

Promptings

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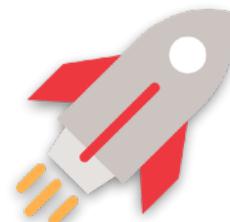
NODA Crit of
Pygmalion



My first stage
appearance



Our Next
Production



2019/20 season
launch event

Message from Jean



Wow! Three nights of all seats sold for *Pygmalion* (unfortunately not an actual bottom on every seat, as some seats were booked, but not claimed). This gave us a 96.8% seat utilisation, and over £600 profit on the show, and although we don't look at individual productions with regard to profit and loss, we are very pleased as it will help greatly for *Handbagged*, which will be costly with wig hire. Well done to everyone who sold tickets, distributed flyers and generally marketed the production. Of course, it isn't just about tickets sold and profit, but also the production itself. *Pygmalion* was a huge triumph of acting expertise, scrumptious set and costume and great technical and backstage work. Lindsay's NODA crit is inside Promptings and everyone involved (on-stage, backstage and FOH) should be very proud of the production.

The box office is open for *Handbagged* and although the take up has not been as immediate as for *Pygmalion*, we are certain it will be a popular production – so make sure you book your tickets. You can help with marketing by letting your friends know about the production and by collecting flyers from Lopping Hall and distributing them (I always keep a few in my bag and in my car – ready to pounce on unsuspecting strangers). The play is very funny, but also poignant and the cast of six are working hard, but also really enjoying themselves.

Although we are only four weeks into rehearsing *Handbagged*, we are already looking to the 2019/20 season and are having a **Season Launch on Friday 31st May**. This is a new venture for LADS, and we hope that it will interest people who may like to join LADS, either as a member or as audience. Please use the flyers to pass onto anyone who you think may want to come along (more information inside Promptings).

Social ... After-show party at **Richard and Barbara's on Saturday 13th** and don't forget the **End of Season Barbecue on Sunday 23rd June at my and Garry's house**. Everyone welcome – information inside.



Dates for your diary

31 st May	2019/20 SEASON LAUNCH – 8pm in Buckleys, Lopping Hall
9 th June	Set up for <i>Handbagged</i> – 9.30am start
13-15 th June	Production nights for <i>Handbagged</i>
15 th June	After show party – Richard and Barbara's house
16 th June	Set down – 10am start
17 th June	Crit and curry – 7.30pm Small hall
20 th June	Read through for <i>Pressure</i> , the 1st play of 2019/20 season
23 rd June	End of Season BBQ, from 1pm at Jean and Garry's
1 st July	AGM. 8pm Small hall
22 nd August	Read through for <i>Colder Than Here</i>



Members' News

New members: We would like to welcome Lucy Craig to LADS' ranks – Lucy supported LADS at *Pygmalion*, and will hopefully will get involved in our 2019/20 season. We are actively looking for new members, as we have had so many move away over the last year, so please encourage people to come along to our Season Launch on Friday 31st May.

Jean x

AGM

Please come along and support us at our AGM on Monday 1st July. This is your society and the AGM is the time we celebrate all we have achieved during the season. We spend an hour patting ourselves on the back and then retire to the Hollybush for drinks and chat. Come along ... I can assure you, it isn't a normal boring AGM! Val will be sending out the AGM notice and agenda and nomination forms at the end of May.

Do You Remember?

10 years ago: June 2009: *A Laughing Matter* by April de Angelis. Directed by Val Parker. Cast included: Iain Howland, Foster Barnett, John Haylett, Dan Cooper, Howard Platt, Christi Drew, Frances Dennis, Keri Jones, Tom Donoghue, David Stelfox, Jean Cooper, Eileen Stock, Roger Barker, Cathy Naylor, Jonica Brown



5 years ago: June 2014: *The Imaginary Invalid* by Moliere. Directed by Wendy Butler. Cast included: Iain Howland, Karen Rogers, Lorna Redburn, Eileen Stock, Howard Platt, Roger Barker, Tom Donoghue, Charlotte Rogers, Nick Martin, Phil Postings, Martin Howarth, Foster Barnett



End of season event



Don't forget to put Sunday 23rd June in your diary!! It is an end of season barbecue at Jean and Garry's (28 Woodland Way, Woodford Green).

The sun WILL shine, the gazebo will be out, and there will be scrumptious foody delights for all and a few games along the way! Bring some drink to share. There will be a small charge of £3 per head to help towards the food. Everyone is welcome – friends and family – but let Jean know you're coming so everyone can be catered for: (jean.famcooper@btinternet.com or 07896910214).

