



CURTAIN UP

the newsletter for

noda
London

Be inspired by amateur theatre

What's in this issue

Words from the Editor

District Round Up

Meet your new Regional Representatives

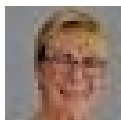
NODA Youth

NODA Theatre Summer School Returns

Whats's On In London



Autumn 2021 issue



Welcome to the last issue of Curtain Up! for 2021 – what a year it has been, but how wonderful that groups are now getting together at rehearsals, audiences are keen to attend shows and the wonderful world of amateur theatre is once again doing what it does best...perform!!! I sincerely hope your group is busy preparing for your next production and that you get the support you will have earned through all your hard work. I look forward to hearing from you in time for the next issue of Curtain Up! You can send me articles any time but the distribution date will be end of April. However you can send your fixtures in to Paul Holgate who will put them on the NODA London FB page – he can be reached at paul.holgate@noda.org.uk. In the meantime have a wonderful time over the festive season and continue to stay safe.

Jacquie Stedman - Editor

District Round-up – news from around the Region

London District 6 – Paul Daynes

I am delighted to welcome two new societies to NODA London District 6, Early Doors Productions and WP Drama.

Early Doors Production were founded in 2010 with the sole aim of producing the best in non-professional theatre and striving to attempt the un-attempted with the most talented unpaid actors around. Previous productions include Alfie, A Clockwork Orange, Frankenstein and The Crucible.

WP Drama/Wanstead Players have been going strong since 1923 and is reputed to be the oldest amateur drama group in East London and Essex. After 43 years at the Kenneth More Theatre in Ilford they are moving to Redbridge Drama Centre. To mark this event and having not been based in Wanstead for some time, they are rebranding themselves as WP Drama. They will still strive to provide the eclectic mix of plays to suit all audiences. The last few months have seen a focus on plays all performed with the delight and energy of people returning to their passion and hobby.

LADS returned to the live stage from their YouTube productions with the three-hander, A Fine Bright Day Today by Phillip Goulding. This is a beautifully crafted play, rarely performed and one that provides talented actors a vehicle to shine, which is exactly what happened in this production.

Early Doors Productions gave us a Halloween gothic horror in Sleepy Hollow, a folklore tale of a murderous headless horseman. With cast of 19 and a busy crew, this was a chance for the company to get back together and present this creepy show.

The Diary of Anne Frank is an important play that requires respect and care in its engaged the audiences, none more so than debutant Olivia Lassen who played the title role.

WP Drama's first excursion to the Redbridge Drama Centre was Joe Orton's Loot. This black and anarchic comedy is as funny now as it was in 1965. The cast of six delivered the wit and satire of the script with expertise, making a laugh-out-loud treat for the audiences.

Here's to a full 2022 programme for all.

London District 10 – Jason Lane

It's all happening with Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company as there is a new Chair, Treasurer and Artistic Director. They are working on an exciting program of events for 2022, meanwhile the panto season is upon them with weeks to go and they are already well over 50% sold! A lot of the cast tested positive for COVID19 but are all back and making the magic work. I've got my invite and really looking forward to it..

King Langley Theatre Company ran a number of successful Summer Workshops, and the last one took place on 3rd October which was Chicago. They launched their next production of The Addams Family which is being staged 6th-9th April 2022. As always men are like gold dust in our community and there are a lot of male roles up for grabs. Annie would love to hear from anyone interested in auditioning.

Abbott's Langley G&S Society started their rehearsals for Pirates of Penzance being staged 2-5 Feb 2022 at the Watford Palace Theatre and they have a stunning cast so this production is one not to miss.

Elstree Productions are currently rehearsing for their Pantomime Scrooge, being staged on the 4th and 5th December at a new venue for them, which is 96 Shenley Road. They also have a new chair and things are being spiced up and it's great to see the work that Matthew Shaw is doing with the company, lots more to come.

During lockdown Potters Bar Theatre Company put on a play at the Wylyotts Theatre in the style of a radio production called Still Life. This was the stage version of Brief Encounter and it was really well received. Their next production is Calendar Girls The Musical at the Wylyotts Theatre, show dates 26th-30th April 2022. They are also producing the play Ladies in Lavender in June 2022 and for November 2022 they are producing KIPPS - The New Half a Sixpence Musical. It's an exciting time to be part of Potters Bar Theatre Company.

Green Room Productions are back in the rehearsal room with Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour DreamCoat which is being staged in February 2022. This production was put on hold due to Covid, but we can't wait to watch this all time favourite show in February 2022. Green Room have a number of new and exciting productions planned for the Spring and Autumn 2022 productions.

