

In the OPEN AIR

Jane Eyre



by **Charlotte Brontë**
adapted by **Meri Mackney**



Programme

18 - 22 July

2023

In the beautiful grounds of
Townhill Park House

Registered Charity no. 900067

maskers.org.uk

Maskers at Townhill Park House

Welcome to Maskers' open-air production of *Jane Eyre*.

This is our fourth production at this beautiful location and we hope you enjoy the beauty of the surroundings and get a chance to look around the Gertrude Jekyll garden. We are very grateful to The Gregg School for allowing us to perform here and for all their help in ensuring that the preparations for the show went smoothly.

This is Maskers' 41st outdoor summer production and we are very proud of our record of bringing award-winning, quality theatre to audiences and locations in the area. Maskers was formed over fifty years ago. During that time we have performed and been based in a number of different places in Southampton but we have had our own studio theatre in Shirley, Southampton, for a good many years now. Do come and see a show there. A performance in its small, intimate space is a very different experience compared with an open-air show. Details of Maskers' next productions are on the back page of this programme. See our website for full details: www.maskers.org.uk.

We respectfully request that you take all your picnic leftovers and empties home. You may remain to finish your picnics at the end of the play but we ask that you vacate the grounds by 10.30pm (5.45pm for matinée). Thank you!!



Please take care when moving around the grounds as steps and paths may be uneven and slippery if wet.

Provision for smoking has been made near the box office. Please use the sand buckets provided. Thank you!

Please note that, for privacy and safeguarding reasons, there is no access at any time to the terrace in front of the house except for members of the cast and crew. Cast will meet friends and family in the audience area after the show.

Director's Notes

What do you do when you choose to direct the play of a book you love but cannot find an adaptation that both portrays your favourite bits of the book and the most important bits for the flow of the story – and will work in the open air? You produce your own adaptation! So, whether you love this production or hate it, I'm afraid it's all my doing. Charlotte Brontë did have something to do with it, of course, and I hope she would be understanding of the need to lose many characters and some subplots of her most popular work, in order to make it fit into a single evening. The first act is quite long for it to work dramatically but the second act is short, so you should be on your way home in reasonable time.

So, why ***Jane Eyre***? Essentially it is a love story and it is easy for us to get behind Jane and Rochester as they find each other. They are not the glossy, super-good-looking people we see in films and on tv – even in film and tv adaptations of this book. They are ordinary, if sharp-witted, people, although their backgrounds vary. Rochester has always had wealth and position whereas Jane has been the down-trodden orphan, yet both have suffered through the actions of their family and the consequences of neglect of their happiness and welfare by the very people who should have had their best interests at heart. We feel for Jane as she is bullied and beset yet retains her moral integrity. We sympathise with Rochester who has drifted aimlessly around the world, unable to face what waits for him in his family home. He has become dissolute but we see a better man underneath the sarcastic veneer. His kindness to Adèle and, indeed, Bertha, speaks of another, more caring personality, twisted by the misfortune that has come to him.

The novel is also a commentary on attitudes at the time, child cruelty and neglect, poverty and disease, equality of the sexes and across social strata. However, it is the love story that stays with us, long after we have finished the book or left the theatre. In the original script, the young characters were going to be played by the adult cast but then I had the pleasure of working with the young people from Light Up Drama Company in ***The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*** and decided to ask some of them to join us instead. All praise to them for their enthusiasm and hard work; they really lift the opening of the play. As I write we are about to try out a late comer to the cast in Buf. Many thanks to Mark and Anca for trusting her to us. This may be the start of her stage career.

My very grateful thanks, not only to the cast for making this such a fun play to rehearse but also to the production crew, without whom it simply wouldn't have happened. It takes the whole company to put on our summer show. We hope you enjoy it.

Meri



Directed by Meri Mackney - Meri has been a Masker for very many years, as actor, director, bar manager and just about every backstage job there is. She has directed a number of shows in the Studio, at the Nuffield Theatre and outdoor, including ***Pygmalion***, ***The Jungle Book***, ***Anne Boleyn*** and ***Pride and Prejudice***, which she also adapted for the outdoor stage. She was last seen playing a particularly gormless maid in ***The Merry Wives of Windsor***.

Meri wanted to direct ***Jane Eyre*** but was unable to find an existing script which both reflected her take on the novel and would work in the open air, so it was back to producing her own adaptation. She hopes it will meet with your approval and Charlotte Brontë's forgiveness.

