

Promptings

In this issue



NODA Crit for
'Jimmy Dean'



My first stage
appearance



'California
Suite'



'From Russia
with Love'

Message from Jean



Thank you so much to everybody who came and saw and sold tickets for *Come Back to the 5 and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*. We have had lots of praise for the production, with people being a little confused in the first half, then being pleased with themselves for working out the reveals in the second half. It was a very interesting, thought-provoking play and the cast and crew all enjoyed working on it. The NODA report on the play is inside.

Unfortunately, the sales were very low compared to recent productions, with only 249 bums on seats over the three nights – compared to 384 for *Breaking the Code* and 343 for *The Elephant Man*. I believe that this is due partly to the very bad weather we had leading up to show-week, so that people did not feel confident enough to book their tickets, and then having not booked, they decided not to come along anyway ... the warm fire and TV will always win on a cold, wet night!

So, you know what I am going to say next, don't you. Please, please, please make sure you book to see both *California Suite* (7th, 8th and 9th June) and *From Russia with Love* (18th May – one night only) AND give out handbills and tell everyone about the productions. Share posts and re-tweet twitters. What you say matters, and word of mouth is the best marketing.

LADS 2018/19 season has almost been finalised, and will be published as soon as we have the licences for all 4 plays ... so watch this space ... I would like to take the opportunity to thank Karen, as Artistic Director, and those on the play selection committee for their hard work – choosing, reading and making informed judgements on upwards of 40 plays. I look forward to seeing the fruits of your labours. The read-through for the 1st play will be on Weds 13th June at 8pm.

Check out the calendar in Promptings for everything that is coming up. You will have had information about the NODA London Festival weekend on 22nd and 23rd June. We would like to see as many LADS' members there to support *The Memory of Snow* in the adjudicated Showcase on the Saturday afternoon – maybe after doing a workshop in the morning; and then again on the Sunday at the Awards ceremony where we would hope to have some nominations. Information on the end of season event on Saturday 30th June is inside – it is something completely different! The LADS AGM is on 2nd July – watch out for papers in June – we will be needing people to go onto play selection and the general committee, so just let me know if you would like some information.



Dates for your diary

30th April	Lopping Hall AGM - if you live in Loughton you can vote to elect Directors - see article
13th May	Loughton Farmers' Market. 0930-1300 Help needed – call Cathy.
18th May	<i>From Russia with Love</i> featuring <i>The Memory of Snow</i> - Lopping Hall
3rd June	Set up for California Suite” – 9.30am start
7th-9th June	Production nights for “California Suite”
9th June	After show party – Richard and Barbara's
10th June	Set down – 10am start
11th June	Crit and curry – 7.30pm Small hall
13th June	Read through for 1st play of 2018/19 season – 8pm - Willingale Room
22nd June	NODA workshops and Showcase - Radlett Theatre
23rd June	NODA workshops and London Awards - Radlett Theatre
30th June	End of season social – Hidden City
2nd July	LADS AGM. 8pm Small hall

From Russia With Love



- at the Loughton Festival

Rehearsals have started on “The Memory of Snow” by Sian Rowland, which we are producing as part of the "From Russia with Love" event with The Loughton Festival on FRIDAY 18TH MAY.

ONE NIGHT ONLY -Tickets available from:
www.lads.org.uk; box office: 07552 736 110;
lads.boxoffice@gmail.com

The evening will begin with music from pianist, Mikhail Bozylev, followed by LADS’ production of the play “The Memory of Snow”, introduced by its playwright, Sian Rowland – “One hundred years since the execution of the Russian Royal Family, the play deals with the incarceration of the four Romanov sisters during the 18 months before their deaths in July 1918. It is a moving portrayal of how love can win through in the most hopeless of situations”. After the interval, there will be a live performance from Daria Kulesh. Daria is a rising star in the UK folk scene with her striking voice and strong Russian and Ingush heritage.

Please come along and support LADS at The Loughton Festival – as it is only one night, it is quite expensive to produce, so we need to ensure we sell out. Should you find you can’t make Friday 18th May, you will have a second chance to see “The Memory of Snow” – as we are producing a shortened version for the Showcase at the NODA Festival Weekend.

