



# Great Expectations

Pip: Gareth Withers  
 Magwitch: John Fenner  
 Compeyson: Brian Goredema-Braid  
 Joe Gargery: Andy Chaplin  
 Mrs Joe/ Molly: Emma Withers  
 Biddy: Sarah McDonagh  
 Orlick / Drummie: Joe McKeown  
 Estrella: Rebecca Fenlon  
 Miss Havisham: Debbie Relton-Elves  
 Herbert Pocket: Joe Fallowell  
 Jaggers: Keith Railton  
 Wemmick: Andrew Tyrer  
 Startop: Nancy Speed  
 Mrs. Pocket: Sara Farman Farnal  
 Miss Pocket: Sara Farman Farnal  
 Mr. Pocket: Craig Porter  
 Ensemble: Nancy Silvester, Calum Speed, Sara Farman Farnal, Craig Porter, Sarah McDonagh, Brian Goredema-Braid, Joe McKeown, Emma Withers.

Director: Helen Withers  
 Stage Manager: Gennie Holmes  
 Designer: Pete Bagley  
 Props Design: Paul Wilkins  
 Choreography: Debbie Relton-Elves  
 Prompt: Jonathan Rees  
 Lighting Design: Ian Knight  
 Lighting Operator: Luke Dabin  
 Sound: Dave Cornish, Tony Cuttford  
 Wardrobe: Maureen Liggins, Pam Coleman, Maureen Copping, Nikki Muckie

Props: Les Rahilly, Erica Young, Clair Henrywood, Aileen Rahilly, Sally Patalong, Kim West  
 Set Build: Pete Bagley, Mike Tooley, Simon Sharpe, Paul Wilkins, Kevin Woods, Andrew Tyrer, Mike Tierney, Paul Tierney, Tom Ellis, Harry Lawrence  
 Set Painting: Doreen Belton, Judy Talbot, Paul Chokran, Judy Sharpe, Sue Hadlum

## Review

This hugely ambitious production marks the amateur premier of Charles Dickens' sprawling tale of half-crazed criminals and thwarted passion.

Here we find jilted Miss Havisham, brought to menacing life by Debbie Relton Elves as she draws hapless Pip (Gareth Withers) into her deadly web, with the lure of the strutting Estella (Rebecca Fenlon).

I'm glad to say there were no weak links amongst this well cast company as it set out on its whirlwind Dickensian journey-although some amongst the audience might have found a little precis of the complex story in the programme would have added to their enjoyment.

Director Helen Withers says Great Expectations is one of her favourite books and she was delighted to get the chance to show it to local audiences. The casting alone must have proved a superhuman task, even with the inclusion of two members of her own family.

I particularly liked Keith Railton's precise rendition of Jaggers, while John Fenner's Magwitch conjured suitable shudders down the spine in Act One followed by cringing embarrassment in Act Two.

Andy Chaplin was endearing as tongue tied blacksmith Joe and I enjoyed the pace and timing of the whole ensemble which, even on the first night, showed no outward sign of nerves and looked as if they had been performing together for weeks.

This is a risky, fast paced venture with clever use of staging and music. It may occasionally confuse those who are not fans of the width and depth of Victorian novels...but even those will find it a fascinating theatrical experience.

Barbara Goulden





Unfortunately, the wig was not available when pictures of Act II were taken, but its effect may be seen above.

