



Pump House Children and Youth Theatre

NEWSLETTER

www.pumphouse.info

From the Chair

A privilege to have served

After three years as Chair this is possibly my last piece in that role for the Pump House Children and Youth Theatre. I will be stepping down at the AGM which this year takes place on Saturday 13 October at 7.30 p.m. in the Colne River Room. I do look forward to seeing you at that meeting. Last year's was brilliant and this year's will be just as good so watch out for more details nearer the time.

I hope to stay on the Committee as a member as I really do enjoy being involved. I have learnt so much about productions, people and painting, well maybe not the latter as Karen Rhodes, Cathy Scarborough and Deb Littley will testify to my dodgy brush strokes. But I really have learnt so much and had such a great time with the best of people who give so much. It's been a privilege.

It's been a great term production wise starting with the Youth in DNA for the National Theatre Connections project directed by Moya Brewer and Richard Weinman which culminated in a truly wonderful performance at the Hampstead Theatre. Other members of the Youth Theatre performed Just at the Welwyn Drama Festival which received glowing feedback from the adjudicator. The Children brilliantly performed a two-cast run of Aladdin with fantastic make-up and sets so eye-catching, we were approached by Westfield school to sell them on for their forthcoming production, which we did! A first for us – and how lucky are they to have such quality.

The season closed with the Youth's one night only Cabaret show, always fun, always a revelation, always innovative.

We are still pushing ahead with the new costume storage facility, commonly known on the Committee as "The Shed". It's been put back until the autumn but lots of work has already gone into it, thanks to David Fargus for leading on the project. It won't be cheap but it's long overdue as Ursula and her costume team will readily testify. We have invested considerably in projects and productions this year so far, with ever more sophisticated effects and support. We hope you noticed. The new photocopier has been a god-send for the tutors and was long overdue.

For my last time as Chair, I would like to thank all of you who so happily volunteer your time and contributions to the Children and Youth theatre. I will say again and again, we really can't do it without you. Please don't say no when asked to contribute a small piece of your time, we really do need it. Just ask Chris Picken (Sarah's father) if you need to know what's involved even after a show finishes. He very kindly stayed to help break the set of Aladdin on the Saturday evening and didn't leave the theatre until well after midnight. Others stayed until much later putting the theatre back to the state prior to the production, which we have to do each time. It ain't easy but it's worth it!

Elisabeth Gunter

After-show party

A good time for everyone

I had the pleasure of attending the after-show party for Aladdin and had a wonderfully relaxing and enjoyable time (yes, really!).

The Pumphouse Youth ran the party in true 'red-coat' fashion. They threw themselves into it and used their incredible individual talents and teamwork to host an amazing party for the Children.

Their skills enabled the tutors, the 'sewing-sue' team, painters and set builders, backstage crew etc etc to socialise and have a good time too.

Thank you so much Barney, Ben, James, Niamh, Nick and Rosie (apologies to anyone I might have missed out).

Cathy Scarborough

Waiting list

Have you moved?

Over the summer we wrote to everyone on the waiting list (450 people!). If you believe you should have a sibling on the waiting lists and did not receive a letter (or e-mail) then please e-mail cyt@pumphouse.info with the details for us to check. Also if you know anyone who thought they were on the list but have not received anything, get them to e-mail us. We have found a number of cases of moving and not telling us, or believing they have put their name down but the details never reached the membership secretary.

Upcoming shows

Fairytales with a twist and a wartime musical

Merry Twistmass

7-8th December

This is a showcase all the children are doing based on work they have done this term, including some fairy tales with a twist devised by the Children

Blitz!

17th – 19th and 22nd – 26th January

The Youth are putting on this musical and there is opportunity for some Children take part as an extra activity. (Rehearsal for the children for this will be on some Saturday afternoons in November, December and January.)

