

TODAY★

noda

Summer 2021 | £4.25

Be inspired by amateur theatre

STAGE
DOOR

Starting rehearsals?
Where to find the
latest information

Download a copy on our website noda.org.uk

NODA Today

© 2021 National Operatic and Dramatic Association.

Registered CIO 1171216

Registered Company no. 241572

National Editor

Rob Williams

editor@noda.org.uk

East Regional Editor

Julia Rymer

julia.rymer@noda.org.uk

East Midlands Regional Editor

Alex Wood

alex.wood@noda.org.uk

London Regional Editor

Jacquie Stedman

jacquie.stedman@noda.org.uk

North Regional Editor

Emma Scott

emma.scott@noda.org.uk

North East Regional Editor

Tony Harris

tony.harris@noda.org.uk

North West Regional Editor

Rob Gemmell

rob.gemmell@noda.org.uk

Scotland Regional Editor

Alan C. Jones

alan.jones@noda.org.uk

South East Regional Editor

Gregory Gower

gregory.gower@noda.org.uk

South West Regional Editor

Matthew Heaton

matthew.heaton@noda.org.uk

Wales & Ireland Regional Editor

Dee McIlroy

dee.mcillroy@noda.org.uk

West Midlands Regional Editor

Emma Laing

emma.laing@noda.org.uk

The National Operatic and Dramatic Association

15 The Metro Centre

Peterborough

PE2 7UH

T +44 (0) 1733 374 790

E info@noda.org.uk

W noda.org.uk

Contents

4

Final non-travels with the chain

A message from Christine Hunter Hughes, NODA National President as she prepares to hand over the chain.



9

Starting rehearsals? Where to find the latest information

With restrictions being eased, find the latest information that will help your groups get back into rehearsals and onto the stage.



18

COLSTARS – seventy five years of defying more than just gravity

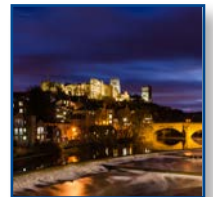
Find out how a group in South Wales have adapted through the years.



23

NODA Presidential Gala & AGM 2021

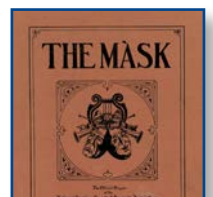
Friday 10th to Sunday 12th September 2021 in Durham



28

A trip to the archives

We have one of the only copies of the very short lived NAODA magazine 'The Mask'. We believe there are only two copies of this edition that remain.



34

A royal visit to Utopia

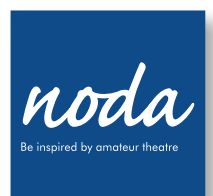
Well it's not every day that you get a phone call to tell you that HRH Prince Edward and Countess Sophie of Wessex would like to come and visit you.



37

Programme and Poster competition guidelines 2022 - 2024

Read the updated guidelines for our National Programme and Poster competition.





Welcome

Michael Hastilow
Chairman of Trustees

Many of you will remember the thrill of arriving at the Stage Door for the first time in anticipation of your first stage appearance - a thrill which never seems to recede. I can remember many stage doors ranging from those at major theatres to village halls. With the reduction, and hopefully the removal, of all restrictions following the pandemic, it seems that we are now at a Stage Door. Let us hope we remember our lines as we go forward.

Over the last year, NODA TODAY has reported on the way our societies have coped with keeping members together and, wherever possible staging performances. We can be thankful for the existence of Zoom and other variants, resulting in productions both on screen, in the open air and even over the radio. We now have another tool in our kitbag. You will find articles continuing this theme. Read them, as I know we learn more from each other than we may ever care to admit.

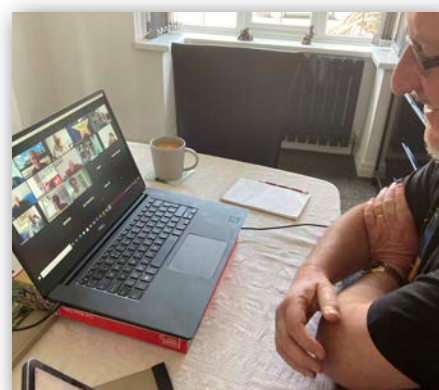
I recommend you keep this edition of NODA TODAY close by as the articles on "Starting rehearsals? Where to find the latest information", are important as guidance changes so frequently and with little notice. I also recommend the document produced by NODASafe "Back to the Stage"; it can be found on our website under Member Benefits, Factsheets. It will aid you in returning safely to rehearsal and production.

The rules for the Programme and Poster competition are being tweaked for 2022-24. If you are preparing a programme or poster, please read the article or direct it to anyone responsible.

In June, we held a virtual conference for our Regional Representatives and all other volunteers to equip them in representing NODA to our society members in the coming months and years. We have a strategy to support our members in the form of a rolling plan going forward based on seven objectives: our volunteers, members, NODA, our partners, products and services, finance and governance. You will see more as time goes by. It is also worth noting that in 2024, we celebrate 125 years of NODA!

Finally, this will be my last "Welcome" as I come to the end of my three-year tenure as Chairman of Trustees. You may say that I ought to have selected a less challenging period for this role, but it has been exciting and I thank you for your support in very difficult times. I look forward to meeting some of you at the National Presidential Gala and AGM at Durham in September!

Michael Hastilow
Chairman of Trustees



Final non-travels with the chain

Well, this will be the last piece I write as NODA President after my 24-month term of office. As you know, the term was extended from 12 months because I only managed to visit societies for 4.5 months out of the 12. As we all know, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, I did not manage much better during the 2nd 12-month period. At the time of writing, having visited a grand total of 4 (wonderful) shows in 10 months.

Of course, we all know the simple reason for this, we have all had to halt, or at least severely curtail, our wonderful hobby for COVID-19 and my heart goes out to all of you who have simply not been able to produce your planned shows. I think in many ways, the necessity of undoing all of the plans and organisation is so much harder and involves considerably more heartache than the original planning! I know and appreciate just how hard it has been for all, both individually and our societies too. I think we all have missed so much not having contact with friends and family.

I guess the 'pot of gold' at the end of this particular rainbow has been the simply wonderful and creative ways societies have found to keep their members and audiences involved. I never thought I would say this, but thank goodness for the internet. Many of us have improved our skills on Skype and Zoom beyond recognition and meetings and AGMs have, in the main, been very well attended. I was delighted to have attended most of the regional AGMs via Zoom of course, and was delighted to have the opportunity to meet, albeit virtually, with many of the regional committees. (Pause for a smile remembering some of the 'outfits' worn for these meetings – 'posh' frock, the Presidential chain, jewellery and make-up – worn with slippers and a cup of coffee (or a G & T) to hand!)



Hopefully, now that many of the restrictions are coming to an end, you will be able to resume rehearsals, with all the social benefits that they bring to so many: the friendship, camaraderie, tolerance and the invaluable sense of belonging and community – not forgetting the sheer good fun that our hobby affords us – with the icing on the cake being able to entertain audiences once more.

Do remember, the incoming President, Gordon Richardson, will be delighted to be invited to attend your 'welcome back' productions.

I am so sorry I have not been able to meet with as many members and societies as I would have liked. A big thank you to all the ones I was able to meet who, without exception made me feel so very welcome and part of their NODA family. My thanks and commiserations to all the societies who had invited me, then had to cancel but I feel certain you will all come back stronger than ever and prove over and over again the old adage that the show can (and MUST) go on.

All that said, I was, and am, honoured and proud (and still slightly awed) for the last 2 years to have been able to serve you as The National President of NODA; **our** Association of hugely passionate and committed people – all of whom are 'Inspired by Amateur Theatre.

Thank you one and all!

Christine Hunter Hughes
NODA National President
2019 - 2021

NODA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The National Operatic and Dramatic Association, Charity No 1171216 will take place on Saturday 11th September 2021 at 2.30pm at The Radisson Blu Hotel Durham DH1 5TA.

The Meeting is called in accordance with Rule 11 of the Association's Constitution: to receive the audited annual statement of accounts, the trustees report, reports on the number of members, the proposed rates of subscription, elect nominated Trustees, Honorary and Life Members, appoint the appeals committee, elect the auditors for the ensuing year and receive any other business of which due notice has been given.

To ensure the smooth running of the meeting, any resolutions to be considered at the meeting should be sent to the Chairman of Trustees Michael Hastilow at 15 The Metro Centre, Peterborough, PE2 7UH or by email to michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk to arrive no later than 12th August 2021.

Who's who on NODA Council

President

Christine Hunter Hughes

christine.hunterhughes@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - East Midlands

Nanette Lovell MBE

nanette.lovell@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - South East

Kay Rowan

kay.rowan@noda.org.uk

Chairman

Michael Hastilow

michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - London

Pam Armstrong

pam.armstrong@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - South West

Graham Liverton

graham.liverton@noda.org.uk

Immediate Past President

Jacque Stedman

jacquie.stedman@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - North

Peter Oliver

peter.oliver@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - Wales & Ireland

Sharon Davies

sharon.davies@noda.org.uk

Vice President

Gordon Richardson

gordon.richardson@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - North East

Leslie Smith

leslie.smith@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - West Midlands

Ian G. Cox

ian.cox@noda.org.uk

Vice Chairman

Ian G. Cox

ian.cox@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - North West

Andy McNicholas

andy.mcnicholas@noda.org.uk

Life Member

John W. Barnes

john.barnes@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - East

Tessa Davies

tessa.davies@noda.org.uk

Regional Councillor - Scotland

Stuart McCue-Dick

stuart.dick@noda.org.uk

Life Member

Nick Lawrence

nick.lawrence@noda.org.uk

Who's who on NODA Limited

Chairman

Eric Smart

eric.smart@noda.org.uk

Director

Ian G. Cox

ian.cox@noda.org.uk

Director

Neil Maidman

neil.maidman@noda.org.uk

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Michael Hastilow

michael.hastilow@noda.org.uk

Director

Christine Hunter Hughes

christine.hunterhughes@noda.org.uk

Director

Fred Piggford

fred.piggford@noda.org.uk

Who's who at NODA Head Office

Chief Operating Officer

Dale Freeman

dale@noda.org.uk

Finance Officer

Chris Cotton

chris@noda.org.uk

Marketing and Publishing Executive

Rob Williams

rob@noda.org.uk

PA to the COO and Chairman

Lisa Sculthorpe

lisa@noda.org.uk

NODA Insurance

nodainsurance.co.uk

01823 250 736

NODA Safe

noda.org.uk/nodasafemembers

0345 257 6632

NODA Legal Advice Service

01733 374 790

(NODA Membership Services)

info@noda.org.uk

Social Media

[facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/nationaloperaticdramaticassociation)

nationaloperaticdramaticassociation

Instagram - @NodaPics

Twitter - @nodatweets

Councillors' Chat

A quick note from your Regional Councillor



Tessa Davies - East Regional Councillor

It is reassuring to see that a number of societies are active in planning their productions for the next few months. It is not going to be an easy ride but I would encourage you all to try and bring some well-needed, positive messages to your audiences and members.

I am looking forward to visiting those societies that have already invited me to see their shows in the next few months and I look forward to receiving more invitations as the events get underway.



Nanette Lovell MBE - East Midlands Regional Councillor

Well it looks now as if theatre as we know it is slowly getting back to something like normal. I know that a number of groups are starting rehearsals for their autumn productions.

Now I have decided it is time I retired as a NODA Councillor and let a younger person take over this unique role. This information has been sent to all groups and several members have expressed an interest in taking on the role (not one that you have to audition for!) Thank you to everyone for your support and my very best wishes to you all.



Pam Armstrong - London Regional Councillor

The London Region AGM took place by webinar in June where we welcomed three new Regional Representatives - Paul Daynes for District 6, Jason Lane for District 10 Musicals and Andrew Walter for District 12. All three have first class skills in all aspects and we look forward to a long and happy association.

In recognition of the superb efforts to keep your societies alive and thriving over the pandemic year, London Region has awarded 'Certificates of Congratulations' to its societies and we hope it will be a reminder of this unique time and how special you are.



Peter Oliver - North Regional Councillor

It has been very pleasing to both read and see on social media that a number of societies in the North are starting to plan their return to what we love doing best "putting on a show". I appreciate that this is not going to be easy, and the road map will test us all, but you have the support from your region and of course NODA, who can offer you support and advice through this. I am looking forward to visiting societies in the near future and hopefully you will be free to welcome and join us as our past councillor, Gordon Richardson, is inaugurated as the National President of NODA at the Radisson Blu in Durham.



Leslie Smith - North East Regional Councillor

Many of you will be returning to rehearsals and to the stage doing what we enjoy most. However, I can also appreciate there will be a good number who will still be apprehensive about meeting others and I hope you will be considerate to the ones who feel this way.

Invites have started to come in for me to attend your shows and I hope these will continue. I look forward to seeing you all again at your respective productions plus, please do remember we are only a phone call or email away if you have any questions.

Andy McNicholas - North West Regional Councillor

I'll be contacting our NW members over the next few weeks with options for the awards event which was postponed from last year so keep an eye out for that.

It's wonderful to see several societies have managed to put on socially distanced shows in the past few weeks and invites are now coming in for shows later in the year.

I'm looking forward to meeting you all in person after talking via Zoom so often over the past 12 months!



Stuart McCue-Dick - Scotland Regional Councillor

The NODA Scotland committee has continued to provide help and support to our members on a vast range of topics over the past few months as clubs begin to resume in person activities.

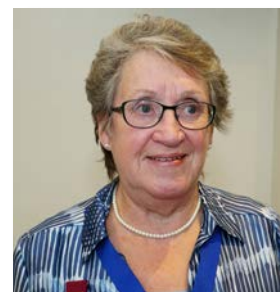
As NODA Scotland Councillor, I have been trying to arrange a meeting with the new Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for culture to put the case for ongoing support for amateur theatre as well as highlighting the important role it plays in the cultural life of the country.



Kay Rowan - South East Regional Councillor

I am writing to you prior to the Volunteer Conference for all your regional committee members. Subsequently, reps and officers will be better informed about a variety of topics of interest and able to support you the members in your endeavours. It is thrilling to see things are gradually opening up and in the main I am praying for fine weather for all the planned outdoor performances. Youth groups have been able to spread their wings and they have a variety of shows coming up in the next few months.

I look forward to joining you all in the coming months and wish you every success.



Graham Liverton - South West Regional Councillor

The wheels are moving slowly, but moving in the right direction for societies beginning to open up and to get on with shows, my diary is filling up for visiting your wonderful productions. We have all been waiting patiently for the off and by the time this magazine arrives on your door step, it will be all systems go!

Please don't hesitate to contact me so I can visit your show, I can't wait to get going! I wish you and your societies all the best.



Sharon Davies - Wales & Ireland Regional Councillor

Well, who would have thought that we would still be in this state of uncertainty with regards to the restarting of rehearsals, where we can actually sing, and the opening of our theatres to more than a minimal audience? We are a resilient bunch and we always have a "half-full glass" attitude no matter how bleak things look.

Keep up the positive attitude, keep in touch with your members and we can all get through this. Who knows how long it will be before we can get back to normal packed houses but I know you will be ready to get back to the theatre, in whatever capacity. Remember we are here for you.



Ian G. Cox - West Midlands Regional Councillor

As aspirations for future events and productions begin to convert to a more detailed planning stage, there are positive signs for a return to some form of normality. Innovative organisation has enabled some outside performances to take place.

Rehearsal schedules are being formulated and auditions for some societies are underway. The pace is a gradual one, but in the right direction. A highly successful virtual National Valuing Our Volunteers' week was attended by your regional committee. Designed to provide you with more information about NODA.





THEATRE

STAGE DOOR

Starting rehearsals? Where to find the latest information

With restrictions being eased, we have compiled a list of places to find the latest information that will help your groups get back into rehearsals and onto the stage.



Government guidance - England

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>



Government guidance - Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-performing-arts-and-venues-sector/pages/operational-guide-for-non-professionals-gathering-for-performing-arts-activities/#Nonprofessional>



Government guidance - Wales

<https://gov.wales/rehearsing-performing-and-taking-part-performing-arts-guidance-phased-return.html?fbclid=IwAR0X9tGSaxL6bgloGiTYIhvaUHgi4OOObuBTK9X6REDMVohvnhf4GzBphg#section-50284>



Government guidance - Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>



NODA Safe - Back to stage Risk Assessment

<https://noda.org.uk/factsheets>



See it safely campaign

<https://uktheatre.org/theatre-industry/see-it-safely-toolkit/>



Health and Safety Executive - COVID support in the workplace

www.hse.gov.uk



Mental health support - Mind

<https://mind.org.uk>

To visit the links quickly, using your smartphone, open the camera app and hold over the QR code. Links are up to date as of publication print date.

Where there's a Will there's a play

NODA East



An appreciative, socially distanced audience watch Shakespeare in Love and War. – Photo: Margaret Leverett.

Shakespeare at The George, in Huntingdon, adapt their usual summer production to still be able to perform despite COVID restrictions.

Shakespeare at The George (SaTG) have been putting on a summer production in the old Jacobean courtyard of The George Hotel in Huntingdon since 1959. In 2020, they were due to perform Twelfth Night, directed by Charlotte Maylor, but when restrictions were enforced in March, the production had to be postponed until this year. So 2019, was the first time, since 1977, that there wasn't a production at The George. As the year went on, with the ups and downs of cases, and then went into the beginning of 2021, it became apparent that it was still touch and go whether they would be able to put the production on this year as planned. With a budget for the usual production in the region of £25,000 and having to commit to high cost items early, such as raked seating, there was a concern that if the country had restrictions in the summer then this money would be lost. Also, Charlotte raised concerns with the trustees about how her cast could rehearse, and how it would be possible to get the chemistry and sexual tension required between certain characters in Twelfth Night, when everyone had to be socially distanced. An impossible situation!

So it was agreed that Twelfth Night, again, would have to be cancelled, but they still needed to find a way to perform to the people of Huntingdon, to at least cover their annual overheads and maintain their presence in the town. A plan B was required.

Richard Brown, regular actor/director at The George and chair of the trustees, suggested a format which could be rehearsed and performed in a socially distanced way, and the concept of *Shakespeare in Love and War* was agreed as the way forward.

Richard says about the concept: "This plan 'B' would have to be something quite different from our usual production - we knew that we could not risk our normal staging with its raised seating, or any sense of rehearsal or performing which did not comply with some form of social distancing. So I started writing. If one could not do a whole play, then clearly extracts were the way forward. These could be chosen to have a workable number of characters to allow distancing on stage and would obviously have the enjoyment of familiarity in so many instances. But that in itself presented a problem to me. I have always felt there is something a bit disconnected about compiling a list of great speeches. Also, some of the longer speeches are lacking in stage appeal whilst many dialogues, or even occasionally one-liners, are the delightful sort of stuff that an audience would enjoy. I took *Much Ado*

About Nothing as a starting point. I set out to see if we could describe just enough of a plot to make the story understandable and allow us to pull together some delicious extracts. If the linking text was sufficiently lively to be fun in its own right, it seemed to work and I found I could encapsulate the gist of the play with my favourite extracts in about ten minutes of stage time.

The task then was to string other plays to this one, to find a theme whereby I could step from play to play, linking them together. Instead of the wretched virus dragging at my heels, I decided to use it to advantage. It became the glue to the production. Instead of pretending it did not exist, the production acknowledged its presence and made fun of the limitations it imposed upon the piece. It became a play within a play. By inventing a faux director and stage manager as kind of compères for the play, I was able not only to make fun of the virus but in a loving way also make fun of the tensions we all know about in putting a play on stage from rehearsal to performance. Sometimes we end up loving each other, sometimes we almost go to war with each other. That, in short, became the theme that allowed me to trip from the



Social distancing maintained at all times. Even on stage. – Photo: Margaret Leverett

lecherous Falstaff to the infatuated Romeo and Juliet, observe the deluded Malvolio, the delightful Beatrice and Benedick, Henry V trying to woo the French Princess, Petruchio encountering Kate for the first time and many others.”

Rehearsals began in April, over Zoom initially due to the restrictions at the time. Although it was possible to meet outdoors following the ‘rule of six’, it was just too cold, but from the middle of April it was decided that it wasn’t working. So cast, director and assistant director wrapped up warmly and met up in Richard’s garden; still limited to six people, which presented a major challenge when trying to produce the rehearsal schedule. The usual 7.30pm start time was brought forward to 7pm to maximise light and minimise the cold. This was the way it had to be until Step 3 of the government’s lifting of restrictions was introduced on 17th May. From then on, the cast could meet indoors in the ballroom at The George, in groups of 6, and finally outdoors at The George as a full cast; just 11 people this year compared to the usual 15-20.

But the COVID restrictions did not just affect the cast. Fortunately, the production is outdoors, so that helps, as opposed to the difficulties of an indoor production, but the next challenge was to work out how to fit an audience into the courtyard safely, in a socially distanced way, but still allowing them to see and hear the production. So it was agreed to put a smaller stage along the side, instead of the usual larger stage at one end, and then have just four rows of seating, with 20 in each row, allowing for groups of no more than six to be seated with adequate space between each group. So an audience of 80 instead of the usual 224, with the smaller stage giving the cast another challenge. With this sorted, the technical trustee, Ian Favell, carried out a full risk assessment which was then submitted and agreed.

So rehearsals were going on at a pace, tickets went on sale, posters were created and the publicity machine was set in motion. But even that came up with issues, caused by the dreaded virus. Cambridgeshire libraries, who are usually so supportive, and particularly Huntingdon library, were not allowed to have any posters or handbills, because the posters encourage people to loiter in the library, and then handbills are a contact transmission risk. Publicity trustee, Simon Maylor, said of the difficulties: “We are lucky enough to have over 1500 email addresses on our mailing list,



A socially distanced rehearsal, performing to Richard Brown’s chickens. – Photo: Simon Maylor

and with only 880 tickets to sell we hoped that this would be a significant help with the sales. This proved to be the case, with over half of the tickets being sold in the first week, but we still have over 400 to sell, and our usual route of putting handbills in The George and in local shops was severely limited. So we used local press and radio, along with websites (including NODA of course) and social media, particularly Facebook where we have over 1,000 likes for our page. We’ve always had a good relationship with the Hunts Post, and I carried out radio interviews with the local community radio station in Huntingdon and we also had great support from the Jeremy Sallis show on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. We sold out in 5 weeks!”

So they had a potential audience, a cast and a play, and even if restrictions were not lifted on June 21st, with the way the production was being put on with the audience seating arrangements, SaTG were fully compliant with the guidance from Step 3 of the roadmap in May. As things turned out, this was a wise decision, but their priority was always the safety of cast, crew, audience and of course the hotel staff. Over the years, Shakespeare at The George have built up a great relationship with The George Hotel, and this was vital when planning how to manage the audience in and out. The play was to be 90 minutes long, with no interval (as other professional companies such as The Globe were doing) to limit the audience having to gather or use all of the hotel facilities, although they could do before and after the production if necessary. It was agreed to include the programme in the price of the ticket, so that these could be just picked up on the way in, and no queuing to buy one was required, hence preventing any gathering of people in one area. Drinks could be ordered using the George Hotel’s app and brought out by hotel staff in plastic containers. The courtyard was marked up clearly with an entrance at one end, and the exit at the other, so unless someone needed to use the hotel facilities



Finally allowed to rehearse, with more than six people, at The George. – Photo: Simon Maylor

there was no need at all for any of the audience to go indoors and tickets were all sent electronically to avoid paper changing hands. Finally, all front of house staff were issued with Shakespeare in Love and War 2021 facemasks to allow them to be identified quickly, and audience members asked to wear face coverings until seated.

The cast would have to use smaller rooms to change in than usual, so changing in shifts to avoid more than 6 in one room, and a base costume was used, with just some changes to jackets, hats or perhaps skirts to limit the amount of changing required. Props were limited, but still sanitised before and after use and, when not on stage, masks were worn by cast members who sat outside rather than in a dressing room.

So the show did go on, for eleven successful performances, and the audiences loved it, giving such comments as:

- Fabulous first night. lots of work put in, in difficult circumstances. Lovely to hear some of the favourites sprinkled around the cast. Great night Well done!
- A superbly constructed and acted piece.

Tessa Davies, NODA East Councillor, said in her review of the production: “I must finish by congratulating everyone at SATG for putting on this production. The organisation was impeccable, the FOH people were helpful in finding us our seats in a socially distanced audience space and it was just lovely to be back watching a live performance again.”

Next year, Shakespeare at The George hope to return with a full scale production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

CREATIVE TAXRELIEFS

NODA members claim Theatre tax credits

Theatre tax credits are payments made via HMRC to incorporated theatre companies, including charitable companies, who perform qualifying theatre productions.

Here are just a few of the NODA members the team at Creative Tax Reliefs have helped to claim:

Bath Light Operatic Group
Cambridge Operatic Society (CaOS)
Durham Musical Theatre Company
Livingston Players SCIO
Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society
Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Company
WOW Youth Musical Theatre CIO
Kidz R Us Community Project

Can your theatre company claim Theatre tax credits too?

Remember – charities like the ones above qualify for the payments.

To find out more and whether your company qualifies contact the friendly team at Creative Tax Reliefs:

Phone: 01204 528575

Email: info@creativetaxreliefs.com

or refer to **NODA's factsheet on Theatre tax relief.**



Neil

Ex-HMRC Chartered Accountant with nearly 30 years' experience



Sandra

Works with our Theatre in Education companies



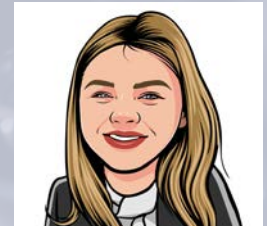
Graham

Former lead Tax specialist with HMRC's Creative Industries Unit



Nick

Chartered Accountant previously Financial Controller of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre



Rachel

Chartered Tax Advisor Apprentice

CREATIVE
TAXRELIEFS

Creative Tax Reliefs Ltd.
F14A Bolton Arena
Horwich
Bolton
BL6 6LB
creativetaxreliefs.com

The show definitely goes on for Babs and Roger

NODA London



Much Ado About Nothing - 1956

Two Loughton residents, Babs Oakley and Roger Barker, who will be 91 and 86 respectively this year, are celebrating their 70th and 65th anniversary of joining Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society – LADS. Even more impressively, during the pandemic both have been able to resurrect their performing careers, thanks to Zoom technology.

Babs joined LADS in 1951. She recalled, *“My family and I moved to Loughton in Essex which was a very compact little village back then. I was looking to put down some roots and went to the local youth centre. I met a lovely lady who was putting on a small one act play for a drama festival. I got involved, and we won. There was no turning back from then. She suggested that I should make an application to join LADS.”* It was a good decision. *“I was definitely looking for a group of people who would be friends and my golly, were they friends! I found the togetherness of doing a play was such a unifying thing. It’s making a contribution towards a greater whole which is just so satisfying. I’ve always been thrilled that there was a contribution I could make, and that’s never ever gone away.”*

After a couple of years in minor roles, Babs got her first lead part with LADS in 1956, as Beatrice in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. Babs recalls this fondly *“I enjoyed the challenge of the language and the fun in it, and I hadn’t thought, until then, that anything like Shakespeare could be fun.”* A brand new LADS’ member, Roger Barker, also got his first part in that production, as a member of the watch. *“That was my introduction to LADS,”* he said, *“and I can see myself now in a floppy hat, and bent over, rather like I am now really.”* The two have been good friends



Babs and Roger in 2013

since those days, have maintained their membership and involvement in LADS, acted together numerous times on the Lopping Hall stage and shared many social visits to the theatre.

Babs also turned her hand to directing, taking charge of about 50 productions. Although she stepped down from acting and directing some time ago, she continues to contribute to the society by working as prompt and helping newer and less experienced members with their lines, and, pre-COVID, preparing her famous picnic lunches. These are a key feature of the Society’s ‘Set-Up Sunday’, when LADS’ members meet at Lopping Hall to build the set for the following week’s production.

Babs and Roger both live alone and found lockdown a challenge. Babs equated it, in a small way, to what she experienced when she was evacuated during WWII. *“That was the first occasion I remember feeling this loneliness and isolation and I don’t remember it happening subsequently, until this pandemic.”* Roger reported that lockdown made him feel *“closed in and not really able to breathe.”* But the new phenomenon of Zoom gave them both a new lease of acting life and helped to alleviate those feelings.

During lockdown LADS’ members used Zoom to have fortnightly readings of plays, monologues and novels. This enabled them to socially interact and work on text and voice, no matter their age. Appreciating that they were still able to act from their sitting room chairs, LADS asked Babs and Roger to perform in *A Walk on the Wild Side*, LADS’ contribution to the Epping Forest Festival of Culture, 2021. Babs read an extract from Richard

Jefferies *Hours of Spring* and Roger played Badger in an adaptation of *A Wind in the Willows*. Both productions were recorded and produced remotely and made available for free on YouTube.

The opportunity to be part of the LADS YouTube production was very welcome. *“It was lovely being an active part of the drama society again, being with people that enjoy performing. It’s all very well to sit at home and have your own memories, but it is that contact that you miss very much. So, it was lovely just to be able to work on a character and see it included in a little production really. It felt very inclusive,”* said Roger.

LADS Chair, Jean Cooper, commenting upon them both, said: *“I joined LADS over 30 years ago, and have always been in awe of both Babs and Roger. They are so skilled in their craft and extremely generous in their time and support for everyone who comes along to ‘tread the boards’. They make no secret of the fact that LADS has given them so much in the way of friendship and interest, but what they don’t mention is the great fun and friendship they have given to others over their 70 and 65 years with the group. Despite failing health, they are still active members and contribute massively to the society, but sadly, they thought their acting days were over. So, it has been a great privilege for all of us to work again with Babs and Roger and I am so proud that LADS has facilitated the platform for them.”*

As lockdown eases the society hopes to find a special way to celebrate Babs’ Platinum Anniversary and to keep using Zoom and YouTube to enable older members, like Babs and Roger, to keep performing.

Bridlington online

NODA North East



NODA North East - Bryan Craven, weekend organiser

Once again NODA North East had to cancel their Bridlington Gala Weekend which was due to take place in April. Instead, the Region held a Virtual Gala Weekend with all their usual activities taking place online.

The event kicked off with Bryan's Brid Quiz run by Bryan Craven and we had 33 members joining in for an exciting afternoon of quizzing.

Members had been asked to hold their own Gala Dinner and send in photos whether it was a grand five-course meal or fish and chips. This was followed by the usual speeches and then the first cabaret of the weekend, *Doing Whodunit* by LYM Productions which was a hilarious spoof of an Agatha Christie type play which everyone enjoyed immensely.

The evening ended with the usual sing along with Matt Symonds who was joined by 36 members who could be as raucous as they wanted to be whilst enjoying themselves.

Saturday morning brought the usual workshops which have always been well attended and enjoyed. Dee Bennie-Marshall, a Rotherham choreographer and director, was joined by 55 members for a dance workshop.

Sarah Osborne from Wakefield, who is also the NODA Summer School Director, led a drama workshop, 5 Top Tips for Performing Text, which went down a storm.

Adam Boniface, a Musical Director from Bradford, ran a singing workshop providing techniques members could use in both auditions and performances.

