'Exit the Body' Hailed By Opening Night Crowd

By BETTY SCHROEDER

Opening weekend for "Exit the Body," a mystery comedy, by Fred Carmichael, started with a bang at Chapel Theatre, playing to 'standing room only' audiences. Under the diligent direction of Fred J. West of Playa del Dey, the cast went through their opening night performances with ease and naturalness and no sign of opening night nervousness.

Precision timing was exhibited during the last act when all the characters are involved in a hilarious series of entrances and exits, including a Mack Sennett-type chase. To quote many in the audiences, "We laughed until we cried!"

Each actor gives his characterization with much individual distinction, making each role an outstanding one, and all are a credit to West's fine direction. Betsy Mackenzie of Redondo Beach made a charming picture on stage in the role of Crane, authoress of mystery stories. Her complete bewilderment regarding the unusual and mysterious series of events was most believable, natural, and humorous.

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FINDING BODIES in closets, who sudenly appear at the front door very much alive, are given the full power of frightening surprise by Betsy Mackenzie. Doris Ward of Manhattan Beach as Kate, makes her second appearance on stage of Chapel and is most enthusiastically applauded for her portrayal of Crane's secretary with her sarcastic and sometimes caustic remarks, given very effectively by Miss Ward. Her delivery of the witty dialogue brings much spontaneous laughter.

Vikki Hoffman of Torrance is delightful as the scatter-brained maid Jenny, who turns out to be something other than a maid as disclosed in the final act. Her characterization as the independent and snippy young maid is refreshing, although sometime most expasperating.

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NEW TO CHAPEL Theatre is Carolyn Conwell of San Pedro who portrays the real estate woman, Helen, with such a flair for comedy that the audiences are sent into gales of laughter at her every entrance and scene. She obviously is having a field day with this role as the audience is completely carried away with her performance which is full of comical mannerisms and vivid gestures accenting her dialogue. Warren Lavender of Manhattan Beach is certainly no stranger to local theater audiences, and as always, gives a splendid performance in his humorous portrayal of Vern, the local sheriff, taxi driver, and master of all trades. His dead-pan-type characterization and monotone voice is a perfect combination for 'breaking-up' audiences at his every scene.

Dennis Morgan of Inglewood, newcomer to Chapel, plays the young small town gangster with much enthusiasm, vim and vigor, injecting much humor with his take-off of James Cagney and nervous and flighty antics. He has many good lines of dialogue and action scenes which are very well put to use in his portrayal of Randolph the jewel thief.

Bob Lohbauer of Inglewood is back with Chapel for his second appearance in his role of Philip who suffers from amnesia until the closing scene when his true identity is revealed, and is believably in a state of frustrated bewilderment. Lohbauer does a tremendous job with facial expressions and pantomime, plus very effective tone inflection with dialogue.

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ALTHOUGH there are a few smaller roles, nevertheless, each is equal to the larger roles in characterization and humor. Corinne Williams of Torrance is another newcomer to Chapel and is a charming addition to the cast of "Exit the Body" as she portrays the role of Lillian (Crane's friend) with much ease, poise and ability. Bill Andrews of Inglewood makes his second appearance at Chapel as the latest addition to the many husbands of Lillian. Andrews plays his role in a sophisticated and sauve manner, and is quite capable in handling the complicated yet humorous situations into which he is forced.

Bob Johnston of Torrance adds the final touch of comedy in his appearance during the last act with his role of Crane's husband as he displays complete confusion, exasperation, annoyance and frustration during the complicated episodes which transpire.

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THE BACKSTAGE crew, lending many hands in keeping the production in smooth running order are highly commended by director Fred West, with special praise given to Jon Matson of Inglewood who does a splendid job of working lighting effe ts. He is assisted by Jim Sena who also helps Matson with sound effects, taped by Jo Ann Matson. Rudi Medina is stage manager and producer; Carolyn Schroeder is assistant to the director and in charge of props, assisted by Marlene Sena.