St Albans Musical Theatre Company kept our theatre community going by staging three stunning outdoor concerts which were produced by Elise featuring exceptionally strong talent from across the Hertfordshire area. SAMTC are in rehearsals for their first fringe type production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee being staged at the Alban Theatre 16-20 November and as they have a very strong cast it promises to be an exciting night at the theatre. I've got my invite and looking forward to it as I've never seen this show before.

Radlett Musical Theatre Company returned to stage with a bang after lockdown, celebrating its 50th Anniversary in a production entitled "GOLD" a musical extravaganza. This production had something for everyone from G&S to modern day musicals Moulin Rouge, Come From Away and Six. As they are celebrating their 50th year, they are going back to the 50's with "All Shook Up" the Elvis Musical in March 2022 and Disney's "The Little Mermaid" in October 2022.

It's safe to say District 10 are back!

London District 11 and 11a – Judith Watsham

Every Society in both districts should have received an email from me recently - if you didn't please let me know and I will send you a copy. Among other things I was checking that my Society Contact list was up to date - any changes please get in touch.

The most important thing, however, is that not only are so many groups performing again - I have seen three superb productions recently - but that audiences can't wait to see you all. Chipperfield Theatre Group tells me that they were absolutely amazed when they sold out their pantomime tickets as soon as they went on sale, and there is a waiting list for returns. Unfortunately there is no room for their NODA rep on this occasion but on the plus side it is great to realise just how much you have been missed and what a hole was left in so many people's lives (on both sides of the footlights) when lockdown brought an abrupt end to local entertainment!

London District 12 – Andrew Walter

Amateur theatre in Oxfordshire is up and running again, and it has been a great pleasure to be welcomed to productions across the county. The Sinodun Players staged Agatha Christie's "A Daughter's A Daughter" in September, Banbury Operatic Society upgraded their autumn concert to "A Night at the Oscars" in October, and Faringdon Dramatic Society presented "Ladies' Day" by Amanda Whittington in November. I will be reporting on the world amateur theatre premiere of "Von Ribbentrop's Watch" by Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran, presented by The Bartholomew Players in Eynsham. I would love to be able to tell you about it, but copy deadlines are copy deadlines ...

Oxford Operatic Society will be returning to the New Theatre stage in December with "My Fair Lady", and the New Year will bring Avocet Theatre Company's production of "Robin Hood" in January – O yes it will! - and Musical Youth Company of Oxford's staging of "Legally Blonde" at the Oxford Playhouse in April.

It was a particular pleasure to report on Abingdon Operatic Society's staging of "All Shook Up", which had originally been scheduled for production in April 2020. The Society's experience of delay and disappointment, uncertainty and risk, culminating in a triumphant presentation of this feel-good jukebox musical will be broadly familiar to many amateur companies, both locally and nationally. Hopefully their next production – "Made in Dagenham" – will be able to go ahead as planned in April, and as I'm directing it I'm already feeling the pressure of expectation!

London District 13 – Cate Naylor



Hello, my name is Cate Naylor and I am the new Regional Representative for District 13. I am a member of Shinfield Players Theatre in Reading and enjoy both directing and treading the boards. I am very pleased to be getting involved with NODA and look forward to meeting all the groups in the District. This has been a very difficult time for amateur theatre and it is great that so many theatre groups are getting back to doing what they love. I am so excited to be a part of that.

Since starting in October, I have seen two productions; Reading Operatics' musical Little Shop of Horrors and Henley Players' commedia dell'arte play Saturday, Sunday, Monday. I really enjoyed both productions and it was great to see two shows that had been about to

go on stage at the beginning of the pandemic finally being performed. I am really excited to be able to see many more shows and to getting to know everyone.

I'd like to thank Jet Maskell for her many years as District 13 Rep and to wish her well in the future. I'd also like to thank Nick Humby and Rob Bertwistle for reviewing shows prior to me starting and, particularly, to Nick who will be reviewing shows at my home theatre going forward.

Please do contact me at cate.naylor@noda.org.uk I look forward to meeting you all!

London District 14 – Nick Humby

As December approaches it is starting to feel like Christmas with many societies staging traditional pantomimes with a chance to have some fun on stage in front of a live audience. It is also an opportunity for me to meet societies face to face for the first time and find out all about them.

Crowthorne Amateur Theatre Society (CATS)

The season starts with their return to the Parish Hall in late November with an excellent Pumpkin Panto script packed with good gags and led by an excellent young Dame as Nanny in Robin Hood.

Colnbrook Amateur Stage Theatre (CAST)

Their production of Sleeping Beauty runs from 2nd December to 5th December at Colnbrook Village Hall and is already sold out!

Riverside Players

They stage a one act pantomime The Prince's Ball from 3rd December to 11th December at the Memorial Hall in Old Windsor with a host of familiar characters around Prince Harry and the evil Megana.

