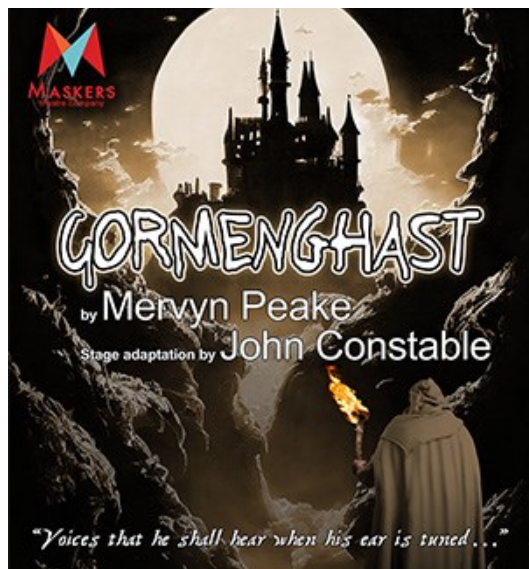


FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS



Gormenghast

24 - 29 Apr 2023

In a world bound by iron laws and dead rituals, two young souls struggle to forge their own paths; but at what cost?

This gruesome, gothic drama is an adaptation of Mervyn Peake's famous Gormenghast trilogy.

at The Maskers Studio

Age 14 and over.

Maskers will be back in the open air
at Townhill Park House, July 2023, with

Jane Eyre



Watch the website for details

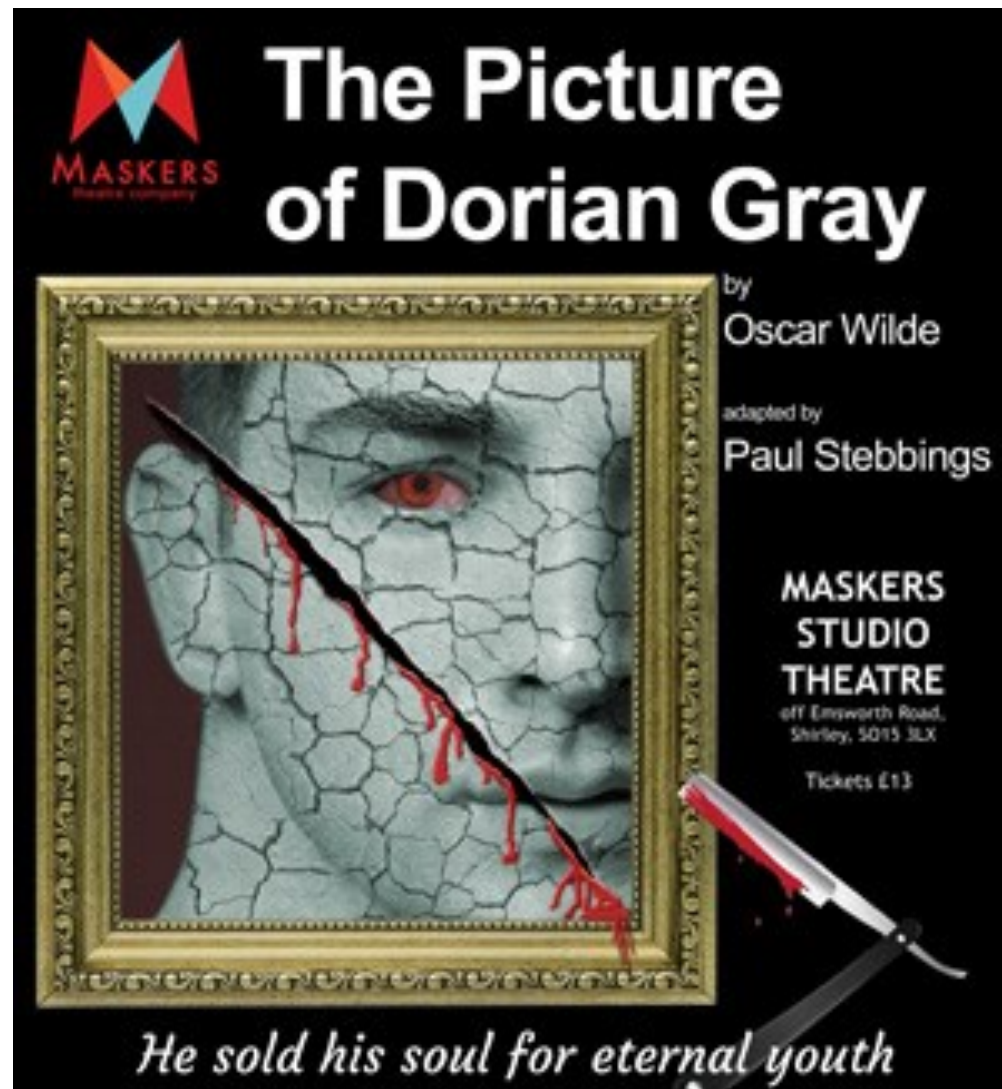
BOOKING: Via link on our website or 0333 666 3366
maskers.org.uk



