

A play by Suzi Clark - all enquiries to suzicb@btinternet.com

Marketing Cinderella

INTRODUCTION, SUMMARY AND SETTING

Marketing Cinderella is the second full length comedy I have written – in fact I wrote it while I was writing Mrs de Souza’s Parlour because the story just battered its way out of me at the time. In fact, one of the characters emigrated from one play to the other ... but that would be telling.

It was written following workshops with celebrated playwright Sarah Daniels at Chicken Shed Theatre Company.

I was inspired to write it because the people who work to actually make theatrical productions happen, aren’t valued for their creativity. And often, it’s those who appear to offer the least, who are the lynch-pin holding things together.

Like Mrs. De Souza’s Parlour, I also wanted to explore issues of being mixed race in the performing arts, and how few opportunities there are for actors of mixed ethnicity.

SUMMARY

The Phoenix Players are about to break into “pro theatre” from successful amdram – one of their founders has thrown in his job and started to draw salary, and so has their administrator, Cindy, thanks to a grant to develop community culture from their local council. The administrator, a “girl Friday” manages everything, and nothing. Box Office at The Nest, their tiny office at the old Town Hall portakabins, coffee and tea-making, grant applications, cleaning the toilets and marketing their next production – Cinderella.

The production has to be marketed in compliance with the grant requirements – it needs to involve the community, raise commercial funding and demonstrate a culturally and socially inclusive approach to theatre. Cynthia (or Cindy) has a diploma in Marketing, backed up by a lot of common sense but no clout within The Phoenix Players. Jonathan, or JB, the artistic director, is a “creative being” whose move from amdram into pro theatre has gone to his head, just a bit. He thinks he knows everything about everything, including marketing the new production. He wants just a glass slipper, and a question mark. Pretentious or what?

Then an unapproved marketing initiative by Cindy to raise more members from the community brings in a new Player – Ravi Patel – and the usual carving up of plum parts by the Players is put to the test.

Jonathan decides to comply with the grant requirements by setting Cinderella in Rajasthan, and enlisting Ravi and his family to help. Cinderella in a sari – and a glass slipper with a curly toe. Ravi as the Prince, doing Wendy out of her customary role as leading boy/girl. Princess Amy is delighted, her mother not so sure, trying in that very English way to welcome cross-cultural relations but not wishing to end up, well - related.

In the Box Office, Cindy holds the fort. She and her cousin Paul exchange thoughts, with her as his “scribe.” His mother believes that Paul could speak more but chooses not to. She says “When Steven was born, he used up all the words in the world – and left nothing for Paul.” “It was like that when the good-looks Fairy came around to see

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Wendy – she must have been asleep” says Steven. He can be very bitchy, in a funny way.

Rehearsals progress but back stage, and front of house, all is chaos. When Amy gets entangled in her sari and breaks her leg, Jonathan is forced to look around for a replacement Cinderella and, sadly for him, Mr Patel won't hear of any of his daughters treading the boards, and particularly, being romanced by their brother, Ravi, now The Prince.

Only one person can save the production ... Cindy. She knows the lines, this is her big chance. But she isn't artistic, she isn't *creative*, she has never been onstage in her life, except to move props during a set change, moans Jonathan. Will she save Cinderella by stepping into the role? For a start, the glass slipper is going to shatter when she tries to squeeze her size eights into it. Will Amy, who will have to be put on Box Office, sabotage the marketing of the production? Will Paul save the day? Will the Patels? Who knows?

The Players are in position ... let the play commence and the plot will work itself out through their struggles, their hopes and their fears.

SETTING

Roysia Templeton, 16 miles outside of Cambridge.

A market town of 10,000. November, 2006.

Characters

There are 9 main characters, 2 additional characters that can be doubled up, and 3 in the public queue that can also be played by cast members.

Jonathon Bryce 34, flamboyantly gay, speech frilled with French affectation.

Co-founder of The Phoenix Players, he has chucked in his job as a Drama teacher at the local Community College in order to run the Players and turn professional. Tetchy – nicotine withdrawal ?

Steven Sidcup 40, Jonathan's lover and co-founder of The Phoenix Players.
Teaches English at public school. Wears brown suede shoes with black trousers.

Amy Simpson, 16, blonde, beautiful, and knows it. An airhead and dram princess who thinks she is going to get into RADA.

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Wendy Simpson 20, Amy's sister. Plain, very tall, no nonsense. Always gets the butch parts. At rural Community College, taking a foundation course in Medicine.

Ellie Simpson 50, mother to Wendy and Amy. Lives to be on the stage where she can see her girls in the spotlight – makes all the costumes, and ensures hers is always the most “bling.” We never see husband, Fred. He sits outside in the car, waiting to ferry his “women” around, listening to the football.

May Sidcup 68, Ellie's next-door neighbour, a widow, Paul and Steven's mother. Gets roped into the chorus usually.

Paul Sidcup 42, wheelchair user, silent, a philosopher. Talented graphic artist.

Cynthia Forrest 38, efficient but not officious. Has been a volunteer with the Players for 15 years since she left the College with a Marketing diploma. Burns for recognition. Wears glasses on a pearl chain.

Ravi Patel Almost 19, darkly handsome, new to the town where his family have just opened the Chutney and Chat, a curry-house with an internet angle. He wants stage experience, so that he can take Bollywood by storm, preferably before he has finished his dentistry course at Anglia Polytechnic University. His parents are never seen, but frequently referred to, as are his four sisters. And the cat.

Other characters

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Shiloh Smith The line-dancing teacher. Can be played by Paul Sidcup. Stetson, Ray Bans, cool “dud” type. East Ender.

The Public Queue at Box Office – Ellie, May and Ravi.

Senior Grants Officer Can be played by Steven Sidcup. Plummy, quite a good sport.

FOR THE FULL SCRIPT AND TO APPLY FOR PERFORMING RIGHTS PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR

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