

# SCRIPTS BY BRIAN FREELAND.

## Full-length, two act plays.

### A MERRY MEETING

*Not yet released for amateur performance, but reading copies are available.*

A few days prior to his death in 1616 William Shakespeare was said to have enjoyed 'a merry meeting' with Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton at the Bell Inn in Welford. Using Christopher Rush's characterisation of Shakespeare from his novel WILL we offer our version of what might have happened in Welford on that wet April evening.

Two Acts: Before, and After Supper.

Setting: The parlour of the Bell Inn.

Seven characters: Shakespeare, Jonson, Drayton, Hostess, Potboy, Wench – and another diner, Tolly, who may or may not be of this world.

*Review: The characters come alive: well-differentiated and believable. Tolly is a superb idea: he arrives from nowhere, shrouded in mystery. The mounting tension in Act Two, and the dramatic value of the last scene, are excellent.*

### LETTERS FROM THE HEN HOUSE

*First performances June 2004, Byre Theatre, St Andrews.*

Eight tours of the Indian sub-continent with British Council drama groups fuelled my interest in the history of British India, particularly the hundred years or so leading up to Independence when the role of the British women achieved greater importance. This script uses their letters, diaries and biographies to dramatise their story.

Setting: the deck of an 1835 steamer carrying the British out to Bombay and Calcutta.

Six ladies; four men.

### YOUR NUMBER'S UP

I was asked to write a Murder Mystery suitable for presentation in a Function Suite, so set it in a Bingo Hall, with the audience seated at tables. They are into their second game of Bingo when a scream is heard offstage: a body has been discovered in the toilets. A Police Inspector arrives: the Bingo Hall staff are the prime suspects and, under his questioning, reveal unexpected personal foibles and family problems.

The production toured pubs and restaurants in Fife Region during 2005.

Four men, four women – and a 'plant' in the audience.

### THE BEXHILL BUDGERIGAR (THE MONTROSE BUDGERIGAR in Scotland).

This started life in 2002 as CASABLANCA HERE I COME, a musical 'homage' to early Hollywood, with James Cagney trying to complete a film version of Dick Whittington despite fiendish attempts by Humphrey Bogart to stop him, but it proved too big and expensive for either professionals or amateurs.

In 2011 the setting became a BBC Radio studio in London. Director Cagney is recording a thriller reminiscent of the Maltese Falcon despite fiendish attempts by Humphrey Bogart to stop him (why waste a good plot and some great lines?).

Four ladies and five men play both the 'real life' actors and the characters in the radio drama. The set is basically a BBC Radio Studio, but the production benefits from a transformation to a pet shop for the final scene.

### **One Act Plays:**

*Adaptations written originally for the SCDA annual One-Act Play Festival.*

### **LILIES THAT FESTER**

An adaptation of a Christopher Rush short story, a dark tale about witchcraft in Fife's Kilrenny Kirk. The Minister, Rev Erskine, wants a lily pond in the churchyard 'wi' gowdfish' despite the clear opposition of his Session, particularly the Clerk, Sandy Monro.

The discovery of skeletons in the intended site re-awakens the spirits of a suspected witch put to death by drowning.

Single set: the church vestry. Five men; two women.

The script was judged one of the six best new British one-act plays of 2006.

### **LAST LOVES**

Stage adaptation of Roni Robinson's touching Radio 4 play, originally starring Richard Wilson. Paul visits his wife in the care home every week. She has dementia, as does another resident, a retired bus driver Bob, who believes Kate to be his wife. Mo, a trainee carer, gets caught up in the confusion. *"Warmly crafted, and laced with affectionate, gentle humour"*.

Two men, three ladies – the third is Dottie, the singing tea lady/cleaner. Premiered 2007.

Setting: the Care Home lounge.

*Review: warmly crafted, and laced with affectionate, gentle humour*

### **AMY'S SPAGHETTI**

Eddie's wife and cabaret partner Amy dies in a club dressing room, leaving him with eight packs of frozen spaghetti and a pile of dirty underwear. He sets out in a search for 'lurv' hindered by a mother with a randy bichon frise, a best friend who can only leave the house in daylight with a paper bag over his head, and a market researcher 'old enough to be his mother'. Adapted from Colin Hough's brilliantly funny Radio 4 play.

Two men; three ladies; voices off. Skeletal set.

Premiered 2008

*Review: "Confidently written, and engaging.*

*NB: LAST LOVES and AMY'S SPAGHETTI would make a possible Double Bill.*

### **In Preparation:**

#### **A MUSICAL: SEE YOU IN HEAVEN**

The story of the arrest and trial of Dr John Bodkin Adams, alleged to have murdered perhaps 140 of his elderly female patients, told in the style of a TWINKLE concert party as produced by Dr Adams's friend and patient Clarkson Rose.