



# CURTAIN UP

the newsletter for

*noda*  
**London**

Be inspired by amateur theatre

## What's in this issue

Words from the Editor

District Round Up

NODA Theatre Summer School Returns

Whats's On In London



## Spring 2022 issue



Welcome to the spring issue of Curtain Up! – Apologies for the delay with this issue but this has been due to circumstances beyond my control. 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 September. However you can send your show 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](mailto:paul.holgate@noda.org.uk). In the meantime have a wonderful time over summer and continue to stay safe.

Jacquie Stedman - Editor

## Councillor's Update



What a pleasure it is to see so many societies welcoming their audiences back into theatre to enjoy their fabulous productions. It has been a tough journey and your persistence and determination to perform has been admirable – *the show must go on* !

I am delighted to welcome a new Regional Representative to our team. Iain Fowles will be joining Jason Lane in District 10 and Iain will be the Rep for Drama groups – more about Iain inside.

Talking of Reps, I am sure you will want to invite your own Reg Rep to your shows and it is always a good idea to get your invitation in as soon as possible as diaries are starting to fill up. And don't forget, as your Councillor, I am always delighted to see your productions.

You are a member of NODA – so why not use it to the full - and why not get as much free publicity for your forthcoming shows as you can ? Don't forget that **you** are able to list productions on the NODA website's **What's On** section. This can be done as far in advance as you like – as soon as you know the dates ! And from this we can also include your forthcoming show on our NODA London Facebook page. If you need help please contact our webmaster [paul.holgate@noda.org.uk](mailto:paul.holgate@noda.org.uk)

Did you know you, too, can become an individual member of NODA. For £28 a year (which you can gift aid as well) it represents remarkable value. You will receive your very own copy of the excellent NODA Today magazine and will have available to you the full gamut of assistance that NODA provides – particularly useful if you are involved in directing shows or running a society and your own society's log ins are not readily available to you. Our Factsheets and Guidance Notes (well over 40) are second to none in their professional assistance to amateur theatre.

A few reminders of a couple of important matters: NODA Theatre Summer School – an extremely popular event attracting attendees across the UK and internationally as well - is taking place on 30 July to 6 August 2022 at Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffs. It is so popular that it gets booked quickly – see if you can grab one of the few remaining places at NODA's professional training event.

Planning a Panto ? NODA has an excellent range of Pantos including Peter Denyer – have a look on our special Panto website [www.pantoscripts.org.uk](http://www.pantoscripts.org.uk) There is something for everyone and every style.

NODA London Regional Day will be taking place on Sunday 19 June 2022 at The Radlett Centre, Radlett and I very much look forward to welcoming you in person at Radlett.

Pam Armstrong  
Regional Councillor - NODA London

**Do you know a talented person who could fill this role ?**

## **NODA LONDON REGION – DISTRICT 1**

**Are you Passionate about Theatre – do you want to get more involved ?**

District 1 in the London Region are looking for a new Regional Representative to help support the vibrant societies within the area of the City and Central London.

The role of the Regional Representative is to support the groups when necessary and keep them abreast of happenings in the world of amateur theatre. They are also required to attend productions, when invited, and write a report acting as a critical friend.

We all want to improve our theatrical skills and as a Regional Rep you would be in a unique position to encourage members to do just that.

If you enjoy, and have a good knowledge of theatre, we would really love to hear from you with a view to joining our team.

If you are interested please contact your Regional Councillor below

[Pam.armstrong@noda.org.uk](mailto:Pam.armstrong@noda.org.uk)

### **District Round-up – news from around the Region**

#### **NODA London Districts 1 & 4 – Robin Kelly**

Fabulous as it is to be back in performance, Districts 1 & 4 have not been immune to the consequences of Covid. The rehearsal process has been interrupted by cast members testing positive or even dropping out during performance week. Clearly, plans now have to be made on the assumption that anyone might be affected and thus avoid last minute panics. Almost guaranteed audience members are now reluctant to attend. Straight plays have proved an even more difficult sell. However, some shows have proved to be box office winners. Centre Stage recently sold out their excellent production of Cats. Bromley Players sold out almost all performances of Shrek. This last production also featured what may be the first amateur Relaxed Performance in this country. It was especially pleasing to welcome NODA London Councillor Pam Armstrong and National President Gordon Richardson to the show. A further article will follow on how this was engineered - there's a lot to put in place! It looks like Katie enjoyed the Meet & Greet after the show! *(Photographs Courtesy Ken Boyce Centre – Choice support)*





*Photographs from the Bromley Players relaxed performance of 'Shrek'*

### **London District 6 – Paul Daynes**

There has been a good variety of shows performed in District 6 over the last few months; panto, musicals, comedy, melodrama and docudrama.

LADS have been busy with two plays, Gaslight in January and Frost Nixon in March/April. Gaslight is a 1938 play by Patrick Hamilton that has coined the contemporary term 'Gaslighting' for emotionally abusive behaviour. LADS presented a powerful production with many fine performances. It was good to see NODA London past Councillor Andrew Rogers back on stage.

Andrew also played President Richard Nixon in Frost/Nixon, the story of the famous David Frost interview from 1977. Christian Mortimer played David Frost and together they gave wonderful examples of character interpretation rather than impersonations.

Theydon Bois gave us the Alan Ayckbourn play, Neighbourhood Watch, in which an enthusiastic suburban group get rather out of control. This was an enthralling and funny ensemble piece, cleverly directed by Nicola Gilbert.

