

## The School Plays 1920s

### 1922 Midsummer Night's Dream

Busy preparations are going on at the Secondary School for the production on Dec. 20th, of scenes from Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream". It is intended to stage and dress the production fully, and to make it an entertainment well worth the seeing. The aim of the effort is to raise funds for articles of school equipment which are not supplied through the regular sources.

Nov. 11th 1922

There has been a big rush for tickets for the Secondary School's first annual Christmas entertainment to be given in the Hippodrome on December 20th, and all the reserved seats are already booked. There are, however, still some seats to be had in other parts of the house. Contrary to rumour, all ticket-holders are assured of seats. The entertainment is to consist of scenes from Shakespeare's comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream", and the production is being carefully staged, dressed and rehearsed. The proceeds are to go to the School Recreation Fund.

December 2nd. 1922

Next Wednesday the Hemsworth Secondary School will bring its first production before the public - a selection of scenes from "A Midsummer Night's Dream". One of Shakespeare's most English plays. The scenes selected comprise the bulk of the play, only the love scenes being omitted, and the production, in five acts, will provide about two hours of entertainment.

All the scenery has been made at the school, as have also the dresses of the fairies and other minor performers. The principals' costumes only have been hired. Great pains have been taken in the preparations, and the acting and dancing promise to be of a high standard. In addition, there is an orchestra, composed of Messrs. Atkinson, Vicars, Ellam, Gill, S. Atkinson (Pontefract) and Walmsley, local gentlemen who are giving their services voluntarily. They will play selections from Mendelssohn's incidental music set to the play, during and between the acts. Miss Jackson, a member of the school staff, is also assisting in the musical part of the programme.

The principal parts of the play are in good hands, the youngsters having taken keenly to their work. One of the central figures is, of course, "Puck", which will be played by F.R. Rothera. The other principals are Winnie Walsh (Hyppolyta), Cyril Teale (Theseus), S. Hawkesworth (Philostrate), W.L. Dooley (Quince), A. Garbett (Snug), S. Tait (Bottom), S.L. Carter (Flute), E. Fearnside (Snoub), E.J. Barker (Starveling), H. Crossley (Oberon), Emma Bates (Titania). Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed, the fairy attendants (Jessie Ledger, Mollie Price, Connie Mann and Hilda Finch. Mollie Garbett, another fairy, is to perform a special dance, and May Bull takes the opening lines in the second act. There are also a number of other fairies and gnomes.

The object of the whole effort is to raise funds for recreational purposes for the school, and it is hoped, if the success of the present effort justifies it, to be able to repeat the performance early next term. The bookings for next Wednesday at the Hippodrome are pretty heavy, but a number of the cheaper seats are still available.

December 16th. 1922

**1924**

Three short plays: "The Princess and the Woodcutter", "Fleur de Neige" and "Creatures of Impulse" were performed in the Quarry Garden. "As You Like It" was performed in the Hippodrome for there was, as yet, no School Hall.

### Three Delightful Plays

On the evening of Wednesday, 25th June 1924 the school gave three performances before a large audience in the Quarry Garden. The school choir enhanced the evening's entertainment with the part songs: "The Silver Swan" (Orlando Gibbons), "Who is Sylvia" (Schubert), "Where the Bee Sucks" (Dr. Arne) and "The Nightingale" (Thomas Weelkes).

The Cast Lists were:-

#### **"The Princess and the Woodcutter," by A. A. Milne**

Princess	Kathleen Hawkesworth;
Woodcutter	Cyril Teale;
King	W. H. Wright;
Queen	Adelaide Branford;
Red Prince	G. Copley;
Blue Prince	T. Burns;
Yellow Prince	R. Webster.

#### **"Fleur de Neige"**

La Reine	Evelyn Parker;
Fleur de Neige	Alice Scott;
Le Prince	Kathleen Jagger;
Moroir	Hilda Sharpe;
Chasseur	C. Bradshaw;
Nymphes Sylvestres	May Bull, Molly Price, Mary Moody, Vera Hammill, Adelaide Branford, Elsie Nicholson, Violet Dodds,
Jessie Ledger	
Gnomes	R. Williams, J. Keenan, Philip Bull, E. Taylor, Geoffrey Schorah, F. Turner, G. Hunt.

