



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Syracuse University Department of Drama presents:

Room Service

"A farce delivering comic goods at upper speed limits." - *The New York Times*

Written by John Murray and Allen Boretz

Directed by Robert Moss

ARTHUR STORCH THEATRE at SYRACUSE STAGE

Opens: March 26 Closes: April 3

(Syracuse, NY)—This comic delight from the 1930s is a real treat for anyone who loves theatre and especially for those who love the people who make theatre. An unscrupulous Broadway producer struggles to find a backer for his new show, which he knows will be a smash hit. Holed up in a Times Square hotel with 19 hungry actors and a ballooning room service bill, he tries to forestall eviction by concocting a series of ever-more preposterous events. A gem from an era of great American comedy. Directed by Robert Moss and presented by the Department of Drama in Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), *Room Service* runs March 26-April 3. For tickets, please call 315-443-3275 or visit vpa.syr.edu/drama.

When *Room Service* by John Murray and Allen Boretz opened on Broadway in 1937, America was on the rebound from the Great Depression and people were flocking to movies and theatres seeking escape from their troubles. A backstage comedy about an undaunted theatre producer, *Room Service* in its original staging played for 500 performances and it has been one of the most popular American comedies ever since. One year after its opening on Broadway, RKO Studio paid Murray and Boretz \$225,000, an astounding amount for the time, for the film rights to their play and subsequently paid the Marx Brothers \$100,000 to star in the movie.

Four years later, in 1943, RKO turned *Room Service* into a musical for Frank Sinatra, entitled *Step Lively*. Although Boretz adapted both the film and musical versions of *Room Service*, neither project matched the popularity of its source. In 1953, however, sixteen years after its premiere, *Room Service* had a Broadway revival featuring a newcomer named Jack Lemmon. And today, over seventy years after its first success, audiences from coast to coast continue to enjoy and rediscover *Room Service*.

TICKETS

Tickets for the Syracuse University Department of Drama's production of *Room Service* are \$18 for adults and \$16 for students and seniors. \$7 rush tickets are available at the door, one hour before curtain. Wednesday, March 31 is "Pay What You Can Night" for valid SU ID holders. For tickets and more information, contact the Department of Drama box office at 315-443-3275 or visit <http://vpa.syr.edu/drama>.

PLAYWRIGHT:

John Murray (1906-1986) and Allen Boretz (1900-1985) created *Room Service* in 1937, their most recognized and successful endeavor. It ran on Broadway for 500 performances and led to a succession of Hollywood screenwriting offers for the duo. The film version of their play was released in 1938 starring the Marx Brothers and Lucille Ball. Professionally, Murray and Allen Boretz had much in common and each excelled in several genres, finding success as lyricists, composers, and playwrights.

In the 1930s, several of Murray's songs and sketches were included in popular musical revues including *Sing for Your Supper* and *Straw Hat Revue*. For the next twenty years he continued to find success on stage particularly with *Sticks and Stones* which he wrote and produced in 1940, and with writing and musical contributions for the *Earl Carroll Vanities*, *The Ziegfield Follies* (1946), and *Alive and Kicking* (1950). He was the head writer for the radio shows of Eddie Cantor and Phil Baker, and he wrote teleplays for many live dramatic programs including Hallmark Hall of Fame, Schlitz Playhouse, and Ford Theatre. Some of the popular songs for which he is credited include "If I Love Again," "Have a Little Dream on Me," and "If I Were You."

Allen Boretz was a playwright, a screenwriter, and a prolific songwriter who composed for Radio City Music Hall and the Broadway musicals *The Garrick Gaieties* (1930) and *Sweet and Low* (1930). He wrote the songs "Whistling in the Dark," "Love is Like That," "Dark Clouds," and "So Shy." Boretz's work as a playwright includes *The School Teacher* (1936), *Off to Buffalo* (1939), and *The Hot Corner* (1956). His screenwriting credits include the film version of *Room Service* (1938), *Up in Arms* (1944), *Ziegfield Follies* (1946), *My Girl Tisa* (1948), *Two Guys from Texas* (1949), and *Step Lively* (1944), the movie musical adaptation of *Room Service* featuring Frank Sinatra.

DIRECTOR:

Robert Moss (*Director*) has been directing plays all over America for more than fifty years. Each one has been a unique mystery waiting to be unraveled in the rehearsal room with the actors and designers. No play can be just "taken for granted." The journey of discovering *Room Service* began almost a year ago and has been a continual series of joyous revelations. Bob is grateful to the entire team for making it all so incredibly rewarding. Godspeed!

CAST:

Daniel Bateman (*Thomas Jefferson*) is a sophomore Acting major from Rutland, VT.

