

Theatre

A Thurber Carnival

Frank Dedenbach

1966

On September 2, 3 and 4 the Lafayette Park Players presented their production of "A Thurber Carnival" at the Chrysler School Auditorium. The cast has worked together only once before last fall in "Monique"; and, although the program notes show that many members have extensive background in other plays, the amateur character of this attempt was painfully obvious.

The play is an adaption of a book containing some of Thurber's best pieces and is full of the light and subtle humor that the author is so well known for. There are fifteen different scenes, each a brief unraveling of the Thurber wit. There is quite a bit of variety here, from a serious short story to beautifully corny sketches, from nostalgic humor to a series of one line gags.

Technically, the play was a success. Providing a backdrop were large, striking projections of Thurberesque drawings. The neo-jazz interludes were adequately handled by the quintet offstage. The crew did an admirable job of pulling off the scenery and costume changes. Up to that point it fit together as it should have—simple, tight and sharp.

The point that the actors seemed to miss is that any comedy must stand or fall on its humor. For the most part the cast seemed too stuffy to find Thurber's mood. Although they looked happy enough on stage, their slightly missed cues and an unwillingness to let go left many of the gag lines laughless. The whole first half was like this; after intermission, though, some things did get cooking. The best moments came in the Walter Mitty sketch when the actors were really enjoying the lines as Thurber wrote them.

Although those truly funny moments were all too few, they show the ability of the Lafayette Park Players. Maybe the whole play, maybe next time.

fifth Estate

Frank Dedenbach
Theatre
A Thurber Carnival
1966

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/14-september-15-1966/theatre>
Fifth Estate #14, September 15, 1966

[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/14-september-15-1966/theatre)