



The Guild Players have been presenting productions since 1946. We are part of Finchley Methodist Church but we also have many people connected with us from the surrounding community.

New members are always welcome, whether you are interested in acting or backstage roles. If you would like further details of the Players, or would like to join, please contact our membership secretary Betty Robertson on 020 xxxx xxxx

For more information about us, including photos of past productions, visit our extensive website at [www.guildplayers.org.uk](http://www.guildplayers.org.uk)

To receive details of forthcoming Guild Players productions, please ask to be added to our audience mailing list.

Our next production . . .

# Gaslight

A Victorian Thriller  
by Patrick Hamilton

Performances:

Finchley Methodist Church Hall  
Ballards Lane, London N3

Thursday 24th April at 7.45 pm

Friday 25th April at 7.45 pm

Saturday 26th April at 7.45 pm

Box Office opens early April  
020 8346 6337  
Tickets £7



present . . .

# Peter's Tale

a short modern  
'mystery play'  
for Holy Week  
by Mike Sparks



Tuesday 18th March 2008

8.00 pm St Paul's Church, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill NW7

Wednesday 19th March 2008

8.00 pm St John's URC, Mowbray Road, New Barnet EN5

Maundy Thursday 20th March 2008

8.00 pm Camden Road Baptist Church, Hilldrop Road, Holloway N7

Good Friday 21st March 2008

3.00 pm St Cuthbert's Church, Fordwych Road, West Hampstead NW2

8.00 pm Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards Lane, Finchley N3

Programme

[www.guildplayers.org.uk](http://www.guildplayers.org.uk)

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# Peter's Tale

A short modern 'mystery play'  
for Holy Week by Mike Sparks

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Peter	Jeffrey Benge
Andrew	Alan Kenny
James	Paul Manel
John	Michael Lamb
Mary	Anha Chimuriwo
Miriam	Carol Renfrew
Traveller	Anha Chimuriwo

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Production Team	Mike Sparks Paul Sparks David Constable
Lighting & Sound	Martin Higgins Andy Higgins

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Mystery plays date back to medieval times, when groups of local people would perform sets of popular religious plays, telling key bible stories from creation, Jesus' life and death, to the last judgement.

From about the eleventh century, plays on biblical subjects were acted out in church by the clergy. These plays became very popular, and eventually moved out of the church into streets and marketplaces, to be performed in English, by lay people, on religious holidays.

The performers who took over from the clergymen were mostly members of craftsmens' guilds which were commonly known as 'mysteries', from the Latin 'mysterium', meaning 'handicraft' or 'office'. Thus, the plays they performed came to be known as 'mystery plays'.

The plays evolved to include topical social themes and comic scenes and jokes, with wildly extravagant costumes and special effects, although the emphasis remained on the message of God's relationship with man and on the promise of salvation through Christ.

The mystery plays would often be performed around the feast of Corpus Christi, which normally falls in mid-June, in an atmosphere of great festivity. The guilds performed on decorated carts called 'pageants', with each play being performed by a particular guild, on a separate cart. On the day of the festival the pageants travelled in procession through the town. Each pageant stopped at each street to perform its play, and then moved on, to be replaced by the next pageant, performing the next episode in the sacred drama. Although each play was fairly short, the complete cycle of plays took a very long time, sometimes more than three days!

A separate subgroup of plays telling the Easter Passion stories developed, and were often performed in Holy Week.

Alongside mystery plays, there is a tradition of country drama 'mummers' plays. These folk dramas also involve travelling bands of local performers, and the stories, although at first glance appearing to be more secular, share the themes of resurrection and the triumph of good over evil with the passion and mystery plays.

Mike Sparks' modern language piece draws on these traditions - a folk drama of the Easter story, acted by local people, travelling to different venues, and combining performance, celebration and worship.

Here in Holy Week we deal with one of the major planks of the Christian religion. The mystery play format enables us to look at what went on around the main events and how the ordinary people who had been involved, perhaps only on the fringes, might have viewed what was happening. How did it affect them, their lives, and the lives of those around them? Can we add to the understanding of events by looking at them through different people's eyes? *"Peter's Tale"* follows on from our previous productions, *"The Gardener's Tale"*, *"The Soldiers Tale"* and *"An Inn Keeper's Tale"*, in trying to do this in a straightforward and accessible way, without losing the impact of the story.