

## FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Maskers will be back in the open air  
at Townhill Park House with

# Jane Eyre

18th—22nd July 2023

Watch the website for details

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



**We hope you enjoy our Show !!**

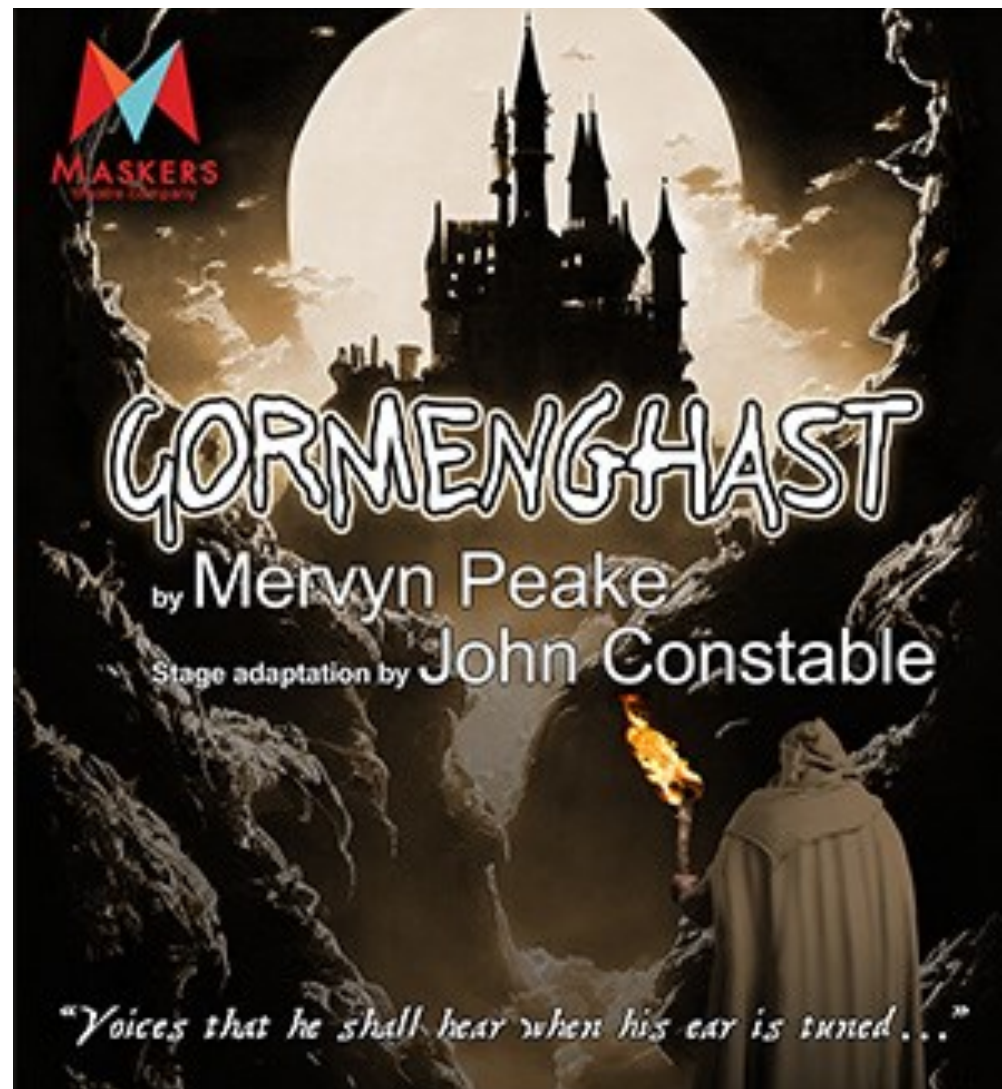
We welcome your comments on tonight's show for marketing purposes and also any feedback on your visit to Maskers Studio

Email: [feedback@maskers.org.uk](mailto:feedback@maskers.org.uk)

**Many Thanks! See you again soon!!**

### 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



**Programme**

24 - 29 April 2023

**MASKERS STUDIO THEATRE**

Registered Charity no. 900067

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

## Director's Notes

*"To begin with and always, the most important thing is that Mervyn Peake was an artist. He drew his characters as he wrote them, sometimes onto the very paper on which he was writing his novel. The hugeness of Gormenghast, the castle that is a city, the habitation that is the only place there is, is uniquely an artist's creation."* Neil Gaiman

From a young age I have always had a passion for stories; going on fantastical adventures, meeting weird and wonderful monsters, and battling dark forces. I found great comfort in books and would escape reality for many hours.

The stories that drew me in the most were often fantasy, horror or sci-fi. It was only later in life that I understood why these particular genres resonated with me so much; the characters. Though not exclusive to these genres, I found the variety and depth of characters incredibly rich and diverse. It was through these complex and flawed characters that I learned more about myself and those around me.