The Cast in order of appearance



Young Jane Eyre played by **Harriet Clarke** — Harriet joined Light Up in 2022 but she has also acted with other groups. She played Mrs Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* with Light Up and also played one of the main six orphans in a summer production of *Annie*. She is looking forward to playing Young Jane Eyre in an open-air production and has enjoyed gaining experience as part of an adult show. She can't wait to show the audience all the hard work Maskers have put in to make this a great performance!



Narrator Jane played by **Abby Brine** — Abby joined the cast of *Jane Eyre* fresh from playing the title character in *The Girl on the Train* for SUP. Originally cast in more minor roles, she stepped into playing the major role of Narrator Jane after rehearsals had started and has very much made the part her own.



John Reed/ Villager played by **Dylan Talbot** — Dylan joined Light Up in 2019. With Light Up Company, he's been in *A Christmas Carol* playing the part of Scrooge, taken part in *Campfire Creations* at The Light up Festival and portrayed Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Recently he has gained a distinction at LAMDA solo acting grade 6 and is studying GCSE Drama. He looks forward to playing the part of Jane Eyre's cousin in his first ever Maskers' production.



Young Georgiana Reed/Understudy for Adèle played by **Sophia Burke** — Sophia loves playing a mean character as she hasn't had a role like her before. Sophia thanks Meri for inviting the children to audition and growing her confidence. It's been an amazing opportunity working with Maskers. Previous roles; Maid and Rabbit Statue in *The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe*, Snow White in *Snow Almost White* and Narrator in *Seussified Christmas Carol*, all with Light Up.



Young Eliza Reed/ Helen Burns played by **Channah Sutton** — Channah joins us for this production following appearing with a number of Maskers in the recent co-production with Light Up Drama Company of *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. She is relishing the contrast in the two roles.



Mrs Reed/ Mrs Fairfax played by **Jenni Watson** — Jenni's love of acting was ignited when she appeared as an extra in *A Man for all Seasons* whilst at Drama School. Over the years she has performed for Maskers as well as many local groups, in a variety of settings. Her favourite roles include, Lady Booby (*Joseph Andrews*), Nancy (*Sitting Pretty*), Mrs Pearce (*Pygmalion*), the Contessa (*An Italian Straw Hat*), as well as Margaret in Maskers 2021 summer production of *Much Ado about Nothing*. More recently she appeared as Beatrice in *After Life* for SUP and in May 2023 as Yvonne in *Hi-de-Hi* for RAODS. Playing the evil Mrs Reed in *Jane Eyre*, will be an experience Jenni will relish!

The Cast



Bessie/ Villager played by **Jo Iacovou** — Joanna has been a member of Maskers since 2003. The roles she has played have been many and varied, ranging from Ruby Birtle in *When we are Married*, Greta in *Metamorphosis*, Childie in *The Killing of Sister George*, Sophie in *100*, Rita in *Educating Rita*, Verges in *Much Ado about Nothing* and playing multiple parts in *Around the World in 80 Days*. Jo branched out into directing with *Our Town* for which she won Best Director of a Drama in the Curtain Call Awards.



Mr Brocklehurst/ Richard Mason played by **Rob Iliffe** — This is Rob's debut for Maskers. When not being horrible to children on stage, he helps to run a toy library service... Previous performing includes; *Southampton Mummers Play*, on the first Sunday of the new year at St Michael's Square, storytelling at festivals, *Pirate Shakespeare* and story walks. Rob has also directed several productions for both The Gantry & Salisbury Playhouse Youth Theatres.



Miss Temple/ Villager played by **Sue Blackwood** — Sue joined Maskers in 2023. She is looking forward to her first role with the Company.



Jane Eyre played by **Rachel di Nucci**— Rachel joined Maskers a couple of years ago and has been in *Four Weddings and an Elvis* as Fiona, *The Three Musketeers* as Milady de Winter and Porthos, and most recently *Gormenghast* as Lady Fuchsia Groan. Rachel is excited to be part of *Jane Eyre*. It was one of her favourite books when she was a teenager. She hopes that her enthusiasm for the role and the book can help her bring Jane to life and for the audience to enjoy it as much as she did when first reading the novel.



Adèle Varens played by **Evelyn Faile** — This is Evelyn's first production with Maskers Theatre Company and she is super excited to be playing with the 'big kids.' Although she is not new to the stage, having been a member of Light UP since she was 4 years old, she is new to speaking another language. Evelyn's credits include, *The Fairy Tale Courtroom*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Annie Kids*, *Snow Almost White* and *A Seussified Christmas Carol* to name a few.