In February half term CADOS performed a traditional family Pantomime, Cinderella. With a cast and crew of over 30 everyone got to be together and enjoy this fun packed panto. All the ingredients were evident including a well-designed transformation scene using a back lit gauze to turn a pumpkin into a carriage. Very clever.

Havering Music Makers returned from the Covid break with a tremendous production of the musical Honk! This was a real winner with a fabulously talented cast performing to the very highest standards. It was good to see HMM back in the Kenneth More Theatre playing to good houses during early February when the Pandemic was still making audiences nervous to return.

WP Drama performed the Peter Gordan play Death by Fatal Murder, a spoof Agatha Christie 'whodunnit' set in 1940 and featuring a cast of stereotypical characters doing stereotypical things.....great fun for both cast and audience!

We are looking forward to three other member societies return to performance in April and early May. Ilford Operatic and Dramatic Society (IODS) are performing the musical Rent written by Jonathan Larson of Tick,Tick...Boom fame. This is at the Lovegrove Theatre, Redbridge Drama Centre. Barking Music and Drama (MaD) return to the Kenneth More Theatre 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May with the musical All Shook Up and Loughton Operatic Society (LOS) have a selection of songs from their favourite musicals at Lopping Hall with Let's Go On With The Show.

## London District 8 Report - Tony Austin

At last some good news from District 8 where the use of the Winston Churchill Hall as a vaccine hub finished on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the day my wife and I walked in and got our 4<sup>th</sup> jabs. Not that there is much sign of other activities being resumed there as I write this report. However, societies have been falling over themselves to get back to performing.

Argosy's first Easter Pantomime *Humpty Dumpty* has to take place at Douay Martyrs School, a new venue for them.

Harefield ADS are dipping their toe in gently with a Murder Mystery on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

And then between the 29<sup>th</sup> April and 7<sup>th</sup> May the District had four shows needing reviews:

Ruislip OS: *Legally Blonde* at The Compass Theatre, .

Ricky Players: *The Lady in the Van* at The Pump House, Watford.

Arrow Players: a new play *Wynter's Ending* by their member Mike Warrick at St Edmund's Hall.

Encore Junior Theatre: *Matilda Jnr* at The Compass – happily Annie will report for me.

Proscenium will be at The Compass May 18 to 21<sup>st</sup> with *The Memory of Water*.

Encore's *Shrek* has been fixed for the Questors in Ealing 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> July and with tickets already sold can't be shifted back to our area.

Future plans include several musicals and straight plays in the autumn, when Winston Churchill should be on our side again.

## London District 9 – Carole Baynes

I would like to say that everything is back to normal in District 9 but unfortunately all the events occurring worldwide have taken their toll on a couple of the groups and as yet they have not reconvened. All other company members are eager to make forward strides to bring amateur entertainment back to our theatres but with the two years of the pandemic and now the senseless destruction of a nation we are all experiencing further emotional as well as financial restraints. But I am sure that staying focused on our wonderful hobby will help to keep us sane.

The musical companies of District 9 have been affected by the loss of the only large theatre in the area (Winston Churchill Theatre) as it is a designated Vaccine Centre and will not be reopening as a theatre at least until the autumn. Alternative venues in the region fail to provide sufficient audience capacity to cover the costs of producing large scale musicals. KLOS Musical Theatre has fallen particularly foul of this. Their next production "Sister Act" was originally planned for March 2020 so of course could not go ahead. Eventually following the closure of Winston Churchill Theatre they booked an alternative venue and rehearsals recommenced with the intention of performing the end of this March. However a few weeks before curtain up the venue owners reneged on their booking. Yet again "Sister Act" was postponed. I believe they are now resigned to waiting for the reopening of WCT and will, hopefully, finally perform this show in October 2022.

WOS Productions have similarly been affected by the loss of WCT. To keep those members eager to perform, happy, they have started a splinter group – the Wospians - who have performed compilation concerts at a smaller venue. The first had a Christmas theme and the next one planned for May is a little more ambitious - they are doing a classical Old Time Music Hall tribute entitled "I Say, I Say, I Say" in Music Hall's original form with refreshments planned - as in its heyday - the Victorian/Edwardian period.

The Good Companions are fortunately able to continue at John Keble Hall Edgware as usual and are performing "The Revlon Girl" there, a play by Neil Anthony Docking set in Aberfan following the mining

disaster and is based on a real life story of the group of bereaved mothers who met weekly to help each other deal with their tragedy. This play is to be performed on 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The Chameleons ADS are similarly fortunate not to have lost their home and are working towards a production of "Vicar of Dibley" in June. However to keep their eager team busy they have recently streamed "The Importance of Being Earnest" as a radio play and a few of their singing members continue regular concerts to boost funds.

Pump House Theatre Company are 'back to normal' and are celebrating their 50 year anniversary with "One Man Two Guvnors" in April and "Black Adder Goes Forth" later in the year. Finally Harrow Opera Workshop are working towards the wonderful "Die Fledermaus" in October 2022.

### **London District 12 – Andrew Walter**

It was a particular pleasure to report on a couple of pantomimes this year, and to be reminded of how important they are to our theatres. All the traditional elements were there – the humour, the cross-dressing, the sinister characters, the audience participation. Above all, these were joyous community events, with plenty of young people in the cast as well as in the audience. These young people are the actors, technicians, volunteers and audience of the future.

