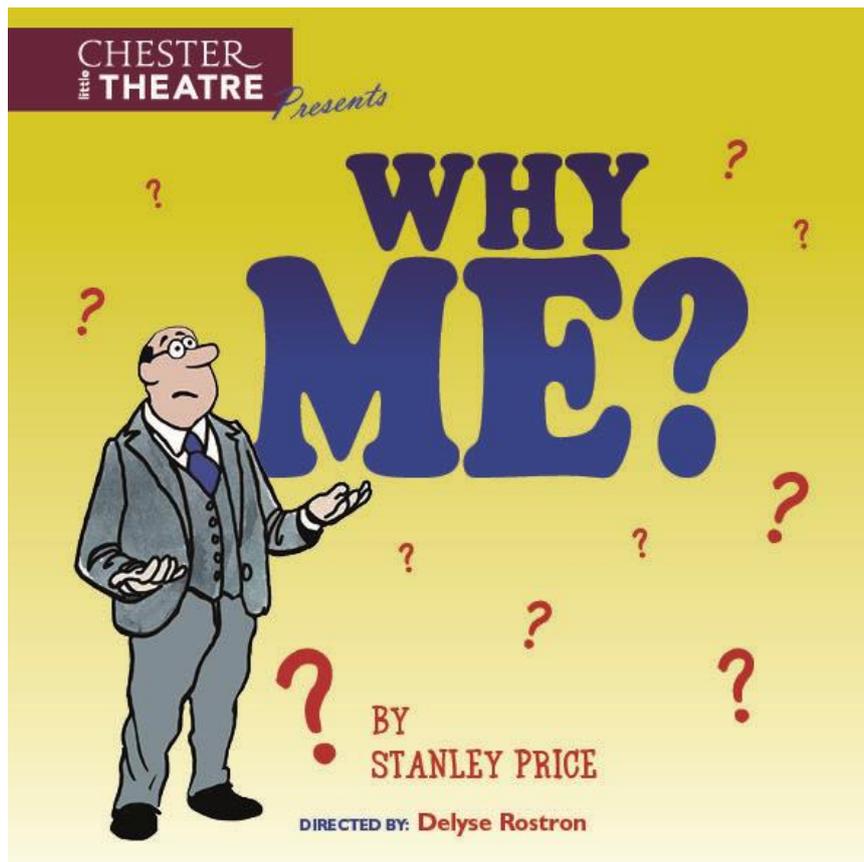


Happy New Year! 2019 certainly promises to be a bumper one for Chester Little Theatre! We start the year with Moliere's *The Miser*, shortly followed by Chester Little Theatre Youth Theatre's *Everyman Recycled* at Theatr Clwyd and *The Real Inspector Hound* in the Salisbury Studio (read on for more about these plays, from directors Jenny and Paul Shryane and Lisa Miller and for some rehearsal shots). For anyone interested in becoming involved in one of our plays, either onstage or backstage, January 2019 offers read-throughs and auditions for **three** upcoming productions- *Why Me?* by Stanley Price, directed by Delyse Rostron, *Little Gem* by Elaine Murphy, directed by John Turner (who is currently performing in *The Miser*, as well as co-directing it!) and *The Beds*, which will comprise two pieces, with eerie parallels, namely *Effie's Burning* by Valerie Windsor and *A Still Life*, by K.C. Finn, both directed by Ed Green. Break a leg to all those involved in the plays and I hope that those who are not will support them and enjoy the show!



Why Me is a very entertaining comedy, with a witty, knowledgeable script, written by Sidney Price, journalist, author and playwright. It was first performed at The Strand Theatre in 1985, with Richard Briers playing the lead role of John Bailey. The play won The Evening Standard Award for Comedy of The Year in 1986.

John Bailey is a happily married civil engineer

who is suddenly faced with a life-changing problem. This is the mid-eighties – a period of economic slump - and he has just been made a member of the **"Over Three Million club"**, having received a "tarnished chrome handshake" and his redundancy notice. Luckily his wife, Helen, has her own thriving business and is able to help out financially. However, John is a proud man and struggles with job rejections, continual

interruptions from his mother-in-law, an adulterous affair with the neighbour next door and a son who is still searching for his own identity.

