



Newsletter

February 2017

Studio production - An Evening of the Absurd

Last weekend saw a studio production featuring play extracts from the Theatre of the Absurd. It was very much enjoyed and appreciated by the participants and the small number of people who came along on the Sunday evening to see the performance. Many thanks to Barry Jarvis for organising and running such an interesting weekend and thanks too to Scilla Jutton-Holland and Pammi Haylett for their help in the organisation.

Important playreading - next date for the diary!

We have a playreading scheduled for this coming Friday, 10th March. It's important because it's the play we're considering for the autumn production. It's also important because the date has changed from 23rd March that was given in the last month's Newsletter!

The reading will be of *The Linden Tree* by J.B. Priestley and will be run by Barbara MacWhirter. It was the last of Priestley's solo plays to achieve both a critical and commercial success and ran in London's West End for no fewer than 422 performances. First produced in 1947, it starred Sir Lewis Casson and his wife Dame Sybil Thorndike.

There are ten characters, 4m and 6f, in a range of ages from 20-something to 60-something so there are plenty of acting opportunities. The play is about a college professor who has reached the age of retirement and is urged by his family to live in comfort away from his gloomy academic surroundings. The new administration of the university dislikes his views on education and is as anxious as his wife and children to have him move out. He resists them all. Even when most of his work is taken away from him, he intends to continue teaching the few students who may come to him. He feels that the time of want and unrest, the time of a peaceful revolution, demands the fulfilment of duties. It is not a time for defeatism or a quick grab at superficial happiness.

This will be a good opportunity to come along and find out about the play before the audition set for Thursday 27th April. The reading will be, as usual, in the Funtington Church Meeting Room on Friday 10th March at 7.30 pm. See you there!

We'll Always Have Paris

Preparations for our spring production are well underway. Bolton Twill took place a couple of weeks ago and many thanks must go to all those who came and helped to make it such an efficient day. Great work! The production will run from 4th-8th April and tickets are now on sale so make sure you book to come along and see this very funny play.

The Get-in weekend will take place on Friday 31st March & Saturday 1st April from 10 am each day. There's always lots to do, so if you can spare any time, even an hour, you'll be very welcome. And if you're feeling strong do please come along on Thursday 30th March at about 7 pm to do some lifting and shifting and help set up the seating rostra before the rehearsal. Your help will be much appreciated.

Summer Theatre - The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Plenty of planning has already gone into our exciting Summer Theatre event. Hilary Strong and Scilla Jutton-Holland will be co-directing *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and are hoping that as many of you as possible will join in. Attached to this Newsletter is the piece that Hilary has written about the project and the opportunities it presents. It certainly does sound exciting

and the added advantage is that you can choose to be involved as much or as little as you want. Have a read and then do contact Hilary – you won't be able to resist.

AGM - and your chance to have your say!

Now for advance notice about our AGM which will take place on Tuesday 25th July. You know, of course, that we'd really like you to come along and this year we have a special reason for it. You will shortly be receiving a questionnaire which has been designed to find out your views of the Funtington Players. We're asking questions that ask what you enjoy, what else would you like us to do and if there are any changes you would like to see. We'll analyse the replies and give feedback at the AGM along with further discussion about the results. So do make a note of the date, Tuesday 25th July at 7.45 pm in the Funtington Village Hall.

Dates for your Diary

To summarise the above, and a few things not already mentioned, here's a list of dates for your diary:

Friday 10 th March	Playreading of <i>The Linden Tree</i> by J.B. Priestley, organised by Barbara MacWhirter, at the Funtington Church Meeting Room at 7.30 pm.
Friday 23 rd March	Playreading of <i>Humble Boy</i> by Charlotte Jones, organised by Jan Copsey. Funtington Church Meeting Room at 7.30 pm. Note: this was previously planned for 10 th March but has been swapped with <i>The Linden Tree</i> .
Thursday 30 th March	The start of our Get-In weekend for the spring production. If you're feeling strong, please come along at 7 pm to help set up the seating rostra.
Friday 31 st March & Saturday 1 st April	The continuation of the Get-In. Lots to be done starting at 10 am each day. Please come, if only for an hour or two. All help welcome!
Tuesday 4 th – Saturday 8 th April	Spring production – <i>We'll Always Have Paris</i> . Tickets now available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/funtingtonplayers or the Box Office, tel 07565 464271.
Thursday 27 th April	Auditions for the Autumn production.
Thursday 18 th May	First get together for <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> .
Saturday 15 th July	Summer theatre – <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> at the Penny Royal Theatre, Bosham. Further details to follow.
Tuesday 25 th July	AGM at Funtington Village Hall, West Ashling, 7.45 pm.

Peggy Haynes

Peggy was a longstanding member of the Funtington Players who, by all accounts, had a very colourful life. Those of you who remember her will be sad to know she has passed away, aged 93, after having been debilitated by several strokes in 2013. Her daughter, Bee Springwood, has let us know of her mother's death and, if you would like to get in touch with Bee, please contact Tiffin Jones, 01243 778839 or home@tiffinjones.plus.com for her details.

And finally ...

The next Committee meeting will take place on Monday, 20th March. You would be very welcome to attend and, if you would like to do so, please contact Scilla, our Secretary, on pjholland@talktalk.net.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

In July Scilla and I are co-directing an exciting theatre project which will be presented at the Penny Royal outdoor theatre in Bosham on Saturday 15th July. **The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Berthold Brecht** is a fantastic play full of great characters and a mix of drama and comedy. The story concerns a servant girl (Grusha) who takes on the responsibility of caring for a lost child when a revolution causes chaos. Eventually, the real Mother (a wicked aristocrat) demands to have him back so she can claim the substantial property attached. Everything is resolved at a trial presided over by a corrupt judge (Azdak).

The aim is to involve as many members as possible but to limit the rehearsal time to just a few sessions. The advantage of the Caucasian Chalk Circle is that there are lots of brilliant character parts which only involve short scenes and so therefore not a huge rehearsal commitment. Scilla and I will edit the script down to make it about an hour long and to focus on the main themes. In theory, we could use as many as 29 people which would make for an exciting epic production, but clearly some parts can be doubled.

We want everyone to be involved but you can choose your level of involvement as follows:

- Lead roles (the biggest being Grusha) and which would mean coming to nearly all the rehearsals
- Small character parts – about half the rehearsals
- Crowd scenes – just come along for the final stage
- Narrators – no need to learn anything and only needed at final stage

This is a unique opportunity for the Club to stage something really spectacular and which will work brilliantly in the open air. The full rehearsal schedule is listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Cast needed</u>
Thurs 18 th May	7.30pm	Everyone: allocation of parts
Tues 13 th June	7.30pm	Lead roles and character parts in scenes 1, 2
Thurs 15 th June	7.30pm	Lead roles and character parts in scene 3
Tues 20 th June	7.30pm	Lead roles and character parts in scene 4
Thurs 22 nd June	7.30pm	Lead roles and character parts in scenes 5, 6
Tues 27 th June	7.30pm	Narrators only
Thurs 29 th June	7.30pm	All involved in scenes 1, 2, 3
Tues 4 th July	7.30pm	All involved in scenes 4, 5, 6
Thurs 6 th July	7.30pm	whole company
Tues 11 th July	7.30pm	as needed, t.b.c
Thurs 13 th July	7.30pm	whole company
Fri 14 th July	7.30pm	whole company
Sat 15 th July	10.00am (t.b.c)	whole company

Please let me know if you are interested in taking part.

Hilary Strong

Email: hilary901@btinternet.com or 01243 389951