#### **"Creatures of Impulse," by W. S. Gilbert:**

Old Lady	Phyllis Addiss;
Martha	Winnie Sadler;
Pippette	Molly Price;
Sergeant Klook	Stanley Hinchcliffe;
Peter	Frank Rothera;
Bomblehard, a miser	E. J. Langley;
Jacques, a rustic	A. Garbett;
Village Girls	Winnie Penn, Olive Tooth and Hilda Gaunt.

In this play a mysterious old lady casts a spell on all who offend her, and under this spell, individuals must keep repeating their impulsive actions whether they like it or not. Of course, at the end, the old lady releases everyone from her spell. This play seemed to be the most enjoyed of the evening in the beautiful natural setting of the Quarry Garden.

Producers were:- Miss M.A. Griffiths, Miss D.L. Prince and Miss E.D. Robinson, each of whom also arranged the dances and dresses.

Business Manager was Mr. Philip Crossland, ably assisted by Mr. J.A. Storer and Mr. E. Dickinson

The Choir was rehearsed by Miss M.M. Jones.

Refreshments were provided by Mr. and Mrs. Manning.

Make-up was supervised by Mr. Undy of Fitzwilliam

The Rector of Hemsworth supplied the chairs to seat the audience

1925

Twelfth Night - Dec 15th and 16th 1925

Once again the school trooped down to the Hippodrome to watch Shakespeare's comedy, "Twelfth Night".

### The Cast

[Names have been augmented where possible]

Viola	Hetty Littlewood
Orsino	Stanley Hinchcliffe
Olivia	Miriam Wass
Sebastian	E. Taylor
Maria	May Bull
Malvolio	Stanley Hawkesworth
Feste	Frank Rothera
Sir Toby	A. Garbett
Sir Andrew Aguecheek	Philip Bull
Priest	Harrison Parsons
Fabian	Fred Williamson
Attendants	Brian Harrison and J. Keenan
Antonio	Stanley Donaldson
Page to Olivia	Fred W. Wright
Officer	A. Campling
Dancers	Emma Bate, Eunice Addis, Vera Parton, Kathleen Thompson.
Orchestra	led by Mr. Atkinson
Piano	Miss Morgan Jones

The account in the local newspaper gave a good insight into the performances of each character. Hetty Littlewood was praised for her fine acting, clear speaking, charming manner and pleasing voice. Stanley Hinchcliffe looked a nobleman to perfection, and was an attractive character, and Miriam Wass was gentle and gracious. There was a distinct likeness in figure and face between Viola and Sebastian (E. Taylor) who played an awkward part very well, enjoying his encounters with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. His voice, however, was in marked contrast to his "twin", and the audience could have been forgiven for smiling at the incongruous words, "The same face! The same voice!" May Bull played the part of Maria vivaciously, with an infectious laugh, and Stanley Hawkesworth's Malvolio was intelligent. He had a long scene in which he read the letter, and managed to maintain the interest of the audience throughout. Frank Rothera's clown Feste was well played, and he showed great versatility when impersonating the priest. Sir Toby was played by A. Garbett as a jovial old rascal whose boisterous humour and love of ale rather bettered his good breeding. The favourite character, especially with the younger members of the audience, was that of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a part played with vacuous imbecility by Philip Bull, with quaint mannerisms and a strange voice. His 'cackle' was highly entertaining. Harrison Parsons as the priest had little to do, but did it well, as did Fred Williamson as Fabian. Others who helped with the success of the show were Brian Harrison and J. Keenan as the Duke's attendants, Stanley Donaldson as Antonio, Frank White as page to Olivia and A. Campling as the Officer.

The three songs were all sung in a pleasing voice and without nervousness by Fred White. The songs were, "Oh, Mistress Mine" (Morley), "Come away death" (Brahms) and "Hey ho! The wind and the rain" (Quilter).

The Gavotte in the first Act was prettily danced by Emma Bate and Eunice Addis, and they were joined in the second Act by Vera Parton and Kathleen Thompson to dance a minuet.

