

Stagers' Spotlight



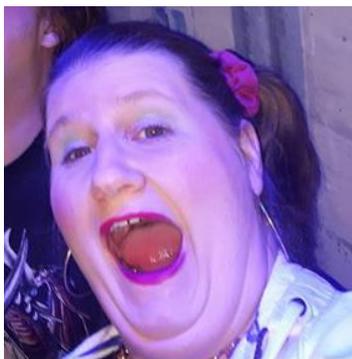
January 2020

Happy New Year and welcome to our new monthly newsletter, keeping you up to date with all things Stagers related.

THANK YOU

After many years as wardrobe custodian and hair extraordinaire, Pauleen Dowsett is finally hanging up her measuring tape and hair spray. Over the years Pauleen has costumed, styled hair and wigs and put her many talents towards making our cast look fantastic. Her skills, knowledge and expertise have been invaluable for the Stagers, and she will be sorely missed. We imagine she is looking forward to finally enjoying watching the shows from out front! Thank you for everything you have done for the Stagers, Pauleen. Here is one of my personal favourite transformations she achieved in 5 minutes during Acorn Antiques from Chav to Chic!

Helen Coyte - Chairman



WINNER, WINNER DUCKY DINNER



Last year the Stagers put a push and pull entry into the Liphook Carnival. On a very wet October Saturday night, Hazel, Helen, Ruth and Ugly braved the rain to take part in the annual procession.

The Honk! themed entry of the Ugly duckling hatching out of his egg was a team effort from Stagers members and supporters.

Simon and Mary Coyte kindly made the egg, provided the pram and storage for the float. Hazel Hawkswell for making a rather beautiful Ugly and Helen Coyte and Jennifer Charters for the decoration and lighting. We are pleased to announce the entry won first in the "Push & Pull" category and we have a shiny trophy with our name on it.

A Tomb with a review

By Howard Bicknell

As per my last visit to Grayshott, the venue was full. The curtain promptly pulled to reveal the library of Monument House, the home of the Tomb family. A fabulous set which was the epitome of a lavish library with the realisation that there was only one book in the room (and this turned out to be a hiding place for a weapon). With the elegance and panache of a beautifully decorated room, it was fun to see that the fireplace portrait of the late patriarch Septimus Tomb, was a caricature of the man himself and it totally allowed the audience to understand that this was no ordinary family! Indeed the six children of Septimus openly discussed that many had visited but rarely had anyone left alive and were neatly buried and arranged six feet under the marigolds and other flower beds of choice. The set was altogether like a room from Cluedo, complete with secret passage, revolvers, plenty of Miss Scarlett and a whole lot of mystery and fog.

The story unfolds with the family solicitor, Hamilton Penworthy who is about to read the will of the late Mr Tomb and is dangerously sipping from the drinks table in a game of russian roulette, unaware of Dora Tombs fondness of creating her own tipples from hemlock and other floral nasties, to present to their unsuspecting guests. David Gow as the scheming Penworthy, played his part well until his untimely death in the midst of the Monument murders. Announcing to the family, Penworthy informs them that they will have a guest to stay in the form of the famous author, Miss Ash her nom de plume, really Freda Mountjoy, who was really Kim Seymour. She, Freda, had her own secrets and reasons for being there and accompanied by her timid secretary, Peregrine Potter played by Tony Carpenter, they set out to add more mystery to the plot. Both Kim and Tony were very well cast and provided welcome comfort to the watcher amongst the shenanigans taking place amongst the dysfunctional family members.

Recent to the stage (not that you could tell) as the eldest sibling Lucien Tomb, a scientist in the making, was Eric Collins. With a beautifully polished silver spoon in his mouth, he maintained his character throughout until his Anne Boleynesque demise, which was delivered faster than an online shop. I was quite sad to see him go. His green fingered, sinister spirited sister Dora, was deliciously brought alive by the fabulous Jennifer Charters. A company stalwart, Jennifer always knows the right roles and brings her own recipe of excellence. I thoroughly enjoyed her deliberate dottiness and felt sure that she was hiding a lot more than she let on, doting on her elder sibling.