Anyone looking for an evening of light and refreshing stage entertainment is guaranteed an evening of gaiety and an abundance of laughter as they watch the hilarious episodes unfold in this mystery comedy which has none of the tensions or suspense of the usual mystery.

Reservations may be made by calling Box Office, FR 2-9636 for any of the next three weekend performances of "Exit the Body" at Chapel Theatre located at 4164 Pacific Coast Hwy., Torrance, behind Smith Bros. Fish Shanty restaurant. Curtain time is 8:30 p.m. and admission prices are $1.50 Fridays and Sundays, and $1.75 on Saturdays.

NOTED LITERARY VISITORS . . . Internationally-known authors of suspense fiction, Mildred and Gordon Gordon, who this week visited the Pen & Quill Hotel, stop in the lobby to compliment Robert Reuben, president of the Manhattan Beach hostelry, on the choice of his reading matter—The Gordons' latest paperback novel, "Case File: FBI." All three are ex-newspaper writers.

EVERYTHING

...yes EVERYTHING TO KEEP YOU IN FUN!

Bits 'n' Bites

By Renee

A quick look around our town for a place to eat and be entertained will yield a wide variety of excellent locations and an equally fine selection of the food and entertainment.

Torrance is rather well off in this department and one doesn't have to travel more than a few miles to find a place that will offer dinner, a show, and drinks.

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One of the top spots for entertainment as well as good food is Marineland. This plush club offers a complete dining room, a cocktail lounge and a fine collection of talent throughout the year. A short and scenic ride on the peninsula along the coast will get you there. Presently appearing is Big Tiny Little. Just last week George Foster announced the addition of children's plates on the menu.

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One of the newest of fine restaurants in the area is John Haratakes' Silver Skates on Western and 238th Street. This combination steak house and coffee shop is immediately adjacent to the Olympic Ice Arena and both the split-level coffee shop and the steak house face the ice rink through large bay windows. You will find the prices and the food pleasing to your tastes at the Silver Skates.

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If it's fun and exercise you want, then the place to go is the Olympic Ice Arena on South Western at 238th Street. There are many open hours daily for the general public. The rink also offers for the non-skaters, curling, a game similar to shuffle board without the sticks and on the ice. Classes are scheduled for those wishing to learn to skate. Also a figure skating club is in full swing. And for the sport-minded individual the management has just purchased the franchise of the L. A. Canadians and thereby giving Torrance its first semi-pro hockey team called the Torrance Olympians.

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For good steaks of varying weight at a most reasonable price, the Sizzler No. 2 on Redondo Beach Blvd., next to the Rodium Drive-in, is the place to try. The management gives away, each week, two free dinners to the lucky person whose name appears in the Sizzler's advertisement on this page.

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If it's a cocktail lounge you're looking for, try the Sit 'n' Sip. It is located on Crenshaw near Artesia Boulevard. You'll find the atmosphere very warm and the surroundings quite pleasant.

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Not too far from Torrance, on Pacific Coast Highway in Manhattan Beach, is the Pen and Quill restaurant. The reputation this place has for its food is equaled by very few. The Pen and Quill offers superb dining and facilities for private parties.

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Probably the best restaurant in Torrance for fish of all kinds is the Smith Bros. Fish Shanty on Pacific Coast Highway. People from the eastern states, who usually know good fish, have praised the Fish Shanty for top quality marine foods. The restaurant has just about everything from lobster to finnan haddie.

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In downtown Torrance, on Carson Street, a good bet is the Palms. Complete dinners are on the menu as well as the a la carte selections.

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Nora Kelley and Roi Arthur are currently appearing at the Branch Office on Torrance Boulevard. The cocktail lounge also offers spaghetti dinners on Sunday from 1:30 p.m. on, for the unheard price of 35 cents.

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Dixieland has come to Torrance. The name: Johnny Lucas and his all stars. The place: the Pizza Palace on

(Continued on Page 37)

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