

## Forthcoming Production



18 — 23 March 2024

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

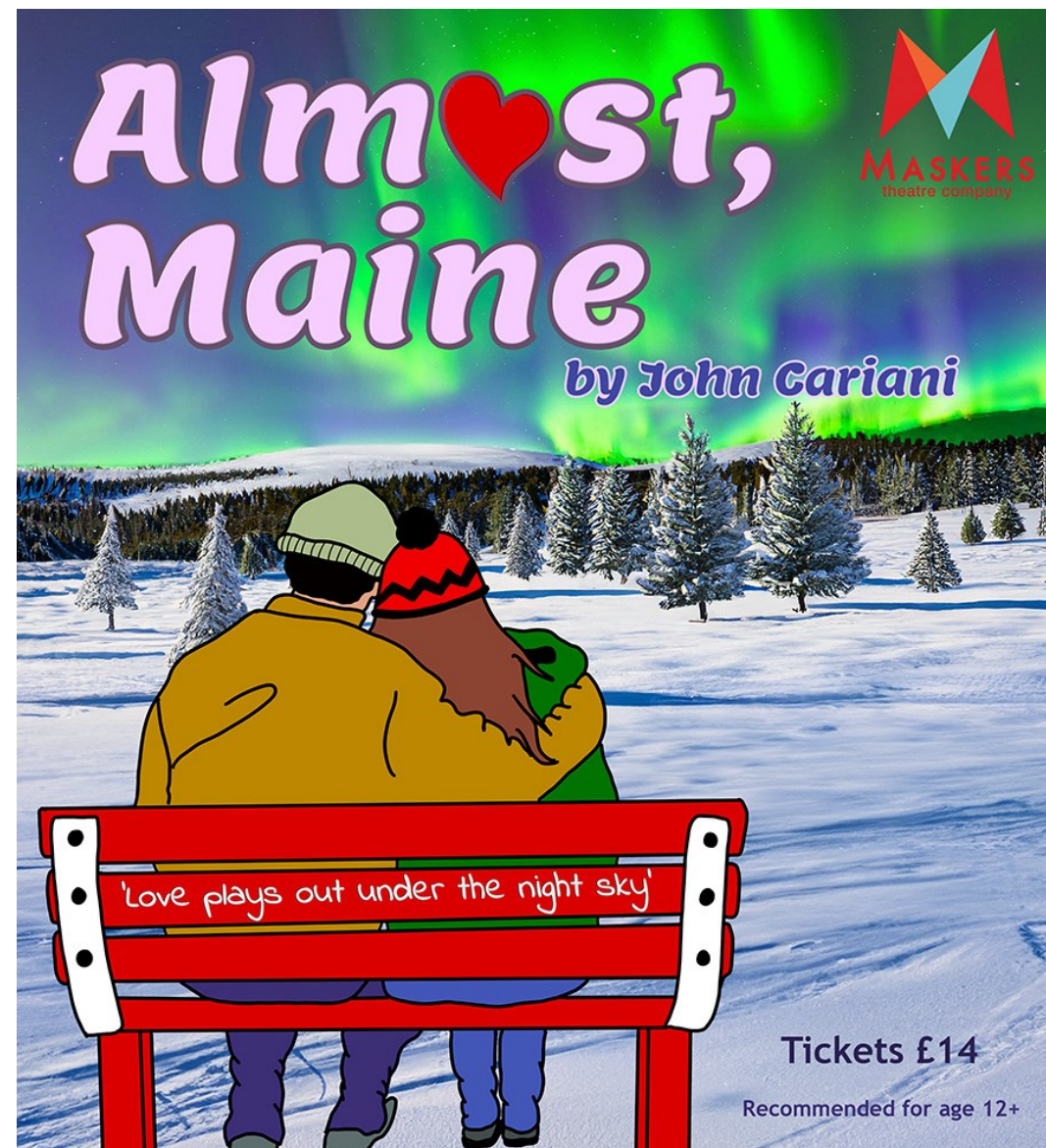
**For the Maskers** Technical Manager:- Jamie McCarthy; Lighting Consultant:- Clive Weeks; Sound Consultant:- Jamie McCarthy;

Marketing Team:- Angela Stansbridge, Clive Weeks, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Paul Baker; Jenni Prior; Rachel Di Nucci; Business Development Manager:- Chrissy Way; 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



Programme

29th January — 3rd February 2024

Maskers Studio Theatre

Registered Charity no. 900067

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

## Director's Notes

For my directorial debut, it was fun thinking what plays I've seen in the past few years I could fit into the studio.

Maybe a typical Shakespeare. Or Annie Barker's *The Flick*, about three ushers in an old cinema auditorium. Or Phil Porter's dysfunctional romantic comedy, *Blink*. Or a claustrophobic *Incident at Vichy* by Arthur Miller. Or Ibsen's thrilling *Enemy of the People* in the round. Maybe flood the studio in *Rosmersholm!*

But I kept coming back to an American play that I saw premiere back in 2014 at the Park Theatre in Finsbury, London. *Almost, Maine* by John Cariani. A funny, at times absurd, but poignant play about finding and (occasionally) losing love in the strangest of ways, with plenty of twists and turns - and all in a studio that reminded me of Maskers Studio. I thought this would be perfect to stage.

Nearly a decade later and the first UK revival is now here in the Studio.

Premiering in 2004, *Almost, Maine* has become one of the most popular plays in the United States. It is the most frequently produced play in High Schools of the past two decades, and according to Playbill the most streamed play during the Covid Pandemic. John Cariani has even adapted it into a book in recent years.

It's exciting to bring a cast of all ages together to play the ordinary folks of Maine, trying to navigate what John Cariani says is "the toughest thing there is to deal with in life: love". It can creep up on you at any stage in life. And that has been the focus of the production.

*David*



**Directed by David Jobson** - David has been a part of the Maskers for the past decade, first lurking in *Anne Boleyn*, then appearing in plays such as *Richard II*, *The Jungle Book*, *Ten Times Table*, *An Italian Straw Hat*, *Around the World in Eighty Days* and most recently playing D'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers*.

He has also performed for Titchfield Festival Players, where he has played several Shakespearean roles including Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, Claudio in *Much Ado about Nothing*, Malcolm in *Macbeth*, and recently Richard Plantagenet of York in an adaptation of the *Henry VI* trilogy.

He is also a proud trustee of Flute Theatre Company, headed by Kelly Hunter MBE, which uses Shakespeare's rhythmic language and physical gesture to release communicative blocks within children on the autism spectrum.

There will be one interval of 20 minutes

## 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 3rd February**  
Running from 10am – 1pm.

**SHINING A LIGHT ON SHIRLEY**

**YOUTH THEATRE CLASSES AT MASKERS theatre company**

**Monday, 4:30 - 6:00 (NEW)**  
Shirley Ensemble (12 - 18 yrs)

**Wednesday**  
LAMDA Tuition (7+), times vary depending on grade. Enquire for details.

**Friday, 4:30 - 6:30**  
Mixed Company (7 - 16 yrs), waiting list only

**Coming Soon to the Light UP line-up:**  
Intro to Tech - register your interest  
Junior Company (7-12 yrs) - register your interest  
Musical Theatre Company (7-16yrs) - register your interest

To get more information or book a free trial visit [www.lightupdrama.org.uk](http://www.lightupdrama.org.uk) or email the team at [info@lightupdrama.org.uk](mailto:info@lightupdrama.org.uk).

## The Production Team

**Director**  
**Mentor to the Director**  
**Production Manager**  
**Stage Manager**  
**Assistant Stage Manager**  
**Lighting Designer**  
**Lighting Consultant**  
**Sound Designer**  
**Lighting and Sound Operators**  
**Set Design**  
**Set Construction**  
**Set Painting**

**Costume**  
**Properties**  
**Rehearsal Prompt**  
**Poster Design**

David Jobson  
William Baggs  
Christine Baker  
Kathryn Salmon  
Tom Foyle  
Simon White  
Tom Foyle  
David Jobson, Jamie McCarthy  
Silas Champagne, Ashley Martin  
Clive Weeks  
Clive Weeks and team  
Viktoriia Prymak, Nataliia Prymak, Meri Mackney  
Anna Hussey  
Christine Baker  
Christine Baker  
Kyla Little, Clive Weeks

