



Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club

Meeting Minutes, 10th June 2016, 7.00pm, Larkum Studio

Meeting Commences: 7.11pm

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from: Rebecca Vaa, Toby Molyneux and Alex Barnett.

Present: Ellie Mitchell, Saskia Baylis, Will Bishop, Catja Hamilton, Oscar Yang, Sheanna Patel, Lewis Scott and Emma Blacklay-Piech.

2. Freshers' Shows

The plays up for discussion are *Rules for Living*, *Britannia Waves the Rules*, *Hopelessly Devoted*, *Dinner*, *Jane Eyre*, *Pygmalion*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Anne Boleyn*.

We discuss *Rules for Living*. Ellie Mitchell describes the show. Sheanna Patel asks how difficult it might be to direct. Will Bishop says that it would need to be tightly choreographed, and we would need to keep this in mind when finding a Director and AD. It has a smaller cast in comparison to previous Freshers' mainshows; Sheanna Patel is concerned by this. Will Bishop points out that the Freshers' shows are also about audience experience; these shows are often the first ones Freshers' come to see. Catja Hamilton asks what opportunities for tech are and suggests that projection, which is required for the play, can be very difficult to get right. However, we agree that between the technicians on committee, we would be able to assist the Freshers with this. The set is at an appropriate difficulty level – simple, but enjoyable to create, similar to the sets of *Grief* and *Tribes*.

Will Bishop describes *Britannia Waves the Rules*. He admits that one negative about it is that it is very centred on one character; others are minor in comparison to him. Oscar Yang asks about the set; Ellie Mitchell explains how it might work really nicely in the Playroom.

We generally discuss how many actor spaces we want to make available, as the plays we're looking at don't allow for as many spots as in some previous years. Emma Blacklay-Piech says that the feedback she has received is that fun should be the priority; the cast should be able to have fun. She explains the way in which she approached rejections for the Freshers Plays as Actors' Rep last year; we agree that this approach is a very good one.

It is suggested that large casts can put pressure on a Fresher director. Catja Hamilton says she does know people who took rejection from the Freshers' shows poorly, and points out that the Freshers' show is the chance for Freshers to be in a mainshow, which is a chance they can often not get again very quickly. Emma Blacklay-Piech says that last year's system did seem to encourage people to keep re-auditioning and that feedback was generally positive.

Will Bishop explains *An Ideal Husband*. He argues that Wilde is difficult to get wrong and the cast is quite large. A good director can make a simple play interesting. Ellie Mitchell asks if Wilde is the first impression we want to give Freshers of Cambridge Theatre, given how well-known and somewhat typical he is. Lewis Scott points out that it would come after *The Duchess of Malfi* in the season, so we would have two classic plays in a row, which would potentially result in a decrease of town audience interest.

Catja Hamilton puts forward Polly Teale's *Jane Eyre* and we discuss this play in comparison to *Rules for Living*. It is suggested that despite being an excellent take on the novel, *Jane Eyre* presents the same issues regarding impression and classic plays that *An Ideal Husband* does.

We agree on *Rules for Living* for the mainshow, but that this entails a need to be careful with the size of the lateshow's cast. We discuss *Dinner* but there are drawbacks due to its similarities with *Rules for Living*.

Oscar Yang and Catja Hamilton tell us about *Game*. We agree that it sounds like a potentially good option. Will Bishop suggests *Bed*, which we agree also sounds like a good option. We agree to read both of these plays over the vacation and decide upon one for the lateshow.

Action Point: Ellie Mitchell to remind people to read both of these plays.

We agree on *Britannia Rules the Waves* for the Playroom mainshow.

6. Teahouse

Will Bishop explains what has happened in the past day. The appointed Director has dropped out due to casting concerns. The Producer has offered the position to the other applicant for Director and talks are ongoing.

Sheanna Patel says that the change in Director, whilst a shame, is not the most worrying thing; we are more concerned by the wider casting issue that has arisen. Will Bishop feels

strongly that no white actors should be cast, even in background roles, and that if the cast cannot be filled in that way, we shouldn't do the show.

Sheanna Patel asserts that quantity over quality is more important in this situation if we are to stick to that; most of the roles are small and offer good opportunities even for inexperienced actors. It would be better to do the show with lots of less experienced actors than not to do it at all.

Lewis Scott raises the example of *Sophtown*, which drew much of its cast from ARU. He asks if more of an effort could be made both to cut the play, and to advertise auditions to ARU students. We agree that both of these things should be pursued. Sheanna Patel would like for someone else to be in the auditions to offer an outside perspective. Jack Rowan suggests running Freshers' auditions for supporting roles at the beginning of next term, if possible.

8. A. O. B.

Ellie Mitchell:

- a. She predicts a potential garden party induced #fridgegate. Catja Hamilton and Sheanna Patel volunteer fridges, ensuring that both the garden party food and Ellie Mitchell can maintain a state of chill.