



## RAIN STOPS PLAY TWICE... BUT AUTUMN'S IN THE DRY

AS THE RAIN LASHED THE COUNTRY during the wettest season on record, the Guild's summer show, Sheridan's *The Rivals*, fell just as much of a victim to the appalling weather as any in the region – out of the twelve shows, two were cancelled and two were hurriedly bundled into an indoor venue, while the continual threat of biblical-scale downpours kept ticket sales low, and even dissolved parts of the set. Despite critical and artistic acclaim, the show was sadly under-attended, with some sales rarely reaching 50; the nigh-miraculous break in the weather on the Saturday matinee was the best attended show, though the clouds regrouped for the evening and final performance. It was, to put it mildly, soggy.

Looking to the present, our most imminent show is the Lottery-funded collaboration with the Playhouse and the Oxfordshire Records Office – *Testament to a Trade*, written by the writers' group at the Playhouse and almost entirely cast from people new to the Guild. So if you get a chance, please do come to see this unique and original show – entirely in the dry....

SEE INSIDE FOR THEATRE NEWS, AND  
REVIEWS OF *THE RIVALS* ...



OXFORD THEATRE GUILD  
presents *testament  
to a trade*  
a dramatic exploration of the  
impact of the slave trade  
directed by Verity Peacock

**Thu 4 - Sat 6 Oct**  
Burton Taylor Theatre, Oxford  
7.30pm + Sat 6 @ 2.30pm  
**Wed 10 Oct**  
Lains Barn nr. Wantage 7.30pm  
**Thu 11 Oct**  
Northbourne Centre, Didcot 7.30pm  
**Fri 12 Oct**  
Friends Meeting House, Charlbury 7.30pm  
**Sat 13 Oct**  
East Oxford Community Centre 7.30pm

After the one-act play, audiences will be invited to participate  
in discussion of the issues raised.  
Tickets £5 (£4 concs) from Tickets Oxford for all performances  
(except Lains Barn) [www.ticketsoxford.com](http://www.ticketsoxford.com) or 01865 305305  
or on the door at any performance if available  
Tickets for Lains Barn from Vale and Downland Museum,  
Wantage, or 01235 760176

[www.oxfordtheatreguild.com](http://www.oxfordtheatreguild.com)



Sponsored by  
The National Lottery  
through its Arts Fund





## Review Record

*The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, directed by **Polly Mountain**, 17<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2007, Trinity College Gardens.



Ben Baxter; Tim Bearder

### The Daily Information

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN OVER 50 YEARS that Oxford Theatre Guild has not presented a Shakespeare play for their summer season. There is no denying that *The Rivals* is a classic of the English stage but it, perhaps, does not have quite the same immediate appeal as the popular plays of the Bard.

Trinity College gardens provide a handsome setting for this production and the cast did well to cope with both the inclement weather and the noisy interruptions from the outside world. It has not been a kind summer for outdoor productions – I do hope things improve soon for them.



Colin Burnie; Holly Jones; Barbara Denton

Drama of the Georgian period requires a certain lightness of touch to bring it fully to life for a modern audience. From our modern perspective, the complex social rules that were being satirized by Sheridan seem somewhat alien. Some of the actors are clearly more at home in the genre than others: Colin Burnie gives a delightfully nuanced performance as Sir Anthony – capturing the essence of the man. Bill Moulford and Alex Rogers both bring their characters fully to life

with lively and well-rounded portrayals. Of the below stairs characters, Rowena Lennon as Lucy (the maid) stands out – she is sparky and consistently entertaining.

When bringing period pieces such as *The Rivals* to the stage, it is important that the details are right. This applies in all areas – movement, gesture, costume, plot, make-up and many more. The costumes, supplied by the RSC, are certainly attractive and the many wigs complete the sumptuous look. Unfortunately some of the props and gestures are clearly too modern to allow us to fully escape into the 18th Century – a minor point – but one that does jar.

