

Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society

Alarms and Excursions

More plays than one

By Michael Frayn

Queen's Hall, Cranbrook

16th, 17th, 18th April 2009

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Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society

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presents

Alarms and Excursions

More plays than one

by

Michael Frayn

An amateur production by kind permission of Samuel French Ltd.

Directed by Sarah Davis and Andy Chesters

16th 17th 18th April 2009
Queen's Hall Theatre
Cranbrook

The performance on 17th April will be adjudicated for the

Kent Drama Festival Awards of 2009

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Directors' Notes

Equipment:

Confused people...Rebellious machines...Communication breakdown

Method:

Use equipment, add a little airline safety lecture, a noisy party and a corporate function. Season with a political collapse and a large pinch of hotel-room chaos.

Result:

An evening of farce and situation comedy driven by the inability of people to understand their fellow human beings or their so-called 'labour saving devices'.

Conclusion:

It has been a long held belief of ours that we should use more of the Queen's Hall than just the stage. Though this play was originally presented with a cast of only four, we saw it as an opportunity to get a host of talented people to the front of the stage, and all round the theatre.

One of Michael Frayn's greatest challenges in this show is the intense relationship between characters, with a common thread of poor communication running through each playlet.

Rarely performed by amateur theatrical societies due to its technical difficulties, we hope you enjoy our interpretation of this modern and engaging piece of theatre.

Andy Chesters—Director: *Alarms, Leavings, Heart to Heart, Immobiles* Andy first trod the boards aged 10 and directed his first play at university when he was 18. He has been involved in around 50 plays either acting or directing. This is his third directing role for CODS, following on from *Abigail's Party* in 2004, which won 5 awards at the Kent Drama Festival – including Best Director! His second, very successful play was Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus* in 2007. Andy's wife, Annie, sings, directs and acts and their son, Max (aged 6) is already a veteran performer, with two stage appearances under his little belt – you might say it is a family thing!

Sarah Davis—Director: *Doubles, Glassnost, Toasters, Look Away Now* *Alarms and Excursions* marks Sarah's directing debut with CODS. Having served apprenticeship on stage and as stage manager in recent productions, she was delighted to be able to introduce the society to the challenge of Michael Frayn's genius in this play. Previous direction by Sarah has included G&S operettas, a couple of Shakespeare plays and two Pantomimes. She has played everything from 'Felicity Rumpers' to 'Grumpy the Dwarf' in recent times. Sarah has enjoyed working with Andy, a fruitful partnership which has, she hopes, created an entertaining interpretation of *Alarms and Excursions*. Again, CODS is a family company, Sarah's husband Dave is behind the scenes.

Paul Mills—Adjudicator Paul is an Associate Member of Guild of Drama Adjudicators who has been associated with the theatre since he trained as a professional actor where he has worked extensively on stage, TV and radio and in stage management. He has also worked in theatre management. As a Director he has had a wide experience of many productions both in the UK and abroad, most notably "The Buddy Holly Story". He is the Director of Reach Productions Ltd and devised "Houdini -The Musical". He is the Administrator for Reach Academy and is an Examiner in Drama, Speech and Musical Theatre for Trinity Guildhall whose anthology of Drama, Verse and Prose he has edited.

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The Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society exists to encourage and perform all forms of amateur theatre, musical, drama and comedy.

If you are interested in joining us we are always in need of new members both on and off stage.

Performers of all ages are welcome as well as back stage helpers, scenery makers, painters, make-up artists, costume fitters and indeed anyone who is willing to help in any capacity.

If you would like further information please look up our website: www.cranbrookods.org

Or contact our membership secretary:

Mrs Janet Beeken,
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Cast

Alarms



Jocasta Jo Levett
John Robin Harrison
Nancy Michelle Sandys
Nicolas Geoff King

Doubles

Miles Richard Vernon
Melanie Emma Hancock
Lynn Teletha Tapper
Lawrence Andrew White

An Interval of 20 minutes

Leavings

Cast as **Alarms**

Look Away Now

Stewardess Angela Woodcock
Bloss Mark Cheeseman
Aptly Maurice Wilkins
Charr Roy Barclay

Heart to Heart

Peter Geoff King
Charmian Val King
Clifford Maurice Wilkins

Glassnost

Armament Barbara Gray
Mervyn Stoop Alan Hodge

Toasters



Speaker Robin Harrison
Spott Michelle Sandys
Much Val King
Candle Jo Levett

Immobiles

Dietrich Mark Cheeseman
Chris Richard Vernon
Nickki Teletha Tapper
Mother Val Whiting

Voices and Removals

Sarah Davis, John Tapper, Andy Chesters, Andrew White, David Davis, Alan Hodge, Derek Moore, Phil Norton.

Production Team

Directors	Andy Chesters & Sarah Davis
Stage Manager	Andrew White
Set Design.....	Derek Moore
Set Construction	Bernard Beardsmore, Bill Marshall
.....	Dennis Russell, Charlie Sharp, Maurice Wilkins
Lighting.....	David Beeken
Sound	Gavin Hogben, Ollie Levett
Wardrobe.....	Rita Wilkins, Marilyn Coleman
Make-up.....	Peggy Latter
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Front of House Staffing.....	Louise Dixon
Hall Manager	Maurice Wilkins
Backstage Refreshments.....	Rosemary Ettridge

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- Phillips Mans Shop for Box Office facilities.
- Printing at Cranbrook for their assistance in preparing the programme.
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- McCabe, Ford and Williams for financial services to the society.
- All members and friends of CODS without whose voluntary help this production would not be possible.