In 1940 the East End of London is taking a terrible pounding from Hitler's bombs. Life, however, goes on, centring around the matriarchal Mrs. Blitzstein and her large family, especial-

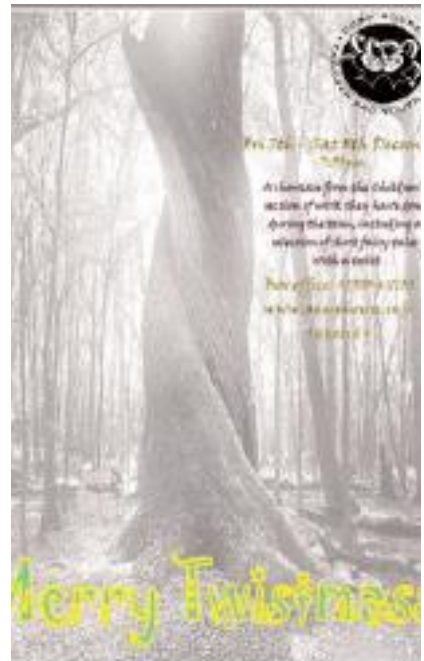


ly her petty-criminal son Harry and her beautiful daughter Carol. They all fight their own particular battles with neighbours and authorities alike, through many situations, many humorous, some tragic, and eventually find their own individual peace. Providing scope for a large cast, it features many hit songs, including "The Day After Tomorrow", "Who's This Geezer Hitler?", and "Mums and Dads".

Mime & Impro night

Date to be confirmed

All children will be taking part in this



fun event. The actually date in March is yet to be confirmed

National Theatre New Connections

March 2008

The Youth will be taking part in this programme again this year and performing in March and beyond.

Seussical

1st – 5th July

This is a the summer musical based on stories of Dr Seuss that all form the Children section will be taking part in

Fees

A reminder that fees are now due

For the Youth it is £75 (for the year) and they must be paid before auditioning

For the Children it is £60 per term (£45 for each additional sibling). Cheque made payable to Pump House CYT

You can pay online at www.pump-house.info/cyt

For those who are looking for less hassle you can pay the whole year in one go (3 terms) if you wish, which will also reduce the amount of admin we have to do.

Catherine Farman



Hired man

For a great night out locally and a chance to see some of our home grown talent in action why not take a trip to the Palace Theatre in Watford to see Cassio's production of "The Hired Man" (15th - 20th October)? It is a great piece of theatre - Les Miserables meets Blood Brothers meets Billy Elliot - and the cast lists some of our home grown talent including Nick Corre, Niamh Brewer, Sean Lovell, Lauryn Murdoch, Adam Feighony, and Jennie Hibberd. For those of you

with longer memories, the production team includes others who have developed their talent with us namely Martin Smith as Musical Director, Susan Barrett as Stage Manager and Tom Kanjii as Fight Coordinator!

The Hired Man is written by Howard Goodall (credits include the music for Black Adder, Q.I., The Vicar of Dibley and Red Dwarf as well as classical works) and Melvyn Bragg (Radio 4 & The South Bank Show) and tells the story of Bragg's grandfather following his life in Cumbria at the turn of the last century. It is a love story and a powerful social drama illustrating the courage of his proud community struggling against injustice on the land and down the mines before and after the first world war.

Tickets from £8-£1. Group discounts available. To get tickets visit: www.watfordtheatre.co.uk

Outside the Pump House

Wider roles for CYT members

Continuing our now regular feature of the activities of our membership of note outside the Pump House CYT (if you have any news you wish to add in future newsletters please contact the editor).

Rosie Spearpoint has been selected to attend the National Youth Theatre in October (you will have a chance to support her on this project at the AGM).

A number of people were invited to be part of the audience in August of a new Sky One programme call "Are you smarter than a 10 year old?" hosted by Dick and Dom on in the Autumn. So watch out for familiar faces in the background.

A number of the Youth theatre are Cassio Operatic's Hired Man at the Palace Theatre in October. This one is not to be missed.

Jessica and Hollie have been busy making an advert for Birds Eye (showing now) and Hollie is performing in the Pump House Theatre Company's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" in November.

AGM

Pump House has talent

The AGM is being held on 13th October 2007 and this year we are doing "Pump House has Talent" – a light hearted version of the TV programme with a fun evening of entertainment.

If you have any kind of act (even a 30s joke) then please take part and let Ben Rhodes know (or e-mail lee.farman@pumphouse.info). The evening will start at 7:30pm and we will also be showing the BBC Blast film that the youth created and was shown at the National Theatre.

Annual Awards

Extra work brings reward for Rachel and Josh

Each year we present awards (one for Youth section and one for Children) for exceptional membership. These are no acting awards but a recognition of members going beyond the call of duty.

The nominated children this year were: Luke Probert, Sarah Picken, Callum Littley, Kirsty Henley-Washford, Hazel Farman and Saoirse Brewer.

The winners were **Rachel Sadie** and **Josh Scarborough** – not only for the inclusive and enthusiastic way they joined in the activities over the year but also all the extra set painting, costumes and other work they contributed to. Well done to Rachel and Josh and, indeed, all the children.

The Youth award meanwhile went to three people **India Barby**, **James Bradshaw** and **Ben Rhodes** as we could not split between them as each one of them has contributed significantly this year including set building, painting, make-up, props, back stage, helping on Saturday mornings, representing the youth at committee, etc.

Pump House Centre News

A busy period is coming up in the theatre with **Oh What a Lovely War** and **Roald Dahl's Witches in October**, **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** in November and **Blag** returning again in December with **Mistletoe & Carlsberg**. Not to forget music with **Open House** every Tuesday, **Jazz** every Thursday and various dancing classes there is something for everyone. More details at www.pumphouse.info

You may notice some scaffolding around the place. We are doing some essential roof repairs, not as much as we would like, but as much as we can afford to stop the worst of the water coming in!

Diary dates

Sat 20-Oct & Sat 27-Oct

Half term, no sessions

Sat 03-Nov to Sat 01-Dec

Rehearsing for Merry Twistmass show

Sat 03-Nov

1:30-3pm

Audition for those interesting in doing Blitz!

Sun 02-Dec

1-6pm

Dress rehearsal for Merry Twistmass show

Fri 07-Dec

6:30-9:30pm

Performance of Merry Twistmass (show starts 7:30pm)

Sat 08-Dec

6:30-9:30pm

Performance of Merry Twistmass (show starts 7:30pm)

Xmas break

Sat 12-Jan

First Saturday of Children's term

17-19th & 22-26th Jan

Blitz!

10-15th Mar

One evening between these dates will be a mime & impro night and two performances of NT connections play

Sat 15-Mar

Last Saturday of Children's term

Easter break

Sat 12-Apr

First Saturday of Children's term

May & June

There may be some Sunday rehearsals for Seussical

Sat 28-June

Last Saturday of term

Sun 29-June

Dress rehearsal for Seussical

Tue 1 - Sat 5th July

Performances of Seussical

8-12th July

Youth production



Situations vacant

We're looking for a production manager

We need production managers for our shows. This is an essential job that "glues" a production together and simply the role is to make sure all the jobs are filled in the team and communication is occurring between them. You do not need to have experience as we have people who are willing to train and mentor you. So if you have an interest on how the shows get to the stage (or know anyone who would be interested) then please let me know.

Lee Farman

Parent rota

A bite to eat and a chance to raise money

As many of you know we have a parent rota (co-ordinated by Cathy Scarborough) that provides a welcome food service after the Saturday morning sessions, gives a great opportunity for people to grab lunch on busy Saturdays and to catch up with other people at the Pump House, as well as inputs some funds to the CYT.

We have had requests for members of the CYT to use that opportunity on occasions to raise money for a good cause. The CYT are very happy to support these but they must be approved by the committee (as happens for all other things) to make sure it does not clash with anything and they receive proper support. You can contact the committee on these type of requests through the food co-ordinator, Cathy Scarborough or as for other items through Lee Farman.



Just for Laughs

Well done all those who took part in this Youth show which was run by and performed by the Youth (under the guidance of Lee Farman and Charles Gunter to whom our thanks must also go). Those in the audience were treated to a humorous evening including the festival play Just and a number of hilarious sketches from Monty Python and Victoria Wood (above).

Can you help?

Diggers and barrowing parents required

C & Y Need people like you, who can use a spade or a barrow (or make tea) this Autumn. If any parent can spare a Saturday Morning while Children are rehearsing to help clear and preparing the area for the new costume store we need your help. Please contact Chris Swallow test e-mail or phone to make sure we have a tool for you to use.

Chris.Swallow@Mullow.co.uk or 07970 273705.



Successful audition



Watch out Billy Elliot, Nick Corre is on his way!

In November I successfully auditioned for NYMT (National Youth Music Theatre) and in April of this year I played Motel in a production of 'Fiddler on the Roof' at the Bridewell Theatre in London

An intensive rehearsal schedule of 10, 12 bars left me feeling tired but it was very enjoyable. The singing and acting offered a challenge and it was a good learning experience to work with other people like me sharing a love for musical theatre. The dancing, however, proved to be much more challenging but the culmination of everyone's work resulted in a fantastic performance which was enjoyable for cast and audience alike.

I found my experience with NYMT to be of great value and I definitely intend to pursue my dreams of appearing in West End Shows. This experience is something I will never forget and despite being exhausted by the end of the last performance, it was all worth it.

To help me follow my dream I'm studying musical theatre next year at American College – let's hope I learn to dance a bit. Better watch out Billy Elliot, Nick Corre is on his way

Duncan Grantham for Nick Corre



Shell Connections

Cast pull together to put on two fantastic shows

DNA was announced as the Pumphouse entry for the Shell Connections competition. During rehearsals for *Batman in Love*, our January musical, places in the show were limited with only 11 people making the original cast.

However, two of these 11 were forced to drop out due to other commitments and were replaced by two other members of the Youth Theatre at a later stage. The final cast was as follows:-
John Tate - James Bradshaw
Danny - Oliver Sharman
Lou - India Barby
Phil - Ben Rhodes
Lea - Lauryn Murdoch
Mark - Sean Lovell
Jan - Emma Williams
Brian - Barney Littlely
Cathy - Stacy Johnson
Adam - Steven Hibberd
Richard - Adam Webster

The rehearsals were mixed times. As a cast we enjoyed experimenting with new non-naturalistic techniques such as slow motion and throwing imaginary rocks at the audience. However, tempers were sometimes fraught with two different directing styles and cast members struggling to learn lines around school work and other commitments.

The Show was co-directed by Moya Brewer and Richard Weinman. Most of the cast had been at Pumphouse for at least two years so were used to the driving force of the directing undertaken by Moya, but when we were introduced to Richard, we weren't used to his more 'experimental' style of directing but we soon adapted and began to take notes from both Directors on board.

We were offered the chance to show an unfinished product at the

Bushey Drama Festival held at Queens School. Unfortunately we did not win any awards as the adjudication did not hold our play in high regard! A few weeks of rehearsals gave us time to tweak the play and ensure that it was of the highest quality possible. Two performances at the home of real theatre, The Pumphouse, was a daunting prospect with many of our friends and peers in the audience – plus an adjudicator from Shell Connections watching the second evening.

Despite these pressures, the cast pulled together to produce two fantastic performances which set emotions high as well as winning over the audience and the Adjudicator! We were given a rest from the Show for a couple of weeks before we started rehearsing for the Show at the Hampstead Theatre! We all know how lucky we were to perform there but lines had been forgotten etc., so the rehearsal programme was very intense with whole Sundays being dedicated to the play. The stage was a lot different to our usual setting with the audience being on the same level as the performers. This worried me and several other members of the cast as we had very little experience in studio theatre. We managed to overcome these fears and I like to think we gave a fantastic performance. We were certainly extremely chuffed when the cast from the first play gave us a standing ovation back in the dressing room! DNA has been a wonderful experience for the entire cast and, of course, we owe a massive thank you to our two excellent Directors. Thank you!

James Bradshaw

Radio play

Sound effects!

When I arrived, I had no idea what to expect, having never been in a radio play before. When confronted with an enormous script I was quite glad when I was told that I wouldn't have to learn it all in three days, and that one of the boons of a radio play was that you got to read from the scripts.

The eleven of us actors were a pretty varied bunch, but mainly in age and in the fact that Rosie was the only person feminine enough amongst us to take on female roles. As much as some of the others might want to. So with our parts in order we had our first read through of the script. After my first ideas that this was a play about a hotel or train were banished, I settled in to the theatrical setting of a ghost hunter story gone wrong in a theatre.

For those of you who haven't had the chance to listen to the play yet, I won't spoil the ending, but suffice to say none of us could have worked it out from the way the play started. An amateur ghost hunting team, on radio, in a theatre. What an unusually setting for characters in a ghost story. Not that any of this let the whole thing down, not even the innumerable plot holes concerning the actual identity of the ghost. Now with the plot in the bag we were curious to understand the radio play side of it all.

A quick glance at the microphones set up around the stage told us all we needed to know. Acting a whole play relying on only our voices along sounded like a fun challenge, one that I think we definitely conquered pretty fast. The second thing about their radio play we found out was the amount of necessary sound effects. These would be supplied by a effects table covered in everything from party poppers to mugs for smashing. Charles of course took it upon himself to

demonstrate the exciting and wonderfully realistic sound effects, even if we know he just wanted to smash a few things. Even with all those, we were promised even more amusing noises, since on the second day of rehearsals we split up to construct two areas of more or less demolition.