Brother Oliver is heard but never seen and lives in the cellar whilst sister Emily (Linette Ackroyd) is an androgynous, sharp-tongued and rude woman, who is there to ensure she gets what she wants from the will. This was a juicy role, only made easier by the amount of Granny Smiths she munched through to get there. Paul Bailey as Marcus Tomb, believes he is Julius Caesar and delivered his Shakespearean character with ease and in a very dignified manner whilst the final Tomb sibling, Monica, uses her feminine charm and guile to grab any unsuspecting man into her lair and bite them. Brezetta Thonger was ravishing as man eating Monica and just as malicious as her kith and kin.

I absolutely adored the housekeeper, Agatha Hammond who knew exactly how to keep the family under control. Aware that each member of the family had foibles, she mostly had the upper hand. Kathy Le Fanu was a delight to watch and her gait to shoulder movements with her emphatic smile were just pure joy and she really would have been at home with the Addams family.

I half expected Nurse Anne Franklin to be living or buried under the floorboards as per her similar namesake, but no, Caroline Thompson was very much above ground and tumbling downstairs to ensure her motives and reason for being there were all credible. This nurse was not there just to keep the family sedated but to show the audience what a talented and cunning little minx she could be. I wouldn't want to be pricked by her needle.

The cast worked really well together and all gave credible performances. I can imagine that rehearsals were immense fun but as a play I wasn't sure if it was meant to be a drama with thrills or a thriller with comedy or a farce with a hint of panto. Maybe it was meant to be all these genres in which case it came across beautifully. Credit must also go to the creative team for the fantastic set, sound and lighting and the eerie fog as well as the brilliant costumes and props.

Take a bow Mr Boughton – this certainly was a mystery that only revealed itself at the end and kept us guessing all the way through.



We need to fill 5 male singing parts for HONK!

We would like to invite our male members and prospective members to join us on Wednesday 15th January for a HONK! Workshop.

This idea of the workshop is to give them an opportunity to hear and try out the songs, along with reading through parts of the show. Then as directors Helen and Chris can hopefully complete their cast and get rehearsals underway. So if you are interested or know someone who is/should be on the stage, please send them along 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th January 2019 in the Studio at Grayshott Village Hall.

HONK!

Following auditions in December we were able to cast the majority of parts for our musical in May 2020 'Honk!'

The story of the Ugly Duckling told through song and many an innuendo, is a funny and uplifting show which promises to have the audience and cast in stitches.

The parts still to be cast are:

Cat: Think panto villain meets Wile E Coyote who never quite gets his prize. On stage a large amount of the show as he follows the duckling on his adventure in an effort to make him his lunch!

Drake: Ida's husband, who is left with the ducklings when she leaves to go in search of the ducklings. Opens the show and appears periodically throughout the show.

Turkey: School master who fears Christmas coming. Small part.

Greylag: Old Goose who is leader of an aged flying squad. Sings duet with Dot. In one scene and the finale.

Bullfrog- Befriends Ugly and tells him it's ok to look different. In one scene and the finale.

Penny – A young swan who Ugly rescues. One scene and the finale.

Father Swan- Penny's Father. One scene and the finale. Non singing part.

If you are interested in taking on any of these parts please contact Helen Coyte:

Chairman@Grayshottstagers.co.uk

Cast

Ugly – Tony Carpenter

Ida- Abi White

Maureen – Hazel Hawkswell

Henrietta – Laura Musco

Grace- Sandra Bray

Dot – Debra Allen

Lowbutt – Kate Buxton

Queenie – Jo Weller

Mother Swan – Jennifer Charters



Dates for your diary:

10th-12th & 17th-18th January - Puss in Boots Pantomime - Haslemere Thespians

10th-11th & 17th-18th January - Snow White Pantomime - Headley Theatre Club

21st-25th January - Sister Act - Farnham Operatic Society

14th-15th February - One Acts Supper Evening - Grayshott Stagers