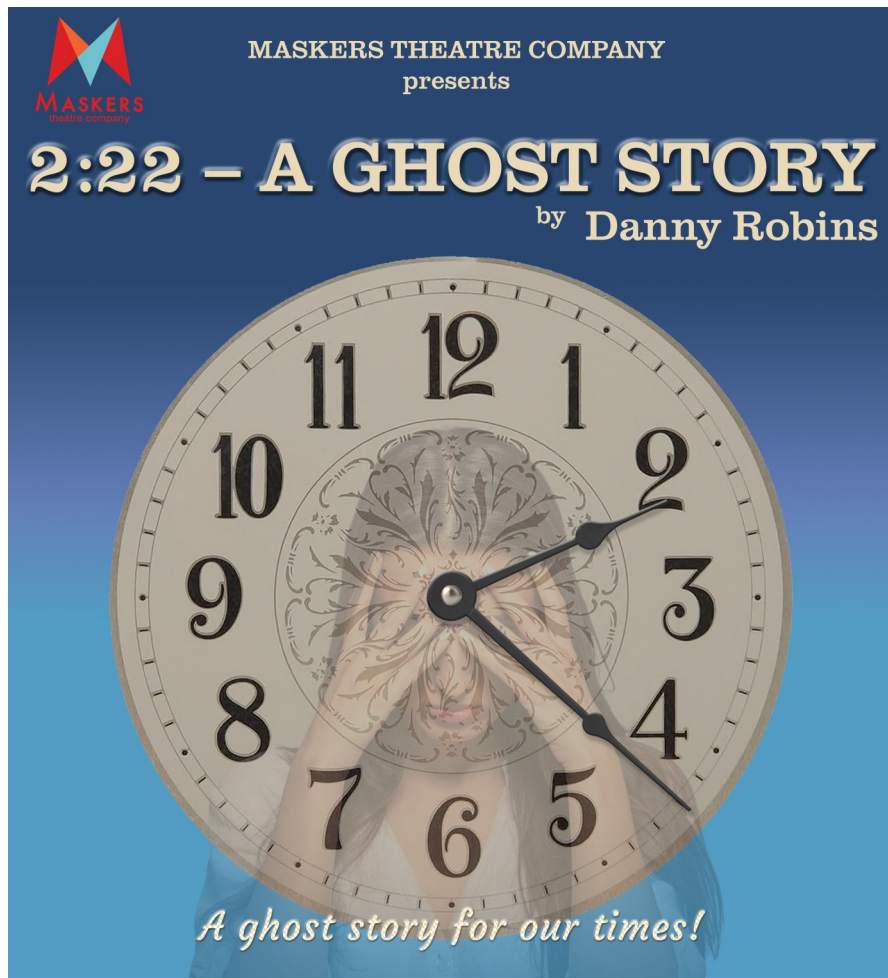


OUR NEXT PRODUCTION



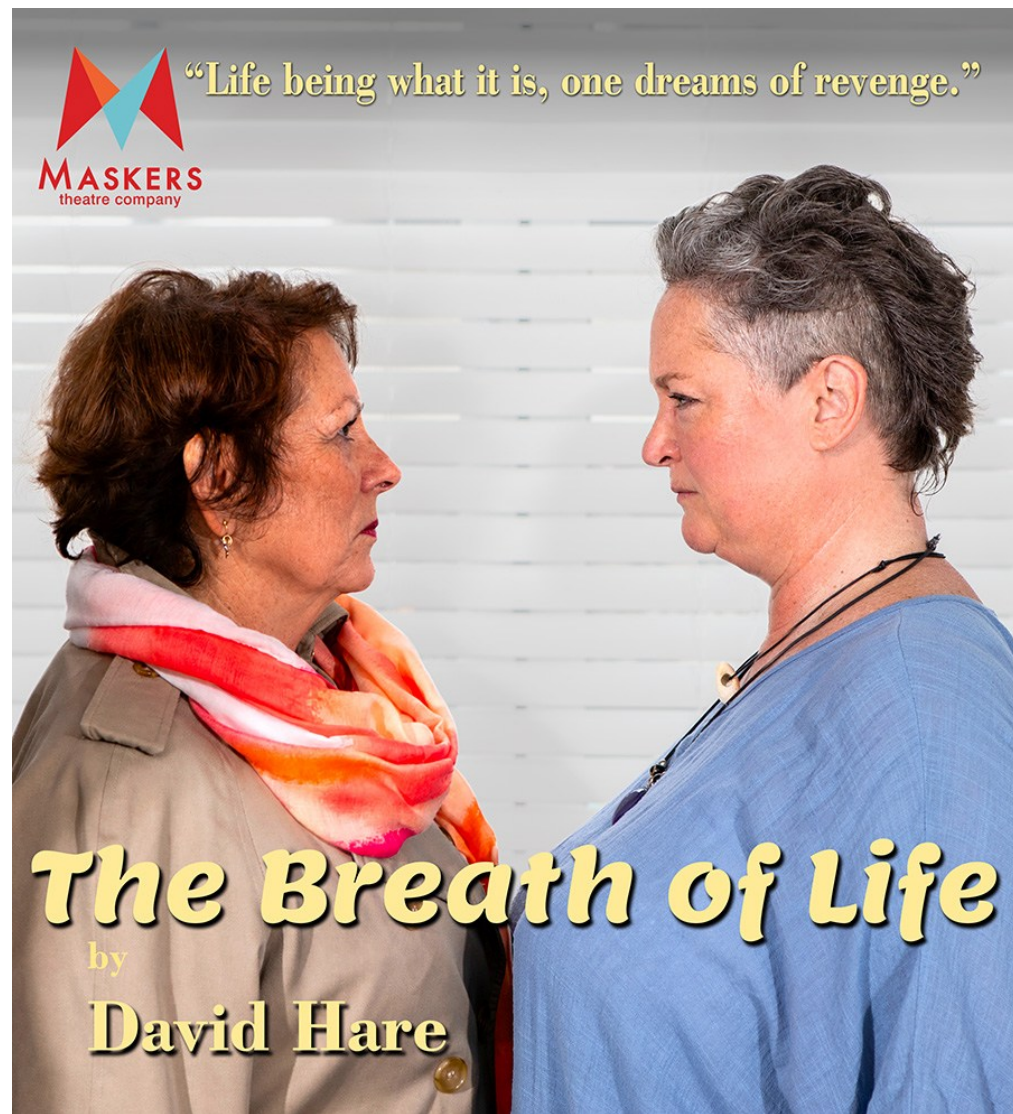
**Monday 26th October to Sunday 1st November
2026 (matinée Sunday)**

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

 @MaskersTheatre

 Find us on
Facebook

Registered charity no.900067



**Programme
21st — 26th September 2026
Maskers Studio Theatre**

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals

Registered Charity no. 900067

maskers.org.uk

Director's Notes

I saw **Breath of Life** at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, in 2003. I had heard that David Hare had written this new play and it was to be performed by Maggie Smith and Judi Dench. Since they had, to my best knowledge, never performed together onstage, I decided this was a play I had to see. I was not disappointed and thought, "This is a play I would like to direct."

Twenty years later, here we are.

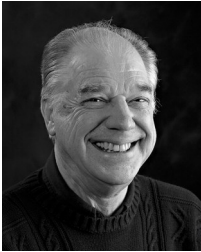
It is interesting for a variety of reasons. The main character, possibly, never appears - shades of **Waiting for Godot**? There are only two characters, mature women - still quite unusual, even today. The play takes place over an evening, that night and the following morning which we have to convey to the audience. There is a great deal of dry humour ("The whole south coast of England. Gardening and dying. That's what we do." "Just to annoy him. Lights on, lights off. Just like the Nazis. I didn't watch all those war films for nothing!")

It is a challenge for the two actors, learning the parts, being onstage for the entire show, moving through all the emotions of hostility, vulnerability, anger, pity and self-pity and opening up to someone you don't know.

I am blessed to have two actors who have managed to bring these characters to life and have made the whole business of developing the play a pleasure.

I hope you enjoy our production as much as I have enjoyed directing it.

Ken



Directed by Ken Hann — Ken joined the Maskers in 1969. He was cast as a servant named Vermin. Plenty of aging lines and a bald pate were required. Looking in the mirror now he could play it without any make-up at all!

There followed many roles over the years; Pierre in **War and Peace**, the dresser in **The Dresser** and many fops and vicars. Having finished working, Ken soon realised he missed telling people what to do. The obvious answer was to start directing. Since then, he has directed four Shakespeare plays, Restoration Comedy, Greek Tragedy and Chekov at a variety of venues, including The Nuffield Theatre, The Maskers Studio, Open Air and touring.