NODA Festival Weekend

The cost is £5 per day. There are workshops being run on both mornings (at extra cost) starting at 0930 hours. Having attended two workshops last year, I can thoroughly recommend them.

You can view a youtube video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6N7KyTCv1Y> – it contains photographs from last year's workshops and if you look carefully you can see photos of Cathy and 'yours truly'. The workshops for 2018 are as follows:

Saturday morning Workshops:

Accents for Performers: Gemma Wright of Rose Bruford College (3 hrs - £15)

Avenue Q and other puppetry skills: Nigel Plaskitt, Puppet Coach on Avenue Q (2 hours - £10)

Pantomime – Buttons, Twanky and a Mop - Nigel Ellacott, Summer School tutor (3 hrs - £15)

Sunday morning Workshops:

The Big Sing: Peter Allanson, Freelance MD (2.5 hrs - £10)

Developing the Character: Shirley Wootten, Freelance Director (2.5 hrs - £10)

Comedy in Shakespeare: Michael Corbidge, Senior Voice Coach at the RSC (3 hrs - £15)

Hands on Make-Up for Ladies and Men: Sue Robb-King, Make-Up Artist (2 hrs - £10)

The Showcase (judged performances) is on the afternoon of Saturday (23rd) which LADS are taking part in. We are performing "The Memory of Snow" by Sian Rowland. It would be great to have support for this from LADS' members.

On Sunday afternoon (24th) there will be the presentation of the NODA London Awards - the nominations and district winners for which will be announced on 5th May on the NODA website. So we are keeping our fingers crossed that LADS will be on the list!!

Tickets for the Festival and the workshops can be booked via the box office on 07597 973490. Online booking is available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/noda-london

Do You Remember?

5 years ago: June 2013

My Boy Jack by David Haig. Directed by Jean Cooper. Cast included: Iain Howland, Cathy Naylor, Camilla Steel, Ashley Flexen, John Haylett, Jon Gilbert, Dan Cooper, Dean Bartholomew, Peter Galloway, Tom Donoghue.

10 years ago: June 2008

Servant to Two Masters by Carlo Goldoni.

Directed by Andrew Rogers. Cast included: Emma Middleton, Irene Jones, Sophie Robertson, Iain Howland, Foster Barnett, Roger Barker, Andrew Rogers, John Haylett, Martin Howarth, Paul Mansfield.

25 years ago: June 1993

A Midsummer's Night Dream by William Shakespeare.

Directed by Babs Oakley. Cast included: Bill Caldwell, Dorothy McCall, Foster Barnett, Jean Cooper, Chris Harris, Andrew Rogers, Karen Rogers, Martin Yeldham, John Haylett, Sylvia Zilesnick, Irene Elkins, Christine Eckley, Wyn Whatson, Val Parker, Sue Cole, John Howard, Iain Caldwell, Stafford Bunce, Martin Howarth, Roy Dart, Jon Denne.



NODA Crit. for 'Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean

Thank you for, once again, giving me the opportunity to report on your latest production. The programme was, as always, highly informative and gave a lot of information, parts of which helped the audience in their understanding of the background to the play, which was a story of a small town where most people know everything and can keep secrets because they understand why they are secrets.

It was also a play where the audience had to keep up with the action and the dialogue as it was all relevant to the story, with Act I setting the scene and Act II following on from the revelation just before the interval.



There was excellent music from 1975 for the beginning of the play as that was where most of the action was set, and then from 1955 because that was mainly the era after the interval. Music adds so much atmosphere to any piece and puts the audience in the mood for what is to come.

The excellent and well thought out set had the right balance between authentic and busy. It was 'fussy' with all the paraphernalia of a Five and Dime store in the mid-50s. The half walls worked well because there was nothing on them to detract from the action and it was very important that the audience were focussed on the players in order not to miss any of the dialogue. Entrances were

used well and the store room gave another acting area that was authentically equipped with barrels and crates.

Gathering the props for this play must have been a nightmare, but was well worth the effort – one was actually looking at a very convincing piece of social history in mid-1950s small town America.

