



CURTAIN UP

the newsletter for

noda London

Be inspired by amateur theatre

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Summer 2023 issue



Welcome to the Spring issue of Curtain Up! –

It's lovely to have the good weather now – it certainly makes going to rehearsals more pleasant – but that means our annual Regional Day is on the horizon. The District Winners are on the NODA website and I know there has been great excitement around that news. Please don't forget to book your tickets to ensure you have a seat for what promises to be a great day for the region in the presence of the NODA National President, Nick Lawrence. Pam and her team have organised a full day so check out the details on the website to be on the safe side timewise. I look forward to seeing you there and wish you all the best of luck!!

Jacquie Stedman – Editor

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Councillor's Update



What a pleasure it is to see societies returning in full force and, dare I say, back to normal, with such an excellent array of shows being presented this Spring. A number of societies have commented that bookings for seats are being left much later, but it is notable that shows are selling really well – which seems to indicate that having been 'starved' of such excellent entertainment over the difficult period we have all lived through, audiences are very keen to get back to live events, and appreciate their value more than ever. With working from home becoming commonplace, getting out to live and shared events is even more important and special.

With the standard of performance that abounds in our Region, societies are providing an enjoyable and stimulating experience in a congenial atmosphere at a more than sensible price – what a recipe for an excellent evening out. A number of societies are also providing Signed and/or Relaxed performances ensuring their shows are accessible to all. NODA is here to assist if you need advice on this aspect.

We are very happy to welcome Thomas Lennon as the new Regional Representative for District 7. You will find his bio after the district reports. Welcome Thomas!! May your association with NODA London be a long and happy one. Please contact Thomas at thomas.lennon@noda.org.uk In good time to invite him to your productions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Holgate for 'holding the fort' in District 7 until now.

A couple of reminders for you :

NODA London Celebration Day and AGM will be taking place on Sunday 18 June 2023 at The Radlett Centre, Radlett and I very much look forward to welcoming you in person at Radlett.

The ever-popular NODA Theatre Summer School is taking place between 29th July – 5th August at Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffs. When bookings were open in December it sold really fast – see if you can grab one of the few remaining places at NODA's professional training event.

Don't forget to reward and honour your long-standing members with NODA's Long Service Awards which may be ordered through the NODA website – prices are from £15. If you need any assistance Jackie Lack, our LSA Secretary, will be pleased to help. jackie.lack@noda.org.uk

Pam Armstrong, Regional Councillor, NODA London

District Round-up – News from around the Region

London District 1 – Matt Bentley

As someone from a part of the world where the seasons are less extreme, I always dread the winter months, as I travel both to and from work in darkness. Fortunately this year there has been plenty of theatre to add some bright spots and soften the blow.

One highlight of this winter has been the number of companies in the district that have taken the risk to produce scripts written by their members. These include Quay Players' panto *Little Red*, New Stagers' panto *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Book Club*, a comedy also produced by New Stagers. All of these were very well crafted and, if I hadn't known otherwise, I would have assumed they were published scripts. There is a huge amount of work put into these projects, particularly as the writers are often also involved in the creative teams, so my congratulations and respect went to all three of these productions.

Another highlight for me was Sedos' production of *Amadeus*. One of my earliest theatre memories is watching my father run around the stage in manic glee in the title role. This production transformed the Bridewell into a stave of musical notation, with all the opulence you would expect from the script, as well as the addition of an innovative cat-based opera. Very entertaining.

I was sorry to miss out on Geoids' production of *Singin' in the Rain*. My visit to that show fell afoul of the perennial issue of shows clashing during half-terms due to the availability of school-based theatres (side note: London needs more theatres for amateur companies). Fortunately, our Regional Councillor Pam was able to attend and assures me it was excellent.

However, I was able to make it to Opera Integra's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, performed in concert format in a lovely local church. This performance had been postponed at the last minute due to Covid so it was excellent to see it come together.

I most recently attended Sedos' production of *The Effect*, written by Lucy Prebble and timed well to coincide with the fourth season of her latest project, *Succession*. This was a thrilling exploration of science and the human condition, taken to another level by an exciting design concept and some top-notch acting.

So District 1 is in very good shape as we head into the lighter months. There are already some intriguing productions on the horizon and I very much look forward to seeing you all in a theatre soon.

London District 2 – Mike Smith

Riding on the wave of many successful pantomime productions and building on the momentum gained at the end of 2022, District 2 Societies seem to be bursting with enthusiasm and energy – much to the delight of returning audiences.

It has been such a pleasure to witness the smiles, enjoyment and appreciation of those being entertained.

Julian Operatic staged a most enjoyable production of *The Mikado* at the Questors Theatre in Ealing and have plans for two further events in the coming months, an informal musical entertainment programme after Easter, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* in the Autumn.

Many congratulations to BACCES (British Airways Cabin Crew Entertainment Society) for their production of *Aladdin*, which raised a magnificent sum of £30,000. This was divided equally between the three chosen charities for the year.

The Little Mermaid has proved to be a popular choice with societies of late with two productions in District 2. A pantomime version by Beaufort Players and the musical version by Hillingdon Musical Society – both shows much enjoyed.

It never fails to amaze me what talent we have in our (so called) “Amateur” groups. Not only in acting ability but vocally, dance, direction, choreography, lighting, sound, costume, props, set construction, stage crew, front of house – and all the vital roles that play such an important part in any Society production.

It is a constant delight when you see all of these working in harmony. My visit to HEOS Musical Theatre’s performance of 42nd Street certainly showcased all of these elements. Just another example of the abundance of talent we have in our District.

As with most other Districts, future shows are already planned – some already in rehearsal – I look forward to each and every one. With costs continuing to rise budgets will be stretched – but the show will go on!! Good Luck!

London District 3 – Des Wilby

After the long and difficult time it is great to see the ever increasing activity in District 3. Since my last update there have been excellent productions from WPDS (Aladdin), PLOS (Cinderella), BCP (Wizard of Oz), Cygnet Players (Young Frankenstein), BROS (Love & Passion), St. Faith’s Players (Wizard of Oz) and Carlton Theatre Group (ENRON).

A very special note to Kingston Vale Theatre Group (KVTG) who staged their first production since November 2019. With many hurdles to overcome (not just Covid) their production of ‘Nativity – The Musical’ showcased many happy faces together with a very appreciative audience!

I am very fortunate to have a wide variety of strong groups in District 3 and this really does pose nomination issues for NODA awards. I have finally completed these, however, and look forward to seeing as many District 3 groups as possible at NODA’s Award Day on June 18th.

I will actually be onstage myself in several weeks for WPDS (The Hollow). Following this, I look forward to attending TOPS (Carousel), Zodiac (Everyone’s talking about Zodiac), HLO (Spring Concert), CTG (Anne Boleyn), WLOS (Curtains) and BCP (The Incident Room). Sadly, I will not be able to enjoy BROS (Half a Sixpence) since they will be performing at the Minack in Penzance. In the past, this tradition has provided much joy to cast, crew and audiences alike. I’m sure this occasion will be a great success for BROS!

I shall actually be stepping down as District 3 Rep at NODA’s Award Day (June 18th) but will ensure the transition to my replacement is made smoothly. Thanks to everyone at NODA, and to those District 3 societies in particular. Your support and warmth over the past years has been greatly appreciated.

London District 4 – Robin Kelly.

Judging by the frequency of productions in District 4, Covid increasingly seems more of a distant memory. However the incidence of repeat infections clearly means we must still be on our guard.

Having reported on concerns around reduced ticket sales in my last report, it is pleasing to note that there appears to be an uptick in local attendances, with Bromley Players and Eldorado Musical Productions reporting sell out performances for current productions. How much of this has to do with production choice is of course difficult to say but we take encouragement where we can!

A shout out now for Pavilion Players who have now formed a new youth section. With DAODS Youth Group now re-established, Bob Hope Theatre New Stagers and Erith Playhouse continuing their good work, the future for amateur theatre in District 4 looks promising! For anyone currently involved in youth theatre, there are still some places on the NODA Theatre Summer School Youth Leadership course. This, as with all other courses at Summer School, is highly recommended. Having attended (and seen) NODA Theatre Summer School in action personally, I can vouch for the quality of tuition and overall experience.

Finally, many thanks to everyone who got in touch to express their support for my ongoing treatment for Prostate Cancer. I am pleased to report that radiotherapy has now been completed, with lingering side

effects gradually dissipating. From a NODA point of view, it was well timed in enabling me to attend all scheduled productions. Although not entirely out of the woods yet with treatment continuing until 2025, I know that I am in very good hands at Guy's so everything is looking good.

I look forward to seeing you again soon!

London District 6 – Paul Daynes

So far 2023 has seen increasing ticket sales and a festival of productions across District 6.

Of special note was a Saturday Directors' workshop organised by LADS and run by Sarah Osbourne of NODA Summer School Fame. There was a great mix of nearly twenty people from a variety of District 6 societies all working and learning together. Many thanks to Cathy Naylor and LADS for hosting this fantastic day and to Sarah for some inspired ideas and encouraging people to give directing a go.

We had a welcome return to NODA for The Woodhouse Players who produced two one-act plays as a Double Bill at their home in Leytonstone. All Hallows Eve and Tracks worked very well together and The Woodhouse team went on to have success with these plays in the Waltham Forest Festival of Theatre in March.

We had two wonderful Pantomimes by Woodford and Theydon Bois, Cinderella and Robin Hood respectively. Whilst being very different productions both had the warmth and magic that Panto brings to its audiences.

The 39 Steps by LADS in January had just four players take on the dozens of characters with all the capers of the John Buchan novel, via Hitchcock and Patrick Barlow. It's a very funny show and had the audiences roaring with laughter.