Titus Groan and Gormenghast (the first two instalments in the trilogy, which the play **Gormenghast** covers) were no exception. Mervyn Peake wrote characters that appeared almost cartoonish in their eccentricities but were grounded with very real and raw human desires and motivations. You could almost smell Swelter from the page, feel the cold stones under foot as Mr Flay walked through passages, see Steerpike slither from the shadows and hear the distant hooting... some say the owl was Sepulchrave.

I knew from the start that to do this story justice I would need two things; a creative, adventurous technical team to bring Gormenghast to life, and a talented, versatile cast to have the characters jump off the page. I am very fortunate to have had both in spades, and grateful for everyone who is going on this creative journey with me. Considering the scale of the show, the technical requirements, the extensive choreography and limited rehearsal time, I am blown away by everyone's hard work and passion for the show. As a new director, I have learnt a huge amount from this experience and the challenges that come with putting a show together. There are always going to be difficult patches to get through, I have tried to offer an open and positive space to discuss any problems and constantly adapted to what my cast and crew need of me; which means I can get the best out of them, too.

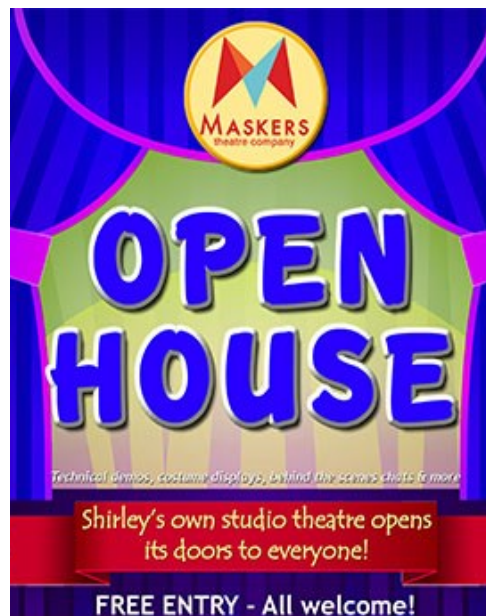
I really hope everyone enjoys the show and I'm very honoured to be given the opportunity to share my creative vision. Thanks to all of my Gormenghast "duckies" for keeping up with me and making me so proud!

Anna

### WARNING

This production contains flashing lights, loud and sudden sound effects, and a suicide.

## POP IN AND GET TO KNOW US 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 6th May**

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)



**Barquentine, Master of Ritual**, is played by **Duncan Randall** - Duncan started as a character actor at primary school. He has been involved in various community theatre groups for over a decade. 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* playing Athos, amongst others, and was recently in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Duncan has enjoyed the delicious language of Barquentine and exploring being a grumpy old man, no change!



**The Thing, an outcast**, is played by **Daria Standall** - Daria has come to the UK from Ukraine and this is her first appearance for Maskers. She is enjoying creating her character and working with the rest of the company.



**Chorus, The Voice of Gormenghast**, is played by **Jo Fox** - Jo has been an active Masker for 13 years and has played a variety of roles in that time, including Lady Jane Rochford in *Anne Boleyn*, Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Ursula in *Much Ado about Nothing* and a monkey in *The Jungle Book*. She most recently appeared in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* where she played, among other things, the wardrobe door, so Jo is excited to be popping up as a door again in *Gormenghast* (as well as helping create a sense of the epic castle with movement and set)! As well as acting, Jo is also kept busy in her role as company secretary on the Maskers' committee.



**Directed by Anna Hussey** - Anna had a passion for theatre from a young age and pursued this further by studying Drama at Aberystwyth University. There she specialised in costume and stage design, as well as translating plays to stage. Although not pursued as a career, Anna has been involved with local theatre groups in a variety of capacities. Anna's debut with Maskers was in 2018 with *Wyrd Sisters* in the ensemble and since then she has been honoured to be involved in a wide range of productions, including physical pieces like *100* in 2019, classic Shakespeare with *Much Ado About Nothing* in 2021, and performing in Totton Festival's winner for Best Original Script *Yards Apart* in 2022. *Gormenghast* is Anna's directing debut with Maskers and she is excited to share her vision.



**There will be one interval of 20 minutes.**

**The bar will be open after the show.**

**Please take care on the uneven surface when leaving the Studio. Stay on the lit pathway to the left to the end of the access road.**

## Acknowledgements

Our thanks to:

Angela Stansbridge  
Martin (Timber) Kelly

## The Production Team

**Director**  
**Production Manager**  
**Stage Manager**  
**Lighting Designer**  
**Sound Designer**  
**Lighting and Sound Operator**  
**Set Design**  
**Set Construction**  
**Set Painting**

**Costume**  
**Properties**  
**Show photography**

Anna Hussey  
James Lawson  
Jill Desborough  
Tom Foyle  
Jamie McCarthy  
Tom Foyle  
Zoe Harris  
Clive Weeks, James Lawson, Zoe Harris  
Paul Green, Zoe Harris, James Lawson,  
Anna Hussey, Sam Hussey, Jo Fox  
Susan Wilson  
Adam Taussik  
Ian Wilson

## The Cast



**Steerpike, a kitchen scrubber**, is played by **Ben Jones** - Ben has recently returned to local acting after a 'break' of 17 years. Over the last year he has played Herr Zeller in the *Sound of Music*, one of Lola's Angels in *Kinky Boots* (both with Spot On Productions) and, whilst rehearsing for *Gormenghast*, is also playing Glen Guglia in SDMS's production of *The Wedding Singer* in Fareham. Ben is delighted to be playing Steerpike as his first role with Maskers. Having first been attracted to the source material as a teenager, he is thrilled at the opportunity to bring one of his favourite literary characters to infernal life (!), alongside such a talented cast of fellow performers.



**Fuschia, Titus' older sister**, is played by **Rachel di Nucci** - Rachel joined Maskers in 2020. She's been in *Four Weddings and an Elvis* as Fiona and she portrayed Porthos and Milady de Winter in *The Three Musketeers* last summer. She looks forward to playing the delicate Lady Fuchsia, though she will be sad to miss out on the fight scenes. On balance though, she is grateful not to be playing another criminal obsessed with post, if only so she doesn't need to try and keep track of an ever-growing pile of props!



**Titus, 77th Earl of Groan**, is played by **Thom Jones** - Thom is a multi-genre street dance teacher and teaches on the world's only government-accredited street dance teacher training course. He is also 1 of 6 street dance examiners for the Royal Academy of Dance. In his spare time, he spends most of his time with his dog, and enjoys performing in local am dram. This is Thom's first production with Maskers and he has done a brilliant job stepping into the role at the last minute with only 2 weeks rehearsal.



**Sepulchrave, 76th Earl of Groan**, is played by **Paul Baker** - Paul has been in over twenty-five shows in the open air for Maskers and rarely ventures indoors. During that time, he has played a variety of roles including Weasel Norman in *The Wind in the Willows* and Thomas Cromwell in *Anne Boleyn* and often multiple parts in the same production, as evidenced only last summer when he played four different characters in *The Three Musketeers*. This is Paul's first production inside for over a year, so he fully expects it to snow - well there is definitely a storm in the play!



**Gertrude, Countess of Groan** is 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* and *Out of Focus* and, most recently, *The Three Musketeers*.



**Cora, Sepulchrave's sister**, is played by **Abi Linnartz** - This is Abi's second outing with Maskers, having appeared in *The Three Musketeers* in the summer of 2022. Previous productions include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Bible (Abridged)*, *The Last Secret*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* and *Mapp and Lucia* (all with Titchfield Festival Theatre); *Murder Most Fowl*, *Hattie Blotter* and *the Philanthropists Groan* (Murdered for Money). Abi has also performed at the Brighton Fringe in *The Field Street Monologues* (Rusty Bucket Productions).



**Clarice, Sepulchrave's sister and twin to Cora**, is played by **Dawn Gatrell** - Dawn previously performed in pantos at The Bent Brief pub and in *The Shadow Factory*, which premiered at the Nuffield City Theatre. This is her second appearance with the Maskers. She was first seen getting to grips with Shakespeare as the tavern owner in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In *Gormenghast*, Dawn will be playing Clarice, one of the twin aunts: dim-witted, largely overlooked, but thirsty for power.



**Dr Prunesquallor, physician to the House of Groan**, is played by **Molly McDade** - Molly has been part of Maskers since 2014 and is delighted to be playing the hysterical Doctor Prunesquallor. As well as being in various Maskers' productions, including *A Bunch of Amateurs* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*, she is also a member of Southampton Operatic Society and has appeared in *Legally Blonde* and *Crazy for You* at MAST Studios.



**Mr Flay, ancient retainer to the House of Groan**, is played by **Sam Hussey** - Sam has been with Maskers since 2019, when he played Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*. Since then, he's been involved in several productions, playing everything from Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing* to escaped Texan convict Fist in *Four Weddings and an Elvis*. Most recently he was very excited to play Mr Tumnus in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* - a joint production between Maskers and Light Up youth theatre. *Gormenghast* was the first play he ever went to see with his now wife Anna (the director), and he's thrilled to bring another classic literary character to life as Mr Flay!



**Swelter, the cook**, is 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, soldiers and bears), but this will be the first chef - though not the first vinophile. For this show, Adam will also be keeping up the swashbuckling tone of *The Three Musketeers*, and wields a cleaver as well as the next man...