He is looking forward to this new challenge, directing a play written by one of our finest living dramatists.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES

Upcoming Production



Mince pie and mulled wine, or fruit juice, included in ticket price.

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



Sun 6 - Sat 12 December

Performances at 7:30pm

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

Tickets £16.50
Registered charity 900067

Telephone booking:
0333 666 3366

LIGHT UP - SHIRLEY YOUTH THEATRE CLASSES

LEARNING TO SHINE ON & OFF STAGE

VALUE FOR MONEY ENGAGING LOCAL DRAMA CLASSES RUN BY HAMPSHIRE'S MOST INNOVATIVE YOUTH THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS CHARITY

WEDNESDAY (TERA TIME) - ADVANCED (11-19)
5:00 - 7:00

THURSDAY (TERA TIME) - MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY (7-18)
5:00 - 7:00

FRIDAY (TERA TIME) - COMPANY (7-18)
4:30 - 6:30

SATURDAY (TERA TIME) - IMPROV CLUB (10+)
1:30 - 3:00 (monthly)

Scan above or email
info@lightupdrama.org.uk to learn more or book a trial.

DOING YOUTH THEATRE DIFFERENTLY

REG. CHARITY: 11294732

MASKERS theatre company

OPEN HOUSE

Technical demos, costume displays, behind the scenes photo's & more

Shirley's own studio theatre opens its doors to everyone!

FREE ENTRY - All welcome!

Next session
Saturday 3rd October
10am – 1pm.

Scene Breakdown

THE BREATH OF LIFE

By **DAVID HARE**

Scene One **Late Afternoon, Spring**

Scene Two **Night**

Interval (20 mins)

Scene Three **4:00 am the next morning**

Scene Four **9:30 am**

The play is set in Ventnor, Isle of Wight, 2003

Acknowledgements

Masks are grateful to:
PDSA Veterinary Charity for books



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; **Front of House Manager:-** James Lawson; **Box Office Manager:-** Chris Baker; **Photographers:-** Clive Weeks, Donald Coe, Ian Wilson; **Bar Manager:-** Meri Mackney

Tuesday Set-Building Team:- Clive Weeks, Brian Stansbridge, Martin Caveney, Martyn Welch, William Baggs, with help from other Maskers.



The Cast



Madeleine Palmer played by **Abi Linnartz** — Abi was last seen on stage in ***Absurd Person Singular*** in May 2025 and is delighted to be working with Maria for this fabulous piece of drama! Abi has been a member of Maskers since 2022 and has worked on ***The Three Musketeers***, ***Gormenghast*** and ***Romeo and Juliet***. Past credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Saga of Ken and Sandra*, *The Bible (Abridged)*, *The Last Secret*, *Sweet Panic*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* and *Mapp and Lucia* (Titchfield Festival Theatre), *The Field Street Monologues* (Rusty Bucket Productions). She is also a regular actor for immersive events company, Murdered for Money. Directing credits include *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Titchfield Festival Theatre) and *Eleemosynary* (Maskers).



Frances Beale 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***, which was also directed by Ken Hann. She has played Mistress Meg Page in ***The Merry Wives of Windsor***, both at Mottisfont Abbey and in the Studio. She was last seen in ***Supernatural Secrets*** last October, when she played a Victorian ghost. Maria is so delighted to be playing Frances in ***The Breath of Life*** and rather daunted to be following in the footsteps of Dame Judy Dench. She hopes she can do it justice!



The Production Team

Director

Assistant to the Director

Production Manager

Stage Manager

Assisted by

Lighting Design

Sound Design

Lighting and Sound Operator

Set Design

Set Construction and Painting

Set Dressing

Costume

Properties

Poster Design

Show Photography

Rehearsal Prompt

Ken Hann

Graham Buchanan

Chris Baker

Angie Barks

Jill Desborough, Robert Osborne

Tony Lawther

Jamie McCarthy

Milo Blackledge

Clive Weeks, Ken Hann

Clive Weeks, Martyn Welch,

Martin Caveney, Brian Stansbridge,

Kevin Butler, William Baggs

Angela Stansbridge

The Cast

Lucy Lockyer

Ken Hann, Clive Weeks

Ian Wilson

Jenni Watson