Lighting and sound, both design and operation were well handled and very appropriate to the action and the setting, particularly the implementation of the flashbacks to the 50s. Flashbacks were convincing with the darkened stage and the working fan. Any of the 70s characters who were on the stage, apart from Juanita, during the flashbacks were suitably still if appropriate.

Costumes were well thought through and reminiscent of the timescales involved, with hairstyles and make up all suitable and appropriate for the characters. The striking red bomber jackets in Act II helped in the identification of the younger protagonists, without looking out of place in the overall setting. Joe's make up was particularly convincing.



The casting was excellent and the characters well defined, and the mix of players worked particularly well. Accents, which were not easy considering the geographical setting of the play, were consistent throughout, although they could have benefitted from a bit more volume, but that may have been because we came on the first night. Once one was 'tuned in' it was

much clearer. The relationship between all the characters was genuine – their feelings obvious and unsophisticated.

Act I served to set the scene in the 70s showing, with the aid of flashbacks, where everyone's particular life journey had brought them. The story of their youth was well portrayed by Mona, Sissy and Joe in Act I. Act II, on the other hand, was highly charged with revelations and confessions.



Juanita (Jean Cooper) the very Christian woman who, though somewhat bigoted in her opinions but protective of her husband's memory, finally had to acknowledge what she knew of her husband's real personality. A very down to earth figure but highly religious. There was sufficient 'busyness' to give depth to the character without losing either the words or the accent.

Mona (Cathy Naylor) was a fantasist, very fragile, often rather fey and living in an unreal world coloured by her experiences on the set of Giant, feeling that she had been 'chosen' and convincing herself of the paternity of her son around whom she had built her entire existence. Her asthma seemed to be psychosomatic in Act II presumably caused by the stress of the lies she had told and the secret surrounding the father of her child. All her feelings in Act II were visible on her face until she was finally forced to face the truth.

Sissy (Dolleen Howlett) was a flirt and a bit of a sexpot of the day, but whose emotional revelations about her mastectomy, her plastic boobs and the final disintegration of her

relationship with Lester kept her grounded and consequently more understanding of Jimmy Dean's desire to escape the smothering love of his mother, Mona. She displayed a brittleness which served to cover her deepest feelings of failure and inadequacy when her husband left.



The complex character of Joanne was well interpreted by Karen Rogers who seemed to have returned for revenge because she knew the truth about the night on the porch at the 'Reata' ranch house, and that the child to whom Mona had given birth was not, in fact, James Dean's. From her initial entrance I felt there was something unreal about her. Her walk, the way she moved her head and hair, and then how she leaned on the counter in Act II. Somehow Karen had managed to maintain some slightly masculine traits to overlay her femininity as Joanne.



The reaction from each of them when Joanne reveals who she really was/is was so well delivered to the point of being almost unbelievable.

Young Mona (Sarah Vickers) and young Sissy (Shea Donovan) were exuberant youngsters and delighted with each other on Mona's return to the town to help improve her health which in Act I could have been real. There was a genuine closeness with Joe due to their singing act and the time they spent together.

Joe (Joshua Sowerbutts) was a troubled young



man, persecuted because of his perceived strangeness and his involvement in the singing act with the girls....a forerunner of his decision to change his sex. The rather earthy description of his rape was delivered with both conviction and shame.

Edna Louise (Sophie Gilbert) had led a very simple life running a home and producing children, although she appeared happy with her lot. She was, however, quite astute in her summation of Stella Mae's life with its lack of children and family. It was very touching how all the others accepted her and how Joanne boosted her confidence by telling her she glowed, a compliment which Edna Louise pathetically accepted.

Stella Mae (Elisa Thomas), although brash and impatient with Edna Louise was not as shallow as she appeared and perhaps that sarcasm and brashness hid a life of disappointment and unhappiness.

The gathering together of all the actors on the stage (from both eras) worked particularly well and the red bomber jackets helped that. The young Mona, Sissy and Joe integrated with the adults Stella Mae and Edna Louise, who

managed to transport themselves back to that era emotionally, so fitting with the youth and buoyancy of the other three – the positioning helped enormously too.

