

Lavenham Players Premiere

Saving Face

by
Alison
Parkes



- A new musical comedy by a local playwright.
- Includes music and songs by Nigel Ashcroft and Alison Parkes.



£1



Programme

Monks Eleigh Village Hall - 20th & 21st May 2022

Full information can be found on our website. www.lavenhamplayers.com

We are The Players

It's not every day that a playwright approaches an amateur drama group to build a premiere production from their work. Lavenham Players has been in existence since the late noughties and has been able to produce and perform many well and less well known plays and shows, down the years since.

Saving Face was a first for us. The first premiere and the first musical. We are rather proud of what we have achieved with a relatively small team.

It is always a pleasure to work together with so many gifted and talented people. We have been very lucky to work closely with Alison and Nigel as the show has taken on form, crafted by the skillful mind of our director, Cecil Qadir. The finished work is funny, uplifting and also poignant and thought-provoking. It all comes to life on stage in the form of the show that you are here to see today.

I mentioned that we managed to put this production together with a very small team. There is quite a lot of planning and preparation that goes into staging a show. We need a performance space and somewhere to rehearse for the usual 8 week

period. Then there is the set, props, costumes, promotional materials and artwork, lighting and sound hire, scripts and royalties, to name a few. The reward is the final show and that glowing feeling of achievement.

The one thing we always need are people. People to act, direct, manage and generally help out. I hope that maybe this show will inspire you and make you curious enough to get involved. The future of amateur groups like ours depends so much on your support.

So, if you are curious about acting or interested in getting involved or just helping out, please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

E: lavenhamplayers@outlook.com

W: www.lavenhamplayers.com



The Play Synopsis

Saving Face is a musical comedy that moves between the Forbes' home and the Upchester Clinic. The action spans almost one year, from winter to late summer.

Derek is an aspiring politician and model railway enthusiast under pressure to keep up appearances. Tina, a single mother desperate for love. Marge, a wife determined to shape her husband - and her life. The play tracks a musical course between passion and pomposity, humour and humanity.

These performances mark a significant milestone for Alison, as Lavenham Players are the first dramatic company to create a production of her work. The coming together of Alison and Nigel Ashcroft was the result of a chance encounter by our director, Cecil Qadir, who heard Nigel playing at a venue in Sudbury. Since then, there has been a significant songwriting and musical collaboration between Alison and Nigel that brings together Alison's original work and songs with newly written and arranged pieces by Nigel Ashcroft.



