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EUGENE O'NEILL'S
THE ICEMAN COMETH

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COMING EVENTS

The Honolulu Community Theatre's next production, the great Cole Porter musical success *Kiss Me Kate*, will open at the Ruger Theatre on April 4 for a six-week run.

March 20, 21, 22, 23,
27, 28, 29, 30, 1957
FARRINGTON HALL

Hair styling by Robert's of Waikiki; other assistance by Hawaii Hotel and Restaurant Supply, and New Vineyard Bakery.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII THEATRE GROUP

presents

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY PLAY

THE ICEMAN COMETH

by

EUGENE O'NEILL

THE CAST

HARRY HOPE	HOWARD GOTTSCHALK
ED MOSHER	GROVE DAY
PAT MCGLOIN	GLENN WILSON
WILLIE OBAN	RICHARD WILLIAMS
JOE MOTT	ARTHUR SONG
PIET WETJOEN	TOM MOSSMAN
CECIL LEWIS	DAVID DONNELLY
JAMES CAMERON ("Jimmy Tomorrow")	GENE PAROLA, JAMES LINN*
HUGO KALMAR	JEAN CHARLOT
LARRY SLADE	ROBERT SCOTT
ROCKY PIOGGI	DON MUNDELL
DON PARRITT	ROBERT SOLLER
PEARL	MARY BEALKE
MARGIE	SUE SEARS
CORA	PEGGY MCKENZIE
CHUCK	JOHN POWELL
THEODORE HICKMAN ("Hickey")	LOUIS STEED
MORAN	NORMAN RIAN
LIEB	TOM BARTOW

* Mr. Parola will play the opening night and the second week; Mr. Linn, the other performances.

The time is the summer of 1912.

The place is Harry Hope's bar on the New York waterfront.

ACT ONE: The back room and a portion of the bar. About 4 a.m.

ACT TWO: The back room. That night.

ACT THREE: The bar. The next morning.

ACT FOUR: Same as Act One. About 1:30 the following morning.

Directed by JOEL TRAPIDO

Settings by ROBERT SOLLER

Costumes by HEDWIG BILLABER

Make-up by KATHLEEN SCOTT

THE ICEMAN COMETH

O'Neill finished *The Iceman Cometh* in 1939, "most of [it] . . . after war started," but he would not permit the play to be produced during World War II. In 1946, it was staged by the Theatre Guild, O'Neill's producer during most of his career. It played 136 performances in New York and went to Chicago for three weeks. Last year it was produced with great success by the Circle in the Square, a leading Off-Broadway theatre. This production is still running. So far as is known there has been no non-professional production of the play in this country.

In its simplest terms, O'Neill's theme in *The Iceman Cometh* seems to be that man cannot live without illusion. The characters, the locale, and the action O'Neill has chosen go farther, suggesting that even when all else has been taken from him, man's illusions will keep him alive. One critic puts this in another way by saying that "Man is ready for truth when he is ready to die." Another says that O'Neill "is merely proclaiming the humanitarian doctrine that mankind, being lost and lonely in a hard and bitter world, is entitled to some sort of illusion to comfort it in exile." But another critic feels that the failure of love is part of the personal tragedy of all the principal characters and that "the unmasking of love is the main intention of the play." One can make still other statements of the play's themes, but it is doubtful that one can escape from the author's concern with man's need for illusion.

The Iceman Cometh is very long, though it was neither the first nor the last play of its length to come from O'Neill (his posthumous *Long Day's Journey into Night*, now running on Broadway, is about as long as *The Iceman Cometh*). Most critics have felt that the play is repetitious, that a number of the characters could be cut without weakening the theme, that theatregoers are good folk and should not be subject to so much verbiage. While none of this can be denied, some critics, possibly prompted by O'Neill himself, have suggested that the repetition serves a purpose, as does the length of the play, that O'Neill was perhaps interested in the effect of mass upon audiences. One writer has this to say on the point:

There is a wild, cascading power in O'Neill dramas, which, if tamed, would destroy the freedom and scope of his fierce and brooding imagination, and the excessive length, the sometimes unnecessary verbiage and the deceptively leisured interludes of an O'Neill play are a small price to pay for keeping his essential quality intact. Editing might make "The Iceman" seem more efficient, but it would endanger the magnitude of its spirit.

The question is, thus, not whether O'Neill might have made his point with four or six characters instead of nineteen, but whether his people, and the resulting play, are alive throughout. Playwrights do not, on the whole, write themes, but people, and audiences do not, on the whole, enjoy plays primarily for their themes. As another writer on *The Iceman* has put it, "There are implications in the drama concerning love and hate, failure and salvation that are deeply perturbing. They are likely to sound banal only when formulated; the felt experience is, as usual in an O'Neill drama, far more impressive than O'Neill's intellectual formulations."

Considerable light is thrown on O'Neill's choice of locale, character, and even incident in *The Iceman Cometh* by the following remarks made by O'Neill in speaking of his early life:

In New York I lived at "Jimmy the Priest's," a waterfront dive, with a back room where you could sleep with your head on the table if you bought a schooner of beer. . . . It was awful. The house was almost coming down and the principal housewreckers were vermin. I was absolutely down, financially, those days, and you can get an idea of the kind of room I had when I tell you that the rent was three dollars a month. One roommate of mine jumped out of the window.

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill was born in 1888 and died in 1953. He won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beyond the Horizon*, *Anna Christie*, and *Strange Interlude*. In 1936 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, the only American playwright ever so honored.