

March 2015

Our 58th Year

# STAGE • WRITE

**The  
Williamsburg  
Players**  
Community theatre  
at its best

## THE 39 STEPS MARCH 12 - MARCH 28, 2015

Adapted for the stage by Patrick Barlow  
From an original concept by Simon Corble & Nobby Dimon



It didn't take 39, but more than just one step was required to bring *The 39 Steps* to its current version on the stage.

The espionage story began as a very popular 1915 book by John Buchan, the first of a series of adventures

involving Richard Hannay, a resourceful engineer, bored with London society, whose life takes a complete turn when someone is murdered in his London flat. Soon he's on the run, framed for the crime by a mysterious spy organization, and in pursuit of a feisty love interest who's attracted to him but not buying his wild story.

The novel was immortalized by suspense master Alfred Hitchcock in a 1935 film. This incarnation of *The 39 Steps* was one of the first films to show some of Hitch's trademarks, a hyperdramatic style, mistaken identities, mysterious villains, a dapper hero, cross-country chases, long tracking shots, and dashes of quirky humor.

Playwright Patrick Barlow keeps Hitchcock's plot, but injects it with a love for old-fashioned humor in the style of English music halls and a nostalgia for theater in the days of greasepaint, melodrama, and hokum. The resulting play merrily employs grand old traditions into a show that contemporary audiences will find new and fresh.

Barlow's adaptation keeps Hannay as the protagonist, but uses just three actors in all of the other parts. One woman plays both the femme fatale and the love interest drawn into Hannay's mad flight, while two very busy actors play

all of the other characters from the film, often changing so quickly that they can't even leave the stage. The result is a suspenseful thriller made madcap with tongue-in-cheek humor, a screwball romance, references to your favorite Hitchcock films, acrobatic antics, sinister villains, and playful re-imaginings of the conventions and language of classic theater.

Barlow's play will please on the level of sheer linguistic firepower, but needs to be viewed in context on the stage to be fully appreciated. Barlow employs a minimal set, using just a few moving set pieces, props, light and sound effects, and pantomime to suggest locations ranging from London flats to Scottish country inns, foggy moors to campaign bandstands, even the perilous heights of a towering bridge and a moving train car. The rapid transformations of two actors into a merry-go-round of quirky bystanders, leering villains, and thick-brogued Highlanders has to be seen and heard to be believed.

The Williamsburg Players brings *The 39 Steps* to the stage in a production directed by Abigail Schumann, and featuring actors David Stallings as Hannay, Annie Lewis as Annabella and Margaret, and Chris Hull and Jordan Wentland as the two chameleon-like "clowns." Buy your ticket and join us on an adventure through comedy, thrills, and the possibilities of storytelling on stage.

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### TICKET & SHOW INFORMATION

Performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm with Saturday matinees at 2:00 pm. Tickets, \$20.00 for adults, and \$12.00 for children and students, can be purchased online at [www.williamsburgplayers.org](http://www.williamsburgplayers.org) or by calling the box office at (757) 229-0431 and leaving your name and phone number. A box office volunteer will return your call as soon as possible.

# AUDITIONS



**Sunday March 15th 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**  
**Drop In Style**

Prepare 32 bars in the style of the show

Must provide sheet music in appropriate key

Accompanist will be provided

No a cappella and no track / Karaoke style CD's.

Callbacks will be notified by 9:00 pm Sunday

Callbacks will be held Monday & Tuesday

March 16th & 17th at 7:00 pm

Questions? Contact the director, Christina

Westenberger at [christinawestenberger@yahoo.com](mailto:christinawestenberger@yahoo.com)

# Last Two 2014-2015 Children's Theatre

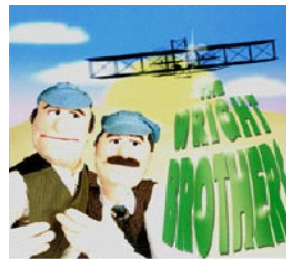
Ages Grades Pre K - 5



**Happily Ever After**

**Mar. 28, 2015**

*Presented by  
Brightstar Touring Theatre*



**The Wright Brothers**

**May 30, 2015**

*Presented by  
Rainbow Puppet Productions*

**All Shows \$7.00**  
**Saturdays 11:00 am**

**Look right here in next issue as we  
announce the 2015 - 2016 season.**

## BOX OFFICE

**BECOME A BOX OFFICE STAFF PERSON  
AND GET TO SEE THE SHOWS FOR FREE!**

**We will train you to sell tickets from home  
and work the Box Office at the theater.  
In return, you can receive COMP tickets  
to the great season of shows coming to  
our theater. Interested? Call Debbie  
Noonan at 220-3208 & say COUNT ME IN!**

## WANTED!

### SEWING SUPPLIES

Sewing machines, needles, thread,  
fabric, notions. You name it,  
we'll take it off your hands  
and put it to good use.

Drop items off at the theater and place in  
the large marked plastic bin by the front  
door. The bin will be checked daily.



**D. Hugh Siggins**

## *A Message from the President*

In most years, January, February and March are the slowest months, but not in 2015.

Our third show of the season and first of the calendar year turned out to be the blockbuster comedy *Run for Your Wife*. I would like to thank the cast and crew for their hard work in presenting this English farce to our patrons.

The attendance for the 12 shows we produced was over 2500, making it the most seen presentation of a non-musical since *Pride and Prejudice*, when 2536 persons saw that production in 2012. We hope that our audiences will continue to support our season.

Just completing a two weekend run was our Valentine presentation, *Heart and Music*, which was written by Neil Hollands and had a cast of 10 local singers. This presentation was well produced and performed songs from several Broadway musicals as well as one Barry Manilow song, "One Voice".

Just in time for Black History month, on January 31st, Bright Star Touring Theater put on their version of *William's Adventure in Black History*. This was part of our regularly scheduled Children's Theater for this season.

The Board is currently hearing reports from the Season Development Committee and expects to be announcing the 2015-2016 schedule sometime in March 2015.

We are always looking for volunteers to help at our theater. Rani Wachter is our board member in charge of this duty. If you would like to volunteer for box office, concessions or ushering, as well as performing on stage or being in the crew, contact Rani. Call (757) 229-1679 to leave a message and she will call you back. We also are on the lookout for handymen and handywomen who like to build sets, paint and anything else that needs to be done on stage prior to the opening of a show.

I hope you are anticipating our next production of the season and already have your tickets. Do you remember the Alfred Hitchcock movies? Abigail Schumann is directing *The 39 Steps*, a thriller based on several of Hitchcock's material. Come and see how a cast of a hundred can be played by three men and one woman - that is part of the mystery. This production will open on Thursday, March 12th, and run for the next three weeks, closing on March 28. Following closely after that will be *Guys and Dolls*, directed by Christina Westenberger, which will run from May 28th to June 13th.

Look in next month's StageWrite which will have the announcement of our 2015-2016 season.



*If you have a comment, a suggestion or an idea that you would like to share with us, you can contact us via regular mail at P.O. Box 91 Williamsburg, Virginia, 23187, send an email to [webmaster@williamsburgplayers.org](mailto:webmaster@williamsburgplayers.org) or leave a message at (757) 229-1679.*

*Please do not leave feedback on the ticket reservation line. Thank you!*