

Play Selection committee's Report - Belinda Naylor-Stables, read by Margaret Skilton

Play Selection Committee Report - June 2020 - 2021

Since before the AGM in June 2020 we saw our activities stymied by Covid-19 (C-19). The Creative Arts Library, our usual resource for scripts closed until further notice; mixing of household bubbles was taboo; our usual venue at Pat Hughes', then in her late nineties, was no longer possible.

Nevertheless, during 2020 we found free online resources for scripts. Also many members had become used to using Zoom as a way of meeting. This paved the way for a new meeting format. In the January 2021 Newsletter Margaret Skilton, our Chair, announced that meetings would resume online.

Plays reviewed

There was general agreement among the group that audiences will be seeking light relief after the seriousness of the C-19 situation. With this in mind, from January to Apr 2021 (inclusive) we have reviewed 5 plays that fall into a 'light entertainment' category. At the end of May we are reviewing a couple of Sherlock Holmes options. The future mix of reviews will include drama, light relief as well as plays by living and local authors. For example, Rachel Feeny-Williams contacted WDS and we have followed this link up selecting four of her plays to review in the short term.

Top 5 Play Recommendations May 2021

1. *Our Song*- Keith Waterhouse (2013)
2. *Ladies' Day* - Amanda Whittington (2005)
3. *Red Hot Mamas* - David Christner (2015)
4. *Illusions/Delusions* (3x1 act plays) - David Pollard (2011)
5. *Reading Between the Lines* - Geoff Bamber (? Recent)

Bruce King continues to report on our play reviews in the WDS Newsletter. A big thank you to Bruce for filling this vital role in sharing what we do and helping Director's select plays that inspire them.

Membership

In January 2021 Robert Cook stepped down from the committee. Robert brought astute views on characterisation and in-depth knowledge of staging plays. As a result we miss his perceptive and insightful comments. We also thank Robert for his lifts to Pat's house and dependable contribution over several years.

In May 2021 Jane Wilkinson decided to step down. Jane has been among the long-serving members who have given a very valuable contribution, both in choice of plays and analysis. We will miss her insight into the characters and the dramatic possibilities. As well as attending meetings she also provided lifts to Pat's house where we used to meet. We'll all miss her.

In April 2021 Pat Hughes sadly passed away. She would have been 100 on the 26th November, coincidentally sharing a birth year with Prince Philip who also passed away in the same month. As hostess to our meetings for several years we'll miss gathering in her warm sitting room with her paintings on the walls, un-nesting her coffee tables for our wine and nibbles, and enjoying her experience and perceptive wit.

In February 2021 Margaret Skilton stepped down from her role as Chair. She has been selecting plays, distributing sets of scripts to the committee and collecting them and returning them to the library, as well as keeping records of plays read for the past 20 years, which is an admirable track record. A big thank you goes to her for that commitment. Bruce also supported Margaret's role with lifts to the library and meeting venues during that time - so a big services rendered thanks to him.

We're pleased to say both Margaret and Bruce are still members of the committee which benefits from their experience. Belinda Naylor-Stables is the new Chair. Current members also include Viv Fairley, Jonathan Field and Sheila Scull. A huge thanks go to them for their continued contribution. We will be seeking two new members.