



The Whisper Club

Producers Skillfully Apply Ninth Coat of Fresh Paint

By WILLIAM GROPPENBACHER

To state baldly that "Tarts Are Trump" is a satire on the Noble Experiment is to fail to do entire justice to as delightful an evening's entertainment as you will customarily find on the local boards. The show begins by pointing a finger at Mr. Volstead's law, then it quickly snaps the finger on a down-turned thumb, and dances merrily on about its own business of being a highly entertaining musical comedy. But every now and again, just in passing, there are some immensely effective jabs at things as they are.

The citizenry of the Kingdom of Hearts have insatiable appetites for tarts. The Ace of Hearts, with one eye on the throne, and the other on the Queen of Hearts, prohibits the manufacture and sale of tarts. The Kingdom immediately falls into a depression; everyone from the Candlestick Maker to the Princess of Hearts is monstrously woeful, the throne totters, and the country falls into a lamentable state of panic.

The Baker, subsidized by the Ace of Hearts, opens a tart speakeasy, called "The Whisper Club," and the criminal element looks to be in a fair way to get the upper hand of things in the Kingdom of Hearts.

Being the hero, the Jack of Hearts is much too upstanding a fellow to be a successful enforcement officer. Besides, the King and the Princess are both very fond of tarts. So he manages, by a sudden bit of dramatic legerdemain, to repeal the prohibition, defeat the depression, restore the King, et al.

In such wise does Mr. Dan Tobin hold a sparkling mirror up to life. To a very original, and a very clever idea, this particular critical hat is doffed.

Mel Bernstein, designer of the settings, has created a Kingdom that would delight the soul of any King of Hearts, and at the same time capture the artistic sensibilities of Mr. Norman Bel Geddes. The costumes by Beryl Ullman would, and did, satisfy the most fashionable citizen of the Kingdom.

Ramon Black is that rarity among musical comedy heroes—one who can both act and sing. He executed the role of Jack of Hearts with a definite flair; he made the most of a number of excellent songs. Marybelle Shriner Mills was equally satisfactory as the Princess of Hearts.

Louis Eaton played the role of Ace of Hearts with an enormous gusto. He is either an exceptionally good actor, or he has a special bent for villainy. In addition to which, he has a splendid voice.

The comedy team of Lucy Greeno and David Rosenblatt were able laugh-getters. Both Miss Greeno and Mr. Rosenblatt have the happy faculty of putting their own special abilities—and they are very special indeed—into the roles they are playing. They did so with great success.

Spencer Booz as the tartomaniac King of Hearts was called

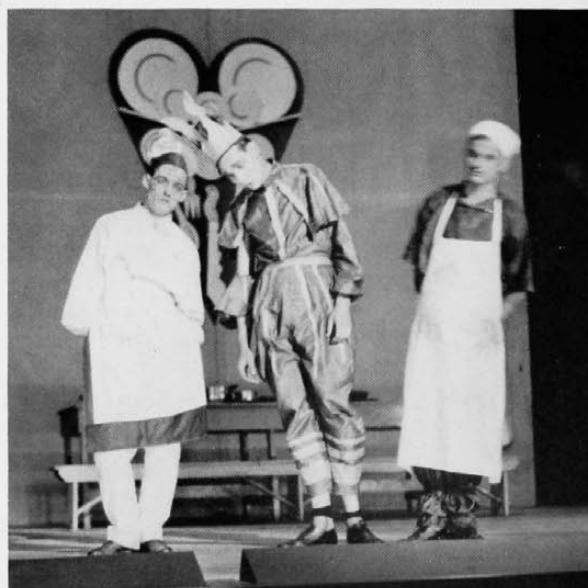
upon to do a somewhat indefinite piece of acting, and he did just that. His Queen, Elizabeth Strauss, was appropriately dour and fierce, carrying the part very nicely.

Art Hoffman as the Candlestick Maker overwhelmed by the depression, did some of the funniest and most original acting in the show. His cohorts, the Butcher and the Baker, were ably portrayed by Gordon Hoch and Mat Lukens.

The Ace's Parliament, Duncan Frame, Allen Lishawa, and Ed Hoff, achieved an extraordinary anomaly: subtle slapstick. From makeup to gesture they were consistently sidesplitting. John Mason reached immortality by making the simple and ancient device of stuttering seem comical.

Jean Hennegan and Ruth Duncan sang a sprightly duet. Two dances by Elsa Trefsgar were very well done. The music for the first, a soft shoe dance, seemed a bit slow; the second was quite charming. Other specialty numbers were done by William Taye; Marion Heuser and Caldwell Robertson; George Diehl and Don Steffa, and Thomas Wiggers.

—Reprinted from the "University News" 4/13/32.



The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker