

PROMPTINGS



ISSUE 81 - MAY 2014

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Since our last edition of the society newsletter there has been considerable improvement in the weather. Spring has finally sprung!

Unfortunately I was not able to have as much to do with the production of *A Lie of the Mind* as I would have liked. However this did give me the unique opportunity to come along to one of our productions in the same shoes as our audience. Knowing little of the play I sat in the auditorium and was enthralled by the production. I agree with the words from the Loughton Town Mayor, Cllr Julia Angol-Stephens who came and saw the play and afterwards wrote to me to say “that the acting in this rather unusual play was excellent and made it an extremely enjoyable evening”. Well done to all involved for tackling this hard hitting drama and making it another LADS success.

We are now in rehearsals for our final play of the season “*The Imaginary Invalid*” by Molière. The tickets for this production go on sale to subscription members on the 21st of May and the general public on the 23rd of May. Handbills and posters are available so please

arrange to pick some up and let’s go out and publicise what will be a great send off to our 90th season.

I have heard great news about two very successful new members meetings. Thank you to all the members that have supported these. The play reading committee have selected the plays for next season in the expectation that our membership will grow. There are lots of parts to fill and jobs to be done! When you talk to people don’t forget to mention LADS and that we always welcome enthusiastic people.

This will be the last Promptings of our 90th Season so I wanted to take this moment to thank all society members past and present for all the time and effort that they have put into getting LADS this far and making it such a successful local society.

LADS has a wonderful past, a strong present and an exciting future.

Dan Cooper

LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 8 June	Set up for <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i> from 9.30am
Mon. 9 June - Weds. 11 June	Rehearsals, Tech and Dress <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>
Thurs.12 - Sat.14 June	Performances, <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>
Saturday 14 June	After show party, venue to be confirmed
Sunday 15 June	Set down from 10.00am
Monday 16 June	Crit night and curry from 7.30pm
Thursday 19 June	Read through for <i>These Shining Lives</i> , 8pm Small Hall
Sunday 29 June	End of Season Picnic at Garry & Jean’s, 28 Woodland Way, Woodford Green from 1:00pm
Mon. 7 July	AGM - 8:00pm

NEW MEMBERS

Remember that word of mouth is the best way to advertise our society. Therefore please know that when talking to people about membership the society doesn't only need people who can hold the audience's attention. We also need people who can hold a hammer, a needle, their finger over the lighting or sound cue button, a conversation with the audience over the bar, a program, handbills, a paintbrush, a script, and so much more!

After having many enquiries for membership I am hoping that we will soon have lots of new faces around the society. Make sure that you say hello and make them feel welcome.

We're particularly pleased to welcome new member, Lorna Redburn, who has taken the part of Angelica in *The Imaginary Invalid*.

Dan

LOVE LOUGHTON _ LOVE LADS

I have booked a stall for LADS for the Love Loughton Day on Saturday 12th July. This is a fun event run by St Marys church, and is attended by lots of people. The event will be from 12 to 4pm and the stalls will be in the grounds of St Marys Church Loughton. Last time we got to speak to lots of interested people, so this is a great event to have a presence at and raise the profile of LADs in Loughton and beyond.

Please let me know if you are available to help man the stall and chat to people, give out flyers etc... The more, the merrier, as they say!! Also, if you have any ideas on what we could do other than the usual display of photographs and posters, I would love to hear from you.

Jean

PLAY SELECTION

The Play Selection Committee has now chosen the four plays for next season, which are attached and I am confident that we have selected a well-balanced season for both audiences and members. I would like to once again thank the committee for all their hard work.

The read through dates and production dates are all on the synopsis sheet so please put them in your diary now.

We have held a couple of new member evenings recently which were well attended and I am delighted to say that we have recruited some new members to the society so we extend a very warm welcome to you all.

As previously mentioned, we do need to promote our society to the wider public and for that, we need your help. Please let me know if you have any ideas on how we can market ourselves to both sell tickets for our productions and to attract more new members.