Because of the relevant historical events of the time, we'll be setting the play in its original period. The eighties setting also gives us the opportunity to intersperse the action with some wonderful music by the likes of Oscar Peterson and Errol Garner whose music "**Summertime**" opens the play.

Redundancy is not a very likely subject for a comedy, but Stanley Price achieves the impossible and pulls it off splendidly.

The Cast:

JOHN BAILEY

Every inch a professional man, but being out of work all summer takes its toll. 45-50s

MARY FERGUSON

A widow. Unsettled in her new surroundings and very lonely. 60s

HELEN BAILEY

A successful, alert and bright woman. 40s

GWEN HOLLIS

An attractive bored Housewife. 30s

ARTHUR HOLLIS

A building contractor. Burly. A man's man. 30s

TOM BAILEY

A lively young man. Likes punk, rock; plays in a band. Scene stealing role. 18-22

If you are interested in this play I would love to see you at the reading and auditions!

Do get in touch if you need any further information. Go to www.chesterlittletheatre.co.uk and click on 'Contact Us'.

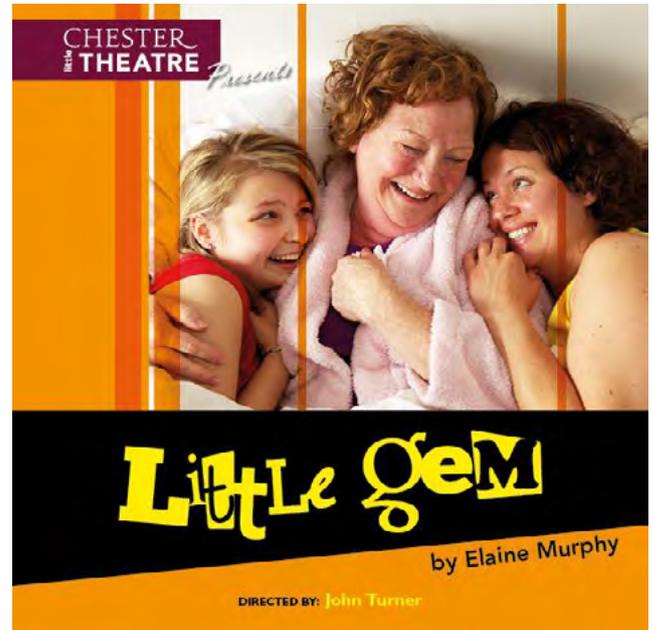
Key Dates:

Reading: Tuesday 29th January at 8:00pm

Auditions: Thursday 31st January from 7:30pm

Production Week: 4th-11th May 2019

Rehearsals will run from Monday 18th March 2019.



A busy year for me - two plays to direct! That simple sentence begs the first question. My January production (*The Miser*) is quite certainly a play - famous French playwright and all that - but what about *Little Gem* in April?

The format is certainly unusual - three actresses, each talking to the audience, but never to each other. It's a bit like Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads*, but, instead of one performer, there are three.

Amber starts it off- she's a teenager, just out of school and excited about her Prom Night. Things don't go too well – boyfriend, Paul, seems to have wandering eyes and there's a bit of a dust up with a girl he's been talking to. Next morning is worse. Very hungover, Amber is suffering 'indigestion' when a casual remark by a friend panics her into a pregnancy test. Alarm bells ring.

Amber's mum, **Lorraine**, takes up the story. She works in a department store and keeps her counter as obsessively tidy as she keeps the rest of her damaged life. Married young to a bad man who left her with a young child and returns occasionally, out of the blue, to cause further hurt, her day ends badly when she loses her cool and shouts at a customer who is sabotaging her neat display. The store refer her to their 'head doctor,' who advises her to "**do one nice thing for yourself each week**". With some reluctance, Lorraine decides to go to a salsa class with a friend.

Kay, Lorraine's mother, is next. She suffers from an "**itch, down there**". Here she is at the doctor's, having swallowed every tablet, trying every cream and changing her washing powder so often she's run out of brands. The real reason for her itch is that since her husband, Gem,

'The Beds'

**Two one act plays with eerie parallels,
featuring a closed room with a bed. Both
directed by Ed Green**

"Effie's Burning" by Valerie Windsor

First produced by the Library Theatre Company, Manchester, in 1987, this play then transferred to London and was performed at Offstage Downstairs

Effie, who has lived in mental institutions since the age of thirteen, has been admitted to hospital with severe burns. Treating her is Dr Kovacs, who finds Effie's extraordinary story of injustice the key to her own suppressed anger and power.

Taut and powerful, tender and funny, *Effie's Burning* is an emotional switchback of a play, with a searing anger at its heart.

A Female 2 hander:

Effie: 55 to 70 years old

Dr Kovacs: 30 to 40 years old

"A Still Life" by K.C. Finn – a Chester Little Theatre writer

This piece is an exploration of a strange intergenerational relationship between an older woman and a much younger man. It has a dark twist.

A very interesting 2 hander for a woman and young man:

Female part: age 40+

Male part: age 18-25

Key Dates:

Reading: Tuesday 12th February at 8:00pm
Auditions: Thursday 14th February from 7:30pm
Production Week: 3rd-5th June 2019 in the Salisbury Studio

Scripts available from Ed Green
(egreen@frenel.co.uk)

Ed Green
Director

suffered a stroke, there's been no sex in her life. The doctors are useless, but her friend, Marjorie, from pitch 'n putt suggests an answer- a visit to Ann Summers!

Over the course of a year, we follow these women, as they struggle to make sense of their lives. Amber's baby is finally named James after his Grandad (thus becoming Little Gem). Lorraine meets Niall at the salsa class, "**I swear, I have never seen so much body hair on one person and he's wringing with sweat. All I want to do is to spray him down with Febreze**". Kay can't bring herself to cheat on Gem - "**....even if it is with a six-inch piece of luminous green plastic**".

This was a story I was hooked on from the very beginning. Funny, poignant, sentimental in many ways, but never saccharine, it had me in tears or laughing aloud at many places.

So, is it a play? Yes, it's a great piece of theatre and well deserves the title. Now the second big question. Can I find three talented actresses to join with me to tell this story on our Studio Stage?

On Monday 21st January we'll be reading the play in the Studio and talking about the challenges. Not least is the accent - these are women from Dublin and it would be good to hear them in full native voice. Then on Thursday 24th January- the auditions. Please come along to the reading - once you hear the play, I'm sure you'll be hooked.

If you want to know more, but can't make it, please get in touch with me to talk about it.

I look forward to seeing or hearing from you.

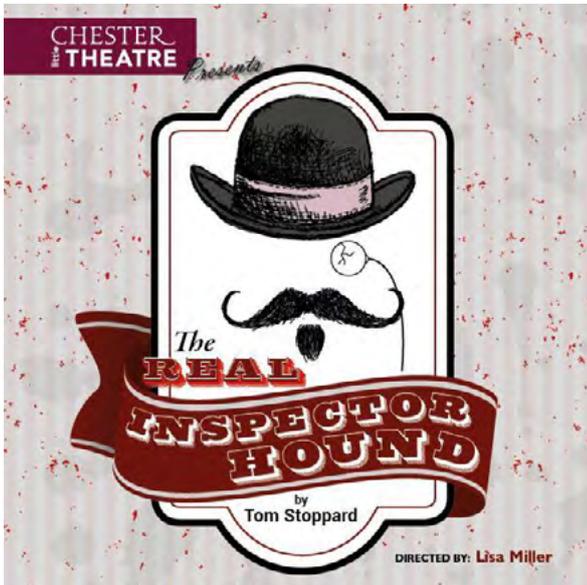
John Turner
Director

07751 137859 or email
john@johndturner.plus.com

Key Dates:

Reading: Monday 21st January at 8:00pm
Auditions: Thursday 24th January from 7:30pm
Production Week: 11th-13th April 2019 in the Salisbury Studio

Rehearsals will be flexible to suit the performers.



Perhaps the first thing I should say about 'The Real Inspector Hound' is that it is **NOT** to be confused with 'An Inspector Calls'. I have lost count of the people who have been quite convinced that I was directing the latter play. Not so.