Maidenhead Drama Guild

Treasure Island is their Christmas show from 9th December to 12th December at the Holyport Memorial Hall when Ma Hawkins and Jim set off on a voyage in search of treasure and meet Long John Silver and his cutthroat band.

Wraysbury Players

In 2022 the Players are staging Pied Piper at the Wraysbury Village Hall from 27th January to 29th January, a retelling of the classic story with Sour-Kraut and Rat-Worst battling Fairy Strudel in what sounds like a German gourmet pantomime.

Looking forward to a varied line of titles and some traditional Pantomime fun

Regional Representatives are at the heart of what NODA does so it is good to hear about their experience and what they hope to bring to the role.....



Paul Daynes – My life in Amateur Theatre

It's now been six months since I took on the role of NODA Regional Representative for London District 6 and I've enjoyed getting to know people who, like me, have a shared passion for local amateur theatre.

My introduction to amateur theatre was via my parents' church drama group in Norwich where I was born and brought up. Twice a year they'd put on a well-meaning play, the cast would swap round parts and two men spent most evenings constructing a set on a tiny stage in the church hall. I loved it and took my first meaningful part aged 14. I was hooked. In the early 1980's a move to Woodford, Essex brought me into contact with a new drama workshop, Studio 80. This wonderful group were set up for 18-30 year olds and with the energy and ambition of a youth group we put on some fabulous shows at the Corbett Theatre in Loughton. We became close friends with many and Studio 80 marriages and friendships were set for life.

Alongside Studio 80 I was lucky enough to get opportunities to perform with Thistles Musical Theatre Company, Forest Operatic Society, Theydon Bois Drama Society, West Essex Rep and Loughton Operatic Society. I fondly remember directing Chicago for Thistles at the Kenneth More Theatre at the age of 20 and directing Yeoman of the Guard for LOS's Centenary Production at Lopping Hall, Loughton in 1994.

As Studio 80 began to wind down I took on a more active role with the West Essex Repertory Company at Lopping Hall. This company attracted some fine actors and I had roles in plays by writers such as Shakespeare, Wilde, Ayckbourn and Joe Orton. I worked with some fabulous directors and actors and feel it was here that I learnt so much about stage craft. I've always enjoyed working backstage as much as on stage, often as Stage Manager or Prompt. I have lent a hand to set design and like nothing better than a solid weekend set building.

The demands of work and bringing up four children meant I took a break from all things theatrical for 15 years before being invited back to Theydon Bois Drama Society in 2015. I've loved being involved with Theydon and have been lucky enough to win a few NODA Regional Awards with them.

I have benefitted greatly from being involved in local theatre. It is a wonderful hobby that gives so much. Those life skills of teamwork, reliability, confidence and dealing with people were honed in the theatre and have helped me in many walks of life.

It's so exciting to see the theatre lights returning and our societies getting back to rehearsals. I am looking forward to seeing and meeting many more like minded people in 2022.

PS the photograph is me as the dame with my daughter.....I won't visit your show looking like this!!!!



Jason Lane – Regional Representative District 10 (Musicals)

My earliest recollection of my time with amateur theatre is when I was about twelve years old. I used to gather a gang of my friends together during the school summer holidays in the back room of our local library, in Dublin, Ireland. We would spend hours and months producing a summer variety show. One of our friend's aunts was a dressmaker and she used to provide us with all sorts of fabrics and costumes.

When our summer production was ready, we would have to move a few book stands and build our own performance space. We would not charge anyone to come and watch it as we wanted people to engage with Theatre and support us as children and young adults.

Since those days I've gone on to direct and choreograph many theatre companies, production companies, school shows and local community theatre.

One stand-out production for me was directing/choreographing for RMTC's production of Cats. With this production I wanted to ensure that, growing up as a stage school kid myself, children appeared and were given the opportunity to perform. I also wanted to include the older members of the company, who are the foundation of why we have a company in the first place, and the Cats Chorus (choir) was created. We had two months to produce a very demanding show, with 75 members in the cast. We won a NODA award for Innovation which was greatly appreciated.

Along with every other amateur company, none of us were prepared for COVID and all its accompanying restrictions. However, I genuinely think theatre people are the best problem solvers in the world as the only thing the audience see is the magic, not the blood sweat and tears that went on behind the scenes to make it happen.

What amateur theatre can do for people is incredible. It's also a hobby that helps a lot of people with social skills and mental health as well as great rehearsal periods, fun show weeks and after show parties and hopefully an award or two.

Thirty two years later and I'm still at it, only this time as a NODA Representative for London District 10. I'm very proud of the companies that I get to represent, as the talent in Hertfordshire is exceptionally strong, and we've got some outstanding performers, many of whom truly belong on a west end stage. Despite two years of lockdown, my region is back and I am proud to say we are determined to smash it and make up for lost time.

Cate Naylor (RR District 13) incorporated her biog into her district report....I didn't forget you Kate.

