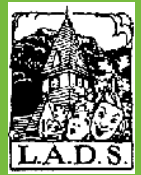


PROMPTINGS



ISSUE 83 - DECEMBER 2014

WWW.LADS.ORG.UK



To LADS

I'm going to start with a reminder; LADS is made up of a fantastic group of people who, through a lot of time, passion and energy, produce award winning drama. You are part of this and you should be proud of yourself and the society. With this in mind I want

us all to talk more about our activities and take an active step in moving the society forwards.

The issue we face is that LADS needs to do more to keep pace with the present demands that are placed on it. One example of this is that since the new hall hire costs have come into effect we have made a loss on every play. Though we have a healthy reserve in the bank account it is obvious that this model cannot continue indefinitely. The General Committee does not want to curb director's or set designer's visions as this will only hurt the final performance, therefore simply put we need to sell more tickets.

The challenge is for every member in the group to sell three more tickets for the January production. This would dramatically increase the audience numbers which I would hope turn into future tickets sales as well. So let's all get out there talking about LADS and then seeing it through to checking that tickets have been purchased.

Some of you may have noticed that there were LADS ticket vouchers being sold behind the bar during the performances of *These Shining Lives*. These would make a good xmas present for people that have expressed an interest in your activities in local drama but never actually attended. For more information about these please contact Lisa Maule.

Whilst on the topic, Lisa has let the committee know that she will be standing down from the ticket

secretary position at the end of this season. I want to thank her for all her hard work whilst being on the General Committee, especially with continuing to develop the process of ticket sales that was started by Andrew Rogers. If you are interested in this role please do talk to Lisa or myself about what the role entails.

I can't believe that I am writing this but well done to those people that have read to this point! I have heard from a few people that some society members are not reading Promptings. This is a shame as it is produced for the membership about the activities that are happening in the society and a lot of work goes into creating it. Sending information electronically allows the society to make the media much more interesting and it also saves us money. However this doesn't work if the emails aren't opened and read. Another benefit of email is that it is easy to distribute. Please forward emails that include the upcoming play handbill to prospective audience members. Of course this doesn't replace popping into Lopping Hall on a rehearsal evening and picking up flyers and posters to distribute.

On a lighter note I do hope that as you will be able to join us at the LADS Xmas social which is taking place at Lopping Hall at 8pm on Tuesday 16th of December. It is an informal gathering which I am sure will involve lots of fun and laughter. The bar will be open but please feel free to bring along festive themed nibbles.

Good luck to all those that are actively involved in *The Curious Savage* and to all LADS members for the challenge that I set. To those of you that I don't see before the festive season, I hope that you all have a great break and that there are many happy moments with family and friends.

Dan

LADS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 16 December	LADS Xmas Party
Sunday 11 January	Set up for <i>The Curious Savage</i> from 9.30am
Mon. 12 January - Weds. 14 January	Rehearsals, Tech and Dress <i>The Curious Savage</i>
Thurs. 15 January - Sat. 17 January	Performances, <i>The Curious Savage</i>
Saturday 17 January	After show party, at Jean and Garry's, 28 Woodland Way
Sunday 18 January	Set down from 10.00am
Monday 19 January	Crit. night and curry from 7.30pm
Thursday 22 January	Read through for <i>Ghosts</i> , 8pm Small Hall

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members (and guests):

Charlotte Pope and Rebecca Phillips who will both be appearing in *The Curious Savage*. We are also very grateful to Pam McDonald, who is guesting for us in *The Curious Savage*.

Maria Tyler helped with props on *These Shining Lives* and is a new member.

Peter Huber, Neil Grosvenor and Chelsea Camp will all be taking parts in *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* and we welcome back Ashley Flexen, who played Jack in *My Boy Jack* and is also joining LADS for a part in *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*.

PLAY SELECTION AND CASTING

With one successful production under our belt and the next one well into rehearsal, the 2014/15 season is well under way.

The play reading committee has started the task of reading and selecting all the plays for next season but we are struggling to find a good murder mystery to add to our list. If you know of a play that would be suitable for LADS, please let me know.

