

Introduction

Play on Words is a six-part comedy series written principally with radio, or a radio-style reading in a theatre, in mind.

The first five episodes are all of a similar length, with the intention that they could each be broadcast in a ten-minute slot. The final episode is a special tribute piece which would, when taken together with its preamble, require a longer, half-hour slot. At the time of writing we are coming closer to the BBC's 100th anniversary in 2022. The idea for this slice of nostalgia as the last in the series came to me as a way of aiming to acknowledge – whether the piece receives a professional airing or goes no further than print – the contributions made by so many people to the remarkable and fondly remembered Golden Age of British Comedy. Opinions may differ as to its timespan but, for the weaving of famous names into the dialogue between the characters, I have started in the 1950s and have gone as far as seemed consistent with whether the shows and performers have tended to be considered part of this period in our comic heritage. I have trawled through my books on British Comedy to identify the biggest names, and names from the biggest shows, not all of whom may necessarily be known to everyone but whom it is important to recognise. Readers may enjoy looking some of them up, which would no doubt lead to the comment, 'Ah, yes, I do know who that is now!'

My hope is also that amateur societies may like to put on selected pieces from this series as part of a mixed bill of entertainment within a comedy night, hence the retention of costume notes and stage directions should the pieces come to life fully mounted and learnt rather than having a radio-style reading. The pieces do not *have* to be presented in the order given here but, if societies hold such events as a regular fixture of their calendar, they may wish to use the opening episode first, as it sets the scene for the rest of the 'name dropping'. Not all of the pieces feature a set-up as to why the characters are bringing in certain words, to avoid the beginning feeling laboured. The theme is established from the title of each piece. The approximate lengths given at the start of the scripts come from reading them

Play on Words

A six-part comedy series



Henry Dawe

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