Rehearsals are well under way for our final production of the season and I hope that you will all come along to support the cast and crew. It's probably worth mentioning that for this production, Lynn and I are dealing with the tickets so it is worth ordering early so that we have plenty of time to work out what we are supposed to be doing!

Finally, a big massive personal thanks to all members who have given their time this season and particularly to those who have stepped up and helped us when we have been in desperate need. There have been many and you know who you are!

Cathy

NODA CRIT. FOR 'A LIE OF THE MIND' JACQUIE STEDMAN

I was pleased to stand in for your Regional Rep Jackie Mitchell to review this play by Sam Shepard, which is part of your 90th anniversary year programme. Although, according to the programme Shepard describes this as 'A love ballad....a little legend about love', I thought it was also about relationships within families and the hurt that can be caused to those we love. It was useful to have the mini synopsis in the programme which gave some explanation as to the psychology behind the characters. There was also some interesting information about the author which is always useful when he/she is not very well known by the reviewer.

Due to the nature of the construction of the play you had used a simple set showing various

locations for the action, with the clever use of lighting these areas as the story moved from scene to scene. Likewise the simple, modern costumes suited the characters and gave the impression of hard working folk. The lighting was well thought out and the fades were quick (when appropriate) and complete. The hospital bed, had to remain as long as Beth was detained in hospital, but I wondered whether there was a 'window' DSL as Jake tended to look that way a lot during his dialogue with Frankie at the beginning of the play. It was a shame that the furniture had to be moved about with more noise than necessary. The (mostly) upbeat music belied the traumas taking place on stage, but set the action in a remote part of the USA with the hillbilly/country sound. At the end of the play the light in the bucket and on the wall reinforced the idea of the house burning even though it was such a long way away.



Frances Chalkwright and Jon Gilbert

It took time to get used to the short scenes which moved from location to location. They felt rather disjointed at first but each scene encapsulated the mood of the characters and the piece of the action at the time. Each one also seemed to focus on a different element of the dysfunctionality of the characters. The opening, where the two brothers were on the telephone, would have been easier for the audience if Frankie had been further towards the stage as some of his dialogue was lost, and Jake spent a lot of his time with his back to the us so we lost some of his too, although I quite understand that the feeling of distance had to be established between the two of them.

From the start it was obvious that all the characters were disturbed to some degree and they all had their own demons with which they were struggling – some more than others – and it was often difficult to understand why they were reacting the way they were. Given the subject matter of the play it was surprising to find humour in the dialogue, but this was well delivered and

did help to give the characters another dimension.

Frankie (Tom Donoghue) was concerned for his brother and keen to help, although he did, gently, raise doubts about Jake's assumption that his wife was having an affair. He showed logic when talking with Jake, and a gentleness, perhaps borne of experience that he could erupt without warning. In Act II, when the worm finally turned, he was confused by Beth's advances to him but was trapped by his shot leg – which no one seemed to care about, almost using it as a reason to keep him in the house. I think that he needed to have a bit more light and shade in his characterisation. I felt that his rejection of Beth (because she was Jake's wife) wasn't quite believable, and that he would succumb and remain with her in the house, almost as a



Sylvia Zilesnick and Paul Caira

prisoner. Tom had a lovely clear voice and all his dialogue was easily heard when on stage. He was generally calm making a perfect foil for Jake.

Jake (Jon Gilbert) was an obviously disturbed individual and he played this to perfection. He seemed incapable of listening to reason and it was fairly obvious that something had happened in his past which was haunting him. His relationship with his siblings and his mother was very different, although there was a sort of affinity with Sally, whom he appeared to trust, presumably born of the terrible secret they shared. He was obviously very jealous of Beth's friendship with anyone else and most unforgiving, but I thought it very touching at the end of the play when he goes to her house and kisses her on the forehead with a gentleness I would not have imagined he could possess.

