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Maskers are keen to welcome new members with an interest in any aspect of theatre - all things technical, directing, costumes, props, set design and construction, front of house, marketing and, of course, acting!

Enjoy the challenge of making theatre happen.

To find out more about Maskers Theatre Company, go to

www.maskers.org.uk

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Kali Mirchi



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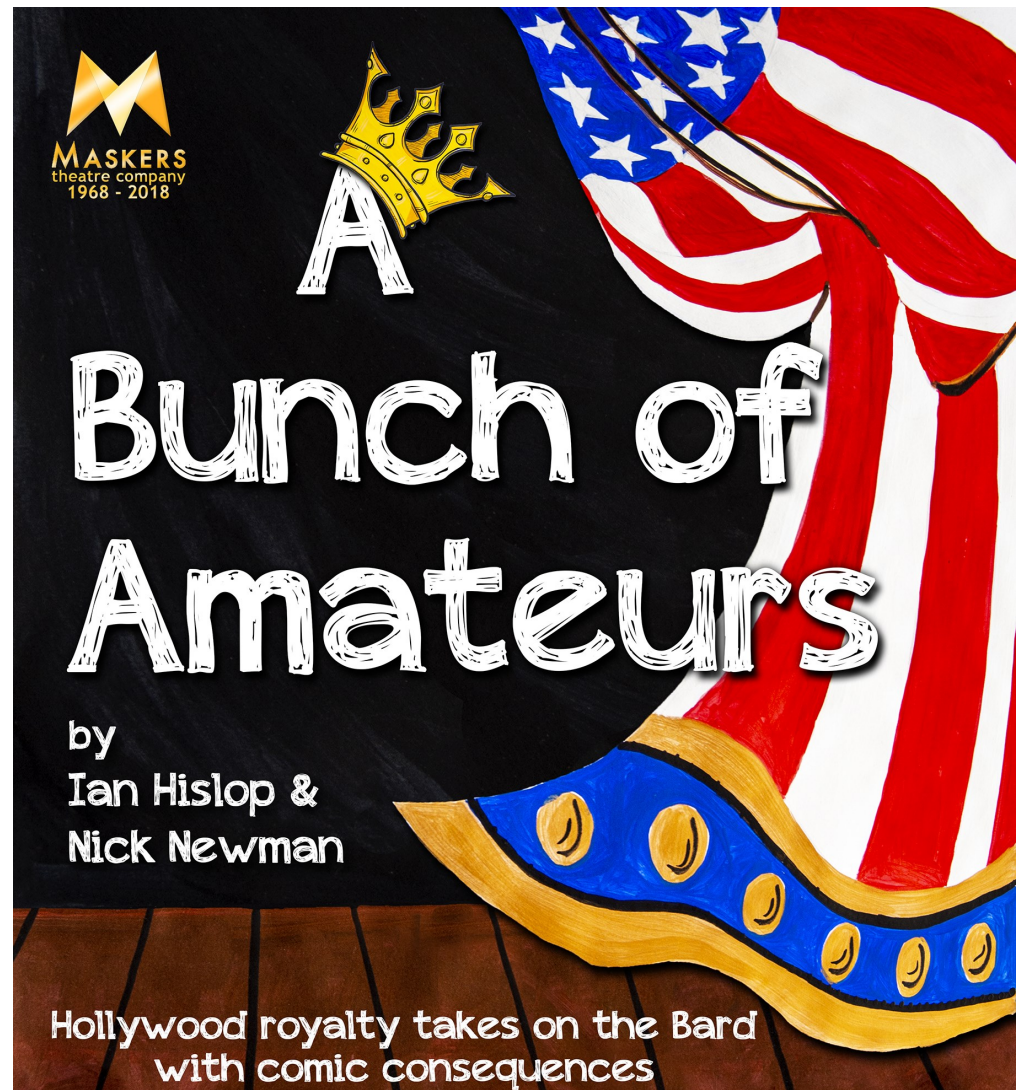
Valid for one visit and up to 4 people.
Valid for one month after the show date.



