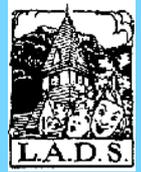


PROMPTINGS



ISSUE 86 - SEPTEMBER 2015

WWW.LADS.ORG.UK



Dear LADS,

Thank you for all the support and good wishes I have received from LADS' members since becoming Chairman. Alongside Cathy as Artistic Director and our hard-working committee, I look forward to the forthcoming season with excitement.

"Ghosts" was an excellent end to our 2014/15 season, which unfortunately did not have the ticket sales to match with only 222 people coming to see it over the 3 nights. We know that one of the reasons for this is that Ibsen is not everyone's cup of tea, but that is why LADS produce a season of plays so that we can appeal to all tastes. Classic dramas like "Ghosts" have their place in the season just as much as "bums on seats" plays such as "Beyond Reasonable Doubt". As Sarah Buttler, the NODA representative who wrote the review on Ghosts said: "This is a difficult play to produce well and I am sure it presented those involved with not a few challenges. However, the acting was really first rate and the production values high. Congratulations to all involved. I do hope that your audiences improved – it certainly warranted a good crowd." So well done to all involved, and next time we produce a play of this ilk, please remember that it needs extra effort from everyone to get out there and sell tickets.

The play selection committee will be meeting within in the next month to start reading plays for the 2016/17 season. Remember, any member of LADS can suggest play/s for the society to perform – just give the script to Cathy, who will add it to those already on the list.

Anne Boleyn started rehearsals at the end of August and the huge cast is working well. See the director's notes inside Promptings – production week starts on Sunday 24th October at set up. However, we do all have a chance to get together before the Anne Boleyn production week. Don't forget to book your tickets for the LADS Start of Season Cocktail Party – Friday 2nd October. Tickets cost £9, but include your food and a welcome drink, so you won't have to cook a meal that night!! More information is in Promptings, but I really hope as many LADS members come along to this evening, which promises to be a great night. We have our own Howard and Dean singing ... and if you haven't heard them before, you have missed something special. I'd like to send a special welcome to new members – come along and take part – LADS is a very welcoming society with charming, lovely people, and social events are an ideal way of getting to know us!!

Do please look at the website: www.lads.org.uk – there is lots of information on there and a special members page where you can find rehearsal dates, policies, constitution and much more (go to the members tab and scroll to the bottom of the page – click on members area and enter password: willingale).

Finally - don't forget our special meal deal offer with the Loughton BBQ (see flyer attached). This is a great way for friends and family coming to see Anne Boleyn to make an evening of it with a great value meal, just a minute's walk from Lopping Hall!

See you all soon.

Jean.

LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 2 October	Start of season social - Cocktail Party at Lopping Hall
Sunday 25 October	Set up for <i>Anne Boleyn</i> - from 9:30
Monday 26 -Wednesday 28 October	Tech and dress rehearsals for <i>Anne Boleyn</i>
Thursday 29 - Saturday 31 October	Performances <i>Anne Boleyn</i>
Saturday 31 October	After show party at Jean & Garry's - 28 Woodland Way, Woodford
Sunday 1 November	Set down, from 10:00am
Monday 2 November	Crit. followed by curry - 7:30pm small hall
Thursday 5 November	Read through for <i>An English Tragedy</i>
Monday 9 November	Rehearsals start for <i>Whipping It Up</i>

MEMBERS NEWS



Congratulations to Jon Gilbert and Sophie Robertson who were married on 12th July. We wish them both every happiness in their future life together.

We welcome the following new members ...

Joshua Sowerbutts, Jamie Warren, Michael Lewkowicz and Steph Adleman will all be making their debut performances in *Anne Boleyn*.

Lydia Dronsfield has been cast in *Whipping It Up* and Sandra O'Nions will be doing props for *Whipping It Up*

START OF SEASON - COCKTAIL PARTY



The Start of Season celebration is on Friday 2nd October at Lopping Hall at 7.30pm. This year it will be a **Cocktail Party**, with a 1920s feel. Tickets are £9 and include a buffet supper and a welcome drink. There will be

singing, (featuring LADS members Dean and Howard) dancing and lots of fun and chatting with friends. We encourage everyone to put on their most glamorous clothes and to reference the 1920s as much as they wish!!

