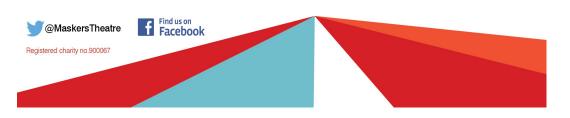
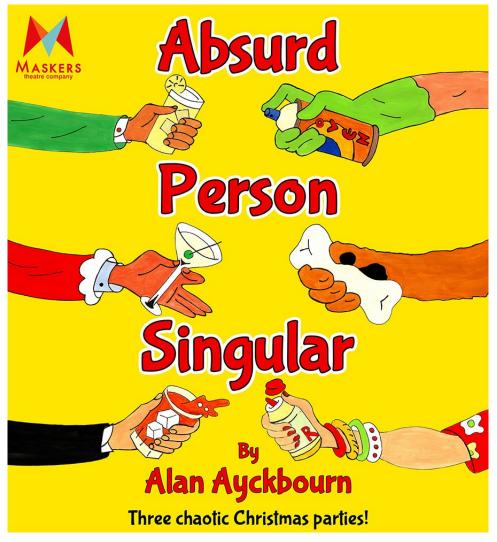
OUR NEXT PRODUCTION



BOOKING: Via link on our website maskers.org.uk or 0333 666 3366





Programme

19th — 24th May 2025

Maskers Studio Theatre

This amateur production of "**Absurd Person Singular**" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

maskers.org.uk

Director's Notes

I love to laugh. Who doesn't!

Alan Ayckbourn (born in 1939, Hampstead) has written more than 90 plays, is the most performed living English playwright and is the second most performed writer of all time, after Shakespeare. HIs work is loved by people around the world. In 1975 Ayckbourn held the record for the most plays running simultaneously in the West End. Among his most popular are Table Manners, Round and Round the Garden, Absent Friends and this evening's production, Absurd Person Singular. Here he focuses on marriage and the English class system. This piece was first performed in the round similar to this production, with the audience on two or four sides.

I thought it might be of interest to share with you how I work as a director. First, I read a few scripts. I particularly enjoy directing comedy and finding a piece that will sell tickets. The licensing fee will be something like £500 for one week! Then I have to consider whether the practical requirements of costume and set design are achievable. Could this Studio accommodate a complex play, with 3 different kitchens, a large number of props (objects used by an actor) and very little space to move backstage. This presented us with quite a challenge but, I work with such a creative team, it made the job difficult but possible.

Next comes casting - auditions, who can best bring this wonderful work to life. We usually rehearse for between 6 and 8 weeks, something like twice a week. Setting up a rehearsal schedule which works around everyone's commitments is always a bit of a challenge. Learning lines is now the priority. Getting rid of the script quickly gives an actor freedom of movement and is so liberating.

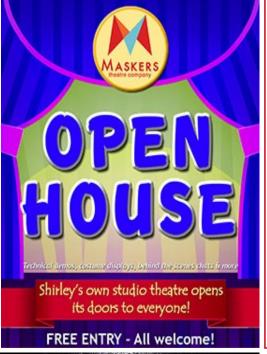
During our first rehearsal we get to grips with the script and how best to develop the characters. My role as a director must be to enthuse the actors - giving them help, advice and inspiring best performances. Blocking is the process of simply moving actors on stage. This process is flexible in the early days and may vary with nuance, emotions and discovering character together. Some actors use Method Acting, which is drawing on their own life experiences and applying them where appropriate.

I prefer directing without the script in my hand so I can concentrate on connecting with my actors, seeing the pictures they show me. A prompter is important and needs to know the play and call the lines when needed. I've spent several months getting to know these three couples and their world, each quite different. We started earlier than usual to give the cast time to learn their lines and study the physicality of this play.

