



Panda Players

Registered Charity Number: 1112851

presents

A NEW PLAY
BY MATTHEW DYE



**WORLD
PREMIERE!**

AMDAM CAN BE MURDER

28th & 29th June 2024

at Hyde Heath Village Hall

corner of Weedon Hill and Brays Lane HP6 5SN

8pm nightly

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Unprompted unfolds during the Annual General Meeting of an amateur theatre company. In a desperate attempt to revive their dwindling membership the company have jammed all of their social events into one in order to fool the members to attend...that and the social secretary has only just been appointed. The group is on the brink of collapse; they face financial ruin, bad reviews, and an absurd demand for better seating from NODA. A core group of determined members have braved the weather warnings and have made their way to a cute cottage in the middle of nowhere to "enjoy" what they can, even with their kids in tow. The party soon turns to chaos as secrets unravel, old rivalries emerge and unexpected surprises await as the arrival of a children's Clown sets off a chain of events that will transform lives forever. How will they improvise their way out trouble this time? How will they all deal with their fatal flaws? And how will they get Alexa to stop playing Russ Abbot's greatest hits? Unprompted offers a farcical glimpse into the chaotic world behind the scenes of an amateur performance society. With a diverse cast of adults, "Unprompted" explores the hilarious and unexpected twists that you couldn't even rehearse for.

CAST LIST

RAQUEL, Female, (30-40s) As the Vice Chairman and self-appointed social secretary of the Little Dingleby Dramatists, Raquel thrives in the spotlight of the community theatre scene. She revels in the limelight, effortlessly securing leading roles in productions with her undeniable talent. Yet, her eagerness to please often renders her vulnerable to exploitation, a trait exacerbated by her tendency to overthink every decision. Raquel's marriage to Cliff, spanning over a decade, is emblematic of her desire for perfection in all aspects of life. Recent cracks in their relationship have left her reeling, the once-stable foundation of their union shaken by uncertainty. Despite their reconciliation, the gossip surrounding their tumultuous journey weighs heavily on her shoulders, tarnishing the pristine image she strives to maintain. Her involvement with the LD Dramatists serves as both a refuge and a battleground, a stage where she can assert her authority yet yearn for validation. Beneath her meticulously curated facade lies a longing for recognition, a desire for someone to truly understand her innermost desires and fears. In her pursuit of perfection, Raquel treads a precarious path, navigating the treacherous waters of personal and professional relationships with unwavering determination. Though she may falter along the way, her unwavering commitment to crafting the ideal narrative of her life propels her ever forward, a beacon of resilience amidst the chaos of uncertainty.

CLIFF, Male (30-50s) Cliff epitomizes the paradox of a man torn between the comfort of a quiet life and the irresistible allure of the stage. Aged between 30 and 50, he carries himself with a demeanour that hints at a life steeped in tradition and responsibility, yet beneath his composed exterior lies a playful wit that occasionally peeks through the seams. As a longstanding member of the Little Dingleby Dramatists, Cliff's decision to suspend his involvement with the troupe remains a subject of speculation among the theatre's gossip mill. While he attributes his absence to the mounting pressures of professional obligations, whispers linger of a deeper, more personal motivation lurking beneath the surface. His relationship with Raquel, his beloved wife, forms the bedrock of his existence, a steadfast anchor in the tumultuous sea of amateur dramatics. However, the glaring dissonance between her prominence within the LDD and his own comparatively subdued role gnaws at

Cliff's sense of self-worth, casting a shadow over their otherwise harmonious union. The whispers of their marital discord echo through the hallowed halls of the theatre company, a constant reminder of the fragile equilibrium that defines their relationship. Despite his best efforts to maintain a façade of stoic resolve, Cliff finds himself ensnared in the intricate web of the LDD's social dynamics. His aversion to the spotlight stands in stark contrast to Raquel's unabashed embrace of theatrical acclaim, a source of both admiration and frustration for him. While he longs for the simplicity of a quiet life untainted by the drama of amateur theatre, Cliff remains acutely aware of the inevitability of his entanglement in its chaotic embrace. Within the ranks of the LDD, Cliff's feelings toward certain members, notably Roy, the Chairman and resident director, remain tinged with ambivalence. While he harbours no ill will toward them per se, their presence serves as a constant reminder of the inherent tensions that simmer beneath the surface of the theatre company's façade. In the quiet moments of introspection, Cliff yearns for a sense of normalcy, a respite from the ceaseless whirlwind of theatrical intrigue that threatens to consume him.

