



Shiplake and Dunsden
Dramatic Organisation
www.shaddo.org.uk

Meeting of the SHADDO Executive Committee – amended minutes 16/02/18

Date: 8th February, 2018
 Place: Croft Cottage, Northfield Avenue, Shiplake, RG9 3PE
 Present: Gareth Jones (GJ), Neill Wilkinson (NW), Rosemary Appleby (RA), Pip Collings (PC), Cheryl Milne (CM), Peter Crowther (PSC)
 Invited for Item 1:
 Rebecca Strong (RS), Sarah Strong (SS)
 Apologies: Liz James (LJ), Phil Johnson (PJ), Simon Classey (SC), Neil McAdam (NM), Becky Ilderton (BI)

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Rebecca Strong – Rôle as Director</p> <p>Long-term SHADDO member RS had expressed a desire to direct or co-direct a SHADDO production. RS has much relevant experience, having studied Performing Arts for three years at Reading College, and also some time at Henley College. She was also responsible for some of the choreography in the most recent Alice in Wonderland pantomime. SS was of the opinion that RS would only have the opportunity to direct in the near future as she would shortly be embarking on a full-time career and her subsequent free time would be limited.</p> <p>There were concerns from some of the committee that RS may need support from someone with experience of directing a panto. It was also suggested RS could direct a smaller mid-year production. RS agreed that she would be happy to be a co-director.</p> <p>A formal response to RS would be drawn up in which she would be asked for her thoughts on being co-director of a pantomime, or director of a smaller production.</p>	<p>PC</p>

<p>2. Pantomime: Lessons from this year's production</p> <p><i>Costumes</i> CM had experienced difficulties in the weeks prior to the pantomime, similar to previous years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had not been easy to keep track of costumes supplied by actors themselves; • Difficulty in contacting specific members of the cast to discuss individual requirements. It was agreed that she would obtain individual email addresses from GJ when required. For general distribution of information, she would request PSC to send out an email to all; • Distribute the costumes at an earlier date: CM had observed that members of the cast memorised their lines more swiftly when in costume than when they were in civvies. <p>CM had built up a large quantity of costumes over the years and would reorganise the costume store to facilitate distribution for future productions.</p> <p><i>Learning the script</i> RA was strongly of the opinion that 3 or 4 early rehearsals should be devoted purely to reading the lines, thereby accustoming the cast to their cues and to timing.</p> <p><i>Principal characters</i> Particular attention should be paid to the casting of principal characters to ensure that they were equal to the burden.</p> <p><i>Publicity</i> It was felt that the publicity for this year's panto was initiated too late. For the purpose of designing publicity leaflets and programmes, a hunt for graphic designers and art students would be initiated. CM suggested that the Art Department at Henley College be contacted.</p> <p><i>Noisy babies</i> As a consequence of a noisy baby disturbing the audience and cast of the panto, for future productions a notice would be inserted in the programme, displayed in the foyer and publicly announced, explaining that while babies would be welcome, if they started crying, their parents would be requested to remove them from the hall until such time as they had calmed down. A suggestion that parents with infants be reserved seats close to the door was considered impractical. This would be included in the 'Book of the Panto'.</p> <p><i>Script simplification</i> LJ had written to the committee suggesting that the matinée script was too complicated for very young children, and a simplified version be produced for that showing. While sympathetic to her idea, it was thought much too complicated to carry out.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>CM</p> <p>PC</p> <p>PC</p>

<p><i>Cast feedback</i></p> <p>The cast would be invited to anonymously give their thoughts and ideas arising from the panto. These would be collated and used to improve the running of future productions.</p>	<p>PSC</p> <p>PC</p>
<p>3. Date for AGM</p> <p>The date for the AGM would be Thursday, 19th April at the Shoulder of Mutton, Play Hatch. The conservatory would be booked.</p> <p>PC announced that she would be resigning from the Committee at the AGM. She would make contact with those SHADDO members whom she thought would be suitable to step into the chair's rôle.</p> <p>Announcement of the AGM would need to be at least 28 days prior to the event, and it would contain invitations to SHADDO members to apply for Committee Officers' positions.</p>	<p>PSC</p> <p>PC</p> <p>PC</p>
<p>4. Rehearsal Venue</p> <p>Although discussed at the previous Committee Meeting, a replacement rehearsal venue had not been identified. This task would be re-initiated, and among the possible halls would be Henley YMCA, Dunsden Hall, Harpsden Hall and the Tythe Barn.</p>	<p>GJ</p>
<p>5. Trips</p> <p>This item was deferred until the next meeting.</p>	
<p>6. Additional SHADDO Productions</p> <p>Any decision would be deferred until such time as the Committee had heard back from RS.</p> <p>GJ considered that the AGM would be an ideal opportunity to launch any ideas for a new production, but only after proposals had been circulated among the membership for feedback.</p> <p>A document of proposals would be assembled.</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note:</i> Appendix A contains summaries of nine small-cast plays that PSC reviewed last year.</p>	<p>PSC</p>
<p>7. Memorial Hall</p> <p>Matters arising from the previous Committee Meeting: GJ explained that the Memorial Hall was no longer using SHADDO-owned lighting, so the problem of dividing hire-income no longer existed.</p> <p>Discussion on the half-stage backdrop, new stage floor, curtains, and seating would be deferred until a future meeting: those dealing with these issues were not present.</p>	

