



THE
ROSE
THEATRE

WE'RE BACK!

CHAIRMAN BY BOB GRAHAM

Well, here we are! About to open with a new season. This has been a long and at times arduous journey to get to this point, but it is just the start. We haven't got as much done during the recess as we would have liked and some of our projects are incomplete, but that will not stop us going forward. We will get things back on track.

Barring a u-turn, one thing is certain - our doors will open on September 27th and will play to decent houses. As I write we already have better ticket sales than for the incredibly successful monologue season that was an absolute triumph for all of those involved. They really are exciting times, even if the uncertainty is partly the cause of some of the excitement.

At present we are running the outward facing part of the theatre on the goodwill of a small group of members. Selling tickets, managing publicity, dealing with the public and running the website. If any members are able to support with this, please get in touch. Hopefully towards the end of the year we will be able to know what the next steps are as we try to re-establish a long term business plan.



The Covid pandemic has clearly had an effect on audience confidence and we cannot expect to have full houses in the short term – I have spent a number of days and evenings on box office and have listened to punters who have expressed their reticence to return to the theatre.

Sadly, this reticence has been shared by some of our members too, but, please don't feel bad. You must only come back when you feel safe to do so. You are all missed, but please come back as soon as you feel confident to do so. You are all welcome.

On the plus side, we are recruiting new members and we hope the forthcoming open day will generate further applications.

On a serious note, if you can offer no other support right now than to be involved in the 2021 AGM, please help us with that. We are seeking your approval to change the society's status to that of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which will protect the future long beyond my days as Chair. We need the approval of 75% of the membership. Please read the AGM documentation and help us with this one. Even if you think it is the wrong direction for the charity, let us know and we can re-think.

Thank you all for renewing your membership and I look forward to seeing you all back here again soon.

Bob

**HAVE YOU MISSED
THE THEATRE?**

... AND ALL THAT DRAMA?

**What's the theatre
without a big hat and a
glorious frock?**

**...or even a
parka and
a beanie?**



**CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE
NEXT TIME?**

I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. It's been fun collating all the submissions and designing this. Perhaps you can submit something in the December edition? It would be great to hear if you have anything to recount re the Rose or drama in general. Just e-mail me - sue2hunt@yahoo.co.uk

BY SUE HUNT

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BY JEN EGLINTON



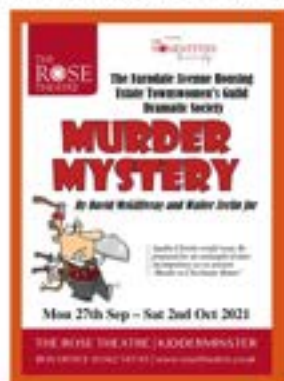
Hello again, everyone! Doesn't seem five minutes since I was writing the last one! So, what have the P.A.G. and I been up to? The answer is quite a lot.

Since the announcement of the new season, we have been correlating information from those of you who sent in Availability Forms and liaising with directors to cast the first half. Because the special performances of the Monologues took up a lot of the summer until the end of July, we were faced with the problem of when to put on our first play of

the new season and how we would fit in the rehearsal period, which varies from 7 to 8 weeks. If you do your sums from the 1st of August, that left us with little time for our usual slot.

However, with the knock-on effect of the rules for performance during the Pandemic, KODS decided that they would cancel their first show with us, and we were able to move our first production until later in the month, which just about gave us 7 weeks. We rushed to cast *Farndale* and began rehearsing in good time, and I am pleased to say it seems to be coming along quite well. Of course, while all this was going on we realised that we had to cast *Gaslight* as well since rehearsals for that began at the start of September! The director decided that there wasn't time for a workshop on this with everything else that was going on, so we cast that one too from the volunteers and moved on to *The Secret Garden*. Now with this we did have time to reinstate our workshop scenarios, and one took place on the 2nd of September. It was quite well attended, and we are currently waiting for feedback from the director to announce the casting. On top of that I have been working on posters, brochures and publicity with Anne, and they are all now in place after our stuffing day.

Here is the casting for the first two plays. I must add that there was little choice in who we picked, as so many of you are still uncertain of your moves this first half season and either did not submit an AV form or told us that you couldn't commit yet. We have had to do a lot of begging and are still terribly short of technicians, backstage staff, and prompts as well. So if anyone is free, please let Keith know as a matter of some urgency.



Murder Mystery

Directed by **Jen Eglinton**
Mrs. Reece: **Amy Cooper**
Thelma: **Katy Ball**
Audrey: **Katie Brown**
Felicity: **Jessica Bishop**
Gordon: **Jonathan Flowers**

Gaslight

Directed by **Tori Wakeman**
Jack Manningham: **Martin Salter**
Bella Manningham: **Beth Grainger**
Elizabeth: **Hannah Tolley**
Nancy: **Faye Bingham**
Inspector Rough: **Stu Wishart**

As soon as *The Secret Garden* is sorted, we will post that, and hopefully there will be a workshop for *Twist* in November when David, the director, stops doing lighting for everyone. He is currently about our only one!

I am happy to announce that this year we are at last able to present our popular *Christmas Entertainment* again. We were unsure whether it could go ahead at first due to the Covid restrictions, but conditions change. This year we are delighted to be joined again by Stephen and Pammy Watkins and a few senior members from their Wymysical theatre company. Our theme is 'Home for Christmas', and with readings, comedy and song we hope to explore families and friends reuniting and being together once more. If any of you are interested in taking part, please let me know as soon as possible, as at the moment I have about 4 people signed up, plus the organisers. I need to know how many of you are interested so we can choose the content of the show to suit you all!



More details are now available online so have a look at the website. Little flyers are available in the foyer if you would like one as a recap on the next season. A.V. forms for the second half will be available for you at the A.G.M in October. I am hoping a lot more of you will return and want to be involved by then. There is still the hilarious classic farce *See How They Run* to cast, after which we have the three shows held over from the previous season before the lockdown, (*Heroes*, *And Then There Were None* and *Cranford*) and there are inevitably some roles we will need to recast in these as well, so don't think they are sewn up.

Please come back and support your theatre, both on and off stage. Without you, we cannot function.



MEMBERS MATTER

BY HILARY THOMPSON

Hi, everyone. As I write, we have the Monologues under our belt and are now into rehearsals for both Murder Mystery and Gaslight. So members are much needed. Backstage and Front of House beckon, especially as we no longer have Gary and Natalie. Please help Jane by getting names down for FOH as soon as you can and I also make a plea for anyone interested in backstage, especially props and prompting, for future plays.



Stuffing Day was really successful. We rang the changes and made it an evening event. Good numbers and some were able to come who cannot usually come during the daytime. Well done to the children and grandchildren!! Sue Clarke and Sue Hunt came along with two grandchildren and along with Hannah Tolley's girls they all pitched in and worked hard. All aided and abetted by superb cakes, courtesy of Lynn Ravenhill of course. We stuffed and sent out 1900 brochures – no mean feat. Thanks to Richard Casewell and Duncan Terry on bagging and posting duties on the next day. It will be no time at all before it is the next one – and we have proved once again what a good social event this can prove to be.

Now the next venture, Open Day, is on Saturday 18th September. Members are much needed to help with refreshments, theatre tours and meeting and greeting visitors and potential new members. Looking forward to a successful day with a chance to thank the public for generous donations through the Crowd Funding.

Welcome to new members – three signed up and keen to go and two more potentials in the pipeline. All three are keen to be involved in backstage but will certainly kick off by supporting FOH. Lots of experience and skills on offer! But – we need actors as well – no experience necessarily needed. If you have friends who might be interested, encourage them to get in touch.



So onwards and upwards. It does all feel a little strange, I know! If members - long-standing, recent or new - want a chat, feel free to get in touch with me on 07500337585.

THE ROSE THEATRE

OPEN DAY
Saturday 18th September 2021 10am – 2pm

- Backstage tour
- Explore our wardrobe and props room
- See our sound and lighting box
- Free refreshments
- Come and talk to our members – maybe you'll like to join us!

THE ROSE THEATRE | KIDDERMINSTER
The Rose Theatre, One Victoria Road, Kidderminster, B39 3JN
BOX OFFICE: 01562 743745 | www.rosetheatre.co.uk

Congratulations ...

TO BECCA AND JACK



Well done to Becca and Jack for surviving the various lockdowns and celebrating their wedding on the 13th August. They were blessed with a lovely day, a beautiful venue and lots of family, friendship and love all around them. I am told they have decided to rename themselves the "Wilbrookes" - combining both their names. This will keep us on our toes!

Most people will know Becca of course but Jack has been a stalwart in supporting KRYPT productions, often given the unenviable task of 'minding' the livelier younger children backstage.

A good gathering of Rose friends were delighted to be invited to the evening event of the wedding so we could join in the fun and congratulations – it was really great. Jess was, of course, there as a bridesmaid. Lots of dressing up - which we all love!

So lots of love and best wishes to Becca and Jack – it is great to have something so happy to celebrate! *Hilary*



In Memoriam



"Committed to Stage, Acting and Amateur Production"

Jill Bennett has recently passed away and is much remembered by members of the Nonentities/Rose Theatre and Wordsley Amateur Dramatic Society (WADS). It is important to recognise those who have committed their lives to amateur theatre in our local community - as Jill did.

70 plus years with WADS and 40 plus years at the Rose is no mean achievement. At the age of 88 Jill was still supporting the Rose and last attended the *Christmas Entertainment* in 2019 before 'lockdown'. She is remembered by our older members as a 'lovely lovely lady', 'fun to act with', 'an elegant lady with a gentle sense of humour' and 'merited for her acting'. In particular she is remembered by members in *Remembrance*, in the Studio, acting with Stuart Woodroffe. She was also in *Three Tall Women*, *Lark Rise to Candleford*, *Lost in Yonkers* and *Once a Catholic*, and much, much more. She was incredibly versatile, doing comedic roles and serious portrayals.

It is a joy to remember such a loyal and dedicated theatrical supporter and actress. Our thoughts go out to her and her family and friends.

PUBLICITY

BY ANNE BOOTH

Well, the posters are designed and printed and the brochure has been stuffed and delivered. Now we have to wait for the members and public to have some confidence in attending theatre performances and buy our tickets! We are still hopeful that we will have a new website over which we will have more control to add up to date news items, photos and video trailers and a pro-active members site.

I have to admit it has been a bit of a slog getting all this ready, especially without the support of Gary in the office, and I am going to take a little step back from all things publicity for a while. If anyone would be interested in taking on this role and joining the committee after the AGM in October, I am more than happy to pass on and explain what is required. It could be that you are happy to take on a small area of responsibility and that would be great also. Thanks to Chris Meusz who has offered to keep an eye on posters around the theatre and Jane Holt who helped with the promotion in Kidderminster Library.



FRONT OF HOUSE

BY JANE HOLT

It's not every day the front of house staff gets a review, let alone a 5 star review, so congratulations all round to everyone involved in helping out front of house for the four weeks of monologues! In case anyone missed the reviews from 'Behind The Arras' the actual wording was 'It's five stars to the front of house staff and management team of the Rose in becoming one of only a handful of theatres nationally who have managed to navigate the Covid rule book and lead the way back to a sense of normality'. A first for the Rose FOH! So a big thanks to all of you for helping out and making my job easier.

And you did such a brilliant job I am going to be relying on you all again for the new season starting 27th September. FOH will be taking on the big task of providing, in the short term at least, a limited bar service alongside serving teas and coffees. We will be very glad to have the help of anyone who has worked the bar alongside Gary to help make the bar a success again.



ROSE REFURBISHMENT

BY KEITH HIGGINS & JEN EGLINTON

A big 'thank you' to all those who have helped so far in whatever capacity to give the inside of our building a fresher look. Jobs done have included painting the whole of the downstairs from Stage Door through to the workshop; additional cupboard space constructed along the corridor outside the dressing rooms; putting up our lovely black and white photos and other 'history' material along the walls from Stage Door round to wardrobe area; draft proofing the side of the stage from the workshop side to help with the cold air coming on to the stage; a new storage area made in the Green Room for our Youth Theatre to store their props and costumes. In addition, after a jolly good sort out of all the clothes, new rails have been installed in the main wardrobe area. *Keith*



You may have noticed the pictures put on Facebook, and those who have been into the Wardrobe in the past will notice a huge difference. It is now clean and well organised. Anne, Carol, Donna, Alix (and partner), Lynn and I have been meeting regularly and the stock is now sifted and repacked. Keith and his stalwarts have fitted a wonderful new double racking system, and everything is re-arranged by type and period and in some cases even colour co-ordinated! The excess has been sold off and paid for all the new boxes, so our costs have been kept to the racking poles and fittings, and a couple of new moveable rails for the dressing rooms. We had more but heaven knows where they have gone to over the years! Thank you, everyone: it was a big job but well worth the effort. I don't think it had been done since the 80s. Unfortunately, most of our fur stoles and wraps have had to be disposed of, as the two trunks they were in were heavily infested with moths and we had to condemn them. (We are looking into a method of future moth control and would appreciate any advice. Opinions differ as to the suitability of various methods.) Any surviving ancient relics have been catalogued and stored for reference.

Looking for a box to fit me in! *Jen*

KRYPT

BY BECCA WILBROOKE

Stop the press and hold your horses - KRYPT finally returned to the Rose Theatre's stage this summer! Our Summer term saw us working in 'Bubbles' and attempting to rehearse and produce three different performances at the same time. It was always a high-risk approach with Covid looming in the background and, despite the best efforts of our members, only one performance ended up going ahead.

Our Juniors were able to showcase their work thanks almost entirely to Jess, who secured and prepped her school playing field so that the group could perform safely outside. Our littlest group packed a massive punch as pirates endeavouring to sail around the world. Due to a cast member isolating, Jess even became part of the cast, two feet taller than everybody else playing the all-important part of 'small child'!



Over the summer holidays, we were finally able to pull together our summer school, KRYPTfest! Over the course of a week, twelve talented youngsters explored the world of storytelling, delving into fairytales both fair and foul as they twisted narratives and subverted storylines. The week culminated in a fantastic showcase by our Summer Company which was met by rave reviews from family and friends. What a week! Huge thanks to Beth and Jess for leading as directors for the week, to Thom for sourcing the music despite being at his full-time real-world job, and to Hilary and Joe for their support offstage. What a team!

Next for KRYPT is the mammoth task of getting one of our other postponed plays on the stage in October - something we're all looking forward to. After that, it's full steam ahead 'til our Christmas showcase!

Before I sign off, I must just give a huge vote of thanks to the Nonentities members who have shown KRYPT so much support over the summer. We've been gifted a cracking new wardrobe AND a range of pint-sized costumes to store in it. We've had Bob working hard to find us dates to suit us and we've had Richard in to explore a text with the kids. Chris Kay has even been coaching one of our little ones in the art of Digimon! Thank you, from us and our little people; for all the love you give!



THE ROSE THEATRE WE'RE BACK!

In June and July the Nonentities presented four collections of short plays to spice up your Summer

Talking Heads

This initial session consisted of two of Alan Bennett's acclaimed plays from the *Talking Heads* series.

'Both solo performances feature two of the company's finest performers, Sue Downing and Richard Taylor, providing them with the opportunity to showcase their considerable skill and experience in two very different monologue tales.'

'The first is *Bed Among the Lentils* directed by Pat Gale with Sue Downing in her own self-isolated tale of her life as Susan, a frustrated vicar's wife. She has become bored to alcoholism with her sterile and mundane life in the service to her husband and the church.'

'With a simple pared down set of a chair and hat stand and with a few clothes Sue Downing holds you captivated throughout.'

'The second play, *A Chip in the Sugar*, is directed by Bob Graham and features the experience and lone talent of Richard Taylor. This seemingly comic monologue is packed with subtly and drama.'

'Richard Taylor is a profoundly good storyteller and creates a vivid sense of desperation and fear bringing out the very best in Bennett's deep analysis of the character.'



'On the night, these two short plays were witnessed by only 40 or so of us, but I genuinely urge anyone to go and reinstall your faith in visiting and supporting the theatre in this and their efforts, over the next few months to get back up and running. You can rest assured the theatre has done its utmost to keep its audience safe and the only thing you will be infected with here is the great performances.'

All quotes taken from 'Behind the Arras' July 2021

Richard Taylor's Graham finds his life in turmoil when mother meets an old flame



Fright Night

The first play was *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe.

'A deranged man plots to kill his neighbour, but his ingenuity in concealing the deed is finally unravelled by his own broken mind. This dark gothic tale featured Stuart Wishart who relished the opportunity to hold centre stage and treat us to an exhibition of very convincing character acting.'

'Directed by Tori Wakeman, Mr Wishart mined every facet of this nervous character whilst recollecting his act of murder. The simple setting of a few props, stage risers and a black backdrop were the perfect atmosphere for this and the subsequent performances.'

'Next came *Trial For Murder* by Charles Dickens and featured Patrick Bentley. A prospective juror for a murder trial receives an apparition of the murdered man at his apartment. Later, and as the trial continues, he sees the apparition several times, believing him at times to be an actual person in the courtroom.'

Mr Bentley was splendid in the role as the comfortable bachelor, Victorian gentlemen, reclining the tale one evening over of a glass of whiskey. Mr Bentley is often included in the company's ensemble work, but the solo aspect of all of these monologue plays presents a great opportunity for an actor. It is still though a considerable undertaking, with each play lasting around 20 mins. Directed by Jen Eglinton it was yet another skilful, chilling addition to the evening.'

'The Final piece was Poe's *The Black Cat*, again with Stuart Wishart in the role and Tori Wakeman directing. A once amenable family man is driven to unspeakable acts of violence and cruelty while under the disease of alcohol dependence.'

'Mr Wishart's clipped and polished delivery of this brutal man, drew gasps from the audience as he calmly recalled his callous acts to the house cat. It was a credit to his performance that he achieved this via his precise timing and cool recollection of the deeds.'

All quotes taken from 'Behind the Arras' - July 2021



A Slice of Life

Week three of The Nonentities' short season of short plays continues, with some welcome comic relief, brought together under the title of *A Slice of Life*.

The first play, *All Apologies* by Neil LaBute, featured Bob Graham and Emma Preece and was directed by Patrick Bentley.

'Bob Graham nicely depicted a man struggling to admit he was wrong. Emma Preece must have worked long and hard on creating the right temperament and mood for her character and was stoic in her role.'



Katie and Chris found out that fires could have a cooling effect on passion in a cupboard.

'Second on the menu was *Cupboard Love* with Katie Brown and Chris Kay, and directed by Bob Graham.'

This short play 'could have been inspired by the recent goings on in the Government. Two employees of a supermarket are about to have some illicit adult fun in a storeroom, when a fire alarm sounds and they get locked in'.

'Katie and Chris were splendid in the roles, passing from friendship to disdain at practically every personal revelation.'

Third and finally was *Anorak Of Fire* with Alex Powell, directed by Stephen Downing.

This very spirited play, written by Stephen Dinsdale, gave us an insight into a young train spotter, Gus Gascoigne.

'Alex Powell revels in the role, creating a very engaging, enthusiastic young man and the writing both pokes fun and dispels the myth of a train spotter all in one. Being the longest of the plays, Mr Powell handled the monologue extremely well and the solo spotlight proved he is a very capable young actor.'



All quotes taken from 'Behind the Arras' July 2021



It was almost a sort of 'girl power' evening, for the Nonentities' final offering, in their series of short plays set under the title of 'Something Classical'.

'The past four weeks have certainly challenged the company, in that the performances are very exposed. With these solo monologues there's no hiding in the ensemble or waiting for a co-player to give a line that gets you back on track. From that pressure has sprung some captivating performances that show just what talent is on offer.'



'The quality continued with the first play *Her Big Chance* by Alan Bennett, featuring Hannah Tolley and directed by Martin Salter.'

'This poignant story tells of a young film starlet, following her dream to fame via the casting couch. Ms Tolley was excellent in the part and kept the story moving along sweetly as she recalled for us, yet another comi-tragic story of one her film acting roles.'



'Next was *Duologue* by Terrence Rattigan, featuring Amy Cooper and directed by Jen Eglinton. This play from 1968, set in the London suburbs, tells of Rosemary, a woman recently widowed.'

'Her deceased architect husband from Huddersfield seems to have married way above his station and one night after a party and fuelled by alcohol, she enters into a conversation with him revisiting the night of his death.'

'Ms Cooper switched easily from the clipped middle class tone, into that of her burly Northern husband, as the hours leading up to his untimely death are revealed.'

'If the phrase 'saving the best till last' is in any way true, then the final play *Lady Bracknell's Confinement* with Joe Harper is a prime contender. This hilarious reconstruction of *The Importance of Being Ernest*, written by Paul Doust, was not only a superb end to the evening, but a great closing testament to a month of plays, that would give any professional company a thrashing.'

'Directed again by Jen Eglinton, Mr Joe Harper, dressed in the full attire of a well to do lady of the 1850s, recounts the incredibly complicated tale of how he manages to rise to the unlikely position of wife to a Lord, and conceal his manhood to the point of even producing children.'

'It's been a long time since I have laughed out loud at any performance and yet Mr Harper was outstanding in mining every comic moment from this very funny script. The depth of his portrayal though was countered with a moment of serious drama that delivered an emotional punch to his role.'



All quotes taken from 'Behind the Arras' - July 2021