

DAG DIGEST

(Inc “STRANGE TIMES”)

Reviews, news and previews from Dewsbury Arts Group

WE'RE STILL HERE

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Ask me Tomorrow opened on the Saturday and just as swiftly closed on the Monday following the government's imposition of the lockdown. Written by local lad Stan Barstow from Horbury, *Ask Me Tomorrow* is not as well-known as *A Kind of Loving* but it deserves to be. Wilf Cotton (Hugh Raine), an aspiring writer moves in to digs in a nearby city where he meets Marguerite Fisher (Catherine Bailey), a girl with a more complex and unhappy background than his own. Poppy (Sue Saville) a lady of a certain age, presides over the digs which are also home to brash and brassy Sylvia (Karen Riding). Hugh gave a commanding performance in the pivotal role which called upon him to be being by turns lover, counsellor and diplomat. Catherine gave depth and vulnerability to Marguerite whilst Sue conveyed pathos and warmth Paul Lightowler as Poppy's estranged and intimidating husband Ronnie Bentley and Simon Beaumont as Wilf's roguish elder brother Harry gave convincing portrayals whilst Allan Liles was appropriately sheepish as one of Sylvia's unnamed "men". David Fletcher's excellent multi roomed set was well dressed and created the perfect hemmed in period atmosphere complimented by appropriate incidental music. Richard M. Brook brought out a lovely balance of humour and pathos from a strong cast in his directorial debut.

And now, the million dollar question; when do we start up again? The committee zoomed in recently with a short agenda with the broad theme "what do we do next?". The Group will heed the government's guidelines. Those following the daily briefing will know that relaxation is some way off yet. Assuming that the rest of the season will not now take place, when we can kick off we need something to kick off with. The likeliest option is to pick up with *Ask Me Tomorrow*. The set is up, the team would need a couple of weeks or so to refresh their memories and we can finish what we started. *Murder Margaret and Me*

was cast and rehearsals had begun. *The Producers* has been cast. The problem, however, is that being allowed to gather to rehearse, build a set and prepare generally are some way off. We will open again but only when we can offer a safe and welcoming environment.

Youth classes are now postponed for the foreseeable future. Maria Bailey will be in touch with youth members individually.

The Summer exhibition is now highly unlikely to take place. However, keep an eye on the website as a virtual gallery is always possible.

Setting out what we had in mind for next season is like telling a losing contestant on a quiz show what they might have won. Lined up were a classic farce, *Dry Rot*, a panto, *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves* a modern drama *These Things I Know to be True* and Sue Townend's comedy *Bazaar Rummage*. We would like to pencil in *The Producers* for the March slot and will do as best we can to present a varied and uplifting programme. Please see also the attached letter from Jacky Fletcher.

Amid all the numbers produced each day, the impact of the virus does not hit home really until you lose someone you know. Ian Burroughs was not a number but a force of nature. He saw the Group's production of *The Proposal* in a festival at York many years ago, made himself known and threw himself in to all aspects of its work. He it was who produced a model of what a theatre at the premises might look like when such an idea was pie in the sky. An accomplished actor he was an intuitive director who took great pains to bring a script alive. During *A Chip in The Sugar*, Ian encouraged Malcolm Parkinson to take an extra pause at one point to turn 3 laughs in to 4. So it is all Ian's fault. He and Nancy lived at 48 West Park Street, "the Titanic House" where Wallace Hartley the bandleader had once lived. Shrewdly, to get the best price, he put it up for sale at the time "Titanic" was released to enable them to move to Kent. We'll miss him.

Just For Fun do have a go at the weekly quizzes. To join in, e-mail jackym.fletcher@gmail.com

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**WE WILL MEET AGAIN
STAY SAFE**

DEWSBURY ARTS GROUP APRIL 2020

