

THE MAITLAND MUSIC & ARTS CLUB PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE 39 STEPS



By Arrangement with
Edward Snape for Fiery Angel Limited
John Buchan & Alfred Hitchcock's

THE 39 STEPS

Directed by

Leanne Cane

Adapted by Patrick Barlow
from an original concept by
Simon Corble & Nobby Dimon

At the
Maitland Area School
Performing Arts Centre
April 10-12, 2014



FROM THE DIRECTOR

So why produce the play “The 39 Steps?” For a director, there is something incredibly appealing (read challenging and inspiring) about asking 4 actors to play 139 characters with only minimal props, a bunch of costumes and nothing much else except the enthusiasm and talent of your cast. Besides, I love physical comedy and this show has it in spades. And then of course the off-stage personnel outnumber the cast in this show by greater than 3 to 1, so there is an amazing complexity that makes the directorial juices run! And to top it all off, the play just happens to be based on Alfred Hitchcock’s 1935 spy classic complete with trains, planes, bridges and Scottish marching bands! Ah, the fun of it all!



I have been in awe of the tenacity and endurance of my cast, a wonderfully close knit group who have worked together brilliantly. Believe me, they sweat! Their enjoyment of the play is palpable; their talent commensurate with some of the best actors here in SA and the camaraderie they share which made the whole process a truly enjoyable experience. I thank them for their commitment, time and talent.

While this is the first time in a while that the club has staged a play, we certainly hope that it won't be the last. As part of our commitment to delivering the performing arts to a wide audience, we have also staged a special matinee performance of this show for students of the two local Maitland schools. We hope that these young people will be inspired to perform themselves by either acting in their own school's productions (both schools have a production coming up soon – be on the lookout for those) or by joining the MMAC and its new Youth Theatre.

It would be remiss of me to not thank the many wonderful people who have come together to help stage this show. In particular I must mention Roger Morgan, our original stage manager who has left (temporarily) for distant shores and will miss the show, Ted Beare who has loyally taken on the challenge of stage manager in Roger's absence, Bri Medcalf who has plucked costumes from everywhere, Anthony Way who sat through, laughed through and was even dragged on stage to fill in during many of our early rehearsals, my other wonderful costume and set crew, the techies and of course Richard, who always manages to fix my problems as well as support and reassure me!

Thank you to you all.

Please enjoy "The 39 Steps."



(Leanne Cane, Director)

*All one needs for the theatre is two tressles,
some boards and a passion.*

Lope De Vega



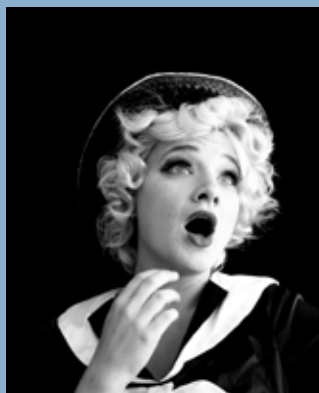
CAST

Richard Hannay



Paul Hayles

*Annabella,
Margaret and Pamela*



Jessamy Cane

Man 1



Ric O'Brien

Man 2



Tim Rowe

Voiceovers

Seb Cooper and Stephen (Fermby) Lodge



Director
Leanne Cane



Stage Managers
Ted Beare, Roger Morgan
Technical Manager
Richard Cane

Costume Coordinator
Bri Medcalfe

Sound Effects
Anthony Way

Stage Crew
Sam Correll, Rex Walker,
Matthew Davey, Val McLean,
Zoe Lodge, Chris O'Brien

Costume Execution
Bri Medcalfe, Jenny Graham

Sound
Stephen (Fermby) Lodge

Lighting
Richard Cane

Follow spot
Tony Hayles

Set Construction
The Cast, Roger Morgan, Ted
Beare, Rex Walker

Poster/Programme
Tim Tuck



THE 39 STEPS



BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

The 39 Steps is a melodrama adapted from the 1915 novel by John Buchan and the 1935 film by Alfred Hitchcock. The original concept and production of a four-actor version of the story was by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon. Patrick Barlow rewrote this adaptation in 2005.[1]

The play's concept calls for the entirety of the 1935 adventure film *The 39 Steps* to be performed with a cast of only four. One actor plays the hero, Richard Hannay, an actress (or sometimes actor) plays the three women with whom he has romantic entanglements, and two other actors play every other character in the

show: heroes, villains, men, women, children and even the occasional inanimate object. This often requires lightning fast quick-changes and occasionally for them to play multiple characters at once. Thus the film's serious spy story is played mainly for laughs, and the script is full of allusions to (and puns on the titles of) other Alfred Hitchcock films, including *Strangers on a Train*, *Rear Window*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest*.