Sophie/ Hannah played by **Sue Daspher** — During Sue's time in Maskers, she has been involved in a variety productions including: *Out of Focus*, *Contractions* and *Metamorphosis* in the Studio and *Sitting Pretty* and *An Italian Straw Hat* at the Nuffield Theatre. Sue has appeared in many open-air productions and was part of The Watch in *Much Ado About Nothing* in 2021. Previous outdoor performances were in *Don Quixote*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *The Jungle Book*, *Anne Boleyn*, *Treasure Island* and *Twelfth Night*. She was last seen as a deliciously dizzy Mistress Quickly in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The Cast



Bertha Mason played by **Maddy Cope** — Maddy has recently joined Maskers this year. She has been in a multitude of shows and has experience working behind the scenes. She has helped with tech for *The Producers*, performed at the Theatre Royal, Winchester, last November. Maddy is happy to return to the stage with this production. She looks forward to playing the wonderful and violently insane Bertha. Even though she has no speaking part, she is grateful to showcase her method acting by portraying Bertha's violent bestial behaviour, demoniacal laughter, and snarling at her other cast members.



Grace Poole/ Mary Ferndean played by **Ruth Smith** — Ruth is a new Masker, having previously appeared in a couple of pantomimes a few years ago. She joined Maskers with her husband to support him and assist backstage with the Christmas show, but enjoyed the presentation of *Jane Eyre* so much, she decided to be part of the cast. Ruth is enjoying being Grace Poole and is excited to be part of what is going to be an amazing performance.



Edward Rochester played by **Adam Taussik** — Since joining Maskers 19 years ago, Adam has played characters of many ranks, from peasants to kings (with a smattering of vicars, chefs, soldiers and bears), but rarely does he 'get the girl'... For this show, Adam will also be keeping up the gothic tone of *Gormenghast*, with mysterious buildings, fires and a cast of eccentric characters.



Blanche Ingram/ Georgiana Reed/ Diana Rivers played by **Anna Hussey** — Anna joined Maskers in 2018 and has been involved both on and off stage. Debuting with Maskers in *Wyrd Sisters* as part of the ensemble, Anna has since played Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and originated the role of Vicki in *Yards Apart*. Recently, Anna has had a successful debut as a director for Maskers with *Gormenghast*, and is looking forward to performing again in *Jane Eyre*. Anna is particularly excited to bring Georgiana and Blanche to life, serving sass and side eye with aplomb.



Mrs Ingram/ Villager played by **Marie McDade** — This will be Marie's 7th outing on the Maskers' outdoor stage – from Shakespearian *Midsummer* fairy to Kipling's jungle panther Bagheera, assorted characters travelling *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Pygmalion*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* and, last summer, *The Three Musketeers*. Indoor shows have included *Richard II*, Granny Weatherwax in *Wyrd Sisters*, *A Bunch of Amateurs*, *Out of Focus*, and, most recently, *Gormenghast*.



Mary Ingram/ Eliza Reed/ Mary Rivers played by **Chrissy Way** — Chrissy joined Maskers in 2022 and is now involved performing in her first play, 17 years since last being on stage. She has found the experience to be a fun and exciting new challenge and chapter in her life and is very much enjoying being back on stage playing some wonderful characters for *Jane Eyre*.

The Cast



Col Dent/ Rev. Wood/ Innkeeper played by **Simon Mewett** — Simon joined Maskers in 2021 and performed at The Gregg School in our 2022 Summer play, *The Three Musketeers*, when he played two characters. Clearly two wasn't challenging enough, so this year Simon has been asked to perform three: Colonel Dent, a Landlord and the Vicar. This has brought back memories of school, where he turned his blazer back to front in drama class and played his first role - as a man of the cloth.



St. John Rivers played by **Shaun Smith** — Shaun is new to Maskers. As St John, he looks forward to delivering mildly sanctimonious judgements on Mr Rochester, while wishing that the two characters could actually meet. Maybe they might get along? Unlikely... more probably, sparks would fly!



Pilot played by **Buf**—This is Buf's first appearance onstage. We hope she will be sufficiently pleased with the treats on offer to play her part! She finds her full name of Lighthouse Aussies Dancing Queen too pretentious to use.



Schoolgirls/ Villagers
played by **The Company**

There will be one interval of 20 minutes



MASKERS
theatre company
maskers.org.uk

We hope you enjoy our Show !!