This was ensemble playing at its best. Each finely drawn character impacted greatly on the others, all of them having a secret that had been kept hidden.

My congratulations to you all on another fine achievement in the LADS' canon.

Jacquie Stedman
Councillor – NODA London



**A message from
Loughton Town
Council**

On behalf of the Town Mayor, Cllr Phillip Abraham, I would like to thank you for inviting him to the production of 'Come back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean' last week. Councillor Abraham said that once again LADS put on a wonderful production with outstanding performances from all involved and he thoroughly enjoyed the American accents!

Thank you once again for the invitation.



**Hidden City
End of season event
Saturday 30th June**

"A mystery journey across the city". We have decided to do something completely different for the end of season event. We will be doing a walk through the city, organised by the Hidden City company. In teams of four, you solve a trail of cryptic clues, which are sent to your phone by text – which lead you to a location – you solve the clue, text it back and then you get the next clue. There are 12 to 20 clues and it takes between 2 and 4 hours to solve (depending on how well your team does). It costs £15 per person, and that must be paid in advance.

INTERESTED? We will need to know numbers in advance as we need to book – so please contact Val and let her know your interest. Val's contact details are: valerieajones55@gmail.com – 07957487718.

NOT INTERESTED OR ABLE TO DO THE WALKING? The quizzers/walkers will be back in Loughton early evening for drinks/food – so you can meet up with them and join in the revelry!!

My first stage experience - Wendy Butler

Having lived in or around this area all my life (except for boarding school), my drama experiences have all taken place locally. The only trouble is, with my increasing age the memories have faded and I have nobody left to refer to to confirm the detail, but this is how I recall it.

Like so many others, my very first performance was as a shepherd in the Sunday school nativity play. I grew up in Epping and the Congregational Church was at the bottom of our road. At the age of three I went along with my friend, Alison. Her sister Avril used to take us across the road, but I'm not sure she stayed for the service and my parents certainly



weren't interested in attending regularly.

The play was uneventful as I recall, in that nobody ran back to their parents or started crying, but it was a lovely happy environment, and I can record it as a positive experience.

From three I also started ballet and later Greek dance at The Trimby School of Dance, mainly at St Mary's church hall in Loughton. Displays,

however, were held at Whitebridge County Junior School. To a youngster they were impressive affairs and the "big girls" took leading roles in the subject story. The photo is either of the *Firebird* or *The Frog Prince* – I really can't remember which. You will spot me there in a white tunic. I really loved dancing, particular Greek with the imaginative "nature rhythms" we made up, imitating something from nature, whether a squirrel or a snowflake.



At junior school we put on annual pantomimes at The Sir James Hawkey Hall, which has an impressive stage. The year group put on a performance and my scrap book tells me the one pictured is *Bubble and Squeak*. This must have been when I was around ten years old. Don't be misled by my central position – I was a relative nobody! However, I did always have wonderful costumes made by my nanna on her treddle sewing machine. I'm not sure how we would have got by without her – my mum was not handy that way. The show I enjoyed most at this period was *The Kings Breakfast* by A A Milne. If you don't know it, you can look up the playscript via Google – it's great fun!

Boarding school was notable for my first attempt at scriptwriting; co-writing the sixth form entertainment for sixth formers to perform to the rest of the school. It contained songs with revised lyrics and some in jokes we certainly thought were hilarious. We did not get expelled or reproached, but no one signed us up either! It is also here that I joined the choir and grew to love harmony singing. Apart from singing in chapel the big performance was Mozart Requiem at Haileybury Boys School with their choir.

So.....Am Dram. Where did I start? It was West Essex Players, a now defunct society which put on shows in the hall at the top of Palmerston Road. I played Maggie in Francis Durbridge's *Suddenly at Home*. After two scenes I was duly bumped off and was supposed to lay still on the sofa under a sheet. Jean will not be surprised to learn that I had a fit of the giggles and my shaking could be noticed from the audience. It is something I had to struggle with for a long time to overcome and it was a feature of rehearsals for my first speaking role with LADS, *When We Are Married*. Straight in at the deep end with Yorkshire accent and bossy demeanour – how I loved it! My “husband” Mike Smith left the society soon after and never came back!!