We welcome all the new Regional Representatives who have joined us in NODA London during the last year and wish them well in their association with NODA and amateur theatre.

Annie Hertler-Smith, NODA London Youth Co-ordinator

Since May I have been lucky enough to see four Youth productions. Youth groups were amazing throughout the entire 'lockdown' period at keeping themselves together and doing things on ZOOM (which all the youngsters seem to be able to manage so well!) but it has been really heartening that so many are now returning to the stage and with live audiences again.

In June, I saw Rickmansworth Youth perform a Compilation show called TEN. It was a selection of songs from their last ten shows followed by songs from shows they would like to perform over the coming years. As this was the first live show I had seen since Kinky Boots in November 2019 I found it a very emotional experience as well as being impressed with the talent on stage – all of which had been rehearsed in separate 'bubbles'.

In July I saw Buggy Malone at Tring, a repeat performance of a show they had done in the car park during the summer of 2020!

Then, a new show for me, In The Heights which was a great production bursting with talent from YOBOS and then, just two weeks later it was Fame by another Banbury based group – with some of the same youngsters who had been playing leads in In The Heights playing principal roles. The learning capacity and energy of young people is amazing!

Keep up the good work all you young people – you are our future!!

If you would like to invite Annie to see any of your youth productions please don't hesitate to get in touch with her at annie.hertler-smith@noda.org.uk - Ed



YBOS (Youth of Banbury Operatic Society) – In the Heights

The Players' Theatre Club still going strong

The Players' Theatre Club in London have a special anniversary show taking place on **Sunday 28th November at the Charing Cross Theatre.**

It will be a star-studded 85th anniversary music hall extravaganza as they return to their original home underneath the arches of Charing Cross station. An evening of comedy, magic, sing-a-long and a trip down memory lane!

Many people from London and the Home Counties will, over the years, have travelled in to London to enjoy the ambience of the oldest theatre club in the world which provided supper alongside the entertainment.

The world-famous Players' Theatre dates back to 1936 when it was co-founded by Leonard Sachs, the tongue-twisting, gavel-wielding compere of smash-hit TV series *The Good Old Days* in the sixties and seventies.

Since then, The Players' has become most associated with the Victorian music hall revival, attracting legendary entertainers such as Hattie Jacques, Ian Carmichael, Clive Dunn, Maggie Smith, Margaret Burton and Sir Peter Ustinov who in 1996 became its honorary president.

Such was its fame that the Players' was recognised by public and critics as 'the most original entertainment in London'.

It was endorsed as one of the few clubs to which the subalterns of the Household Brigade were permitted to belong, and the Churchill family were great supporters, with Sarah Churchill helping as a programme seller.

The award-winning novelist Christopher Fowler has described the Players' Theatre as 'a microcosm of British theatrical history'.



Long service awards report September 2021

Since the AGM in July 2020 the following awards have been made by groups to show the service shown by NODA members to amateur theatre.

NODA Commendation award-Benjamin Coleman- Banbury Operatic Society

10 year badge-Faye Spooner- Barking Music and Drama

15 year badge-Anthony O'Connell- Barking Music and Drama

Silver bar and 40 year badge, John Cable-Barking Music and Drama

NODA Commendation award-Carol Lucas-Barking Music and Drama

35 year badge Barbara Wood- Sinodun Players

40 year badge-Julie Grimshaw-Sinodun Players

50 year badge-Jennifer Thompson-Sinodun Players

50 year badge-Peter Orton-Sinodun Players

50 year badge-Richard Hickman-BACCES

50 year badge-Dee Bull-BACCES

Congratulations to you all!!!!

For details and costs of the medals and badges please see the NODA website

www.noda.org.uk

The Memory of Water by Shelagh Stephenson, presented by Proscenium

After its world premiere at Hampstead Theatre in 1996, *The Memory of Water* transferred to the West End where it won the 2000 Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy. This was Shelagh Stephenson's first stage play.

As was the case with Caryl Churchill, initially her favoured medium as a writer was radio, firstly as a scriptwriter on BBC Radio 4's drama series *Citizens*, and subsequently as an author in her own right. Of the many original plays broadcast perhaps the best known is *Five Kinds of Silence*, 1996, which received the Writers Guild Award for Best Original Drama.



After years of separation three sisters return to the family's Yorkshire home for their mother's funeral. As they revisit their past it becomes clear that their memories are both subjective and unreliable exposing hidden lies, self-betrayal and personal, unresolved crises. Their mother's death impacts on the sisters in different ways but each is forced to face unsettling and often poignant home truths that challenge their current lifestyles and ambitions.

Stephenson's personal circumstances prompted her to write this play. She is one of five siblings spanning over twenty years and, like so many families of size, impressions and memories of past events are often at odds. Whilst discussing the themes of this play the cast and I were no different. In many respects we acknowledged that often we could no longer differentiate between fact and fiction, witnessed and assumed, accurate and amended. We

suspected that we, too, may have adopted others' memories and later presented them as our own. Interestingly, our actors hail from families of varying sizes, background and eras, yet we all recognised how some of our memories could be inventions or distortions of the truth.

This has been a demanding piece to work on and, like so many companies, we have had to amend performance dates due to ever-fluctuating COVID restrictions. People's availability has changed, schedules have been disrupted but, above all, the roles in this play demand honesty and integrity in performance if the piece is to resonate with audiences. The roles are complex and ever-changing but I am confident that our interpretation of both characters and themes will affect all who come along to view our efforts and will, hopefully, prompt audiences to re-examine their past with fresh vigour!

If you missed the recent 25th Anniversary revival of this play at Hampstead Theatre, or would welcome another opportunity to experience this moving, highly amusing yet disturbingly familiar play, why not come along?

The Memory of Water runs from Wednesday January 26th to Saturday January 29th at Compass Theatre, Ickenham. All performances: 19:45

To find out more and book: www.hillingdontheatres.uk | 01895 250615

Riverside Players are back!!!

After nearly 2 years of no rehearsals or performances it has been fabulous to be back together. I think what we missed most wasn't necessarily putting together a production, but just the social and friendship aspects of Riverside. It was so lovely to know the children, who had done multiple shows with us in the past, were still raring to go and get back on the stage with us even after the break. No one really knew what level of, if any, interest we would have for the 2021 pantomime. During the lockdown periods we did our best to organise a few virtual socials but as we all know with the challenges of Zoom, or any technology for that matter, it was hard to truly catch up with everyone, and we definitely saw less of our youth members via these get togethers.

Now that we are back in full swing of rehearsals for our December show it feels like no time has passed. In the interest of putting together a more COVID friendly event we are producing a shorter pantomime written by the Director himself and this has really allowed us to play to the cast strengths and include the aspects of panto we most enjoy. We have had our challenges with a few COVID cases within the cast (unrelated to rehearsals) but this has led to periods of missed rehearsal time by isolating individuals. However, for a few years now we have used a Google Drive to ensure that all script, lyrics and choreography videos are accessible to all cast at all times online, so we were prepared for cast to be practising and learning from home where needed, which seems to have been proving successful so far! We can't wait to welcome back our audiences and feel the hall full of Christmas joy and laughter again, I think everyone needs a bit of that back in their lives this year. So, we really hope that we are managing to create an environment where everyone will feel comfortable.



Riverside Players production of Dick Whittington (Simon Clark photographer)

Pride and Prejudice and NODA Perfection

In the spring of 2012, best-selling author Josie Brown and Emmy Award-winning composer Rita Abrams received a life-changing email: the late Helen Bailey, who was the artistic director of the Ruislip Operatic Society at the time, had discovered online their newly completed musical of Jane Austen's classic novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, felt it stood out from everything else in its category, and wanted to direct it.

The creators couldn't be more pleased than to have the musical's World Premiere in Jane Austen's homeland—and in a frighteningly short time!

"We were both excited—and unnerved," Ms. Abrams recalls. "Since the show was new and as yet unproduced, much would have to be done *fast* to make this possible."

All written scores would have to be completed, contracts drawn up, transitional music composed; and, perhaps the most demanding of all, communications among director, musical director, and authors concerning possible adaptations arising during rehearsals would begin upon signing—and continue until opening night.

Yes, it was daunting, but doable. The pair dove right in. With the help of adrenaline and the talents and temperaments of director, the late Helen Bailey, musical director Rob Wickes, musicians, cast, and crew, the production came off beautifully. "Sitting in the enthusiastic audience of Ruislip's Winston Churchill Theatre, Rita and I were overwhelmed with gratitude and pride, the magnitude of which has not been exceeded to this day," says Josie.

Some lovely reviews followed:

- "The members of ROS who had the privilege of creating their roles will remember that for the rest of their lives. And the fact of witnessing the super World Premiere was an equal privilege for the audience." - Tony Austin, Regional Rep, District 8 of NODA London;

- “Rita Abrams’s lyrics are hellishly clever, sassy American showtune stuff that puns on Austen and Dickens, alliterates and rhymes in staccato...Hope you saw it here first, folks!” - Alan Hayes of *The Uxbridge Gazette*

Since the ROS production, Abrams and Brown’s *Pride and Prejudice* musical has had its U.S. Premiere as well: in their hometown of San Francisco, where it won the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle for Best Original Music.

A Peoria, Illinois production is scheduled for next May, followed by another Northern California show

However, given the grand treatment of the musical by the Ruislip Operatic Society, Abrams and Brown cannot help but set their sights on a return to the UK—hopefully to see another production by a NODA theatrical society.

