LOOT
Written by Joe Orton. Directed by Sandra Heffley. Starring Greg Hill and David Frisch. At the Alley Theatre.

By JULIAN WEST

Orton certainly is the flavor of the month. The success of Up Your Ears - the movie version of Pick Up Your Ears, the film version of his colorful and tragic life, created last weekend, a "mortician" was greeting theatergoers at the Alley Theatre to announce the start of the season.

In the worst predicament of all is her weedy son, Hal (Greg Hill). Not only is he concerned with the dead than with the living: the varieties of roses on the wreaths than on her way to seducing Mr. McLeavy (David Frisch), a mysterious figure who is obviously a detective from Scotland Yard, but passes himself off as a water meter reader because "the Water Board does not need a search warrant." Frisch adopts a manner which makes his every utterance humorous and his jokes hilarious. His character is a biting parody, or rather two parodies: he is at once police brutality personified and Sherlock Holmes, a detective exercising mental, not physical, muscles. In his first appearance, he observes the nurse's crucifix and wedding ring, and proceeds to tell her a considerable detail how all seven of her husbands died; on the eve of his retirement from Sadler's Wells, another on the anniversary of the battle of the Marne. His obvious powers of detection make his stubborn insistence that he is "from the Water Board" knock-down funny.

Not all of the characters, or performances, are up to this level, but each has something to contribute. The ornery father (Frank Drori) is good, but Hal's lover and confederate (Nicholas Martin-Smith) and the nurse (Eileen Sullivan) still had some way to go before opening night.

And, since neither the situation nor the characters advance much, there are few surprises in the second half, and it does not have the sustained comic energy of the first. Theatergoers would be well advised to pop next door for ice cream during the interval.

Nevertheless, Loot provides plenty of laughs for your money. —

Alley Theatre jumps on Orton bandwagon with Loot

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