.

## QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS

### Before you see the show:

1. What do you think makes a piece of theatre “good” or “bad”?
2. When you think about the Murder Mystery genre, what kinds of themes come to mind? Are there certain elements that all murder mysteries share?
3. Americans and Brits generally have different sensibilities when it comes to humor. What are some examples of this that you are aware of? What do you think accounts for this difference?

### After you see the show:

4. The *Farndale Avenue* plays are generally done with women playing the ladies of the Dramatic Society, but Bag&Baggage has chosen to have Phoebe, Thelma, Felicity, and Mercedes played by men (and Gordon played by a woman).
  - a. What are the major effects that this casting decision has on the show?
  - b. How do you think the element of drag contributes to the comedic, Coarse Acting, and farcical elements of the play?
  - c. If you were directing *The Farndale Avenue... 'Murder at Checkmate Manor'*, what would be your priorities when selecting a cast of actors? What do you think are the most important qualities for actors to have to do this kind of show effectively?
5. What examples of parody and farce did you observe in the way the show was structured - the storytelling, the dialogue, and the relationships between characters? Give one example of parody or farce in each area.
6. Imagine you are producing your own comedic retelling of a classic story.
  - a. What story would you pick and why?
  - b. Give three examples of comedic elements you would choose to add to enhance the storytelling.
7. *The Farndale Avenue... 'Murder at Checkmate Manor'* has tons of props that are used throughout the show. Give three examples of moments when you saw a prop being used to comedic effect, and explain how the comedy of each of these moments worked (keep in mind the concepts of parody and farce).
8. Does the concept of Breaking The Fourth Wall diminish the audience’s experience of the show or does it add to it? Do you think you would answer this question differently when considering a comedy than you would when considering a drama? Why or why not?
9. Do the ladies of Farndale conform to the “leading lady” and “ingénue” stereotypes that define their characters? Why or why not?



Jeremy Sloan plays Mercedes Blower



---

## SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

### **Background on the Farndale Avenue series**

**Walter Zerlin's obituary, by David McGillivray**

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/dec/14/guardianobituaries1>

**Program notes from The Colony Theatre's 1991 U.S. Premiere of The Fardale...Murder at Checkmate Manor**

<https://www.colonytheatre.org/shows/FarndaleAvenueHousing.html>

**Notes on the Farndale Avenue series from tvtropes.org**

<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Theatre/FarndaleAvenue>

### **Style and Genre**

**"Farce" from thedramateacher.com**

<http://www.thedramateacher.com/farce/>

**"Genre Characteristic Chart" from scholastic.com**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/reading/bestpractices/comprehension/genrechart.pdf>

### **On Murder Mysteries**

<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/writing-a-mystery-novel/>

<http://penandthepad.com/6-key-conventions-common-murdermystery-plots-12004663.html>

[https://web.archive.org/web/20090719004017/http://www.historyofthemystery.com/short\\_history.php?page=33](https://web.archive.org/web/20090719004017/http://www.historyofthemystery.com/short_history.php?page=33)

### **On British Panto**

<http://thelaughingstock.ca/what-is-panto/>

<http://www.theatre-britain.com/About%20Panto.html>

<http://www.britishplayers.org/aboutpantomime.html>

### **On Coarse Acting**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_Coarse\\_Acting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Coarse_Acting)

<https://thisstage.la/2012/11/the-sacredness-and-the-foolishness-of-coarse-acting/>

<https://vulpeslibris.wordpress.com/2015/02/27/the-art-of-coarse-acting-50th-anniversary-edition-by-michael-green/>



*The infamous Pythons in a shot from Monty Python's Flying Circus*