'An Inspector Calls' is a tense and gripping supernatural Thriller in three acts. It was written by J. B. Priestly and tells the tale of a young woman who committed suicide by drinking bleach.

'The Real Inspector Hound' (**THE PLAY I AM DEFINITELY DIRECTING**) is written by Tom Stoppard and is a ludicrous parody of the country house murder mystery. It has mad characters, daft costumes, clever comic dialogue and some great sound effects. It couldn't be more different. It is very, very funny, whereas Priestly's play is a slam of gloom. Don't go getting them confused.

'The Real Inspector Hound' is structured as a play within a play. Two critics – named Moon and Birdboot- have come to review a production that is set in a Country House. It is quite clearly a 'Whodunnit', as there is a corpse on the floor. The play begins and the ludicrous madness starts. However, for all of its farce and comic stage business, it is also an astoundingly clever play.

Prizes for those who predict the ending. I say this in full confidence that no one will. Another prize if you truly understand the ending (we don't).

I am confident that I will not have to buy any prizes. It doesn't matter though, as I am confident that you will be too busy laughing to care.

This has got to have been the funniest rehearsal period I have ever been involved in and we are all looking forward to sharing this clever, witty, madcap piece of intelligent nonsense with the audience.



(The cast of *The Real Inspector Hound* in rehearsals)

Lisa Miller
Director

The Real Inspector Hound will be performed in the Salisbury Studio from **Monday 4th-Wednesday 6th February**. Tickets are £7 and £6 Concessions and are available via the Chester Little Theatre website- www.chesterlittletheatre.co.uk or on 0333 666 3366 or at the Little Theatre Box Office or via completing the Booking Form below.

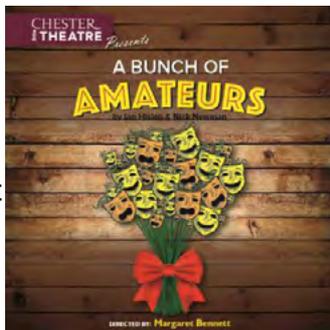
★ Chair's Column ★

Your friends at Chester Little Theatre hope you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

So here we are in 2019, opening with a really-good laugh- *The Miser*. It should shoo the post festivities blues away.

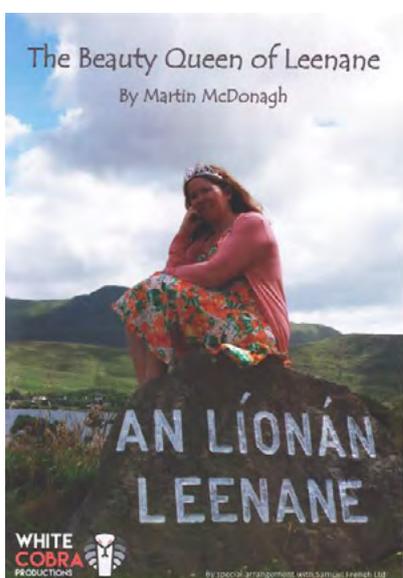
To add to the fun, we are also shortly presenting a piece in the Studio for 3 nights (4th, 5th and 6th February). *The Real Inspector Hound* is a mad-cap parody of a country house murder mystery, by Tom Stoppard. I can recommend it.

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman is set to end the winter blues in March (9th to 16th). This is a comedy about (surprisingly) an amateur dramatic group trying to save their theatre by putting on *King Lear*, with only six people and a self-centred, fading action hero, actor in the lead! It is a piece of fiction.... Honestly.



I hope and would recommend that you try to see all three productions and laugh your way through the 'bleak mid-winter'.

Margaret Bennett
Chair, Chester Little Theatre.



The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh is a modern classic of Irish theatre from the director and writer of the Oscar-winning *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri*. It tells the story of Maureen Folan, a plain and lonely woman in her early forties and Mag, her manipulative, ageing mother. Mag's interference in Maureen's first and potentially last romantic relationship sets in motion a chain of events that are as tragically funny as they are horrific.

Those of you who enjoyed Chester Little Theatre's 2017 production of *The Cripple of Inishmaan* will know of McDonagh's ability to tug at your heart strings while at the same time making you laugh out loud at people's careless and bizarre behaviour.