## Alm♥st, Maine

### First Act

#### Prologue

Alec Sleigh - Pete  
Jenni Prior - Ginette

#### Her Heart

Philip de Grouchy - East  
Jill Desborough - Glory

#### Sad and Glad

Simon Mewett - Jimmy  
Emily Smith - Sandrine  
Jenni Prior - Waitress

#### This Hurts

Dawn Gatrell - Marvalyn  
Rob Iliffe - Steve

#### Getting it Back

Neil Forster - Lendall  
Jenni Prior - Gayle

### Second Act

#### They Fell

Alec Sleigh - Chad  
Neil Forster - Randy

#### Where it Went

Dawn Gatrell - Marci  
Rob Iliffe - Phil

#### Story of Hope

Jill Desborough - Hope  
Philip de Grouchy - Man

#### Seeing the Thing

Simon Mewett - Dave  
Emily Smith - Rhonda

## Acknowledgements

Maskers would like to thank :

Lian Fry for the heart painting



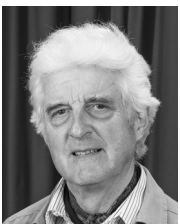
## The Cast



**Ginette/Waitress /Gayle** played by **Jenni Prior** — Jenni joined Maskers in November. She has been involved in amateur drama since 2001, playing a mixture of comedy, drama, farce and pantomime. Jenni is enjoying being involved in her first production with Maskers.



**Pete/Chad** played by **Alec Sleigh** — This is Alec's second show with Maskers, after previously playing Don John in the 2021 production of **Much Ado About Nothing**. His first role was as the lead in a production of Simon Stephens' **Birdland**, which was taken to the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Since then, he has had other roles in **Miss Julie**, **At The Mountains of Madness**, **Hamlet**, **As You Like It**, and the original play, **A Stranger In Our House**. Last year, he returned to **Much Ado** with Titchfield Festival Theatre, this time as Benedick - shortly before heading back to the Edinburgh Fringe in a production of **The Misunderstanding**.



**East/Man** played by **Philip de Grouchy** — Over the last fifty years, Philip has played a large number of varied characters with Maskers, usually extrovert in nature; Scrooge in 2022's **Christmas with the Cratchits**, for example. As his contribution to this interesting play, he is looking forward to the challenge of tackling two more subtly introverted types.



**Glory/Hope** 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. 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, more recently, the Ghost of Christmas Present in **Christmas with the Cratchits** and Leaf/Chorus in **The Picture of Dorian Gray**. She is looking forward to experiencing the magic of the northern lights in this production of **Almost, Maine**.



**Jimmy/Dave** played by **Simon Mewett** — Simon's second appearance for Maskers was as Colonel Dent, Vicar and innkeeper for **Jane Eyre** last summer. Simon was also involved in **Love & Power**, scenes from Oscar Wilde, a BBV production, which was performed at Maskers Studio back in November.



**Sandrine/Rhonda** played by **Emily Smith** — Emily joined Maskers in the spring of 2023 and has worked backstage on several shows; both as a lighting/sound operator and a stage manager. She briefly studied acting at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco before changing to Motion Pictures and Television (Cinematography) and has produced several short films for her own studio. This is her first performance on stage in over ten years!



**Marvalyn/Marci** 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 fourth appearance with Maskers. She was first seen getting to grips with Shakespeare, as the tavern owner in **The Merry Wives of Windsor** and then in **Gormenghast**, playing one of the twin aunts. She was delighted to be involved with **Time and Tide** last September and is really looking forward to her dual roles in **Almost, Maine**.



**Steve/Phil** played by **Rob Iliffe** — Rob's first appearance for Maskers was as Mr Brocklehurst in **Jane Eyre** last summer. Previous performing includes: **Southampton Mummings 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.



**Lendall/Randy** played by **Neil Forster** — This is Neil's third show with Maskers, after playing Basil Hallward in **The Picture of Dorian Gray** last year, and Stan in **Four Weddings and an Elvis** in 2022. 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**.

