



St George's Players Chair's Report 2018

Opening thoughts.....

Hello all. As 2018 draws to a close and we prepare for our annual general meeting, I was reflecting with a friend about the importance of community. Don't worry, I'm not going to start a discussion about our country's place in the world (there's enough of that going on). It was more about saying how important it is to have solid, local community groups that offer a place for individual creativity, where new friendships are built and where we can all play our part in putting something back into the community we call home.

The last year has been fantastic. We've had the confidence to mix up our styles with two main productions at opposite ends of the spectrum - a light and breezy timeless classic performed in the spring followed by a dark, contemporary piece as the cool of the autumn swept in. Our playwriting group has continued to excel, offering up a first for the group - a brilliantly successful scratch night held in the summer in which our writers got to see their work performed by our players. Also, our popular monthly play readings have given us the opportunity to experiment with many styles ranging from the DiscWorld series (thank you Robin) through to previous big West End hits; all at only the cost of a few print outs and maybe a pint (or two).

In summary, we started the year determined to grow and build on what was a real high spot at the end of 2017 with the hugely successful Jekyll&Hyde production. In that task we can be justifiably proud. In 2018 we have expanded our reach, explored new genres and brought new and diverse voices to our already incredibly talented pool of individuals. All of who share our common purpose of bringing creativity and entertainment to our fantastic local community.

Stephen Gaskell, Chair

The year digested a bit more.....

It's important to be Earnest

Spring 2018 saw Uli Wilfer take on her directorial debut with the timeless classic "The Importance of Being Earnest" by Oscar Wilde. The production was a fantastic success and once again demonstrated the power of group working as a team to put our stamp and interpretation on these classic texts. We all know that Uli was brave in tackling a Wilde production for her first St George's outing and that courage played off with a stellar cast and fantastic production team bringing us big audience numbers, a sell out Saturday (also the opening day of the Brockley Max festival, which we participated in for a second year) and a tidy income to boot.

A St George's first.... Scratch Night

With the long, hot summer in full swing our playwriting group turned up the heat with a brilliantly inspired and produced "Scratch Night", taking place in the upstairs "Loft" at the Honor Oak pub. The evening gave the opportunity for our hugely talented group to see their work performed by our equally talented players. Plays were extremely differing in styles, genres and storytelling and our willing audience were more than happy to give their constructive feedback on what worked well, what could be developed and where the pieces could be taken next which was invaluable to hear. So successful was our first 'scratch' that one audience member commented the playwrights should test their creativity at the Brockley Jack's ever popular "Write Now" festival too. Looking forward we'll hear more from Rob and the gang about plans for 2019 and ambitions to ultimately perform a full length self-penned piece as one of our main productions.... exciting times ahead!

Deliciously, dark Dinner anyone?

October saw us bring a different focus with our production of Moira Buffini's "Dinner". Deliciously dark, on point contemporary and with a twist as sharp as a freshly bladed carving knife, producers Shelley Brownlee and Uli Wilfer should be hugely satisfied with the success of the show. Dinner was part gamble. It takes the group into new and wonderfully different territory and the gamble paid off with dividend. Produced 'in the round', the play allowed the actors to experiment with the depth of layers of each individual character. It also gave Shelley and Uli the opportunity to test more traditional boundaries of St George's plays whilst telling a story that is perhaps more frighteningly relevant today than when originally produced in the early noughties. Our thanks also go to the church team for their open minded approach and to our audience, where we saw a sell out opening night for the first time in many years. Well done to everyone involved and here's to the next step into pushing those limits!

Behind the scenes developments

This year saw us develop further 'behind the scenes' including:

- Moving our bookings on line, using the 'ticketmaster' system, which saw a big increase in efficiency for our front of house team who were able to spend less time handling every single transaction with cash on the night and more time improving the front of house experience for our ever expanding audience.
- We continued to make improvements to the website, pushing more of our material out via twitter and facebook and seeing our online presence enhance securing interest from more new members.
- Our financial position remains sound, more details to be set out in the Treasurer's summary, giving us a solid platform upon which to progress new ideas into 2019.

So to conclude although we find ourselves at the end of 2018 in a country where perhaps the concept of community seem strained by polarising views on our future place in the world, at a very local level we can take heart in the small part St Georges Players plays. We're overloaded with talent, brimming with ideas and full of optimism for a successful 2019. Here's to another year of success and fun!