It was said by many that the drinking scene was especially amusing, and the baiting of Malvolio was splendidly done. When poor Malvolio appeared with his cross garters, the house rocked. Another entertaining scene was the sham duel between Sir Andrew and Cesario. There was pleasant entr'acte music supplied by an orchestra under the direction of Mr. Atkinson, with Miss Morgan Jones at the piano. Costumes and wigs were professionally supplied, and some scenery and the curtains were made by members of the staff. The garden scene was especially fine. Each of the actors was well received with a warm ovation at the end of this third school play, and then Mr. Jenkinson thanked everyone concerned with this enjoyable production. He expressed great pleasure in the knowledge that Shakespeare was enjoying such a wide appreciation in schools in general and in Hemsworth in particular.

The audience of the Tuesday afternoon was mainly children from the top classes of the neighbouring Primary schools, and the performance was repeated on the following day.

1926

**"Hey, No Nonny"**

Scenes from "Twelfth Night" were enacted by the pupils in an open-air performance on the school grounds on Wednesday, 21st July 1926. Act 1, scenes 3 and 5; Act 2, scene 2, and Act 3 were performed. The weather was fine, but the attendance was poor. The music was under the direction of Miss Morgan Jones, assisted by a voluntary orchestra. The play was originally produced by Miss Prince and Miss Robinson. The business manager was Mr. R. Shields.

The songs and dances in the programme were,  
"O, mistress mine," "Come away, death," and "Hey, no nonny" sung by Frank W. White  
Gavotte danced by Emma Bate and Eunice Addis.  
Minuet danced by Emma Bate, Eunice Addis, Vera Parton and Kathleen Thompson.

The Cast

[Names have been augmented where possible]

Viola	Hetty Littlewood
Orsino	Stanley Hinchcliffe
Olivia	Miriam Wass
Sebastian	E. Taylor
Maria	May Bull
Malvolio	Stanley Hawkesworth
Feste	Frank Rothera
Sir Toby Belch	A. Garbett
Sir Andrew Aguecheek	Philip Bull
Priest	Harrison Parsons
Fabian	Fred Williamson
Attendants	Brian Harrison and J. Keenan
Antonio	Stanley Donaldson
Page to Olivia	Fred W. Wright
Officer	A. Campling
Dancers	Emma Bate, Eunice Addis, Vera Parton, Kathleen Thompson.
Orchestra	led by Mr. Atkinson
Piano	Miss Morgan Jones

This production was a carbon copy of the previous year's Twelfth Night at the Hippodrome, with the same cast and performers, but lacking the same audience numbers.

1927

"The Rivals" 19th, 20th, 21st December 1927

The first play to be staged in the new school hall was presented on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

#### Characters

[Names have been augmented where possible]

Lydia Languish	Miriam Wass
Lucy	May Bull
Julia	Martha Mustill
Mrs. Malaprop	Kathleen Thompson
Sir Anthony Absolute	Stanley Hawkesworth
Fag	H. Teale
Captain Absolute	Frank Rothera
Faulkland	Leslie Jago
Acres	Fred Williamson
Sir Lucius O'Trigger	Brian Harrison
David	F. Howitt

Perhaps the drama critic of the local newspaper did not intend the first line of his account of the play to sound so dismissive, but it might have been a little insensitive to say, "In presenting Sheridan's comedy, "The Rivals" the Secondary School Dramatic Society made a welcome change from their previous Shakespearean plays". What had happened to "there's not enough Shakespeare in Hemsworth."(1923)? An opinion not consistently held, it must be assumed. Frank Rothera further enhanced his reputation by his rendering of the part of Captain Absolute, while Kathleen Thompson as Mrs. Malaprop caused much laughter by her absurd sayings. The play was well presented, with a cast of such equally high abilities as to make discriminating between them a hard task. Between the acts, incidental music was provided by the School Orchestra, conducted by Miss Morgan-Jones. The play was produced by Miss E.D. Robinson and Mr. W.A. Storer. Mr. R. Shields was the business manager, and a beautiful front curtain depicting flowers and peacocks was painted for the occasion by Mr. H.S.P. Taylor.