Ross Baum (*Dr. Glass*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Scarsdale, NY. Previous Syracuse credits include *Little Women* (Syracuse Stage), *[steal these words]* (SU New Playwrights Festival), and most recently *The Flying Dutchman* (Syracuse Opera).

Chris Dwan (*Leo Davis*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Canton, MI. He was last seen in *Little Women* at Syracuse Stage. SU Drama credits include Mike in *Oklahoma*, Corky/Peanut in *Steel Pier*, and Pygmalion in *Falling to Earth* (New Play Workshop Program). Other credits include Aladdin in *Aladdin* and Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* (Papermill Theatre) as well as Rob in the new musical *I Don't Play Second String* (Madison Street Theatre).

Raffy Ganimian (*Gregory Wagner*) is a junior Acting major from Fair Lawn, NJ. Recent roles include Freddy in *The Unwritten Code* (New Playwrights Festival), Van in *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* (The Attic Theatre) and the Coachman in *The Way of the World* (SU Drama). Additional credits include staged readings for Bob Moss's *The Training of Cashel Byron* and Brian Kepple's *Ash Wednesday*.

Chelsea Gonzalez (*Hilda Manney*) is a junior Acting major from Sarasota, FL. She was previously seen in *Unwritten Code* and *Reality Life* (SU's New Playwrights Festival).

Peter Hourihan Jr. (*Senator Blake*) is a senior Acting major from Washington, NJ. Previous SU Drama credits include *The Chairs* (Old Man), *The Way of the World* (Waitwell), and *The Rimers of Eldritch* (Trucker). He also appeared as a Nazi in *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Syracuse Stage and Dr. Scott in Starving Artist's *The Rocky Horror Show*. Peter is a brother of Delta Kappa Epsilon and the President of Groovestand Acapella.

Christopher Hutton (*Timothy Hogarth*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Doylestown, PA. Previous SU Drama credits: *Tales of Whimsy*, *Remember the Magic*, and SU's New Playwrights Festival. Other favorite roles include Billy in *42nd Street*, Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Matt in *The Fantasticks*.

Melissa Jessel (*Amelia Earhart*) is a junior Musical Theatre major from Boxford, MA. Syracuse credits include *Tales of Whimsy* and *Little Person: An Original Piece*. This summer she will perform with SU Drama at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Previous credits include *Sweeney Todd* and *Children of Eden* at North Shore Music Theatre.

Kerry Kazmierowicz (*Joseph Gribble*) is a senior Acting major from Chatham, NY. Past credits include the Syracuse Stage reading of *Laramie: Ten Years Later* (Aaron McKinney/Jedediah/others), *The Way of the World* (Mr. Fainall) and *The Rimers of Eldritch* (Preacher/Judge) with SU Drama, and *Dog Sees God* in the role of Beethoven. \

Mary Claire King (*Betsy Ross*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Columbus, IN. Last semester she appeared in SU Drama's *Oklahoma!* She is currently working on an experimental dance and modeling piece called *Metanoia* and will model in Syracuse University's Senior Fashion Show in April. Favorite roles include Ruth Sherwood in *Wonderful Town* and Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

Charlo Kirk (*Gordan Miller*) is a sophomore Acting major from Clinton, NJ. He previously played Jason Willette in the Black Box Players production of *Rabbit Hole*.

Brad Koed (*Harry Binion*) is a junior Acting major from Groton, MA. Recent Syracuse roles include Mr. Martin in *The Bald Soprano* (SU Drama), Peter in *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Syracuse Stage), and Walter in *The Rimers of Eldritch* (SU Drama). Favorite roles

include Petya Trofimov in *The Cherry Orchard*, Steven in *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket*, Officer Barrel in *Urinetown* at the Walnut Hill School of Natick, MA, and Charlie Gordon in *Flowers for Algernon* with Peacock Players of Nashua, NH, where he also spent two years with the improv comedy troupe *Technical Difficulties*.

Toby Marks (*Annie Oakley*) is a sophomore Acting major from Calgary Alberta, Canada. She last appeared in *Steal These Words* (SU's New Playwrights Festival). Other Syracuse credits include Doctor/Patient in *The Man Who* and ensemble in *Oklahoma!*

Aeryn Michelle (*Harriet Tubman*) is a sophomore Acting major from Detroit, MI making her SU Drama debut.

Lori Pasqualino (*Christine Marlowe*) is a junior double-major in Acting and Religion. She is from Attleboro, MA, where worked with Triboro Musical Theatre. Last semester Lori studied at the Globe Theatre in London where she played Celia in *As You Like It*. Past SU credits include: *Water Children* (female understudy) and *Or Forever Hold Your Peace...* (Katharine). Other favorite credits include: *Bells Are Ringing* (Ella), *Anything Goes* (Reno), and *The Pajama Game* (Babe).

