

Playwriting News

Scott Salver Competition 2016

It's always encouraging to see a variety of original scripts receive their world premiere performance in our annual One Act Play Festivals throughout Scotland and although H.Q. received a much reduced total of only nine entries this season the generally high standard of writing was maintained.

We welcomed two new recruits to our experienced judging panel this year who work completely independent of each other marking and grading the plays under various artistic categories.

Achieving victory for the very first time is prolific playwright and regular entrant Isabella C Rae from Cambuslang with **'Such a Parcel of Rogues'** presented at Glasgow District Festival.

The parallels between the historical periods are well accentuated with a good mix of characters and ages. The complex structure of the piece was handled skilfully with period references and personal tragedies conveyed effectively. There was scope for development of minor characters and confident management of the narrative throughout.

Runner-up was Russell Adams from Stonehaven with **'Grave Concerns'** entered in Aberdeen District Festival.

Skilful plot development featuring an interesting assortment of offbeat characters from conventional TV Time Team personnel, a doric speaking shepherdess to the spirit of a Stone Age chieftain – all served with a pinch of tongue in cheek humour. The convoluted storyline challenges in staging and special effects fitted in general with the context.

In Third Place came last year's winners Kirkintilloch Players Youth

with another of their offerings scripted by cast members in rehearsal also premiered at Glasgow District Festival. **'The Lonely Road to Freedom'** is a well constructed youth drama dealing with a very relevant modern day problem featuring flashback scenes to emphasise the play's morality lessons. Authentic natural dialogue and believable characterisation portraying the target age group. The structure was interesting and well managed providing two different perspectives on the same narrative.

The above top scripts will be forwarded to the Geoffrey Whitworth UK wide Competition for original plays presented in the first round of the One Act Festivals organised by SCDA, AETF, AUDF and DAW with the winning author receiving their prize at the British Final in Sherman Theatre, Cardiff early July.

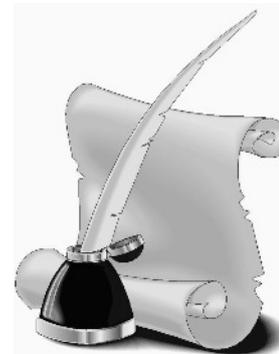
Brief comments on the remaining scripts entered:-

'Bright Lights' by Alan Richardson: A trio of strong well written characters across the age range in this developing tale of revenge and revelations in Theatreland. Neat structure, very economical and technically well managed with the sharp humour fitting the context.

'Mind Your Own Show Business' by David Carswell: Original piece of comic writing with send-ups of classic TV genres delivered at pace with lively humour and witty repartee. Twist in the tail where the three characters were neatly shown to be voices of the same person.

'Listen to the Walls' by Anna Price and Sandra Batty: Four dramatic cameos from Stanley Mills history. Atmosphere and period delineated by well chosen poetry and songs which provided a gentle rhythm to the writing.

'The Pits' by Jamie Thorburn:



Showed a glimpse of the emotional human side to the 1984 Miners' Strike with structure and staging used effectively. However there was a danger that the central characters' story might be swamped by the lengthy monologues and screen projections.

'The Box' by Graeme Ferguson: A sentimental family tale of memories and unexpected discovery. Sound structure with some character development but tendency to be theatrically contrived at times.

'# Likes' by Claire Wood: Snappy dialogue and quirky characters dealing with 'on trend' issues requiring delivery with pace. The bare script detracts from the climax of the play's resolution.



Many congratulations to winning playwright Isabella Rae who will be presented with the Scott Salver on the last night of Scottish Final in Church Hill Theatre, Edinburgh.

We thank all the writers who entered this season and trust you enjoyed the experience of seeing your work come alive on stage.

As usual the top new scripts will be available to borrow from our Summerhall Library in Edinburgh.

Stephen Lambert
Playwriting Convenor

Photos are from *Such a Parcel of Rogues*

