

September 2005

Pump House Children and Youth Theatre NEWSLETTER



Email: cyt@pumphouse.info Web: www.pumphouse.info/cyt

Your editors would like to thank you for the positive verbal feedback regarding the June newsletter. This newsletter will be a more streamlined issue, but keep writing for us so that December issue will another bumper issue.

The next edition will be in early December, so please do put pen to paper the old fashioned way and send your articles to Moya Brewer C/o Pump House Local Board Road, Watford. Or text or email the new age way.
Moya Brewer and Olivia Gunter

Recent Performances

Oliver!

Well, what a week it was!

After the first dress rehearsal on Friday 1 July, I was saying to myself "never, ever again!", the lines had been forgotten and the dances had all gone to pot, people were coming on late, the scenery was upside down and to cap it all, I could not get my favourite beer in "Tesco's"!

The following day dawned bright and sunny, full of new hope, as they say, and the second run though went so much better. The dress rehearsal from the night before had taught everybody, including me, an awful lot and the whole show was finally taking shape.

Finally, on Sunday 3 July, we had our second dress rehearsal and everything suddenly came together. Yeah, some people still forgot their lines and came on too early but things did seem to click.

On Tuesday 5 July, I could not concentrate at work all day and nearly ran out of the building at 5pm. The time approached until, at 7.33pm to be exact, the lights went down, and the 2005 Children's Theatre production of "Oliver!" began....

As the show ended, I stood in the foyer with my stomach doing cartwheels waiting for the reaction of the audience as they came out. It was fantastic! Everyone I spoke to was full of praise for the singing, the dancing, the acting, in fact all of it and everyone involved in it.

The week continued and the praise and compliments, to everyone involved, just kept coming. The low point of the week was, of course, the terrible events of 7 July. There was some discussion as to whether the performance for that night should be cancelled but it was decided to go ahead and all praise goes to everyone who carried on, allowing the audience to put those terrible events to the back of their mind, for a few hours.

I was very nervous on Friday, when the NODA rep came and I was particularly aware of any little "faux pas" that were made that night, but I think that the intake of breath from the audience as the

By Robin Scarborough

noose appeared at the end, told me that everything had gone OK. This was further confirmed by NODA's report on the performance.

Saturday became one big party as everybody seemed to relax and just wanted to enjoy it. The two Saturday performances were definitely the most enjoyable of the run for me. A great time was had by all.

All that is left to day is Thank-you, Thank-you, and Thank-you. You are a great bunch of people and rightly deserve all of the praise that has been heaped on you because of this. That includes actors, stage crew, tech. crew, costume makers, makeup, props people, FOH people, etc. etc. etc., the team spirit and team effort at the Pump House is something that makes it such a marvellous place to be involved with.

I would not say that I enjoyed every single moment as there were definitely times when I was ready to give up, but the post-show high that I was on lasted for about three weeks and I would challenge anyone not to enjoy something like that. As Jeanette said in her leaving speech, the Pump House and the people involved with it are quite unique. I sort of knew that before directing "Oliver!", but know it for definite now.

Next time, please don't leave it to the dress rehearsal to bring it all together and make sure that you let me know if you can't make a rehearsal, as Fagin said "this old heart can't take it!" However, what to do next, I fancy something with three casts in it....

MUGGED IN EDINBURGH

By Coco Keene

Before arriving I was in complete suspense as what to expect from Edinburgh.

When we arrived after 12hrs of driving we settled straight into our apartments.

It was annual fringe Sunday the following morning and we took every opportunity it gave us to advertise our new and exciting piece of theatre.

We spent most days doing exactly this between Mugged and other shows we had all fancied a look at.

On top of this we were able to draw in the crowds with street performances of the show and a master class in stage fighting.

The play was a success, as a cast we really gave it our all to draw in the crowds and put on a stupendous performance every evening, even if we had been up all night exploring the city and the fringe's best comedy shows.

The best thing about the fringe experience is that the atmosphere and feeling of the fringe is all around you when you're there.