Covid continues to cast a shadow over local productions. Oxford Operatic Society had to cancel the first night of "My Fair Lady" at the New Theatre, and did a terrific job getting the show on stage for the remainder of the run. Over in Abingdon, preparations for "Made in Dagenham" have been seriously disrupted, with no full company rehearsals for almost two months over the winter. I am writing this while self-isolating at home!

The outlook, however, is distinctly brighter, with many Oxfordshire groups taking to the stage in the next couple of months. Musical Youth Company of Oxford's presentation of "Legally Blonde" and Banbury Operatic Society's staging of "The Mikado" take place in the coming weeks, while May brings productions of "Ladies' Day" by The Bartholomew Players in Eynsham, "Nell Gwynn" by The Sinodun Players in Wallingford, and "Confusions" by Faringdon Dramatic Society at Buscot House – a venue I have never visited before.

Looking further ahead, Oxford Operatic Society will be returning to the Oxford Playhouse in July with "Calendar Girls". I suppose they thought it prudent to wait for some warmer weather.

### **London District 13 – Cate Naylor**

Amateur theatre in West Berkshire is back, and it has been such a pleasure to be invited to a variety of productions in the district. Covid has hit hard, and a lot of the shows I have seen had been delayed, but it was great to see them finally get to the stage. I am so pleased to have visited a lot of societies to review shows in the last six months and look forward to meeting many more in next season. Please do get in touch if you have not done so already.

**Progress Theatre** have been very busy and produced a play every month with some excellent performances. I saw Radiant Vermin in November, Babe the Sheep Pig performed jointly with their youth members in December, Dark Sublime in January and You's Two in March. They also ran their annual WriteFest which invites writers to submit new short one act plays and new directors to direct the plays and it was great to see such a variety.

**Henley Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society** finally managed to bring Shrek the Musical to the stage after an 18-month hiatus, followed by a supper performance of Hi De Hi in March. This was a lot of fun as we were served by the yellow coats!

**Woodley Light Operatic Society** brought their biennial production of a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera producing Iolanthe in December and entertained us with floaty fairies and in the finale peers with wings

**Shinfield Players Theatre** had great fun with their pantomime Snow White and the Four Swedish Popstars before Storm Eunice did her worst taking the roof of the theatre the week before their next production.

Currently the theatre is undergoing repairs, but rehearsals are still running for the rest of the seasons shows in other venues. They look forward to returning again to their theatre.

**Twyford and Ruscombe** brought a second pantomime for the season with Rapunzel, complete with an amazing rotating tower.

In March, **Henley Players** performed The Real Thing, a play within a play, cleverly leading us all to question 'when is love real'.

My final production of the season was Confusions from **Aldermaston Players**, another clever play, this one with five interlinked playlettes.

### **London District 14 – Nick Humby**

The first three months of 2022 have seen many societies getting back to normal and it has been great to get out and finally meet societies.

### **Pantomimes**

My final two pantomimes of the season were Adventures in Pantoland by **Quince Players** with a great sense of fun and an excellent fresh script and **Wraysbury Players's** Pied Piper giving the traditional story the pantomime treatment with a gag packed script.

### **Curtain Up**

Two very different shows under the same name were **Crowthorne Musical players** revue ,Curtain Up at The Wilde Theatre with a superb tribute to the people of Ukraine with a medley of Les Misérables lit in yellow and blue with neckerchiefs in same colours and a week later from **EBOS** at Pinewood Theatre an amusing five handed play about a group of women who inherit a theatre. It was also wonderful to present the **EBOS** technical wizard Duncan Bruce with his 25-year NODA award at their earlier AGM .

### **Maidenhead Drama Guild**

My second visit to this society at a different venue and a different sort of show. Two one act plays in Windsor with the two-handed thriller Blood on the canvas followed with the same two ladies and 4 others in the comedy Anger Management which gave them all a good chance to demonstrate a range of characterisations and styles.

### **Colnbrook Amateur Stage Theatre (CAST)**

The **CAST Academy** presented We will rock you at Colnbrook Village Hall with an academy graduate Jonathan Carlton, who has appeared in West End directing the young diverse cast in a lively show which gave everyone a role in the wonderful finale of Bohemian Rhapsody.

### **Coming up**

My first visits to see **Maidenhead Musical Comedy** present Wizard of Oz at Kenton theatre in April and **Maidenhead Operatic** in HMS Pinafore in May.

Then return visits to see **EBOS** The Boyfriend at Wilde Theatre as they celebrate their 70th anniversary, **Quince Players** in 'Allo 'Allo at Cordes Hall and the **Wraysbury Players** A Fete worse than death in May

A varied programme for the East Berkshire Theatre goers.

## NODA Theatre Summer School 2022



There are still a few places left so check out the website and see if there is anything listed which will enhance your knowledge, skills and enjoyment of theatre and 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 30<sup>th</sup> – August 6<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://www.noda.org.uk/summerschool).

### **NODA LONDON PROGRAMME AND POSTER COMPETITION**

Posters and programmes that were entered for the competition covering 2020 and 2021 have now been judged and the winners will be announced at the Regional Awards Presentation on 19 June. The winning entries in each category will be forwarded to compete in the National competition.

I am very pleased to report that we had more than 40 submissions and I will be contacting all competing societies at the end of June to give them feedback on their entries.

The competition for programmes and posters dated from January to December 2022 is now open.

Please take note of the changes to entry criteria  
The most important are:

- The NODA logo with the strapline "be inspired by amateur theatre" must be displayed on both programmes and posters.
- Programmes must include the paragraph "an introduction to NODA".

Both of these items may be downloaded from the NODA website

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



Programmes and posters should NOT use the NODA crest, which is being phased out.

The three categories of programmes have been renamed, they are now

Peacock Class – 24 sides or over including cover

Perkins Class – 16-20 sides including cover

Barnes Class – Up to 12 sides including cover

Posters may be up to a maximum of A3 size

From this year, we are able to accept electronic copies of posters which should be in pdf format. You may continue to submit paper copies of course.

**There are new entry forms for this year which may be found here.**

<https://www.noda.org.uk/regions/london/noda-london-poster-programme-competition-2023>

The closing date for entries is 31 January 2023

Good Luck!

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



### **Twenty-Five (now nearly twenty-seven) Years a Rep**

You can't get away with anything these days. There was I thinking that the Honorary Membership of NODA awarded to me by the National Council in September 2020 was no longer news, when at the first actual London Committee Meeting I had been able to attend after the pandemic, I was presented with the appropriate badge by Past National President Jacquie Stedman and photographed with her for Curtain-Up! to a round of applause from the rest of the team.

I have been asked to recall some memories of my time becoming a NODA Rep in 1995, although happily not too many. Low points in my first years were the lack of ambition in some societies which presented less than fully rehearsed plays, sometimes with inappropriate sets or costumes. But others, meticulous in

presentation and adventurous in repertoire, more than compensated. The worst example (happily in another London District whose Rep was unavailable) was a terrible attempt at *The Ghost Train*, where solecisms on and back stage led to prompt after prompt in the third Act. NODA London provided no review as “with lines not learned how could the cast define their characterisations?”

Musical Theatre was always my passion and I was privileged to have societies covering the gamut of the repertoire, with some still surviving to entertain me with a great variety of shows (Ruislip OS and Bishopshalt School, more recently joined by Encore Theatre Company and Rickmansworth Players). Sadly PHEOS (G&S leading to some very powerful more modern musicals), Players 2 (everything from classics to premieres of new American shows, really widening my experience) and my own society Harrow Light (a huge range of spectacular productions) no longer exist.

I was re-educated in pantomime (in over 50 productions) by Arrow Players) and Argosy Players. More welcome dramas and comedies still come from Ruislip DS and Harefield ADS (plus trips to other Districts) all properly directed and rehearsed.

And that is the difference for me between 1995 and 2022: the care and attention to detail, including sound where appropriate and lighting. (No longer are the cues just for the cast switching on the lights in the room – with some trepidation as to whether they will actually come on!) In particular, since more of my societies make their own scenery than in most Districts, the rock-firm walls and staircases as opposed to the wobbling flats, hopefully now only seen in *The Play That Goes Wrong*!

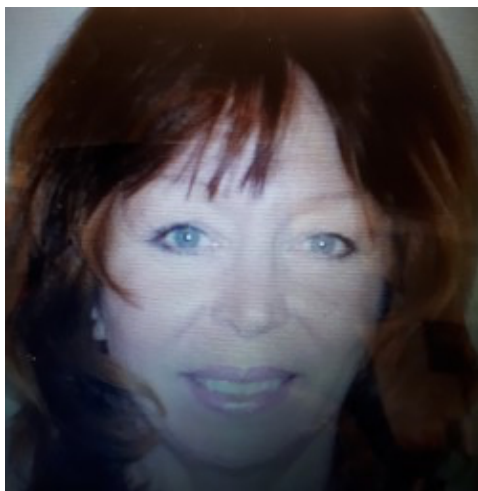
One more wonderful memory from the twentieth century: the Albert Hall celebrations for NODA’s centenary, when on one evening NODA societies did the entertaining and on another we saw and heard stars as famous as Howard Keel. We have a 125<sup>th</sup> year celebration coming up shortly, but I fancy the Albert Hall will need to wait 75 years longer.

**Tony Austin, Regional Representative, London District 8**

*Tony has always been a stalwart of the London Regional Committee and I was delighted and privileged to be able to work with him during my 12 years as London Regional Councillor. He brought a wealth of knowledge to his role and has supported his groups superbly over the years. He is also a wonderful wordsmith and has provided just the right words for various award documents which are still in use today – they cannot be bettered. Thank you Tony, for your wonderful, and very much appreciated, contribution!!!*

*Jacquie Stedman*

## It’s a 60 Year Badge for Annie!!!!



I started dancing when I was 3 and Mum expected me to give it up when I went to school but, by then, I was hooked and although, my ambitions to be a professional ballet dancer were frustrated by lack of funding, I carried on my training and finished with 2 years at London Dance Centre.

Several other young dancers and I were spotted by the Director of Hillingdon Musical Society, which rehearsed in the same venue as we had our classical ballet classes..... so my first amateur show was Glamorous Night in 1962 .

Once I started work proper (at Kodak) I joined the Kodak Theatre Group and Wembley Operatic Society, guested with many local societies and finally joined Hornsey Operatic and Dramatic Society and performed in musicals and pantomimes as a dancer and choreographer.

In 1986 I directed and choreographed my first show with Cuffley Operatic Society (Orpheus in the Underworld) and have since worked with countless societies on a wide variety of shows.

I attended the NODA Operatic Summer School in Ripon for 25 years, again as a performer and then as a Director and Choreographer, have been the NODA London Youth Coordinator for 14 years.

When I retired from full time employment I fulfilled a dream and set up a weekly school for young people teaching singing, dancing and acting for 13 years. Eleven annual Summer Schools followed attracting more than 50 young performers each year and winning several NODA London Awards.

The energy and enthusiasm and I hope to be working on more shows in the years ahead.