ROY, Male (50-70s) is the archetype of a man ensconced in the trappings of power and self-importance. Aged between 50 and 70, he exudes an air of posh refinement, coupled with an unwavering belief in his own indispensability. As the Chairman of the Little Dingleby Dramatists for several decades, Roy's thirst for control knows no bounds, his iron-fisted rule dictating the course of the company's endeavours. With the looming spectre of Dingleby's Mayoral election on the horizon, Roy campaigns with fervour, poised to ascend to the pinnacle of political power in the community. His ambition burns brightly, casting a long shadow over the quaint streets of the village, as he manoeuvres with calculated precision to secure his place at the helm of municipal affairs. However, beneath the veneer of polished sophistication lies a man haunted by the ghosts of personal discontent. Roy's romantic pursuits mirror the transient nature of his political ambitions, his search for fulfilment perpetually thwarted by the ephemeral allure of the next conquest. Despite his outward projection of confidence, his tumultuous romantic history bears witness to the emptiness that gnaws at the core of his being. Within the haven of the LDD, Roy's influence is undeniable, his word law, and dissent swiftly quashed beneath the weight of his authority. His patronage extends to Gareth, whom he views as a protégé, a younger reflection of his own aspirations and ambitions within the company. Yet, behind the facade of mentorship lurks a shrewd calculation, as Roy seeks to mould Gareth and Raquel into loyal acolytes. Paranoia festers within him like a dormant seed, particularly towards the neighbouring Amdram Company from Ardleton, whom he views with suspicion and disdain. His fervent attempts to isolate the LDD from external influences serve as a testament to his insecurities, his grip on power tenuous at best amidst whispers of dissent and defiance. In his relentless pursuit of control, Roy casts a scrutinizing eye upon Cliff, suspecting him of treachery amidst whispers of defection. The shadow of suspicion looms large, a palpable tension that threatens to fracture the fragile alliances that underpin the fabric of the LDD.

GARETH, Male (30-40s) - Gareth is full of mischief and charm, a roguish figure traversing life's pathways with an irreverent grin and a penchant for cheekiness. In his 30s to 40s, he embodies the spirit of a "Jack the lad"; forever on the prowl for his next conquest, his words dripping with lewd jokes and double entendres like honey from a playful tongue. Life, to Gareth, is a grand jest waiting to be unravelled, and he never shies away from seizing the opportunity to inject humour into every moment, no matter how mundane. Yet, beneath the veneer of his boisterous exterior lies a layer of apprehension, particularly when it comes to

the delicate dance of navigating interactions with women. Trapped in an antiquated 80s-style attitude towards gender dynamics, Gareth treads cautiously, keenly aware of the consequences should he incur the wrath of “the fairer sex”. Despite his bravado, he possesses a heart of gold, his caring nature often overshadowed by his relentless pursuit of amusement. Amidst the chaos of his antics, Gareth finds solace in the steadfast friendship of Cliff, a bond fortified by mutual respect and camaraderie. While he looks up to Cliff as a mentor figure, Gareth is not one to shy away from the occasional opportunity to poke fun at his friend, revelling in the dynamic interplay of their banter. Within the hallowed halls of the Little Dingleby Dramatists, Gareth discovers his place in the spotlight, his performances oscillating between moments of prominence and supporting roles, each stage presence marked by his infectious enthusiasm and unwavering charisma. He savours the thrill of the limelight, cherishing every opportunity to steal a kiss from the leading lady, his unabashed exuberance a testament to his unabashed zest for life. Despite his penchant for jest and distraction, Gareth’s loyalty knows no bounds, his affections steadfastly directed towards Michelle Foster, a love interest he has harboured since his induction into the Amdram group.