We have held a few new member evenings recently and I am delighted to say that we have recruited several new members, some of whom have already been cast or are working backstage for *The Curious Savage* and *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* so a very warm welcome to you all. We still need to increase our membership for acting, backstage and audience members so if you know anyone who may be interested in joining, encourage them to contact me and get involved.

I'm sure that this will be mentioned elsewhere in Promptings but it is increasingly vital that we sell more tickets for each of our productions and the best way to do this is word of mouth so please do what you can to help. If you are not involved in a production, come to see it and support other LADS members, we all like to perform in front of a full auditorium. The dates of all our productions are on the website so make sure they are in your diary. LADS are now on Twitter and can be found at @loughtondrama. Please follow us and re

tweet our messages and join our Facebook group and share our status updates. If you would like to help with marketing or have any ideas about how we can promote our plays and the society, please contact Jean.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Christmas social on 16th December, resplendent in your best festive attire.

Cathy

ADVERTISING IN OUR PROGRAMMES

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO MAY WISH TO ADVERTISE IN THE NEW FULL-COLOUR LADS PROGRAMME?

Please let me have their details and I will send them a media package. Flexible rates are available, but the basic price is £50 for a full A5 portrait ad, and £30 for a A6 landscape ad.

Jean - 07896 910214.

TICKET SALES

WE NEED TO SELL MORE TICKETS LADS needs YOU to sell tickets... Marketing the society and our plays will raise the profile of LADS in the area, but it is generally accepted that the people that actually come and watch a play by an amateur company for the first time almost always knows someone in the company. Please talk to your friends and relations about LADS, and sell them tickets - not just for the plays you are involved in, but for EVERY play!! If they come along and enjoy it, make sure they know about the whole season.

NODA CRIT. FOR 'THESE SHINING LIVES' - JACQUI STEADMAN

I was very happy to cover for your Regional Rep, Andrew Rogers who was involved in this production, and to once again witness the vision of LADS in putting on a play that is so little-known. It takes a lot of courage to perform plays of this ilk and, under the experienced and

sensitive hand of Karen Rogers, the audience were drawn into the lives of these young women in their attempt to make better lives for themselves and their families. I was also pleased that there was some background about the writer and the play in the programme notes, thus enabling us to concentrate on the performances and the enactment of the story. For me, plays which are, in fact, true stories are always so powerful, and one leaves the theatre both thoughtful and thankful that those days are over.



Roz Gerrie and Tom Donoghue

The simple set, which used different levels to indicate different locations, worked very well to illustrate different venues in which the play takes place, with just the work benches needing to be brought into view to indicate the factory. You made very good use of the side aprons too, as the doctor's surgery and the judicial court. Visuals on the back syc helped in this respect to set the scenes without the need for protracted changes, thus keeping the pace of the play uninterrupted. It certainly helped to show the conditions in which the girls in the factory worked. The lighting on various parts of the stage when the venue changed, was well executed. Take care, when working with accents, that they are maintained throughout the performance. There were a couple of places where they did slip a little.

There was a very good introduction to the story in Catherine's opening speech to the audience – full of hope for the future and excitement about the opportunities opening up for women in the first part of the 20th century. At various points during the action of the play Catherine addresses the audience in this way, creating a very intimate atmosphere in which to watch the development of the story. Although this was initially Catherine's story it eventually expanded to include all the girls, Frances, Charlotte and Pearl who had formed such a tight bond they became like family. The four of them made a very good acting team

with clearly drawn personalities and characteristics which were maintained throughout the play.



Martin Howarth and Andrew Rogers

Roz Gerrie was remarkable as Catherine, the pivotal role in the play. She seemed to inhabit the character from the time she stepped onto the stage and was totally believable all the way through. Such was her conviction that the job about which she was so nervous would make such a tremendous difference to her husband and family and enhance their standard of living, that she was determined to succeed. This conviction was so strong that she was loathe to think that the eventual changes in her health could be attributed to her working environment. This 'hopeful' attitude permeated the whole of her performance in Act I. However, when it was obvious to her that there was something seriously wrong (her aches and pains and the 'glow' of her hands) she seemed to find an inner strength in spite of her fears.

