

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Many years ago I ran across an old book in an antiquarian bookstore. It was entitled "Archy & Mehitabel," and there in the aisles of that dusty old bookshop a love affair was born. I fell deeply in love with the characters, with the stories and with the illustrations done by the incomparable George Herriman. But most of all I fell in love with the ideas expressed by the book's author, Don Marquis. I bought the book, brought it home and proceeded to devour it.

I read and reread that book countless times over the years, each time finding it fresh, funny and insightful. But, as is often the case, life intervened, and over the years and many moves I lost track of the book. But then, just a few short years ago, lightning struck and I ran across it while going through some boxes stored in the attic. I dug it out and placed it on my bedside table. The next morning while reading it in bed, I recited a few passages from it to my wife, Joselle.

"Isn't that great stuff?" I asked her.

"It's wonderful," she answered. "You ought to do something with it."

"Like what?"

"I don't know. A play, maybe?"

"A play, huh?"

"Yeah, a play."

"Hmm."

And so it began. I immediately went on Amazon and bought every book by and about Don Marquis I could find. After absorbing as much of this material as I possibly could, I began the process of transforming what was basically a series of unconnected newspaper columns into a cohesive evening of theater. Over the many months that followed, after innumerable readings and workshops, of rewrites and rewrites of rewrites, of input and suggestions by writers and actors of my acquaintance, the show slowly began to take shape. And so it is with great pleasure and many thanks to all the people who helped make it happen, we proudly present *The Secret World of Archy & Mehitabel*.

I hope you will enjoy the play. I hope you'll find as much humor, heart and humanity in it as I have. But most of all, I hope I have managed to honor the work produced by, in my opinion, one of the greatest American humorists of all time, Don Marquis.

— Dan Gilvezan