“The energy of everyone involved—Helen, her marvellous production manager Malcolm Unwin, the orchestra, and the players—was electric,” Josie says. “Not to mention that the performances were spot on.”

Rita adds: “The experience spoiled us. We certainly made some dear friends, many of whom expressed surprise that we Americans could create a script and score that felt so British to the audiences there. But the highest compliment came from a Ruislip resident opening night: ‘You have done Jane Austen proud.’”

For more information on *Pride and Prejudice - The Musical*, go to <https://www.prideprejudicemusical.com>, There, you can listen to the music, see video clips of performances, and download the [reviews brochure](#).



Ruislip Operatic Society’s production of *Pride and Prejudice – The Musical*



Josie Brown and Rita Abrams, creators of *Pride and Prejudice – the Musical*

WOS provides ‘a little Christmas’ for everyone

As has been the case for many amateur theatre companies, WOS Productions has spent the last 20 months unable to perform together. With shows cancelled due to COVID-19, our usual theatre in Hillingdon was commandeered as a vaccination centre. Being unwilling to take the financial risk of booking a run at another ‘proper’ theatre with the continuing uncertainty over the pandemic (particularly when insurance no longer covers cancellation due to COVID), we looked for another way to be on stage together again. We decided to perform a Christmas concert at a local church hall - something that could be flexible in cast numbers, audience numbers and provide a bit of festive cheer for our members and the local community.

The concert is a group effort from the members and cast with everyone contributing ideas about which songs would fit our winter theme and supporting each other through solos and coming together for duets. It has been brilliant to get back to rehearsing together again!!!! Singing together in harmony for the first time after so long apart was incredibly moving, and of course we have reinstated the post-rehearsal trip to the pub! We’re really looking forward to being able to put on a show again after so long an absence from a stage, even if it’s not one of our usual big musical theatre productions. We do hope our audience enjoys this way to kick off the festive season.



WOS members in festive mood!!



Dramatic Pause

Amateur dramatics company Wanstead Players has relaunched itself as WP Drama, with a new home at Redbridge Drama Centre. Lindsey Sculfor explains the changes ahead of their first post-COVID performance.....

Wanstead Players is reputed to be the oldest amateur drama group in east London and Essex. After successfully performing at the Kenneth More Theatre in Ilford for 43 years, the company is moving to a new venue at the Redbridge Drama Centre in South Woodford. We have marked this revitalising new venture by rebranding ourselves as WP Drama (not having been based in Wanstead for some time).

Wanstead Players has always been noted for producing high quality, wide ranging tragedies, comedies, dramas and musicals by such authors as Wilde, Dickens, Ibsen, Priestley, Shaw, Godber, Shakespeare and Coward. Members of the company have even written their own plays.

Our company includes members from teenagers to senior citizens, many of whom not only act but also provide backstage expertise, and we constantly welcome new members. Some of the company have been encouraged to tread more exalted boards, including Louise Jameson, Tony Robinson, Don Henderson and Ricky Groves, who started his career as Gary in

Eastenders. We are now hoping that relocating to a new venue will provide an opportunity not only to broaden our audience, but to attract new talent to join us as actors, directors, technical managers and crew.

Loot by Joe Orton was intended to be performed back in March 2020, but with two weeks to go, COVID intervened and we were locked down and out. Instead of giving up, it was merely moved to the back burner, and we are very happy to announce that it was our first show as WP Drama in our lovely new venue, a fresh start all round.

During COVID lockdown, members kept in touch by 'cinema evenings' organised by the director of Loot, Brian Seaton. People met in the virtual Zoom bar before the show to catch up. YouTube then provided the platform for a screening of a past Wanstead Players production; audiences reconvened in the Zoom bar afterwards to share happy memories or relive disasters. There are always a few of those!

We are delighted by the welcome we have received from Redbridge Drama Centre and look forward to exciting times.

For further information about WP Drama call 020 8708 8803 or visit wpdrama.co.uk

G&S comes to Banbury in 2022

In its 60th Anniversary year, Banbury Operatic Society are delighted to be staging *The Mikado* (also known as *The Town of Titipu*) in April 2022. This two-act comic operetta, with music by Arthur Sullivan and libretto by W.S. Gilbert, will run from Wednesday 20th April to Saturday 23rd April 2022, nightly at 7.30pm. There will also be a matinee performance on the Saturday at 2.30pm. The production will be performed at Wykham Theatre, Wykham Park Academy, Ruskin Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9HY, just after the bank holiday weekend - so, why not treat yourself to a post-Easter musical - egg-cited? - we are! Keep an eye on our website for more details in the New Year, including when tickets will be on sale - www.banburyoperaticsociety.co.uk. The Society have just started initial rehearsals and auditions will be on Monday 13th December 2021 - so if you are a G&S fan, budding or otherwise, do get in touch on banburyoperaticsociety@gmail.com.

