

The Maskers Theatre Company

in association with

OYT
oasis youth theatre



MITCHELL'S WINGS

THE STORY OF THE SPITFIRE

By Johnny Carrington

Directors Johnny Carrington and Mark Wheeler

Lyrics by Mark Wheeler

Music by Paul Ibbott

Touring Hampshire in March 2011
to mark the 75th anniversary of the first flight of The Spitfire



The Maskers Theatre Company
is a registered charity no 900067

www.maskers.org.uk

Oasis academy
lord's hill



Mitchell's Wings Production Photographs



Photography by
Clive Weeks
www.cwphotos.co.uk



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Director's notes

If ever there could be something called a labour of love, then this project has been it! It has even been suggested that I was 'born to write it'; for if ever the sound of an aeroplane is heard I just can't help but start scanning the sky to locate and identify it.

I consulted my colleague, Mark Wheeler, Director of Oasis Youth Theatre at Oasis Academy, Lord's Hill, about my vision to tell the story of R J Mitchell. I then approached The Maskers Theatre Company, of which I am a member, about working together on the project. They agreed this would be an exciting opportunity to celebrate our local history whilst joining two respected theatre groups together; one providing the youth and the other providing the not so young! Mitchell's Wings really has been a collaboration of talents and experience, although a massive 'thank you' must go to The Maskers for embracing and funding the project. We were very excited by the idea of a musical score and it was not difficult to persuade Paul Ibbott, Academy Head of Music, to join the creative team – the stage was then set!

Writing this play has been a real privilege. I have been humbled listening to the stories that have been contributed and they all helped shape the piece, although regrettably there just wasn't the capacity to include them all. Stories of bravery, humility and modesty; from Peter Ayerst's 'amusing' recollection of being chased by twenty five Messerschmitts with whom he had accidentally joined in formation over Germany, to Johnny Freeborn's riveting account of shooting down a Heinkel over London, to Bob Doe's moving testimony of how he couldn't shoot down the helpless

German fighter he had chased over the English Channel. I have read biographies and interviews of WW2 pilots before, but talking to these gentlemen first hand, knowing that they were barely twenty years of age during the Battle of Britain has left me with nothing but admiration for them.

This project is not, however, just about pilots, or indeed R.J. Mitchell. It is about how the Spitfire has touched so many people and left such a lasting impression. Pat Viney and Joan Rolfe both recollect eloquently their experiences of the Spitfire; they talk with a sense of pride and fondness that is, I suspect, mirrored by many thousands of others... all of whom could tell their own story.

I would like at this point to thank Dr. Gordon Mitchell (R.J.'s son) who sadly passed away in July of 2009. When I read his book 'Schooldays to Spitfires' I phoned him, and he immediately agreed to an interview and for me to use parts of his book in the play. His enthusiasm was infectious and I felt privileged at being able to chat with this gentleman about his father's creation. I am only sorry that he can't be here to see it.

I was convinced whilst talking to him, that this story should not be lost to the next generation; a story of determination and triumph against adversity and a story told in a way that will hopefully educate and inspire.

Johnny Carrington. Writer/Director.



RJ Mitchell CBE

Although this play concentrates overwhelmingly on the Spitfire and the Schneider trophy, R.J. Mitchell was a designer of extraordinary talent and this is reflected in his catalogue of designs... Between 1920 and 1936, Mitchell designed 24 aircraft including light aircraft, fighters, bombers, several seaplanes and flying boats including a revolutionary large scale bomber that never made its first flight because the plans were destroyed in the bombing of Woolston in 1940.

Mitchell was awarded the CBE in 1932 for his contribution to high-speed flight.

This play is about more than just machinery however. It is the story of a man's determination to succeed against a backdrop of difficulties and tragedy. A man who felt a heavy responsibility for the pilots who flew his machines... and ultimately the story of a man who battled against his illness to design perhaps the most iconic aircraft (or indeed machine) this country has produced.



Wing Commander Bob Doe DSO, DFC & Bar

Bob Doe enlisted in the RAF in January 1939 and was posted to an operational squadron later in the year. He served with 234 and 238 squadrons flying, initially, Spitfires and then Hurricanes. He was to become one of the leading aces of the Battle of Britain shooting down 14 aircraft, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar. In January 1941, whilst flying a night sortie, the oil of his aircraft froze. As a result of his engine seizing he landed heavily at Warmwell on the snow covered runway, breaking his harness and smashing his face against the reflector sight, almost severing his nose and breaking his arm. He was taken to hospital where he underwent twenty-two operations. Returning to duty in July 1943, Bob flew against the Japanese in the Far East earning a Distinguished Service Order. He retired from the RAF in April 1966 with the rank of Wing Commander. He sadly passed away on 21st Feb 2010.



Cast

Rob Praine	Gordon Mitchell (R.J's son) as main narrator
James Norton	RJ Mitchell
Sarah- Jane Wareham	Flo Mitchell
Alex Chalk	Bob Doe
Sophie Agostinelli	Young Pat
Curtis Bain	Young Bob Doe
Paul Baker	Teacher, Foreman, Worker and Doctor
Stuart Barrow	John Mckeown and Narrator
Kylie Boylett	Spectator 1, Younger Joan Rolfe and Narrator
James Bratby	Italian pilot, Jack and Narrator
Shaun Bridges	R.J Mitchell as a young boy and Ken
Carl Browning	Older Eric, Air Ministry Official and Mr Mckeown
Mia Carrington	Doris
Steve Carroll	Sir Robert McLean
Sue Dashper	Lady Houston and Joan Rolfe
Bradley Holmes	Eric (RJ's brother), Narrator and Doug
Dylan Keenan	Young Gordon Mitchell:
Ruth Kibble	Mrs. Mckeown and 'High Flight' Dancer
Marie McDade	Pat Viney & Miss Cross
Tasha Thomas	Mary and Narrator
Alan Watson	Barnes Wallis, Recruiting Officer and Narrator
Callum Watts	Schneider Official, Derek, Worker and Narrator
Ricolle Marie Williams	Peggy Moon and Narrator
Hayley Willsher	Spectator 2, Aunt Connie and 'High Flight' Dancer
Ian Wilson	Herbert Mitchell (R.J's father), Biard, Joe and Narrator
Becky Wiltshire	Audrey and Narrator

Songs and Singers

High Flight	Sophie Agostinelli
Heroes 1	Daisy Wheeler, Becky Wiltshire
She Said Yes	Daisy Wheeler, Becky Wiltshire, Marie McDade, Carl Browning, Bradley Holmes, Shaun Bridges
Heroes 2	Carl Browning
The Ballad of the Schneider 4	Carl Browning, Stuart Barrow, Bradley Holmes, Shaun Bridges
Mitchell's Wings	Daisy Wheeler, Becky Wiltshire, Marie McDade, Carl Browning, Bradley Holmes, Shaun Bridges
Heroes 3	Daisy Wheeler, Becky Wiltshire, Ruth Kibble, Carl Browning, Bradley Holmes, Shaun Bridges
Silly Name	Carl Browning and Company
Imitating Heroes	Carl Browning, Bradley Holmes, Shaun Bridges.
We'll Never Meet Again	Daisy Wheeler & Company
High Flight (Reprise)	Sophie Agostinelli & Company

The Band

Grace Ibbott	Violin
Sophie Edmonds	Cello
Emily Tulloh	Flute
Matthew Mason	Guitar

Production Team

Producer	Johnny Carrington
Directors	Johnny Carrington and Mark Wheeler
Musical Director	Paul Ibbott
Assistant Director	Carley Sefton –Wilson
Choreographer	Hayley Willsher
Technical Director	Tony Lawther
Stage Manager	Angie Barks
Stage Crew	Members of Maskers Theatre Company.
Production Manager	Peter Hill
Multimedia Designer	Danny Sturrock
Lighting Design	Amy Barnett and Tony Lawther
Lighting Operators	Tony Lawther and Dan Phillips
Sound Design	Danny Sturrock and Bernard Andrews
Sound Operator	Bernard Andrews and Martin Caveney
Set Designer	Ken Spencer
Set Construction and Painting	Ken Spencer and Roger Lockett
Wardrobe	Sheana Carrington assisted by Christine Baker Kat Chivers and Susan Wilson
Furniture	Sheana Carrington
Properties	Ella Lockett
Marketing Manager	Angela Stansbridge
Marketing Team	Sarah Russell, Sarah-Jayne Wareham, Pam Cook, Geoff Cook and John Cunningham.
Production Photography	Clive Weeks
Programme	Chris Webb
Front of House Manager	Peter Hill
Assistant Front of House Manager	Geoff Cook
Front of House Team	Members of Maskers Theatre Company.