You can order your tickets by using the attached Cocktail Party flyer and send to Martin with a cheque - or just email me or Martin (martin.anthony.howarth@gmail.com) and book your tickets and pay by internet transfer using the following details:

Account name: Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society

Sort code: 40 52 40

Account number: 00017610

Everyone is welcome, so bring along friends and family - but you need to book so we know numbers!!

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you use Facebook or Twitter, please make sure you join the LADS pages (Twitter - @loughtondrama; Facebook - www.facebook.com/groups/2399580967). Please retweet on Twitter and share on Facebook - it is such an effective way of spreading the word about what we do. Make sure you add our website address (www.lads.org.uk) to your own posts and tweets.

NODA CRIT. FOR 'GHOSTS' SARAH BUTTLER

Ghosts is an enthralling piece of theatre about the effects that shadows of the past can have on the future. It is unsurprising that some of Ibsen's play were deemed so controversial in his lifetime that they were banned. Whilst a modern audience is more sanguine about some of the themes in the play it is also true that others such as euthanasia and incest as subject matter are still considered somewhat taboo even today. The play remains a compelling piece about relationships within a small community without the same shock value of its day.



Cathy Naylor & Dean Bartholomew

This was a thoughtful and considered piece of direction from Andrew Rogers who neither allowed the action to be cloying and sentimental nor melodramatic. There was a natural flow to the staging of the narrative underpinned by a stillness of movement which captured the emotional paralysis of the characters amongst the revelations of the plot. Stillness on stage can often have a powerful impact upon an audience and I thought it most effective. Characters stood or sat often in complete isolation from the other protagonists. Human contact was rare. Stillness told of internal struggle and emotional turmoil and there was little excessive movement. This

technique worked incredibly well and I thought it most impressive.

The programme included some interesting side notes from the Director as well as the biography of Ibsen and these – as I found on my last visit – provided some thoughtful context to the production.



Christian Mortimer

Stephen Radley and Wendy Butler and Steph Adelman, set design/construction and properties, put together a set and properties which complemented this air of remoteness and isolation. The set was sparsely appointed with a small number of quality and functional period items of furniture and pictures. There were three working interior doors and a glass panelled exterior door to a conservatory/porch. There was a rather nice small wooden model of a house on one of the side tables. I wondered whether this was meant to be the house where the action was taking place, but unless I missed it, there was no allusion to this in the dialogue. The set was very well designed and solidly constructed – doors opened well, and were able to be closed firmly with no visible shaking of the walls.



Cathy Naylor & Adam Rabinowitz

Some of the exits and entrances had me a little confused. Pastor Manders entered the house through the conservatory but then left the house via one of – what I took to be – interior doors. The interior door in the back well, next to the exterior

door, seemed to lead into a different part of the house yet was set close to the external wall. Weather is obviously a very important theme of the play and it is raining persistently at the outset of the play and through most of Act 1. When Pastor Manders arrives he complains about the rain. This is also referred to later when Oswald Alving cancels his walk outside. Yet when Jacob Engstrand enters through the exterior door at the opening of the play there is no obvious reference to the weather implied through his clothing.

The stage was well lit by Terry Tew and although the lighting plot must have been relatively straightforward it was well delivered. There was a particularly effective lighting effect to denote the fire at the orphanage which was imaginatively done. Sound was similarly well imagined by Andrew Rogers and operated by Sarah Biggs and Martin Howarth and there was some good use of incidental music.



Gemma Garside

Very nice costuming by Liz Adams, Hannah Southgate, Sylvia Zilesnik and Christine Eckley did a good job of reflecting the period. Mrs Alving's dress was a particular highlight. Make-up and hair was also in keeping with the period.

The play opens with dialogue between Jacob and Regina Engstrand, providing some important background to the characters and action. Both performers portrayed their characters very well but I didn't feel that the age gap between father and daughter was particularly well denoted and could have been enhanced by ageing Jacob, perhaps with longer greying hair and a beard. Christian Mortimer gave an intense, rather menacing air to the portrayal of the cynical, exploitative Jacob Engstrand.