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Programme

13-18 May

2019

MASKERS STUDIO THEATRE

Registered Charity no. 900067

maskers.org.uk

Director's Notes

It is with the greatest of pleasure I bring this wonderful piece of theatre, with its great one-liners, to life. My cast have worked so hard to explore every page and have not missed a laugh, rather like a piece of music, savouring every note. It will help if you have even a sketchy knowledge of *King Lear* (see page 6), discovering its many parallels with our play.

The co-writers Ian Hislop and Nick Newman give a nod to everyday trends in our lives, Twitter/Skype and Micro Beers. There are so many recognisable characters. We see, and perhaps know, grumpy Jefferson and assertive Dorothy while they lead the way in attempting to bring a production of *King Lear* to this small village hall, so well supported by its motley crew. It is played in the half round so as to include the audience, as though they were a player waiting for their entrance.

One of the reasons that drew me to directing this play was the brilliant, so very English, humour. I love to laugh, hysterically sometimes, and to leave the theatre feeling well entertained. I saw the staging very simply with two walls providing a huge performance space, heavily dependent on the actors finding their own props. These details help make the characters become believable. Enjoy the wonderful voice of Ruth Kibble as she links some of the scenes with song, Pete Burrows' original music and my tech crew's clever lighting, sound and set. Many thanks also to Ken Hann for his advice with understanding and delivering the bits of the Bard's text that pop up from time to time. I could not imagine a better venue than the Maskers Studio, it's just us!

Hazel



Directed by Hazel Burrows - Hazel has been a Masker for many years, acting, directing, set painting and supporting. Her most recent directing credits include **Sitting Pretty**, **Ten Times Table** and co-directing **An Italian Straw Hat**. Her most memorable acting roles were in **Our Lady of Sligo**, **Beauty Queen of Leenane** and **Ring Around the Moon**. Hazel worked as a teacher and a commercial artist, producing exquisite paintings on silk.

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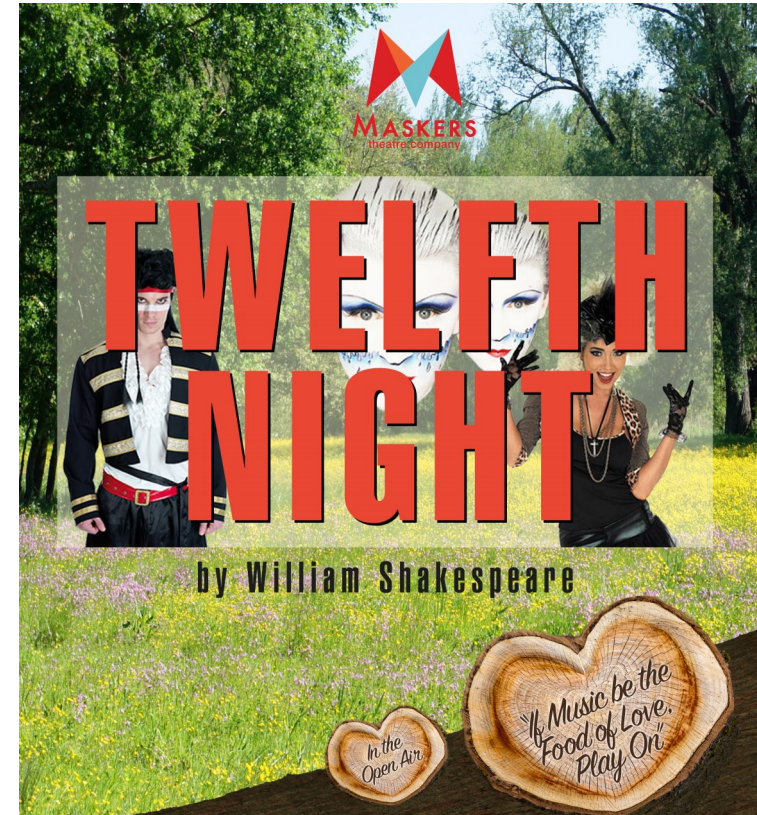
For the Maskers

Technical Manager:- Jamie McCarthy; **Lighting Consultant:-** Clive Weeks; **Sound Consultant:-** Jamie McCarthy; **Marketing Director:** Peter Court;

Marketing Team:- Angela Stansbridge, Sarah Russell, Clive Weeks, Anna Hussey, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Paul Baker, Rob Davis; **Front of House and Box Office Manager:-**

Chris Baker; **Photography:-** Clive Weeks, Stuart Gray, Ian Wilson; **Bar Manager:-** Meri Mackney

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King Lear - a synopsis. How many famous Lears can you identify?