Nicholas Petrovich (*Simon Jenkins*) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major from Newtown, CT. He last appeared as the Orator in SU Drama's production of Ionesco's *The Chairs*. He has performed in numerous venues throughout the tri-state area including Ivoryton Playhouse, Warner Theatre, and the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts.

Robbie Simpson (*Faker Englund*) is a junior Acting major from West Springfield, MA. Past SU credits include: *The Way of the World*, *The Fever*, *Where's My Money?*, *Rocky Horror*, and *The Axiom of Time* for SU's New Playwrights Festival. Other recent credits include Orlando in *As You Like It* at the Globe Theatre (London), Hanschen in *Spring Awakening* at the Roy Arias Theatre (NYC; 43rd & 8th), Tony in *West Side Story* and Nick Piazza in *FAME* (both at The Courthouse Center for the Arts in RI).

Amos VanderPoel (*Sasha Smirnoff*) is a sophomore Acting major from Chicago. In the past year he appeared as CB in *Dog Sees God*, Chris in *The Unwritten Code* (SU's New Playwrights Festival), and Dennis as *The Tales of Whimsy*. Previous credits include Officer Lockstock in *Urinetown*, *Come Together* (Northwestern University), and Erich Honeker in *Full Circle*. Lauren Krystal Waters (*Madam C.J. Walker*) hails from Baltimore, MD, where she was exposed early to the entertainment industry as her father was a locally recognized Jazz musician, and mother a former dancer. She has played the following roles: Winnie Tate from *Annie Get Your Gun*, Cha Cha in *Grease*, and Pistache in Cole Porter's *Can-Can*. In college she has appeared as Delia Jones in *Sweat* (a story by Zora Neale Hurston), and as Elaine in *Tales of Whimsy*.

DESIGNERS & STAGE MANAGER:

Gette Levy (*Scenic Designer*) is a senior focusing on scenic and lighting design, born in Honolulu, HI and raised in Phoenix, AZ. Previous Syracuse credits include scenic design for *Home* (a senior thesis project), and lighting design for *Equus* (Black Box Players) and *The Way of the World* (SU Drama). Last year, she assisted lighting designer Ann Wrightson on *The Fantasticks* for both Syracuse Stage and Geva Theatre Center. Most recently, she designed

scenery for *The Man Who* and *General of Hot Desire* (Black Box Players), and she worked as assistant lighting designer to Dawn Chiang for Syracuse Stage's *Little Women*.

Caroline London (*Costume Designer*) is a senior Theatre Design and Technology major from Sharon, MA. Previous credits include costume designer for *The Fever* (Black Box Players), assistant costume designer for *Godspell* and *The Fantasticks* (Syracuse Stage), and *Servant of Two Masters* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (SU Drama).

Marc Fisher (*Lighting Designer*) is a junior Design and Technology dual major from Potomac, MD. Previous Syracuse credits include lighting design for Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and *The Chairs* (SU Drama), assistant lighting designer for *Steel Pier* (SU Drama), and lighting design for *Where's My Money?* (Black Box Players, where he served as the 2008-2009 master electrician). Additional credits include lighting design intern for Montgomery College's Summer Dinner Theatre and for CPR MultiMedia Solutions in Gaithersburg, MD.

David Huber (*Sound Designer*) the Assistant Audio Engineer at Syracuse Stage. He has designed for Syracuse Stage (*Woman in a Blue Dress*), Swine Palace Productions (*Speak Truth to Power*), Hangar Theatre Lab Company (*Tell it Underwater*), Syracuse University (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), the Syracuse Stage Children's Tour (*A Thousand Cranes*), and Cortland Repertory Theatre (*Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*). Other design credits include *Damn Yankees!*, *The Rimers of Eldritch*, *Home*, *Marisol*, Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* and *The Chairs*, and *The Possibilities*.

Kathryn Graves (*Stage Manager*) is a senior Stage Management major from Wayne, PA. Previous credits include *The Winter's Tale* (assistant stage manager, SU Drama), *Equus* (stage manager, Black Box Players), *The Rimers of Eldritch* (stage manager, SU Drama), and she is currently acting as the production manager for Black Box Players.

VPA AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

VPA is committed to the education of cultural leaders who will engage and inspire audiences through performance, visual art, design, scholarship and commentary. It provides the tools for self-discovery and risk-taking in an environment that thrives on critical thought and action.

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March 26 - 8 p.m.

March 27 - 8 p.m.

March 28 - 2 p.m.

March 31 - 8 p.m.

April 1 - 8 p.m.

April 2 - 8 p.m.

April 3 - 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.

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