Launch Event for 2019/20 Season



Please spread the word about our Season 2019/20 Launch. This is a new idea for LADS and with your help it will be

a great way to attract new members as well as giving everyone a better idea about the plays we are doing next season. It will be from 8pm on Friday 31st May in *Buckley's*, Lopping Hall's newly refurbished bar. Please use the information attached and below to tell people about it - we want to reach out and raise the profile of LADS with the view of getting new audience and new members - right from the beginning of the season.

So if you have ever had a friend who has shown interest in your being a member of a drama society who has said "oh, I'd like to have a go at that" ... get them to come along. Or perhaps someone has said "that sounds like good fun, but I don't know what I could do" ... get them to come and find out.

We will be welcoming people with a drink and there will be displays and information about the society and the new season. We will also be having a couple of short talks: LADS and how you can get involved and how we choose plays. And also a short introduction to the plays for next season.

Please be proud of your society and get others involved!!

Handbagged



We are only a few weeks into rehearsal but thanks to the cast being well ahead with their line learning, we've been able to make excellent progress and equally importantly, we're all having a huge amount of fun. Although it's early days I'm confident that the play will be both extremely funny and heartbreakingly poignant. Despite the inevitable political content, 'Handbagged' is a play about relationships rather than politics and the cast are developing some wonderful characters to illustrate this fascinating period of modern history.

Please do all you can to sell tickets and support what promises to be a fantastic end to our season.

Cathy

NODA crit for Pygmalion

Thank you for inviting me to your production of Pygmalion. I was delighted to be able to attend. The story is well known, not least for its romanticised musical version, My Fair Lady. Having played the role of Eliza many many years ago, I was familiar with a lot of the text which seemed to be the same. I was so looking forward to seeing this on stage and I was not disappointed.

Choice of Play:

I totally understand the choosing of this play with 14 parts of varying size, a good cross section of male and female parts, and a well written script. The scene changes could have caused a great deal of problems but you seemed to simply accommodate these effortlessly.

Production:

The play was first performed in London in 1914 and the play was set a little earlier. This production had great depth and thoughtful direction with a simple, but effective, cleverly thought through set.

Continuity:

The play moved quickly and effortlessly along. There was one hiccup with loss of words and an incorrect name for someone but these were minor things and quickly forgotten.



Director:

Jean Cooper directed this wonderful piece and, to me, it was a study in how to do so. Each character seemed to have been choreographed.

There were no snarl ups, or overcrowding: everyone had their space in which to perform and it just worked beautifully. Each character knew precisely what their job was and how to do it. I really marvelled at how seamless the whole play was from beginning to end. This, on the whole, appeared to be a very experienced cast and one, I am sure, you enjoyed working with.



Principals:

Eliza Doolittle was played by Sarah Hudson. A huge role and one that is coveted by many. It is demanding, not least because of its size, but also the consistent cockney accent, then posh with cockney interjections which decreases as the play goes on. You captured Eliza at every turn. You portrayed a cheeky playful cockney attitude at the beginning, coupled with seeing an opportunity not to be missed. It was almost possible to see the cogs whirring round in your mind as to your next move and that was relayed to the audience. It seems so minor but, I would have liked you to have been a little more dishevelled in the opening scenes until Mrs. Pearce got hold of you, but as I said this was so minor given the rest of your performance. I so enjoyed the first scene in Mrs. Higgins' drawing room. Your timing and annunciation were spot on and even though we all knew what was coming, we waited with baited breath, having been titillated by you until led to the climax 'Walk? Not bloody likely'. Your expressionless face whilst expounding about your family was superb until we reached the denouement which you timed brilliantly. Moving through the play your fondness for Higgins was cloaked, very cloaked and it was clear yours was a business

arrangement rather than a romantic one, which I understand from the programme notes is exactly what Shaw had written. You moved from the cockney sparrow effortlessly to the charming, well groomed aspiring Eliza, not only in accent, but also physically. You scrubbed up well and your countenance matched. Yours was a great performance and although I know you were suffering from a throat infection we, the audience, would never have known.

