

PRODUCTION CHAIRMEN

Stage Manager Kazuo Kiyonaga
Business Vivian Ching
Publicity Janet Alter
Lighting Jack Zukerkorn
Properties Millie Odan and Margaret Bingham
Costumes Bette Kondo
Painting George Wago
Make-up George Girdler
Production Assistant Elaine Kushiyama

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PRODUCTION CREWS

Staging.....Zella Argenbright, Helen Geracimos, Richard Jackman, Richard King,
Sally McManus, Ed Nakamura, H. P. Ryan, Ted Schnack, T. Toda
Lighting.....Ruby Lum, Clarence Merriles, Helen Sumida
Properties.....Betty Chapson, Nancy Corbett, Tom Evan, Carmelita Krone,
Donnette Lee, Patty McCall, L. Mangelsdorf, Josephine Starker
Costumes.....Vivian Hee, Doris Horiuchi, Ayako Miura, Woodrow Sato, Natalie Yates
Make-up.....Harriet Gillen, J. Jensen, Martha Stenberg
Business.....Charlotte Catterall, Kam Lang Chang, Koyuki Hidani,
Grace Kim, Delbert Sanchez, Alice Tagawa, Priscilla Vierre
Publicity.....Mildred Finn, Masae Kashiwamura, Grace McAlister
Sound.....Grant Garlinghouse, Donald Hawley, Duncan Kakazo

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THEATER GUILD COUNCIL

Janet Alter	Bette Kondo
Vivian Ching	Lillian Lee
George Girdler	Millie Odan
Kazuo Kiyonaga	Joel Trapido (Director)

The Theater Guild wishes to acknowledge the assistance of others, including both students and members of the University faculty and administration, who have made this production possible; and to thank the Honolulu Community Theater for its generous cooperation.

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THE THEATER GUILD

The University of Hawaii Theater Guild is a student organization which operates under the supervision of a faculty director. The students fall into two groups: those taking the courses in Theater and Drama, and a much larger number for whom plays are an extra-curricular activity. The purpose of the Guild is to present plays which give the maximum opportunity for participation and study to interested students of all races, to present, where possible, plays which might not otherwise be seen by residents of the Territory, and in other ways to foster interest in theater and drama.

Season VIII, 1946-47

October 1946
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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII THEATER GUILD

presents

PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
WILLIAM SAROYAN'S

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE



October 24, 25, 26, 1946
FARRINGTON HALL

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII THEATER GUILD

presents

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

by William Saroyan

THE PLAYERS

OWEN WEBSTER	Walter Jensen
HARMONY BLUEBLOSSOM	Grace McAlister
AGNES WEBSTER	Jane Steen
JONAH WEBSTER	Mitchell Erickson
MR. PRIM	Benjamin Campbell
DAN	Donald Mayo
FATHER ODA	Harry Arakaki
HAROLD	Richard King
STEVE	George Yamamoto

SCENE: An old house atop a high hill in San Francisco
TIME: Act I, Scene 1—Now, or some other time.
Act I, Scene 2—An hour later.

INTERMISSION

Act II, Scene 1—Later.
Act II, Scene 2—After supper, two hours later.

Directed by JOEL TRAPIDO
Setting designed by GEORGE WIMBERLY

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TONIGHT'S PLAY

One of the chief reasons for the choice of *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE* as the Theater Guild's first production of the 1945-46 season was a combination of two facts: Though William Saroyan has perhaps been the subject of more argument than any other American playwright of the last ten years, no play of his has ever been produced in the Territory.

Saroyan, having had only minor success in the theater, in 1940 won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Drama Critics' Circle Award with what has remained his most successful

and most orthodox play, *THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE*. In the next year he wrote, produced, and directed *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE*, which almost immediately released a storm of controversy. George Jean Nathan, who has almost since Saroyan's first produced play looked upon him as the hope of the American theater, found Saroyan's people both beautiful and dramatic—and said so in unmistakable terms. He was joined by John Mason Brown, among the most catholic of critics, Joseph Wood Krutch, Stark Young, and others. An almost equally reputable group of critics, including Wolcott Gibbs of *The New Yorker*, felt that the play was, if a play at all, a bad one. Posterity has cast its vote chiefly in the activities of the colleges and universities: They have seen fit to give the play a large number of productions in the last half dozen years.

Certainly the popular critical objection that the play has little or no connected surface plot is true. Certainly also this is not of itself sufficient ground to condemn the play. Emphasis upon plot is rather the vein of melodrama and farce (and the film) than of drama and comedy—which is not to deny that most great drama is well plotted. But the sine qua non of drama, and especially modern drama, seems to be character rather than plot. (This we may admit in the same breath as we admit that we do not know what, in the ultimate, drama really is.) Much of Chekhov and Andreyev, to name perhaps the chief modern European examples, would have to be discarded if plot, at least surface plot, were made the chief earmark of a good play. It remains to be said that in its slight emphasis upon external action *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE* is typical of Saroyan's plays (in this respect his prizewinner, *THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE*, is less typical), and that the absence of surface plot does not mean either that there is no action or that there is no structure. Saroyan himself is quite specific on this point, having said that he considers that all of his work has very marked form.

In tonight's play, for example, Saroyan presents his theme first through Owen Webster, Harmony being in effect the audience. He then proceeds to develop the theme by bringing on the members of Owen's family in order and, subsequently, outsiders who seem successively less likely to accept Jonah Webster or his family, but who in varying degrees finally do accept him. This acceptance is not brought about by any very startling series of connected events, which is what leads to much of the misunderstanding.

The theme thus developed is Saroyan's main theme—that the values which we are accustomed to call the Christian values and the democratic values are the only values which count, that the individual has worth simply as an individual and without regard for his material successes, that material things have no ultimate reality, that, indeed, they are often evil in effect.

If the play is thus seen as a series of loosely connected character studies—loosely connected only from the point of view of external action—developing and illustrating these themes, much that seems at first pointless or obscure falls into place. Saroyan's charm, his compassion, and in particular his deftness at sentimental comedy will do the rest.

At this point a word is perhaps in order on the immediate future. In two weeks the Guild will present as one of the attractions of the Collegiate Carnival, a short program of plays and sketches. As this program will be played three times a night for three nights, we expect to need a rest in November. But we hope, in December or January, to put on another long play, to be followed by two others next semester. Among the plays under consideration are *ANTIGONE*, *R.U.R.*, Noel Coward's *HAY FEVER*, and possibly a modern Chinese or Japanese play.