<p>8. Photos and Videos published on social media</p> <p>The publication of photographs of productions on social media was not considered a problem except if young children were involved.</p> <p>GJ explained that with videos, the licence we have only covers the copyright for words. Any music published on social media would be an infringement of the licence.</p> <p>It was agreed that the most appropriate course of action would be to have an announcement at a production, or inclusion in the programme, explaining that no photographs or videos were to be taken of the production.</p> <p>A link to official photos would be provided on the SHADDO website.</p> <p>An announcement explaining this would be drafted, approved by PC and GJ, then circulated among the SHADDO membership.</p>	PSC
<p>9. Finance</p> <p>It was agreed that a donation of £125 be made to the nursery, as was the custom.</p> <p>GJ informed the Meeting that although revenue was slightly down, and expenses much greater than last year, SHADDO had still made approximately £700 profit from the panto.</p> <p>An invoice for expenses of £420 was circulated during the Meeting and it was approved. It would be paid by BACS.</p>	GJ
<p>10. Play Readings</p> <p>A request was made that at such time as the play-readings were announced, character numbers in the script be included in the précis.</p>	PSC
<p>11. AOB</p> <p><i>NODA Election</i></p> <p>GJ had received an invitation from National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) inviting SHADDO's input into the election of either of two candidates for the post of London Region Councillor. As none of the Committee was familiar with either of the candidates, a response would be sent to NODA explaining that SHADDO would not be voting. <i>Post-meeting note:</i> This response was sent on 9th February.</p> <p><i>Storage Trolley</i></p> <p>GJ considered that an additional trolley would be useful for storage and transport of props. The estimated cost was £300. PJ, MM, and NM would be contacted regarding this purchase.</p>	GJ
<p>12. Vote of Thanks</p> <p>The Committee thanked Neill for his generous hospitality.</p>	

APPENDIX A

A Review of Small-cast Plays

After I'm Gone by Frank Vickery

Comedy

Characters: 4, 3F, 1M.

1 act, 3 scenes (but no scenery change required).

Set in Wales, an awkward elderly widow doesn't want her middle-aged and very naïve spinster daughter, upon whom she depends, to marry her beau. They do marry, however, and the new husband and his stone-deaf widower-father move in. To our surprise, the widow and widower marry and leave the younger ones to themselves. In time, the oldies drop in with a surprise present, the meaning of which is completely misunderstood by the daughter.

This comedy has some very funny dialogue, much of it arising from the deaf dad's misinterpretation of what the others shout in his direction, and it becomes apparent that marriage will hold some very significant revelations for the naïve and innocent daughter.

I enjoyed reading this very much, but, to be honest, I thought that the ending was rather weak: but I could have been missing something.

Knightsbridge by John Mortimer

Comedy

Characters: 4, 2M, 2F.

1 act, 1 scene.

A cultured young girl introduces her fiancé, a TV interviewer, to her wealthy widowed (there are a lot of them about!) mother. The fiancé overhears his future mother-in-law talking on the phone to a customer and misinterprets how she earns her living: she's an antiques dealer, he thinks that she's 'on the game' and as such he'd like to interview her for one of his programmes. The truth eventually comes out, much to his disappointment (for more than one reason) and he and the girl leave in some embarrassment over the misunderstanding. After their departure the phone rings again and the mother answers it in a 'soft and sexy voice' . . .

This is a beautifully-written play, brim full of double entendres. Such was my chuckling as I read it that I got quite a few acidic looks from the librarian.

A Glass of Bitter by J B Priestley

Drama

Characters: 5, 2F, 3M

1 act, 1 scene.

A middle-aged childless couple are sitting quietly at home, and hubby decides to go out for a pint. While he's away, a girl comes to the door claiming to be the wife of the woman's illegitimate son from years prior to her meeting her husband who knows nothing of the boy. The girl threatens to tell all to the husband unless she's given some cash to enable them to make a quick get-away following a bungled crime that they've just committed. She leaves, promising to return shortly with the son. Meanwhile a detective inspector calls and persuades the woman that it would be in her son's own interest were she to assist in his arrest to avoid his getting more deeply embroiled with real villains. She agrees, and when he returns from the pub hubby and the detective inspector have a most revealing conversation.