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Facebook



Programme

6 - 11 March 2023

MASKERS STUDIO THEATRE

Registered Charity no. 900067

maskers.org.uk

Director's Notes

So here we are, one year on from my last Maskers' show. This production combines two versions of an adaptation by Paul Stebbings. During the licence process, I contacted Paul and discovered we both had a background in Grotowskian Theory, which he still practises today with his own company in Germany. I asked if he was okay me with adding to and further adapting his versions. Amazingly he said 'yes'; so the version you are about to see is a new adaptation of what, I think, is Wilde's greatest work. I have directed many adaptations over the years, but I don't prescribe to the 'just tell the story' school of adaptation because, surely, the book did that already? What I look for in an adaptation is something that can be developed in some way to enhance the story and shed light on the themes. With this adaptation, I have tried to represent the differences between the two lives Dorian leads - the genteel drawing room etiquette of High Society set against the lurid lights and colour of indulgence and narcissism.

So, is Dorian Gray just a horror story about a man who transfers his sin into a painting in order to retain eternal youth, or something quite different? Well, Wilde definitely didn't write it as a horror story but he was very angry when he wrote it. It's primarily about Art, how it is perceived, interpreted and exploited. As he writes in the preface to the second edition, 'The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim'. But there is still always the question, if you had the chance to retain your youth at the cost of your soul, would you take it? With this gift, Dorian chooses to transfer all his sin and evil into a painting, rather than atone for them. It becomes an addiction, drawing him further and further towards hell.

So how do you go about adapting a classic piece of literature where the words are regarded as almost sacred? Well, you keep to the words where they show you the characters and story and, where there is clear subtext, you turn to techniques of the theatre to present them physically. It will become clear immediately, that this is not a naturalistic production. There are natural scenes, but even those use elements of stylised movement.

There is one particular scene I have developed which involves two 'ladies of the night'. Where the original was meant to be just a lascivious representation of depravity, I have chosen to show female sexuality in a different way and counterpoint female sexuality with the suppression of gay men at the time. (As most know, Wilde was gay and was imprisoned for it.) This is to connect with another theme of the novel, namely suppressed or denied love.

In most adaptations (and there are many) I have seen, there is an obsession with rendering the picture itself but for me, in the theatre, one of the most powerful forces is the audience's imagination. Therefore, I have chosen to represent the picture as something that haunts Dorian and physically interacts with him.

Some may also take issue with the use of contemporary music and movement but, I believe Wilde was literally a hundred years ahead of his time, and I would hope he would approve of the challenging and questioning approach of this production.

So, I have not just concentrated on the words (as brilliant as they are) but also the themes Wilde was passionate about : art, personal expression, ownership of art, love, passion and its role in art. (That's a lot of mentions of art in one sentence!)

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to:

Georgette Ellison for the wig.



MASKERS
theatre company
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

Many Thanks

See you again soon!!



Maskers Theatre Company
are pleased to host

LIGHT UP

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

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

The Production Team

Director	Paul Green
Production Manager	Kathryn Salmon
Stage Managers	Donald Coe, Kathryn Salmon
Lighting Designer	Clive Weeks, assisted by Maria McKay
Sound Designer	Chris Moses
Lighting Operators	Simon White, Maria McKay
Sound Operator	Heather Callaway, Kathryn Salmon
Special Effects	Anna Hussey
Set Design	Paul Green
Set Construction	Brian Stansbridge
Set Painting	Clive Weeks, Donald Coe
Choreography/Movement	Paul Green
Costume	Lou Lozano De La Mota
Costume Consultant	Sheana Carrington
Make Up Manager	Lou Lozano De La Mota
Properties	Adam Taussik
Show photography	Clive Weeks
Rehearsal Prompts	Philip de Grouchy, Marie McDade

At the centre of the play is the relationship triangle of Dorian, Henry Wotton and Basil Hallward, which explores male relationships and obsession. Several critics at the time drew comparisons between Dorian and Oscar Wilde himself. Wilde's reply was to say that all three characters were aspects of his character so the story could be said to be about a man trying to reconcile his creativity.

The cast have been unflinching and trusting throughout the process. They have worked brilliantly with me to push the limits of possibility, to produce something that will challenge, stimulate, amuse, involve and, yes, shock. I am using a mixture of techniques, both physical and theatrical. This means the acting veers from stylised vaudeville to realistic. I have a brilliant technical team behind this show, which has achieved an immersive blend of light and sound to compliment the movement.

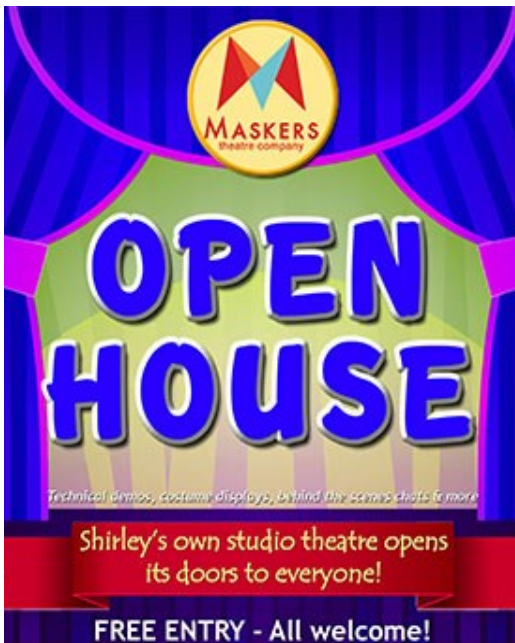
Finally, I close by saying that convention in any system is a source of control rather than creativity, which, ultimately, slows progress rather than enhancing it. Art is the product and source of creativity. Enjoy the show.