Annie Hertler-Smith, NODA London Youth Coordinator

### Shakespeare at the Greek (Theatre Players)



As You Like It - photograph by Kate Arkless Gray

Imagine, if you will, that you are a 1920s schoolgirl. How excited would you be when told that the council offered to build a swimming pool in your school grounds? What would you then feel when you find out your new Headmistress has persuaded them to build a replica Greek Theatre instead?

Judging by reports in the school magazine, the pupils at Walthamstow School for Girls were actually quite delighted. Replica Greek Theatres had become a feature of the most prestigious public schools, an index of a school's status. However, as far as we know, the theatre built in 1924 is the only one built in a council run school as part of the public works carried out in the 1920s to combat the terrible recession that followed the First World War. It was funded by The West Ham Board of Guardians, which also provided the labour. This Board was responsible for administering the 400-year old Poor Law across North East London, and had embarked on an ambitious programme of public works including road works, lidos - and a Greek Theatre.

Quite remarkably, the theatre was officially opened with a performance of the Greek tragedy Medea, starring renowned theatre and film actor Sybil Thorndike, who revived her West End production for the occasion. Aside from a little maintenance work carried out a decade ago, Dame Sybil would still recognise the theatre, which sits to this day as part of our local heritage nestled in the heart of Walthamstow Village.



The school's productions eventually evolved into productions by an Old Girls' Society. This in turn expanded suddenly in 1958 to involve amateur actors from all over the borough: the Greek Theatre Players was born as a loose knit group that coalesces each year to produce a Shakespeare play.

The main aims of the Players are to provide good quality drama locally at the best price possible and to make best use of this remarkable local theatre. It aims to cover costs while funding high quality productions worthy of the venue. Its constitution commits the Players to present "traditional" Shakespeare, which means working hard to present an honest, accessible and entertaining play based on close reading of the text. It's Shakespeare as intended; outdoor, colourful and intimately close to the audience. And who wouldn't want to challenge and improve their skills working on the finest and most rewarding plays written? Moreover, audiences agree that on a summer's evening, The Greek Theatre is a superb place to be; actors would agree it's a uniquely magical space to perform in.

A committee selects each year's play from suggestions and proposals to direct. Everyone can apply and everyone is welcome to audition – the group always embraces new members and fresh talent. This year's production is **TWELFTH NIGHT**, playing at the theatre from July 27<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>.



King Lear – photograph by Lindsey Sculfour

Please see the website for full details and information on how to get involved in future productions.

[www.greektheatreplayers.co.uk](http://www.greektheatreplayers.co.uk)





## **RADLETT MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY**

50 years ago a small group of people, who loved singing and acting, met together in someone's house – and Radlett Light Opera Society was born. Their first production was 'The Gondoliers', by Gilbert and Sullivan (G&S), and this was the start of a highly successful Society.

Over the years the Society, now called Radlett Musical Theatre Company, has adapted to the changing times. From G & S and operetta we moved to American musicals, then to Andrew Lloyd Webber and other more modern shows. We were proud to be the first amateur company to perform 'Cats' and are now delighted to be the first in the area to stage Disney's 'The Little Mermaid', from the 11th-15<sup>th</sup> October 2022, at the Radlett Centre.

Our Golden Year commenced in October with 'Gold', a compilation of numbers from shows we have performed or would like to perform. One of our inaugural members, Ann Williams, was on stage with us! In March we staged 'All Shook Up', a 50's Elvis-inspired show. In April we reprised 'The Gondoliers', a Bring and Sing in the Church Hall where we have always rehearsed, and included some members who have been with us for more than 40 years. We will be dancing the night away at a Golden Summer Ball in July.

Our annual calendar includes two main shows at the Radlett Centre; a 'fringe' show at a local venue, to showcase new Directors and smaller productions; a 'One-Nighter' of songs and dances from shows; and a varied programme of social activities.

50 years on we pride ourselves on being welcoming to all new members, on or off stage, and on entertaining audiences with high quality amateur productions.

If anyone is interested in joining, do contact us on [membership@rmtc.org.uk](mailto:membership@rmtc.org.uk).

Val Penketh, President

Gilly Morris, Honorary Vice President

**COPY DATE FOR THE SUMMER ISSUE**

**27<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST.....AT THE VERY LATEST.....SOONER IF POSSIBLE**

**IF SUPPLYING PHOTOGRAPHS (AND PLEASE TRY TO) PLEASE ADD A CREDIT TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER**

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF BOTH CURTAIN UP! AND**

**NODA TODAY**



## Remembering Dr. Ron Hewitt

It is with great sadness that I have to announce that following a short illness, Ron Hewitt died in hospital, aged 95 years, just before midnight on Tuesday 9th March 2021

Ron joined Oxford Operatic Society in 1954 and his active involvement spanned 61 years until he retired as President of the Society in 2015.

Over the years Ron played numerous leading parts, specializing, much to the delight and enjoyment of audiences, in the 'patter' roles for many G&S productions. In 2001 he celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> principal role as the Judge in G&S's Trial by Jury. It was not only on stage that Ron excelled. He worked tirelessly for the Society and for many years was Chairman and then Vice President, before becoming President in 2008.

Always modest and unassuming Ron devoted a lifetime to the continuous existence and development of the Oxford Operatic Society. Ron has made an indelible mark on the Society's history and our archives hold an impressive collection of photographs of past productions from the 1950's.

He was loved by many, both in the Society and in our audience and will be greatly missed.

