

Artistic Directors Report Jan 2016

1. Current Season: 2015-2016

Last play of season (Dad's Army) is now cast and details sent out.

Entertaining Angels, Breaking the Code and Dream 16 all currently in rehearsal.

Production meetings for Muddy Cows, Glass Menagerie and Dad's Army need to take place before the end of January to ensure rigour in planning, rehearsing and execution of the plays.

2. Next season: 2016-2017

- First play of the new season "Jeeves and Wooster" is already in the brochure and selling. This play was one we were keen to put in the current season, but could not obtain the licence.
- We also have obtained the licence to perform "One Man/Two Guvnors" at the end of the season. This has been 'pencilled in' and with agreement of the committee, we will take up the option on this play.
- The PAG group who currently consist of myself, Sue, Bob, Tori and Joe are currently reading through play suggestions sent in by members in order to construct an exciting new season. With the two plays already mentioned, we only have another 7 to find. The PAG will be meeting shortly to firm up possible inclusions.
- It is extremely important that we ensure that not only do we have a variety of genre, but also take into consideration our acting membership and the technical challenges that each play brings with it. Challenge is crucial to developing all our skills but we must be realistic in terms of choices.
- I am aware that this year, some of our acting membership have been 'under used'. This has to be addressed in order to ensure we are following the information we give to members on the Rose Members page under the heading : Appointment of Directors and Casting Procedure:
 1. All Nonentities Productions are cast with equal strength across the season,
 2. All members who wish to act are treated fairly and their abilities respected,
 3. And that within the requirements of the chosen plays, **as many members as possible** are enabled to play interesting or significant parts during the season as a whole, always allowing for the availability of the actors concerned.
 4. **All acting members are enabled to improve their skills and experience by encouragement to play as wide a variety of parts as may lie within their compass.**
 5. An additional objective will be **to ensure "balance" from one season to the next.**

CASTING, PLAY READINGS AND WORKSHOPS.

One of my aims as AD is to engage our membership in a variety of ways throughout the year so that there are opportunities for all to get involved, whether they are in a play or 'resting'. It is very clear that we all love being part of the Nonentities, and we can tap into that more effectively by looking at how we can develop our actors and backstage crew.

Workshops:

I am very keen to set up some informal skills workshops for members, run by members. I've already outlined this idea in an email last year. Purpose of these is to give everyone a chance to participate in a session, or run a session, where they can learn new skills or find out more about a job or role. Each workshop would last 45mins-1hr and it would be great if two could be run in one evening. So a workshop on comedy skills could be paired up with how to work on props management.

Play readings:

There has to be a group reading of all the plays selected for the season. Recently, this has not been the case for some plays and this can be problematic. It is here I want to make a significant change for the new season.

- Play season is announced in April 2016. Availability Sheets sent out.
- From April onwards, 9 play meeting/reading dates are set and sent out to members. ALL PLAY READINGS TO BE COMPLETED BY OCT 2016.
- First play reading would be for Jeeves and Wooster.
- At this reading, the AD/PAG members and those who have expressed an interest in directing the play will be present.
- Rather than sitting around reading the play and swapping parts, there will be instead key extracts from the play. The AD and/or Director will give an overview of what the play is about and the characters.
- Following this, actors will be given an extract from a selection /scene/key moments in the play.
- Each actor will then work with another performer (s) or individually if needs be, on physically and vocally bringing the text to life.
- These extracts will then be performed back to the AD/Director /other actors and POSITIVE feedback given.
- Following this session, casting will be discussed and then choices made.

Benefits:

- Creates a level playing field
- Everyone gets a chance to read for a part they may be interested in
- It is a fair process and enables the procedure to be seen as 'transparent'
- Actors may demonstrate something that they have not had the opportunity to show before.
- Even if a member is not cast in the play, it may provide options for consideration for other shows in the season.
- Provides a vehicle to look at what future skills might be useful for workshops
- Prevents negativity around final cast lists as all have had the same tasks to engage in
- Challenges actors to physically and vocally interpret scene
- Reinforces the 'no audition' ethos of the Nonentities

Added to this, there should also be some informal play meetings, not tied to castings, where we could look at a variety of texts and their possible inclusion in future seasons.

Monologue/Duologue evenings:

As already outlined in an email to members, I am also keen to set up an informal sharing evening of monologue/duologue work to enable all members to have something to work on, or contribute to, particularly new members who may find themselves in the position of having to wait to be cast in a production. This would be something that would involve actors taking responsibility for their own choices and in the two or three feedback/sharing sessions in the run up to the sharing with members, enable everyone to have positive feedback and support from others.

There are so many opportunities for us all and we are fortunate to have such a fabulous theatre and membership. Embracing change and new directions is always a challenge, but I know we can all rise to it. The support so far in the role has been much appreciated.

Chris