We welcome your comments on
tonight's show for marketing purposes

Email: feedback@maskers.org.uk

Many Thanks! See you again soon!!

The Production Crew

Director

Production Managers

Stage Manager

Stage Crew

Lighting and Production Engineering

FoH Sound and Electrical Engineering

Special Effects

Lighting and Sound Operator

Special Effects Operator

Lighting Assistants

Properties

Costumes

Assisted by

Set Design

Set Construction

Set Painting/Covering

'Jane's' drawings

Front of House Manager

Car Park Manager

Catering Manager

Rehearsal Prompt

Meri Mackney

Jill Desborough, Chris Baker

Katherine Salmon

Pippa Messent Watling, Robert Osborne,

Clive Weeks

Jamie McCarthy

Tony Lawther

Emily Smith

Robert Osborne

Sam Hussey, James Lawson, Tom Foyle,

Emily Smith, Robert Osborne,

Brian Stansbridge, Simon White

Adam Taussik

Sue Grove, Serena Brown, Allegra

Carlton

Susan Wilson, Jill Desborough, Meri

Mackney, Ania Sikora, Brigitte Lavoie,

Hazel Burrows

Meri Mackney, Clive Weeks

Brian Stansbridge, Andrew Burrows

Kathryn Salmon, Jill Desborough, Meri

Mackney, Jo Fox

Viktoriiia Prymak

James Lawson

Brian Stansbridge/ James Lawson

Chris Baker/ Bandy Smith

Bandy Smith

Acknowledgements

Thanks to

Anca and Mark for allowing Buf to take part

Emphasis Event Productions for hire of radio microphones and van hire

Angela Barks for the loan of 'Jane's' desk

Abigail Caveney for video trailers

National Tool Hire for access tower hire.

RAODS and **SOS** for the hire of costumes.

Help us save the environment and over £1000 in postage.

Join the Maskers' online mailing list - visit our website and click the box provided.

Townhill Park House



From early Norman times until the dissolution of the monasteries, Townhill was held by the Bishop of Winchester. In 1536, it was granted to Sir William Paulet and became known as Townhill Farm. Nathaniel Middleton of the East India Company acquired it in 1787 and turned it into a private home. The estate became known as Townhill Park. Middleton enlarged the farmhouse and it was later remodelled following a fire. For twenty years, from 1820, it was home to William Hallette and then, in 1842, it was purchased by the Gator family, who also owned Gator's Mill, near Mansbridge.

Townhill Park was bought by Samuel Montagu, 1st Baron Swaythling, in 1897 as a residence for his newly-married son, Louis. Extensive modifications took place in the Italian style under the architect Leonard Rome Guthrie. He and Gertrude Jekyll were asked to design the gardens to complement the new style of the house and the arboretum.

Her Majesty Queen Mary visited the house in the 1920s. Stuart Montagu became 3rd Baron Swaythling in 1927 and began hybridising rhododendrons with his gardener, the aptly named Mr Rose.

During World War II, the estate was loaned to the Red Cross as a convalescent home for British soldiers, after which the house was sold to Middlesex County Council and became a boarding school for underprivileged girls. The rest of the land became the housing estate known as Townhill Park. Southampton City Council took over the house and grounds in 1969 as a hostel for merchant navy cadets. In 1994, it became The Gregg School, as you see it today.

In 1997, The Friends of Townhill Park Gardens volunteer force was formed to restore the Gertrude Jekyll Garden, the Herb Garden and the Herbaceous Borders. More recently, work has been done to restore the Arboretum and Orchard. The gardens are open to the public free of charge on advertised dates through the year. The next is open day is Heritage Day on Sunday 10th September. from 2pm- 5pm



LIGHT UP - SHIRLEY YOUTH THEATRE CLASSES



LEARNING TO SHINE ON & OFF STAGE



VALUE FOR MONEY ENGAGING LOCAL DRAMA CLASSES RUN BY HAMPSHIRE'S MOST INNOVATIVE YOUTH THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS CHARITY

FRIDAY (TERA TIME)

4:00 - 6:00 Light UP Company, for 7-16's
6:00 - 7:00 Advanced, 7+



MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY
OFF ENSWORTH ROAD, SHIRLEY

Join our waiting list and be the first to hear about new classes and book on for a FREE TRIAL



DOING YOUTH THEATRE DIFFERENTLY

REG CHARITY - 1134732

WWW.LIGHTUPDrama.CO.UK



presents

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR

PERFORMANCE 29/7/23 AT THE HILT
HILTINGBURY RD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH SO53 5NP

BOOK BY: DAVID SIMPATICO

MUSIC ADAPTED, ARRANGED & PRODUCED BY: BRYAN LOUISELLE

BASED ON A DISNEY CHANNEL MOVIE
WRITTEN BY: PETER BARSOCCINI

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

GENERAL ADMISSION	£12
LIGHT UP MEMBER	£5



DISNEY'S HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR. IS PRESENTED THROUGH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT BY MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL

WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/LIGHT-UP/T-DJVPKZM

Light Up
Drama
Company

Why not join Maskers?