Marilyn Moore – Oxford Operatic Society

## Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday to THE PUMP HOUSE THEATRE COMPANY, WATFORD

The Pump House Theatre Company in Watford is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year since its first production in 1972. A small band of enthusiasts was asked by the South West Drama Council to form a group with the sole intention of providing innovative, and challenging theatre amateur theatre for the local community. Shows that were different from the standard amateur theatre offerings by other companies of the time. So, what was then the Little Theatre Company was formed, and a venue found at the lower end of Watford High Street in Local Board Road, where an old Victorian Pumping Station had become available **The Pump House**. The group became The Pump House Theatre Company, and over the first few years started to renovate the building to create the Arts Centre. The first show was **No No Nanette**, which, whilst rehearsed in 1972 at The Pump House, was put on at St. Johns Road, whilst renovations took place.



**Cast of No No Nanette 1972**



**Cast of our last show Cheshire Cats 2021**

Within a couple of years The Pump House Children & Youth Theatre was formed. Thanks to the dedication of those pioneers, and of the growing number of volunteers over the years, our productions now are in a comfortable, tiered studio theatre that seats just over 120 people. There are bar areas, rehearsal rooms and meeting places, where other groups share the centre's facilities.

Today the Pump House Centre is thriving, and is the home to other theatre companies, Folk, and Jazz clubs, Clog Morris Dancing, Open Mic Nights, Art, and Film Clubs, and theatre educational classes.

The Pump House Theatre Company continues to put on top class innovative productions. In April this year there was **One Man Two Guvnors**, by Richard Bean, with a live skiffle band.



And to mark it's 50 years of productions the PHTC are performing Richard Curtis and Ben Elton's **Blackadder Goes Forth**.

The company is always looking out for new members, both on and off stage. Further details can be found at [www.pumphousetheatrecompany.com](http://www.pumphousetheatrecompany.com)

Here's to the next 50 years at The Pump House Theatre Watford...everyone is always welcome!!





@PNDphotography

## BROS REMEMBERS SONDHEIM

### "Dreams don't die, so keep an eye on your dream"

Multi award-winning BROS Theatre Company were proud to bring Sondheim's iconic 'Merrily We Roll Along' to Hampton Hill Theatre, Twickenham, for 6 performances earlier this month.

Director Paul Turnbull, a previous winner of the NODA District 3 award for Best Musical with "A Little Night Music" in 2017, was back again with BROS TC. Their reputation for offering audiences consistently high-quality productions year in year out precedes them, and he was determined that this will be no exception.

'Merrily We Roll Along' is a musical with a book by George Firth and lyrics and music by Stephen Sondheim. It is based on the 1934 play of the same name by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart.

It tells the story of what happens when friendship is tainted by ambition. In reverse. The show starts at the end of the story, in the late 1970's when we're introduced to the three central characters, each damaged in their own way and with the bond between them apparently irreparable. We then travel backwards through time, watching the moments of their lives that led them from young 60's idealists who shared the same dreams, to bitter artists wondering what might have been.

The end of the show marks the beginning of their story where everything seems possible, even though we already know how things finish.

Friendship, compromise, and the high price of success, this is a poignant and emotional contemporary story about the importance of staying true to one's ideals. With a brilliant "Broadway-style" score and that deep insight one expects from any Sondheim endeavour, *Merrily We Roll Along* is a spirited and moving cautionary tale for anyone who has ever pursued a dream. It played to full houses and was warmly received by a very appreciative audience and was a most fitting tribute to the genius of Stephen Sondheim



In memory of Stephen Sondheim

1930-2021



## WHAT'S ON IN THE LONDON REGION

### **ANGELS IN AMERICA, PARTS I & II** by Tony Kushner

20 Jun 22 – 02 Jul 22

Progress Theatre

Progress Theatre RG1 5HL

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/progresstheatre>

### **ANYTHING GOES**

21 Jun 22 - 25 Jun 22

Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company

The Boxmoor Playhouse HP1 1NP

Box Office: 0333 6663366

[www.hhtheatreco.com/anything-goes](http://www.hhtheatreco.com/anything-goes)

### **JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH** by Roald Dahl

24 Jun 22 - 02 Jul 22

Garden Suburb Theatre

Little Wood Open Air Theatre NW11 6QS

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

### **RENT**

21 Jun 22 - 26 June 22

St Albans Musical Theatre Company

Roman Theatre Open Air Festival

<http://www.samtc.org.uk/>

<https://ovo.org.uk/whats-on-roman/>

### **YOU CAN'T STOP THE BEAT (interactive show for children)**

22 - 26 Jun 22

St Albans Musical Theatre Company

Roman Theatre Open Air Festival

<http://www.samtc.org.uk/>

<https://ovo.org.uk/whats-on-roman/>

### **AN EVENING IN LITTLE GRIMLEY**

30 Jun 22 - 02 Jul 22

Masque Players of West Wycombe

West Wycombe Village Hall HP14 3AB

[www.masque-players.co.uk/product-category/grimley-2022](http://www.masque-players.co.uk/product-category/grimley-2022)

### **HUSHABYE MOUNTAIN** by Jonathan Harvey

30 Jun 22 - 02 Jul 22

WP Drama

Redbridge Drama Centre E18 2RB

[www.wpdrama.co.uk](http://www.wpdrama.co.uk)