1928

She Stoops to Conquer



These photos have been sent in by Grace Mills. The names of the actors have been lost. Can anyone help?

L-R: 1, 2, 3, Grace Mills, 5, 6, 7, 8

Front: 1



L-R: 1, Grace Mills, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

The pupils of the school further enhanced their reputation with their presentation of Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer" in the Assembly hall on Wednesday evening, 18th December. The acting was good, and the producers were Miss E.D. Robinson and Mr. J.A. Storer. Mr. Storer was also Stage Manager. Each of the players showed confidence, with no prompter's voice being heard. Entr'acte musical items were given by the school orchestra, assisted by Mr. A. Willey and Mr. E. Silverwood, under the direction of Miss Phyllis Wright. A repeat performance took place on Thursday, and a matinee was held on Tuesday for 75 elementary school children. The proceeds went towards the school tennis court fund.

The Cast

Mrs. Hardcastle	Maisie Thorne
Kate Hardcastle	Miriam Wass
Constance Neville	Mollie Price
Sir Charles Marlow	Leslie R. Smith
Mr. George Hastings	Frank White
Tony Lumpkin	Fred Williamson

Minor characters were satisfactorily played by:

Edwin Taylor, Harry Maybury, Cyril Warner, Arthur Thorpe, Thomas Hebden, K. Ellison, Leslie Jago and Arthur L. Wilson

Goldsmith's masterpiece had young Marlow as a rich, handsome and single young man, but despite his infamous ability to charm a barmaid, he was hopelessly bashful in the presence of a society lady. His chances of impressing the beautiful Miss Kate Hardcastle were further jeopardised when he was persuaded by the mischievous Tony Lumpkin that her family home, Liberty Hall, was in fact the local inn. To the horror of her father, Squire Hardcastle, Marlow made himself thoroughly comfortable and somehow got the idea that Kate was a serving girl. In fact Kate assisted in this deception in a bid to capture his heart. Thus, in terms of the social status, she stooped to conquer. This practical joke leads to a night of misunderstanding, embarrassment and confusion for all concerned. First staged in 1773, 'She Stoops to Conquer' or, 'The Mistakes of a Night' proceeded at electric pace, with nothing quite as it seemed.

**1929**

**"Admirable Crichton"** 18th and 19th December 1929

The students of Hemsworth Secondary School performed Barrie's play in the school Assembly Hall on Wednesday and Thursday evening, 18th and 19th December 1929, and it was received with admiration and applause by the appreciative audience. From beginning to end there was not the slightest hitch, the acting was of a high standard, and the whole performance was undoubtedly a great success. Fred Williamson as Crichton, the perfect butler portrayed his part with masterly effect. Maisie Thorne as Lady Mary Lazenbury, who was remembered for her lead role in "She Stoops to Conquer" was also very good. Leslie Smith made a realistic and aristocratic Lord Loam. Josephine Read made an impressive but rather terrifying Lady Brocklehurst, and John Lawrence Frazer as Lord Brocklehurst made an admirable foil for her sarcastic wittiness. Other outstanding characters were:

G. Grayson	Hon. Ernest Woolley
Ethel Midgley and Mary Jones	Ladies Agatha and Katherine Lazenby
Frank White	Mr. Treherne
Grace Mills	"Tweeny", who drew the most laughs. Her quaint mannerisms won the hearts of the audience.

Other parts were taken by: M. Walker (Mrs. Perkins), J. Richards (Monsieur Fleury), J. Marlow (Mr. Rolleston, valet), Arthur Thorpe (Mr. Thompsett, coachman), Hilda Paley (Miss Fisher), Dorothy Parkinson (Miss Simmons), Sabina Weaver (Mlle. Jeanne, Albert Heywood (Thomas), John Taylor (John), Kathleen Sayles (Jane), Thomas Hebden (page boy), Frank Denton (Naval officer).

The producers	Miss G.M. Lockey and Mr. J.A. Storer, who also officiated as Stage Manager.
Musical Director	Miss Phyllis Wright L.R.A.M.
Business Manager	Mr. Robert T. Shields.
Electrician	Mr. G.A. Hunt