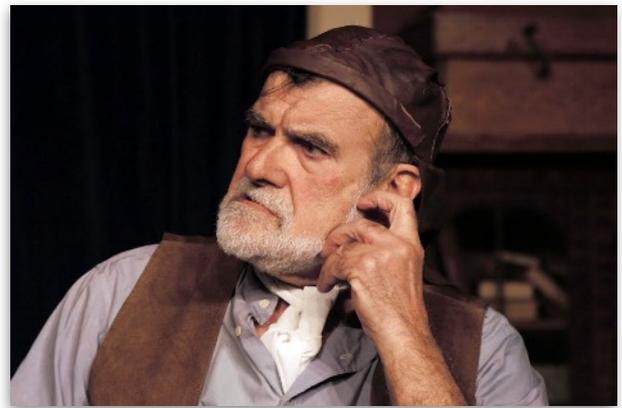


Very many congratulations.

Professor Higgins was played by Christian Mortimer. Congratulations to you. What a tour de force. Your quick, fast talking, energy filled and, exhausting, performance was something to watch. You, to me, really got under the skin of this character as Shaw had wanted and hydrated it in a way I had not previously seen. Although your delivery was fast, I understood and could hear every word. You wove into your portrayal idiosyncrasies that one might imagine Higgins would have and maintained them throughout, adeptly strutting about the stage but never getting in the way of others (nor they of you). Your characterisation could have irritated but it didn't and worked so well as a juxtaposition to Colonel Pickering. The relationship you developed with each character was plausible and almost palpable, particularly with the Colonel and your mother, Mrs. Higgins. I really do feel you managed, as the programme notes say, to portray Higgins as a likeable tyrant and bully. You were so caught up in the end result, that how to get there didn't really matter. Congratulations.

Colonel Pickering was played by Howard Platt. What a suave, sartorially elegant Colonel you

were. A real foil to Christian Mortimer's Higgins. Your measured delivery and steadfast composure was wonderful to watch. Your relationship with Higgins felt true and profound. Again all your dialogue could be heard clearly and your considerable experience shone through with your effortless moves and complete security in your own ability. I would have liked a bit more sympathy from Pickering towards Eliza but that was more from the written word than characterisation. Very well done on a memorable performance, you were in no way a second string to Higgins as can often



be the case.

Alfred Doolittle was played by Graham Milne. This is also a role with many long speeches, particularly the beginning of the second half. The perfect Doolittle, 'he's a stereotype of a bombastic barfly...with an oratorical twist'. Not surprisingly I couldn't have put it better than Shaw. You were clearly spoken and you looked the part, again perhaps a smudge here and there on the face and hands would have looked good but I am splitting hairs. You completely understood your character and I particularly liked your moment (well, several) when expounding about winning all the money cleverly, unwittingly, emphasizing the very reason why you had won. Congratulations!

Mrs Higgins was played by Karen Rogers. Another well formed and carefully thought through characterisation. Karen looked the part and easily retained her composure whilst dealing with the chaoticness of her son and his idiosyncrasies. You were sophisticated, strong, elegant and like everyone else in this play, we could hear every word.

Mrs Eynesford-Hill was played by Wendy Butler. I really enjoyed your interpretation of the financially strapped Mrs Eynesford-Hill. You were upper class (without being snooty) approachable, and likeable. Your delivery was clear and well timed and you very much looked that part. The relationship with your children was delightful and you appeared to be every bit the family.



Clara Eynesford-Hill was played by Lizzie Tucker. A lovely fresh joyful performance. A bit of a double act with her mother not understanding the lack of family wealth whilst pursuing the upper class life. Your clear delivery was excellent. Mrs. Pearce was played by Val Jones. An accomplished performance which I enjoyed very much. You were dour and stern with a soft centre. Your delivery was excellent and the maintenance of your Scottish accent was first rate.



Parlourmaid was played by Cathy Naylor. Again a lovely portrayal of a working maid in a posh house.

Freddy Eynesford Hill was played by Marcel Kay. A much smaller role than in the musical version. You looked very smart and you fitted in well with your mother and sister.

Costumes:

The costumes were superb, well thought through and of the period. Wigs and jewellery were of the period and enhanced the whole production.



Set and Props:

The set was designed and built by Garry Cooper. The set for me was a triumph. The Portico of St Paul's worked so well. I watched with baited breath as to how the columns would be dealt with but it was so cleverly designed with the top part being reeled upwards and the columns being taken off. The transition to the second act was smooth and cleverly done with members of the cast and stage crew all dressed in black LADS polos. It was like watching a ballet, each piece of furniture having its precise position and each member of the crew knowing precisely where to go. There were no collisions or hold ups. However, it was the change from Higgins Laboratory to Mrs Higgins Drawing Room which left me open mouthed. The whole set changed from a masculine dark room to a lovely light feminine drawing room with flats being swung round to reveal a recessed area, a garden room and lovely light decoration. It was all so very clever.