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The Players

Jo Levett—Jocasta, Candle Jo joined CODS as a timid postulant in *The Sound of Music* in 1992. Since then she has enjoyed a variety of roles, including a floor-scrubbing wench in *Tom Jones*, an opinionated chicken in *Honk!* and the fun-loving moll, Erma, in *Anything Goes*. She is relieved that the characters she plays in *Alarms* and *Leavings* are not like the awful Beverly whom she had great fun playing in CODS' production of *Abigail's Party* in 2004.

Robin Harrison—John, Speaker Robin was born in Swaziland, starting his stage career as a spear carrier in his school's production of *Mother Courage*. Passing via the chorus of the Cambridge Footlights to roles in London and Kent including Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, Mack in *Biograph Girl*, Fagin in *Oliver*, Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* and most recently the title role in *The King and I*. In his spare time he is a tea broker in the City of London!

Michelle Sandys—Nancy, Spott Michelle joined CODS in 1979 and is now doing her second stint as Honorary Secretary of the Society. As well as acting, singing and dancing in a myriad of our productions, she has directed and co-directed several shows. Michelle has also had roles in panto with Cranbrook Showtimers.

Geoff King—Nicolas, Peter Geoff joined CODS in 1983 and first appeared on stage in *Outside Edge* the same year. Despite not being able to sing a note, he has also starred in many musicals and charity concerts, usually hidden amongst the chorus! He has however played leading roles in *Tom Jones*, *The Fardale...Macbeth*, and *Pygmalion*.

Richard Vernon—Miles, Chris Originally from Epsom, Surrey, Richard started his acting career at Ewell Castle School where he took roles in several school plays and also acted for the National Youth Theatre. After leaving school Richard joined Sutton Amateur Dramatic Club and Barnstead Little Theatre, appearing in *Cause Celebre* by Terence Rattigan, which won the South East Drama Festival at the Harlequin in Redhill. Since moving to Kent, Richard has been acting for the Smarden Players, appearing in two pantomimes, various plays and reviews.

Emma Hancock—Melanie Emma was last seen on the CODS stage playing Anna in *The King and I*, a far cry from her previous role as Reno Sweeney the nightclub singer in *Anything Goes*. She joined CODS in 2004, and played Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, following this with her role as Nellie in *South Pacific*. She first appeared on stage as a member of the Bob Hope Youth Theatre and subsequent shows included *My Fair Lady*, *The Boyfriend*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Death of a Salesman*.

Teletha Tapper—Lynn, Nikki *Communicating Doors* in 2008 was Teletha's first appearance with CODS. Most of her theatrical experience has been as an ex-pat abroad. She is delighted to be back on stage in *Alarms and Excursions*.

Andrew White—Lawrence Most of Andrew's previous theatrical experience has been with the Stables Theatre in Hastings and he joined CODS only fairly recently. He has however made his presence felt since his arrival! He directed last year's spring play, *Communicating Doors* and went on to win awards at the Kent Drama Festival – including for Best New Director. He has also Stage Managed the last two musicals for CODS and combines his talents for this play as actor and SM!

Angela Woodcock—Stewardess Angela has been a member of CODS for 25 years, during which time she has enjoyed many and varied roles including in musicals and drama, dancing and choreography. She co-directed *There Will Always be an England* which CODS later took to Holland, and has won awards for best supporting actress in *How the Other Half Loves* by Alan Ayckbourn and for best actress in Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party*. Angela devised and directed our latest production, *A Step in Time*, which generated £2,000 for local charities.

Mark Cheeseman—Bloss, Dietrich Mark first trod the boards with CODS in *Wizard of Oz* and followed up with an intrepid Chinese gambler in *Anything Goes*. He has also played Bill Sykes in the Benenden Players' production of *Oliver* and appeared as the hapless security guard, Harold, in last spring's CODS play *Communicating Doors*. Off stage he runs his own building company!

Maurice Wilkins—Clifford, Charr Although he has always been interested in the theatre, Maurice only joined an am. dram. society after moving from Surrey to Kent on retirement. Since joining CODS in 1998 he has played a wide range of different characters from chorus parts to principal roles in drama, comedy and musicals. He will, perhaps, be best remembered for the role of Grandma in *Family Planning* and for Denzil Shanks in *Habeas Corpus*, for which he was nominated for an award in the KDA festival.

Val King—Charmian, Much Val joined CODS in 1982 appearing in *The King and I*, since which she has been on stage for numerous plays, musicals and Spring concerts. Major roles include those in *Noises Off*, *Tom Jones* and *Season's Greetings*, during which she was required to make love on stage.....to her real life husband – Geoff!

Barbara Gray—The Right Honourable the Baroness Armament KO GBH RSVP Barbara is a retired hospital pharmacist and has trodden the boards since her late teens. She played many roles in Somerset before her move to Kent when she joined the CODS. Subsequent performances include Mrs. Bumble in *Oliver*, Calliope in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and most of the G & S old ladies. She also played Bloody Mary for the CODS production of *South Pacific* in 2005. Dramatic roles include those in *The Odd Couple* and *Habeas Corpus*.

Valerie Whiting—Mother Val joined CODS last year and recommends the experience to everyone

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Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society

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A stylized illustration of a woman in profile, facing right. She is wearing a long, white, sleeveless dress with a long, flowing train of feathers. She is holding a dark parasol. The background is a soft, pinkish-red wash.

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