Gemma Garside's stillness and poise was most effective in portraying a young woman stuck by her sex and social standing without the means to marry into another social level. The simplicity of the character masks her grasping, mercenary nature and Gemma's last speech really

demonstrated how this character grows through the play.

The play is hardly comic by design and although there is humour it is rarely laugh out loud. Neither is Pastor Manders a particularly funny character – his hypocrisy and lack of integrity are continuously called into question throughout the narrative. However, the humour that could be elicited from the character was very effectively exploited by Adam Rabinowitz. Adam made a physically imposing and pompous Pastor and gave his character a variety of wide ranging emotions: oily, easily offended, God fearing, indignant, proud and easily astounded as events unfurl. The breadth and the requirements of the role were more than matched by Adam's ability and I felt that this was a very impressive stage debut in such a demanding role.

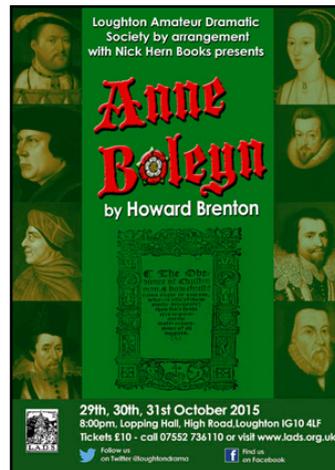
Cathy Naylor gave an excellent performance as the troubled and haunted Mrs Alving who has passed on her own "ghosts" into the beliefs of Oswald and Regina. Cathy is clearly a very experienced actress and demonstrated excellent presence and stagecraft in this role. I found her portrayal of a tortured soul, called to account too late to change the course of events, extremely affecting especially in her re-telling of the truth of her husband's life to Pastor Manders. However, it was her anguish in the final scene where she is called upon to poison her terminally ill son where her experience and talent shone through. A most affecting, sincere and impressive performance.

Dean Bartholomew gave a gentle performance of Oswald Alving befitting the doomed soul he is. Dean's slightly diffident demeanour, demonstrated Oswald's inability to settle even at his Mother's house. The final scene, when Oswald is dying and pleading to be put out of his misery was given a real sense of anguish and the interplay with Cathy Naylor as his Mother was incredibly touching. A very good performance.

I should like to thank the cast and crew for a very rewarding evening of theatre and the very professional Front of House team for a warm welcome. This is a difficult play to produce well and I am sure it presented those involved with not a few challenges. However, the acting was really first rate and the production values high. Congratulations to all involved. I do hope that your audiences improved – it certainly warranted a good crowd.

Best wishes Sarah

ANNE BOLEYN



After 4 weeks of rehearsals, and with 5 weeks to go to show week (at time of writing) - most of the actors are at that stage of confusion and concern. Confusion as to where they should be on-stage, and concern as to whether they will ever learn the lines. As director, I am at the stage of quiet confidence - I know that no-one will walk through a wall when there actually is one there, and that (with a certain amount of nagging and looks of disappointment from me) all actors will be word-perfect. I am delighted with how everything is progressing - although with a cast of 21 actors, I do feel at times that I am back teaching with a class full of excitable children (so if I appear like a strict school teacher at times, I apologise). I hope the bare staging and thrust into the audience will interest our audiences - as well as challenge the actors. This is a great play - interesting, funny and educational - and with hard work will prove to be an excellent start to the season. Tickets are now on sale and the marketing machine is in full flow - handbills and posters are available from Lopping Hall on rehearsal nights.



We are still looking for a suitable chair (see photo left), and if anyone has some small leather-bound books that we could use for a bible please let me know.

Jean
tel: 07896 910 214

lads.chairman@gmail.com

ITEMS FOR PROMPTINGS

This is **your** newsletter please feel free to send anything you feel would interest the membership to Howard for inclusion (how_platt@yahoo.co.uk). Share your views on plays you have seen, restaurants you have eaten at, places you have visited.