My love of singing continued after school and I joined St Mary's Chigwell Church choir which at the time had an enthusiastic choir master, Graham Grant, who arranged for the choir to sing in various cathedrals for a week in the summer holidays. Good friends from there invited me to join them at CROADS for *The Gipsy Princess*. I was so nervous, but everyone was friendly and there was no audition, so no problem. Enjoyment of this led us on to The Ivor Evans choir which performed operas at KMT and competed in Eisteddfods. So I have sung in Welsh, while hardly understanding a word of it, and one year we were winners.

The first opera I was in was *La Traviata* – what a thrill to be “in” that ballroom with my friends singing sublime music and watching the back of the lead soprano move as she filled her lungs before uttering. For teenagers and early twentysomethings we found it thrilling and amazing.

There is quite a gap before I returned to CROADS after having the children and I began singing lessons. I am reliably informed my first solo singing role was as Ruth in *Pirates of Penzance* in April 2008 – a role I shared two nights on with two nights off, in the chorus. It was quite hard work remember both – but a

very rewarding experience. Soon after this, I won the role of The Queen of the Fairies in *Iolanthe* outright.

All this other background does not take away from LADS. My love of drama is mainly for the serious plays. I remember seeing *The Devils Disciple* with my mum when I was still at school and found it amazing. I have had opportunities with LADS to do some great parts, not available with many societies. It is hard to pick, but I think my favourite might have been Ruth in *Entertaining Angels*.

Coming soon to Lopping Hall...

Loughton Operation Society (LOS) present the much loved musical *Gus and Dolls* from 9th-12th May.

Tickets available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/los or by calling 07940 488583

LOS Proudly presents

A Musical Fable of Broadway
Based on a Story and Characters of Damon Runyon

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9th - 12th MAY 2018

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FOR BOX OFFICE & MORE INFORMATION PLEASE RING OR TEXT:
07940 488 583

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with
Music Theatre International (Europe)
All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTT Europe
www.mtishows.co.uk

There will be quiz night to raise funds for the Lopping Endowment Trust on Sunday 26th May (starting 7pm for 7.30pm). Tickets are £8 . For more information, call 020 8508 1660 or email loppinghallmanager@gmail.com



Lopping Hall AGM

The Lopping Hall annual general meeting is on Monday 30th April at 8:00pm (in the main hall).

As well as presenting the annual report and the accounts, the aim of the meeting is to elect 3 Directors - two for three years and one for two years. All Loughton residents are eligible to vote.

Anyone who wants to stand for election to the board of Directors needs to submit their nomination by 23rd April - see below

California Suite



Rehearsals are now underway for California Suite. This classic Neil Simon comedy is a great finale to our season and features four stories in in one play.

This is Christian’s directorial debut for LADS and Liz will be trading the boards again after much too long an absence. Please support this by spreading the word and don’t forget to buy your ticket/s which are on sale now.

www.lopping-hall.org.uk

THE LOPPING ENDOWMENT

The Directors give notice that the

133rd Annual Meeting

and
ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
will be held at

LOPPING HALL, LOUGHTON

on
MONDAY 30th APRIL 2018
at 8.00 pm

when the ACCOUNTS and REPORT for the year ended 31st December 2017 will also be presented

Notice is also given that it will be necessary to elect THREE DIRECTORS, two for three years, and one for two years. The names of persons for nomination must be entered on a form to be obtained from the SECRETARY at LOPPING HALL.

This form must be delivered to the SECRETARY, duly completed, on or before Monday 23rd April 2018. The names of the candidates duly nominated will be announced at the above meeting and the election of the Directors will then be proceeded with and completed.

Persons attending the Meeting are reminded that under the Scheme all those residents on the Electoral Register in the Parish of Loughton, and the Ancient Parish of Loughton, are entitled to vote, voting by proxy is not permitted.

By order of the Directors
Stephen Radley
Secretary to the Directors
(sr.radal@hotmail.com)

March 2018