I commend the Guild for their courage in breaking out from their traditional choice of playwright. *The Rivals* is an entertaining play and one that has the potential to do well as a garden show. I sincerely hope that the weather improves for them and that audiences enjoy this quintessentially English play. **Simon Tavener**



Bill Moulford; Alistair Nunn

A SMALL GROUP OF STALWARTS in a corner of Trinity College gardens

### The Oxford Times

braved rain, cold and some equally committed midges to support the Oxford Theatre Guild on the opening night of Sheridan's *The Rivals* on Tuesday. And, despite the conditions, it was a great show, with accomplished and witty performances by the lead characters, and Alistair Nunn outstanding as the hero Jack Absolute.

This is, of course, the play that introduced the world to malapropisms, and Barbara Denton is stunning in the role of the linguistically challenged Mrs Malaprop, besides sporting a coiffure that Marge Simpson would be proud of. Indeed, hair features quite prominently in this production. Right at the beginning the conversation between Sir Anthony's coachman and Jack's manservant reflects on the horrors of gentlemen wearing their own hair, and the subsequent choice of wigs ranges from the elegant (Sir Anthony) to the perfectly outlandish (Bob Acres).

Set in 18th-century Bath, where there's not much to do apart from seeing and being seen ("not a fiddle or a card after 11pm," observes one of the servants sadly), *The Rivals* presents the fortunes of a couple of pairs of lovers whose progress to the altar is never in serious





Grace Mountain: Alex Rogers

doubt. Holly Jones is delightful in the role of Jack's beloved, Lydia Languish, whose worldview is shaped by reading too many novels from the circulating library, and Grace Mountain is a comely Julia Melville, the much put-upon girlfriend of Faulkland (Alex Rogers), a tense and insecure character who comes complete with stress balls (outsize worry beads, in case you're wondering).

The male characters dominate the play - and very striking they are too. I particularly enjoyed Bill Moulford as Bob Acres and Tim Bearder as Thomas the coachman. Between them they have a repertoire of facial grimaces that is thoroughly entertaining and the odd touches of sheer blokishness do much to enliven a well-worn classic.



Peter Green



Ralph Watson

One innovation that must be welcomed is the Guild's decision, in response to popular request, to provide a detailed synopsis of the play for visitors whose first language is not English.

The rain policy is simple: if the play is abandoned before the interval you get a full refund. On Tuesday, the intermittent drizzle turned to a downpour at the end of Act II, so we had an early interval!

Paula Clifford

## CAST:

<i>Mrs Malaprop</i>	Barbara Denton
<i>Lydia Languish</i>	Holly Jones
<i>Julia Melville</i>	Grace Mountain
<i>Lucy, Lydia's lady in waiting</i>	Rowena Lennon
<i>Jack Absolute</i>	Alistair Nunn
<i>Faulkland</i>	Alex Rogers
<i>Sir Anthony Absolute</i>	Colin Burnie
<i>Sir Lucius O'Trigger</i>	Peter Green
<i>Bob Acres</i>	Bill Moulford
<i>David, manservant to Bob Acres</i>	Ralph Watson
<i>Fag, manservant to Jack Absolute</i>	Ben Baxter
<i>Thomas the Coachman</i>	Tim Bearder

## CREW:

<i>Director</i>	Polly Mountain
<i>Stage manager</i>	Gareth Morris
<i>Deputy stage manager</i>	Emily Dickerson
<i>Production manager</i>	Kate Stratford
<i>Properties</i>	Gaurav Prateek; Fiona Sinclair; Angela Myers
<i>Technical manager</i>	David Long
<i>Lighting design</i>	David Long
<i>Stage design</i>	Steve Whitaker; David Long
<i>Set construction</i>	Gareth Morris; Brian Plater; Julian Johnson; Gaurav Prateek; Kevin Elliott
<i>Lighting operation</i>	David Long; Gaurav Prateek
<i>Sound</i>	Julian Johnson
<i>Costumes, hair, make-up</i>	Emma-Jane Jones
<i>Wigs</i>	Sheila Robbins
<i>Costume assistants</i>	Sue Tibbles; Surabhi Sharma
<i>Publicity</i>	Felicity Peacock; David Guthrie; Sarah O'Connor; Elizabeth Kirkham; Ralph Watson
<i>Poster design</i>	Richard Boxall Design Associates
<i>Photography</i>	Marc Brome
<i>Transport</i>	Stephen Ashworth
<i>Programme production</i>	Joe Kenneway / TBI Communications; LDI
<i>Front of House mgr.</i>	Joanna Matthews
<i>Refreshments</i>	Sally Watson
<i>Production assistance</i>	Kevin Elliott
<i>Front of House stewards</i>	Members of the Guild





Rowena Lennon

### *Post-Script to The Rivals - Summer 2007...*

"THE DECISION TO DO an English classical play not by Shakespeare was warmly received and I don't think there are many people shaking their heads or muttering into their beards that the Guild has made a big mistake. Audi-

ences and critics alike seemed to welcome the change.