Just as important are sound and lighting. Thanks to my wonderful sound and light technicians you will see it used to great effect in this comedy. A team have constructed three different kitchens over the last two months - what an incredible task! There are so many props in the production, especially glasses and bottles, accumulating everything is quite a task. On opening night, the Stage Manager takes over, ensuring everything runs smoothly in all departments.

In Absurd Person Singular we meet a lower-class couple. Sidney and Jane, who will stop at nothing to impress the middle- and upper-class couples. Middle-class couple Geoffrey and Eva are a philandering architect and his pill popping wife, who is deeply depressed but making the best of things.

POP IN AND GET TO KNOW MASKERS BETTER



Ever wondered what goes on offstage at a play?

Every show has a host of people working away out of sight of the audience.

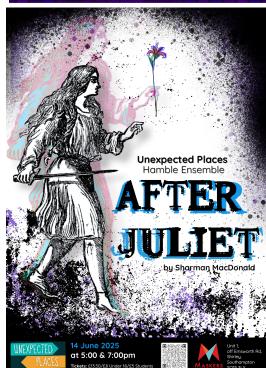
Maskers is welcoming people into the theatre to see the bits the audience doesn't usually get to see. Come and learn a little about the workshop, the technical department, the costume department and how we go about marketing our shows.

Or just drop in for a cup of tea and a chat on the first Saturday of every month.

Saturday 5th April

Running from

10am - 1pm.



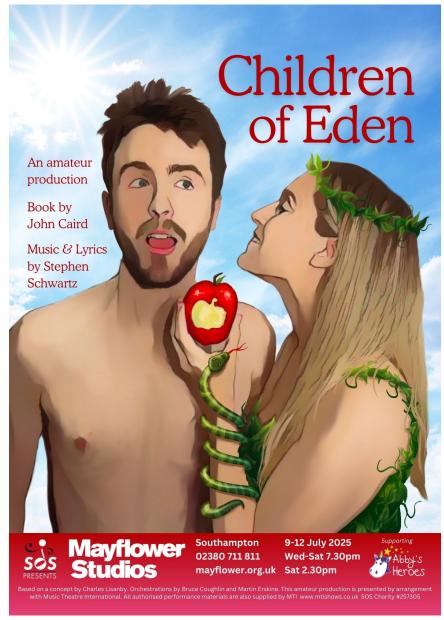


FRIDAY (TERM TIME) - COMPANY 7 TO 16

info@lightupdrama.org.uk to book a FREE trial



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT SOS



For the Maskers Technical Manager:- Jamie McCarthy; Lighting Consultant:-Clive Weeks; Sound Consultant:- Jamie McCarthy;

Marketing Team:- Jenni Prior, Angela Stansbridge, Clive Weeks, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Paul Baker; Tash Priddle; Redmond O'Sullivan; Nataliia Prymak; Front of House Manager:- James Lawson; Box Office Manager:- Chris Baker; Photography:- Clive Weeks; Bar Manager:- Meri Mackney

Finally, the upper-class couple, Ronald and Marion, have seen better days but all we see now is a man who wants peace and quiet, living with his gin-swigging wife. We find ourselves laughing at these people, when we really shouldn't.

I am so proud to present this wonderful cast, who have been a joy to work with. Now sit back, relax and let them show you a thoroughly English black comedy.

Hazel



Directed by Hazel Burrows - Hazel has been a Masker since the mid-70s during which time she has been known for her numerous and varied stage roles. Her first role was in *The Man who Came to Dinner* an American comedy followed by *Alfie* in 1977, a comedydrama. During those early days Hazel was to discover all the theatrical possibilities of her creative mind but in particular comedy. Some of her favourite roles were in *Our Lady of Sligo*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Pride and Prejudice*, and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.

Some of the many productions directed by Hazel were *Ten times Table*, *Sitting Pretty*, and *A Bunch of Amateurs*. Hazel attributes their success to the talented actors we have in this Company of Players.



There will be **two** intervals of **15** minutes each Win a bottle of Prosecco—tickets available from the bar!