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 or speak to any of the Front of House staff



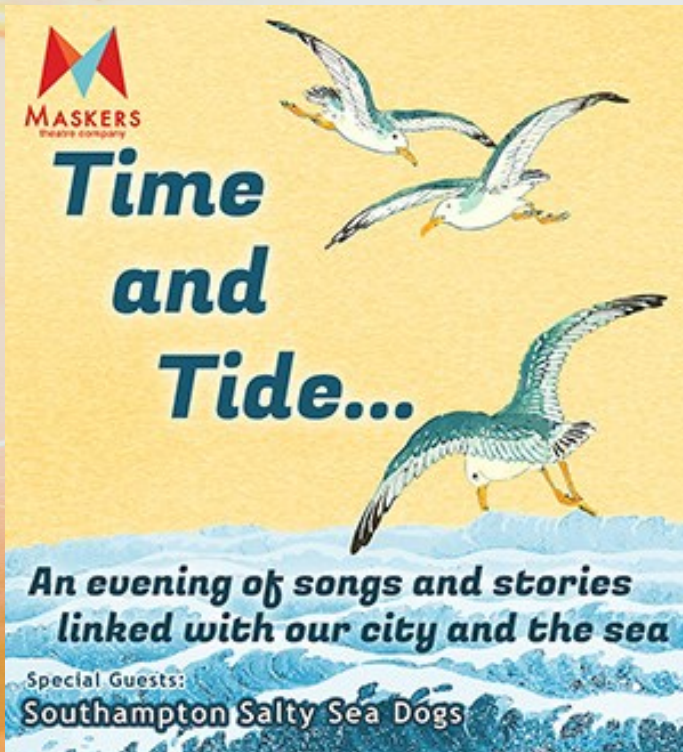
@MaskersTheatre



Find us on

Facebook

Upcoming Productions

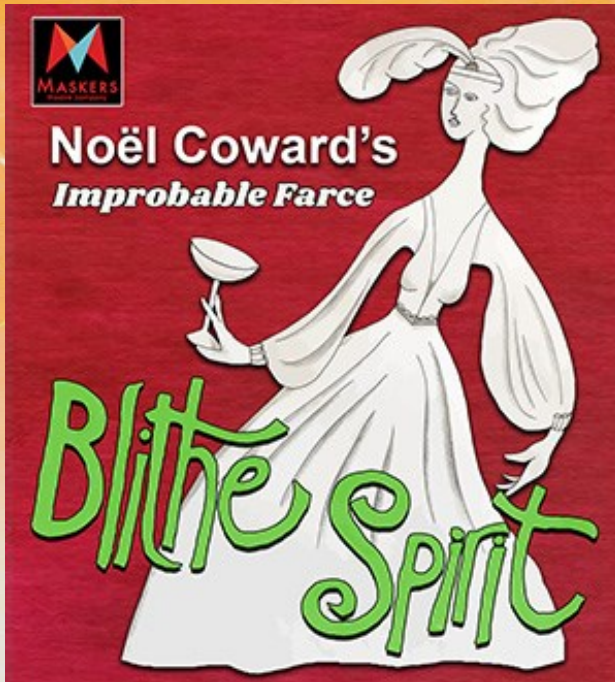


13th - 16th

September 2023
Maskers Studio
Theatre

Friday performance at
8pm, other nights at
7:30pm

Upcoming Productions



23 - 28 October 2023

at The Maskers Studio

Emsworth Road, Shirley, Southampton SO15 3LX

BOOKING: Via link on our website or 0333 666 3366

For the Maskers

Technical Manager:- Jamie McCarthy; **Lighting Consultant:-**
Clive Weeks; **Sound Consultant:-** Jamie McCarthy;

Marketing Team:- Angela Stansbridge, Clive Weeks, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Paul Baker,
Abigail Caveney; **Front of House and Box Office Manager:** Chris Baker; **Photographer-** Clive Weeks,

