**Discuss Reviews Of Play**

Librarian: Can I help you?

Student: Yeah, I need to find a review. It’s for my English class. We have to find reviews of the play we are reading. But they have to be from when the play was first performed, so I need to know when that was and I suppose I should start with newspaper reviews…

Librarian: Contemporary reviews.

Student: Sorry?

Librarian: You want contemporary reviews. What’s the name of the play?

Student: It’s Happy Strangers. It was written in 1962 and we are supposed to write about its influence on American theatre and show why it’s been so important.

Librarian: Well, that certainly explains why your professor wants you to read some of those old reviews. The critiques really tore the play to pieces when it opened. It was so controversial. Nobody had ever seen anything like it on the stage.

Student: Really? Is that a big deal?

Librarian: Oh, sure, of course the critics’ reaction made some people kind of curious about it. They wanted to see what was causing all the fuss. In fact, we were on vacation in New York. Oh, I had to be, oh, around 16 or so, and my parents took me to see it. That would’ve been about 1965.

Student: So that was the year it premiered? Great! But,uh, newspapers from back then aren’t online, so, how do I…

Librarian: Well, we have copies of old newspapers in the basement, and all the major papers publish reference guides to their articles, reviews, etc. You will find them in the reference stacks in the back. But I start with 1964, I think the play had been running for a little while when I saw it.

Student: How do you like it? I mean just two characters on the stage hanging around basically doing nothing.

Librarian: Well, I was impressed. The actors were famous, and besides it was my first time in a real theatre. But you are right. It was definitely different from many plays that we read in high school. Of course, in a small town the assignments are pretty traditional.

Student: Yeah, I’ve only read it but it doesn’t seem like it would be much fun to watch. The story doesn’t progress in any sort of logical matter, doesn’t have real ending either, just stops. Honestly, you know, I thought it was kind of slow and boring.

Librarian: Oh, well I guess you might think that. But when I saw it back then it was anything but boring. Some parts were really funny, but I remember crying too. But I’m not sure just reading it. You know, they’ve done this play at least once on campus. I’m sure there is a tape of the play in our video library. You might want to borrow it.

Student: That’s a good idea. I’ll have a better idea of what I really think of it before I read those reviews.

Librarian: I’m sure you will be surprised that anyone ever found it radical. But you will see why it is still powerful, dramatically speaking.

Student: Well, there must be something about it, or the professor wouldn’t have assigned it. I’m sure I’ll figure it out.