The Cast



Sidney played by **Ian Wilson** — Ian has been a member of Maskers for 17 years and appeared in many productions, most recently playing multiple roles in **Notes from a Small Island**. Previous performances include Eric, the benefit cheat, in **Cash on Delivery** and the pedantic trainspotter, Leonard, in **Out of Focus**. Last year he directed **Blue Remembered Hills**, a play he has been wanting to be involved in for many years.



Jane played by Kate Grundy-Garcia — Kate has been a Masker on and off for about 35 years and most recently played Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Ruth Condomine in *Blithe Spirit*. She is now enjoying playing the more down to earth Jane is this fast-paced comedy set in the 1970s, where a washing machine with an 'Ironing mode' is the highlight of her day!



Geoffrey played by Paul Baker — Paul joined Maskers in 1996 and has been in over twenty-five shows in the open air for Maskers . During that time, he has played a variety of roles including Weasel Norman in Wind in the Willows and Thomas Cromwell in Anne Boleyn and often multiple parts in the same production, as evidenced when he played four different characters in The Three Musketeers. Paul has appeared in most of the recent productions in Maskers Studio, having played Sepulchrave in Gormenghast and Chris Kriegle, the Santa Burglar in Sorry, Wrong Chimney!, Uncle George in Cash on Delivery, three different characters in Murder in the Studio, Andrew in Murder in the Citizens' Jury, and most recently Willie in Blue Remembered Hills. As this play is set in the 70s, his character is very much of the time and, if the Me, Too movement had existed, he would most definitely have been cancelled



Eva played by **Abi Linnartz** — Abi has appeared for Maskers at Townhill Park House as the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Aramis in *The Three Musketeers*. She has also been in *Gormenghast* at the Studio and stage-managed *Copenhagen*. Abi has performed with a variety of drama companies throughout the area such as Southampton University Players, RAODS and with Titchfield Festival Theatre, where she also directed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the Great Barn.



Ronald played by Duncan Randall — Duncan is involved in various community theatre groups. On moving to the South coast, he joined Titchfield Festival Theatre (TFT), creating roles such as, Bri in A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, Enobarbus (Anthony and Cleopatra), Goldberg (The Birthday Party) and the Landlord in Jim Cartwright's Two. Duncan joined the Maskers 2022 playing Athos in The Three Musketeers. Since then, he has appeared in The Picture of Dorian Gray, Gormenghast, Time and Tide, Blithe Spirit, Murder in the Studio, Romeo and Juliet and Blue Remembered Hills. Duncan worked in a bank briefly in the 1980s; he was about as effective as Ronald, but not promoted to senior management, alas!



Marion played by Marie McDade— Marie's first appearance with The Maskers was in *Mitchell's Wings* in 2011. Since then, she has enjoyed a wide range of roles both in the studio and on the outdoor stage. These have included Bagheera in *The Jungle Book*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Granny Weatherwax in *Wyrd Sisters*, the comedies *A Bunch of Amateurs*, *Out of Focus*, *Cash on Delivery* and, most recently, *Blue Remembered Hills*.

The Production Team

DirectorHazel BurrowsProduction ManagerChris BakerStage ManagerDonald CoeLighting DesignClive WeeksSound DesignJamie McCarthy

Lighting and Sound OperatorsAshley Martin, Maddie CopeSet CrewDaniel Dick, Maria McKay

Set DesignClive WeeksSet ConstructionTuesday Team

Set Painting Donald Coe, Hazel Burrows, Clive Weeks,

Maria McKay

Set Dressing Alison Tebbutt

Costume Chris Baker and Cast

Properties Alison Tebbutt

Poster Design Hazel Burrows, Clive Weeks

Show Photography Rehearsal PromptClive Weeks
Chris Baker

Acknowledgements

Maskers would like to thank: Angela Stansbridge, William Baggs and Kate Grundy-Garcia for the loan of furniture.