

# PASADENA THE CITIZEN

Knowledge: Fun and dangerous in 'Born Yesterday'  
at Pasadena Little Theatre



Things come to a head over Billie's "pursuit of knowledge" in the Pasadena Little Theatre production of "Born Yesterday." As she learns more and more under the tutelage of Paul (far left — Mark Stanley), Billie (center — Candi Rae Boehme) alienates overbearing boyfriend, Harry Brock (center right — Tim Taylor) as lawyer Ed (far right — Jeff Luchsinger) points out that Billie has gone too far with her "books."

By **GLORIA WALKER SMITH**

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Regarding the play, "Born Yesterday," set in Washington, D.C., in 1946, Director Mal Morley quipped that politicians have not changed a lot since then. As the delightful play unfolds, you see exactly what he meant!

However, politics is not the real heart of the story, although it plays a big part in the action. The REAL heart is the evolution of Billie Dawn, former chorus line dancer/live-in girlfriend of hoodlum millionaire, Harry Brock. When director Morley found Candi Rae Boehme and

Timothy Taylor to play these two parts – his success was assured!

Although Brock is a rough-hewn junk man himself who scratched his way to the top, he now feels the need to “polish up” his trophy blonde, Billie, as they begin to circulate in D.C. circles.

On the surface, Billie is the dumb blonde of every dumb blonde joke you ever heard! Her attributes were other than mental, so she’s done pretty well up to now (ropes of pearls and two mink coats).

Chosen for the job as tutor, who surprisingly agrees to do it, is newspaper man, Paul Verrall (Mark Stanley). Another surprise – as unlike as they are, loud-mouth thug Brock actually LIKES Paul and feels comfortable in hiring him to educate Billie.

We have become fans of Stanley’s performances, as he played ‘background’ parts in several recent productions in the area ... UNTIL ... he played the lead in Clear Creek Community Theatre’s “Ideal Husband” a few months ago. He did an excellent job of that and it was great to see him “come into his own.” Equal to Boehme and Taylor, he was born to play Paul Verrall, yesterday or otherwise. He stands up to the threatening Brock, while maintaining his cool, unflappable demeanor.

Being a millionaire many times over, Brock is used to ordering people around in the crudest ways, so his “lackey” cousin Eddie (Patrick Hoehn) and his booze-guzzling lawyer, Ed (Jeff Luchsinger) are not exceptions. Partly because he pays well and partly because they are scared to death of him, these two remain at his beck and call. Luchsinger is an old pro and handles each role as a seasoned actor, with energy and experience. Once a brilliant writer/attorney, Ed Devery has degenerated into an alcohol-soaked “yes man” to a shady, wealthy bully. Good job, Jeff!

Patrick has had roles at Art Park Theatre and is grateful for the opportunity to work with Mal Morley and further advance his skills as an actor. His girlfriend, Vanessa Pearson, plays the sassy hotel maid and is a consistent favorite at PLT – she can make any role her own, no matter how diverse they are. Vanessa is a theater treasure, adapting well to “on stage” and “backstage” (in this case, doubling as assistant director). Kathy Morley is also an assistant director.

Richard Sims and Laura Hoehn are Senator (Grease-my-palm) Hedges and his wife, being courted by “my-way-or-no-way” Brock. Duties of the hotel staff are handled by Clint Murphy, Jimmy Anderson and Kimberley Grimes.

Renea Runnels adds a small stage role to her responsibilities as Stage Manager. Her professionalism was evident when her beautifully arranged set had to be re-configured at the last minute to accommodate several wheelchairs whose occupants needed access to chairs at the rim of the set. In the theater, a priority is always – stay flexible!

Speaking of the set, masterful changes were made to produce a two-level luxury hotel suite – very attractive and serviceable for a variety of activities. That’s a skill, folks.

There are the “mechanics,” so let’s talk about this: will you enjoy it?

It is SO funny, so touching and so involving – when you’re not laughing hard, you’re wanting to hire a hit man to get rid of obnoxious Harry Brock. You’re entranced by Billie’s heartbreaking background and her thirst for bettering herself through learning – about words, the world, the truth about the predicament she is in and the transformation that takes place.

Looking at the audience around me, YES ... I’d say you would be the exception if you didn’t enjoy it immensely.

“Born Yesterday” will reappear at Pasadena Little Theatre, 4318 Allen-Genoa, on weekends through July 11, with Friday and Saturday performances at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees on July 4 and 11 at 3 p.m. Treat yourself to a good time by calling 713-941-1758 for reservations.