MICHELLE, Female (30-40s) Michelle is a tough talking, strong willed single mother, who is going through a messy divorce. She has a penchant for self-medication through dance and alcohol. In her 30s to 40s, she navigates life’s labyrinth with a mixture of defiance and vulnerability, her spirit worn but unbroken by the trials of her tumultuous existence. Her divorce proceedings, marred by contempt for her soon-to-be ex-husband, reflect the disillusionment of a woman who has weathered one too many storms. Yet, amidst the chaos, her relationship with her son Ryan, though volatile and rife with reminders of her estranged spouse, remains a steadfast beacon of hope and determination. Michelle’s wary eye rests on Gareth, recognising his charms but cautious of becoming just another notch on his bedpost. Her yearning for depth and maturity transcends the allure of fleeting romance, rooted in a desire for authenticity and emotional connection. Despite her reservations, there exists an unspoken bond between them, a complex dance of attraction and restraint underscored by her refusal to be outwitted by his whimsical advances. As a prominent figure within the Little Dingleby Dramatists, Michelle’s disdain for the mundane rituals of the company’s affairs is palpable. The obligatory AGM becomes a bitter pill to swallow, a stark reminder of the irritations she endures amidst a sea of annoyance. Yet, beneath her veil of indifference lies a woman of remarkable fortitude, her ability to remain level-headed and spring into action in moments of crisis a testament to her inner strength. It is in her friendship with Raquel, forged amidst the flames of adversity, that Michelle finds solace and strength. Their bond, weathered by the storms of life, serves as a sanctuary amidst the chaos, a source of unwavering support and understanding amidst the tumult of their respective journeys.

PHYLIS, Female (50-60s) Phylis can be described as a Northern, tree-hugging hippie spiritualist. Her presence is a colourful tapestry woven into the fabric of Dingleby’s community. In her 50s to 60s, she migrated to the area with her daughter, seeking solace and connection amidst the subtle embrace of nature. Yet, Phylis’ quest for inner harmony extends beyond the boundaries of the physical realm, her eccentric beliefs and spiritual musings serving as beacons of light in the murky waters of mundane existence. Unapologetically centre stage in any situation, she captivates attention through her magnetic aura and unyielding conviction in the interconnectedness of all things. Despite dismissive labels of being a kook or a hack, Phylis remains steadfast in her belief that every event bears deeper, spiritual significance, a testament to her unwavering faith in the universe’s

guiding hand. As a performer, Phylis's glory days on stage have faded into the annals of memory, yet her presence within the Little Dingleby Dramatists transcends the confines of mere performance. She no longer graces the spotlight for applause but lingers within the company's folds to engage in spirited conversations and impart her spiritual wisdom upon willing listeners, especially her daughter Aubrey, (who really isn't willing or listening). For Phylis, the stage is not merely a platform for theatrical expression but a sacred space for communal communion and enlightenment. Her hunger for attention goes beyond the confines of the theatre, permeating every aspect of her existence, a testament to her insatiable thirst for connection and validation.

ETHEL, Female (70-80s) Ethel, a beloved figure in the Little Dingleby Dramatists, is the quintessential little old dear, her presence a comforting reminder of warmth and nostalgia. In her 70s to 80s, she stands as one of the last remaining founding members of the company, a testament to her unwavering dedication and enduring love for the theatrical arts. Once a juggernaut of productivity, she held multiple roles within the organization, from president to chairman, director, choreographer, and pianist, orchestrating the symphony of creativity that defined the company's heyday. However, the ravages of time have etched their marks upon her, with fading hearing and memory dimming the brilliance of her once-sharp faculties. Despite these challenges, Ethel remains the epitome of sweetness and charm, her ever-present smile a testament to her unwavering optimism and belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. Her fixation on the minutiae of behind-the-scenes intricacies speaks to her enduring passion for the craft, from committee business to the ever-important raffle that she infuses with a sense of excitement and anticipation. Yet, amidst the hustle and bustle of theatrical production, Ethel's grasp on reality begins to slip, her hearing failing and memory faltering, leaving her adrift in a sea of confusion and uncertainty. Though she may not always comprehend the tasks set before her, her gentle demeanour and innate kindness endear her to all who cross her path. Ethel's awareness of Roy's true nature serves as a poignant reminder of her wisdom and insight, a quiet acknowledgment of the complexities that lie beneath the surface of company politics. Yet, she remains steadfast in her commitment to peace and harmony, choosing to navigate the turbulent waters of interpersonal dynamics with grace and dignity. In her own little world, Ethel finds solace amidst the chaos, a gentle lady whose calming presence offers respite from the storm of life's uncertainties.