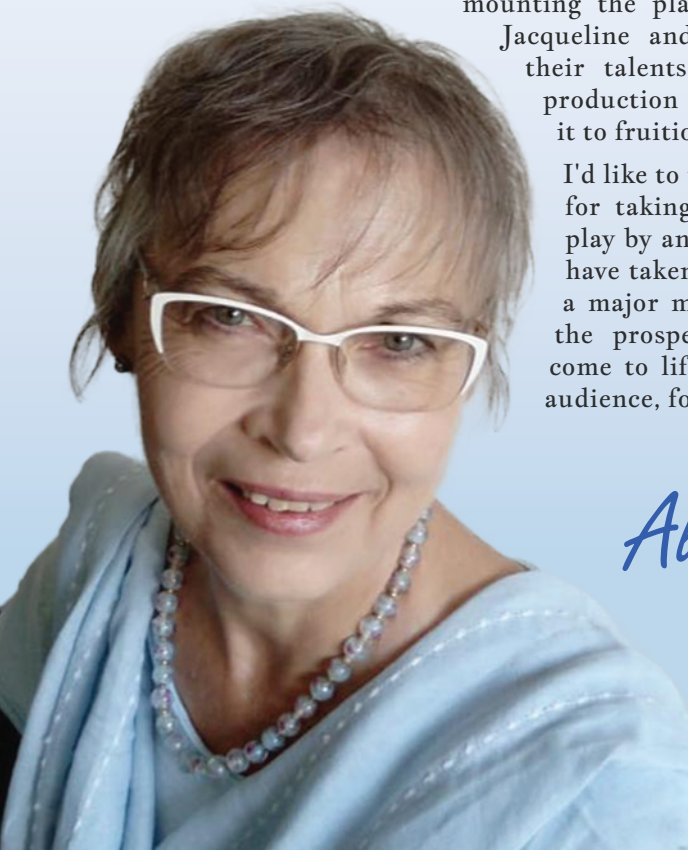
Our Playwright

Saving Face is inspired by true life events and personalities. Without giving anything away, I can say that when a friend of mine came under pressure to change her appearance, it prompted me to reflect on the subject of identity versus physical appearance. I see Saving Face as an identity play, in which each character is exploring his or her true self - hopefully in a way that will get you laughing in spite of yourself.

Cecil's enthusiasm for my play has enabled the production to survive beyond the challenges of Covid. Nigel's beautiful music has added a wonderful dimension, allowing the play to blossom. Brian's vision for the set - and its construction - has lifted the production, quite literally. Peter's expertise in graphics, IT and lighting has lent us the skills and support needed at key moments. Monks Eleigh Village Hall has proved a tremendous ally in mounting the play. As for the cast, Emily, Jacqueline and Paul, they have brought their talents and commitment to this production and given tirelessly to bring it to fruition - I salute you all!

I'd like to thank the Lavenham Players for taking a chance on an unknown play by an unknown playwright - they have taken quite a risk! For me this is a major milestone and I'm excited at the prospect of seeing Saving Face come to life onstage. I thank you, our audience, for your support.

Alison Parkes



Nigel Ashcroft

The man and his music



I have been working in music for over 20 years, as a writer and performer, as a solo artist and in diverse bands and collaborations, travelling all over the world always with a guitar in hand.

Music has been my passion and also a vehicle for seeing and experiencing the world in a unique way. It has opened doors for me in the most unexpected of places. I have performed in all sorts of venues and I am a keen advocate for street performance; taking music and art to the streets.

"My first venture into musical theatre has been fun and strangely liberating."

I recently became involved in theatre for the first time when I was accosted by the play's director, Cecil Qadir, as he passed by a restaurant I was performing in.

Although originally drafted in to do the arrangement on two songs composed by Alison Parkes, the play's writer, ideas and songs soon started coming to me and before I knew it I had inadvertently written a lot more songs for the play. My first venture into musical theatre has been fun and strangely liberating.



<https://www.nigelashcroft.com>

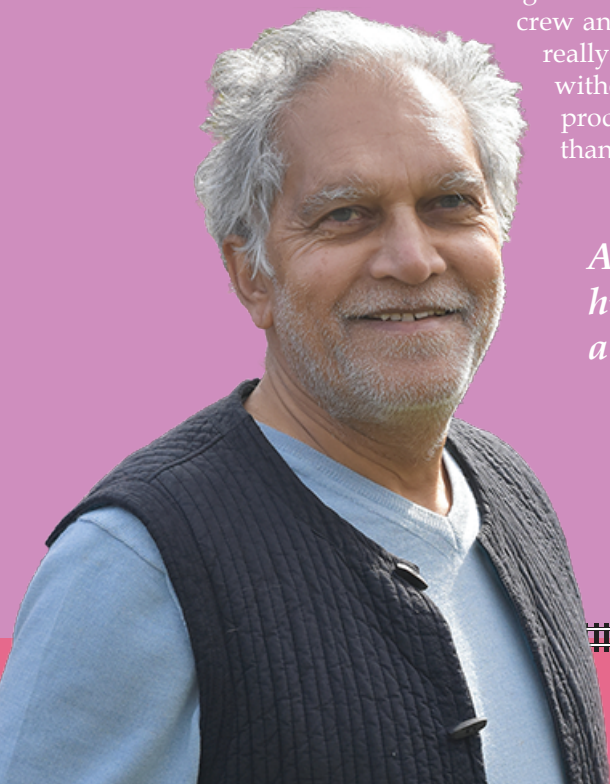
Cecil Qadir



During production my vision for the play was constantly shifting. Doubt follows us like reflecting surfaces. We doubt how we look. We are made to doubt how we look. Uncertainty lives among us but the pandemic made a precarious existence all the more so. With the lifting of lockdown restrictions, I wanted the production to celebrate an ending of isolation.