The White Cobra company is skilled at bringing funny and moving moments to the stage. Their last play here was *Duets* and before that,

Glorious – the True Story of Florence Foster Jenkins, both by Peter Quilter. Another opportunity coming up to see White Cobra in action, but just for one night – **Saturday 23rd March (7:30pm)** - so book your tickets early!

Tickets £11 and £10 concessions. Book online at www.chesterlittletheatre.co.uk or telephone TicketSource 0333 666 3366 (booking charges apply).

Everyman Recycled

Mr & Mrs Everyman have been living rather recklessly for too many years. The oceans are awash with plastics, the bees have vanished and fracking is on the 'up'. But Mother Earth has had enough and demands a final reckoning 'without delay'. The hapless family is sent on a journey to prove that they have tried to be 'green', but who will go with them? Their in-laws are jetting off to a South Seas island, their friends are too busy indulging in 'fast fashion' shopping, Scientists can't agree, Big Business is full of platitudes and Government has gone to tea.... only Friends of the Earth stand by them to offer some practical advice.

Chester Little Theatre Youth Theatre present their original take on the medieval morality play 'Everyman' that sets the timeless tale in the contemporary context of global warming and environmental issues.

The performance is on **26th January at Theatr Clwyd at 8pm** and is accompanied by an original work entitled '**TALES FROM THE ANTHROPOCENE**' performed by an adult company from CLT.

Tickets available on Theatr Clwyd's website.



Jenny and Paul Shryane
Directors

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January

Sat 26th at 8:00pm

Everyman Recycled- Clwyd Room, Theatr Clwyd

February

4th-6th at 7:30pm

The Real Inspector Hound- Salisbury Studio, director Lisa Miller

March

Sat 9th to Sat 16th at 7:30pm

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop & Nick Newman, director Margaret Bennett

Sat 23rd at 7:30pm

The Beauty Queen of Leenane by White Cobra Productions

★ Other Opportunities ★

Are you handy with tools?
Enjoy coming to the theatre?
Have a little spare time?
Perhaps you'd like to join our
Set Building Team!
Creative, practical, essential for
our productions.
For more information, contact
info@chesterlittletheatre.co.uk



CONTACT US AT

Chester Little Theatre, Gloucester Street, Chester CHI 3HR
Tel: (to leave a message) **01244 322 674** Box Office: TicketSource 0333 666 3366
Email: info@chesterlittletheatre.co.uk
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For latest news and upcoming events, visit www.chesterlittletheatre.co.uk

CHESTER LITTLE THEATRE
Advance Booking Form (full members and supporters only)

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone Number.....Mobile.....

Email address.....
 (please print clearly)

The Real Inspector Hound by Tom Stoppard

Date	No. of full price tickets		No. of concessionary tickets		Total Amount
Monday 4 th February		@ £7.00		@ £6.00	
Tuesday 5 th February		@ £7.00		@ £6.00	
Wednesday 6 th February		@ £7.00		@ £6.00	

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop & Nick Newman

Date	No. of full price tickets		No. of concessionary tickets		Total Amount
Saturday 9 th March		@ £10.00		@ £8.00	
Monday 11 th March		@ £10.00		@ £8.00	
Tuesday 12 th March		@ £10.00		@ £8.00	
Wednesday 13 th March		@ £10.00	n/a		
Thursday 14 th March		@ £10.00	n/a		
Friday 15 th March		@ £10.00	n/a		
Saturday 16 th March		@ £10.00	n/a		

The Beauty Queen of Leenane by Martin McDonagh

Date	No. of full price tickets		No. of concessionary tickets		Total Amount
Saturday 23 rd March		@ £11.00		@ £10.00	

Ticket confirmation by email is free. For confirmation by post please add £1

Cheques enclosed for £..... payable to: ***Chester Little Theatre.***
 Send to: The Box Office, The Little Theatre, Gloucester Street, Chester CH1 3HR

Other ways to book: by phone: TicketSource on 0333 666 3366. Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. Pay by Credit or Debit card. Booking Fees and Postal Charges apply.

Website: www.chestertheatreclub.co.uk, click on Booking. Pay by debit or credit card. Booking Fees apply.