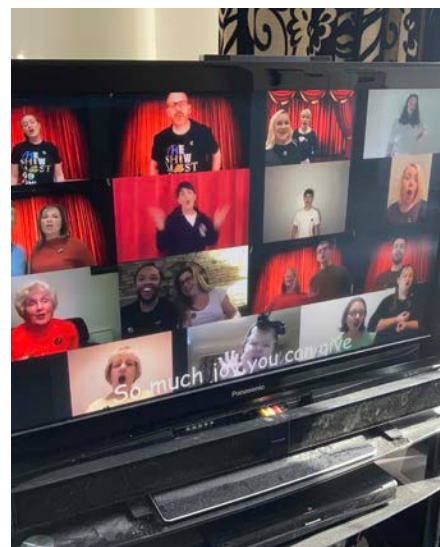
The final workshop was a Zoom Play Reading hosted by Carolyn Craven of Leeds who had also taken part in the Friday evening play.

The Region's AGM followed in the afternoon, with 44 members attending, 136 members enjoyed a cabaret presented by LIDOS, a Leeds based society, who throughout the whole of lockdown have managed to deliver many superb socially distanced online performances.

For the final session on Sunday morning, it had been decided to hold a virtual cabaret and societies and members were asked to submit their offerings for this. All the songs, monologues, short panto pieces and dances were compiled to give a superb cabaret enjoyed by 130 members.



North East Weekend session

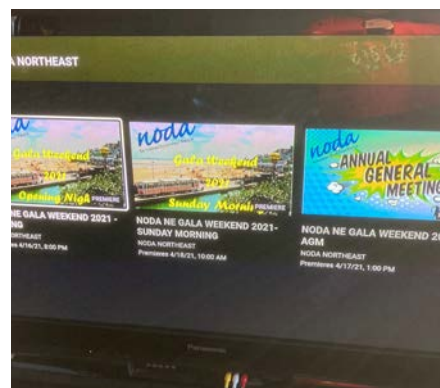


Bridlington sunshine

The weekend ended, as usual, with singing of 'Jerusalem' and members had provided videos of themselves performing this which were put into the final edit.

In total, 652 ticket reservations had been made available via TicketSource totally free. With other members and family members also watching, many more people viewed the weekend's events than the number of tickets "sold".

The weekend had been put together by Bryan Craven who is Regional Rep for NODA NE District 15 and without his expertise this could not have gone ahead. We therefore owe Bryan a big debt of gratitude for all the hours he spent getting the weekend to the high standard it was. There has been some excellent feedback from members who attended and far too many to list here. However, the general feeling was that the events were much enjoyed by all.



North East Weekend welcome

Twenty Four Show : A Musical Comedy

NODA North West



As performers on stage, we all understand the importance of preparation and knowing our lines, movement and choreography. You may have also had that recurring nightmare during show week

when you are on stage, but you don't know any of your lines! So, just imagine if you are about to perform a show in 24 hours only you don't know your lines, you've not rehearsed and you don't even know what character you are supposed to be. Audlem Theatre Company have been embarking on something brand new - *Twenty Four Show - A Musical Comedy* that will be cast, rehearsed and performed after just 24 hours!

Now this may sound like a mammoth task, but they had a production team busily working away behind the scenes and a cast of new and returning members excited to be part of this wonderful journey!

How does it work? Secret preparation

happens in the months leading up to the show, including writing the script, preparing costumes, designing the stage and planning the tech and lights with only a select couple of people knowing the title of the script, keeping it a mystery for all others involved until 24 hours prior to curtain up!

24 hours before curtain up and the director announced the title of the play and who would play each part. The cast then immediately got to work rehearsing overnight and throughout the next day while the backstage and technical crew constructed the set and programme the lighting. The show was then performed a mere 24 hours later!

EODS Open Air Shakespeare is back with a bang

NODA South East



For 19 years, long-time NODA members Eastbourne Operatic and Dramatic Society have been delighting audiences in the beautiful seaside resort, and way beyond, with their fresh and imaginative productions of some of Shakespeare's best-loved plays. And now, after a bleak year for theatre companies everywhere, they're back - ready to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of one of the highlights of the Eastbourne arts and entertainment calendar, with a production of *The Taming*

of the Shrew that promises to be both charming and challenging.

The magical atmosphere of Eastbourne's famous Italian Gardens has the power to transport audiences to wherever The Bard sets his dramas, but this year the transformation of the garden's classical features into the world of the roaring 20s is something else altogether. The opening scene alone combines art deco architecture, hot jazz and a fashion parade

where the shimmering, dropped-waist dresses look as if they came straight from Chanel's studio.

Charming, clearly, but challenging? Director Jaz Manville reminds us that the 20s was a transformative decade in which women's hard-won struggle for the vote (strengthened by their massive contribution to the war effort) ushered in profound changes how they saw their place in society – and how society saw them. So as well as the glitz and glamour of a hedonistic decade, expect the cast of seasoned stalwarts and talented newcomers to appear as suffragettes and the production's music to feature some of the movement's distinctive songs.

EODs production team and in particular their FOH crew have faced their own challenges in adapting to a world where Covid restrictions still have a big impact on public performance. But while EODS' legendary homemade cakes will now all be individually wrapped, they will still make their contribution to the powerful appeal of a theatrical event that has been sorely missed and whose return is eagerly awaited.

Larbert in lockdown

NODA Scotland



Like all amateur dramatic companies across the UK, lockdown in 2020 was tough. No weekly rehearsals, no shows, and no pantomime to kick off the festive season.

Panto and Christmas are a huge deal for everyone at LAOS, so it was important to us that we didn't let the COVID-19 pandemic stop us from engaging with our members and audiences. We wanted to come together as a community to produce something meaningful and entertaining.

So, with all that in mind we embarked on a plan to do things a little differently... and digitally! We wanted to use our Facebook page to share festive content, for our audience, that was created by our company members.

Our plan was:

(a) to have shareable video content each day in the run of what would have been our "panto week"

(b) to have a video performance from our wider membership to wish our audiences a Merry Christmas.

Our Digital Panto Week

We decided to create short fun videos featuring characters from our 2019 panto, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The theme running through each video was, that due to the pandemic, our characters were stuck in "pantoland" and couldn't get to the Dobbie Hall in Larbert to be in *Aladdin* in 2020.

A script was written for each character to perform, along with the traditional shout outs to local groups that normally come

to the panto. It was important these videos were produced to a professional standard, so we engaged the services of MM Sound and Lighting who we normally hire for our annual shows. Like so many in the creative industries, they too had felt the effect of the lockdown, so we knew that in getting them to help us, we were in turn, helping them. They set up a COVID safe space in their warehouse, which could be fully ventilated, and individuals were all able to come at staggered times and socially distance. They used a video wall and the same artwork that we had as backdrops in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Each character was filmed separately, but MM were able to virtually bring some of them together and added in special effects.

So, in what would have been our panto week from 23 to 28 November 2020, we released a video each day on our Facebook page. Alongside the videos, we ran a JustGiving page link in each of the videos, encouraging people to donate to our chosen Charity - Parkinson's UK, which raised £660 for a very worthy cause!

The engagement with our audience was beyond our expectations. In total our set of videos had over 18k views! Feedback from our audiences was wonderful and made us feel so emotional that we could still connect with them virtually.

Comments included:

"After a horrible year, as I'm sure many have had, my 14-year-old daughter looked ready to cry, she was so happy seeing this!"

"You are brilliant. I'm sorry that I'm not seeing you live but you've really cheered me up."

Our Makaton Merry Christmas Video

At the end of our panto, it has become a tradition for the cast to sing and sign the song 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town', so we decided to do a video version of this using a pre-recorded version of the song. Previously we've signed in BSL but to make it more inclusive we decided to sign in Makaton. We are very fortunate to have a Makaton teacher as a company member, so they produced step-by-step videos and materials for company members to rehearse at home.

Our members found this an enjoyable challenge, and they were able to have Zoom rehearsals so that everyone could support each other to get the words and actions exactly right.

Each person filmed themselves individually and MM then edited it together. We released it in the week leading up to Christmas, as a Merry Christmas message from our company. Doing this video was particularly meaningful to us, as each year we put on a performance of our pantomime just for young people with additional support needs and their families. At our performances it's a joy to see many of them join in signing along with us for 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town', so this video was inspired by the young people.

Feedback from the public was extremely positive with the video receiving thousands of views and being shared by many people. Company members also loved being able to perform together even if it was in this new virtual world!

John Coe, Vice President



The wrong kind of online drama!

NODA South West

NODA South West's 2021 online AGM Zoom experience is immortalised for ever!

So eventful with the modern-day delights of Zoom was NODA South West's recent AGM with NODA National President Christine Hunter Hughes in attendance, that Regional Secretary, Dee Way, felt compelled to record the events as a poem. As well as being for your entertainment, it may well echo your own experiences too!

*T'was our AGM last Sunday
The Census Day, UK,
As ever at the moment
The Zoom app holding sway*

*We checked the links and ID
For several days before –
And found that in the copying
A dot had gone AWOL*

*So all of that was put right,
And tested on the day
Zoom operated beautifully
It should go well today*

*But when the meeting time arrived
I logged in as before
“Host in another meeting”
My chin it hit the floor!*

*None of us could get in
So panic floated free
Emails flying round about
And phone calls by the three*

*All the members waiting
The President and all
“Now what do we do?”
Came screaming down the hall*

*Start up another meeting
On emergency ID
Circulate the links again
Keep cool as can be*

*Delay the start of meeting
By 15 mins at best
Contact all and everyone –
The hassle and the stress*

*Hope the link gets passed on
To the people waiting still
Societies and members –
I think I need a pill!*

*Start admitting members
Sorting out the screen
Greeting those arriving
Apologise again*

*The AGM did happen
With several members there
It really was a good time
Our interests to share*

*So now we get to hoping
Future meetings to run well
With Zoom our chosen platform
Performing really well*

*For as we drink our coffee
Prepare for summer still
These dramas with the Zoom links
Could break the toughest will!*



noda

Theatre Summer School

2nd - 6th August 2022

Follow our Facebook page to keep up to date with the latest news

COLSTARS – seventy five years of defying more than just gravity

NODA Wales & Ireland



The Vagabond King - 1946

The Coliseum Theatre in Aberdare, South Wales officially opened on Saturday September 9th 1938. A plea went out from the theatre management to the community to find people who would be interested in forming an Amateur Operatic Society to perform at the new venue. The response was outstanding and the Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society was born.

The first production was planned to be staged in November 1939, but due to the onset of the Second World War the whole project was shelved and rehearsals came to an end. Following the end of hostilities in 1945, people were eager to get the society back on track. So under the baton of Mr W. R. Thomas, with Mr Griff Harris as Director and Miss Marian Phillips-Evans as choreographer, the Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society took to the Coliseum stage with its first production *The Vagabond King*. The show ran for seven nights and played to capacity houses of 600. It was reported in the local newspaper that: “*The Company, fired with real enthusiasm and imaginative zest, all entering into a spirit of escapist romance among a dazzling brilliance of colourful costumes, picturesque settings and melodious music*”.

By the 1950s, the Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society was well established and now had a resident Production Team in husband and wife Mr W.R. Thomas (affectionately known as Billy) and Mrs Enid Thomas. They stayed at the helm of the Company for twenty two years. The society now returned to staging the

more traditional, well-loved operetta and musical comedies, having large chorus numbers and the talents of their new resident “leading lady”, Pauline Jones who took the soprano leads for more than twenty years. The mid 1960s saw an influx of new members following the collapse of two other local amateur companies in the area. By 1969, the Coliseum Society had 65 members on stage for their production of *Rose Marie*.

The 1970s started well but by the middle of the decade the popularity of the Company began to wane. Many of the older audience members and patrons were no longer with us and the chorus and Production Team were getting older. Older shows were still being staged which didn't appeal to the “new generation” – times were changing, but the society wasn't moving with the current trends. Then in 1975, whilst conducting the orchestra during a performance of *Goodnight Vienna*, Mr. W. R. Thomas the Musical Director suffered a stroke. With fading health he continued in the role for *The Desert Song* in 1976, but passed away soon afterwards in May 1977. His wife continued in her role as Director until 1980, but by this time the Company was elderly and there was a lack of enthusiasm, resulting in it folding following a dire production of *Rose Marie* which was badly attended and suffered terrible reviews.

So for the first time in thirty five years the Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society were unable to stage a show at the Coliseum Theatre. However, in 1981 a new



Enid and Billy Thomas

Management Committee took over and a request was made to other local societies for help to restart the Company with a view to putting on a show in 1982. The plea was favourably answered and in November 1982, *Carousel* hit the Coliseum stage with a brand new Production Team and company. The Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society was back. But, as with so many amateur companies, internal politics crept into the mix and by 1985, things came to head and landmark changes took place yet again. An established director and performer Mr. Tony Griffiths, took up the post on the Production Team and totally changed the ethos of the company. He introduced changes and adopted a strict regime which altered people's attitudes towards theatre and the performing arts in general. The company grew in strength and popularity once more.

In 1990, due to the lack of funding from the Coal Industry Social and Welfare Organisation and the deterioration of the Coliseum Theatre, the building, the home of the Company for more than forty years, was sold to the Local Authority. Luckily, they maintained the building as a working theatre and a large refurbishment programme began. The Coliseum Amateur Operatic Society had now lost its home and had to seek rehearsal space elsewhere. This move from the theatre gave the Company the opportunity to change its identity to a name that was easily recognisable and synonymous with an excellent standard of entertainment. So in 1991, for the Welsh Amateur production of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, the Company adopted the new



Curtain up with Colstars

name of COLSTARS (keeping the Col from the Coliseum Theatre to still maintain our association with the venue).

Sadly, Tony Griffiths passed away in 1997, leaving the Company in the capable hands of Mr Colin Lewis. Colin had already been an associate of Tony Griffiths and knew the Company and how it worked very well. Alongside the now resident Musical Director, Michael Jones, the team took Colstars into the new millennium with confidence, staging many and varied productions at the newly refurbished Coliseum Theatre Aberdare.

Everything continued well into the new millennium. In 2001, Colstars staged the Welsh Amateur Premiere production of the NODA musical *The Slipper And The Rose*. Then in 2006, (the Diamond Jubilee year of the Company) disaster struck: the day before the dress rehearsal, for the celebratory performance of *The Merry Widow*, heavy rain caused the Coliseum Theatre to flood thus cancelling the show. All outstanding bills for hire of scenery, costumes, orchestra etc had to be honoured and all ticket money returned. Luckily, the company was covered by the NODA Insurance Scheme and we were able to reclaim nearly half of our losses, but the Company was left in a very difficult financial position which almost led it into liquidation. However, due to the generosity of members and patrons, Colstars once again survived.

The following year saw the formation of the Colstars Youth Theatre under the



Colstars performing at the NODA Wales and Ireland awards in 2016

direction of Mr Derek Williams. The group still thrives today. The Youth group have staged many productions and won the NODA Award for Best Youth Production for their 2010 staging of *13*.

In 2008, Colin Lewis resigned his post as Director and the position was taken up firstly by Mrs Pat Evans and then by Mr Davron Hicks. Following the staging of *Calamity Jane* in 2010, the Company once again saw a decline, this time in membership. For the following two years, no musicals were staged but the Company maintained its existence by producing plays and concerts alongside the annual pantomimes. Then in 2013, Mr Derek Williams took over as Director of the main adult company and brought the Colstars back to its former glory and the strong successful, award winning Company that they are today. Under his directorship, the Company has reached new heights and over the past six years have been nominated for, and won many, NODA awards for their staging of such successful shows as: *Jesus Christ Superstar*, with Musical Director Michael Jones, *Carousel*, *Sister Act*, *All Shook Up* and most recently *The Wedding Singer* in partnership with Musical Directors Nathan Jones and Sioned Evans.

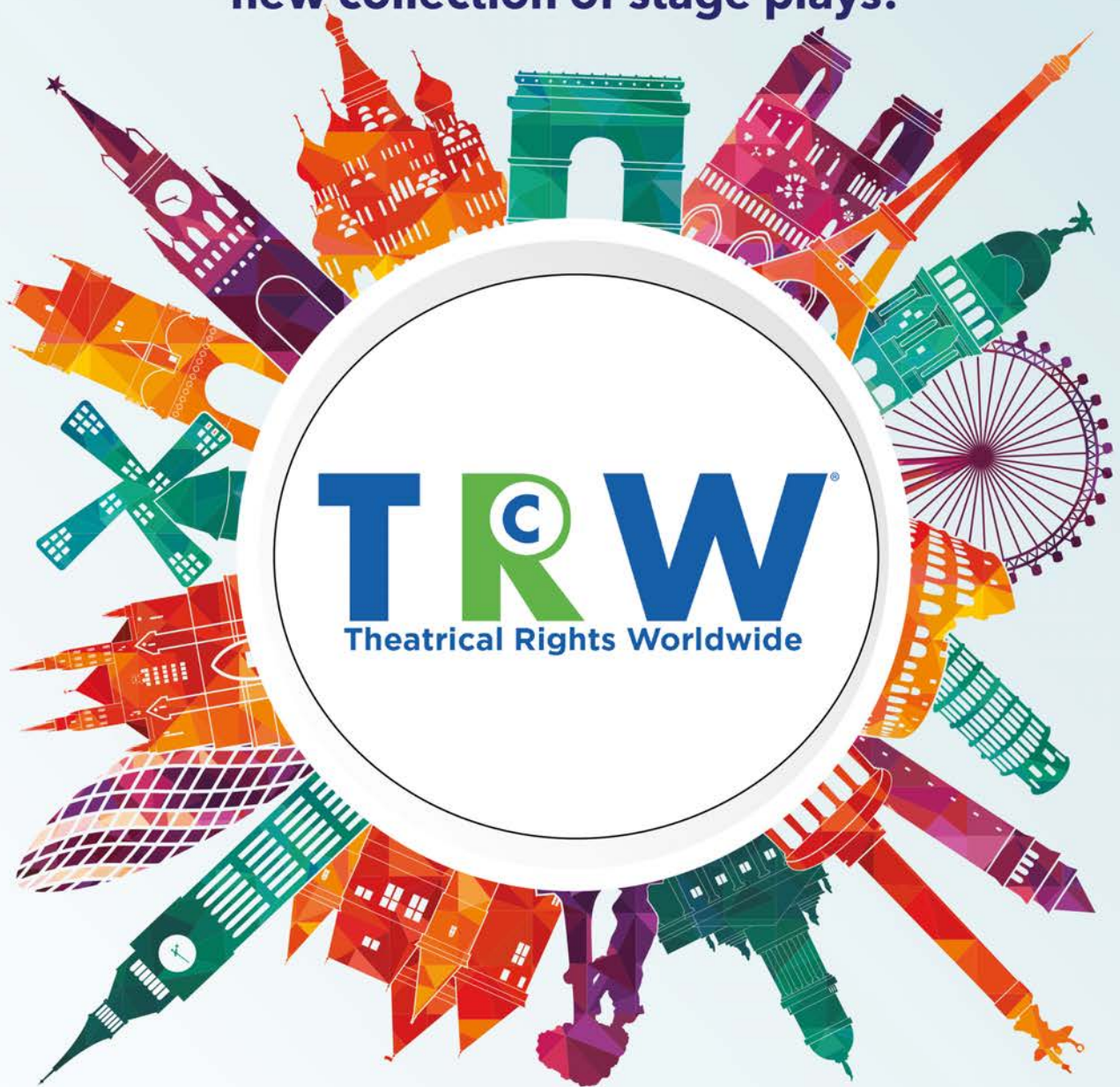
The pandemic of 2020, has once again brought the Company to a halt. Plans had been made to stage *The Sound of Music*, *Hello Dolly* and *Shrek* in May 2021, but have all been abandoned. During the lockdown, however, Colstars have still been very much alive and active with

virtual recordings, monthly raffles and the transmission of a very successful fortnightly radio programme entitled *Curtain Up, With Colstars* which airs on Jacsradio.media on a Sunday afternoon from 4pm. So despite the ups and downs that Colstars has endured over the last seventy five years, the Company soldiers on and is now thriving.

The current situation is just looked upon as another “blip”. In the words of Evan Hansen: “So let the sun come streaming in. Cause you'll reach up and you'll rise again. If you only look around - You will be found.” Colstars will be back, bigger and better than ever!



From the leader in musical theatre licensing comes a
new collection of stage plays!



PLAYS
TRW[®]

Now Available from Theatrical Rights Worldwide at

www.trwplays.com

The race for 'curtain up'...

"Beginners to the stage please!"

NODA East

In these uncertain times there are those who are ready at the starting gate! None less than Blakeney Players in North Norfolk who already have a reputation locally, for doing it 'differently'... They are raring to go as soon as the government's metaphoric gun is fired, with a home written piece called appropriately *Stand and Deliver* written, produced and directed by Chairman Peter Franklyn.

Having tracked this busy man down, Peter firstly outlined the impressive arrangements put in place to ensure everyone involved with the production complied with Blakeney Players Covid protocol. This was helped by 90% of the players having been double vaccinated, (those who weren't, provided negative lateral flow tests on each rehearsal day) and, following DCMS Making Music guidelines for rehearsals, weekly rehearsals were able to commence after Step 3 of the road map was lifted.

Once inside the spacious village hall, separate bubbles of six players were kept socially distanced on individual "carpets" songs were rehearsed outside to the band, in a bubble of four appropriately spaced. The extravagant home made set was constructed by a maximum of six builders in their own bubble. Scenery and set painting was done by two painters when the hall was empty.

Phew, as a director myself I am well aware of the complexities of scheduling, but this must surely be the most mammoth task during a very intensive period. But, what about the lead-in to opening night I hear you ask? Unable to use the stage in rehearsal (to remain socially distanced), the cast had their first and final dress rehearsal on the same evening before opening night. This, complete with a full band and chorus and the first of two separate three-course supper evenings thrown in, or more specifically, 'served at socially distanced tables', to a sold-out audience! What an achievement!

The show, *Stand and Deliver* is set in 1650 in the stately home of Lord Montague

Summer 2021 **Blakeney Players Present**



STAND & DELIVER





at
**BLAKENEY
VILLAGE HALL**

Curtain 8pm
Licensed Bar from 7:15pm

Thursday 22nd July
Thursday 29th July
Tuesday 3rd August
Thursday 5th August

TICKETS Adult £9 Child £3

SUPPER SHOW
Saturday 24th July
£28 per ticket. 6 for 6:30pm
Max 8 tickets per booking

NEW BOX OFFICE
From 24th June
10am - 4pm weekdays
Blakeney Garage
Coast Road, Blakeney

Telephone: 07824 474171
Please do not use Blakeney Garage landline no.

www.blakeneyplayers.com



Donne, a garden enthusiast with a desire to win Gold at the Chelsea Flower Show. But, the risk of highway robbers, tension between Holland and England, and fraught trade deals between the Dutch delegates and Norfolk's own MP, his hope of winning with exotic plants is at grave risk and thus his hearts desire. There is romance, music, and laughter, combined with fantastically outrageous costumes within the period and a beautiful set. Opening night is July 22nd, with shows running across the early summer which are already selling well to a loyal audience of locals and of course a larger than usual influx of holiday stay-cationers!

Feeling very proud of the Blakeney Players Peter says: "It was always going to be tight. We had advertised to open on July 15th, which would have four rehearsals on stage had restrictions lifted on June 21st but with commitment from everyone (including the caterers) the Players really took to the task and are ready to go, albeit with fingers crossed. It will be a brilliant antidote to the last 15 months."

Peter Franklyn

noda

Long Service Awards

Visit noda.org.uk/awards to apply today



10 Year Badge



15 Year Badge



20 Year Badge



25 Year Badge



30 Year Badge



35 Year Badge



40 Year Badge



45 Year Badge



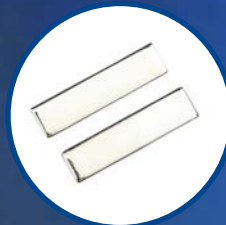
50 Year Badge



60 Year Badge



25 Year Medal



Silver Bar



50 Year Medal



Gold Bar



Diamond Bar



55 Year Pin



60 Year Pin



65 Year Pin



70 Year Pin



Individual Member



Society Life Member



Youth Award



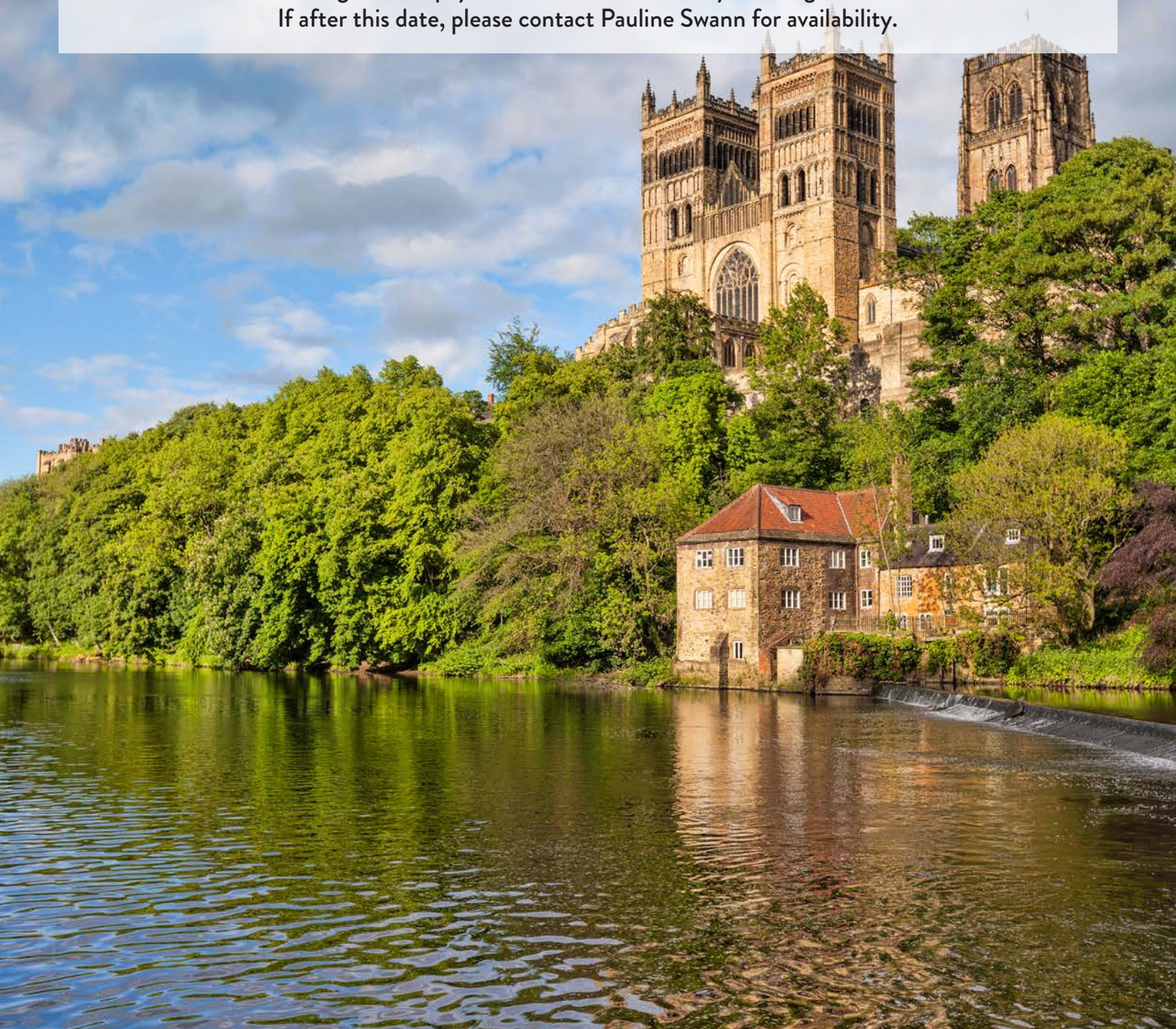
Commendation Award

NODA Presidential Gala & AGM 2021

Radisson Blu Hotel Durham DH1 5TA
Friday 10th to Sunday 12th September

The North is proud to welcome you to the Presidential Gala and AGM. Overlooking the River Wear, right in the city centre, the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham is the perfect place to unwind. Durham, in the northeast of the country, is a quintessentially English city peppered with historical and cultural charms. Shop, dine and explore before taking a short walk back to your room to relax.

**Booking and full payment must be received by 7th August 2021.
If after this date, please contact Pauline Swann for availability.**



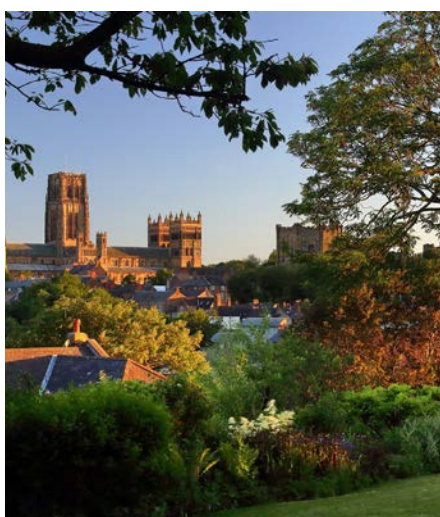
The City of Durham



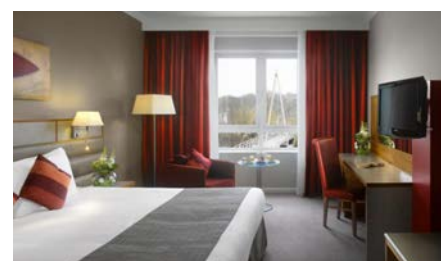
Why not make a full weekend of your trip? Booking Package A or C will give you time to explore the amazing city and its sights.

The city boasts a UNESCO World Heritage site, as well as a maze of hilly, cobbled streets. Visit Durham Cathedral where parts of the Harry Potter films were made, Durham Castle and The Oriental Museum at Durham University. These attractions are all just a short walk from the hotel.

If you are looking for a more relaxing day, why not try the hotel Spa and Wellness centre where you can soothe your body and mind with a massage and a swim.



The Radisson Blu



Friday

If you have booked the two night package, the evening meal is included. This evening will be an informal social occasion, giving you time to settle in and meet others attending the Gala.

Saturday

Saturday morning you are free to explore the amazing site of Durham.

The AGM will take place at 2:30pm on Saturday 11th September and the inauguration of Gordon Richardson as NODA National President.

For those attending the Gala, a drinks reception will begin at 6:45pm followed by evening meal at 7:30pm.

Middlesborough Youth will be providing our evening Cabaret and to round the evening off there will be live music to dance the night away.

Carriages 12:30pm

Sunday

After a leisurely breakfast and check out, you are again free to roam the city before traveling home.

For NODA Regional Representatives, there will be a Regional Representative meeting held at 10:30am

Package A

Based on 2 People sharing

2 Night Stay Bed and Breakfast Friday, Saturday plus evening meal Friday and lunch Saturday, Gala dinner and AGM.

£215 per person

Package B

Based on 2 People sharing

1 Night Stay Bed and Breakfast Saturday plus light lunch Saturday, Gala dinner and AGM.

£140 per person

Package C

Single Occupancy

2 Night Stay Bed and Breakfast Friday, Saturday plus evening meal Friday and lunch Saturday, Gala dinner and AGM.

£280 per person

Package D

Single Occupancy

1 Night Stay Bed and Breakfast Saturday plus light lunch Saturday, Gala dinner and AGM.

£165 per person

Package E

Per Person

AGM, light lunch Saturday and Gala dinner

£65 per person

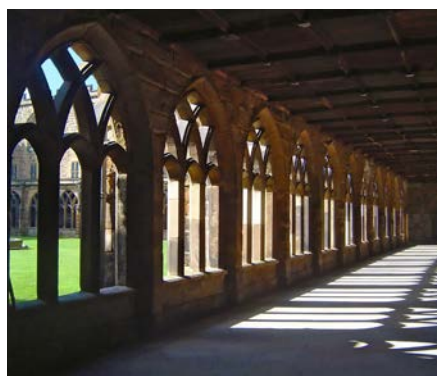
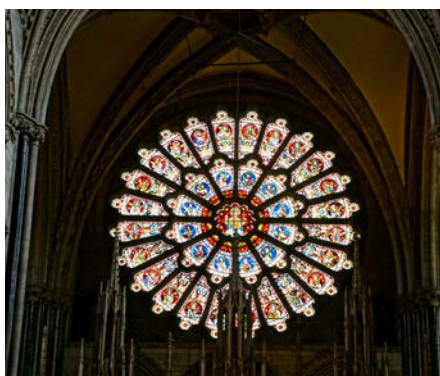
Package F

Per Person

Gala dinner only

£50 per person

Please note - there is no charge to attend the AGM



NODA Presidential Gala & AGM 2021

Radison Blu Hotel, Durham Frankland Lane Durham DH1 5TA

Friday 10th - Sunday 12th September

Please complete in block letters

Name(s)			
Address			Postcode
Phone			NODA Region
Email			

N.B. Confirmation and other news about the celebrations will be sent via email. Your tickets and name tags will be available with complete information packs including timings on your arrival.

Package options

	A: to include 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) Bed & Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £215pp Two people sharing
	B: to include 1 night (Saturday) Bed and Breakfast, Light Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £140pp Two people sharing
	C: to include 2 nights (Friday & Saturday) Bed & Breakfast, Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £280pp Single Occupancy
	D: to include 1 night (Saturday) Bed and Breakfast, Light Lunch and Gala Dinner Saturday £165pp Single Occupancy
	E: AGM, Light Lunch Saturday, Gala Dinner £65 per person
	F: Gala Dinner only £50 per person

There is no charge for attending just the AGM.

Type of Room	<input type="checkbox"/>	Double	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	Twin (limited availability)		
Dietary Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gluten Free	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dairy intolerant
Other								

Payment

All payments must be accompanied with a booking form which can be posted to Pauline Swann, 135 Burn Park Road, Houghton Le Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 5DG or emailed to pauline.swann@noda.org.uk

The latest date for application and payments is 7th August 2021.

Deposit

Package A to D - Non-returnable £50.00 per person. Package E and F - payment in full

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheque made payable to NODA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Payment by BACS Sort Code 60 - 83 - 01 Account 20379546 Quote GALA and your name	<input type="checkbox"/>	Card Payment - please call NODA HO once your booking has been confirmed - 01733 374 790
--------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------	---	--------------------------	---

Names of other members of your party or seating preference

Disability considerations

You can complete this form on our website noda.org.uk/gala

THEATRICAL TRADERS ASSOCIATION

Representing all the affiliated traders who supply amateur theatre in the UK.

Membership of the TTA means a reputable supplier who maintains the standards set by the Association.

COSTUMERS	AceTheatrical Costumiers Unit G, Crown Business Park, Dukestown, Tredegar Blaenau Gwent NP22 4EF 01495 350008 elande1@tiscali.co.uk www.acetheatricalcostumiers.com	Ariel Costume Hire Unit 20, Bolney Grange Business Park, Stairbridge Lane, Bolney, Sussex RH17 5PB 01444 250407 costumes@arielct.com www.arielct.com	The History Bunker Ltd. 263a Whitehall Road Leeds, West Yorkshire LS12 6ER 0113 220 5881 info@thehistorybunker.co.uk www.thehistorybunker.com
	Molly Limpet's Theatrical Emporium Ltd. Unit 2 Barmouth Court, Barmouth Road Sheffield S7 2DH 0114 250 0851 enquiries@mollylimpets.com www.mollylimpets.com	Northern & UK Costume Hire Long Ing Mill, Long Ing Lane, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB18 6BJ 01282 817351 info@northerncostumehire.co.uk www.northerncostumehire.co.uk	Triple C's Costumes Brindley House, Engine Lane, Lye, Stourbridge DY9 7AQ 01384 893911 enquiries@tripleccostumehire.com www.tripleccostumehire.com
		Utopia Costumes Utopia House, Academy Street, Forfar, Angus DD8 2HA 01307 468231 www.utopi acostumes.com	
SCENERY, PROPS ETC.	The Border Studio Riverside Mill, Level Crossing Road, Seikirk, Scottish Borders TD7 5EQ 01750 20237 info@borderstudio.com www.borderstudio.co.uk	HWL (UK) Limited Cricket Street, Denton, Manchester M34 3DR 0161 335 0220 props@hwitd.co.uk www.weaponuk.co.uk	Proscenium Ltd. Sladen Wood Mill, Todmorden Road, Littleborough, Rochdale OL15 9EW 01706 377226 enquiries@proscenium.co.uk www.proscenium.co.uk
	Problood & Glynn McKay SFX Makeup Framlingham Suffolk 01728 723865 glynnmckayassociates@gmail.com www.problood.co.uk	Scenic Projects Ltd. Nelson Wharf Business Park, Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 9LP 01502 575000 sales@scenicprojects.co.uk www.scenicprojects.co.uk	Scenery Solutions Trading Ltd. Unit 2, Barton Farm Industrial Estate, Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh, SO50 6RP 023 8064 1496 enquiries@scenerysolutions.co.uk www.scenerysolutions.co.uk
	RIGHTSHOLDERS Stagescripts Ltd Lantern House, 84 Littlehaven Lane Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4JB 0345 686 0611 sales@stagescripts.com www.stagescripts.com	TICKET PRINTERS Just Tickets 23 Wood Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, Berkshire RG4 9SJ 0345 126 0631 sales@just-tkts.com www.just.tkts.com	WIGS The Wig Centre 244 Dialstone Lane, Stockport SK2 7LE 07973 758091 wigs@hwitd.co.uk

Look out for the TTA logo. For help with supply of anything for your productions contact TTA helpline
0345 126 0631



WWW.THEATRICALTRADERSASSOCIATION.CO.UK

Summer comedies...



Agatha Crusty and...

Agatha Crusty murder mystery comedies have had audiences guessing and laughing with more than 400 performances all over the world. Catch one yourself soon and see the laughs pile up as fast as the bodies!



Baroque 'n' Roll

(3M, 1F) 120 mins.

A comedy romp through the larger-than-life lives – and glorious music – of three of the most celebrated composers of all time: Handel, Bach and Scarlatti.

The Lady Vanishes

(Full Length 6m, 9f)

Fast moving, funny adaptation of the Hitchcock classic, written so that the action moves seamlessly from one scene to the next. The various different 'sets' are all on stage throughout and lit as appropriate.



Roy Brown:

Untitled

(1-act 2m, 2f)

There's nothing like modern art to make a fast buck, and Roy's attempt is nothing like it.



Some aren't!

No Smoke

(1-act 2m, 4f) 50 mins.

Drama about a music teacher who is accused of sexual assaulting one of his students and how social media causes things to spiral out of control.



Another Life

(1-act 2m, 2f)

Award-winning play about Mary who has cancer and knows she only has a limited time to live. With touches of wry humour, the play ultimately is a celebration of life.

Many more full length and 1-act comedies and plays at derekwebb.co.uk

derekwebb.co.uk

For free downloadable evaluation scripts, go to stagescripts.com

THE MASK



The Official Organ
of the
National Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Association.

A Quarterly Magazine of
Amateur Opera & Drama

W.H.H.EATON.

JULY, 1911.

A Trip to the Archives

At NODA we have documents, librettos, scores, meeting minutes dating back to our beginning in 1899. In each edition of NODA Today, we will be taking a trip down into the archives to showcase some of our more interesting and historically important documents.

In this edition we have one of the only copies of the very short lived NAODA magazine 'The Mask'. We believe there are only two copies of this edition that remain.

The Question of Charity

In the April issue of *The Mask*, Mr W. H. H. Eaton, in his article on "The Importance of Raising the Average" wrote:-

"To keep your end up on the sickly, sentimental appeal to charity is more degrading and demoralising than to hold a bazaar. I nearly said 'it is obtaining money under false pretences.' I never see billed the work 'In aid of Local Charities' without experiencing an indescribable nausea. If you cannot exist as a society without dressing up as a waif and stray, and 'making up' as being in the last stage of consumption in order to get assistance, do not attempt to exist at all. It is not honest"

In our contributor's notice of the performance of "My Friend the Prince," by the Eastbourne Amateurs, which appears in the present issue, the subject is again raised from a similarly hostile point of view; in Mr Moody's letter to *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, re-printed in this issue, a further reference is made to it; and a letter which appears in our correspondence columns also deals with it. We may therefore reasonably assume that the quest is engaging the attention of more than one of our societies.

It is undoubtedly the fact that practically all amateur stage societies, whether playing drama or opera, make use of the charity appeal in one form or another. Even those few which do not expressly lure their patrons into the theatre by a formal announcement that the proceeds of the show will in some devious way relieve the long-suffering philanthropist of some portion of his annual generosity, contrive to let I be know, by circular or otherwise, that they have in former years made certain contributions to this or that charitable institution, with an inference that if the generous patron is sufficiently number something of the kind may possibly occur again. One society, which shall remain nameless, prints in prominent figures at the top of all its notepaper the amount of a fabulous sum which presumably represents the result of its artistic activities during its highly successful career. Others support cots in the local hospitals; and again others cannot pay their way and drop out of the National Association; but there is seldom any anxiety to advertising this last form of charity.

The only difference between the boast that you will have given more money to charity than any other society in the Kingdom, and the boast that you have given a better rendering of, say, "The Yeoman of the Guard" than can be seen anywhere else in the Kingdom, is that the latter is vastly worthier of pride than the former, in as much as anybody with money can give it away, but anybody with an opera society cannot necessarily play an opera, even indifferently well. Yet to print the latter boast on your notepaper, no matter how true it might be, would be looked upon as vain-glorious; while the former boast is applauded to the skies, and one begins to acquire an idea that there is something peculiarly distinguished about it.

Scale of Charges

For Advertisements (prepaid) on the insides of Cover and four pages of "The Mask"

COVER, inside front and back - and FIRST and LAST PAGE.

Whole page...£1 1 0	single advert	Whole page...£3 3 0	four quarters
Half ,, ...£0 12 6	,,	Half ,, ...£2 2 0	,,
Quarter ,, ...£0 7 6	,,	Quarter ,, ...£1 5 0	,,

SECOND PAGE - i.e. opposite first page of letterpress

Whole page...£1 10 0	single advert	Whole page...£4 3 0	four quarters
Half ,, ...£0 17 6	,,	Half ,, ...£2 17 6	,,
Quarter ,, ...£0 10 0	,,	Quarter ,, ...£1 12 6	,,

THIRD PAGE - i.e. opposite last page of letterpress

Whole page...£1 5 0	single advert	Whole page...£3 15 0	four quarters
Half ,, ...£0 15 0	,,	Half ,, ...£2 10 0	,,
Quarter ,, ...£0 8 6	,,	Quarter ,, ...£1 8 6	,,

"FOR SALE" AND "WANTED" ADVERTISEMENTS

Scale of Charges (to be prepaid).

Twenty-four Word, 1s each insertion.

Each Additional Eight Words 4d.

Then, again, we are really out in the interests of charity? If we are quite frank most of us will probably admit that our chief aim as amateurs is to amuse ourselves. There are just a few of us who are very seriously inclined; who are satisfied that they are the prophets of a heaven-sent message to the nation to show it what sincere art really is. The mantle of the Greek drama has descended upon them. For centuries the English stage has been notoriously in a very bad way. No playwright of any merit has been known until generations have tramped over his grave. No musician with an instinct for the stage could possibly come out of England. (In these strictures the sacrosanct Savoy Alliance is of course carefully expected). And as for players and operatic artists and producers - what does the English stage know of them?

We are concerned here with the common or garden amateur who makes as much as he can of the limited material at his disposal, and leaves the result more or less to Providence and a too lenient public. Why does he persist in dragging an indiscriminating world into an unhealthy theatre for at least a week in every year? Is it in order to 'swell the coffers' of the local infirmary, or to 'attain fame' by Endowing a cot? It it? Not a bit. It is to amuse himself, to gratify a personal ambition, to strut about and preen his fine feathers in the public eye. Let us be honest and admit that charity is very much a secondary consideration.

If that is agreed would it not be well if we all ceased to make use of so unfair an appeal? A modern writer has said:-

"We pass along the Strand and see a respectable young widow standing in the gutter with a baby in her arm and a couple of boxes of matches in one hand. We know she is a widow because of her weeds, and we know she is respectable by her clothes. We know she is not begging because she is selling matches. The sight of her in the gutter pains our heart. Our heart weeps and gives the woman a penny in exchange for half-penny box of matches, and the pain of our heart is thereby assuaged"

Are you aware Mr. Amateur that when we make use of that unfair appeal "In aid of Local Charities," we are standing in the gutter; we are pretending to be a respectable widow with a baby to support; we are laying ourselves open to the imputation of attempting to get a penny for a half-penny box of matches; and in probability the public come to see us for a reason very like that which led us to buy matches from the respectable widow? If our show is worth doing at all let us have the courage to stand by our belief in it. Why should we hide behind a hired baby? Why descent to the dodge of the weeds and matches? Why give the public an opportunity to conclude that we have labelled it a fool from whom money may be extracted by any sort of hollow pretence?

Let us be honest and announce that we have a least a penny worth of matches to offer in exchange for a penny. Never should we let it be hinted that but for our charity appeal we could not exist for more than two consecutive seasons. Yet that very thing is being hinted all over the country.

At the same time, if unlike the Penzance King, we are able to make this particular variety of piracy pay, by all means let us give what our superfluous wealth. But we need not make any fuss about that. It were better not to tell it in Gath, not to publish it

in the streets of Askelon, lest the Philistines confound us with such organisations as exist merely for the purpose of maintaining these charitable institutions, most of which, in a well-arranged social fabric, should by now have ceased to exist. We all have artistic ambitions and they cannot but benefit by being kept rigorously separate from our more sentimental interest in the material welfare of our fellows. Moreover, in the matter of charity, it was once and for all well said, "When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."



Recent Amateur Productions

The Hastings and St. Leonard's Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society "The Yeoman of the Guard"

There appears to be no limit to the ability and versatility of the Hastings and St. Leonard's Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and the town may well be proud of so talented a body.

Their past works need not be enumerated at the moment, but in presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Yeoman of the Guard," they were admittedly under-taking a work of no mean order, and one which is generally regarded as the most difficult of the famous set of operas. The most sanguine of the host of supporters which the society is happily blessed with never anticipated for a moment of immense success which characterised the first night on Monday. It was admitted by all hands that the presentation was the best yet to be seen, and that is saying more than a little.

The Society has certainly surprised and gratified everybody. One of the profession, with a quarter of a century to look back upon as a producer, said on Monday evening that he had never seen anything better done in his life.

The chorus work was as good as ever, the voices were admirably balanced, and the enunciation, a quality generally lamentably lacking with amateurs and professionals alike, was beyond reproach.

The Hastings & St. Leonard's Observer
29th April, 1911

The Scunthorpe Operatic Society "The Pirates of Penzance"

The Scunthorpe Operatic Society covered themselves in glory on Thursday evening when the initial performance of "The Pirates of Penzance" took place in the Public Hall. The members have been intensely enthusiastic in the rehearsals, and their efforts were undoubtedly crowned with success on the opening night.

Mr F. T. B. Smith was the honorary coach and stage manager, and much of the success of the production is due to this gentleman and also to the musical director, Mr F. C. Nicholson.

The Scunthorpe Star

Shelford Walsh,

The Successful Coach

TO ALL THE LEADING OPERATIC SOCIETIES.

Holds the record for the Largest Amount ever taken; also for the Largest Profit ever made by an Operatic Society. Three more records broken this past season.

EXTENSIVE REPERTOIRE,

Including all the Gilbert & Sullivan Operas.

:: :: Prompt Books supplied at Reasonable Fees. :: ::

For Vacant Dates, Address—

'Corneville,' Dragon View, Harrogate.

"OPERATICS" by Shelford Walsh. Price One Shilling.

C. & W. MAY,

Theatrical : Costumiers

To the Principal LONDON and PROVINCIAL THEATRES.

Costumes on Hire for Amateur Theatrical and Operatic Performances,

FANCY DRESS BALLS, TABLEAUX VIVANTS, &c.

9 & 11, Garrick St.,

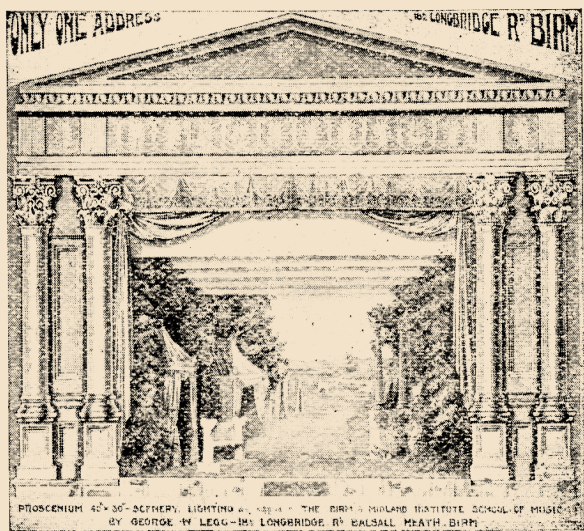
COVENT GARDEN,

LONDON.

Telegrams—
"SHAKESPEARIAN, LONDON."
Telephone—6525 Gerrard.



Entered at Stationer's Hall,



PHONE 1269 MID.

MY CARD

AND POSTERS

Only ONE GEORGE W. LEGG.

THE LEGG (NOT A COMPANY, NOTE THIS.)

IS

George W. Legg

18 1/2 LONGBRIDGE ROAD,

Balsall Heath Road, BIRMINGHAM,

**Scenic Artist, Flag & Banner Maker,
and General Decorator.**

TONS of Scenery—All Sizes in Stock—Sale or Hire.
Fit-ups, Tableaux Frames, Gauzes, Draperies, Limelights,
Any Stage Fitted, Bazaar and Room Decorations.
16 years' Stage Work for Birmingham Amateur Opera Society, Birmingham School of Music, University, &c.

Ethel and Peter Fiddler – lovers of Magic and Fun

NODA London



Ethel and Peter Fiddler



The Boyfriend at the Minack Theatre

The 'Magic and Fun' of Amateur Theatre and a happy association with NODA, formed a huge part of the long lives and seventy year marriage of Ethel and Peter Fiddler, who recently passed away.

Both of them displayed an early talent for performing. Ethel in school plays and, when evacuated, as part of an a capella trio, and Peter with tap dancing and mime acts in talent competitions. They met at a youth group in London's Dollis Hill and in 1945, were founder members of the *Madhatters Theatre Club*, which is still in existence today.

Involvement with the 'Madhatters' and the 'Happylanders' Concert Party saw them directing and performing anything from revue sketches (many written by Ethel), to full length plays in a variety of venues including Wormwood Shrub's prison - their best ever 'captive' audience!

Ethel and Peter collectively performed in over ninety musicals during their long association with Wembley Operatic

Society. Later years were spent directing musicals for other local groups with the memorable experience of playing Lord and Lady Brockhurst in *The Boyfriend*, with Amanda 2 Summer Productions. Staged at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall, the Atlantic Ocean provided a dramatic backdrop!

Away from the bright lights, non-performing roles for Ethel included: Secretary, Publicity Manager and Chairman, and for Roger, Treasurer, Chairman and Vice President.

In 1972, Ethel became NODA Regional Representative for London District 9, a role she held for seventeen years. During that time she conscientiously wrote over three hundred reports.

A grateful director recently wrote: "*Ethel would always spot the special things I had tried to include, giving constructive criticism and helpful advice on how to improve*". Substituting reports for minutes she then became Hon. Secretary for the London

Regional Committee.

In 1988, Ethel joined the team at NODA Headquarters at Cresswell Street in London, formerly as Administrative Assistant and latterly as P.A. to Mark Thorburn, the newly appointed General Administrator. Mark described her knowledge of amateur theatre and the work of the Association as 'invaluable' when inducting new councillors and when supporting him in his new role.

Ethel and Peter relished the social aspects of NODA: attending meetings, summer schools and conferences, from Bournemouth to Peebles, when they always wore their long service medals with pride. Two lives filled with 'Magic and Fun' and NODA of course!

This delightful tribute to Ethel and Peter has been supplied by their daughter Clare, who has inherited their talent and is a speech and drama tutor.

NODA member received the BEM

NODA Wales & Ireland



I started dancing at the age of 4, in a local dance school in Newport. During my time there, I performed in many shows and pantomimes. I then went to a stage school in Manchester to further my studies in performing arts. This including dance of all genres, drama and singing. After this, I did several years as a professional dancer and then went on to perform as a singer.

Eventually, I decided to open up my own dance school in Newport. That was 30 years ago! Initially, the school would be for dance also giving students the opportunity to take examinations in the Bbodance syllabus. I remember opening up the first week with just 5 students, but that soon changed and we now have over 200 students in the school.

Over the years, I have worked with many local amateur and pro companies both as a performer and choreographer/director. This includes plays, cabaret, pantomime and of course my first love musicals.

Many of these performances were held at the much loved Dolman Theatre in Newport. Hopefully, we will see many more there again - once these covid guidelines allow.

My dance school, now Academy, also has evolved. I now have tap and ballet for children to adults, jazz, modern, contemporary plus the new Bbodance Musical Theatre dance syllabus on offer. We also have our own children's musical theatre group. Both the Dance Academy and Musical Theatre group perform on a regular basis and take examinations in all the genre of dance on offer at the school.

Approx 9 years ago, me and a group of friends decided to open up our own adult company. It started off as Sharon and Friends performing a concert. This was the company that became what is now known as CentreStage Cymru. The first main stage production was *Godspell* and we have performed many more shows since

including *Addams Family*, *Whistle Down the Wind*, *Sister Act*, *Chitty Bang Bang* (with flying car), and *Evita*.

More recently, I was asked to become an examiner with Bbodance. I was really honoured to have been asked and thoroughly enjoy going around the country examining students of all ages. It's wonderful to see such talent in this country.

Of course my real honour this year was to be recognised in the Queen's New Years' Honours list for services to Musical Theatre and awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM). I was honoured and delighted to be recognised for all the years of hard work both on and off the stage. I just wish my mum, Pearl, was here to see it.

I cannot wait until we are all allowed back to the rehearsal room and back on stage!



A Royal visit to Utopia

NODA Scotland



Credit - Tim Rooke (Shutterstock)

Well, it's not every day that you get a phone call to tell you that HRH Prince Edward and Countess Sophie of Wessex would like to come and visit you.

Well, that's what happened to Ewan Campbell the Director of Utopia Costumes Ltd in Forfar, on the 14th of June 2021. He answered a call from the Lord Lieutenant of Angus' Office asking him if he would be willing to have the Earl and Countess visit his premises as part of a Royal visit to the town on the 28th June.

Prince Edward was granted the Earldom of Forfar by the Queen, to mark his 55th birthday on 10 March 2019, and means whenever the Prince and Sophie travel to Scotland, they are officially titled the Earl and Countess of Forfar

This was to be their second official visit, their last visit being July 2019, and the Lieutenant's Office were keen to include something that took into consideration the Prince's interests.

Since his university days, he has always had a keen interest in theatre. Prince Edward worked, in London's West End, as

a production assistant, for Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Theatre Company in the 1990s, on musicals such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats* and *Starlight Express*. So a visit to a theatrical costumiers would be right up his street.

The Lord Lieutenant's officer came to visit Ewan to explain what would happen and the format the visit would take. After an

official visit from police and security teams from the Palace, the green light was given.

Ewan was very honoured to be asked. The only down point was he now had less than 2 weeks to get his warehouse back into shape after a refurbishment, that had been done during the 15 month break in trading, due to covid restrictions and lockdowns.



Credit - Kenny Smith - DC Thomson



Credit - Kenny Smith - DC Thomson

Ewan explained: “We had to let all but one of the staff go as all theatre work stopped with lockdown. So, I was very lucky to have friends and family who rolled their sleeves up to help me. It took nearly a fortnight of 15 to 20 hour days to get everything ship shape for the visit. Although everything construction wise was finished, we still had finishing touches to complete. The outside of the building needed painting and the new signage had to be put up. None of the stock was in the right place. There are roughly 30,000 costumes in the warehouse and we needed to move about 10,000 costumes and hats, 2000 pairs of trousers and shirts and 1000 pairs of boots and shoes to get them into their new homes.”

Prior to lockdown, Utopia had just finished a second wardrobe for *Shrek the Musical* and had commissioned the boots for *Kinky Boots*, but after that, production stopped. However, the freelance costume makers and wig dressers, Ewan has used for many years, kindly offered their services free of charge to make stunning outfits to show case the work they do for Utopia, so there was a flavour of things to come once theatre begins again.

The hard work paid off and the willing team of volunteers had everything in place by the weekend before and they set about making displays to show the Royal couple.

Monday 28th was D-Day, final touches were made and everyone waited in anticipation. Punctually, at 1.10pm, the royal cars arrived. Ewan met their Royal Highnesses at the door and the Utopia team were in their places in the warehouse.

The Royal Party were conducted to the work room where they met with 2 costume makers, who were working on costumes for *Kinky Boots* and *Little Mermaid*.

Ewan explained what the ladies were working on, and both Prince Edward and Countess Sophie asked questions about the construction of the costumes. They had both seen *Kinky Boots* when it opened on Broadway and were fascinated with the work that goes into drag costumes. HRH Sophie then turned her attention to the mermaid’s costume and tail. The costume maker explained how Utopia adapt the original designs to make them practical for hiring to theatre companies all round the UK and Ireland.

The party then moved to the Wig Room where the wig dresser was preparing wigs for a photo shoot for *Phantom of the Opera*. It was there that His Royal Highness told us about his experiences working on *Phantom* when he worked in the West End, although he did admit it was many moons ago.

From the Wig Room, the Earl and Countess were directed to a display of boots that were for the wardrobe of *Kinky Boots* as well as costumes that were completed. Cheekily asked if either of them would like to try on a pair, unfortunately both declined. The Earl laughed and said they might not go with his kilt.

Ewan took time to explain to the royal couple that the maker of the fancy footwear had worked with the designer for the boots for the West End run of *Kinky Boots*, so although they were not copies, they were very close to the original designs.

The party then moved to one of the main costume stores to view a display of *Shrek the Musical* costumes, where Ewan described how they had been constructed, and asked if they would like to see one in action. The Earl and Countess then followed him to the company’s photographic studio, where waiting for them was an actor dressed as Lord Farquadd from the show. The actor plays the part on his knees with puppet legs, effectively making him a small person.

Prince Edward and Countess Sophie were very amused by the costume and both royals were very interested as the prop maker, who made the legs, explained how they were constructed and attached to actor’s own legs to make them work.

Before having their photograph taken with Lord Farquadd, Countess Sophie admired a model theatre on display in the studio and explained she had had one as child. The Royal couple had their photo taken with the little Lord and the Countess even took time to arrange his legs and cloak.

Their visit was now at an end and the time had passed very quickly. Thanking everyone in the team, who had assembled at the door, they left to go back to the cars.

Looking back on the day, Ewan said: “It has been a great privilege to be chosen as a business to represent Forfar and that we would be of such interest to the Earl and Countess. They are such lovely people who made us all feel at ease. Their visit has also been a great boost to members of the Utopia team as the theatre industry starts to come back to life again.”



Credit - Kenny Smith - DC Thomson



ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER SHOW LICENSING

PERFORM AN ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER MUSICAL WITH YOUR
SCHOOL, YOUTH GROUP OR AMATEUR ORGANISATION!

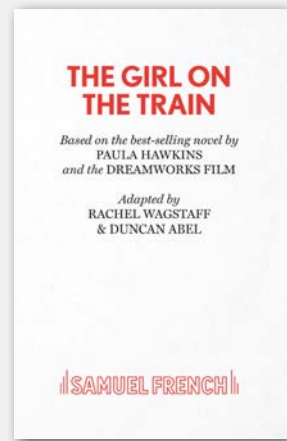
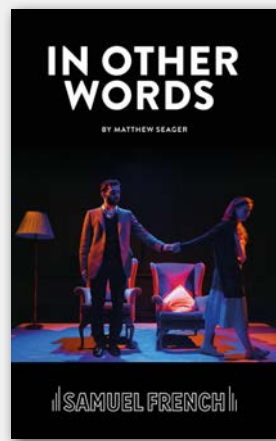
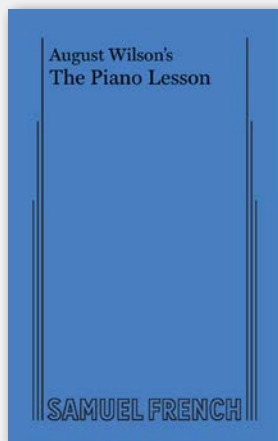
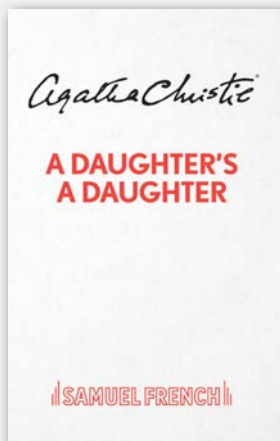


ALWSHOWLICENSING.COM

VISIT WWW.ALWSHOWLICENSING.COM TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE

CONTACT: STOCKANDAMATEUR@REALLYUSEFUL.COM

TEL: +44 20 3475 7923



Discover bold, brilliant plays.

From much-loved classics to daring new writing, explore our extensive range of plays to read and perform.

concordtheatricals.co.uk/shop

@concordukshows



CONCORD
THEATRICALS



Tams

Programme and Poster competition guidelines 2022 - 2024

NODA's annual Programme and Poster Competition is a very popular competition for societies and highlights the promotion of amateur theatre in the UK. Its purpose is to encourage high standards in programme and poster design.

Each region holds their own competition, using the criteria set out below, with the winning entries then put forward to the national competition. Trophies for the winners and runners up of the national competition are currently then awarded at the NODA Annual General Meeting.

Criteria for judging 2022 - 2024 entries

(Please note that these criteria apply to entries for shows between 1st January and 31st December in each of these years and come into effect 1st January 2022)

It is important to note that it is a condition of entry for all programmes and posters that:

- the official NODA logo with the strapline 'Be inspired by amateur theatre' is included in the programme or poster.
- 'An introduction to NODA' is also to be included (in programmes only).

The current versions of the logo and the 'Introduction to NODA' (to fit all styles of media) are always to be found as downloads on the P&P competition page on the website for use in the programmes and/or posters.

The name of the various classes of programme and posters are taken from the trophies which are awarded to that particular class of entry.

To take part in the competitions, 5 copies of your entry must be sent to your Regional Councillor, either direct or via your Regional Representative, to be received no later than 14th January following the end of the competition year.

An introduction to NODA for programmes



Be inspired by amateur theatre

Did you know?

NODA was founded in 1899.

Has a membership of over 2000 amateur groups and 1000 individual members.

Members stage musicals, operas, plays, concerts and pantomimes.

Member venues range from professional theatres to village halls.

Supports the needs of youth and adult theatre, on and off stage.

NODA publishes three magazines a year **NODA Today** Read it for free on our website?

Visit our website to join today

noda.org.uk

Lockdown engagement

NODA Wales and Ireland

Alys and I first met in our school's production of *Carousel* back in 2013 - I was in the chorus and Alys played the role of Carrie.

If I remember rightly, I think we had one 20 second scene together at some point in the first act! The following year, we played *The Phantom* and Christine in our last school show which is a memory I will never forget!

I'm lucky enough to have shared the stage with Alys in a number of musicals since then, including shows with Abergavenny Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (AAODS) including *Grease*, *Cats*, *Singin'*

in The Rain and *Sister Act*, when Alys played Dolores Van Cartier and was awarded the trophy for NODA Wales & Ireland Best Musical Theatre Performance.

We're also members of A4B - a voluntary organisation based in Abergavenny dedicated to promoting and supporting the Borough Theatre's thriving amateur community.

The Borough Theatre is a place that means so much to us - we've shared so many incredible memories there together and made lifelong friends - and we really care about preserving such a wonderful building.

After almost eight years together, I proposed to Alys in April this year - thankfully she said yes! It's crazy to think that if it wasn't for amateur theatre we may never have crossed paths!



An exciting start to a special year for Banbury Operatic Society

NODA London

As it approaches the start of its 60th anniversary year, Banbury Operatic Society is delighted to announce that it has recently been granted charitable status and Sir Tony Baldry (formerly MP for Banbury) has agreed to become its new Patron.

The position became vacant following the sad death in 2020 of Tony Brace, who held the post for many years.

In accepting the post Sir Tony said: "I am honoured to become Patron of BOS. Over the years, I have enjoyed many BOS productions. Tony Brace was a fine public servant and a good Banburian and will, I know, have set a high standard as BOS Patron for me to follow."

He said he looked forward to supporting both BOS and its youth arm, YOBOS, in continuing to grow, thrive and provide varied kinds of high quality musical theatre to the people in Banbury and the surrounding area.

BOS is Banbury's longest running musical theatre group.

Their Chair, Jonathan Rubery, said: "We are delighted to have been granted charitable status and very pleased to welcome Sir Tony into the BOS family in this special, 60th anniversary year. We have many plans to mark this milestone, which currently are somewhat fluid, but full details will be forthcoming. It is well known that Sir Tony has 'trodden the boards' so all parties consider this to be a perfect match!"



Lamproom's Shining Stars

NODA North East

In January 2020, several weeks before all theatres were closed, the Lamproom Musical Theatre Company had just appointed a new social media team to their committee's ranks.

These two, young, bright lights within the society had thought they were coming on-board to market future productions, take rehearsal photographs and help sell tickets with regular post updates. What they didn't realise was that, instead, for the next 18 months, they would have no rehearsals, no get-togethers, no show to promote and lots of bored members wanting to be entertained.

Prepared to take on the challenge Tamsin Kendall and Joe Boswell instead used their creative energy and enthusiasm to keep the LMTC members and supporters thoroughly entertained throughout lockdown and their hard work has paid off because, in just 14 months, they have almost doubled the number of 'page likes' on the @LamproomMTC Facebook page.

The group was just weeks off performing

Legally Blonde when the Pandemic struck and so their first undertaking was to organise a full-cast video of Bend and Snap. The society choreographer filmed herself dancing and then members were encouraged to film themselves, in their homes, dancing. Tamsin invested in editing software and spent the first lockdown learning this new skill. The end result featured in the 2021 NODA NE Virtual Weekend Cabaret.

Fuelled by its success, TamJoe (as they are now affectionately known by the Committee) then organised a second dance video - this time to the MegaMix of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, LMTC's second pandemic casualty.

Both videos turned out so well, that Tamsin and Joe now have two excellent marketing tools for the rescheduled *Legally Blonde* (May 2023) and *Joseph* (Nov 2021) productions.

Also using Tamsin's new skills, TamJoe asked five questions of all the members -

along the lines of:

- What is your first memory of the LMTC? "
- What was your favourite show?
- Who would you give your LMTC Oscar to?

Members recorded the answers and it took seven interview videos to feature everyone and to listen to older and younger members talking about their own personal experiences.

But the piece de resistance to the social media entertainment has definitely been TamJoe's latest endeavour. They challenged the committee to each make a musical theatre themed sock puppet, which they then shared on social media and asked people to guess who they were. You can check out the hilarious sock puppet videos at www.facebook.com/LamproomMTC

It is thanks to Tamsin and Joe's hard work and creativeness, during the lockdowns, that the group now has an even larger following than prior to the pandemic.

Long serving rep retires

NODA East

Ann Platten celebrates 60 years with a NODA badge having been involved with the theatre and NODA as well as a choir director for her local church.

Professionally trained as pianist and singer from age 10, Ann comes from a musical family; both her grandfather and father were heavily involved with brass bands, as players and conductors, serving over 50 years with the brass band movement.

With her father's tuition and support, she learnt to play the tenor horn amongst other instruments with the Colchester Silver Band reaching the national finals.

Joining Colchester Operatic Society in 1960, Ann remained an active member serving on production committees and performing in most of their shows until 1984, when she became a founder member of Sudbury Light Operatic Society (SLOS) now renamed Sudbury Musicals Society. Here she put her skills to

work, helping the new group put on their first show at the Quay Theatre in 1985, as musical director for the society and later becoming chairman. Ann is proud to be acknowledged as a Life Member.

As a NODA representative for District 11, Ann recalls many happy memories. One was coordinating the musical rehearsals for the Eastern Area when, in 1999, an evening at the Royal Albert Hall was performed with 1000 NODA members singing to a packed audience. It was called aptly *The NIGHT OF 1000 VOICES*. She says: "We performed alongside such stars as Roy Hudd, Howard Keel, Philip Quast all accompanied by the City of London Philharmonic, plus a guest appearance of Cy Coleman, performing *Rhythm of Life*."

Then a really great memory of going to the wedding of two members of the cast of *Carousel*. Ann recalls: "*The wedding took place in the morning. Then we did a Matinee*



performance of the show, announcing the marriage of Caroline and Reg to the cast, followed by the entire cast going back for a celebration wedding reception in the happy couple's garden after the Matinee performance, before returning to the theatre to perform the evening show! I'm not sure how many of the cast were sober!!"

Ann has now retired from her work as a NODA representative to spend time with her family and the hope that her grandchildren will follow in her footsteps.

The last show in town...?

NODA North West



The wind whistled through the room as members rehearsed with their coats on. The back-up team scurried about with spray bottles and cloths cleaning anything that didn't move. But to everyone's astonishment, the singing and dancing, which looked so shambolic on Zoom, came together into the start of a genuine performance. Phew!

Then we were locked down again.

The date for our planned live performance in March 2021, came and went. What to do now? Enter our knights in shining armour – Scott Dawson of Hartshead Productions and Garreth Hicklin of shows2home.Hartshead Productions have a small, but very professional, recording studio. Scott gave us plenty of advice about how members could record themselves at home and send in the videos to be processed into a film. This was much more difficult than anyone anticipated, so we were relieved when the lockdown easing meant we could work face-to-face again.



In March 2020, our Youth Theatre was in the final stages of rehearsals for *Bugsy Malone*, when news of possible Covid restrictions started to creep into the media. With fingers crossed, we carried on and were fortunate enough to complete our performance run. Two days later, theatres were shut down and our performance became quite literally “the last show in town”.

As the lockdown ebbed and flowed, we began to hear from some of our members and their families, that the young people who had performed so confidently in *Bugsy Malone* were beginning to suffer mental health problems, some minor and some more concerning. The main issue was the lack of anything outside their restricted home/school life.

During the summer, some of our adult volunteers who were more actively involved in the Youth Theatre began to mull over the situation and think outside our usual theatre performance box. There was a heartfelt desire amongst everyone to provide a platform for our youth theatre members to explore and come to terms

with their lives during COVID-19.

We are extremely lucky to have amongst our supporters the amazingly enthusiastic and creative Liz Hume-Dawson. Liz worked with our society's management committee to bring together a team to work on a project which could be rehearsed either via Zoom, or in restricted face-to-face rehearsals and which could be performed live or recorded. We put out a feeler to find out if any of our youth theatre members were interested. Everyone immediately signed up, so off we went...

Liz's creative team did an amazing job of drawing up a programme of songs, dance routines, poems, and monologues. We started in September, with our first Zoom rehearsals, and that was an eye-opener.

At last, towards the end of Autumn, we were able to have face-to-face rehearsals. That was when our back-up team swung into action. Whilst members queued up to have temperature checks, hands sanitized, etc, the rehearsal area was marked out with metre sticks to ensure social distancing.

After much planning and checking of regulations, we took groups of our members to the studio to film our performances in front of a green screen. Scott and Garreth also came to film the whole group performing together outdoors at our rehearsal venue. Then we crossed our fingers whilst Liz worked with the Hartshead team to pull together all the bits of film and sound recordings into our final product –

Toilet Rolls and Talent: We're All in this Together.

We watched some of the proofs and it looked OK. Then we watched the whole thing from start to finish and it was amazing. Not everything was perfect, but that's true of any performance. The small imperfections actually made the whole thing more heart-warming. It was lovely to see how happy the members looked as they sang and danced their hearts out. How moving the tributes were to those who struggled during the lockdowns and those who helped us all through them.

It was a magnificent response to a very difficult time.

Zoom, Plays for Lockdown

NODA South East



With their local theatre clubs dark for performances and all the London theatres closed to audiences, thespians Marie-Jose Zuurbier and Tess Townsend set about using their time in lockdown to write a virtual comedy to be performed on Zoom and within a couple of weeks their first play was written and cast.

The pair had often discussed writing together due to many hilarious ideas cropping up between them as they observe life around them.

Marie-Jose has been writing short stories since childhood and her poetry was published in her 6th Form Magazine. Tess co-wrote *Henry, A Tudor Musical* which won NODA's Best New Show 2018. *Zoom* is their first collaboration.

Co-Writer/Producer, Tess Townsend says: "We all thought we would be in lockdown for a month but as things developed and the rules kept changing, this gave us plenty of new material. Boris kept giving us great new catchphrases so we kept writing until, after a year, we had completed 6 comedies reflecting these unusual times through the eyes of an amateur theatre group trying to keep their club alive."

The 30 minute plays follow The Watson Amateur Theatre Society who can't rehearse at their village hall because of lockdown. The oddball members are all keen to carry on, but how? We laugh at their attempts at virtual rehearsals whilst coping with the news, technophobia and boredom. Committee politics cause plenty of chaotic controversy and hilarity for the audience along the way.

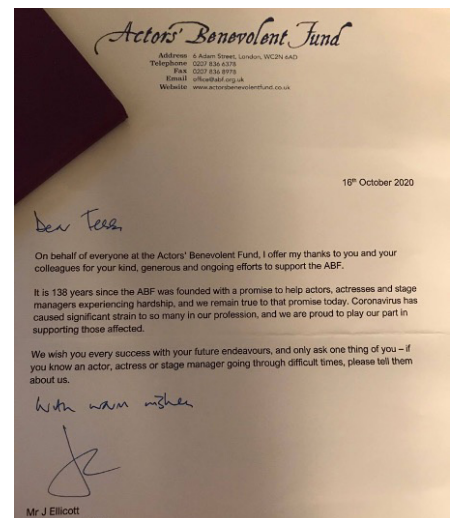
Each play has been written during the pandemic, following the emerging stories and the way they affect theatre groups. To add some depth, the pair also chose to explore the topics of loneliness, domestic wrangles, rule breaking, new initiatives, enduring friendship and a commitment to theatre at any cost!

Co-Writer/Director, Marie-Jose says: "Real life developments just kept coming, wave after wave, so we just continued grabbing the headlines, listing the buzzwords and finding new ways to keep our group on Zoom. More hilarious versions of the plays kept appearing and that fuelled our enthusiasm."

It proved tricky to find ways to keep the group on Zoom and we binned several ideas that didn't work virtually." adds Tess "For example, we wondered about sending The Watson Amateur Theatre Society on a cruise, or meeting up for a socially distanced walk, but then realised we wouldn't be able to see them doing that online. Our Christmas show was clever, as one-by-one our characters' plans got cancelled and they decided to have Christmas Day together online."

It was also great fun to spread the net a little wider and develop new characters. So many of our acting friends wanted to be part of this and, of course, Zoom allowed us to hook up with everyone seamlessly. Our final cast joined from Vancouver, New Zealand, Shropshire and Anglesea, as well as Surrey where it all began. It's nice to know we are fully international now!"

The pair also wanted to help professional



Writers - Tess Townsend and Marie-Jose Zuurbier

actors and stage crew who currently find themselves in difficulty due to the theatre closures, so, although the pair have waived their royalty rights, anyone who enjoys the plays are invited to make a donation to The Actors Benevolent Fund. Aside from that there are no costs to run these little gems.

Since release, the original group have won 3 awards at the recent Spelthorne & Runnymede Virtual Drama Festival - Best Production, Best Director and "Best Ensemble Piece."

Anyone who is interested and can connect a cast on Zoom is invited to get in touch for royalty free copies of the plays.

Director, Marie-Jose says: "We had such fun with it, we decided to offer the scripts free of charge to other amateur groups missing the fun of rehearsals and performing. So far 195 theatre clubs have requested scripts including many NODA members. We have also been surprised to receive requests from Israel, Peru and the USA."

Three Plays for Today by Tony Diggle



William Shakespeare returns to London early in the twenty-first century believing that everything is very much better. But has anything really changed? And what does this mean for the future? Shakespeare recalls his horror at how things went after his death ...

“Nay, Shakespeare, look a few years hence and see ...”

The sparring in of windows and the tell-tale Signs of the blue cross proclaim the plague!”

A Kingdom for a Stage

Characters 40 for a cast of 7 Male 4 Female. Cast size and genders may be varied.



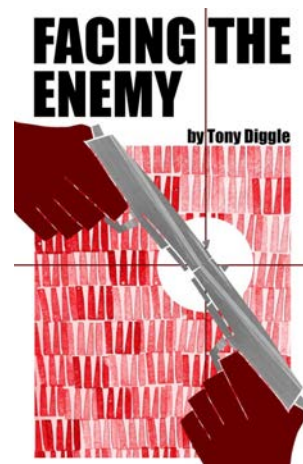
Show me the Money

A dark “city” comedy

David is determined to start making big money and find the girl of his dreams. Jenny is determined never to do any work at all and marry a millionaire. Will they get what they want? Will it be what they expect?

Characters 14 for a cast of 6

Cast size and genders may be varied



Facing the Enemy

A play about fear and conflict

A war looms over a disputed border between two far-off lands. A general derails a plan for averting it. His brother, an intelligence officer, is sent to retrieve the situation. But is everything quite what it seems?

Characters 16 for a cast of 10

Cast size and genders may be varied

Published in paperback and as ebooks by Troubador (www.troubador.co.uk).

Visit www.tonydiggle.co.uk for more information.

Musical background leads to EP

NODA North East



Performing as Charlotte Beatrice, a young musician from West Yorkshire has launched her first EP 'Reminisce' which has received excellent reviews from music critics and has been played on numerous radio stations including on Amazing Radio in the United States.

However, Charlotte's background in amateur theatre has given her a great grounding in performing. Starting at the age of nine with Normanton Musical Theatre Society, Charlotte performed

in a range of musicals and pantomimes including playing Louisa in *The Sound of Music* and Hope Harcourt in *Anything Goes*. Most recently she played the title role with Morley AOS in the pantomime *Cinderella*. She enjoys performing, but has also found a love for writing her own songs and music.

Charlotte, aged 20, is now studying BA Hons Popular Music (vocals) at Leeds Conservatoire (formally known as Leeds College of Music) and continues to use her

time creatively by writing new music and practising with her band who will be playing numerous gigs throughout the year.

The EP it can be download on Spotify, Apple, Amazon and all other streaming platforms. Charlotte also has physical copies of her EP that she has for sale.

**You can find her on social media as
Charlotte Beatrice on Facebook and
@charlottebeatricesinger on Instagram.**

EROS Musical Society: lockdown activities

NODA Scotland

EROS got off to a bit of a slow start when it came to organising lockdown activities, possibly because we firmly hoped and believed that lockdown would end and everything would return to normal! By November, we realised that this was probably not going to be the case, and so we recorded and filmed a virtual recording of the very apt *We need a little Christmas* with the aid of Ryan Cunningham. Since the New Year, we have continued with regular virtual social nights which have been well-attended and lots of fun. Those kicked off with a musical bingo evening hosted by our own David Clark. There were a number of prizes to be won on the evening, the most sought-after being Nanette's Covid pictures and Eileen's caramac cheesecake!

Our next social evening followed the format of the TV gameshow, *Taskmaster*, and was hosted by the director of our past few shows, Jon Cuthbertson. The evening's first task required participants to suggest a song title and name of singer(s) for a winning Eurovision entry. This prompted some very topical suggestions including *Freedom* by the Vaccinators. Several other tasks followed, each prompting more hilarity than the previous one. Those included acting out some lines from an iconic film – cue *Titanic*. I must admit that I found it strange that so many members had appropriate props and costumes to hand – maybe they knew more about the gameshow than I did!

The task which generated the most fun

was the one which required you to get as many food items as possible in your mouth. How many people do you know who just happen to have a packet of mini marshmallows conveniently to hand? We had several competitors swallowing a large number of marshmallows, including Nanette, who followed hers with a whole banana. Amazingly, this was topped by Ian with a mouthful of dried pasta and, just when we thought it was all over, Laura Wilson managed to cram over 500 rice crispies into that delicate small mouth. Her prize: the first audition slot for our next production!



Panto Scripts

Whether you are looking for something traditional like Jack and the Beanstalk or Cinderella, or something a bit different like A Sword in the Scone or Sherlock Holmes the Pantomime there is something for every group

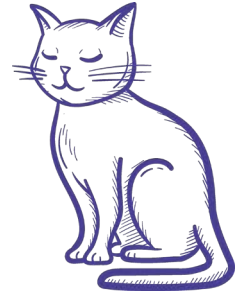




Over 100 quality scripts
New scripts added regularly



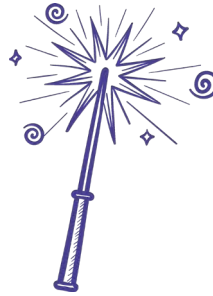
Modern, something different
or past masters - there is some-
thing for everyone!



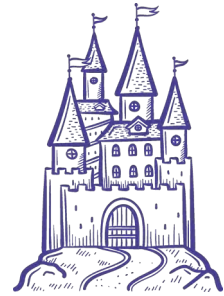
Digital scripts available with
every title



Film your production with a
video licence

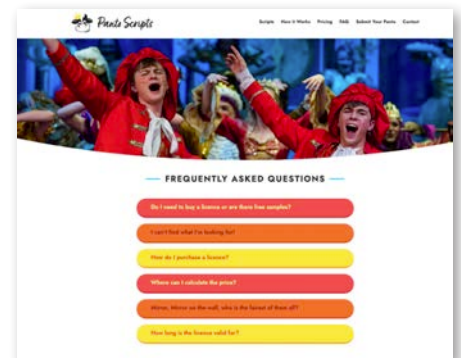
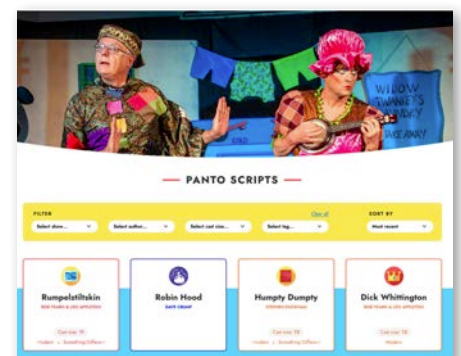
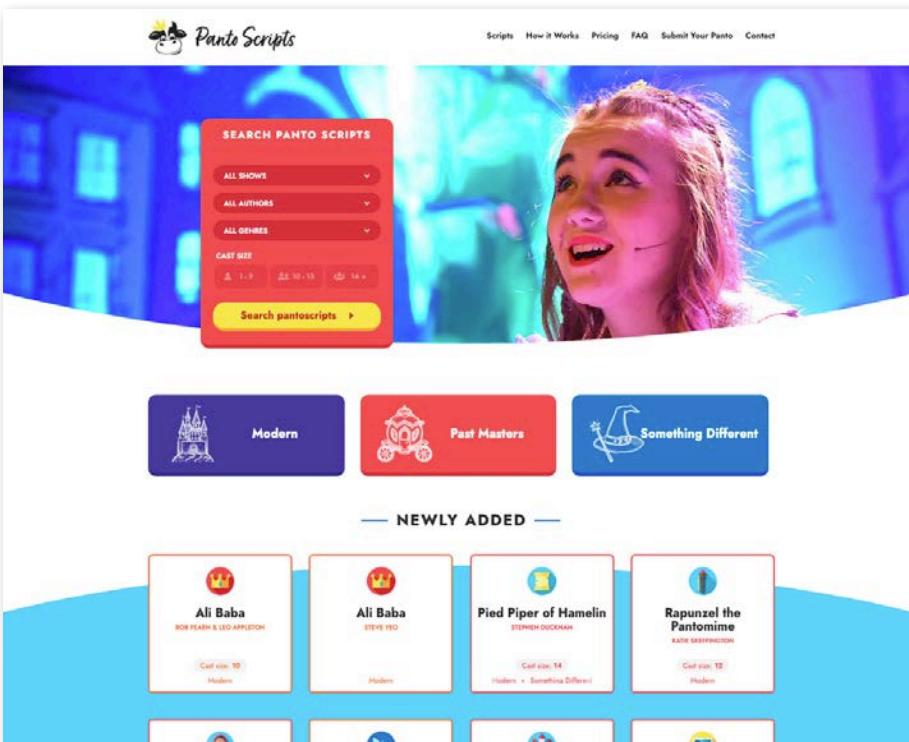


Flexible licence options



Free digital perusals

Have you visited our new website?



pantoscripts.org.uk

BOATers setting sail again...

NODA South West

Open Air Theatre Company that usually perform Shakespeare on Brownsea Island, are finding even more ways to perform!

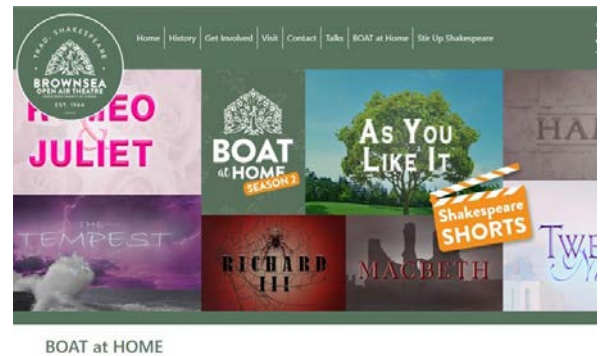
Brownsea Open Air Theatre (BOAT) has been performing Shakespeare on Brownsea Island in Dorset for over 50 years, in aid of the National Trust. 2020's show was to be *Romeo and Juliet*, but, with the advent of COVID-19, for the first time in BOAT's history, the scheduled production could not go ahead and the sad but inevitable decision was made to postpone.

It didn't take long for "Boaters" to find ways to flex their creative muscles and raise donations (even without a show to put on there are bills to be paid). The first thought was to use our wealth of past productions. Recent BOAT performances have been professionally filmed, so we decided to broadcast some on YouTube. Entitled *BOAT at HOME*, each broadcast was an event – going live at 7:30pm on a Saturday, with the audience reacting and sharing the experience with onscreen chat.

Before the last show was aired (2019's acclaimed *Richard III*), BOAT planned

to go further by creating new content. The stars of the postponed *Romeo and Juliet* had already started working with the director and it seemed a shame to waste that work, so the idea of filming a scene came about. This inspired other directors to film scenes from Shakespeare in innovative "COVID secure" ways, and before long we had several projects in the pipeline.

The new content, *BOAT at HOME – Season 2 - Shakespeare Shorts*, is available for viewing. This includes: a Zoom meeting, *Twelfth Night* with actors filming themselves at home, a gothic horror *Macbeth* filmed in a back garden with one camera and lots of creativity, as well as speeches from *The Tempest* with magical special effects and original music. We've also seen *Hamlet* with a digitally enhanced ghost, *Romeo and Juliet* inspired by the production that didn't happen (star crossed lovers indeed!), a British Sign Language Prologue from *Romeo and Juliet*, a sardonic *Richard III*, and a youthful *As You like It* directed by



one of BOAT's longest serving members Eileen Rawlings (she played Ariel in the first BOAT production in 1964).

The challenge has been to use the film medium to our best advantage under difficult conditions (rehearsals on Zoom are not easy!). BOAT is blessed with some talented, technically-minded people, who have shaped each video into a polished piece of work. As novice film makers we've learned new ways of telling old stories. We will continue working in this way as long as necessary, and the lessons learned will undoubtedly affect the way we work when we return to performing live!

Milestone for society member

NODA North West



A long-standing member of Blackburn Musical Theatre Company has been honoured for her contribution to the society in an amateur theatre career spanning 70 years.

A former leading lady, with the likes of Bloody Mary, Ado Annie, Carrie and Adelaide to her name, Janet Holden has been presented with a 70-year NODA badge from BMTC chairman Gary Worthy on behalf of members.

Janet has performed with BMTC since 1951, when she joined as part of the dance troupe. She recalls watching her own mother in productions in the 1940s and her grandmother was also involved with Blackburn Amateurs, as the company was then known. Janet's late husband John, their daughters and grandchildren have also appeared in BMTC productions. Janet was also a member of Blackburn Drama Club in the past.

"I don't know how I've got to 70 years, but it has been my hobby for all these years – and means so much to us as a family through the generations," she said.

"I've played all the theatres in Blackburn, although none of them remain except the Empire where BMTC now performs, and that's sad to see how times have changed."

But what hasn't changed is the friendship and companionship that being in the amateurs brings for people. I retired from performing a long time ago, but took part in BMTC's Centenary Showcase in 2012, but I still help front of house and love to see all that still going on. It's wonderful to see."

Chairman Gary Worthy paid tribute to Janet's lengthy contribution to amateur theatre. He said: *"Janet has been an absolute star within our membership for such a long time – and it's a real honour to be able to present her with her 70-year long service award for her platinum anniversary on behalf of all our members. It may be some years since she's had a leading role with us on stage, but since stepping back from performing, Janet has sat on our audition panels and is a real stalwart of our front of house team at every production."*

Elevating Pateley Playhouse to new heights

NODA North East



For 84 years, the people of Nidderdale, North Yorkshire, have been entertained by one of the best amateur dramatic troupes in the country and, as a result, Pateley Bridge Dramatic Society has garnered a reputation as a shining gem in The Dales. No gang of actors is complete, however, without a stage to perform on and since then, that stage has been the Pateley Bridge Playhouse. The building itself has a rich history, having originally been a Primitive Methodist chapel. The resulting conversion gave the Playhouse a unique layout. The stage was elevated so that the upper circle of pews in the church became the main auditorium and where there was once an altar, there now resides the downstairs bar - a fitting conversion for anyone who has ever spent time with the members of PBDS!

With the passage of time, however, comes the need to renovate and renew and the pandemic has provided an incredible

opportunity for the society to use the time to restructure the theatre in order to make it a splendid facility for all potential audience members in the 21st century. Alterations are required so that the building can legally comply with building regulations regarding disabled access.

A fundraising effort began in 2020, in order to start raising the £75,000 needed to rebuild the lower level and install a lift that will solve access problems and maximise the available space on the lower level. The changes will be in line with new Covid regulations ensuring the Playhouse should never have to close its doors again. Every dramatic society in the country is dependent on its volunteers and Pateley Bridge will always be indebted to those whose sweat and toil completed the unglamorous preparatory work; including the sorting and moving of the extensive costume and props department, surplus being sold to help with the fundraising.

The rebuilding importantly gained early support from Eileen Burgess, the most senior member of the Playhouse, who was instrumental in its initial development and opening in 1968. She says: *"We have long considered the need for improved disabled access and the enforced closure has given us the chance to tackle the issue. It is a complex project, given the layout of our historic building, but we are determined to preserve the unique character of the Playhouse while achieving greater accessibility. I hope the public will continue to pull together to raise the funds needed for the refurbishments."*

The fundraising efforts have been magnificent with direct donations to the society and a dedicated JustGiving page. Money has also been able to be raised by a method called 'Easyfundraising' and the Local Lotto whereby associated retailers give a small donation to the Playhouse every time an item is bought online. More traditional means of raising money, such as pop-up 'Tea and Cake' stalls in the park, have also been complemented by the members' determination to put on outdoor productions and virtual productions throughout the pandemic. These included performing a series of 'Ghostwalks' through the haunted town of Pateley Bridge on Halloween weekend. It was also an excellent opportunity for the actors to exercise their dramatic muscles after months of inactivity. The constraints of lockdown also led to an online production of readings, soliloquies and sketches delivered brilliantly by both junior and senior members.

The Playhouse is a much-loved building in Nidderdale and its character will remain intact after the renovations are completed. Upstairs the fundamental structure will be unchanged and the beautiful character of the auditorium will be preserved in all its glory. By doing the building work before the full lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the Playhouse will be able to re-open its doors, hopefully this autumn, and hit the ground running with a new range of productions.



NODA Youth Coordinator contacts

National Youth Coordinator
East
East
East Midlands
London
North
North East
North West
Scotland
South East
South West
Wales & Ireland
West Midlands

Mike Mullen
Zelda Rolfe
Caroline Ranson
Amanda Hall
Annie Hertler-Smith
Michelle Coulson
Jo Sykes
Kit Phillips
Neil Hartley
Mike Mullen
Jo Wilson-Hunt
Matt Hampson
Emma Laing

mike.mullen@noda.org.uk
zelda.rolfe@noda.org.uk
caroline.ranson@noda.org.uk
amanda.hall@noda.org.uk
annie.hertler-smith@noda.org.uk
michelle.coulson@noda.org.uk
jo.sykes@noda.org.uk
kit.phillips@noda.org.uk
neil.hartley@noda.org.uk
mike.mullen@noda.org.uk
jo.wilsonhunt@noda.org.uk
matt.hampson@noda.org.uk
emma.laing@noda.org.uk

Supporting amateur theatre in times of need...

“ Our claim was dealt with efficiently. I sent in the relevant paperwork as requested with a covering letter and that was it! ”

“ Procedure was swift, simple and effective - pleasantly surprised ”

“ This is the first claim we have had over many years and the staff were most helpful. We will remain with Lloyd & Whyte and recommend them to other drama groups. ”

Society Insurance | Committee Insurance | Home Insurance

www.nodainsurance.co.uk

Call: 01823 250736

noda

INSURANCE

Protecting Amateur Theatre

NODA Insurance is a trading style of Lloyd & Whyte Ltd, used under licence from the National Operatic and Dramatic Association. Lloyd & Whyte Ltd are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Calls may be recorded for use in quality management, training and customer support.