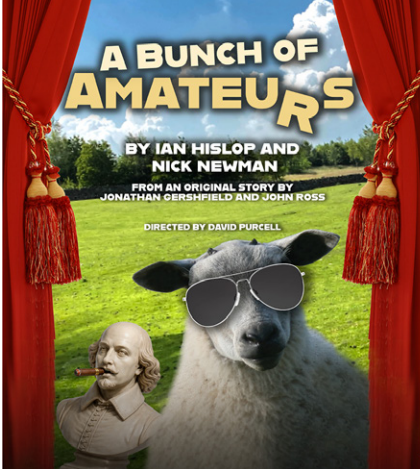


AUDITION NOTICE



A BUNCH OF AMATEURS
BY IAN HISLOP AND NICK NEWMAN
FROM AN ORIGINAL STORY BY JONATHAN GERSHFIELD AND JOHN ROSS
DIRECTED BY DAVID PURCELL

PLAY READING NIGHT:
TUESDAY 31 MAR AT 7.45PM
IN THE STUDIO

AUDITIONS:
FRIDAY 10 APR AT 7.45PM
SUNDAY 19 APR AT 2PM

PRODUCTION DATES:
17 – 26 SEP 2026

READ THROUGH

Tuesday 31 March 2026, 7.45pm in the Studio

AUDITIONS

Friday 10 April 2026, 7.45pm in the Theatre

Sunday 19 April 2026, 2pm in the Theatre

FIRST REHEARSALS

Begin late July (tbc)

Rehearsals are at 7.45pm, Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, with Sunday afternoons at 2pm from 30 August 2026

PERFORMANCES

17 – 26 September at 7.45pm

Matinée: Saturday 19 September at 2.30pm

DIRECTOR

David Purcell purcells1@ntlworld.com 07505 354424

PA

Helen Dunford-Hearn helendunford12@yahoo.com 07984 746259

Scripts available from Helen.

A Bunch of Amateurs by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman, is a sharp, warm-hearted comedy about ego, identity, and the magic of amateur theatre.

Fading Hollywood action hero Jefferson Steele, desperate to revive his declining career, eagerly accepts what he believes is a prestigious opportunity: starring as King Lear for the world famous Shakespearean company in Stratford-upon-Avon.

However, his dream of an elite theatrical comeback shatters the moment he lands in England. He discovers he's not in the birthplace of the Bard at all, but in a small, sleepy Suffolk village – home to the struggling but enthusiastic Stratford Players, an amateur dramatic group fighting to save their theatre from being taken over by developers.

Jefferson's inflated ego collides spectacularly with the Players' earnest dedication. Instead of seasoned actors like Kenneth Branagh or Judi Dench – whom he expected – he's surrounded by locals passionate about theatre but lacking in professional polish. His vanity, insecurity, and Hollywood habits are pushed to their limits as he clumsily attempts to fit in.

As rehearsals unravel and comedic chaos builds, the celebrity outsider and the village troupe begin to learn from one another. Jefferson slowly develops respect for the group's genuine love of performance and community – discovering along the way some uncomfortable truths about himself, and an unexpected connection to the character of Lear.

Ultimately, acting worlds collide in a heartfelt, funny story that celebrates the spirit of amateur dramatics, the value of collaboration, and the idea that greatness can come from the most unlikely places.

CHARACTERS AND AUDITION PIECES

JEFFERSON STEELE – male, 50s/60s

American accent. A fading Hollywood action hero—arrogant, insecure, brash, demanding, gauche and vulnerable, yet ultimately aware of his own absurdity.

Modern Audition Piece:

Jefferson discovers he's not performing with the RSC.

Act One, Scene 2, Jefferson with the journalists, p.4-5

Act One, Scene 3, from bottom p.8 Dorothy's cue "But as the director...", to bottom p.12

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Act Two, Scene 7, p.82, 'Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!'

Act Two, Scene 10, from p.94 entrance to bottom p.96 "Cordelia, Cordelia."

DOROTHY NETTLE – female, 30s/40s

Director of the Stratford Players, charming, gentle, but with inner steel and determination. She's the force keeping the theatre alive.

Modern Audition Piece:

Dorothy opens the play with an impassioned speech intending to find sponsors and supporters to keep the theatre going.

Act One, Scene 1. Dorothy's opening monologue, page 1

Act One, scene 3. From top p.6 to bottom p.8

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Act One, Scene 3, p.13 Fool's Song, [Song of Fool \(King Lear\) \(YouTube\)](#)

JESSICA STEELE – female, late teens/early 20s

American accent. Jefferson's daughter, neglected and resentful, sharp tongued, hurt but guarded.

Modern Audition Piece:

Estranged father-daughter confrontation.

Act One, Scene 6: top p.40 to top of p.43 "I am my father's daughter..."

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Included in above (p.40), as Cordelia delivering the lines in an ironic way, "Good my Lord..."

NIGEL DEWBURY – male, middle-aged

Pompous solicitor, self important leading light of the company. Believes he should always get the starring roles.

Modern Audition Piece:

Nigel announces he is leaving the Stratford Players.

Act One, Scene 5, p.30-31 from entrance to "No not really."

Act Two, Scene 9, p.90 Nigel negotiating on the phone.

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Act One, Scene 5, p.34, Nigel as Kent and then himself.

MARY PLUNKETT – female, 30s-50s

Owner of the local B&B, warm, enthusiastic, naïve; easily star struck but good hearted.

Modern Audition Piece:

Mary is infatuated with Jefferson and flirting outrageously, whilst making a complete, flustered mess of it.

Act One, Scene 4, p.14-16 to Mary: "Really?"

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Act Two, Scene 4, Mary as Goneril, p.67 from top, to "I don't want to be in the play any more."

DENIS DOBBINS – male, 50+

Handyman and village fixer; good natured but bumbling, with moments of surprising emotional depth.

Modern Audition Piece:

Act One, Scene 5, trick with Gloucester's eye (ping pong ball) from enter Denis p32, to p.33 "What do you think?"

Act One scene 6, p.45 from: entrance top of page to: high five bottom of page.

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Act Two, Scene 10, Denis as Gloucester, p.94 top to Exeunt.

LAUREN BELL – female, 30s

A marketing executive; sharp, practical, energetic, trying to modernise the group.

Modern Audition Piece:

Act Two, Scene 2, p.56-8, Beginning of scene to p.58 "How's that?"

Shakespeare Audition Piece:

Lauren as Goneril: Act Two, Scene Ten, p.94 "Sir I love you..."