King Lear revolves around the relationship the King has with his three daughters and his closest advisors. A strong theme is how deceptive words can be, along with the correlation (or lack of it) between wisdom and old age. Feeling his age, Lear has decided to divide his kingdom between his three daughters but requires each

of them to declare her love for him in order to 'earn' her share.

Goneril, Duchess of Albany, and Regan, Duchess of Cornwall, both speak enthusiastically and earn their father's praise but Cordelia, the youngest, says nothing because she cannot voice her deep love for him. Lear wants to be loved and admired. Misunderstanding her feelings, Lear disowns and banishes her. He also banishes the Earl



of Kent, one of his oldest friends, for defending Cordelia. Lear's kingdom is shared between Goneril and Regan. Lear plans to live alternately with each of them. Kent returns later, disguised as a Fool, and wins a place as servant to Lear. Goneril, becomes exasperated by the behaviour of Lear's companions, who are upsetting life at her castle. Lear leaves to go to Regan, who also rejects

him.

Despairing, and deeply regretting rejecting Cordelia, Lear goes mad at the height of a great storm. He and the Fool run wild on the heath, where they meet Poor Tom, a



ragged beggar.

Tom is actually Edgar, legitimate son and heir of the Duke of Gloucester. He has taken on this disguise after his jealous, illegitimate brother, Edmund, has falsely claimed he was plotting against their father. Also fooled by lies, Gloucester is trying to keep in with Goneril and Regan while secretly helping the King. They find out and blind him, turning him out onto the heath, where Tom finds him and, maintaining his disguise, helps the old man to accept his fate.

Edmund, meanwhile, has been making up to both sisters and they

have both fallen for him. Goneril poisons Regan out of jealousy. Edmund leads Goneril's army against Cordelia, who has landed with an army to help her father. There is a touching reunion between Lear and Cordelia but they are captured just before Goneril's army is defeated. Goneril kills herself and



Edgar fatally wounds Edmund. Just before he dies, Edmund admits giving the order for Cordelia to be hanged. They are too late to save her and Lear's heart breaks as he carries her body and he dies. Edgar is left to re-organise the kingdom and resolve the civil wars.



The Production Crew

Production Manager

Stage Manager

Musical Director

King Lear Consultant

Set Design

Lighting Design

Lighting Operator

Sound Design

Sound Operator

Properties

Costumes

Assisted by

Jill Desborough

Kathryn Salmon

Ruth Kibble

Ken Hann

John Hamon, Hazel Burrows

Tony Lawther

Tony Lawther, Kathryn Salmon

Jamie McCarthy

David Cowley

Alison Tebbutt, Gill Buchanan

Sheana Carrington, The Cast

Serena Brown, Susan Wilson,

SJ Wareham

Set Construction

John Hamon, Ken Hann, Graham

Buchanan

Set Painting

Hazel Burrows, John Hamon

Rehearsal Prompt

Chris Baker

A Note on the Music

Jefferson's theme was specially composed and performed by Pete Burrows. The track is entitled *Elastic Data Radar*.

Shakespeare's verse set to music and performed by Ruth Kibble.

The pre-show and interval music is Cleo Laine singing songs from Shakespeare.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to

Care & Mobility Centre Ltd for the loan of the scooter

Ned's Noodle Bar for some props

Stuart Gray for rehearsal photography



Famous Lears - See page 6.
Clockwise from bottom left:

John Gielgud
Don Warrington
Derek Jacobi
Ian McKellen
Timothy West
Laurence Olivier
Simon Russell Beale
Glenda Jackson

The Cast



Jefferson Steel played by **Johnny Carrington** — Johnny made his stage debut at the tender age of ten... as the back end of a donkey in the school nativity! Promotion soon followed, however, because a year later he was making his Maskers' debut at the Nuffield as a paperboy in ***Oh What a Lovely War***. Having parents who were founding members meant he was always around the theatre and he started appearing with the Maskers Youth Theatre whilst at college. Johnny has been in numerous shows both in traditional venues and outdoors, but three of his favourites have been ***The Three Musketeers*** and ***The Man in the Iron Mask*** (D'Artagnan) and ***The Wind in the Willows*** (Toad). He also began directing with the Maskers with the tribute play to the Spitfire, ***Mitchell's Wings***, in 2011 (which he also wrote). His last attempt at an accent was as the Irish business man, Finbar, in ***The Weir***.



Dorothy Nettle played by **Jan Spiers** — This is Jan's third play with Hazel as director and she is thrilled to be working with her again. ***Ladies' Day*** and ***Sitting Pretty*** were our last comedies and ***A Bunch of Amateurs*** is proving to be just as much fun! Other plays Jan has appeared in include ***Humble Boy***, ***An Ideal Husband***, ***'Allo Allo***, ***Stepping Out***, ***Quartet***, ***The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds***, and, after a short break, she is looking forward to playing Dorothy in our cosy, quirky Maskers Theatre!



Jessica Steel played by **Molly McDade** — Having appeared in several shows for both the Nuffield Youth Theatre and previous Maskers' productions, this will be Molly's second outing as an American since her first Maskers' show, ***Our Town***, in 2014, and her first major part since appearing as Tabaqui the Jackal in ***The Jungle Book*** in 2015. Jessica Steel is a very different role to the ones she has played before but she is definitely looking forward to the challenge.



Nigel Dewbury played by **Philip de Grouchy** — This character is described as 'the classic am-dram performer, pompous, stuck-up and self-regarding. He believes he is the star of the show and should play all the leading roles'. Some small-minded and jealous rivals have declared that Philip has been type-cast in this role; he would like to remind them that the greatest challenge any actor can confront and triumphantly overcome is playing himself!



Mary Plunkett played by **Maria Head** — Maria has been a member of Maskers for some time and has played a wide variety of roles including Goneril in ***King Lear*** at the Nuffield Theatre. She is delighted to play Mary in ***A Bunch of Amateurs***, who starts the play as Goneril and ends it as Reagan. As they both die at the end of King of Lear, it's all the same really! So wonderful to be in such a great comedy. What a relieve from B*****

The Cast



Denis Dobbins played by **Adam Taussik** — Since joining Maskers 15 years ago, Adam has played a few amateur actors, notably Flute, the bellows-mender, in ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, in a shocking blue muslin dress. For this show, Adam will also be channelling the spirit of Lear's world, where he played many parts in 2007, from the King of France to the servant who blinds - SPOILERS...



Lauren Bell played by **Marie McDade** — Marie has been a Masker since 2011 and has appeared in a wide range of productions at the Studio, the Nuffield Theatre and outdoors at Hamptworth. This time last year she was Granny Weatherwax in ***Wyrd Sisters*** - an aged crone - so is looking forward to being the polar opposite in this show as a blonde trophy wife!



Journalists played by :

Carolyn & Huw Thomas — Carolyn and Huw are new Maskers, having moved to Southampton a few months ago, and so this is their first show. They say it's been great fun and very interesting to see the production come together.

Ralph Baggs - Originally from Leatherhead, ***A Bunch of Amateurs*** is Ralph's first play with Maskers. He has been having a huge amount of fun with this incredibly talented and wonderfully funny team. Ralph has little experience in the theatre; however, he has been a part of 'action sports' movies, one of which is on Netflix.

Martin Caveney - Martin has enjoyed being a member of the Maskers for 27 years, being involved in a wide cross section of plays and having the opportunity to act in leading roles as well as smaller ones. He has also been involved in backstage production with lighting, sound, and props. Martin has made friends for life through the Maskers and is looking forward to sharing this production with a truly professional bunch of amateurs.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes