



Registered Charity No 1105153
Affiliated to the National
Operatic & Dramatic Association
and Kent Drama Association

The Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Chairman's Notes	1
New Vice Presidents	2
A Streetcar Named Desire	3 - 5
Taking Steps	6
War Shorts	7
High Society	8 - 10
Notices	11
The Back Page	

New Members!

WELCOME! We hope you have a long & happy life with CODS!

Did you know we are on Facebook?

CODS has its very own group page on Facebook with lots of information, news and photographs.



Visit www.facebook.com

'Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society CODS (official page)'

Contact [Steph or Jackie](#) for more information and to submit copy. Thank you.

CODS Website

If anyone would like anything put onto the CODS website please contact Matt at m.g.barker@talk21.com or call 07872557446, Thanks.

Codswallop!

April 2014



NOTES FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear fellow members,

It seems longer than two months ago since I last wrote to you. Since then, the heavy rain has stopped and the sun has started to shine. Hopefully we will also continue to shine, maybe even brighter than we have been during the past twelve golden months.

Within the last two months, two important events have taken place. At our Annual General Meeting in March, I referred to the continued success and accolade we had seen in all of our productions last year, which is largely due to the strong commitment and teamwork demonstrated by all involved. I would take this opportunity to convey my substantial thanks to you all once again, and hope you will continue taking steps wherever possible during the next year to support the Society in any way you can. Such effort is recognised, and it was an honour to propose two new Vice Presidents for the Society, namely Ian Wookey and Maurice Wilkins, for all that they have done, time and time again, in order that we can continue to perform live theatre for the community.

In recent weeks, our production of "A Streetcar Named Desire" has taken place. Whereas we knew this production would not attract the large audiences we became used to last year, we nevertheless rose to the challenge of performing a true American classic. My thanks go to all members of the team involved, who maintained their spirit of duty when the ticket bookings were not as prosperous as we had hoped. We now await the nominations from the Kent Drama Association and come early June, hopefully we will see several nominations turning into further awards for the Society.

Our auditions for "War Shorts" are currently taking place and I am pleased to see the Society commemorating the 100th anniversary of the First World War, not by performing tried and tested material, but in a fresh format that we enjoyed and, indeed, successfully pioneered last year. It is our ability to look over the horizon rather than look back at the past that will ensure our continued success.

As soon as these auditions have ended, our auditions for "High Society" shall be starting; this will be the first time we have performed this great show, and this is your chance to say you were involved in our first production of "High Society" ! See you at the auditions ?

In between all these forthcoming auditions and rehearsals, I hope you can all find five minutes or so to pay your subscriptions, which are now due and remain unchanged. Remember, you need to be a member of the Society to take part in any aspect of our productions and be covered by our insurance in the event of any accidents, so please can you ensure your renewal is valid as soon as possible.

Finally, I hope you will all join me in raising a large glass to Dinah, who celebrates sixty years of membership of the Society in early May. That's been quite a lot of membership renewals to remember, with many great achievements and memories en route! Well done Dinah!

I hope to see you all at a War Shorts and/or a High Society rehearsal within the near future.

Andrew Tel 01424 718328

E Mail supertr@mp7902.wanadoo.co.uk

"War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children." - Jimmy Carter

AGM - New Vice Presidents for the Society

Congratulations to Ian Wookey and Maurice Wilkins, who were elected as new Vice Presidents for the Society at the recent Annual General Meeting.

Ian has been a member of the Society for 46 years, and has taken considerable responsibility for sourcing, hiring and the production of many of our props, as well as taking roles in some of our productions and arranging for the display of many of our large advertisements around the community.

Maurice has been a member of the Society for 15 years, and has carried out many roles, sometimes all at the same time ! Business Manager, Hall Manager, member of the Flishinghurst Gang, Committee Officer....these are in addition to his regular participation as actor within many of our productions. Last year, Maurice added a new skill to his many range of talents, namely Stage Manager, to two of our productions.

We are sure all members will agree these elections are well deserved and we once again thank Ian and Maurice for their services and commitment to the Society.



A Streetcar Named Desire

KDA Full Length Play Festival 2014

Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society – ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’

I adjudicated a performance of this production on 11 April 2014. Based upon my adjudication, this is a very short summary of suggestions I think may have been of benefit in its presentation.

The well designed stage set would have been further enhanced had the décor been a little less bright in tone and had the kitchen units, doors and curtains been less modern in appearance. The furnishings might have reinforced the American location more, I felt. For example, the standard lamp seemed rather too English and out of place.

I thought that the skirt that Stella wore in the opening scene looked too short and, therefore, too modern; her blouse did not appear to have a collar even though Blanche refers to one. Attention to such small details will pay dividends.

The script indicates that Stanley's bowling shirt should be vivid in colour but you chose a predominantly black shirt with a red stripe. The colourful imagery suggested might have been more fully exploited to emphasise his vitality and sexual awareness. Although his pyjamas were bright red, the trousers and jacket did not quite match and they looked a little too 'straight out of the box'. They might have looked better had some of the pronounced creases been ironed out. I felt that the wedding ring Stanley wore made him look rather too domesticated.

Some of the mood inducing music was very effective but I felt you might have exploited the opportunity to point Stella's declining mental state through the more prominent use of the Varsouviana Polka or a similar, striking, piece.

There were a number of instances in the delivery of dialogue where concentration was lost by the actors and prompts were required. There was also a lot of paraphrasing and lines missed altogether which indicated a lack of security, giving the overall impression that dialogue could have done with more rehearsal. The result was that the tempo of the play was erratic and the audience's ability to suspend its disbelief was made more difficult. I do urge you to work relentlessly on the fundamental requirement of securing lines fully before performance.

The level of vocal projection was inconsistent across the cast and, unfortunately, the audience had difficulty in hearing some characters for much of the time. Regrettably, this was so with Blanche and, consequently, the impact of some very important lines was much diminished. Do work on vocal technique and breath control to ensure that the actors can be heard in the large auditorium of the Queen's Hall Theatre.

The director can assist with the clarity and audibility of the cast by the avoidance of actors having to talk upstage unless it is absolutely necessary.

David Vince, GODA

18 April 2014

A Streetcar Named Desire

Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society
A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
Queen's Hall Theatre, Cranbrook
Friday 11th April 2014
Director: Louisa Nelson-Chambers

This evening's performance was adjudicated for the Kent Drama Festival 2014 Full Length Play by David Vince and therefore some of my observations may be repeated in this review.

A 1947 play by American Tennessee Williams for which he received the Pulitzer Prize, with names as Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh synonymous with its fame. Set in New Orleans, still attractive, refined but fading, school teacher Blanche DuBois arrives on the doorstep of her sister Stella's home via a streetcar named Desire. 'Belle Vue' the ancestral family Plantation has been lost and Blanche says she has taken time off for her nerves when in reality she has been fired for having an affair with a 17 old. She endured a brief marriage quite young and experienced the death of her homosexual husband who shot himself. Stella's dominating husband Stanley Kowalski is rough, perhaps even animal like and this is quite a shock to Blanche and difficult for her to understand. She has a brief encounter with Stanley's card playing friend Mitch. There are inevitable conflicts in the cramped two roomed household heightened by Stella's pregnancy. Stanley unveils Blanche's past and tries to cruelly unmask her with the final confrontation, rape, resulting in her total breakdown and commitment to a mental institution. In the final scene the doctor and his nurse lead her sadly away when she says 'she has always depended on the kindness of strangers'.

FRONT OF HOUSE: A busy foyer with tickets waiting for collection, the meeting of fellow NODA members, sashed programme and raffle tickets sellers. An excellent display of past production photographs and refreshments were available. Chairman **Andrew** introduced me to the Adjudicator and we took our seats.

PROGRAMME: An A5, fairly comprehensive booklet with a good colour cover containing interesting information but regrettably no synopsis or indication as to where and when the action took place. The NODA crest appeared and I was pleased to see, not only future productions for this year but also for next.

MUSIC: I particularly enjoyed the incidental music, but there were on some occasions, noticeable silences.

SCENERY: A good open set designed by **Derek Moore** showing a weatherboard side and an excellent flight of steps to the upper floor apartment, together with street foliage. The apron was the cobbled street and although effective meant most of the action took place much further back than it might have been. The basic living accommodation was separated by a curtain. The second room, a bedroom, had a window and door which led into the well used bathroom. Furniture was adequate and the table and chairs were sturdy for the at times quite strong action. The walls were a little on the drab side and although there was a good selection of props I would have preferred to have seen an

A Streetcar Named Desire

actual radio for added realism.

COSTUMES: These were good particularly for the girls and of the time, with the men's sweated clothes telling us it was very hot. I'm sorry to say I was a little disappointed with Stanley's seductive PJ's which didn't actually match.

MAKEUP/HAIR: Again good with plenty of contrasts but at times Blanche's full face was somewhat obscured, perhaps a slide might have worked better.

SOUND/LIGHTING: The opening script was rather hard to hear particularly over music but was much improved as the play advanced. The lighting effects operated by the technical crew created atmosphere and a feeling of the stifling heat both during day and night time action.

THE PRODUCTION: **Louisa** herself is American, has a soft spot for American plays, Tennessee Williams in particular and this gave her an advantage, she encouraged her actors in not holding back, wanting realism and true sincerity and I think she achieved her aims. The card games and drinking sessions with the four men were quite believable. This is a demanding piece and exposes characters with their multi layers. Coping with the intense heat was very well maintained throughout. The backup team behind the scenes worked amazingly hard too. Action was strong, quite violent and frightening at times and contrasting pathos came through and brought you almost to tears. A superb performance was given by **Angela Woodcock** as Blanche – a huge part, her southern accent kept up beautifully – rather softly spoken at times, ending in such sadness as a sick and unbalanced woman. Equally strong was **David Baker** giving us a primal, very physical Stanley Kowalski. Softer, besotted wife Stella was convincingly played by **Rachel Croft-Golding** with a particularly realistic pregnancy advancement! Eunice Hubbell played by **Victoria King** kept husband Steve (**Simon Tomlinson**) in line and was a good friend to Stella. **James Hanaway** as 'Mitch' Mitchell, Blanche's would-be suitor came across very well, and cameo parts of Pablo (**Maurice Wilkins**), the rather shocked young man (**James Hammond**), Woman/Nurse (**Debbie Knight**) and Doctor/Sailor (**Geoff King**) completed the hardworking cast.

A truly thought provoking presentation sometimes sadly interrupted by prompts, but nevertheless an excellent effort. A précis will appear on the NODA website shortly.

Anne Lawson
Regional Representative
NODA South East District 3

Taking Steps

Looking for some entertainment now that Streetcar has ended and War Shorts is yet to come? We recommend a trip to Hastings between 16th - 24th May, where our illustrious Chairman is acting in the Stables production of Alan Ayckbourn's "Taking Steps", an interesting farce set on three floors of an old house, with all three floors being at stage level only! Sounds most interesting to us! Andrew is playing the part of the scheming owner of the house who is determined to get his crooked deal through at all costs.... as a property consultant we feel he has plenty experience of this!

the **Stables**
Theatre and Arts Centre

Sponsored by
Battie Abbey School
KILBY'S CARPETS
PRIORY MEADOW

Taking Steps

By Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Ian Morson

Following its run at the Stables Theatre we shall be taking this production to Chicago Heights USA in June

FIRST NIGHT & SUNDAY
£2 OFF
ALL TICKETS

Friday 16 to Saturday 24 May 2014 at 7.30pm
Sunday 18 May at 3pm. No performance Monday.

Tickets: adults £12.50. Members, under-18s and groups £7.50. Membership from only £10
The Stables Theatre, The Bourne, Hastings TN34 3BD
Box office 01424 423221 · Book online: www.stables-theatre.co.uk

Photography: Peter Mould

There are seven performances of this play, all starting at 7.30pm together with a matinee on 18th May at 3pm. Tickets are £12.50 each (or £7.50 for Stables members) and promises to be a good night out.

For those of you who are unable to attend, a further eight performances will be taking place in the flatlands of Chicago in June, just before our War Shorts event takes place.

Andrew will be happy to obtain tickets for anyone who wishes to come and see this production. Sounds good to us!

War Shorts

Hi Folks, well... War Shorts Auditions were successful and we have pretty much cast all the slots available. Thanks to everyone for strong auditions and readings. I am waiting on a couple of people to confirm on roles and then I will post a full cast list on Facebook and out by email.

With a few changes to the original line up, mainly due to prohibitive licencing costs! Here is the confirmation of performances and Directors:

1. "Now is not the time" - a short Comedy Play by Nicholas Richards - The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse visit a Guest House up North. - Directed by James Hanaway. Venue: The Vestry Hall.
2. "And the band played waltzing Matilda" and "The Green Fields of France" by Eric Bogle - Small Harmony version. Music prepared by Ruth & Glyn Roberts and some Voice Coaching by Annie Chesters. Venue: St. Dunstan's Graveyard.
3. Gallery of Local WW1 Photos, Letters, Memories, Stories and Artefacts - Matt Barker Curating. Venue: The Cranbrook Museum.
4. "All the President's Turds" - a short Comedy by Bernard Scahill - The president of the USA invents a Nuclear Threat to win the election and is helped by an unlikely ally. Directed by Rachel Croft-Golding. Venue: Gardens of Cranbrook Museum.
5. "WW1 Poetry" - A selection of English & German Soldiers poetry, alongside Poems from the home front - Directed by Louisa Nelson-Chambers. Venue: The War Memorial.
6. "Title TBC" - An interactive, live action Film - Directed by Leon Chambers. Venue: A bus travelling around Cranbrook.



Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society Presents:

WAR SHORTS

MUSIC · COMEDY · DANCE · FILM · POETRY
ON THE THEME OF WAR

FRI 20 JUNE & SAT 21 JUNE
 VESTRY HALL & 5 SECRET LOCATIONS IN THE TOWN

BOX OFFICE: 01580 713887
 UBERTOGS, HIGH STREET, CRANBROOK

www.cods.ticketsource.co.uk

SPONSORS: PETER JONES OPTICIANS & WATERLOO HOUSE TEAROOMS

You will see at No. 3 that we are looking to have a Gallery of WW1 Memories, photos, stories and letters from local people, so if anyone has anything like this that they would like included, could you please send it on or get in contact with Matt Barker:

E: m.g.barker@talk21.com or M: 07872 557446. It would be fantastic to have some memories from CODS members as part of the show... !

War Shorts promises to be a moving and memorable production, that will stir emotion, marking the centenary with respect but also poking an irreverent finger at the futility of War.

Tickets will go on sale online at www.cods.ticketsource.co.uk at the beginning of May or you can call 01580 713887. And the high street BOX OFFICE will be open at the end of the May. Please spread the word amongst friends, family, colleagues and I hope you will be able to come along and see the show!

Thanks everyone, James

High Society

Sing through/familiarisation – Monday May 12th – Queen’s Hall
Auditions – Monday 19th (and Thurs 22nd) May – Queen’s Hall and PAC
Rehearsals starting at the beginning of June.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS and CHORUS

Tracy Lord	female	30-40	lead
Dexter Haven (Ex)	male	30-45	lead
Liz Imbrie (Reporter)	female	25-40	lead
Margaret Lord (Mother)	female	55-75	supporting
George Ketteridge (Fiance)	male	30-50	supporting
Dinah Lord (sister)	female	12-17	supporting
Mike Connor (reporter)	male	30-50	lead
Seth Lord (Father)	male	60-75	supporting
Uncle Willie	male	55-75	supporting

The servants and entourage who are mostly named characters with dialogue and often singing parts.

THE STORY

High Society is a musical adaptation of “The Philadelphia Story” by Philip Barry. The story is set in 1948 when Tracy Samantha Lord is about to marry her second husband, George Ketteridge. Her mother, Mrs Margaret Lord, and her sister, Dinah, are at the family mansion in Philadelphia supervising last minute preparations. Her father, Seth Lord, is absent, ostensibly on business. Sydney Kidd, editor of “Spy” Magazine is determined to get the inside story on the wedding and blackmails Dexter Haven (Tracy’s first husband who is still coming to terms with the failure of their marriage) to arrange for two journalists, Liz Imbrie and Mike Connor, to pose as guests and obtain an exclusive story. Tracy shows a great interest in Mike’s ambition to become a successful author, causing jealousy from both Liz and George; her erratic behaviour on the eve of the wedding leads to its demise just as the guests arrive for the ceremony. The show’s finale is a spectacular double wedding; Tracy and Dexter and Liz and Mike!

A fantastic show, with heaps of parts and wonderful Cole Porter score.

See you at the sing through!

Annie

(01580 388716 or 07876501760 or annie.chesters33@gmail.com)

High Society

High Society – Vocal Numbers and ranges

Principal Singers:

Tracy	True Love		Low G - A
	I am Loved (Solo)	*	C – D
	Well Did you Evah		Bb – Top G
Dexter	True Love		C – C
	Little One		A – Eb
	Samantha	*	C – F
	Well did You Evah		Bb - E
Mike	You're Sensational	*	Bb – Eb
	That's Jazz	*	Bb – F
	High Society		Bb – Eb
	Who Wants to be a Millionaire		Bb – F
	Well Did You Evah		Bb – G
Liz	The Still of the Night	*	Low G – D
	High Society		Bb – Eb
	Who Wants to be a Millionaire?		Bb – D
	Well Did you Evah?		Bb – Eb
Dinah	Ohh La La	*	C – Eb (F)
Willie	Hey Good Lookin'	*	C - Eb

Cameo soloists:

Solo baritone – Begin the beguine in ballroom scene *

3 girls – close harmony trio – Gentlemen don't like Love *

Various one liners in other numbers – esp in How do you Spell Ambassador

* Audition pieces

High Society

Chorus Numbers:

1. How do you Spell Ambassador?
2. High Society (plus perc break),
3. Ballroom scene – which includes;
From this Moment on, Let's Do It,
Down Argentine Way, Delovely,
Begin the Beguine, Anything Goes,
4. Most gentlemen don't like Love (trio then ladies),
5. Now You Has Jazz,
6. Finale 1 – True Love,
7. Finale 2 - High Society and Did You Evah?

High Society – still needed:

Prompt

Audition Panel Member

Producer/production secretary

Assistant Director

I need a society member to serve as a member of the audition panel. The familiarisation evening is 12th May and auditions on 19th and possibly 22nd, depending on the demand. If you are interested and are not planning on being in the show, please get in touch.

I also need a producer/production secretary and an assistant director. These jobs could all be done by the same person, especially if that someone was interested in directing in the future.

I realise that many of you might be waiting to find out whether you are cast in the show before you all shower me with offers of help, so I am willing to wait!

Annie (01580 388716 or annie.chesters33@gmail.com).

Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society presents:

HIGH SOCIETY

Music and lyrics by Cole Porter
An amateur production by kind permission of Boosey and Hawkes



**Queen's Hall
Theatre
Cranbrook**

**29th October -
1st Nov 2014**

Tickets: £12/10 (£6/5)
cods.ticketsource.co.uk
'Ubertogs' High Street
or 01580 713887

Sponsored by Peter Jones (Opticians) and Waterloo House Tearooms

Notices

An Apology

During the week leading up to our production of "A Streetcar named Desire", it was considered necessary to reduce ticket prices from £8 to £5, in order to generate further bums on seats.

Whereas this decision was not made lightly, the Society has received complaints from members who paid £8 per ticket in good faith. We apologise to all members and their guests who purchased tickets at the original price.

The Committee have resolved to refund £3 per ticket to any members and guests who purchased their tickets at the original price. Anyone who wishes to claim such a refund should contact John Tapper, the Society Treasurer, accordingly.

We hope this recent incident does not deter existing members from supporting our future productions.

Summer Barbeque/ Props Hut Sort

Please join us at Flishinghurst on Saturday July 19th from 10.30am for a Barbeque and a drink. You may well (as in definitely) be asked to assist Lee with sorting and organising the props hut (and providing some BBQ fuel!) More details in the next Codswallop.

Membership Fees

CODS membership fees are now due! These need to be paid ASAP to ensure that you are able to take part in CODS productions, be properly insured doing so; and also to receive important society information from Jackie and other members, such as your wonderful Codswallop!

Thanks from Maurice

I must apologise for the delay in writing, but life in the Wilkins household is anything but idle! However, I feel I must write and say thank you to you and the committee for proposing me as a vice president of CODS and the gift of champagne and card.

It was totally unexpected but I take it as a great honour to be considered in this light and feel humbled that I should have been thought of as such.

I can assure you that anything I have done over the last 16 years is because I have enjoyed doing it and I wanted to do it to the best of my ability and that it has been done in what I considered to be the best interests of the society. In spite of the fact that there comes a time when it is right and proper to give up some jobs, at no time have my duties been a chore or an unwanted burden.

I hope to serve the society for many more years to come, albeit in a reduced capacity.

The Back Page

Any questions about what you have read? Please contact your Codswallop Editor Lee Hatcher: tel: 07539 460571 or email: leedavehatcher@gmail.com

If you have any news, views, or ideas as to what YOU want to see in Codswallop, let me know!

WANTED / FOR SALE

Do you have anything you wish to sell that might be of interest to other members? Are you looking to buy something that another member might be wanting to sell? Do you have an event, an occasion, or a notice you'd like your fellow members to be aware of? If so, for a small donation of £2 per entry, you can ADVERTISE YOUR GOODS OR "WANTS" in Codswallop. To advertise in the next edition, or for further details, please contact me using the details at top of this page.

Did you Know? If you receive Codswallop by email, things like website addresses, or email addresses are usually 'clickable' www.cranbrookods.org.uk

The Executive Editor Ponders....

Aaah, spring! Don't you enjoy this time of year my lad? No? What on earth is wrong with you? Spring has sprung! There it goes sprunging all over the place. What's that? Oh, because you're here, waiting with baited breath for the golden words that drip from my mouth? Is that sarcasm? Sorry my lad, I don't get it.

I wanted to talk about 'War Shorts'. I know you still need sergeant types to don their shorts and bark their orders for June don't you? Well, I'd be perfect, its right there in the job description, barking. Ha-ha-HA!... Well, you're really being a tough audience today boy, that was prime material, and I wasted it on you.

Never mind, lad, nearly finished, then you can run outside and play in the puddles from the spring rain, gambol across meadows, light bonfires and cook bacon on them. Erm, actually, why don't you do that now, start with the last thing though, and why don't you bring me some?

Go on, go on... And cocoa, I SAID CO-COA!

Charlie Knight (Sir) B.A. DO.g. Ar.F. g.RR.



DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR NEXT EDITION: FRIDAY 13TH JUNE 2014