Her husband Tom (Tom Donoghue) was everything a young husband should be and it was obvious that he and Catherine had a very strong relationship. He showed initial reluctance that she would not be in the home full time but supported her decision to try for this job. As the story unfolded it became apparent that Tom was a more complex character than was at first thought. We learnt that because of the nature of his work (on high girders) he lived with the daily knowledge that one false move could result in him being killed and consequently never see his wife or children again. This fear was almost rung from him when Catherine told him of the pains in her legs and ankles, and he intimated that this was the price she had to pay for being in employment. This side of Tom's character was nicely observed but, I was rather bemused by the sudden anger Tom showed during this conversation because it didn't seem to have any build-up to it, and all anger has a 'bubbling' stage. He showed good restrained emotion when talking

about how he was going to manage without his wife to Mr Reed, who appeared to be completely indifferent to his situation.



Liz Adams, Claire Taylor, Lorna Redman, Roz Gerrie

Frances (Claire Taylor), Charlotte (Liz Adams) and Pearl (Lorna Redburn) were the established workers in the factory and into whose company Catherine was introduced. Charlotte was obviously the more chatty, sarcastic one showing a saucy rapport with Mr Reed. Frances and Pearl were more acquiescent and respectful as far as he was concerned, but all three were, eventually, happy to accept Catherine into their circle, especially as she proved to be a good worker. They shared lots of happy moments – like the day out on the lake – and were supportive of each other when told they were all developing symptoms of radium poisoning. There were no histrionics (which I feel would have been inappropriate), just restrained solidarity.



Peter Fox

Mr Reed (Peter Fox) was a true company man showing an incredible ability to explain away the worries and the fear of the girls. He spoke with such conviction that one supposes that he was not in possession of all the facts himself. Even when presented with the evidence of the damage being done to the health of the radium girls he was reluctant to accept it. He had a well hidden

ruthless streak which came to the fore when he told Catherine the company were letting her go, but tempered with a kindness by offering her an extra week's wages.

It is Dr Rowntree (Dave Hinkley) who casually praises the use of radium in the treatment of various illnesses when Catherine queries its use. Likewise with the Company Doctor (Andrew Rogers) who tried to persuade her that her symptoms had absolutely nothing to do with the radium. Both small scenes were nicely played DSR. It is Dr Dalitsch (Martin Howarth with a strong German accent) who has the unenviable task of telling the girls about the truth of their condition, which he does calmly, but honestly. Their interview with Dr Dalitsch was very emotional for the girls coupled with the realisation of what their future would be now that they had a firm diagnosis. However, he at least shows some understanding in recommending that they see a lawyer about suing for damages.



Jon Gilbert

Leonard Grossman (Andrew Rogers) is the lawyer who takes on their case, not for the money, but because he genuinely believes they have a case, although he is honest enough to convince them it will be a long and difficult case. The Judge (Martin Howarth) looked and spoke like a member of the judiciary.

The Radio Announcer (Dave Hinkley), Reporter 1 (Dave Hinkley) and Reporter 2 (Jon Gilbert) were all played with the right amount of sensation seeking over the case. The son (Dave Hinkley) and daughter (Claire Taylor), who asked in their innocence why Catherine was unwell, bore the brunt of her anxiety when she pushed them away so that they could not see her pain.

The cameo roles reviewed in the last three paragraphs were all taken by members of the cast, but so engrossing were the story and the

performances that this didn't matter – they became essential 'bricks' in the building of the action, and whose contributions were very necessary for the telling of the story. The interaction between these characters and the radium girls was always appropriate and convincing.



Claire Taylor, Liz Adams, Lorna Redman, Dave Hinkley

The dates on the visuals showed the passage of time which was helpful and necessary as none of the cast had a change of costume and no opportunity to 'age' as such. It was obvious though that the effects of the radium were causing changes in their physical condition and this showed gradually in the way the girls moved and carried themselves.

At the end, after Catherine's death, when she appears again tall and well, she talks, with some emotion, to the audience about the final time the four girls went to the lake and she talks about the other girls who have died as a result of the radium poisoning, saying they were all 'shining', both materially and metaphorically. The same 'shining' hope perhaps that she had in the beginning of the play.

Throughout the play and, I suspect, because of the association with clocks and watches time seemed to be at the centre of all the action. Catherine talks about it in each of her speeches to the audience, almost as if she is being carried towards her allotted span of years. The realisation of the actual time between the winning of the appeal and her death being only 21 days was a very sobering moment, and it seemed very appropriate that the play should end with the light of the moon and stars (both timeless) on an empty stage – a very powerful image I thought.

