



CRAIG SCHWARTZ

FORTUNE SMILES: Gutrecht, left, with Kellie Waymire, is electrifying in the title role

Good Luck

Arthur Miller's first play gets its first U.S. revival

HIS LATEST PLAY IS RUNNING SUCCESSFULLY on Broadway. A string of first-rate revivals has, in recent years, burnished a glowing reputation. There's even a new opera based on one of his tragedies that has a shot at entering the modern repertory. Alone of his theatrical generation, Arthur Miller, at 84, remains a living, vital force on our stages.

A small but worthwhile part of his good fortune is the first-ever U.S. revival of his first professionally produced play, called, with ironic aptness, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. Now running in a smart, wonderfully acted production at the Ivy Substation in Culver City, Calif., the play opened on Broadway in 1944 and closed after four nights. At the time, Miller thought it was victimized by the cult of the well-made play, and he may be right. For *Luck* is a sometimes comic melodrama that flirts a little messily with tragedy—particularly in that Miller specialty, father-son relationships.

Its title character, David Beeves (played by the electrifying Paul Gutrecht), is a small-town garage mechanic, who effortlessly rises to prosperity and marital contentment and can't understand what he has done to deserve his happy fate—especially as he watches his father meddlesomely destroy his brother's baseball dreams. David must tempt the gods' benignity. The dramaturgy here is crude, but the subsidiary roles are divertingly drawn. Dan Fields' good direction planes down the rough spots, and you leave admiring the vigor of a compelling young talent on his way to becoming a major one.

—By Richard Schickel