At the heart of theatre is human contact, a live act in a shared space. If we succeed in making you laugh, wittingly or unwittingly, and leave you with a poignant memory to carry away, our efforts have been well spent. If we fail, we ask your pardon and urge you not to turn your back on theatre. We will fail better next time.

The production has been a team effort. I have had the amazing good fortune of finding a supportive, resourceful and creative crew and cast. And the last mention should really be the first, Alison, the playwright, without whom there would be no production. To all, and to you, a huge thank you for sharing this experience.



*At the heart of theatre is
human contact, a live act in
a shared space.*

Cecil Qadir

The Actors



Paul Vella - Derek

Paul began acting with Lavenham Players in the production of Blithe Spirit and has also appeared in Suddenly at Home, Don't Dress for Dinner and Confusions. All of this after many years performing at The Quay Theatre in Sudbury and the Irving Theatre Company in Bury St Edmunds.



Emily Young - Tina

Emily plays the part of Tina. She studied at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama for three years and has been involved with a range of different plays and performances. This is her second time performing as a part of Lavenham Players. The first occasion was playing the part of Cecily Cardew in Oscar Wilde's play, The Importance of Being Earnest.



Jacqueline Cooper Clarke - Marge

Jacqueline was on the first Lavenham Players' committee, and returned in 2017 after a break, and has been heavily involved in behind the scenes production work for Saving Face. She played Muriel in LP's first production Habeas Corpus and has had roles in several plays since including: Gallipoli, Suddenly at Home and Confusions. This play is the first that LP has staged that includes singing, and as such this is Jacqueline's first experience of that. She is delighted to be performing at Monks Eleigh Village Hall.



The Set Designer

Following a degree in Fine Art at Leeds, PCGE at Goldsmiths College and an Italian Government Scholarship, Brian embarked on a teaching career. He was Head of Art and Design in several schools in the east of England and was appointed a Principal Examiner for CIE in Art and Design at national and international level.



Part of a railway viaduct that features on the set

He has broad experience in scenery design/production and some acting experience but prefers to write, particularly comedy, having contributed to Channel 4's 4Laughs, BBC's Radio Norfolk Comedy Sketch Shows and co-writes the podcast, Brilcast, with comedy writing partner Hil Jennings.

The set design for Saving Face was originally constructed to be viewed on three sides but this had to be adapted to fit within Monks Eleigh Village Hall. Despite the temporary nature of a theatre set, the construction needed to be solid enough to absorb any movements which might derail the model railway train.

I 've always believed that there should be interaction with the set by actors, hence the multiple levels and props. The oversized railway signal acts not only as a comedic device, but illustrates to the audience, Derek's modelling skills and also acts as a contrast to the clinic's pristine, antiseptic atmosphere.

The home residence set has been constructed from: 90% recycled, donated materials and offcuts.

Following the final performance, anyone interested in acquiring any aspect of the residence set should contact Brian through: lavenhamplayers@outlook.com

Brian Heyes



The Tech Guy

Well, they had to let me have my own page. I mean, what could possibly go wrong? My background is in electronics and electrical engineering, then in later years, it became IT. So, I know what parts of an electrical distribution board not to touch and those that will give me a shocking new hairstyle!

As a young man, I wanted to go to art college, but alas, my parents said that I should get a proper job, whatever that is? At least my collected skills have come to good use here for this production.

It is my role to produce the programme and all the artwork that has been used on

posters and advertising. I enjoy the creative side and also look after the Lavenham Players website as well. It can be a struggle to get the copy together on time for print deadlines, but I hope you will agree, the results are worth it.