Sally (Camilla Steel) Sally appeared to be the only level headed person involved in this situation. She was strong willed, but there were times when even she needed some show of affection from her mother. Her account of her

father's accident and Jake's part in it all was well delivered with the horror of the situation gradually dawning on her again, as it must have at the time it happened. She seemed frustrated that her mother would accuse her of trying to murder her father and put the blame onto Jake, but she bore it all with a kind of sympathy for her mother when she learned the truth. She also seemed genuinely surprised when looking through the old photographs to realise that her mother had once been happy with her father. The scene between her and Lorraine was very touching in parts and almost convinced us of the better life to come for them both.



Frances Chalkwright and Camilla Steel

Lorraine (Frances Chalkwright) was a woman living a life she really did not want to live and perhaps would never have envisaged when she was first married. The desertion of the family by her husband made her the brittle, no nonsense woman she was but she was protective of Jake and showed this throughout her speeches. In fact she really did have a blind spot where Jake's faults were concerned, and throughout the play she retained the brittleness of a woman deserted and left with three small children. Despite her lack of physical affection for the children there remained elements of a disappointed life, and a realisation that it could possibly be better elsewhere. Well balanced with hints of dark humour, exasperation and desperation.

Beth (Sophie Robertson) had a very difficult part to play because there could, possibly, have been no personal experience (one hopes) to draw on. Her eventual 'recovery' was played with depth of feeling and demonstrated that although her speech may have been impaired there was a functioning woman still able to make coherent thoughts. It was very hard to understand Beth's dialogue at the beginning, but this gave an insight as to the degree of beating she had received. Unfortunately she remained rather difficult to understand, although it did improve slightly as the

play progressed. Could she not have stayed in the bed through the first scenes, with the lights just being brought up on her when necessary? It rather destroys the flow of the action when the 'sick' person keeps getting out of bed to leave the stage. It was clear that her brother was the one who had most concern for her throughout the play and she responded well to this particularly when she was in hospital.

Mike (Dean Bartholomew) was very sympathetic at the beginning when his sister was in hospital but was frustrated and disgusted that no one appeared to care about the fact that Jake had come to the house to see his own wife. He appeared to have a very short fuse and was frustrated by Beth's inability to hate Jake in spite of what he had done to her. This was a well observed part but I did find it somewhat difficult to listen to because of the amount of shouting that went on when the family were together in their home. Sometimes, when the dialogue is delivered with a quieter tone there is more menace and emotion than when it is at full volume. I also wonder whether there could have been another way of bringing the deer into the house. I would not have thought it possible that one person could carry the rear end of an animal that size, and perhaps if the 'body' had been put



Tom Donoghue and Sophie Robertson

into a sack with a leg sticking out it could have been dragged on, which is what would possibly have happened because of the size and weight.

Baylor (Paul Caira) and his wife Meg (Sylvia Zilesnick) were something else when it came to the care of their daughter. Baylor was selfish and showed lack of feeling and understanding for his entire family - deeming it unnecessary to see Beth when she was in the hospital and showing very little thought for her condition when she was at the house. He delivered his lines in a very offhand way, giving the impression, throughout the play, that his family were really not as important as his livelihood. He worked well with

Meg who, as the 'little woman', showed more insight that might have been expected. Meg was in a little world of her own. She was placid, calm and really not totally in tune with the gravity of the situation. I couldn't believe that she could be so calm in such terrible circumstances, but one got the impression that she was in this little world as a protection from the realities of life. A gentle performance with flashes of insight.

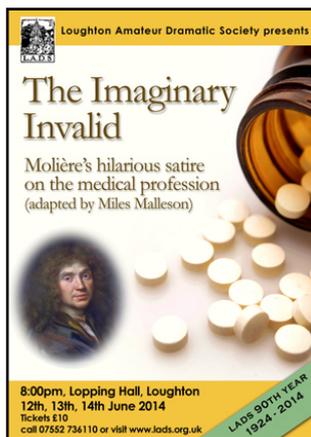


Sophie Robertson and Dean Bartholomew

This cannot have been an easy play to direct or rehearse but, as ever, you certainly gave the audience something to think about, and I hope it was successful both artistically and financially.

Jacqui Stedman

THE IMAGINARY INVALID



The cast for the last production of the season was only finalised after rehearsals had begun and we are very pleased to welcome Lorna Redburn in her first role with LADS as Angelica.

