

## **THE ACCRINGTON PALS**

A Play

By Peter Whelan



### **Synopsis of the show:**

The Accrington Pals is originally set in a small Lancashire town at the beginning of World War I. Peter Whelan has written a beautiful play about the women and men from a town during the raising of Kitchener's Army.

Our version will be modern dress and set in the present day. The Accrington Pals could be done as a very nice, sentimental period drama. We want to acknowledge that this pithy, often funny, human-interest play has the opportunity to open the audiences view to a sense of history repeating rather than the distance of a centenary war. Ours is a play that focuses on the people, their loves/dislikes of each other, and the ways in which that manifests itself under terrifying circumstances.

Our setting will be amongst the market stalls of a small town; our Pals (a section of the local Army regiment), like those of Accrington, are being shipped out to fight in a war they don't truly understand.

May is a green grocer who inherited her work from her father and has by default become the epicentre of the town. Close-by, Annie, Sarah and Bertha.

Tom has signed up to the Pals, with his best friend Ralph, and Annie's pigeon-fancying husband, Arthur. They have their reasons; reasons that May struggles to understand, and rallies against.

In the boys absence Eva, Ralph's girlfriend, replaces Tom in May's life and on the stall.

The men are disappearing from the town as the women close ranks to defend what remains. In the midst of which, Reggie ducks and dives about the town trying to make sense of a family and town that continues to disintegrate under the pressure of war.

While the town comes to terms with the idea of war, an odd figure presents themselves as the voice of reason. War is necessary.

This is a town that throbs and pulses with life, even as death advances.

## **DETAILS ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

### **Creative Team:**

PRODUCER Rebecca Chisholm

DIRECTOR Frances Rafferty

### **Important Dates:**

Workshop 1pm Saturday 15 October 2016

Auditions 7pm – 9.30pm Thursday 20 October and 10am – 1pm Sunday 23 October 2016

Recalls 2pm – 5pm Sunday 23 October 2016

Performances Tuesday 14 – Saturday 18 February 2017 including Saturday Matinee

### **Rehearsal days:**

*There is some flexibility on availability through the rehearsal schedule, please note your known N/As on your application form*

Tuesday 7pm, Thursday 7pm and Sunday 11am

They will be Saturday rehearsals in 2017 notably Saturday 11 February

Rehearsal schedule commences Sunday 06 November 2016

*Additional dates – you must be able to commit to all of these, there is no flexibility on availability for these dates*

Get In Sunday 12 February 2017

Technical and Dress Rehearsal Monday 13 February 2017

Performances as given above

### *Christmas and New Year*

Rehearsals will break for the holidays on Thursday 22 December 2016 until Tuesday 03 January 2017

**Production crossover:**

You are welcome to audition for any of the productions in the season but if you wish to appear in the Drowsy Chaperone it may not be possible to be in The Accrington Pals.

Similarly, if you are appearing in Candide, it may not be possible to commit to rehearsals for The Accrington Pals.

**AUDITION INFORMATION****Setting:**

The Accrington Pals is set amongst the market stalls of a small town at a time when the world is entering the gulf of War.

**Characters:**

We're looking for a cast of 10.

We would encourage you to read the character descriptions carefully; these will guide you regarding the possible playing ages and our openness to what you can bring to the character.

**MAY (F) 30s-40s**

Strong willed and independent. Speaks her mind in a considered but not always expected way.

Green grocer stallholder, inherited from her Dad.

Landlady to Tom.

**TOM (M) 20s**

Socialist come communist.

Lithographic artist who eschewed art for the army. Tom works on May's stall, as he did when May's dad owned it.

Tom is soon to depart with the Pals.

**EVA (F) 20s**

Small town girl who comes to see the world entire.

Ralph is her boyfriend. Can hold a tune.

Replaces Tom on May's stall.

**RALPH (M) 20s**

Loveable tease of a man/boy.

Eva is his girlfriend.

Ralph is soon to depart with the Pals.

**ANNIE (F) 30s-40s**

Fiercesome firebrand.

Wife to Arthur and mother to Reggie.

**ARTHUR (M) 40s**

God fearing pigeon fancier.  
Husband to Annie and father to Reggie.

**REGGIE (F/M) 16-19**

Beautiful confusion of a teenager.  
Signing up for the army and the Pals would not be an option.

**SARAH (F) 30s**

Neighbourhood gossip, life and soul of a party.

**BERTHA (F) 20s**

Shy, musicophile who at first seems to see the world simply.

**CSM RIVERS (F/M) 30s**

Commanding officer of the Pals.

**Accents:**

Actors' own accent.

**Our audition process:**

Please use your natural accent when auditioning.

For your audition you will be provided with a script extract based on the character you favour.

First round auditions will be individuals reading with a member of the production team. At recall stage we may ask actors to pair up as per the character pairings in the script.

Those auditioning for Eva; we may ask you to sing a short nursery rhyme or Happy Birthday, acapella (without accompaniment) just to hear how confident a singer you are.

**Note about casting:**

We positively encourage diversity amongst the amateur performers auditioning for The Accrington Pals.

The notes regarding gender and playing age are provided as a guide only. Please don't feel limited by the original setting of the story; Our Pals will be about casting the performers who show the best understanding and portrayal of the characters irrespective of ethnicity, age, gender or ability.

Please advise us via your application if you have access needs including level access to the audition space, or a sign language interpreter.

All persons auditioning must be 16 years or older.

**Book your audition:**

To book an audition please email [sedospals@gmail.com](mailto:sedospals@gmail.com) with your name, the role/s you would like to audition for, preferred audition date (from the dates given below) and any access needs.

A reminder of the first round audition dates: 7pm – 9.30pm Thursday 20 October and 10am – 1pm Sunday 23 October 2016

The location will be confirmed in your confirmation email.

**Sedos: audition, participation and membership fees** – a note from the society:

Sedos is one of London's premier amateur theatre societies with the aim of producing quality amateur theatre to the best artistic quality possible. In the nature of amateur theatre performers are not paid – not even expenses. To perform in The Accrington Pals you must be a member of Sedos (membership is currently £35 per year, £30 if paid by Direct Debit) and pay a participation fee of £30. There is a £5 audition fee for nonSedos members

Thank you for reading and showing an interest in The Accrington Pals, we look forward to meeting you during the audition process!

Franny & Becky