For this production, I have also taken on responsibility for the stage lighting. The hall is a difficult space due to its low ceilings, so I needed to plan for the best coverage and optimal angles, avoiding unwanted light spill and dazzling. I will be running the lighting for the show together with my son Tom, who is coming up from London to help. Sound is another issue. Our musician required some additional sound reinforcement, so I am involved in the solution, along with Nigel Ashcroft.

We are a bit thin on the ground for this production. With Cecil, Paul and Jacqueline all taking parts in the show, it doesn't leave a lot of slack to pick up the normal committee and production tasks, although we have all done our bits where we can.

I need also to mention that none of this is possible without the unending support, understanding and patience of our wives, husbands and partners. They feel the pressure every bit as much as those of us involved the show.

Peter Day



The Credits

Original Songs and Lyrics

By **Alison Parkes**

- *Dreammaker*
- *If This Is Love*

By **Nigel Ashcroft**

- *Let The Show Begin*
- *Brand New You*
- *My Train Is Coming In*
- *I Need a Man*
(*'Bout Half as Much as I Need a Drink*)
- *Runaway Train Blues*
- *Out of Love*
- *What About Me*
- *He Ain't For Lovin'*

The Cast

Derek Forbes
Margery Forbes
Tina Robinson
Receptionist (voice)

Paul Vella
Jacqueline Cooper Clarke
Emily Young
Bernadette Smart

Crew and Backstage

Director
Musical Director
Stage Management
Sound & Sound Design
Lighting Design & Runtime

Cecil Qadir
Nigel Ashcroft
Cecil Qadir
Nigel Ashcroft
Peter Day
Tom Day

Set Design & Build
Set Transportation

Brian Heyes
Brian Heyes
Dave Jackson

Artwork & Design
Production & Marketing

Peter Day
Jacqueline Cooper Clarke

Props and Costumes

Loan of walker/stroller
Railway Paintings in Hall

Jeanine Stephens
David Lee

Helpers and Volunteers

Front of House - Tickets
Front of House & Bar
Bar

Claire Weeks
Sally Day
Sally Herring
Kathy Haddow
Laura Reeves
Grainne Marmion

Our Supporters and Friends

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to those who support our cast and crew throughout the course of the show. It can place demands on us which are felt by those who live closest to us. Husbands, wives, partners, brothers and sisters, as well as those friends who provide support to us.

Your help and support is greatly appreciated.

Thank You.



We Acknowledge

A show is all about teamwork and collaboration. Apart from the tasks and roles assigned to the members of the Lavenham Players team, there is a far greater number of people and organisations, to whom we owe our sincere gratitude and thanks.

Performance Venue

With special thanks to:

Monks Eleigh Village Hall Committee
Chris Eames, Patty Derry and Richard Bines

Rehearsal Venue

Lavenham Village Hall
The home of Kate Cooper & Family
The home of Catherine Stephens

Ticket Sales

Monks Eleigh Community Shop
The Nook Readers Cafe & Bookshop

Displaying Posters

The Lavenham Butchers
Sparling & Faiers
Bridge Farm Barns & Corncraft

Distribution of Promotional Info

Elaine Thom
Flicks in the Sticks

Marketing & Social Media

Alex Parkes

Special Thanks to:

Robert Parkes for his support of Alison
Catherine Stephens for her support of Cecil
Bernadette Smart for her support of Nigel
Sally Heyes for her support of Brian
Sally Day for her support of Peter

Monks Eleigh Parish Council

Allowing our large banners to be placed on the village green.

Model Junction (Bury St. Edmunds)

Supply and advice on model railways.

Ed Oakes at Spingold Design

Printing of creative materials and for their calm expedience and patience.

Cliff Dix at Phosphene (Stowmarket)

For all help and assistance with the lighting and sound.



1 in 2 of
us will
get it.



All of
us can
help beat it.

Fundraise. Pledge.
Volunteer. Donate.

cruk.org



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Together we will beat cancer