Actors and crew alike have been working hard in difficult circumstances to bring Miles Malleeson's English adaptation of Molière's masterpiece to life and I'm sure audiences will appreciate the great

performances that are in development. People who did not know they could sing are finding a voice and Mary, my assistant, and I are already being kept in fits of laughter at some of the comic lines and expressions during rehearsals. Molière's ridiculing of the medical profession comes through in this more modern version and I hope doctors in the audience will take it in good part – after all, medical knowledge and treatments were very different in the latter half of the seventeenth century!

Christine and her team are doing a grand job on the period costumes and our set design is finalised. However, we are still looking for a dark wood table approximately 3x3 feet and not more than 72" high, bottles that could pass as period medicine bottles (maybe smokey green glass or stoneware, but not too large, period pestle and mortar, abacus and a double piano stool with plain dark wood legs. If anyone has any of these, please let me know (Wendy Butler 07710 641739).

All hands will be needed on deck for the set up on Sunday June 8th, as Stephen will be preoccupied building a spinet!

Wendy

END OF SEASON PICNIC _ 29TH JUNE

I would like to invite all LADS members and their families to a picnic to celebrate what has been a great 90th season. On 29th of June the doors will be open at 28 Woodland Way from 1pm to all of those that would like to come along. Please bring your deck chairs, blankets and all the food and drink that you would like to consume. A BBQ will be provided (with fuel) for you to cook raw ingredients and contributions for the group will be gratefully received. I have prayed to Melete (the greek goddess of performance) for good weather!

Dan

LOPPING HALL UPDATE

Lopping Hall's AGM was in April. It was an important evening for the users of the hall to attend and I am glad to say that many LADS members made their way to hear the reports from the trustees. One of the take-home messages for me was that the users need to continue to work with the trustees to improve the facilities. With this in mind I would like to ask the society

what improvements it feels are most necessary. My thoughts are new chairs, refurbished stage and house lighting, a new tannoy system for FOH and backstage and more storage but I am interested in what you all think. Please put your answers on the back of a postcard (or in an email if you prefer!).

On the flip side of that we hire Lopping Hall and with that come certain expectations. Some would say that the society might expect too much from the hall, be as it may, if you find something wrong with the hall please take a photo of it and send it to me as I will bring this up with the trustees. After taking a photo, if it is safe, do something about it, that way it won't be a problem for the next person.

Lastly congratulations to Karen Rogers who was voted to continue her hard work for a further year.

CAPTION COMPETITION

There were only two entries for the previous caption for this picture from Lilies on the Land, which LADS presented in October 2011.



Firstly, from Jean Cooper:

"Sophie and Liz may have been warned that the audience were direct from a Spencer Tunick photoshoot, but they couldn't conceal their shock when the curtains opened".

(For those who don't know, Spencer Tunick is an American photographer best known for organizing large-scale nude shoots!)

And from Liz Adams:

"Sophie and Liz realise that if the guys are going to wear short costumes for the Shakespeare play, they really ought to wear something suitable under them when sitting down".

(Liz tells me this really DID happen in Babs' production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Marguerite and others had a right giggle at the back of the hall! A quiet word was had with the offending actor.)

So, now to this issue's caption. Couldn't resist this shot of Sylvia giving Paul foot massage in our latest production of *A Lie of the Mind*



Come on, let's have your captions please, and I'll post them in the next issue of Promptings,

Howard. how_platt@yahoo.co.uk

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE IS CHANGING

I am sad to say that four members of the General Committee will be standing down at the end of this Season. Frances from the Secretary post, Christine from the Wardrobe Officer post and Roz and Tom have now served their three years as elected general members. Many thanks to all of them for their commitment to their various roles over the years that they have served on the committee.

Due to this there will be space for new faces on next year's General Committee. These will be decided by the Society at the LADS AGM which will take place at Lopping Hall on the 7th of July. Official notices will be put up and distributed soon but if you are interested in getting involved then please contact either myself or another member of the committee to find out what is involved.

Dan