

Diary of a Director

“About half way through” I thought to myself in a ponderous moment when it occurred to me that I should check where we were. Time is a funny thing when it has come to directing. If you try to do things too early no one sees the urgency and if you leave it too late no one can help you. Getting it just right is definitely the knack and I’m not sure I have perfected that yet! But we are all on target from set to publicity to props and costume (not sure about budget!). We are not finished either so active help is still welcome. Fitting all the pieces and people together is like running a business. Remembering to phone so and so two days before such and such so that thingy bob can do that important thing and so forth. My mind is packed full of small events and information all falling over each other like where are we rehearsing next, what colour are the flats, where do you buy fleece, what kind of radio do we need, who prints the programme, where’s the banner, can we smoke, who has to leave at 2.30 and who is Fiona?

The actual directing bit is the bit I love and at the moment we are at the mapping, levers and learning bit. Mapping is making sure I let the actors know where they are in the play and how things fit so I am trying to run scenes into each other. Levers is a little idea

of mine where I imagine an actor inside the head of their character with lots of levers to pull. Each lever makes the character “fly” differently and setting these levers early helps the actor to feel confident they have good control. In my view when an actor has control the lines come out best. Learning is just that. It’s those damn lines! Some of the cast have an enormous task. Holding the script cripples any creative inventiveness so it has to go as soon as possible. Everyone has worked very hard at learning lines and I will have to be very tough on them soon to drive those books down. I know how

scary that can be but it is a hurdle that, once cleared, is long gone.

I am working with new people too like Mike, Andrew and Jim and I hope they are enjoying working with us too. The cast is good fun and we have had some funny moments re writing scenes like Blanches exit from the bathroom and her turning to Stanley and saying “ Id give it five minutes if I were you”. Yes I think we are in for a good one !

Geoff Hunt

A Streetcar Named Desire
By Tennessee Williams

Merlin Theatre
24th - 26th April

Box Office: 01373 465949
Bath Road Frome, Somerset

Direct? You?

Frome Drama Club is always looking for new talent and to give members new challenges. If you have suggestion for a play you would like to direct for our Spring production 2009 please contact Gillie Richardson in time for it to be discussed at the May committee.

THE AGM

The Club's AGM took place at the Packhorse on Monday, 25th February and was well attended. In due course the minutes will be posted on the website but, in the meantime, here is a summary.

Following the fist fight over the chair nearest the gas fire, and my resignation for financial irregularities over my £17,000 expenses claim, the evening settled down to a mix of procedural matters and lively debate.

The usual suspects of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer in the guise of Gillie, Trixie and yours truly (after undertaking to repay every penny – such a fuss over nothing!) all agreed to stand again whereupon they were duly carried before returning to their seats. Our committee also survived intact despite the fact they weren't all there.

Reports of 2007 were given by the three principal officers and there seemed general agreement that it had been a very good year with our reputation for excellence further enhanced. But there was also a note of caution to be wary of complacency – yesterday's headlines, today's fish and chip paper, know what I mean. As the Bard* reminded us: "*Look at Chris Marlowe, innit. Celebratin' Doctor Faustus one day and sleepin' wiv the fishes the next for dissin' some critic in a Frome*

tavern". Fortunately (he added) with 3 very exciting productions and 2 new directors for 2008, there is every prospect of another great year ahead.

Earlier I mentioned some lively debate. Topics included play castings, entry in the Phoebe Rees competition, should we join the Euro, the future for rehearsal space, why Everton deserve 4th place in the Premier League, and the future for suitable premises for set construction. So many questions, so few answers – although I'll be happy to justify Everton's elevated position and discuss the future of the offside rule in the Frome Subbuteo Challenge Cup.

And so, as the gas fire flickered and died and nobody had a shilling for the meter, the meeting was brought to a close. Following on from our recent Christmas party there were high hopes for a repeat visit from the stag party fancy dress troupe "Invisible Men" but I'm saddened to report that we didn't see them there.

MH

*Sorry, that should read the Barman – my spall chick is plying ip.

SOS from the Costume department of Streetcar

Does anyone have a pair of *men's* red satin pyjamas? (OK, OK, I know, but I didn't write this play.) I understand this an unlikely thing to admit to - but if you have some - and are willing to lend them, I promise on Tennessee Williams' grave not to reveal my source.

Also, we are looking for full length satin or chiffon negligees/dressing gowns, fitted petticoats and a couple of 1940s (ish) evening dresses/ball gowns. These are for *women*, incidentally.

Gillie Richardson

Frome Festival – FDC production of Blue Remembered Hills by Dennis Potter. Blue House Garden 9th 10th, 11th, 12 July 2008

Gates open at 6 p.m for picnic and play starts at 7.30 p.m.

Calum Grant writes:

The auditions went really well and I'm very excited about working with such a great group. We had a day out at Vallis Vale to take a few publicity shots and here is my favourite shot

The cast is:

Peter	Mike Walter
Willie	David North
Donald	Alan Burgess
John	David Riley
Raymond	Bryan Williamson
Angela	Gillie Richardson
Audrey	Fiona Taylor



Play Readings at the Packhorse

January 14th

[The Night of the Iguana by Tennessee Williams](#)

Your committee came up with the idea that the club would choose another play by the author of the current production and *The Night of the Iguana* was chosen. The 1966 film was vividly remembered by many having Richard Burton in the starring role playing the priest turned tour guide. The drama was played out in a hotel in the steamy jungle in Mexico and involved a large cast of interesting characters, the action revolving mainly around the three main protagonists, the ex priest, his long time friend and lover the owner of the hotel and the woman guest. It turned out to be a longer read than we'd expected and although we understandably lost a few people along the way we were gripped enough by Tennessee Williams to maintain a goodly number of us until we finished- well past closing time!

Lesley Swinburn

February 11th

["Oh What a Lovely War"](#)

A small but select band of versatile club members turned out on a cold night to read this seminal work at the Packhorse. With a huge cast and songs we had an entertaining and sometimes thoughtful time racing through the entire play. Sometimes we spontaneously burst into song and sometimes we just read the lyrics. Casting was done on a who sat where basis which resulted in some wonderful performances. At the end I think we all felt quite exhausted with the marathon and had learnt a lot about the hideous nature of the First World War whose statistics are quite literally mind-boggling. Thanks to all who came along.

Chris Parker

Play Readings – these take place every month at 8 pm at The Packhorse in Christchurch Street - all welcome - to read or just listen.

On **Monday 10th March** we have the exciting prospect of reading an adaptation made by FDC member, Terry Griffin, of the Charles Dickens' classic, *Barnaby Rudge*. The first of Dickens's historical novels, *Barnaby Rudge*, written in 1841, is set at the time of the anti-Catholic riots of 1780, with the real Lord George Gordon, leader of the riots, appearing in the book. The characters are caught up in the resulting mob lawlessness which climaxes in the destruction of Newgate prison, an actual event brought to life in the novel. As to cast, thousands probably!

On **Monday 14th April** we cross the pond to New York to enjoy the battle of *The Odd Couple* by Neil Simon. Felix and Oscar, two divorced men, decide to share an apartment, the only problem being they are as different as chalk and cheese. Felix is a hyper-allergic fanatic for organization and cleanliness, while Oscar is a cigar-smoking, compulsive slob. The characteristics that drove each of them to leave their wives soon have them at each other's throats. A mixed cast of eight and guaranteed laughs out loud.