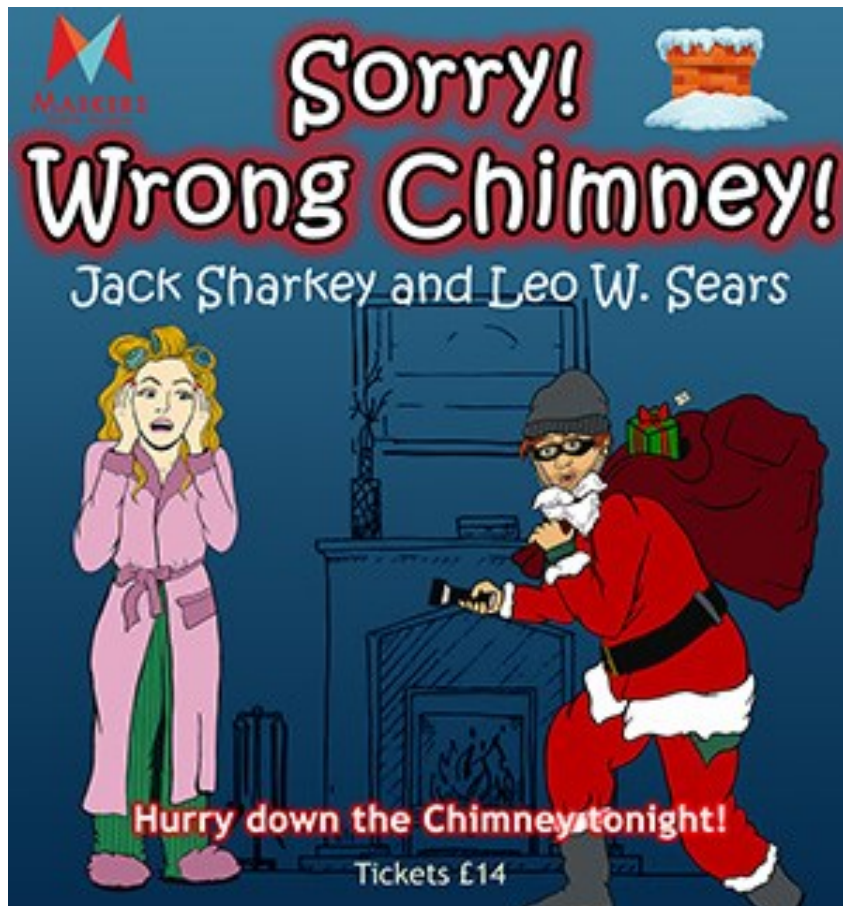


Forthcoming Production



4 — 9 December 2023

**BOOKING:** Via link on our website  
[maskers.org.uk](http://maskers.org.uk) or 0333 666 3366

### For the Maskers

**Technical Manager:-** Jamie McCarthy; **Lighting Consultant:-** Clive Weeks; **Sound Consultant:-** Jamie McCarthy; **Marketing Team:-** Angela Stansbridge, Abigail Caveney, Clive Weeks, Neil Maddock, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Alison Buchanan, Paul Baker; **Front of House and Box Office Manager:-** Chris Baker; **Photography:-** Clive Weeks; **Bar Manager:-** Meri Mackney

 @MaskersTheatre

 Find us on  
Facebook

Registered charity no.900067



Noël Coward's  
*Improbable Farce*



**Blithe Spirit**

Programme

23rd — 28th October 2023

**Maskers Studio Theatre**

Registered Charity no. 900067

[maskers.org.uk](http://maskers.org.uk)



## Director's Notes

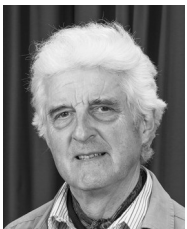
One challenge involved in directing this play is its length. As written, it runs for nearly three hours plus two intervals. Perhaps in 1941, when it was first produced, audiences were more patient than they would be now. Or perhaps the actors, including such contemporary luminaries of the stage as Cecil Parker, playing Charles, Kay Hammond, the ghostly Elvira, Fay Compton, Ruth, and, of course, Margaret Rutherford, as the eccentric Madame Arcati, directed by Noel Coward himself, spoke at a very rapid rate in the clipped style of the time. However, it is interesting to see that when a film was made of it in 1947, with Rex Harrison and Constance Cummings as the Condomines, and Kay Hammond and Margaret Rutherford in their former parts, the script had been savagely cut to about half its previous length. Our production is a compromise between these two extremes. One definite cut we had to make – in the thirties, smoking was, of course, taken for granted. In the script, our characters regularly resort to the cigarette or cigar; but, for all our sakes, we have made the Condomines' a 'No Smoking' household. Another challenge is the various 'spiritual' effects required – tables tapping and levitating, ghostly figures appearing and disappearing, curtains blowing, and many others. We have fortunately a very skilled technical team, which has risen to the challenge and triumphed! Our setting and costuming endeavour to evoke the style of over eighty years ago – we hope you will feel our team of artists has succeeded, as far as possible on a limited budget. Finally, we have gathered a splendid team of performers to bring to life the astonishing events of these few days in the Condomines' living-room. We hope you will enjoy the distinctive characterisations created by our actors, who have overcome the challenge of mastering a verbose script in only a very limited rehearsal period. We hope you enjoy this 'improbable farce'!

*Philip*

**ALWAYS** by Irving Berlin

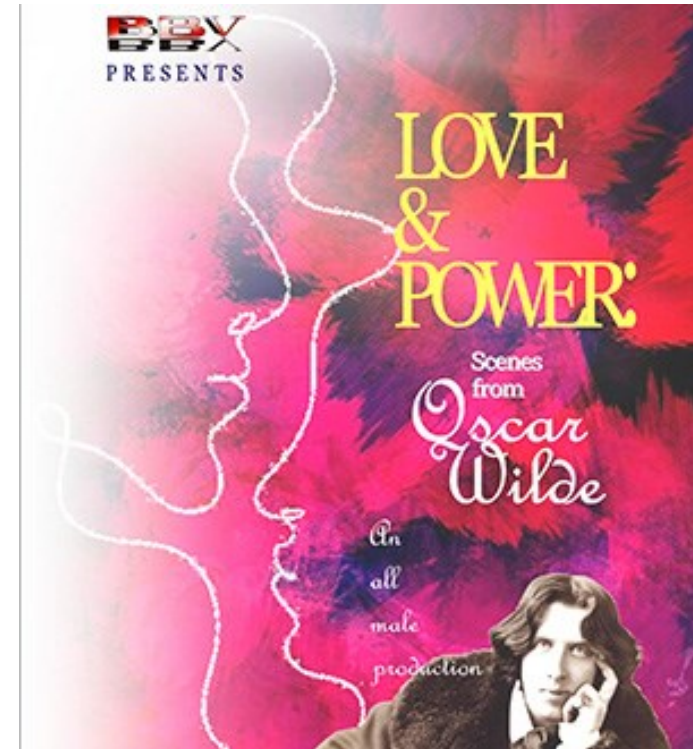
I'll be loving you, always.  
With a love that's true, always.  
When the things you've planned  
Need a helping hand,  
I will understand, always.

Days may not be fair, always.  
That's when I'll be there, always.  
Not for just an hour,  
Not for just a day,  
Not for just a year,  
But always, **Always!**



**Directed by Philip de Grouchy** - A member of the society since the early 1970s, Philip has played a large variety of parts in every kind of show; each time, for some reason, playing an older character than before! In the last few years, he has appeared as: Justice Robert Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lou in *Four Weddings and an Elvis*, Mark in *Yards Apart* and in the Christmas Show, *A Box of Delights*. He has also directed a number of Christmas Shows, including last years' *Christmas with The Cratchits*.