Acknowledgements

Directors thanks for help with research to – Dr Gordon Mitchell, Wing Commander John Freeborn, Wing Commander Peter Ayerst, Wing Commander Bob Doe, Mr Joe Roddis, Mrs Pat Viney (nee Maloney), Mrs Joan Rolfe (nee Jagg), Mr David Sercombe
Ewan Burnett and Ian Thirsk,- RAF Museum of Hendon for obtaining film footage
Sqn Ldr Alan Jones RAFVR(T) MBE
All the staff at the venues – Oasis Academy, The Museum of Army Flying, Solent Sky Museum
424 City of Southampton Squadron ATC
Geoff Grandy for sound recordings
Shepherd Neame – Spitfire Ale
Andy Leitch Director RSA Engineering Solutions Ltd
Sophie Carrington and Rachael Wheeler for their support and patience
Parents of the younger members of the cast who have supported their offspring's attendance at rehearsals.

The Maskers Theatre Company



On 25th July 1968 a group of a dozen actors, actresses and technicians made the momentous decision to become The Maskers Theatre Company. 45 years, 100 members and some 235 or so productions later, the Company maintains its well earned reputation as the leading, most active and successful amateur theatre company in the Southampton area. The Company owns its own Studio Theatre with workshop and storage facilities at Unit 1, off Emsworth Road, Shirley. This was acquired with help from the National Lottery Fund in 1994 and is used for rehearsals, set construction, social gatherings and regular performances.

We pride ourselves of providing opportunities for members to develop their skills, offering workshops and mentoring. There are opportunities to be involved in small and large scale theatre. Our major open air production at the stunning gardens of Hamptworth Lodge provides a showcase of Maskers creativity. This July we present 'Treasure Island' - the terrace will be transformed into a sailing ship and the grounds taken over by pirates! We are regular visitors to The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton and also produce small scale productions in our Studio Theatre. We regularly received Curtain Call Awards that recognise the high standard of our productions.

Mitchell's Wings was written by Johnny Carrington, a life-long 'Masker' and our members are delighted to be working with Oasis Youth Theatre on this production.

Our membership embraces all age groups and we extend a warm welcome to people from every part of society and from all ethnic groups. The Studio has a stair lift for people with limited mobility

We are very proud of our technical team, wardrobe experts, props, set builders, Front of House staff and of course of all the actors who have given the Maskers such a high professional standard.

If you would like to find out how to join Maskers or to add your name to our mailing list visit www.maskers.org.uk

Forthcoming productions:

At the Maskers Studio

Emsworth Rd, Shirley, SO15 3LX

Ladies Day by Amanda Whittington
16 - 21 May 2011

Humble Boy by Charlotte Jones
24 - 29 October 2011

Box Office: 023 8055 1489

In the open air at Hamptworth Lodge

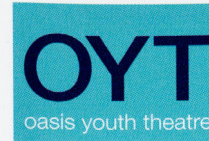
Landford, SP5 2EA (between Romsey and Salisbury)

Treasure Island - an adaptation of the Robert Louis Stevenson novel
20 - 30 July 2011

(no performance 24 July)

Box Office: 023 8071 1818

Online at www.ticketsouth.co.uk



Oasis Youth Theatre is open to young people in the area of Southampton aged predominantly between 10 and 24. We work on specific projects which are often original and OYT have become well known for their original Documentary Plays and encouragement of new writing.

Formerly Oaklands Youth Theatre, Oasis Academy Lord's Hill were keen to continue the support for this youth theatre group and so it became Oasis Youth Theatre (remaining OYT). OYT has developed an enviable reputation over the last twenty years and is delighted to continually attract audiences well beyond associated parents and relations. It is proud to be a part of its local community.

OYT have won many accolades over the years, recently being Finalists in the All England Theatre Festival One Act Play Competition (Graham – World's Fastest Blind Runner, 2008) and becoming Winners of the this competition in 2010 and representing England at the British Final (One Million to STOP THE TRAFFIK, 2010). OYT have also participated three times in the internationally renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

OYT toured Hard To Swallow and Too Much Punch For Judy to schools in USA (Houston 1990) and Chunnel of Love to schools in France 1993. There are plans to tour their forthcoming show Jack internationally.

The success of all OYT's productions has led to them being published and used in schools internationally. In 2010 OYT produced a professionally shot DVD featuring extracts from the original plays they have presented over the last 20 years which is now commercially available.

These high standards are not accidental; they are the result of intensely hard work and long periods of preparation. The OYT motto is "Participating in Youth Theatre for the fun of doing it seriously". Young people who go through OYT increasingly aspire to pursue a career in the performing arts and we offer them every encouragement to fulfil their ambitions.

Forthcoming production:

Jack

OYT's imaginative adaptation of Benjamin Tabart's 1807 version of the Jack and the Beanstalk story. To be premiered in October 2011.

For more information about OYT please visit
www.oasisacademylordshill.org/community/oym/