Dear Everybody

In February, for the first time in many years, the Mitre Players will be presenting a farce. And what a farce! Caught in the Net is by the master of the genre, Ray Cooney and is the hilarious sequel to Run For Your Wife. The play first opened at the Vaudeville Theatre, London in 2001 starring Russ Abbot as Stanley and Eric Sykes as Dad.

Here’s what the papers said at the time:

“… a sheer joy from beginning to end.”

“… fanciful and brilliant, this is the funniest play of the year…”

“Cooney gives you a masterclass in the art of farce…the perfectly potty plot is a precision-built laughter machine.”

I can only say when I first read the play whilst on holiday earlier this year, I laughed all the way through.

**So what’s the plot?**

This sequel to Run For Your Wife finds bigamist taxi-driver, John Smith, still keeping both his families (one in Wimbledon and one in Streatham) happy and blissfully unaware of each other. However, his teenage children – one girl and one boy by each wife – have met on the Internet (“net”) and are determined to see each other especially as it transpires that they have so much in common – same surname, taxi-driver dad of the same age etc! When it dawns on John that they are about to meet, he plunges into a hell-hole of his own making in order to keep them apart. His saviour could be Stanley, his lodger. Stanley is about to go on holiday with his decrepit old father, who turns up thinking he is already at the guest house. The ever-spiralling situation gets increasingly out-of-hand as John busts a gut to juggle with the truth.

**And what about the characters?**

The ages below are playing ages. All the roles will be great fun to play. They are quite physical roles and most characters are constantly confused. All characters are involved throughout the play except for ‘Dad’ who only appears in act 2.

**John Smith, 40s/50s**
The taxi driver. A cheery man who has got away with his web of deceit for many years. When he realises that his world is about to fall apart, he comes up with ever more ludicrous lies and embroils his friend Stanley into his plot to prevent everyone from finding out the truth.

**Stanley Gardner 40s/50s**
The lodger – a good soul but not overly bright. Poor Stanley finds himself in the centre of the shenanigans to keep the two families from finding out about each other.

**Barbara Smith, 40s/50s**
The Wimbledon wife. Barbara is Vicki’s mother. She spends the play in a state of confusion.

**Mary Smith, 40s/50s**
The Streatham wife. Mary is Gavin’s mother. She also spends the play in a state of confusion.

**Gavin Smith, late teens**
Gavin is an excitable young man who has met Vicki on the internet and is desperate to meet her in person.

**Vicki Smith, late teens**
Vicki is excitable too and is equally keen to meet Gavin.

*(Gavin and Vicki could be played by people in their 20s who look younger)*

**Dad, 80s**
Stanley’s dad. He fluctuates between senility, alertness and cussedness. He will probably be played by someone considerably younger.
The Set
The unusual feature of the set is that the same set doubles as the house in Wimbledon and the house in Streatham. Throughout the play, the action takes place simultaneously in both Wimbledon and Streatham but the inhabitants of each home are naturally oblivious to the others.

Rehearsals
As this is a complicated play with lots of ‘business,’ there will be three blocking rehearsals in early December. There will then be a complete break over the Christmas period, but we shall recommence on 6th January with lines mostly learned so that we can concentrate on the ‘business.’

I look forward to seeing everybody at the read through and auditions. I’m also looking forward to riotous and hilarious rehearsals as we work to get all the timing right.

Yours

Ian

The “Small Print”

- **Read Through:** Thursday 8th November. At 7.30. TMWA Clubhouse.
- **Auditions:** Thursday 15th November. At 7.30. TMWA Clubhouse.
- **Rehearsals start:** Early December. NO REHEARSALS OVER XMAS OR NEW YEAR
- **Performances:** 21st to 23rd February. The Mitre Theatre, Trinity School, Croydon
- **To audition for the play you must be either a Patron or Member for 2012 – This can be paid on the night of the auditions**
- **If cast, you must be a member for 2013.**
- **There is no need to be a Member or Patron to attend the read through.**
- **If you would like further details or would like to take part but can’t attend the auditions, please contact the Director, Ian Brown – ian.brown@mitreplayers.org.uk**
- **Please contact Ian if you would like to borrow a script before the auditions.**
- **The whole of Trinity School site is a no-smoking venue including the grounds.**