It's the street performers, it's the venue 152 and 143, it's the people, it's the accent and the kilts and it's especially the people you go with. We took Mugged to some amazing venues and are all very thankful for being involved with Mugged, we would like to thank Lee and everyone else who helped make the play possible.

The whole experience is one we were all very grateful to have had. We all decided that it's something we'd all do again and strongly recommend it.



Tom demonstrated fight techniques on the Edinburgh royal mile stage. Here is a member of the audience trying it out with Guy. What happened next!



Recent Performances

EXPOSED TO THE PUBLIC

BY LEE FARMAN

Performing in Edinburgh is very different to performing at home. You have to persuade complete strangers to come and see you show instead of the 100 others that are on at the same time and impress reviewers who have already seen several shows that day and who do not make any allowance for the age of the cast.

One of the main reviewing publications is ThreeWeeks and if you get a 3 star or more review your are getting somewhere. Here is our ThreeWeeks review:

"The brutality of teenagers is shockingly believable in this high quality, youth theatre production. From the pen of TV writer Andrew Payne, the viciousness within the hierarchy of a group of school kids is transcended by a far more menacing threat lurking in playground beyond. The empathy the cast brings to these frightened children, especially the less sympathetic ones, is a mark of their sensitive, intelligent handling of the material but the naturalistic characterisation of the news reporters is jarring from a cast too young to substantiate it. And the script seems a little too anxious to draw the play to its optimistic close. However, the theme of the media passing off hearsay about the crime and its victim as 'news' rings too true"

tw rating 3/5

Part of the experience is seeing other shows. The brilliance of the festival is you can get brilliant stuff one minute and then see the worst play of you life the next. This can be seen from the some examples of reviews written by Fringe veteran and ace reviewer Jason Brameld:

Monty Python's Flying Circus (in French!)

Had it's moments

How do you approach seeing Monty Python in French? I didn't know what to expect, but I found that some of this show was hilarious, and some was a bit drab and un-funny - this is how I found the original Python stuff as well though. The show was well executed, fast paced, technically slick and the performers were very competent. I dread to think about the state of the wings after all of those very quick costume changes. Some of the comic timing of the original performances (argument sketch particularly) was lost in the use of surtitles (which were otherwise very helpful!). What I want to know is how the hell the french understood the humour!

Slice of Saturday Night

Not the best

The venue choice for this show was inspired, but sadly that was the only thing about this show that was. There were some good individual performances, and there are some good voices in there, but not enough to pull this show off against the poor direction, simplified music and brutal cuts to get it into 1:15 from a 2+ hour original script. Most of the gags were lost or thrown away, and none of

the changes really worked. The choreography was lacking, and completely missed the point of 'the jacket flap'. Poor sound didn't help (feedback and mic crackles), and the music played over the dialogue was distracting, unnecessary and just plain annoying. All credit for a brave attempt from a young cast who I think could do much better with different direction but this show was wide of the mark.

Amateur Transplants

Best laugh of my Festival

What can I say - the funniest thing I have seen this year by far. Highly offensive but remarkably clever material. New words to popular tunes is not an original format, but these doctors have truly taken it to a new level. Well performed and well received in an intimate venue. Side-splittingly funny from start to finish. Go and see it (if you aren't easily offended).

Goblin Market

-National Youth Music Theatre

Good performance - lousy piece

I am in agreement with some of the other reviewers about this show. The performances were truly great, good singing both from the principals and the chorus. The sound produced at times being absolutely staggering. A good orchestra helped the overall performance impression, and the young cast can be rightly proud of their achievements in this respect. But..... What a rubbish piece. Whilst the music was good, it was all the same and there wasn't enough variety to hold your interest. There was also not enough plot to stretch out to the duration of the show. There wasn't enough characterisation to actually make you care if they lived or died (or if tea was ready). If they had done a good piece, I would have given 5 stars as the performances were excellent. Overall, the writing and directing let it down.

Oh Romeo

By Steven Bland

My first show since the big bang musical Hood in 2003 would also be my last, and required actual acting, intimacy on stage, and more importantly, offered me the opportunity to wear tights again. Rehearsals and preparations for this show were... how can I put it...unbearable? The children are better behaved than we are. Rehearsal worry was compounded by Lee's messages of ticket sales gloom! Tom Kanji was a model RADA student in his stage-fight teaching, for which we humbly fall prostate at your knees, Kanj.

As we got close to the first night the nerves were added to by the delay in rehearsing certain kissing scenes...at least my counterpart was, its been universally agreed, stunning. As the nerves increased, however, the play improved markedly- Edna's directorship became more and more effective, until we were left on dress rehearsal night with a play that was, as always, not quite ready, but, as always at the Pump House - bloody brilliant.

What's more, there was a last week rush in ticket sales, every night but one was filled well. I'm sure the 10 people that

A GUIDE TO FLYERING

By ace promoter Hanna Brameld

The life of a show promoter at Edinburgh involves many pit falls which need to be carefully avoided, here are a few handy hints on how to earn yourself a set of chocolate bagpipes for your efforts.

1. Ensure that you have been up until early hours, kidnapping cast members, dancing in clubs or mattress diving as this gives you the edge! Having had no sleep gives you that don't mess with me aura.
2. Aim yourself at large groups, 13 Muslims and their 2 year old child for example.
3. Hijack other peoples stage slots by handing out flyers to them during their performances, (licking their face is optional) and conning them into promoting your show before they realise it is at the same time as theirs.
4. Make sure you leave your self respect, pride and dignity at home, be utterly shameless, refuse to take no for an answer.
5. Learn to walk backwards.
6. Know your target audience. Doddering old people who look like they watch mid summer murders were a key target, victims helpless to resist particularly at the top of the street ten minutes before the show when you play the trump card of a two for one ticket!
7. Make lots of noise! Sell the show its better than Jesus for goodness sake. Stage street fights and generally shout at people "Come see mugged you muggy little \$%*!" Complete expletive as appropriate!
8. "Come see mugged, I'm in it" ;)
9. There is so much competition at the fringe it is hard to sell a straight play so start a conversation about its selling points; acrobats, dancing girls, fireworks etc!
10. Pretend it's a musical and start an impromptu sing a long on the royal mile. Though I think Tom and Charles might have had even more success if they had been wearing short skirts!

turned up for the matinee enjoyed it as well.

I won't be here for Les Miserables - think of me trekking through the wilderness of Patagonia, no toilets, with only condors and 19 other crazy environmentalists for company, I will probably be, at times, tres miserables.



What's happening in the PHCYT

Chairs' Update

You may remember, I do hope so, that my first article as chairman recounted the surprise felt at my right hand's willingness to volunteer me for the CYT committee to the astonishment of the more rational and less altruistic parts of my body. Still, I am now grateful to that hand, having nearly completed a year as chair. It's been fun, enjoyable, interesting and an education.

As we approach the start of a new term and the forthcoming **Annual General Meeting**, which is on **Saturday 8 October** – **PLEASE PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARIES, CALENDARS AND BLACKBERRYS** – I thought this would be a good time to talk to you about the Pump House Children and Youth Committee.

We meet once a month, from September to July, and discuss all aspects of the management and control of the CYT. The committee consists of a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, a membership secretary a Youth section and Children's section leader, two active members of the Youth section and other committee members.

The present faces behind these titles are myself, Elisabeth Gunter, (chairman), Ann Bolitho-Jones (secretary), Nizar Kanji (treasurer), Catherine Farman (membership secretary), Lee Farman (Youth and Children's section leader), Moya Brewer, Christine Clifford, David Fargas, Patricia Hibberd, Ursula Hodgkinson, Mike Lovett, Karen Rhodes, Ken Spearpoint and Jean Staveley-Taylor. The Youth members are Maria Enevoldsen and Sean Lovell. Until recently, Jeanette Behn and Sara Corre were also committee members but have left for various reasons.

You probably know some of these people, you may know all of them, and you will definitely have seen them around the theatre in one capacity or another. Each current committee member has a link to the CYT via either a current or past child or youth member. The other thing they all have in common is their absolute commitment to the CYT. We bring a variety of skills and talents to the committee though not necessarily theatrical or artistic ones. In fact when I joined, I thought long and hard about what I could contribute having no acting, directing, sewing or other creative leanings. I was slightly worried but soon realised that an association such as the CYT just needs people, any willing volunteers, as there are so many things to be done which any and all of us can do.