To create the necessary sounds of a lighting gantry and backstage floor collapsing large amounts of metal and wood was found, dropped together and dropped again. After hours of building, testing, re building and re testing to Charles's orders we finally had our sounds ready. All we had to do now was build up at atmosphere. Which wasn't too hard with certain members of the cast jumping out of their skins at effects even they knew were going to happen. So with everything ready, from dodgy microphones to 1950's British accents we were ready to perform.

Oliver Sharman

In 2005 Watford Girls School ran a drama GCSE course for the first time. There were limited places so in July all the applicants auditioned for just 17 places and I was one of the lucky few.

Almost two years later the course is completed and the exam looms. Two pieces of coursework consisting of written and performance elements.

We had two performances, a devised piece 'Woman of War' and the classic Arthur Miller Play 'The Crucible' Despite the tedious written work, I really enjoyed this opportunity and I definitely intend to continue drama in the future.

The Pumphouse has offered me a broader spectrum in which to perform and my recent audition for National Youth Theatre proved successful and I will be taking my place on a course in October. Thanks Pumphouse for my A*. More to come on NYT soon.

Rosie Spearpoint

Children's Theatre

Scary moments

I turned up one Saturday morning to Children's Theatre (as I usually do) and found out they were doing auditions for the part of The Man in Scary Play.

Scary Play was a newly written play for National Theatre Connections. As history goes I get the part of The Man. Scary Play is about a bunch of kids who get bored on a sleepover and decide to investigate a local abandoned house. However, on entering the house they experience the worst night of their lives.

We started rehearsing in October and first presenting an extract in the Christmas Showcase. We continued rehearsals in the New Year. We soon faced problems as some of the cast could not make some of the very important performances (I shall not mention any names but there were quite a few!) However, our Directors Jean and Robin tackled this problem very well and kept Scary Play going. We sacrificed our Bushey Festival performance but this was probably to my advantage as I could concentrate on Animal Farm (my entry with the school in the Bushey Festival). We kept going and did two performances in the Festival of New Writing. Our Adjudicator was present in the audience in the second performance. He seemed to thoroughly enjoy our performance as he gave very positive feedback in our interview afterwards. I must commend the cast for such a stunning performance that night. We soon found out we got to the next round at Hampstead Theatre. When we saw our performance space, our reaction was 'it is rather small!' However, yet again, we pulled together a brilliant show, despite problems such as missing cast (yet again – I shall not name names!).

I would like to thank the Directors for being brilliant. It made my last Pumphouse show great. I have to say thank you to everyone who made my final show great. If the Children's Theatre doesn't enter again I shall be disappointed. Very well done everyone and thank you.

Jon Bolitho Jones



Warwick Way Productions

‘The Last Night at the Imperial’

Over the last couple of years every now and then I have written in this newsletter about Warwick Way Productions. This is a group who write, direct, record and produce audio plays. Working with the PHCYT this summer we tried something different, rather than spend a couple of hours recording one weekend, 8 members of the CYT spent 3 days on our summer project, ‘The Last Night at the Imperial’.

‘The Last Night at the Imperial’ project took a specially commissioned script from page to performance and although the production was as an audio play with the cast not only acted but created and performed almost all the special effects.

Radio acting can be quite different



to acting on stage as it doesn’t matter what expression is on your face or what costume you wear – the character is created by your voice and nothing else. Props in a radio play can be very different to a stage play. On audio it doesn’t matter what it looks like. A party popper can be an exploding light, a squeaky bucket can be a spot light and a Tesco value mug can be an expensive urn!

The whole thing was a big experiment for me as I am used to our recordings being rushed and always pushed for time. It was so nice to have extra rehearsal time which could be spent on creating the atmosphere and introducing the cast to radio theatre.

When I stage manage a CYT show I

am used to being really busy backstage the whole time and it shows how committed the cast were and how hard they worked as during the performance all I had to do was open the curtains at the beginning and close them at the end – everything else was done by the cast.

I’d like to thank everyone who was involved (The Cast) Jonjo Brooks, Ben Corre, Nick Corre, Stephen Hibberd, Callum Jewell, Oliver Sharman, Rosie Spearpoint, Adam Webster (and the Crew) Sara Watts, George Wells, Chris Wheeler and Jason Brameld who provided invaluable technical support.

We are already planning several project for 2008 – so watch (or should that be listen to) this space!

Charles Gunter