New Talkback System Gets Thame Players Talking!

A new talkback system has been installed at the Players Theatre in Thame, thanks to grant



funding from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). The new system enables clear speech between all points of the theatre, which is a massive improvement on the level of communication that was possible with the old system.

The new talkback system was funded by grants from SODC's Councillor Community Grant Scheme and OCC's Councillor Priority Fund. Following detailed applications submitted to each council earlier in the year, funding was granted, the equipment could be ordered and the work got underway. The new system has already proved its worth during the Thame Arts & Literature Festival (TAL) in October. It was used as a means of communication between stage and control box during this week-long event. The stage user was able

to communicate while on stage and during live events, impossible with the old system. Thame Players' pantomime this year, *Babes in the Wood*, will be using the talkback between all points: stage manager at side of stage, props, back projection backstage, lights, sound, and streaming in the balcony. The old system did not have any mechanism that would connect all areas of the theatre.

Thame Players' Steve Lambell commented, "The new talkback system, as used in theatres nationwide, means communication in all parts of the theatre is swift, clear and effective, enhancing the proficient running of our own productions, visiting shows, cultural events like TAL, and business or community hire. Visiting companies will be trained on how to use it, enhancing the audience experience. This is particularly relevant for youth group hirings - we can train the stage crew and help young people wishing to qualify in stage training by giving them hands-on experience with professional equipment".

The photograph shows Cllrs Bretherton and Barker operating the system

Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker of SODC commented, "We are delighted to have been able to help with funding of the new talkback system at the Players Theatre; any improvement that offers a clear benefit to the community served by the theatre is to be welcomed. As part of this, we are pleased to hear that training will be given to youth groups and those wishing to



qualify in stage training". Cllr Nigel Champken-Woods of OCC commented, "The Players Theatre is the only theatre serving Thame and local area, so it's important that technical improvements enhance performance standards, benefiting the local community for whom entertainment will be provided to an equivalent standard as might be found elsewhere"

NODA Theatre Summer School is back in 2022



Make 2022 the year you attend the residential 'bubble' that is NODA's Summer School. With tuition from the best in the business you can be assured of a week of full-on learning and fun that will enable you to be the best you can be. The only stipulation is that you are 18 or over on the day the school starts. This year's dates are July 30th – August 6th. Please join us for a week that you will never forget and make friends for life. For details of courses please

go to the NODA website www.noda.org.uk/summerschool. Booking opens 1st December – don't leave it too late.

Important changes to Programme and Poster Competition from next year

From next year programmes entered for the competition must carry the NODA logo with the strapline "Be Inspired by Amateur Theatre" and must include the paragraph "An Introduction to NODA" which is available from the website.

The use of these two elements is a condition of entry and a programme which does not carry both of them cannot be considered either for an award or to be forwarded for entry to the national competition.

Similarly, posters submitted for the competition must now carry the NODA logo and strapline as a condition of entry.

The NODA crest with the crown and laurels is being phased out and should no longer be used.

There are some other minor changes to the rules of entry for the competition:

The three classes of programmes – based on the number of pages – have been renamed the Peacock, the Perkins and the Barnes Class. These replace the old deluxe, standard and basic categories.

Both programmes and posters will continue to be given a mark out of 100 by the judges and a feedback form will be supplied to all entrants after the winners have been announced.

Full details of the new rules together with downloadable versions of the current logo are available at

<https://www.noda.org.uk/programme-and-poster-competition>

Please note that these changes apply to programmes and posters submitted for shows with a performance date of January 2022 onwards.

Programmes and posters for this year's competition (for shows dated between January 2020 and December 2021) will be marked using the existing rules.

There is still plenty of time to submit your entries for the current competition, Entry forms are available here

<https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/london/noda-london-poster-programme-competition-2021-2022>

Forms should be returned to me with five copies of each programme or poster before 31st January 2022

Good Luck!

Paul M Holgate, Chair of Programme & Poster
Chair of Programme and Posters Judging Panel
NODA London

What's On Winter 2021

NOVEMBER 2021

SHREK

24-27 November

Henley Amateur Operatic Dramatic Society (HAODS)

The Kenton Theatre Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BS

Box Office 01491 525050
boxoffice@kentontheatre.co.uk

DECEMBER 2021

CINDERELLA

1-5 December
BACCES (British Airways Cabin Crew Entertainment Society)
The Beck Theatre, Grange Road, Hayes, UB3 2UE
Box Office: 0343 3100044
www.becktheatre.org.uk

A BARKING MAD MUSICAL CABARET

3rd-4th December
Barking Music and Drama
The Ripple Centre, Barking IG11 7FN
07375039936
www.BarkingMAD.org.uk

