

The Diary Of Anne Frank

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

Play no. 150

Opening show: 22/01/1957

Hebrew by: Nissim Aloni

Directed by: Israel Becker

Designed by: Boris Aronson

Cast

Mr. Otto Frank: Shimon Finkel

Miep: Ruth Shalk

Mrs. Van-Daan: Ina Govinska

Mr. Van-Daan: Shmuel Rodensky

Peter Van-Daan: Jacob Ben-Bassat

Mrs. Frank: Pnina Perach

Margot Frank: Tania Peres

Anne Frank: Ada Tal

Mr. Kraler: Haim Amitay

Mr. Dussel: Ari Kutai

"On Friday, June 12th, I woke up at six o'clock and no wonder; it was my birthday. But of course I was not allowed to get up at that hour, so I had to control my curiosity until a quarter to seven. Then I could bear it no longer, and went to the dining room, where I received a warm welcome from Moortje (the cat).

Soon after seven I went to Mummy and Daddy and then to the sitting room to undo my presents. The first to greet me was you, possibly the nicest of all..."

Thus "spoke" Anne to her Diary, in the very first entry, when she received it, on her 13th birthday. She called her diary "Kitty" and henceforth covered with it as with the most intimate and confidential friend.

All this was in Amsterdam, in the summer of 1942, when the Nazis ruled the Netherlands, Anne had been born to well to do Jewish parents in Germany, who found refuge in the Netherlands, following the rise of Hitler in Germany. Here Anne grew up and left thoroughly Dutch. Then the Nazis caught up with her; she had to leave her school and go to an exclusively Jewish school, she had to wear the Yellow Badge and learn to live under the numerous limitations put on daily Jewish life. All this, however, did not diminish her zest for life, her terrific curiosity, and her joy of blossoming forth into full youth.

A short while after receiving her diary, the Frank family moved into a hiding place, provided for the Van-Daan family, by on-Jewish Dutch friends and business-associates, at great risks to themselves.

For two years the Jews lived hammered in high up at the back of the house. The full darkness of Nazi occupation was over Europe when they went up there; the Armies of Liberation were winning the war nearly when the Green

Police invaded their "home". Their Dutch benefactors too were thrown into concentration camps, but returned after the war. Of the Jews in this particular drama only Anne's father returned (from Aushwitz). All other perished, including Anne Frank, a girl fifteen years old, who died at Bergen-Belsen in March 1945, just before Liberation.

Amongst old heaps of books and old newspapers discarded by the Gestapo when they plundered the Frank hiding-place, Anne's diary was found, eleven years ago. Anne's father decided to publish it uncensored, even where delicate matters were concerned, including family relations. He has thus given the world a unique document.

The book, first published in its original Dutch in 1947, was called "Het Achterhuis" meaning literally "The House Behind", and referring to the back part of the building which served as Hiding Place. Since its publication in English under the name of "The Diary of Young Girl", it has been translated into many languages including French, German, Norwegian, Danish, Japanese, Swedish, and Italian. In some countries several editions have already come out. The Hebrew translation from the Dutch is by S. Shnitzer, published by Karni Publishing House.

The tremendous success of the Diary is due to its being an authentic document, not intended for any eyes except those of the writer, and because of the character and ability of this particular author. Sensitive as she was to all the tempests for her adolescent age, this authoress remained utterly true to herself in the "reporting" side of the Diary, whilst the literary ability shines through a wonderful sense of humour and power of characterization. The shock to the reader comes because the terrors of the period in which the Diary was written, hover only in the background. The full-blooded content is concerned with Life and People. Rarely, if at all, can grown-ups learn so much to their benefit as here, of how the Young are their parents. A unique chapter in the Diary is formed by the budding love of Anne for Peter, love amongst fears and bombs, told with the utmost candour and purity.

The play, based on the Diary, and utilizing some illuminations shed by Anne's father on what had happened, has won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Drama critics Award for the Broadway Production. It is now being shown in Paris, London, Berlin, Zurich, Vienna. Lately it was put on the stage at Amsterdam in presence of the Royal Family and the Dutch Personea Dramatis, who had provided the shelter for the Franks, Van-Daans and Dr. Dussel. The performance took place only a few steps from that House itself, on the Prinsengracht Canal. The house is being kept as a National Shrine. On the wall of Anne's room are stuck again the photos of the Movie Stars she liked.