### **SWEENEY TODD THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET**

04 Jul 22 – 09 Jul 22

Erith Playhouse Ltd

Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

### **LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!** by Terrence McNally

05 Jul 22 - 09 Jul 22

Stock Exchange Dramatic and Operatic Society

Bridewell Theatre EC4Y 8EQ

[www.sedos.co.uk/shows/2021-love-valour-compassion](http://www.sedos.co.uk/shows/2021-love-valour-compassion)

### **NOBODY'S PERFECT** by Simon Williams

05 Jul 22 - 09 Jul 22

Thame Players Theatre Company

Players Theatre OX9 2DP

Box Office: 01844 290888

[www.thameplayers.co.uk/events/nobodys-perfect](http://www.thameplayers.co.uk/events/nobodys-perfect)

**THE VICAR OF DIBLEY** by Ian Gower & Paul Carpenter

08 Jul 22 - 10 Jul 22

The Chameleons

St Erconwalds Church Hall HA9 8NB

Box Office: 020 8123 6443

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/chameleonsdrama](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chameleonsdrama)

**SOMETHING'S COMING A Celebration of Musical Theatre "Sondheim to Schwartz"**

08 Jul 22 - 09 Jul 22

Musical Youth Company of Oxford (MYCO)

The Amey Theatre OX14 1DE

Box Office: 01865 686481

<https://myco.foxwellboxoffice.co.uk/>

**CALENDAR GIRLS** the musical

11 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Oxford Operatic Society

Oxford Playhouse OX1 2LW

[www.oxfordplayhouse.com/events/calendar-girls#dates-and-times](http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com/events/calendar-girls#dates-and-times)

**THE TRAIL TO OREGON!**

13 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Dartford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society

Heathfields Hall DA1 2TW

[www.daods.co.uk](http://www.daods.co.uk)

**BEDROOM FARCE** by Alan Ayckbourn

13 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Sinodun Players

Corn Exchange OX10 0EG

Box Office: 01491 825000

<https://cornexchangewallingford.savoyssystems.co.uk/CornExchangeWallingford.dll>

**ENTERTAINING ANGELS** by Richard Everett

14 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Abbots Langley Players

Henderson Hub WD5 0AR

Box Office: 01923 601280

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/alp](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/alp)

**LEGALLY BLONDE**

14 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Havering Music Makers

Queen's Theatre RM11 1QT

Box Office: 01708 443333

[www.haveringmusicmakers.co.uk](http://www.haveringmusicmakers.co.uk)

**ALADDIN**

15 Jul 22 - 24 Jul 22

Lane End Players

The Village Hall HP14 3ER

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/laneendplayers](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/laneendplayers)

**A MUSICAL JUBILEE** (concert)

16 Jul 22 - 17 Jul 22

Launton Village Players

Mayflower Garden Theatre OX26 5AB

Box Office: 07864 715708

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/lvp](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/lvp)

**THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR** by William Shakespeare

20 Jul 22 - 23 Jul 22

Mayhem Theatre Company

Cannizaro Park SW19 4UE

[www.mayhemtheatre.co.uk/merry-wives-of-windsor.html](http://www.mayhemtheatre.co.uk/merry-wives-of-windsor.html)

**THE KITCHEN SINK** by Tom Wells

20 Jul 22 - 23 Jul 22

Beaufort Players

Church of the Ascension Hall W5 3EB

[www.beaufortplayers.org.uk/productions](http://www.beaufortplayers.org.uk/productions)

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS** by Charles Dickens

20 Jul 22 - 30 Jul 22

Progress Theatre

Reading Abbey Ruins RG1 3BA

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/progresstheatre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/progresstheatre)

**OUR SUMMER OF LOVE** (concert)

22 Jul 22 - 23 Jul 22

HEOS Musical Theatre

St Thomas The Apostle Church Hall W7 2AD

Box Office: 07727 448760

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

**BEDROOM FARCE** by Alan Ayckbourn

13 Jul 22 - 16 Jul 22

Sinodun Players

Corn Exchange OX10 0EG

Box Office: 01491 825000

<https://cornexchangewallingford.savoyssystems.co.uk/CornExchangeWallingford.dll/>

**LOUDER THAN WORDS** A celebration of diverse voices

24 Jul 22 - 24 Jul 22

Festoon Theatre Company

The Vaults Theatre SE1 7AD

Box Office: 0207 401 9603

<https://www.thevaults.london/louder-than-words>

**CENTRE STAGE'S HUGE STICK OF MUSICAL ROCK** (concert)

26 Jul 22 - 30 Jul 22

Centre Stage London

Bridewell Theatre EC4Y 8EQ

[www.centrestage.london/huge-stick-of-musical-rock](http://www.centrestage.london/huge-stick-of-musical-rock)

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE** by Jane Austen

27 Jul 22 - 30 Jul 22

Croydon Operatic & Dramatic Association (CODA)

Wandle Park Bandstand CR0 3RD

<https://codashows.co.uk/product/pride-prejudice>

**ABIGAIL'S PARTY** by Mike Leigh

27 Jul 22 - 30 Jul 22

Barnes Community Players Ltd

OSO Arts Centre SW13 0LF

[www.facebook.com/BCPSW13/](http://www.facebook.com/BCPSW13/)

**TWELFTH NIGHT**

27 Jul 22 - 30 Jul 22

Greek Theatre Players

The Greek Theatre E17 9SB

[www.greektheatreplayers.co.uk/2022-cymbaline](http://www.greektheatreplayers.co.uk/2022-cymbaline)

**SHREK THE MUSICAL**

11 Aug 22 - 13 Aug 22

The Quay Players

Greenwood Theatre SE1 3RA

<https://quayplayers.org.uk/tickets>

**THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE**

09 Aug 22 - 13 Aug 22

East Berkshire Operatic Society (EBOS)