SCROOGE THE PANTO

04 Dec 21 - 05 Dec 21
Elstree Productions
The 96 WD6 1EB
Box Office: 01442 454 000
www.eventbrite.co.uk

THE PRINCE'S BALL

3 - 11 December
Riverside Players
The Memorial Hall, Old Windsor
07717 671765
www.riversideplayers.com

BABES IN THE WOOD

3-5, 8-12 December
Thame Players
Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame, Oxon, OX9 2DP
Box Office online : www.thameplayers.co.uk

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS! A festive concert

11 December
WOS Productions
St Lawrence Church Hall, Eastcote, HA5 2SJ
Box Office: 07391988077
www.wos-productions.org.uk

SLEEPING BEAUTY

18th-19th December
The Chameleons Amateur Dramatic Society
Bushey and Oxhey Methodist Church Hall
<http://www.thechameleons.co.uk/tickets/>

GOLDILOCKS & THE 3 BEARS

29 - 30 December (with some matinees)

HEOS Musical Theatre
Greenford Hall UB6 9QN
Box Office: 07708 277327
www.heos.org.uk

2022

CINDERELLA

08 Jan 22 - 22 Jan 22
Erith Playhouse Ltd
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY
Box Office: 0333 666 3366
www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

13-15 January 2022
Theydon Bois Drama Society
Theydon Bois Village Hall, Coppice Row, Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER
01992 919038
www.theydondrama.org

SLEEPING BEAUTY by Peter Orton and Barbara Wood

14 Jan 22 - 29 Jan 22
Sinodun Players
Corn Exchange OX10 0EG
Box Office: 01491 825000
www.cornexchange.org.uk

GASLIGHT

20-22 January 2022
Loughton ADS (LADS)
Lopping Hall, High Road, Loughton IG10 4LF
Box Office: 07552 736110
www.lads.org.uk

ROBIN HOOD & THE WITCHES OF SHERWOOD

20 Jan 22 - 22 Jan 22
Avocet Theatre Company
Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY
www.avocetheatre.co.uk

THE MEMORY OF WATER

26-29 January 2022
Proscenium
Compass Theatre, Ickenham UB10 8PD
01895250615
www.hillingdontheatres.uk

PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER – Norman Robbins

23-26 February 2022
Belmont Theatre
The Pump House Theatre, Watford
www.belmonttheatre.co.uk

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

01 Feb 22 - 05 Feb 22
Green Room Productions

Wyllyotts Theatre EN6 2HN
Box Office: 01707 645005
www.tickets.wyllyottstheatre.co.uk

CLUE Jonathan Lynn, Hunter Foster, Sandy Rustin & Eric Price
10 Mar 22 - 12 Mar 22
Early Doors Productions
The Brentwood Theatre CM15 8AG
Box Office: 01277 200305
www.earlydoors.org.uk

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE
8-12 March 2022
Thame Players
Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame Oxon OX9 2DP
Box Office online: www.thameplayers.co.uk

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE
23-26 March 2022
Proscenium
Compass Theatre, Ickenham UB10 8PD
01895250615
www.hillingdontheatres.uk

THE ADDAMS FAMILY
6-9 April 2022
Kings Langley Musical Theatre Company
Kings Langley Community Centre
01442 268839
www.klmtc.org

THE TOXIC AVENGER
12-16 April 2022
Festoon Theatre Company
The Questors Studio, 12 Mattock Lane, London, W5 5BQ
www.festoontheatrecompany.co.uk/box-office

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
10-14 May 2022
Thame Players
Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame, Oxon, OX9 2DP
Box Office online: www.thameplayers.co.uk

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE by Lee Hall
26 May 22 - 28 May 22
Early Doors Productions
The Brentwood Theatre CM15 8AG
Box Office: 01277 200305
www.earlydoors.org.uk

BONNIE & CLYDE
27 September - 1st October 2022
Festoon Theatre Company
Bridewell Theatre, 14 Bride Lane, Fleet Street, EC4Y 8EQ
www.festoontheatrecompany.co.uk/box-office

Why not share news of your next production??

TEMPLATE FOR WHAT'S ON SECTION

NODA London District

NAME OF PRODUCTION (Arial, 10 font, Bold, Caps)

Date	(Arial, 10 font)
Name of Society	(Arial, 10 font)
Venue	(Arial, 10 font)
Box Office number	(Arial, 10 font)
Website	(Arial, 10 font)

Please see the example below:

SOUND OF MUSIC

5 – 8 March 2021

Kettering and District Musical Society

Lighthouse Theatre, Kettering

www.kitts.co.uk

Please put your submissions in date order. You can submit as many as you like and they will be removed when the production has taken place. The fixture list also appears on the NODA London FB page. Contact Paul Holgate at paul.holgate@noda.org.uk

Thank you – Ed.