Lighting & sound:

The lighting and sound were well operated and without hitch. The incidental music was well chosen but unobtrusive. Congratulations to Sarah Biggs in her operation.

Front of House:

Again, I enjoyed a warm welcome meeting Jean Cooper once more.

Programme:

The programme was well laid out, easy to read and had interesting notes regarding Shaw, his views and the play. I enjoy looking at the photos of the cast and seeing how they look in "real life"! The NODA insignia was on the front cover as usual.

General:

I really enjoyed coming along to LADS once more. Thank you for inviting me. I hope the rehearsals for Handbagged are going well.

My first stage experience - Val Jones

I appeared on stage for the first time because I did poorly in my Latin exam at the end of my first year in secondary school. Let me explain...

When I started secondary school, back in the olden days, you worked your way through from the 1st form up to 6th form (none of this year 7, 8, 9 etc. stuff). I got into my local grammar school (yes, it was that long ago) and Latin was a compulsory subject for the first 3 years. At the end of the 1st year we were tested and then put into sets for the 2nd and 3rd year. I did not do well in my Latin exam and ended up in the bottom set. Sensibly the school recognised that

pupils in this set were not going to flourish linguistically. So, they decided to spend the next 2 years teaching us about the ancient civilisations of Rome and Greece instead. Learning about the ancient Roman way of life, (houses, clothing, hairstyles, food, education, past times, social and political structures) with the odd Latin word thrown in, to maintain the pretence that we were studying the language, suited me far better. I loved it.

In the 3rd year we moved onto ancient Greece. Of course, as part of the study of ancient Greek culture we had to cover Greek drama. Our enlightened teacher decided that the best way to help us learn about Greek drama was for us to read and perform an actual play. She wanted to do a comedy rather than tragedy and there was only one surviving ancient Greek comedy - *Dyskolos* by Menander (it translates as *The Grouch* or *The Curmudgeon*). I was given a leading part. I went to an all girls school so we did gender blind casting decades before it became trendy in the West End. I was cast as Sostratos, a young man who, thanks to the interference of the god Pan, falls in love with the grumpy old man's daughter. The play is about how Sostratos manages to deceive the grump, and court and marry his daughter. We performed the play in the school hall in front of proud parents, friends, other pupils and teachers. Our teacher was a language specialist, not a drama teacher. At that time there was no active drama group/club in my school and no staff members had an interest in it. So the set and staging was probably non-existent and the production was all very basic and low key. However, I threw myself into the role and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Sadly, there is no photographic evidence to share with you.

So. That was it for a while. At the time I was not aware of any opportunities locally for someone of my age. My school continued not to take drama seriously as a performing art. We just had to study the texts academically.

However, doing that play gave me the bug and 18 months later I got the opportunity to go on a 3 week long residential drama course run by my local education authority in the summer holidays. Again this was in the good old days, when local authorities had a far greater

influence over schools, had specialist subject advisors, had budgets to support them and it cost my parents nothing. The course gave me skills and opened my eyes to all the elements of theatre and drama (improvisation, movement, speech, make up, costume, props, stage management etc). I adored it and had a wonderful time. From it I discovered and joined my local amateur theatre (Altrincham Garrick) where I did a lot of back stage work and joined the Junior Garrick group. I also did a couple of plays with my local church group, over which I should probably draw a veil. For my first show with them, as a 17year old, I played the female lead in a comedy/farce, opposite a balding, 40/50 year old male lead wearing a toupee. It was excruciating and fortunately there are no photos of that.

So there you have it. It just goes to show that when you fail at one thing it can lead to a chance to try something else, to which you are much more suited, and which provides you with heaps more fun than declining nouns and conjugating verbs.

Val



STOP PRESS! - NODA AWARDS

I am so proud to announce that LADS has been awarded two NODA London District 6 awards. Best Female in a Play to Karen Rogers for Queen Eleanor in *The Lion in Winter*, AND Best Male in a Play to Christian Mortimer for Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion*. They will be considered for the Regional Awards which will be awarded at the NODA London Theatre Festival on June 9th.

Jean