The Whitty Theatre RG40 3EU

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/ebos](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/ebos)

**KIPPS** the new Half a Sixpence musical

12 Aug 22 - 13 Aug 22

Youth of Banbury Operatic Society

Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY

<https://www.yobos.co.uk/tickets>

**POMONA** by Alistair McDowell

12 Sep 22 – 17 Sep 22

Erith Playhouse Ltd

Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

**5 LESBIANS EATING A QUICHE** by Andrew Hobgood & Evan Linder

15 Sep 22 - 17 Sep 22

Kings Langley Players

Kings Langley Community Centre WD4 8ET

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

[www.klp.org.uk/current-show](http://www.klp.org.uk/current-show)

**BLACKADDER GOES FORTH** by Ian Gower & Paul Carpenter

19 Sep 22 - 24 Sep 22

Pump House Theatre Company

The Pump House Theatre WD17 2JP

Box Office: 0333 6663366

[www.pumphousetheatrecompany.com](http://www.pumphousetheatrecompany.com)

**OUR HOUSE**

20 Sep 22 - 24 Sep 22

TOPS Musical Theatre Company

Hampton Hill Theatre TW12 1NY

[www.topsmusicals.co.uk/#buytickets](http://www.topsmusicals.co.uk/#buytickets)

**LIVING TOGETHER** by Alan Ayckbourn

22 Sep 22 - 24 Sep 22

Swanley Light Opera Group

Darenth Village Hall DA2 7LL

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/SLOG](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/SLOG)

**BONNIE & CLYDE**

27 Sep 22 - 01 Oct 22

Festoon Theatre Company

Bridewell Theatre EC4Y 8EQ

[www.festoontheatrecompany.co.uk/box-office](http://www.festoontheatrecompany.co.uk/box-office)

**CHILDREN OF EDEN**

28 Sep 22 - 01 Oct 22

Ruislip Operatic Society

Winston Churchill Theatre HA4 7QL

Box Office: 07905 932366

[www.hillingdontheatres.uk/index.php/events/children-of-eden](http://www.hillingdontheatres.uk/index.php/events/children-of-eden)

**SING FROM THE HEART**

30 Sep 22 - 02 Oct 22

Henley Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (HAODS)

HAODS Studio RG9 2BP

Box Office: 01491 525050

<https://kentontheatre.co.uk/event/sing-from-the-heart>

**SEE HOW THEY RUN** by Philip King

10 Oct 22 – 15 Oct 22

Erith Playhouse Ltd

Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

**DISNEY'S THE LITTLE MERMAID**

11 Oct 22 - 14 Oct 22

Radlett Musical Theatre Company

The Radlett Centre, WD7 8HL

<https://mail.radlettcentre.co.uk/What-s-On/Theatre/Little-Mermaid>

**ME AND MY GIRL**

18 Oct 22 - 23 Oct 22

ELODS

Wylyotts Theatre EN6 2HN

Box Office: 01707 645005

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



**PYGMALION – George Bernard Shaw**

19-22 October 2022  
Belmont Theatre  
The Pump House Theatre, Watford  
[www.belmonttheatre.co.uk](http://www.belmonttheatre.co.uk)

**HAIRSPRAY**

26 Oct 22 - 29 Oct 22  
Chingford Amateur Dramatic & Operatic Society (CADOS)  
Mornington Hall E4 7ER  
Box Office: 07445 650935  
[www.cados.org](http://www.cados.org)

**KISS ME KATE**

26 Oct 22 - 29 Oct 22  
Mill Hill Musical Theatre Company  
Hartley Hall NW7 2JA  
[www.mhmtc.co.uk](http://www.mhmtc.co.uk)

**DIE FLEDERMAUS**

27 Oct 22 - 29 Oct 22  
Harrow Opera Workshop  
Compass Theatre UB10 8PD  
[www.harrowopera.com](http://www.harrowopera.com)

**YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**

01 Nov 22 - 05 Nov 22  
Green Room Productions  
Wyllyotts Theatre EN6 2HN  
[www.greenroomproductions.co.uk](http://www.greenroomproductions.co.uk)

**ASSASSINS**

07 Nov 22 – 12 Nov 22  
Erith Playhouse Ltd  
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY  
Box Office: 0333 666 3366  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

**MOANA THE MUSICAL JR.**

11 Nov 22 - 12 Nov 22  
Avocet Theatre Company  
Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY  
<https://www.avocettheatre.co.uk/tickets>

**ALADDIN**

30 Nov 22 – 04 Dec 22  
British Airways Cabin Crew Entertainments Society  
The Beck Theatre UB3 2UE  
Box Office: 020 8561 7506  
[www.baccas.com](http://www.baccas.com)

**FARNDALE AVENUE...CHRISTMAS CAROL by David McGillivray and Walter Zerdin Jr**

05 Dec 22-10 Dec 22  
Erith Playhouse Ltd  
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY  
Box Office: 0333 666 3366  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

**2023****MOTHER GOOSE**

07 Jan 23 - 21 Jan 23  
Erith Playhouse Ltd  
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY  
Box Office: 0333 666 3366  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited)

## 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, 9 font)
Name of Society	(Arial, 9 font)
Venue	(Arial, 9 font)
Box Office number	(Arial, 9 font)
Website	(Arial, 9 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](http://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](mailto:paul.holgate@noda.org.uk)

Thank you – Ed.