I thought this was an exceptional piece of theatre, well acted and sensitively handled, and although the content of the play was seriously questioning the ethics of big business against the welfare of the working populace, the abiding emotion, I felt,

was of hope and love. Congratulations on achieving such a good balance throughout.

Jacqui Steadman

LADS TICKET SECRETARY

Do you enjoy talking to people and organising things?

If so, the LADS ticket secretary role could be right up your street!

Lisa & Lucy are stepping down in order to concentrate on family life with baby Ted, so the committee is seeking a new volunteer to take on this simple and satisfying role! The new person would need to start at the beginning of the new season 2015-16, ie October 2015 would be the first play. A handover and shadowing process with Lisa & Lucy could be offered towards the end of this season.

The ticket secretary:

- Is an officer on the general committee
- Receives all advance ticket bookings
- Manages all phone and email bookings through the TicketSource website
- Staffs the Box office for each play, selling tickets on the door

The best things about the job are:

- You get to speak to our audience very regularly, and build relationships with all our regulars
- You get to be involved and part of the team for every show, but in a predictable way!

If you're interested, contact Lisa who can tell you lots more about the role.

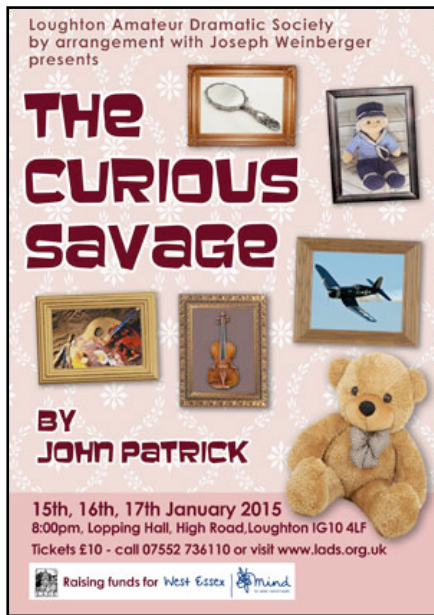
Call 07811 471948 or email lads.boxoffice@gmail.com

LADS TICKET VOUCHERS

Still racking your brains over what to get for Christmas presents? Why not buy LADS Ticket Vouchers? These can be redeemed for tickets in one or more LADS seasons and are a great way of promoting our plays and drawing in new audiences.

Call 07811 471948 or email lads.boxoffice@gmail.com

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE



At the time of writing , we are only entering our 3rd week of rehearsals, so although I obviously cannot rave about how wonderful everything is, I can report that we have a full cast, that everyone is enthusiastic about the play, working hard and we are all getting along splendidly. I am full of confidence that this will be a delightful play which will warm up the cold January evenings. If anyone should fancy being involved in *The Curious Savage*, I am still looking for a Production Assistant to be my right-hand man or woman. Any takers?

I am pleased to say that there are signs of early line learning, so I thank all the actors for this - it makes my job a lot easier when actors are confident with the text. Please do make use of Babs and her offer to help with line learning - thank you Babs for continuing to offer this service.

We need a young boy for the end of the play - aged about 5 - he has no lines and will only be on-stage for a couple of minutes in a tableau. He is not a character, so will not be on the cast list (but we will make sure we thank him in the programme for his input). Does anyone have a son, nephew, brother, grandson who may be able to do this for us? If so, please let me know.

We are supporting and raising funds for West Essex Mind during the production, and I will want to do some box rattling in Loughton for them in Loughton in December, (whilst giving out handbills about the play) - so please be ready to rally round when you see the plea for help in your email in-box.

Props and furniture needed for *The Curious Savage*:

We are currently looking for the following items - if you can lend us any of these, or have any leads for where we can find them, please get in touch:

- Small low coffee table
- Small pouffe
- Artists easel
- Two upright chairs or two small armchairs
- Piano stool
- Boy Doll or ragdoll (preferably similar to the one in the poster)
- Carpet

Note: period of the play is early 1950's

Many thanks,

Jean - 07896 910214.