AUBREY, Female (20/30s) Aubrey, a paradoxical blend of deadpan wit and youthful exasperation, navigates life's complexities with a demeanour that belies the whirlwind of emotions churning within her. In her 20s to 30s, she stands as a testament to the enduring influence of her mother, Phylis, whose colourful exuberance has shaped Aubrey's identity in both subtle and profound ways. Despite her northern charm, Aubrey's deadpan manner serves as a protective barrier, a shield against the overwhelming presence of her mother, while also concealing her own kaleidoscope of feelings—whether excitement, disdain, or ambivalence—towards any given situation. Beneath her outward facade lies a woman grappling with intellectual challenges, navigating the complexities of life with a hesitancy and uncertainty that stem from a rigid adherence to her own opinions. Raised in the embrace of the theatre world since childhood, Aubrey finds herself reluctantly entangled in the spotlight, participating in shows not out of genuine passion but rather as a means to accompany her mother to rehearsals. Her ambivalence towards the stage contrasts sharply with her fervent obsession with social media, where she seeks to capture and curate the perfect snapshots

of her life. In her pursuit of the ideal digital narrative, Aubrey often neglects important tasks, prioritising the pursuit of the best social media material over more pressing responsibilities. Despite her intellectual challenges and hesitancy towards differing opinions, Aubrey's journey is marked by a subtle longing for independence and self-discovery. While she grapples with the weight of her mother's influence and the expectations placed upon her, she yearns to carve out her own identity amidst the cacophony of life's demands. In Aubrey, deadpan delivery meets the ignorance of youth, creating a character whose journey is defined by the delicate balance between familial obligation and the pursuit of personal fulfilment in a world shaped by the ever-changing landscape of social media and self-expression.

CLOWN Male, (30-50s) - The Clown, a male character aged between 30 and 50, serves as a whimsical addition to the proceedings of the AGM. Despite having minimal lines, the role demands a keen sense of physicality and movement, as the Clown's stage time involves assuming peculiar positions and interacting closely with other characters. However, there's an air of mystery surrounding the Clown, hinting that not everything is as straightforward as it seems. His presence adds an element of intrigue to the scenes, captivating the audience's attention through silent antics and enigmatic gestures.

FEMALE CLOWN – A small role. A less impressive Clown. In one scene. Designed to be performed as the same actor as Ethel, but can be a great opportunity for anyone who wants a much smaller role.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Please Note – If you are going to miss more than 3 rehearsals please speak to Matthew before auditioning. There are only 12 rehearsals in total and it is essential for cast to attend

Date and Location	What's being set	Who's called
Sun 17 th March Hyde Heath Infant School 10am-1pm	Introduction Workshop	Anyone
Sun 7 th April Hyde Heath Infant School 10am-1pm	Auditions	Anyone – Forms need to be submitted by Thurs 4 th April
Thurs 18 th April Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 25 th April Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 2 nd May Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		

Thurs 9 th May Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Sun 12 th May Hyde Heath Infant School 10am-1pm		
Thurs 16 th May Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 23 rd May Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 30 th May Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 6 th June Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Sun 9 th June Hyde Heath Infant School 10am-1pm		
Thurs 13 th June Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 20 th June Hyde Heath Infant School 7:30pm-10pm		
Thurs 27 th June Hyde Heath Village Hall 6pm-11pm	DRESS AND TECH	
Fri 28 th June Hyde Heath Village Hall 7pm	SHOW	
Sat 29 th June Hyde Heath Village Hall 7pm	SHOW	

FEES

CURRENT MEMBERS – There will be a production fee of £50 to be paid prior to the performance dates

NEW MEMBERS/UNPAID MEMBERS – You will need to pay a £10 non-refundable audition fee prior to the audition day, if successful, you will need to become a member and pay a membership fee of £40. In addition, there is a production fee of £50 to be paid prior to the performance dates, of which your £10 audition fee will count towards.

Membership fees are paid annually and cover September to August and Production fees are paid per show