SYNOPSIS (FROM THE FILM)

At a London music hall theatre, Richard Hannay (Robert Donat) is watching a demonstration of the superlative powers of recall of "Mr. Memory" (Wylie Watson)—a man with a photographic memory—when shots are fired. [3] In the ensuing panic, Hannay finds himself holding a seemingly-frightened Annabella Smith (Lucie Mannheim), who talks him into taking her back to his apartment. There, she tells him that she is a spy, being chased by assassins, and that she has uncovered a plot to steal vital British military secrets, masterminded by a man with the top joint missing from one of his fingers. She mentions the "39 steps", but does not explain its meaning.

Later that night, Smith bursts into Hannay's bedroom, fatally stabbed in the back, and warns him to escape. He finds a map of Scotland clutched in her hand, with a town circled. He sneaks out of the watched apartment disguised as a milkman and boards a train to Scotland. He sees the police searching the train and learns from a newspaper that he is the target of a nationwide manhunt for Smith's murderer. Quickly, he enters a compartment and kisses the sole occupant, the attractive Pamela (Madeleine Carroll), in a desperate attempt to escape detection. She frees herself from his unwanted embrace and alerts the policemen. Hannay jumps from the train onto the Forth Rail Bridge and escapes.

He walks toward the town circled on the map, and stays the night with a poor crofter (John Laurie) and his much younger wife (Peggy Ashcroft). The next morning, Hannay flees from the police, wearing the farmer's Sunday coat given to him by the young woman. Hannay presumes that the only new resident in the town must be Annabella's contact, whom she was trying to meet and tell of the "39 steps". With the police still in pursuit, he arrives at the man's house, and tells his story to the seemingly respectable Professor Jordan (Godfrey Tearle), who then shows that he is missing part of a finger. Hannay realises his mistake, but Jordan shoots him and leaves him for dead. Luckily, the bullet is stopped by the farmer's

hymnbook, left in his coat pocket.

Hannay goes to the Sheriff, but he refuses to believe his story since he knows Jordan well. Hannay jumps through a window and escapes into the crowd. He tries to hide himself at a political meeting, but is mistaken for the introductory speaker. He gives a rousing impromptu speech—without knowing a thing about the candidate he is introducing—but is recognised by Pamela, who gives him up once more. He is handcuffed and taken away by "policemen" who ask Pamela to accompany them. Hannay realises they are agents of the conspiracy when they bypass the nearest police station. Hannay is handcuffed to Pamela while the men try to disperse a flock of sheep blocking the road, but he still manages to escape, dragging the unwilling Pamela along.

They make their way across the countryside and stay the night at an inn. While he sleeps, Pamela manages to slip out of the handcuffs, but then overhears one of the fake policemen on the telephone; the conversation confirms Hannay's assertions. She returns to the room and sleeps on a sofa. The next morning, she tells him what she heard. He sends her to London to warn the police. No secret documents have been reported missing, however, so they do not believe her. Instead, they follow her to get to Hannay.

Pamela leads them to Mr. Memory's show at the London Palladium. When the performer is introduced, Hannay recognises his theme music—the annoyingly catchy tune he hasn't been able to forget for days. Hannay puts two and two together and realises that the spies are using Mr. Memory to smuggle the secrets out. As the police take him into custody, he shouts out the question, "What are the 39 Steps?" Mr. Memory compulsively begins to answer, "The 39 Steps is an organisation of spies, collecting information on behalf of the foreign office of ..." Just then, Jordan shoots him and tries to flee, but is apprehended. The dying Mr. Memory recites the information stored in his brain—a design for a silent aircraft engine



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Our grateful thanks to
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Maitland Music and
Arts Club

Anthony Way's Party Hire

Andrew Davies

Roger Morgan

Ted Beare

Tim Tuck

Seb Cooper

Families of
Cast and Crew

Cast and Crew

*From the start it has been the theatre's business to entertain people ...
it needs no other passport than fun.*

BERTOLT BRECHT, A Short Organum for the Theatre