Paul

Directed by Paul Green - Paul has been acting and directing in Southampton and the surrounding area for over 50 years. He was the Artistic Director of The Talking Heads Theatre Pub in Portswood during the 90s. Since then, Paul has worked with many companies and has directed at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall - a well-received production of *The 39 Steps*. He joined Maskers in 2013 and has acted in and directed several shows. Last year Paul was very busy directing: *Ugly Lies the Bone* in the Maskers Studio, *Lilies on the Land* outdoors at Furzey Gardens, and *Rules for Living* at The Plaza Theatre in Romsey. His next production will be outdoors at Furzey again, a comedy by Amanda Whittington, *Ladies' Day*.

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 1st April

Running from 10am – 1pm.



The Cast



Dorian Gray is played by **Alex Mawers** - Alex is a new member of Maskers and this will be his first show with the group. His only previous experience on stage (excluding Drama classes at school) was in 2019 as Anthony Marston in Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. Alex works in a role in finance for the NHS, which he initially joined in 2012 on the apprenticeship program. Outside of work Alex enjoys keeping fit and playing sports, and spending time with friends and family.



Henry Wotton is played by **Jez Minns** - Jez has been working in the theatre as an amateur, and sometimes professional, actor for the last 35 years and he has been with the Maskers for 25 of them. Most recently he played Tiny Tim in last year's Xmas show *Christmas with the Cratchits*. Other recent appearances for the Maskers include Borachio the drunkard in *Much Ado About Nothing* in the open air and, before Covid, the bullyboy Innkeeper in *The Flint Street Nativity* in the Maskers Studio. When he is not doing theatre, Jez enjoys painting and sketching and writing poetry.



Basil Hallwood is played by **Neil Forster** - This is Neil's second show with Maskers, after playing Stan in *Four Weddings and an Elvis* last year. This production couldn't be more different but, as they say, variety is the spice of life! A native Geordie(ish), Neil grew up in South Shields and studied at York University, where he appeared in various shows including *Cider with Rosie*, *Arcadia* and *Journey's End*. He moved to London after university, where he performed in many other productions including *A Clockwork Orange*, *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and *Hand to God*.



Jim Vane is played by **Robert Osborne** - Robert has been with Maskers since 2011 and has turned his hand to pretty much every area from acting to stage managing to directing. Currently in his fourth year as the company's Productions Director, he has faced the tricky task of rebuilding the programme of plays after the pandemic. Last seen as the smiling Marvin Marvel in *Four Weddings and an Elvis*, Robert now portrays the gruff sailor, Jim Vane. With a degree in English Literature, he is pleased to get the chance to be part of this reworking of Wilde's only novel.



Alan Campbell/ Chorus is played by **Duncan Randall** - Duncan has enjoyed community theatre for more than a decade in various places. He started as a character actor at primary school. On moving to the south coast, he joined Titchfield Festival Theatre (TFT). His creations for TFT include: 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 last year for *The Three Musketeers* playing Athos, an outrageous King Louis and a Boris-like Buckingham. Duncan has enjoyed the ensemble and physical acting rehearsals with all its weird creative moments.



Sybil Vane/ Chorus is played by **Pippa Messent Watling** - This is Pippa's first production with Maskers and she's very excited to make her debut with the company. Her previous theatre experience includes participating in Addington Theatre Group's 2015 production of *Jack the Ripper* and being cast as Barbara in their 2017 production of *Billy* - with both having been musicals, she hopes to be able to live up to the vocal (and dramatic!) expectations of this role. Outside the theatre, she enjoys fibre crafting, digital art and running.



Leaf/ Chorus is played by **Jill Desborough** - Jill joined Maskers in 2014 and has been involved with many shows in a variety of roles, both on and off stage. Recent acting highlights have included: Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Liz, a cleaner in an art gallery in *Sharks in the Custard*, a member of the Watch in our open-air production of *Much Ado About Nothing* and, most recently, the Ghost of Christmas Present in *Christmas with the Cratchits*. She is excited to be working on this production of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, her first time being directed by Paul.



Mad Cat/ Chorus is played by **Kinga Motyka** - Kinga, originally from Poland, started performing in a theatre at age 6 in her first show, *Cinderella*. Kinga studied Musical Theatre at the University of Winchester and Acting at the University of Shenandoah in Virginia, USA. Kinga has performed in many productions but this is her first show with The Maskers. Apart from theatre, Kinga loves singing and travelling.

WARNING

This play contains sudden noises, flickering lights, music, and non-irritant theatrical haze.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes.

