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## As Long As We Both Shall Live

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Reviewed on **2012-05-15**

The American Heartland Theatre located inside Crown Center is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Its latest production is the world premiere of a murder-mystery comedy written by Sean Grennan ("Married Alive," "A Dog's Life" and "Another Night Before Christmas." v As the title implies, a wedding lies at the heart of the play. Act 1 takes place at the Wilcox Estate in Kansas City on a late fall evening. The principal characters are rehearsing on the eve of the big day.

The bride is Addison Ashe (Jessalyn Kincaid most recently seen in "The Marvelous Wonderettes"), a brilliant and beautiful young woman. She believes in love, but has had very little luck with men. She makes her living as a professional poker player.

The handsome groom is Jamie Wilcox (Jeff Smith making his AHT debut), the wealthy heir to family fortune. His grandfather invented the "clapper" that works like an on/off switch for lighting and other electricity-activated devices.

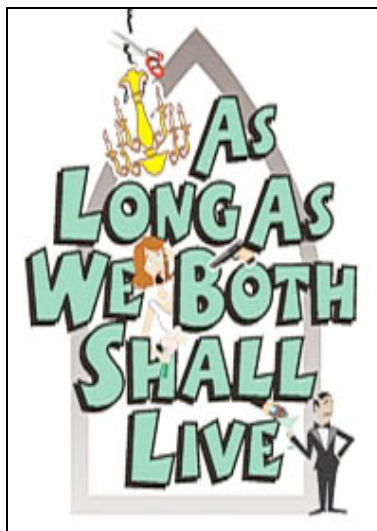
Jamie's mother, Mrs. Wilcox (Melinda MacDonald from "Taffetas" and "The Buddy Holly Story"), is an alcoholic. She hates the bride and views her as a social climbing gold digger.

Raul Montelban (Charles Fugate last seen in "Stories My Grandmother Told Me") is a gay Spanish-speaking wedding planner.

Reverend Mountain (Doogin Brown last seen in "The 39 Steps") is a last minute replacement to officiate the ceremony. He is afraid of the dark. He is always coming up with strange Biblical references.

A lot of suspicious things occur during the night before the wedding. One of the main characters drops dead from arsenic poisoning. Addison is forced to sign a suspicious prenuptial agreement and consent to being the insured on a large life insurance policy naming Jamie as her beneficiary. A chandelier falls from the ceiling shortly thereafter narrowly missing Addison.

Lieutenant Dobbs (Fugate) arrives on the scene to investigate the crime. He is suffering from a bad cold. Act 1 ends with Addison spending the night in jail as the prime suspect in the murder. The audience is left to ponder who the real culprit is



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[Movie Reviews Page 2](#)

[Movie Reviews Page 3](#)

[Movie Reviews Page 4](#)

[Movie Reviews Page 5](#)

[Branson Family Trip](#)

during intermission.

Act 2 takes place the next day with the wedding ceremony going forward as planned. Addison plays junior detective and tries to solve the mystery by shifting through all the clues. Murphy's Law kicks in and new light shines on each character. Everyone involved reveals their true identity. The main lesson learned is that trust is the most important part of any relationship.

This entertaining play is full of laughs and keeps you guessing. The clever dialogue includes local geographic references. The visual gags will have you in stitches. There are two long dying scenes that are hilarious.

The star of the show is Kincaid. Her acting is superb. She gets a big assist from costume designer Paul Hough. Her outfits show off her shapely figure.

MacDonald displays her comedic chops as the inebriated mother-in-law. She plays off Kincaid with precise timing in their verbal cat fights.

Fugate shows off his versatility playing multiple parts with different accents. Brown has fun with his character. Smith plays the straight man with a low-key directness.

The play directed by William J. Christie ("Unnecessary Farce" and "The 39 Steps") runs through June 17. You can order tickets by telephone (816-842-9999) or online at [ahtkc.com](http://ahtkc.com).

Other first-class amenities include free covered parking, a full-service bar, drinks permitted in the theatre, discounted tickets for students and seniors, plush tiered seating, pre-order intermission refreshments and dinner discounts at Crown Center restaurants.

For more information see their website: [www.ahtkc.com](http://www.ahtkc.com) or call 816-842-0202

Review By:  
[Keith Cohen](#) "The Movie Guy"



Jeff Smith, Melinda MacDonald, Charles Fugate, Douglas Brown, Jessalyn Kincaid



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