"Now whether or not Shakespeare had any influence over the weather, I do not know. Was he getting his own back by making sure we had the wettest summer in living memory? "Unlucky" would be the understatement of the year. I could go on at length about the disappointment and frustration the weather caused us, but what I really want to say is how deeply impressed I was with EVERYONE concerned – actors, techs and backstage – who coped admirably under such difficult circumstances. In spite of the rain, chilly breeze and very active mosquitoes, everyone gritted their teeth and pulled out all the stops to put on a show full of energy, pace and infectious high spirits. Congratulations to you all for an impressive performance in every sense!

"Just a final thought: what about doing a Shakespeare at the *Playhouse* one year?"

**Polly Mountain**

## Review Extra

*And as suitable epilogues to this commemoration of The Rivals, here's two extra reviews of appreciation, the first sent in by long-term Guild director Gerard Gould...*

WITH TWO PRODUCTIONS OF *A Midsummer Night's Dream* competing with one another in Oxford at the same time (one a "highly physical production very much spoken in a modern idiom" and the other with "some poor text delivery") director Polly Mountain was wise in choosing Sheridan's 18<sup>th</sup> Century comedy of manners *The Rivals* for the summer production.

And what a splendid production it was! Sheridan's period dialogue was delivered with a verve, a degree of confidence, a meaningfulness which reflects long, patient rehearsals with a director who knew exactly what she was doing. No need to resort to such theatrically impoverishing devices as "physical theatre" or "political correctness." Much more important to inspire confidence and comedy timing.

Led by Alistair Nunn as Captain Absolute and Colin Burnie as his Father the Company gave a highly disciplined and utterly professional performance the like of which I haven't seen in a Guild production for a while. I have now seen Alistair Nunn in several plays, and in every one he was different – the sign of a good actor. Here he gave a masterful display of a *jeune premier* – much more difficult than playing character roles. With roving eyes, a mischievous sense of fun playing round his lips, a charm of manner and a flexible voice he entered into the spirit of the play.

Colin Burnie resisted the temptation of playing Sir Anthony Absolute as a bullying soldier; instead, his scenes with Alistair Nunn were played with subtlety and perfect comedy timing.

Barbara Denton also resisted her natural exuberance trained in musical theatre and gave us a disciplined Mrs Malaprop who scored a bull's eye with every malapropism she uttered; no mean achievement this, and it was well rewarded by our spontaneous laughter.

Alex Rogers also was convincing as the neurotic, vulnerable Faulkland. It's a good part to play, in complete contrast to Jack Absolute.

I also want to praise Holly Jones for such clear enunciation, thus achieving the right languishing pace for Lydia Languish. She needs to work on her voice to produce lower notes in her register. The training course at LAMDA should help her.



The assembled cast in last act mode





Alistair Nunn and Barbara Denton

Bill Moulford's Bob Acres – the country boy with a splendid hay-strewn wig – managed to be both comical and vulnerable. Every member of this good company helped to make this an outstanding production, especially Ben Baxter always with a smile on his face.

The variety of wigs was another outstanding feature. Costumes were appropriate and unobtrusive. The setting was simple, perhaps too simple. Trinity College Garden is not the most striking among Oxford's colleges. Maybe, the gazebo could have been put to greater use. The two garden benches looked good, but by remaining set in up-stage left and right places they were not really serviceable when some important scenes were played on them. More use could also have been made of music.

The great boon of this production lay in its verbal clarity and sheer *joie de vivre*. For these gifts I am truly thankful.

**Gerard Gould**

**...and the second sent in by long-time member Elizabeth Kirkham...**

I WENT TO THE LAST FRIDAY NIGHT PERFORMANCE, and was happy to have picked a night when there was no rain to stop play, as unfortunately the two weeks the Guild picked to perform the play were about the wettest you could get. On this night, they played to a full house of enthusiastic play-goers.

I always find the complicated and contorted plots of Restoration Comedy rather difficult to follow, so they are not usually my favourite form of entertainment, except for the beauty of the décor and the costumes of the period. However, having seen a very excellent of this play by Oxford Dance Theatre, directed by Jackie Keirs at the OFS a few years ago, this time the plot seemed reasonably clear to me, but not, by any means, only for this reason.

If there is a complicated plot involved, the skill of the director and the excellence of the acting make all the difference to an audience being enthralled and fully involved in the performance. In this production this was very much the case, skilfully di-

rected by Polly Mountain and very well performed by a group of very competent, and in some cases exciting performers.

The set by David Long was simple, attractive and looked authentic for period. A set can make so much of a difference to the whole atmosphere and feeling of a play, as do also the costumes, hairstyles and make-up. It is important that they all seem authentic and complement each other in the right ways. The costumes, hair and make-up by Emma-Jane Jones and wigs by Sheila Robbins were all good. The pale restoration make up for the characters wishing to seem upper class and fashionable was well done, without it being to insensitively white.

Lydia Languish, played by Holly Jones, looked all together very attractive and right for the part. She had a good and very audible speaking voice, and good diction; the loudness of her voice gave a strident, determined and rebellious teenager interpretation of the character, but in keeping with that period in history, had rather more dignity than such a teenager of today would have. Her acting was convincing, she had a good stage presence, and was just right for the part. The only criticism I could give would be that at times she could have shown slightly more modulation and range of tone in her voice.

The famous part of Mrs Malaprop, Lydia's aunt, with her malapropisms and blind pretensions to being something of a *femme fatale*, egged on by Lydia's maid Lucy (well played Rowena Lennon) who wishes to make some financial gain out of it, was engagingly and mischievously played by Barbara Denton. She was complemented by a very excellent performance from Colin Burnie as the ruthless and misogynistic Sir Anthony Absolute, father of our hero Jack Absolute (played by Alistair Nunn). Barbara Denton and Colin Burnie together showed themselves at their very best, both giving exciting and humorous performances.



Grace Mountain and Holly Jones

Alistair Nunn as Jack – who is also the more common and less suitable Beverley, and thus more attractive to her in that guise – gave a very good, positive performance, making full use of his very



Photos: Steve Whitaker

fine speaking voice. I very much liked the way in which he switched to being common, with a common accent, when in the character of Beverley, wooing Lydia.

Bill Moulford gave a very humorous and loveable performance as Bob Acres, Lydia's country cousin, also a contender for Lydia's hand in marriage but summarily pushed aside by Mrs Malaprop when she sees one who is wealthier and of higher social standing in the person of Sir Anthony Absolute's son. He gave an amusing performance as a good-natured clown, rather allowing himself to be pushed around by his friends.



Alistair Nunn, Bill Moulford and Alex Rogers

Peter Green looked just the part for Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and gave a very good impression of the engaging Irish rogue.

Grace Mountain as the sincere and honourable Julia Melville and Alex Rogers as the tiresomely capricious Faulkland complemented each other very well in good performances. Neither one is destined to be all that happy with the other, as Faulkland seems to enjoy finding any excuse to make his life, and that of his unfortunate fiancée, a complicated and tortuous drama.

Rowena Lennon gave a good characterisation of Lucy, Lydia Languish's roguish and opportunistic Lady in Waiting, leading a double game between Lydia and her Aunt, and turning out in the end to be a little too clever for her own good, as such characters often do.

Ben Baxter as Fag, Ralph Hughes Watson as David and Tim Bearder as Thomas the Coachman all gave good performances.

I found this to be a very lively and excellent production, with very well-chosen casting by director Polly

Mountain. Finally, the poster design by Richard Boxall Design Associates was very excellent and eye-catching.

*Elizabeth Kirkham*

*And finally, while we're on the subject of summer shows – a correction! – The newsletter editor made certain claims concerning outdoor shows, which Guild stalwart and long-time member Freddie Madden has kindly written in to correct...*

"*MIXED DOUBLES* WAS NOT IN A GARDEN but indoors. The Guild production in 1973 was *Measure for Measure* and in New College Cloisters. Peter Oppenheimer of Christ Church College was Angelo, and I was The Duke. Malcolm Russell was Lurcio. You are right about 1968 – the Molière play (*The Prodigious Snob*) translated by Miles Malleson. I was The Philosopher, Bob Cambray was The Snob. Malcolm was not in it, but we were both in *Uncle Vanya* twice that year – he as Vanya and I as Astrov – once in Cherwell School and again in a revival at the request of the Playhouse before Christmas.

"So I think Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* was the only non-Shakespeare in a college garden – Worcester."

*Freddie Madden*

## Works In Progress

### October 2007 – Oxford Inspires

*Testament to a Trade* by The Oxford Playhouse Writers' Group, to be directed by **Verity McLellan**, 4<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at various venues around Oxfordshire (see front page!)



Howard McNair; Peter Dandy; Marlon Williams

Our community- flavoured play depicting the horrors of the slavery trade (and its continued foul presence in modern times), and some of

Photos: Bill Moulford



the links that may be found right here in Oxfordshire, is about to hit venues across the county, coinciding with October as Black History month. This multi-layered, multi-media and multi-source piece – from research, writing, improvisation and workshops – is packed with powerful acting and live music throughout. We've just completed a mammoth assembly rehearsal, which also served to iron out technical issues and hone the focus for all involved.



Ria Bamisile

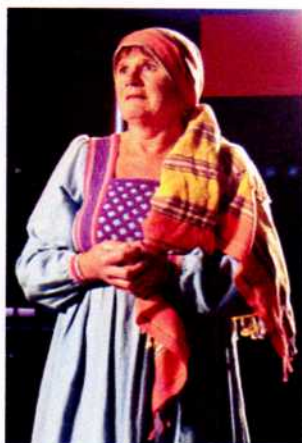


Keisha Watson

Now we're ready to roll, kicking off in the Burton Taylor and continuing to Didcot, Wantage, Charlbury and East Oxford. Each show will be followed by a discussion of the issues with the cast and director, and invited guests from organisations such as Amnesty International, and promises to be a fascinating exploration of slavery in both historical and modern guises – so please do come and see the show!



Kaylee Corcoran



Judith Fantozzi

#### THE ENSEMBLE CAST:

**Keisha Watson, Ria Bamisile, Judith Fantozzi, Kaylee Corcoran, Hannah Wilson, Howard McNair, Peter Dandy, Marlon Williams, Ferris Chitsike**

#### CREW:

##### **Director Writers**

Verity McLellan  
Heather Dunmore, Joel  
Kaye, Gwilym Scourfield  
Joanna Matthews  
Nayo Butler-Puttock

##### **Stage Manager Assistant Stage Manager**

Felicity Peacock

##### **Production and publicity manager**

Stephen Scott

##### **Musical director, composer, percussion**

Ferris Chitsike

##### **Singer and composer**

Mike Ward

##### **Technical manager**

Julian Johnson, Colin  
Silvester, Nigel Copping

##### **Technical support**

Darren Cliff

##### **Filming**

Emma-jane Jones

##### **Wardrobe**

Verity Walker

##### **Wardrobe assistance**

Ralph Watson, Joe

##### **Production assistance**

Kenneway, Colin Mac-  
nee

We're currently looking for another four people to help Front-of-House at the touring venues in Didcot, Lains Barn, Charlbury and Cowley Road – if you would be interested in helping out please do contact Joanna at the details on the back page...



Music composed and performed by Stephen Scott

#### December 2007

*The Dresser* by Ronald Harwood, to be directed by **Sue Baxter**, 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007, Old Fire Station Studio Theatre.

Following our three auditions for the Christmas show, we've managed to assemble most of the cast for the show with some familiar faces and some actors new to the Guild, and we have most of the all-important crew as well. However, we are looking for a Stage Manager; someone with either existing experience, or



someone who has assisted before and is enthusiastic to be trained up. We have two ASMs in place who can attend some rehearsals and will be sorting out props, but the Stage Manager will have to attend some rehearsals (in a rota with the ASMs), ensure all the blocking, sound, and light effects are recorded, and then run the show during performances.

Rehearsals started in earnest from 1st October and, and run three times per week until the production opens. If you would like to take on the stage management role, or could recommend someone, please do contact Joanna at the details on the back page. We welcome people new to OTG or existing members!

We are also looking to cast the three male roles of Thornton, Kent and A Knight – see the web site for further details and contact Joanna at the details at the back page if you are interested in playing any of these parts.

#### CAST:

<b>Sir</b>	Colin Burnie
<b>Her Ladyship</b>	Gloria Deacon
<b>Madge</b>	Helen Taylor
<b>Irene</b>	Alice Fearn
<b>Norman</b>	Alex Rogers
<b>Oxenby</b>	Philip Cotterill
<b>Gloucester</b>	Matthew Fell
<b>Albany</b>	Julian Johnson

#### CREW:

<b>Director</b>	Sue Baxter
<b>Production manager</b>	Joanna Matthews
<b>Stage manager</b>	TBD
<b>Deputy stage managers</b>	Carrie Dodd; Zoe Simmons
<b>Properties</b>	Zoe Simmons
<b>Technical manager</b>	TBD
<b>Lighting design</b>	TBD
<b>Stage design</b>	Jimmy Keene
<b>Production support</b>	Julian Johnson
<b>Lighting operation</b>	Graham Lockey
<b>Sound</b>	TBD
<b>Costumes, make-up</b>	TBD
<b>Costume assistants</b>	Verity Walker
<b>Publicity</b>	Ralph Watson, Kathryn Nicholls
<b>Poster design</b>	Stuart McLellan

### Easter 2008

*Plaza Suite* by Neil Simon, to be directed by **Janet Bolam**, April 2008, The Oxford Playhouse.

Late-breaking news for next year, as we base-

line Neil Simon's sparkling comedy of the human condition for the Playhouse – exact week of April yet to be finalised! Watch this space for more news as we get it...

### Summer 2008

If you would be interested in directing Oxford Theatre Guild's summer outdoor production in July 2008, please start thinking about putting forward a play for consideration.

It could be Shakespeare - but it doesn't have to be! This year's choice of *The Rivals* proved popular with those punters who braved the weather. Trinity College has kindly agreed to let us use their gardens again for the last 2 weeks in July.

The deadline for submitting proposals for consideration by OTG Committee is 24<sup>th</sup> October 2007, with discussion of the proposals at the meeting on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, to which the proposing directors will be invited.

Please have a look at the guidelines reprinted below on what to include in your proposal – for example, why you want to do the play, how it would appeal to audiences who are often tourists in Oxford, etc.

Written submissions should be emailed to Chair Gareth Morris or the Treasurer Bill Moulford at the details on the back page by 24<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

#### Directions for Directors

HERE ARE SOME BASIC GUIDELINES FOR directors and for those who are thinking about directing. Hopefully, it will make certain areas clearer without taking away any creative scope. The Committee looks forward to hearing your proposals as soon as possible as part of our advance planning...

#### First Stage

You have a play you want to direct and have some ideas how it is going to look. When you tell us that you're willing to direct and what you want to direct, we'll arrange for a little presentation to be made at an appropriate committee meeting. This is not a scary flip-chart-and-overhead style of presentation, but a fairly informal discussion of the major aspects of the bid. Here's what we're looking for:

#### Points to Cover in Your Presentation

1. Why you have selected this script



2. How you intend to treat the play (e.g. will it be a modern dress Shakespeare? Will it be in the round? Does it have a specific setting?..)
3. Whether there are any rights issues (e.g. if the RSC has placed a ban on all other productions within 100 miles of London and Stratford)
4. Size and mix of cast (especially whether children are involved – there are a number of legal issues concerning the involvement of under-16s in plays)
5. Specific skill requirements i.e. singing, dancing, live music, stage fighting, dialogue coaching, etc.
6. Technical requirements – lighting, music, sound effects, explosions, trap-doors, flying wires, animal wrangling, animatronics, etc.

Some additional items you might like to think about

7. What the key selling points are
8. Suggested audition dates
9. Suggested rehearsal start date

Here are some guidelines about venue:

Venue Definitions

**Easter:** the Oxford Playhouse – to cover the large budget risk, the play really ought to be commercially viable e.g. a well known playwright or play, and if it is a study text, it's even more useful. We'll try to publish a suggested selection as drawn from examining board web sites in GN. However, the selection does have to be accepted by the Playhouse, so we normally take at least two choices.

**SUMMER:** *an Oxford College Garden, open-air – from a traditional point of view, this production will most likely be Shakespeare. We also have some flexibility concerning seating arrangements, since the entire venue is to be built from scratch.*

**Autumn:** in a small alternative venue – an opportunity for a more “adventurous” script. We understand that there won't be much return on costs, so it depends on our financial state, i.e. should it rain all through summer and wipe out the garden show, we may not be able to afford anything too complex. This show is also an opportunity for new writing, new crew and new actors if possible, and the director would be asked to recruit their own production team from people who don't usually get involved on this side of production. In this way it doesn't add to the work of those who of-

ten cover the production technical or management aspects, and gives others a chance to take on something different!

**Christmas:** the Old Fire Station Theatre – this can be a seasonally appropriate choice, either from tradition or from content, but all offers will be considered.

When the committee has made a selection, there are a few immediate activities required:

Second Stage

The publicity machine needs to be fed straight away, so we'll need text and an image for advance publicity no later than two weeks after you get the go-ahead.

The production team is almost as important – at this stage, you will need a publicity manager, a production manager and potentially a stage manager as well. Note that the committee will always help getting the production team together, but if you can start with some team members it is greatly appreciated!

A director will also be asked to sign up to a director's agreement:

Director's Agreement

The Director is responsible for:

1. Committing to audition dates
2. Casting according to OTG policy (i.e. no pre-casting)
3. Working and communicating with the production team to keep to deadlines.
4. Drawing up a rehearsal schedule and giving it to the Production Manager at the earliest opportunity
5. Advising set, lighting, choreography, music and sound effects etc. with the Production Team and agreeing the final designs
6. Providing text for the programme as required by the Production Manager
7. Encouraging maximum cast attendance for get-in and get-out via the production team
8. Attending production meetings as required
9. Working with the Production Team to ensure all lighting, music, choreography and sound effects etc. are running smoothly
10. Ensuring all communication goes through the Production Manager.
11. Ensuring that the Committee gets final approval on poster and flyer design. Note that the Committee will commission all poster and



flyer designs against the standard specification.

All Guild productions depend on a team effort requiring your leadership and support, bearing in mind that we are a voluntary organisation. That is in no way to say that you would be on your own – you can expect the maximum support from the committee. After all, we have *exactly* the same goal: to produce a fantastic show to the best of our abilities that is as much fun as possible for all involved.

Now, you may go through this process but not be chosen. We will always tell you the reason, and keep your submission on file, so that it should be easier if you would like to resubmit later on.

## Committee News

**Cabinet reshuffle news:** it's been a busy time in the hallowed halls of the Guild committee these past months, as we say thanks and goodbye to **Sarah O'Connor** who is starting a brand new job in Tipperary, and many thanks and goodbye to **Diana Kilburn**. Meanwhile, we're pleased to welcome **Ralph Watson** to the team...

## Workshop Round-Up

*Would you like to expand your theatrical skills?* Workshops on Theatre (WOT) are organised about 8 times a year by the WOT committee, avoiding the summer and Christmas periods. the present WOT committee members are:

- Susi Dalton – The Panto Players, Southmoor; Kingston Bagpuize Drama Group
- Barbara Douglas – Domino Players; Kingston Bagpuize Drama Group
- Bettina Hughes – Phoenix Drama Group, Didcot
- Sue Haffenden – Charlbury ADS
- Julie Kedward – Old Gaol Theatre Company
- Elizabeth Kirkham – St Peters Players; OTG
- Sheila McKean – Domino Players; OTG
- Felicity Peacock – OTG
- Mike Westwood – Charlbury ADS

All one-day WOT workshops cost £15 for OTG or ODN members (concessions £12). Booking forms are emailed to all OTG members on our email list

about 5 to 6 weeks before each workshop: if you require a posted copy, please contact Felicity.

