**Moonlight and Magnolias**

**A Comedy by Ron Hutchinson**

**Fast, sharp & funny; loosely based on a true Hollywood story.**

**Audition Dates:**

Saturday 11th October @ 10.15am – 5pm Cripps Solicitors 

Poss Sunday 12th October 11am – 2pm Cripps Solicitors TBC

Re-calls Monday 13th October 7.30pm – 10.15pm Cripps Solicitors

**Get-In & Performance Dates: 22nd Feb – 28th Feb 2026**

**Director:** Helen Thorpe

**Script & Audition Pieces**

Scanned copies of audition pieces & the script available. If you need anything else please call Helen on 07909881347 or email her at Calamity.thorpe@gmail.com or pop onto Amazon UK and order a copy, as it’s a jolly good read anyway!

**Synopsis:**

Five weeks into filming *Margaret Mitchell's* novel *Gone with the Wind,* which in 1939 was The most eagerly awaited & expensive movie to date; Producer David O. Selznick, fires the director & halts filming. With his reputation on the line & a determination to fulfil his vision of making a truly great movie to impress his father-in-law - MGM's Louis B Meyer; he pulls Victor Fleming off the set of *The Wizard of Oz* & gets script-doctor, Ben Hecht in to rewrite the screen play.

With just five days to do it; they have the added complication that Hecht hasn’t read the epic novel!! The three men are locked into Selznick’s office, with Selznick & Fleming reduced to hilariously re-enacting the whole story to a very baffled Hecht. Fuelled with only popcorn, peanuts & bananas, tension's builds, exhaustion sets in & fights abound; but out of the chaos emerges one of the biggest Hollywood blockbuster of all time. Based in part on fact, to all those who love *Gone With The Wind* & Hollywood's Golden Age, *Moonlight & Magnolias* is an affectionate homage; for those who haven’t (unbelievably seen the film, a chance to experience this epic tale in a very different way.

**Players include:**

**Ben Hecht:** A Hollywood screenwriter & playwright. Hecht is offered $15,000 by producer Selznick to rewrite the screenplay for Gone with the Wind; the filming of which has come to a complete halt. But there’s a hitch; Hecht hasn’t read the novel, & after hearing a quick synopsis, he thinks the film is doomed to failure. He is an ex-journalist from Chicago and is very committed to pro-Jewish causes. He also butts heads with the newly appointed director Victor Fleming more than once during the five-day re-write, as he isn’t shy to share his cynicism and sarcasm. Aged 35’ish to 55’ish.

**David O.Selznick:** A renowned fanatically driven Hollywood producer & son-in-law to legendary Louis B. Meyer of MGM fame, movies are in his blood. Selznick confines Hecht, Fleming, & himself in his office, surviving on only popcorn, bananas and peanuts, until a new screenplay has been completed. Throughout the play he suffers from hilarious occasional catatonic stupors. Age 35’ish to 60’ish.

**Victor Fleming:** A Hollywood director who is pulled from directing The Wizard of Oz, Fleming is to take over directing Gone with the Wind. His other films have been mostly action films, but he says “if you can write it, I can shoot it.” He & Selznick frantically act out all the characters in Gone with the Wind for Hecht, who types as they role-play. Aged 45’ish to 60-ish.

**Miss Poppenghul:** The long-suffering Secretary of Mr. David O. Miss Poppenghul who is constantly on-call & dutifully fulfills each request made of her, during the men’s five-day write-in. Aged 25+++ or perpetually "39" (so she says) was once Miss California Orange Festival circa 19 sometime or another or Head Cheerleader at the local High School. Very capable & long suffering to Selznick, caters to his every whim with either good grace (or deadpan) humour. A Californian native, she has witnessed the movie industry grow from its early years into the all-powerful studio systems of Hollywood's Golden Age. She is a huge fan of Gone with the Wind & has read it several times and she cannot wait to see Clark Gable take on the role of Rhett Butler. Here, she keeps the screenwriting team fully supplied with nourishment (well with popcorn, peanuts & bananas) & steadfastly keeps the world at bay while they complete their task….... The actress will need to portray the same physical deterioration as the men over the 5 days and be able to demonstrate physical comedy often with no lines or ad libbing as she works to meet all of Selznick's demands.

The principal challenge for the cast of Moonlight and Magnolias is energy/physical. The staging of this play requires actors who are fairly well conditioned, with frenetic energy throughout. Fleming and Selznick characters must be able to project a variety of voices as they “act out” the whole of GWTW for Hecht. Diction will be critical with rapid line delivery, plus putting up with a barking mad director is a pre-requisite ☺.

**Additional Required Voices:**

Security Chief, Nunnally Johnson, Martin Quigley, Leland Harward Vocals only.

So there you have it: one screenplay to be hammered out at a breakneck pace while escalating costs keep rising at a commensurate speed; A two door - one to the bathroom, one only to the outside world set; one secretary stationed at the latter door to stop unwanted visitors from invading& invalidating the sanctity of creativity; three Hollywood legends locked inside an office to wrestle a noteworthy novel into a sumptuous screenplay; 5 hectic days & nights to hatch it or hack it. Ah, what madness, with many mirthful moments of making movie magic from Margaret Mitchell’s masterpiece. *Moonlight and Magnolias* is indeed a comedic gem.