A very interesting yarn with drama, tension, goodies and baddies, and a twist in the tail.

The Last Munro by Dave Watson

Drama

Characters: 3, 1F, 2M.

1 act, 1 scene.

Set atop a Scottish munro. A young married couple, Mark & Sandra, have reached the summit: her first, his 53rd. She is in a foul mood from the pain and blisters she acquired during the climb and vows that this is her first and last munro. An experienced older climber joins them and explains that this is his last munro, having climbed all the others over the years with his late wife. His tale of marital togetherness, reinforced by the climbing, changes Sandra's mood and opinion and she can't wait to get at the next peak.

Probably needs to be done in a Scottish accent, and there are a few Gaelic place-names to master, although phonetic help is provided for this. The dialogue is sharp and carries the play along, but I found the plot to be rather predictable.

Last Panto in Little Grimley by David Tristram

Farce

Characters: 4, 2M, 2F.

1 act, 3 scenes.

It opens with a talentless actress singing awfully. A failing amdram group of four members bicker over what to do for their next production. One of them has written a script, based on Dick Whittington, on a cheap computer with a dodgy word-processing program so the script is full of unfortunate (and v funny) spelling errors. The four of them are unable to find a date for rehearsals that fits, but costumes are produced and the performance night arrives. The actress playing Dick turns up very late with an arm and leg in plaster following a road

accident; the home-made pantomime horse's head has no eye-holes and the two actors can hardly fit into the body causing it to career around the stage uncontrollably resulting in mayhem; the lights fuse leaving the stage in total darkness. With no other option, we end with the talentless actress singing the same song as she was singing at the start.

This is a very funny play with no long speeches. It needs pantomime costumes for the final scene, but I think we should be able to cope with that!

Stop and Run by Diana Raffle

Drama

Characters: 5, 3F, 2M

1 act, 1 scene.

An elderly woman whose husband left her thirty years previously returns from a holiday with a blind bingo-caller whom she intends to marry, much to the surprise of her two daughters and son-in-law. The daughters become worried about their inheritance which their mother herself inherited from her own mother. She carries it around with her in cash in a case. Their doubts about the motives of the bingo-caller prove to be justified: he is not as blind as he is pretending and he scarpers in the son-in-law's car with the case of dosh. She's not so worried about his running off and makes up her mind to get together again with her first husband (she's happy). The car is found at the station (son-in-law's happy) and, as for the cash in the case: it was in obsolete notes which the bingo-caller wouldn't be able to use.

A most entertaining play with fast dialogue and a sound plot.

Flood Warning by Fay Weldon

Modern Drama

Characters: 5, 3F, 2M.

1 act, 1 scene.

Cynthia and Step, a middle-aged couple, run a struggling antique shop in a country town. The rain pours and the town is flooding. Step, his two daughters, Jane & Angela, and Jane's partner, Trevor, are moving stock upstairs to the living quarters in anticipation of the shop's being flooded. Cynthia's leg's in plaster and she can do nothing to help. Jane is a pushy and successful City business woman, Angela is altogether different: quiet, polite, still lives with Cynthia and Step and is an infant schoolteacher. There is much cross-chat and arguing during which Angela lets out that she's pregnant with Trevor's child. As this news sinks in, Step reveals that he's known all along Cynthia's Big Secret: Jane isn't his daughter. The last part of the play deals with how they sort out who's going to live with whom, and as an uneasy truce is reached, the flood waters start to recede, and Trevor successfully removes Cynthia's plaster.

An excellent story with crisp dialogue, although some of the speeches might take some learning. No scenery changes of the living-room are required.

Green Forms by Alan Bennett

Comedy

Characters: 5, 3F, 2M

1 act, 1 scene.

Two women, Doris (a spinster) and Doreen (younger and married) share an office. They have plenty of work to do processing forms, but spend their time chatting about trivial happenings in the firm. Their big worry is redundancy, especially when they discover that a woman with a reputation for being an executioner, Dorothy Bliss, is to share their office. The play ends with Dorothy Bliss looming over Doris and Doreen in the office doorway, having watched them break into her desk.

This is a play in which nothing much happens, but nevertheless it is told in such a funny and clever way that it doesn't matter. The dialogue is brilliant, although some of the speeches are quite lengthy. Doris and Doreen have the lion's share of the speaking with the office postman/union rep making a couple of short appearances. Dorothy Bliss has only one line: the very last in the play, but what a bombshell! The props in the office are important as the missing or broken bits 'n' pieces start to take significance.

Footprints in the Sand by Colin Crowther (no relation!)

Mystical drama

Characters: 4, 2M, 3F.

1 act, 1 scene.

I couldn't finish reading this. I found it rather boring and pretentious.