## Visiting Productions



**2 — 3 November 2023**

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



Tickets: <https://www.unexpectedplaces.co.uk>

## The Production Team

<b>Director</b>	Philip de Grouchy
<b>Production Manager</b>	Maria McKay
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Donald Coe
<b>Lighting Designer</b>	Clive Weeks
<b>Sound Designer</b>	Jamie McCarthy
<b>Lighting and Sound Operator</b>	Maria McKay, Kathryn Salmon, Simon White
<b>Set Design</b>	Clive Weeks
<b>Set Construction</b>	Clive Weeks, Brian Stansbridge, Roy Romsey, Donald Coe, Andy Burrows, Martyn Welch, Martin Caveney
<b>Set Painting</b>	Hazel Burrows, Zoe Harris, Kathryn Salmon, Jill Desborough, Robert Osborne, Maria McKay, Rob Iliffe
<b>Special Effects</b>	Clive Weeks, Donald Coe, Maddy Cope, Martyn Welch
<b>Costume</b>	Chris Baker
<b>Properties</b>	Alison Tebbutt
<b>Set Dressing</b>	Angela Stansbridge, Hazel Burrows
<b>Rehearsal Prompt</b>	Chris Baker

## Acknowledgements

Maskers would like to thank the following for the loan of props:

Bitterne History Society  
Murdered for Money



## 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 4th November**  
Running from 10am – 1pm.



Maskers Theatre Company  
are pleased to host



the Youth Theatre part of  
registered charity Unexpected Places

**Shirley Juniors/Seniors**  
Fridays, 4pm-6pm, Aged 7-11/11-16

**Shirley Advanced**  
Fridays, 6pm-7pm, Aged 7-16

[info@lightupdrama.org.uk](mailto:info@lightupdrama.org.uk)



## The Cast



**Edith** is played by **Maddy Cope** — Maddy has recently joined Maskers. She has been in a multitude of shows and also has experience working behind the scenes. She helped with tech for *The Producers*, at the Theatre Royal, Winchester, last November. She was last seen as the violently insane Bertha, in our summer open-air production of *Jane Eyre*.



**Ruth Condomine** is played by **Kate Grundy- Garcia** — Kate is enjoying playing the bossy Ruth, who henpecks her husband hilariously in this wonderful 1930s comedy. Of course, today she would not be deemed bossy or henpecking, just assertive and determined - and with good reason, as her husband, Charles, is fraternising with a rather attractive spirit!

Kate has been a Masker for many years, performing most recently in *Antigone*, *Comfort Me with Apples* and *Sharks in the Custard*.



**Charles Condomine** is played by **Jonathan Barney- Marmont** — Jonathan has been a member of many societies over the years and involved with many productions for Maskers, including playing Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion* and Gregor Samsa in *Metamorphosis*, for which he won Best Actor in a Drama in The Southern Evening Echo's Curtain Call Awards.

You may also spot Jonathan on your television in a TV advert for Wren's Kitchens or in programmes such as *World's Greatest Palaces*, *Britain's Most Evil Killers*, and a feature film due to be aired later this year.



**Dr George Bradman** is played by **Duncan Randall** — Duncan started as a character actor at primary school. He has been 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 for *The Three Musketeers* in 2022 playing Athos, amongst others, and was recently in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. For *Gormenghast*, he created the grumpy Barquentine - no change there! Duncan's latest Maskers' role was in *Time and Tide*, where he played King Knut (among others). Typecast again!



**Mrs Violet Bradman** is played by **Sue Dashper** — During Sue's time in Maskers, she has been involved in a variety of productions including: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *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, including our recent production of *Jane Eyre*. Previous outdoor performances were in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Don Quixote*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *The Jungle Book*, *Anne Boleyn*, *Treasure Island* and *Twelfth Night*.



**Madame Arcati** is played by **Jane Russell** — This will be Jane's sixth performance with Maskers, including the last four Christmas productions – her favourite being the role of Mary in *The Flint Street Nativity*. She also channelled her inner 'Gavin and Stacey' for Maskers, playing Welsh cleaner Mair in *Sharks in the Custard*. Jane has performed in numerous productions with RAODS and EOMS and most recently directed the sell-out outdoor production for RAODS of *Swallows and Amazons*.

Jane is delighted to be playing Madame Arcati – one of those truly iconic female roles - and she very much hopes you enjoy the show.



**Elvira Condomine** is played by **Katy de Haviland** — Katy joined Maskers earlier this year. Having begun acting as a child, she went on to study Drama and Performing Arts at college, before joining a local theatre company in the Midlands. After a 20-year break from the stage and returning to the south, she's looking forward to playing the role of Elvira.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes

