

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION



Merry Maskerade
MASKERS theatre company

Yuletide '25

Let Christmas begin at Maskers!

MASKERS STUDIO THEATRE
off Emsworth Road, Shirley, SO15 3LX

Fri 5 - Sat 13 December

Performances at 7:30pm, no performance Sunday 7th

Tickets £15
includes a glass of mulled wine, or fruit juice, and a mince pie!

Full details and on-line booking at:
maskers.org.uk

Registered charity 900067

Telephone booking:
0333 666 3366

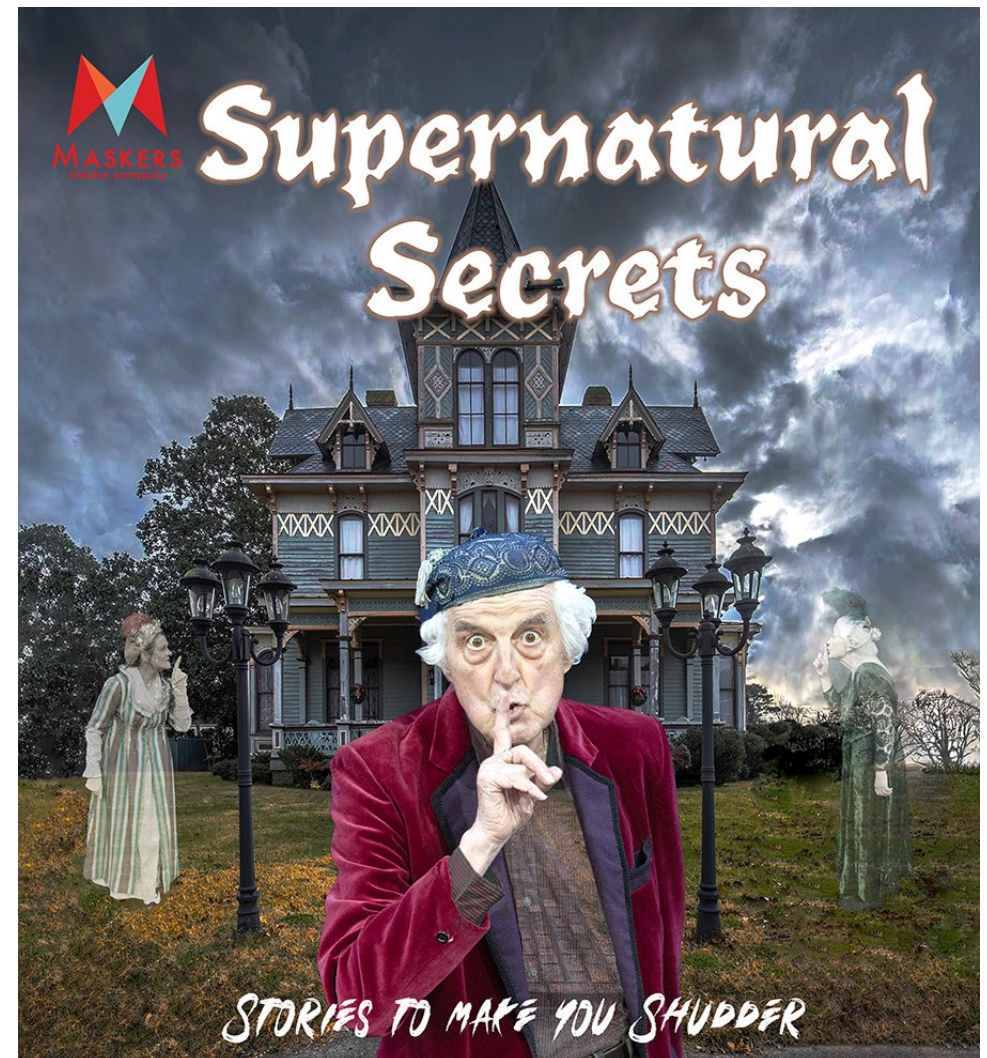


**BOOKING: Via link on our website
maskers.org.uk or 0333 666 3366**

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Facebook

Registered charity no.900067



Supernatural Secrets

STORIES TO MAKE YOU SHUDDER

Programme

20th — 25th October 2025

Maskers Studio Theatre

Registered Charity no. 900067

maskers.org.uk

Director's Notes

For me, there's nothing quite like the thrilling chill of the unknown. I've always been utterly captivated by horror and the supernatural — the whispers of the night, the creak on the stairs, and the deep, rich history of folklore that feeds our primal fears. Give me a good scare any day! It's that exhilarating jolt of adrenaline that reminds you you're alive.

My fascination with ghosts and the things that go bump in the dark isn't about morbid curiosity; it's about the eternal question of what lies beyond, and the compelling, universal human desire to believe in something just out of sight. They represent history, unfinished business, and the sheer power of human memory given spectral form. When the lights go down. Our medium, who is, shall we say, a dedicated charlatan, represents the perfectly human desire to exploit that beautiful, desperate belief in the afterlife. He's selling a fantasy, and the audience, along with the other characters, is constantly navigating the line between his masterful con and the possibility that something real is indeed listening.

Directing this piece has been a tightrope walk of comedic timing. Every mistimed "spirit voice," and every frantic glance our medium gives is a carefully constructed moment designed to maximize the laughter and the anxiety simultaneously. The rhythm of the show depends on precision — the split-second it takes for a dramatic gasp to turn into an uncontrollable chuckle.

I'm hoping you will be captivated, and haunted, and maybe—just maybe—tricked into looking over your shoulder on the way home.

Clare



Directed by Clare Britton - Clare joined Maskers in 2023 and has helped with costume design for *Murder in the Studio*, *Notes from a Small Island* and *Copenhagen*, played Devanika in *Murder in the Citizens' Jury* and appeared in *Winter Sparkles*. Even though this will be her first time directing with the Maskers, she has directed with other community theatre groups. Clare believes that everyone has creative input when she directs though her decision is final but, if it is a suggestion that brings something to the play, it will be included. She has had a fascinated interest in the supernatural and the paranormal since a teenager and actually likes a good scare or the suspense of the old style of movies. There have also been some experiences that have caused her to ask questions....

Searching is dedicated to June Abbott 1942-2020. Artistic Director of The Courtyard and Finborough Theatres. She was the best teacher I could ever have had. *Matthew Meehan*



There will be one interval of 20 minutes
Win a bottle of Cava — tickets available from the bar!

POP IN AND GET TO KNOW MASKERS BETTER



Ever wondered what goes on offstage at a play?

Every show has a host of people working away out of sight of the audience.

Maskers is welcoming people into the theatre to explore the bits the audience doesn't usually get to see. Come and learn a little about the workshop, the technical department, the costume department and how we go about marketing our shows.

Or just drop in for a cup of tea and a chat on the first Saturday of every month.

Saturday 1st November

Running from

10am – 1pm.



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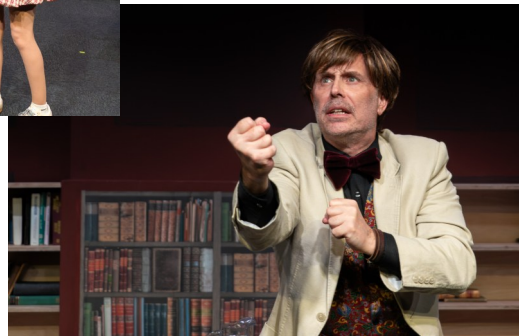
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The Production Team

Director	Clare Britton
Production Manager	Christine Baker
Stage Manager	Robert Osborne
Lighting Design	Clive Weeks
Sound Design	Jamie McCarthy
Lighting and Sound Operators	Daniel Dick, Emily Smith
Set Crew	Marie, McDade, Paul Stanley
Set Design	Clive Weeks
Set Construction	Tuesday Team
Set Painting	Robert Osborne, Hazel Burrows, Peat Burrows and Maskers
Set Dressing	Angela Stansbridge
Costume	Christine Baker and Cast
Properties	Angela Stansbridge
Poster Design	Clive Weeks, Clare Britton
Show Photography	Ian Wilson, Clive Weeks, Donald Coe
Rehearsal Prompt	Christine Baker



For the Maskers **Technical Manager:-** Jamie McCarthy; **Lighting Consultant:-** Clive Weeks; **Sound Consultant:-** Jamie McCarthy;
Marketing Team:- Jenni Prior, Angela Stansbridge, Clive Weeks, Robert Osborne, Meri Mackney, Paul Baker; Tash Priddle; Maddy Cope, Nataliia Prymak; **Front of House Manager:-** James Lawson;
Box Office Manager:- Chris Baker; **Photography:-** Clive Weeks; **Bar Manager:-** Meri Mackney

The Last Letter of Sefa Bubbels a Flemish folktale retold by Signe Maene

Jozefa Coleta Bubbels lived in Steenuilbos (Little Owl Forest). Born in 1667, she worked as a cowherder. Around 1700, as the Plague rampaged through Europe, she lost her husband and five of her children to the disease and the remaining two left soon after. Left alone, she became a morose and lonely figure and, when strange things happened, they were blamed on her and she was rumoured to be summoning witches. On her death in 1750, no-one wanted to handle the coffin. As her coffin was lowered, the ropes broke and tipped the coffin on its side. At that moment, a violent storm broke out which set fire to the forest, burning it to the ground.



Performed by Teo Rusu — Teo joined Maskers in 2024 and was most recently seen portraying a variety of characters in and playing some of the musical accompaniment for the tour of *Northanger Abbey*. She has previously been seen as Pauline in *Murder in the Studio*.



Directed by William Baggs — William has been a Maskers' member for many years. He has both acted and directed. His appearances include roles in: *Anne Boleyn*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Sitting Pretty*. He is delighted to be directing *The Last Letter of Sefa Bubbels* - a small contribution to the evening.



The Cast—Ghost of a Chance by Brian J Burton



Mrs Terry played by **Hazel Burrows** — Hazel has been an active member of the Maskers since the early 70s. These fifty years being involved with theatre and have brought her many hours of discovery and pleasure. Hazel has dealt with all aspects of theatre: set design/painting, costume design and always getting involved with sound and lighting with a play she is directing. Her enjoyment has been particularly through comedy and finding the laughs, even when not on stage herself. Over recent years Hazel has chosen to direct to much critical acclaim and sell out shows. Most recently she presented the much-loved **Absurd Person Singular** by Alan Ayckbourn.



Mrs Dean played by **Gemma Kirk** — Gemma is a new member of Maskers but not new to the drama scene. She has been interested in drama since she was at school and had roles in school plays including **Chicago** and **Sweet Charity**. Since then, Gemma has been a member of various drama groups over the years and has had a variety of roles in plays and pantomimes such as **Dick Whittington**, **Bright Young Things** and **A Midsummer Night's Dream**.



The Mother played by **Maria Head** — Maria has been a member of Maskers for many years. In that time, she has played a wide variety of roles including Goneril in **King Lear** and Mistress Meg Page in **The Merry Wives of Windsor** twice! The first production was open air theatre at Mottisfont Abbey and the second in the studio. She was last seen in **Murder in the Studio** in May 2024. This is the first time she has played a ghost with Maskers and is looking forward to a creepy evening.



The Daughter played by **Harley Harding** — Harley first discovered her love for performing through a variety of local youth theatre groups and has been passionate about the stage from a young age. Harley went on to study Acting at University, where she developed her skills and deepened her appreciation for all aspects of performance. Never one to stay away from the theatre for long, Harley is thrilled to be stepping into her first production with the Maskers, and she looks forward to bringing her energy and creativity to the company.



Hopkins played by **Paul Baker** — Paul joined in 1996 and since then has been in over twenty-five shows in the open air for Maskers. He has played roles including Weasel Norman in **The Wind in the Willows**, Thomas Cromwell in **Anne Boleyn** and four different characters in **The Three Musketeers**. Paul has appeared in most of the recent productions in Maskers Studio, having played Sepulchra in **Gormenghast** and the Santa Burglar in **Sorry! Wrong Chimney!**, Uncle George in **Cash on Delivery**, three different characters in **Murder in the Studio**, Andrew in **Murder in the Citizens' Jury**, Willie in **Blue Remembered Hills**, and, most recently, Geoff in **Absurd Person Singular**.

The Cast—Searching by Matthew Meehan



Alison played by **Maddy Cope** — Maddy became a Masker in 2023 and made her debut with us playing the insanely violent Bertha, first wife to Mr Rochester in **Jane Eyre**. Despite having no spoken lines, she made quite the impression! She has been involved backstage with several shows and this summer she was ASM for the tour of **Northanger Abbey**. Prior to joining Maskers, she has been in a multitude of shows and has experience working behind the scenes. She helped with tech for **The Producers**, performed in the Theatre Royal last November.



Martha played by **Megan Swanson** — This will be Megan's first show with the Maskers. Her previous experience on stage consists of four shows with a (very) amateur theatre group at university, all of which were written by members of the group. Megan is currently undertaking a year-long internship in Southampton, after which she will be returning to Sheffield for a third (and final) year at university. When not doing theatre, Megan enjoys reading, writing, and taking weekend trips away.



Sally played by **Molly Smith** — Molly finished school in 2023 with a distinction in BTEC Drama and Dance. Molly wanted to continue with her passion for drama after school finished and has gone on to perform in various roles in productions such as **Dick Whittington**, **Bright Young Things** and **A Midsummer Night's Dream**. This is her first performance with Maskers.



Vincent Welby played by **Simon Carter** — Simon has performed in a wide range of Maskers' productions, from the heartfelt vignettes of **Almost, Maine**; the literary intensity of **Jane Eyre**; the swashbuckling adventure of **The Three Musketeers to Love & Power**, excerpts from Oscar Wilde. Simon was involved in Maskers' 250-year anniversary production of Jane Austen's **Northanger Abbey**, playing Richard Morland, Catherine's father, as well as the rascally John Thorpe. In this latest production, **Searching**, Simon is flexing his comedic side.



Jim played by **Paul Baker**

Rachel played by **Gemma Kirk**

Eden played by **Teo Rusu**

Car Mechanic played by **Paul Stanley**. This is Paul's debut for Maskers