Likewise, WP Drama's Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, adapted by Constance Cox from the Oscar Wilde short story was a play packed with laughter and comedy. This production got the tone just right and the wonderful performances made for a happy evening at Redbridge Drama Centre.

In contrast, CADOS's Hard Times brought historic tales of Dicken's industrial Victorian northern Coketown. A large cast did a tremendous job telling this story, expertly adapted by Director Judith Jackson. In May they also put together an evening of creative work with eight short plays written, directed and acted by themselves. This was presented as Creative Streaks.

The Father was LADS' March production which provides challenging insights into dementia. This carefully navigated play disorients the audience and makes them mistrust what they are seeing. The lead role was expertly portrayed by Andrew Rogers who continues to enthral audiences at Lopping Hall.

Havering Music Makers' production of The Wedding Singer at the KMT in Ilford was tremendous with 29 cast, 10 band and a crew of 12 plus the FOH team, this was a complete company show where teamwork and fun shone through. Great singing and dancing warmed cold February nights and made for a winter highlight.

The Addams Family welcomed the IODS audiences into their home in April with a very funny production. The look, feel and style with this familiar family made for a ghoulish evening with some fantastic performances.

Keeping on the horror theme Loughton Operatic Society opened the Little Shop of Horrors in May. This very colourful and energetic production with its glorious plant puppets brought much laughter rather than fear to Lopping Hall. Clara Beauchamp and Luke O'Keefe played the lead roles superbly.

The Summer Season line up looks like being another sunny theatrical period for District 6.

London District 8 Report - Tony Austin

I ended the current NODA Year (which runs from April to March) in the difficult situation of having seen the last musical of the year for review on March 30th, and only being able to

consider who to choose for the various Musical Award nominations for the District, all of which needed to be carefully worded and submitted to the judging Panel before April 10th.

I was similarly busy in May when once more (as happened in January) I was faced with at least five productions within thirteen days:

6th May Encore Junior in *Grease Junior*

11th May Rickmansworth Players in *Nell Gwynn*

12th May Arrow Players in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

17th May Ruislip DS in *Bedroom Farce*

18th May Harefield ADS in *Vicars in a Twist*

Proscenium played *Art* over the end of May and the beginning of June. There may yet be announcements of other productions, but the summer does thankfully look much calmer.

So far in the autumn I know that Encore Theatre will do *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* at the beginning of November, with Ricky Players' *Kipps* later in the month.

A special mention for Ruislip OS who are celebrating their Centenary with *Crazy for You* (booked before the West End run was announced!) and *White Christmas* (towards the year's end), as well as a grand Dinner Dance in July. I have asked them to write something for Curtain Up! so watch this space.

London District 9 – Carole Baynes

Spring is a busy time of year for amateur theatre with most societies in full performance mode - District 9 is no exception.

The Chameleons ADS were unable to secure a venue for their pantomime this year, unfortunately but undaunted they successfully put together a compilation of radio themed sketches & monologues with music and laughter entitled "Radio Times 2" at their usual venue, in March. They are now early in their rehearsal period for Agatha Christie's "Verdict" which they will perform in June. Pump House Theatre Company are on stage, imminently, with a new play "City of Champions". This society regularly takes on challenging, thought provoking plays and this is one such - 'a sensitive and absorbing drama which goes behind the glitz and glamour of Tinseltown' - a warts and all expose of the evil therein - playing 11-15th April. Having done two brilliant productions "One Man Two Guvnors" and "Blackadder Goes Forth" in their 50th anniversary year 2022, they can afford to do a production which will probably not be such a 'crowd pleaser.'

As I compile this report KLOS Musical Theatre are performing "Sister Act"-finally. This production had first been planned for Spring 2020 - but we all know what happened then! Since that time various attempts to bring this show to the stage have failed due to casting and venue issues. At last they have a new cast and their usual venue is back in business so I wish them much success with it.

WOS Productions presented a fabulous "Drowsy Chaperone" in February and have now started recruiting for a production of "Wizard of Oz" in October. I am sure they will put together a fine show.

Finally Harrow Opera Workshop - this company of fine amateur and semi-professional singers are well into rehearsals for their next full scale operatic performance of "The Magic Flute" which I look forward to seeing in May.

District 10 – Iain Fowles

Well, the spring season has flown by and I've been delighted by the sheer breadth of productions I have seen – From Disney to a Farndale comedy!

I have been lucky enough to see 11 productions this season: -

Belmont Theatre

A delightful and technically clever production of 'Head over Heels' – great fun! – and a re-telling of the Gothic tale of Jekyll and Hyde.

Potters Bar Theatre Company

A lovely presentation of 'Kipps' with a very clever set, followed by a wonderful comedy play in 'Jumpy'

Abbotts Langley Players

Two very contrasting plays – the very funny 'The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery' – probably the longest play title in history! followed by the funny and poignant 'Quartet'

Kings Langley Players

My first panto of the season, Dick Whittington, followed by the hilarious 'Up N Under' – I'm so glad to see you're continuing with the cocktail bar!

Radlett Musical Theatre Company

Two productions for Radlett – the very fast and slick, one-night musical revue 'Dynamite' – just fab, followed by a much slower paced 'Fiddler on the roof' – with some delightful principal performances.

Green Room

'Kinky Boots' in May was an amazing production which had some input from Steve Pateman who was the original 'Charlie' in the story.

St Albans Musical Theatre Company

I was delighted by the very lavish production of 'Shrek' – the supporting company was truly a line-up of principal players.

St James Music and Drama

Lovely to attend my first production by St James – the panto Jack and the Beanstalk. Very well written in house and produced on a tiny stage with a massive company! Looking forward to seeing more from St James.

Kings Langley Musical Theatre Company

Great to be back at The Nap for my first show with Kings Langley – a colourful and exciting 'Hot Mikado', directed by our very own Annie Hertler-Smith.

Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company

My own company have been busy with a fabulous production of 'Aladdin', followed by a glorious Agatha Christie – 'The Hollow' – I never did guess who dunnit!

So, it's been a busy start to the year. As I've already mentioned, the NODA London conference takes place on 18th June at The Radlett Centre – more details on the NODA website, but it would be wonderful to see as many of you there.

If you'd like to see me in action, I'm going back on stage myself in Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company's 'Our House' in June – love to see you in the bar!

If there is anything that I can help with, please do get in touch ian.fowles@noda.org.uk

Look forward to seeing you all over the coming months.

District 11 and 11a – Judith Watsham

Districts 11 and 11A are both in good shape with some excellent shows seen recently - musicals, plays and pantomimes! A couple of groups have still to put on their first show for three years but they are all getting there slowly. I am always impressed by the very high standards achieved by groups whose facilities are minimal too, performing faultlessly in small community venues where everything has to be cleared after each performance to allow access during the day.

Not every group invites me to their events but I know from checking their websites that most of the 24 musical and dramatic societies performing in Buckinghamshire and the small adjoining corners of Hertfordshire and Middlesex which fall into London Districts 11 and 11A, have plans for shows before the end of 2023. Do remember that if your NODA Regional Representative is not invited along there will be no report nor will there be the possibility of either a NODA District Award or even one of the trophies awarded to London overall winners - the 2022-2023 Awards Season has now closed and winning societies will be announced at our London Event in June.

London District 12 – Andrew Walter

Traditional pantomime continues to thrive in District 12, and it was a particular pleasure to report on Faringdon Dramatic Society's production of "Sleeping Beauty" a couple of months ago. Performed across two weekends, this was warm-hearted community theatre at its best. The Sinodun Players staging of "Jack and the Beanstalk" was just as enjoyable, and of course we still have Avocet Theatre Company's production of "Sleeping Beauty" to look forward to ... in June. Yelling "He's behind you!" in the height of summer will be a new experience for me.

Before then, the Wykham Theatre in Banbury will host the Youth of Banbury Operatic Society's twentieth anniversary concert, "Platinum". YOBOS are the current holders of the London Region "Youngstars" award, so have a lot to celebrate. We are fortunate also to have the Musical Youth Company of Oxford in the District, and they are returning to the Oxford Playhouse stage with "The Addams Family" in the first week of April.

The senior societies have scheduled a wonderful selection of musical theatre. Having just celebrated their 60th anniversary, Banbury Operatic Society staged an incredibly ambitious production of "Ghost The Musical", played out in front of a video wall. Oxford Operatic Society presented a deeply impressive interpretation of "Evita" at the Oxford Playhouse, while Abingdon Operatic Society will return to the Amey Theatre after Easter with Rodgers and Hammerstein's somewhat neglected masterpiece, "Carousel".

I am also looking forward to reporting on a couple of modern plays in May. Eynsham's Bartholomew Players are presenting "A Bunch of Amateurs" by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman, while Faringdon Dramatic Society are putting pantomime firmly behind them by staging Amanda Whittington's "Be My Baby" in the beautiful surroundings of Buscot Park Theatre. I expect this will provide an interesting contrast to "Ladies' Day" by the same author, which was the first play I reported on in Faringdon as pandemic restrictions began to ease.

London District 13 – Cate Naylor

It continues to be busy with shows in District 13 and I am enjoying meeting more societies new to me as they bring their first productions to the stage following the pandemic. I have now been the representative for District 13 for 18 months and have been lucky enough to visit 15 societies over the past year. I have also been lucky to enjoy three theatre suppers so find myself being fed in both mind and body 😊.

In November, I had the pleasure of joining Henley Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (HAODS) for their centenary year production of 'Hot Mikado', the choice of which was very significant as 100 years ago, the society's first production was The Mikado. I was grateful to Nick Humby (District 14) for reviewing 'Inspector Drake and the Black Widow' at Shinfield Players as I was involved in its production. He really enjoyed its many twists and turns.

December brought two youth group productions; 'Life is a Dream' from Progress Youth and 'Time after Time' a review from Shinfield Players Senior Youth Group. It is great to see the young talent within our District. I also joined Woodley Light Operatic Society (WLOS) for an evening of 'West End Show Stoppers' which had us tapping our feet to songs from many decades of musical theatre.

In January, I began my run of pantomimes with 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' from Twyford and Ruscombe Theatre Group and 'Aladdin and the Valley of the Dragons' from Shinfield Players Theatre. These were followed in February by 'The Wizard of Oz' from Kintbury St Mary's Drama Group and 'Dick Whittington' from Kennet Amateur Theatre Group (KATS). I had a lot of fun booing the baddies and laughing at a fantastic range of Dames as they joked and flirted with their audiences. It was also lovely to see so many children involved, some of whom were enjoying their first time treading the boards. Interspersed with the January pantomimes, I also visited Progress Theatre for their production of 'The Welkin' which was excellent and challenged and shocked the audience. I finished January with a theatre supper at Mortimer Dramatic Society - Murder by the Book, a murder mystery written by a member of the society. The evening was great fun with lots of intrigue and an excellent supper. This was followed in February by a second theatre supper with Aldermaston Players and a review 'A song for All Seasons' with songs and sketches from the four seasons.

March has been no less busy, and I started the month on the bus to Whitby with Shinfield Players and their funny production of 'Last Tango in Whitby'. I then joined HAODS again for their theatre supper production 'Black Adder'. I spent a very enjoyable evening eating an excellent dinner and laughing out loud to the antics of Black Adder and his compatriots. This was closely followed in complete contrast by Progress Theatre's gritty production of The Lonesome West. I was then transported back to 1930's glamour to enjoy Henley Players' production of 'The Philadelphia Story'. District 13 is very lucky to have many youth groups and I ended March with Starmaker's excellent production of '13 the Musical' and look forward to Newbury Youngstars' production of 'Singing in the Rain JR' right at the end of the month.

District 13 continues to be very active in theatre and I am privileged to be able to enjoy so many productions, thank you!

London District 14 – Nick Humby

As the NODA Awards year drew to a close, I report to having seen 25 District 14 productions from 13 different societies including 6 pantomimes (plus six shows in District 13), so it feels like Amateur Theatre is back up and running in the area. Once again, I have been impressed both by the quality of performances but also the strong sense of inclusive communities that societies project.

Recent Productions

Merlin from **Riverside Players** was a refreshing new title in Pantomime and had all the right ingredients. A familiar story given a gentle twist, an outrageous Dame, a silly comic, a proper Principal Boy and Girl and an evil villain with two hopeless henchmen to produce an entertaining show which was fun for all the family.

Beauty and Beast from **Maidenhead Drama Guild** was a Warren McWilliams script full of silly puns and one liners and plenty of characters for the society to offer all its members a few lines and very cleverly distances itself from the Disney version of the title, which gives the show a fresh feel.

Cinderella from **CAST** was a Ben Crocker Pantomime script with thirteen named parts including the Pantomime horse. It is packed with puns and comedy business around the traditional story although it does play with the subplots to freshen it up. The result was an enjoyable show.

Rapunzel from **Wraysbury Players** presented a strong sense of a community celebrating amateur dramatics which is reinforced by the bold tradition of having a cast line up in the foyer as the curtain comes down so the audience can personally congratulate each cast member.

Quince Players version of Wizard of Oz by Tom Whalley converts the tale into a pantomime by making Aunt Em and Glinda a Dame, packing it with innuendo and silly jokes, including traditional pantomime business and it worked very well.

Crowthorne Amateur Theatrical Society production of Ben Crocker's script of Sleeping Beauty included a number of classic pantomime comedy routines, and some excellent musical choices making this a fast paced entertaining two hours.

EBOS celebrated the International Women's Day on 8th March with a brilliantly conceived cabaret Woman Up consisting of twenty-five songs from a selection of mainly modern musicals sung by a team of fourteen women.

MAOS production of 9 to 5 required three strong differentiated women to play Violet, Judy and Doralee and they were fortunate to have such actresses to lead their return to the stage post Covid. They brought a delightful energy and great range of emotions with fine contrasting voices.

CAST Academy is a remarkable organisation developing young people's stage and life skills through performances and giving opportunities to a diverse group so that they all can grow and develop in a fun environment and High Street Musical was a perfect vehicle for this young talent.

Welcome to Thomas Lennon – Regional Representative District 7

Originally from the West Coast of Ireland, I performed on stage and as a choir soloist from a young age. My interest in musical theatre developed when performing within secondary education and continued with various local societies during my late teens and early twenties. Productions have included **HUCKLEBERRY FINN, MY FAIR LADY, GREASE, GUYS AND DOLLS, THE BOY FRIEND, OKLAHOMA!, ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY** and **WEST SIDE STORY**.

I also performed as a member of the Corps de Ballet for the Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS) in two concerts, '21st Anniversary Concert' and 'SHOWTIME', both staged at The National Concert Hall in Dublin.

I worked as a choreographer on a pantomime, **GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS** and musicals **GUYS AND DOLLS, OKLAHOMA!** and **FINIAN'S RAINBOW** and received a creativity award for my choreographic work in local competition.



In August 1988, I moved to London and my initial introduction to NODA was as a volunteer on that year's Summer School production of **WEST SIDE STORY** at Central School of Speech and Drama. Later I joined Stock Exchange Dramatic & Operatic Society (Sedos) and was as *Ephraim* in their

production of **SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS**. I then went on to perform with Lloyds Dramatic, Operatic & Musical Society in **CABARET**.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments, I have not been actively involved with any individual society for an extended period however, I have been an avid theatre goer seeing hundreds of amateur, touring and West End productions through the years, and keeping involved indirectly through his contacts within amateur societies in the UK and Ireland.

In the wake of the pandemic, however, I decided to reignite my theatrical passion and involvement with amateur theatre, and what better way to do this than re-engaging and volunteering with NODA. I am really looking forward to serving alongside colleagues in NODA London as the Regional Representative for District 7. Please contact me at thomas.lennon@noda.org.uk. I look forward to meeting you.

NODA Theatre Summer School 2023



The 2023 NODA Theatre Summer School is back at Yarnfield Park in Stone with all the enthusiasm and commitment that the students expect. Once again we will be delighted to meet again, in person, and to throw ourselves into a wonderful, energetic week of theatrical learning.

The 2023 NODA Theatre Summer School launched, as usual, on 1st December 2022. Check out the NODA Summer School Facebook page to hear how the courses are going.

Dates for 2023 are July 29th – August 5th. Please join us for a week that you will never forget and make friends for life. For details of what we do please go to the NODA website and see what we have offered by way of courses in the past. www.noda.org.uk/summerschool.

ROCK ON WITH SONGS FROM THE SHOWS – A MINEFIELD ?

Compilation shows are great fun and enormously popular with societies and audiences alike – great revenue earners. However, for the unwary they can be a minefield, so be careful and do your research thoroughly on the permissions you must obtain beforehand.

What you **can't** do are DISNEY songs and ABBA songs – see **the NODA Factsheet**.

How to go about obtaining permissions ?

- Check that the venue has a PRS Licence
- Check IN **DETAIL** the NODA Factsheet
 - This gives **COMPREHENSIVE** advice on how to go about checking and obtaining the correct performance rights and keep the right side of the copyright laws

LANE END'S DRAMATIC SUCCESS



Lane End Players took their production of "Two" by Jim Cartwright to the Maidenhead Drama Festival which ran for 5 days at the Norden Farm Arts Centre last week. They competed against nine other teams from Kent, Berks, Surrey and Oxfordshire and were the only team from Bucks. They were the Adult winners of the All England Festival (The Lynda Whitworth Trophy) and won the Biggs Drama Shield in the Open Class. As a result, they are now progressing to the next stage of the All England Competition - the Eastern Division at Oxted in Surrey. Needless to say they are absolutely over the moon as this is the first time they have ever taken part in a competition of this kind. Fingers crossed !!!!!

So, you want to direct amateur theatre



The obligatory class photo – lots of happy enriched people!!! Sarah Osborne is fourth from the left, front row.

It isn't often that a group decides it need to increase the quality of its body of directors, and furthermore is happy to open the experience to other groups within their district. Well, this is exactly what Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society (LADS) did at the end of February at Loughton in Essex. LADS is in District 6 in the NODA London region and so members of other groups within District 6 were invited to come along and share in the experience. And it didn't disappoint in any way, shape or form, everyone had a wonderful time, learned a tremendous amount and came away with increased knowledge of what directing (be it a musical or a drama) was all about.

Sarah Osborne, who is a drama practitioner and writer/director running her own Youth Company as well as being the Director of NODA Theatre Summer School, travelled down from Wakefield in Yorkshire to impart her knowledge and experience to twenty one students hungry to learn, some starting from scratch, but many wanting to improve their already considerable skills by learning from a professional. For some it was gaining new skills to try with their groups, but for some it was almost a validation that what they had been doing up to this point was correct and could be taken further with the knowledge they had gained that day.

From the start everyone was engaged, getting to know each other by means of games and exercises before the real work began. Somehow, though, it didn't feel as though we were working. It was all so engaging and, yes, exciting too, that the time just flew by so when it was time for the obligatory 'class' photo everyone felt enriched and motivated....and keen to put into practice their new-found knowledge. A handout is always useful and we took away all those salient points from a day the contents of which will make us sensitive, constructive and kind directors.

If you would like to Sarah to visit your group to deliver a workshop she can be contacted at sarah@yew-tree.com ...You won't be disappointed!!!!

WHAT'S ON IN THE LONDON REGION

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

08 Jun 23 - 10 Jun 23

Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society (LADS)

Lopping Hall IG10 4LF

Box Office: 07552 736110

www.lads.org.uk/tickets.htm

9 TO 5 the musical

15 Jun 23 - 17 Jun 23

Barking Music and Drama

Kenneth More Theatre IG1 1BT

Box Office: 020 8708 8800

www.BarkingMAD.org.uk

THE SILENCE OF THE SEA by Paul Vercors

19 Jun 23 - 24 Jun 23

Progress Theatre

Progress Theatre RG1 5HL

<https://progresstheatre.co.uk/2023-silence-sea>

SLEEPING BEAUTY A Musical Pantomime

22 Jun 23 - 24 Jun 23

Avocet Theatre Company

Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY

www.avocettheatre.co.uk/tickets

OUR HOUSE

27 Jun 23 - 01 Jul 23

Hemel Hempstead Theatre Company

Boxmoor Playhouse HP1 1NP

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

www.hhtheatreco.com

MURDERED TO DEATH by Peter Gordon

29 Jun 23 - 01 Jul 23

Wraysbury Players

Wraysbury Village Hall TW19 5NA

<https://wraysburyplayers.co.uk>

MACBETH by William Shakespeare

24 Jun 23 - 02 Jul 23

Garden Suburb Theatre

Little Wood Open Air Theatre NW11 6QS

www.gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk/

TWO GUN COHEN by Spencer Simmons, Brian Seaton and Liam J Rand

05 Jul 23 - 06 Jul 23

WP Drama

Redbridge Drama Centre E18 2RB

https://wpdrama.co.uk/index_frame.html

A CHORUS LINE

03 Jul 23 - 08 Jul 23

Erith Playhouse

Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY

Box Office: 0333 666 3366

SONDHEIM ON SONDHEIM

04 Jul 23 - 08 Jul 23

Stock Exchange Dramatic and Operatic Society (SEDOS)

Bridewell Theatre EC4Y 8EQ

www.sedos.co.uk/shows/2023-sondheim-on-sondheim

MISCAST the parts we'll never play

05 Jul 23 - 08 Jul 23

Dartford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (DAODS)

Heathfields Hall DA1 2QH

www.daods.co.uk/our-shows

VERDICT by Agatha Christie

07 Jul 23 - 09 Jul 23

The Chameleons Amateur Dramatic Society

St Erconwald RC Church HA9 8NB

Box Office: 02081 236443

www.thechameleons.co.uk

THREE MUSKETEERS by James Barry

08 Jul 23 - 09 Jul 23

Valley Players Hughenden

The Orchard, Meadow View HP14 4NE

www.valleyplayershughenden.co.uk

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

11 Jul 23 - 15 Jul 23

Sinodun Players

Corn Exchange OX10 0EG

Box Office: 01491 825000

<https://sinodunplayers.org.uk/future-shows>

OUR HOUSE

13 Jul 23 - 15 Jul 23

Havering Music Makers

Queens Theatre RM11 1QT

www.haveringmusicmakers.co.uk

PIPPIN

13 Jul 23 - 15 Jul 23

The Quay Players

Greenwood Theatre SE1 3RA

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

COME RAIN OF SHINE (variety show)

15 Jul 23 - 16 Jul 23

Launton Village Players

Mayflower Garden Theatre OX26 5AB

www.launtonvillageplayers.org.uk/next-performance.php

TWELFTH NIGHT by William Shakespeare

12 Jul 23 - 22 Jul 23

Progress Theatre

Reading Abbey Ruins RG1 3HW

<https://progresstheatre.co.uk/reading-open-air>

ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE (concert)

20 Jul 23 - 22 Jul 23
HEOS Musical Theatre
St Thomas the Apostle Church Hall W7 2AD
Box Office: 07727 448760
www.heos.org.uk

DON'T REIGN ON OUR PARADE (musical showcase)

21 Jul 23 - 22 Jul 23
Crowthorne Musical Players
Morgan Centre RG45 7LD
www.cmp-berks.org.uk/events/droop

OUR HOUSE

25 Jul 23 - 29 Jul 23
Centre Stage London
Bridewell Theatre EC4Y 8EQ
www.centrestage.london

ALICE THROUGH WONDERLAND

26 Jul 23 - 29 Jul 23
Croydon Operatic & Dramatic Association (CODA)
Wandle Park Bandstand CR0 3RD
<https://codashows.co.uk/current-season/alice-through-wonderland>

THE WINTER'S TALE by William Shakespeare

26 Jul 23 - 29 Jul 23
The Greek Theatre Players
Greek Theatre E17 9RZ
www.greektheatreplayers.co.uk

ALAN BENNETT DOUBLE BILL Cocktail Sticks & Two in Torquay

26 Jul 23 - 30 Jul 23
Barnes Community Players
OSO Arts Centre SW13 0LF
www.barnescommunityplayers.co.uk

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE teen edition

11 Aug 23 - 12 Aug 23
Youth of Banbury Operatic Society (YOBOS)
Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY
www.yobos.co.uk/jamie

FAME the musical

07 Aug 23 - 20 Aug 23
Smash Arts Theatre Company
Centenary Theatre HP4 3BG
<https://smashartstheatrecompany.co.uk/book-tickets>

LITTLE WOMEN the musical

06 Sep 23 - 09 Sep 23
Cygnet Players
Putney Arts Theatre SW15 6AW
<https://cygnetplayers.com>

THE GRADUATE adapted by Terry Johnson

11 Sep 23 - 16 Sep 23
Erith Playhouse

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

'ALLO 'ALLO by Jeremy Lloyd & David Croft
20 Sep 23 - 23 Sep 23
Potters Bar Theatre Company
Wyllyotts Theatre EN6 2HN
Box Office: 01707 645005
<https://pottersbartheatrecompany.co.uk/next>

SUMMER END by Eric Chappell
21 Sep 23 - 23 Sep 23
The Priory Players Amateur Theatre Company
Progress Hall SE9 1SL
Box Office: 07798 625820
www.theprioryplayers.com/forthcoming_productions

SHREK the musical
04 Oct 23 - 07 Oct 23
Nomads Musical Theatre
Corn Exchange RG14 5BD
Box Office: 01635 522733
www.cornexchangenew.com

THE BROWNING VERSION by Terence Rattigan
09 Oct 23 - 14 Oct 23
Erith Playhouse
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY
Box Office: 0333 666 3366
www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited

LEGALLY BLONDE the musical
10 Oct 23 - 14 Oct 23
Radlett Musical Theatre Company (RMTc)
Radlett Centre WD7 8HL
www.rmtc.org.uk

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman
11 Oct 23 - 14 Oct 23
Eldorado Musical Productions
Bob Hope Theatre SE9 5TG
www.bobhopetheatre.co.uk

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG
11 Oct 23 - 14 Oct 23
Dartford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (DAODS)
Orchard Theatre DA1 1ED
Box Office: 0343 310 0033
www.daods.co.uk/our-shows

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN
17 Oct 23 - 21 Oct 23
ELODS
Wyllyotts Theatre EN6 2HN
Box Office: 01707 645005
www.elods.org.uk

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

31 Oct 23 - 04 Nov 23
East Berkshire Operatic Society (EBOS)
Wilde Theatre RG12 7PA
Box Office: 01344 484123
www.ebos.org.uk/productiondetail.asp?show=chitty

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

01 Nov 23 - 04 Nov 23
Encore Theatre Company
Winston Churchill Theatre HA4 7QL
Box Office: 01895 737374
www.encoretheatre.co.uk

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

02 Nov 23 - 04 Nov 23
Maidenhead Musical Comedy Society
Kenton Theatre RG9 2BS
Box Office: 01491 525050
www.maidenheadmcs.co.uk

HAMP by John Wilson

06 Nov 23 - 11 Nov 23
Erith Playhouse
Erith Playhouse DA8 1QY
Box Office: 0333 666 3366
www.ticketsource.co.uk/erith-playhouse-limited

COMPANY

07 Nov 23 - 11 Nov 23
Potters Bar Theatre Company
Wyllyotts Theatre EN6 2HN
Box Office: 01707 645005
<https://pottersbartheatrecompany.co.uk/next>

ELF the musical

07 Nov 23 - 11 Nov 23
St Albans Musical Theatre Company
Alban Arena AL1 3LD
Box Office: 01727 844488
www.samtc.org.uk

KIPPS the new Half a Sixpence musical

22 Nov 23 - 25 Nov 23
Rickmansworth Players
Watersmeet WD3 1EH
www.rickyplayers.co.uk

WHITE CHRISTMAS

29 Nov 23 - 02 Dec 23
Ruislip Operatic Society
Winston Churchill Theatre HA4 7QL
www.facebook.com/RuislipOperatic/?locale=en_GB

NATIVITY the musical

08 Dec 23 - 09 Dec 23
Avocet Theatre Company
Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY

www.avocetheatre.co.uk/tickets

SWEET CHARITY

06 Mar 24 - 09 Mar 24

Panda Players

Elgiva Theatre HP5 1HR

www.pandaplayers.co.uk/productions

SISTER ACT

20 Mar 24 - 23 Mar 24

Eldorado Musical Productions

Bob Hope Theatre SE9 5TG

www.bobhopetheatre.co.uk

DISNEY'S FROZEN THE MUSICAL JR.

12 Apr 24 - 13 Apr 24

Avocet Theatre Company

Wykham Theatre OX16 9HY

www.avocetheatre.co.uk/tickets

Why not share news of your next production?

You should include:

Name of production

From date – to date

Name of Society

Venue, post code

Box office number or url (optional)

Website

EXAMPLE

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

25 Sep 23 - 29 Sep 23

Kettering & District Theatrical Society

Lighthouse Theatre, NN15 6PB

Box Office: 01536 414141

www.kitts.co.uk

You may submit as many shows as you like and they will be removed when the production has taken place.

The fixture list also appears on the NODA London Facebook page and the NODA website.

Contact Paul Holgate at paul.holgate@noda.org.uk

Thank you – Ed.