We are hoping some new faces will join the committee in October. You will be very warmly welcomed and can volunteer at the meeting or speak to any one of us in advance. If you don't want to join the committee you will still be warmly welcomed to the AGM. We are planning to make an evening of it with entertainment

Every little helps

The two summer shows were such tremendous successes in every way. Oliver, brilliantly directed by Robin Scarborough, with its packed houses each night and superb double casts and Romeo and Juliet, so sensitively adapted by Edna Eckett with its intelligent and adult performances and edge of the seat drama, especially the breath-taking fight scenes. Both shows were wonderfully supported by volunteer help and I thank you all for your time and support. Special thanks to all those who filled in and returned the volunteer slips – it made the job of coordinator so much easier.

The set design, building and painting teams created a stunning stage for the performers, so effective for both shows in such different ways. Thanks to Chris Swallow, and his creative design and build team. Chris said he'd enjoyed building this set probably more than any other he'd recently been involved with and that's in no small part due to those working with him.

Jason Brameld's team also put in a huge amount of time and effort to give us lighting and sound that wouldn't be out of place in a West End show. We are privileged to receive the benefit of this knowledge and skill.

The props team led by Tracy Calder, Audrey Whitty and Moya Brewer for Oliver and Sara Watts for Romeo and Juliet, set the scenes so authentically and imaginatively.

The set painting team led by Karen and Keith Rhodes worked Dickensian hours and lovingly created the beautiful and authentic backdrop for Oliver though at one point I believe the London Eye was to be seen peeping through the smoking chimneys, sadly painted out before first night.

It seems so easy to write that the costumes, as always, were wonderful because so many hours of planning and making go into producing all that is needed. It's not just the frocks and main characters' clothes that receive such painstaking attention to detail but also the less obvious items such as hats and shirts which are just there but on so many cast members. I should also say that with two casts, the easy option wasn't taken of casting two people for the same role with the same build, thus needing only one set of costumes, they were all

and a glass of wine or two after the business is finished.

I really look forward to seeing you all in October – look out for further details nearer the time and remember, if you come to the AGM and you feel an uncontrollable urge to raise your arm when the call for new members comes – please don't fight it!

Elisabeth Gunter – Chairman

Consider Yourself...



individually catered for. I take my hat off to Sue Vos and Ursula Hodgkinson and their team.

The stage crew, managed by Charles Gunter, provided a sterling service which kept the shows running smoothly each night, many of them not only juggling exams with the commitment they had made to turn up and move scenery and props each night, but also performing in Romeo and Juliet the following week.

The Front of House and chaperone duties were particularly demanding especially for Oliver as so many people were needed to manage the large cast spread over the various changing rooms. However, all those who gave up their time and helped were so generous and so conscientious in the care and attention of their charges. You were marvellous. In fact, many people not only helped for Oliver but also came back the next week to help with Romeo and Juliet. Thanks too to all the Front of House managers, it's an important role and a necessary one.

A special thanks goes to Lorna Bailey who manages the bar for the shows and makes all volunteer bar stewards feel at ease in the job.

Saying thank you to everyone who helped doesn't seem quite adequate, but I am saying it whole-heartedly. I hope you will all do it again for the next productions because as you can plainly see, we can't do it without you. I also hope you all had a great summer break and look forward to seeing you in the coming weeks and months.

Elisabeth Gunter
Chairman

If you would like to be a Front of House Manager for future shows or help on the bar, training will be taking place before the next productions. We need more managers and would love to hear from you if you would like more details. Please give me a ring on 01923 240762 or 07904 352025 or email Elisabeth.Gunter@btinternet.com

The autumn term Saturday lunchtime food rota will be issued very shortly. Please, please do try to make a note of your date and partner. If you can't do your allocated slot please try to make your own swap, but if you are having difficulties, **call me, Elisabeth** on 01923 240762 or 07904 352025.

We still need someone to run the box office for future productions. If you want further details please call Lee Farman on 07958 955512



What's happening in the PHCYT

Annual Awards

Each year we present an annual award to a member from each section. This award is given for outstanding contribution to membership of the Pump House CYT. For example helping other members, supporting other productions they are not in, enthusiasm and so on.

This year people have been nominated for helping run the Children's theatre, being the production team for Bad Girls, designing sets, getting the new newsletter going and for showing very strong commitment.

The nominations in the Children section are:

Roseanna Allnutt
Niamh Brewer
Saoirse Brewer
Nick Corre
Hazel Farman
Callum Jewell
Alex Howells
Tom Jordan
Calum Littley
Callum Murdoch
Dominic Powell
Hollie Sullivan
Rosie Spearpoint
Charlie Smith
Emily Woods

This years winner for the significant extra effort he put in this year is:



Ben Rhodes

The nominations in the Youth section are:

Jon Bolitho-Jones
Steven Bland
Oliver Gunter
Jenny Hibberd
Emily Kiddle
Sean Lovell
James Sheppard
Chris Wheeler

This years winner is:



Emma Williams

'Daisy, Daisy...I'm tired.'

Steven and Mike Bland.

Well we did it. 960 miles, 13 days, tonnes of pastries and carbohydrates consumed, and yes...I put on weight. (All muscle, I've assured myself). Although we averaged 74 miles a day, we were off the bike every 6 or 7 to unceremoniously return life to numb undercarriages.

Cornwall was hell- hills like you can't imagine (and being metres from a horrific car crash didn't help), Scotland was incredible, scenery breathtaking. The bike broke outside Glasgow, lost a day, but made it up the next. Rained on us in Cornwall, but not again, a bitter NE wind in Scotland was demoralising and impossibly hard.

A wonderful experience, despite times of despair, physical and mental exhaustion,



and thoughts of riding straight into the depths of Loch Ness. We raised over £3500 for the Rainforest Foundation, no less than £385 of which came from Pump house collections during Oliver and R&J. Thank you all! Would we do it again? Dad wouldn't, but me?...it's the Tour De France route next...if you see me with a bucket...run away.

(Visit www.2totandem.co.uk, if its working, and see our diary etc.)

The membership waiting list

We have encountered two problems with the waiting list.

First it appears a fault has occurred with the database, which has lost some people who were added a couple of years ago. If you know anyone who added their name two years ago and has not heard anything, please get them to contact us. Please note: we do get people thinking they have put their name down when know for certain that they have not, so please be careful.

Secondly a number of people put down one child and then assume that we know about

any siblings. Please check if siblings are on the list, and if there are siblings of current members who want to attend please let us know as soon as possible.

The membership is a hard job with the numbers we have to deal with, so please be polite and patient and help us help you. Thanks,

Catherine Farman cyt@pumphouse.info



PUMP ART

The Pump House Theatre and Arts Trust (the people who run the Pump House building) have been working hard recently to secure the future of the Pump House and add significantly to its facilities.

Roger Martin, someone who has been involved in the local arts scene for many years has taken on the role of development officer. This involves promoting the Pump House and finding funding for the various projects.

Roger has created Pump Art, a week of artistic events that will showcase the Pump House. One of the objectives of this event is to persuade a number of funders and local business to support the Pump House.

This event already has the backing of the Mayor, Dorothy Thornhill.

The CYT have offered to provide some snippets of performances for the Monday showcase (bits of Oliver, R&J, etc). More details for those involved will follow.

The upper rehearsal room is being converted into an art gallery and will be showing art created by users of the centre all week.

So if you are interested in exhibiting some of your creations or want to get involved or want more information contact:

Roger Martin

info@pumphouse.info 01923 241362

PUMP ART WEEK 24th - 29th October

All week - art from the Pump House people (open all day Monday - Saturday)

- Monday evening will be the "Showcase", (invitation only)
- Tuesday evening "Spoken Word" - storytelling, poetry and prose.
- Wednesday evening "Youth in Action" Music and performance by youth,
- Thursday evening "Film night", a series of festival films,
- Friday evening "Rhythm of the Pump House" Dance of various styles,
- Saturday evening "Pumping Sounds" a gala evening of music and entertainment for all tastes (ticketed event)

For more information contact: Roger Martin info@pumphouse.info 01923 241362



Back to the Future

Diary dates

SEPTEMBER

Wed 7th – Youth theatre begins
Sat 10th – Children's theatre begins
21st - 24th April in Paris
Pump House Theatre Company

OCTOBER

Sun 2nd - Auditions for Les Mis
Sat 8th 7pm AGM and fun quiz night
17th - 22nd Fiddler on the Roof
Cassio Operatic Society, Palace Thtre
(including some CYT members)
Sun 23rd - Sat 29th
Pump Art Week
Sat 29th - NO SATURDAY SESSION
TBC - Read through of new
NT shell connections plays

NOVEMBER

14th -19th Darling Buds of May
Pump House Theatre Company
(including some CYT members)
Sat 26th Old Tyme Music Hall
(Open House group fund raiser)

DECEMBER

Sat 3rd - last Saturday morning
session of term
Fri 9th - Sat 10th
(three performances on Sat)
A Carousel at Christmas
a showcase from the Children's
theatre

JANUARY

Sat 7th - Start of spring term
Thur 18 - Sat 20 & Tue 25 - Sat 28
Les Miserables Schools Edition
(Youth theatre)

MARCH

22nd - 25th - Bushey Drama festival
TBC (Beginning or end of the Month)
Festival of new writing

JULY

TBC - Musical from the Childrens
section
TBC - Youth production

Future Shows

We have an exciting year of theatre ahead of us.

Carousel at Christmas

A showcase for the Children theatre, which gives a gentle entry for new members and gives others a chance to showcase their skills workshops activities from the term.

It will include:

- A new short play by Karen Rhodes set around the evacuation of Children in WWII
- A short panto type piece
- Songs and sketches

Les Miserables School Edition

Youth theatre's chance to show what they are made of with this challenging piece.

This show is still on in the West End and this version only has some minor changes to accommodate young people.

We have been very lucky to secure the services of Roger Martin, an award winning director with many years experience, to lead this production.

It will be a technical challenge as well so we will be looking for lots of help. So let us know if you would like to be involved.

National Theatre Shell Connections

Following this years success with Mugged we continue with this festival, where the National Theatre commission 10 new plays.

The plays arrive around October, when we will have some play reading sessions. The directors go to a weekend workshop with the wirters in November. We will audition in December and start intensive rehearsals from February for performances at the Pump House at the end of March.

Festival of New Drama Writing

Another chance to explore new drama and have fun with improvisation. This event is likely to run at the end of March and will include NT Shell connections play, rehearsed play readings, improvisation and mime.

A famous Musical - for Children's Theatre

Subject to confirmation the Childrens theatre will be doing the Broadway Juniors version of Guys and Dolls at the beginning of July 2006.

Youth summer project

The Youth section summer term project is yet to be confirmed. If you have any references then please let me know as soon as possible.

Footnotes



- The Adult Pump House Theatre Company have offered free membership for 2 years for any older Youth member who would like join them. Call Pat Knight for more information on 01923 675284
- Look out for CYT members taking part in Fiddler on the Roof at the Palace Theatre in October and Darling Buds of May at the Pump House in November.

ONLINE

www.pumphouse.info/cyt

(don't forget the /cyt on the end)

We are trying to use technology to ease the significant burden on our volunteers. So please use the web and e-mail as much as you can.

Tickets

We are changing our prices so that the cheapest method for you to purchase tickets is by using your credit/debit card online. All other methods such as via the phone, reservation form or on the door will incur a surcharge of 50p a ticket.

Membership

People can add their names to the waiting list by using a form on the website

Letters

Copies of letters sent out, newsletters, contacts and diary dates will be available on the website

E-mail

If you are responding to a letter or giving notice that you can not attend a rehearsal then please do this by e-mail to cyt@pumphouse.info



Your editors would welcome contributions for the next newsletter which will go out late November.

So please send anything to Moya and Olivia
c/o elisabeth.gunter@btinternet.com

This newsletter is also available online at www.pumphouse.info/cyt