**WOT is supported by OTG and ODN**

**SHAKESPEARE FOR THE NERVOUS (and the not-so-nervous):** to be led by Robert Clare, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at Sandhills Community Hall, Oxford. Booking form enclosed!

### E-MAIL LIST

If you're not on the Guild e-mailing list and would like to receive notification by email of events, requests for actors from other groups, or special offers, etc, please e-mail Felicity (details on the back page) and ask to be added to the email list. If you currently receive such emails and would prefer not to, please let Felicity know and your name will immediately be removed from the list.

### REMINDER: GUILD GRANTS FOR WORKSHOPS

If you want to improve your skills in a particular technical area, you can apply for a grant to cover the cost of the workshop fee. It would be particularly useful to extend the number of members able to help with lighting, sound or make-up, so if you are interested please contact Felicity Peacock, our Workshops Rep (details on the back page). This applies to outside workshops as well as those run by WOT; grant application forms are available from the Treasurer – details on the back page!

## Future Attractions

*For more information on future attractions, see the ODN newsletter, or visit the ODN web site*

**Oxford Theatre Guild / Oxford Playhouse / Oxfordshire Records Office:** *Testament to a Trade*, by Heather Dunmore, Joel Kaye and Gwilym Scourfield. Performances followed by a discussion. All shows at 7:30 pm: Burton Taylor Theatre, 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October (with a matinee at 2:30 pm on the 6<sup>th</sup>); Lains Barn, 10<sup>th</sup> October; Northbourne Centre, Didcot 11<sup>th</sup> October; Friends' Meeting House, Charlbury, 12<sup>th</sup> October; East Oxford Community Centre, 13<sup>th</sup> October. Tickets £5 (£4 concessions) – available from Tickets Oxford (01865 305305) except Lains Barn (01235 760176).

**Sinodun Players:** *Habeus Corpus* by Alan Bennett; The Corn Exchange, Wallingford; 17<sup>th</sup> to



20<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

**Banbury Cross Players:** *Robinson Crusoe and the Pirates* by Paul Reakes; The Mill Theatre, Spiceball Park, Banbury; 22<sup>nd</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

**Sinodun Players:** *Art* by Yasmina Reza; The Corn Exchange, Wallingford; 29<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

**Oxford Theatre Guild:** *The Dresser*, by Ronald Harwood; The Old Fire Station Studio Theatre, Oxford; 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007, 7.30 pm (matinee Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 2:30 pm). Tickets via the OFS: 01865 297170, or on-line from [www.livenation.com](http://www.livenation.com).

**Tomahawk Theatre Company:** *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare; The Old Fire Station Studio Theatre, Oxford, 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

**Banbury Cross Players:** *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* by Constance Cox; The Mill Theatre, Spiceball Park, Banbury; 27<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

**Banbury Cross Players:** *Breaking the Code* by Hugh Whitemore; The Mill Theatre, Spiceball Park, Banbury; 30<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008.

**Banbury Cross Players:** *Men of the World* by John Godber; The Mill Theatre, Spiceball Park, Banbury; 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008.



## THE GUILD COMMITTEE, 2007 – 2008

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ceive in a generous quantities across the awe-inspiring gulf of blank pages that re-appears when it's time for a new circular... *See you next issue!*

*The Oxford Theatre Guild* is a registered charity, number 294056. *Guild News* is published as often as possible, a phrase which, like "best endeavours", means "don't get your hopes up". Last issue's picture of a penguin proved so popular (or at least, no-one wrote in to complain) that we're carrying on this brand new ancient tradition with a picture of a rhinoceros. Next time – the Beast of Bodmin (we just have to complete the negotiations with his agent).



A rhino, yesterday.

*So that's it for whatever flash-in-the-pan summer there might have been...* and the time for mists are mellow fruitfulness is upon us once again. Bramble bushes were heaving with fruit, apples tree were bowed down with their burden, and my ornamental cherry tree deposited at least four tonnes of inedible ornamental cherries all over the back garden. So in this spirit of abundance, why not harvest tales of theatre and drama, boil 'em up in a pan with an equivalent weight of sugar and a tad of pectin to make 'em set, bottle 'em with a gingham doily over the top and post 'em to me here at Guild News? I promise to spread all that I re-