

Players' British farce promises lots of laughs

'When the Cat's Away'
hits stage next week

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A pair of philandering, up-to-no-good husbands will take centre stage in an upcoming production by the Milton Players Theatre Group, aptly titled *When the Cat's Away*.

Playing upon their strengths and giving audience members more of what they like, the local stage company will once again present a British farce, with the first show next week.

For fans of over-the-top, chaotic, in-one-door-out-the-other humour, director Susan Cranford said this show is sure to satisfy.

"They do love to laugh," Cranford said of the audience members.

The show will run February 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13 at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, 500 Childs Dr.

Written by Johnnie Mortimer and Brian Cooke, *When the Cat's Away* is based on the British sitcom *George and Mildred* (which was adapted in the U.S. as *The Ropers*, a spin-off of *Three's Company*).

It follows the antics of two husbands (played by Geoff Ford and Huw Evans) who are left behind when their frustrated wives (Sharon Beddoes and Kim Evans) take a trip to Paris. Thinking it just the opportunity they've been waiting for, the men waste no time getting busy with a couple of young women (Kirstie Hall and Sandy Ingratta).

But — as one would expect in a farce — the wives return home unexpectedly and the husbands frantically try to cover their tracks.

"The chaos is them trying to get themselves out of the situation," Cranford said.

This is the third farce she has directed with the Milton Players, and this one is "even more over-the-top" than the previous two, she said, explaining a farce is distinctly different from a comedy.



SPIRITED REHEARSAL:

Players (from left) Huw Evans, Kirstie Hall, Geoff Ford and Sandy Ingratta have some fun while preparing for next week's opening of *When the Cat's Away*.

GRAHAM PAINE /
CANADIAN CHAMPION

"It's a lot more physical," she said, adding the timing is crucial. "Comedy relies more on funny lines. With a farce, you can't try to make too much sense of the story. It's craziness making people laugh."

The cast brings together long-time members of the group and some newcomers.

"Rehearsals are going really well. We have a fabulous cast," Cranford said.

Appearing for the first time with the Milton Players is Hall, a relative newcomer to the stage, and the Evanses, married on staff as well as off, who bring with them a wealth of community theatre experience.

Ingratta appeared once before with the Players in their most recent production, Norm Foster's *Sinners*.

"This has been a really good season because there's so many new people in the group," Cranford said.

With its adult content, as the title implies, this play likely won't be for everyone.

"It's (a farce) typically a bit more risqué, so I wouldn't advise children to come to this one," Cranford said.

Play-goers have the choice of a dinner theatre performance or a show-only performance. Dinner theatre shows will run

Saturday, Feb. 6 and Saturday, Feb. 13. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. and the show will start at 8:15 p.m. Tickets cost \$40 each in advance or \$45 at the door.

Show-only performances will take place Friday, Feb. 5, Friday, Feb. 12 and Thursday, Feb. 11. The doors will open at 7:30 p.m., with the performance beginning at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$20 each.

For tickets, call (905) 875-0629. For more information about the Players, visit www.miltonplayers.com.

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