



TIME TO MAKE A RESERVATION

City Break

THE GUILD'S SHOW FOR 2008 at the Oxford Playhouse is Neil Simon's comedy of crises, *Plaza Suite*. As is normal for this stage of the proceedings things are fairly powering along, with rehearsals barrelling by, sets in full flow of construction, costumes being collated and created, and accents being honed to perfection. The publicity machine is in full swing too – and this is where you can help as well, firstly by coming to see this rip-roaring comedy, and secondly by getting everyone else to come to see it! With all the hard work going on, it promises to be a Grand way to spend an April evening...

Summer Vacation

Meanwhile, we've now chosen this year's summer show, and it's a return to Shakespeare with *As You Like It*, and a return to Trinity College for a hat-trick. Although it's early days yet, the fabled cut-out-and-keep audition notice can be found nestling inside these hallowed pages...

SEE INSIDE FOR MORE THEATRE NEWS AND REVIEWS OF THE DRESSER...

OXFORD THEATRE GUILD

Neil Simon's

Plaza Suite

The Tony Award winning play

"If Broadway ever erects a monument to the patron saint of laughter, Neil Simon would have to be it" TIME MAGAZINE

OP

OXFORDPLAYHOUSE
15-19 April at 7.30pm
Saturday matinee 2.30pm
BOX OFFICE: 01865 305305
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

Oxford Playhouse StageCard members
50% off Tuesday 15 April

www.oxfordtheatreguild.com
Registered Charity No. 274024

Review Record

December 2007

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



Gloria Deacon and Alex Rogers

The Daily Information

THE DRESSER HAS CERTAINLY been a popular play for amateur groups in Oxfordshire this year - this production is the third to hit the stage in 2007. It is easy to see why: it has often been referred to as a 'love letter to the theatre' - featuring, as it does, the intimate lives of a small scale Shakespearean touring company struggling with a production of *King Lear* amidst the turmoil of the Second World War. Central to the action is the relationship between 'Sir', an actor-manager in the grand tradition, and Norman, his dresser of some ten years. The play opens with 'Sir' having gone missing and follows the action through what turns out to be his final performance as *Lear*.

The most memorable scenes of the play occur in the second half as we, the audience, are shown the backstage chaos as the performance is going on. Entrances being missed, sound effects being created and general theatrical mayhem - all creating great comic effect. This is nicely counterpointed by the ultimately tragic happenings in 'Sir's dressing room.

There can be no doubt that Oxford Theatre Guild's production, under the careful watch of Sue Baxter, is highly polished. The set is, perhaps, the best I have seen in the OFS Studio - creating a real sense of place and period. The props and costumes, on the whole, are well chosen. I was also delighted to see real tea being

made on stage! The lighting and sound worked well, seamlessly flowing with and complementing the action.

This play rests on its two central performances. Colin Burnie as 'Sir' gives a nuanced portrayal of a man struggling to come to terms with his own mortality, ranging through the full seven ages of man eliciting sympathy and smiles in equal measure. He is obviously at home in the bombastic passages where he is at his most theatrical, but he is equally able to show the more vulnerable side to 'Sir's character. (I have seen Colin perform on a number of occasions now, and I have to say that this is the best to date.) Opposite Burnie is Alexander Rogers as Norman. It is clear that he has spent a lot of time and effort in creating the character, peppering his delivery with verbal and physical tics and mannerisms. He shows Norman as a multi-faceted person, conveying both his vicious side and the more flamboyant aspects of the character. Whilst this is, for the main part, successful, I feel that he does not quite integrate the technical skill of his portrayal with the character as conceived by the author. I do not want this to be seen as a major criticism - it is not. However, it feels to me that he may require a little more time to settle into the role - something that the rest of the week will allow him to do.



Colin Burnie, Alex Rogers and Helen Taylor

The rest of the cast work well with the more limited scope they are given by the script. Gloria Deacon is touching as 'Her Ladyship', bringing the right combination of steely determination and fragility to the role. Credit must also go to the three actors who never appear on stage but

whose voices we hear - such dedication is to be applauded.

All in all, this is a good production of a good play. It shows that Oxford Theatre Guild is on top form and able to compete with the best that the county has to offer. I am sure you will be royally entertained.

Simon Tavener



Colin Burnie and Alex Rogers

The Oxford Times

NOW KNOWN FOR PENNING award-winning screenplays - and, indeed, for writing this play - Ronald Harwood used to be a 'dresser' to the stars. He knew what it was like to be subjugated to every whim and desire of theatre's leading men. He used these experiences to inform this 1980 drama about someone in his former position.



Peter Roberts and Colin Burnie

Set over one night in an unnamed provincial town in Blitz-era England, the piece tracks the progress of that evening's performance of *King Lear*. The eponymous lead is played by "Sir" (Colin Burnie), a cantankerous, yet loveable, old curmudgeon getting older disgracefully. He is ably assisted by brandy-nipping Norman (Alexander Rogers), who is fiercely protective of his master. Without Norman, "Sir" would have been written off as a has-been. For better or for worse, he pleads and cajoles the ageing actor on to the stage night after night. It becomes increasingly apparent, however, that there are to be terrible consequences for this increasingly co-dependent relationship.

The Dresser is essentially about duplicity and performance, on and off stage. Thematically, it's teasingly tangled - is the theatre a metaphor for the co-dependence and usury between the two leads, or vice versa? Harwood lulls the audience into a false sense of security with a warm, witty and nostalgic first half, before exposing the character's melancholy, loneliness and fruitless passions in the second half.



Gloria Deacon and Helen Taylor

The Oxford Theatre Guild put on a fine production. Rogers's portrayal of Norman is full of nervous energy, while Burnie's "Sir" is equal parts vainglory and misery. The supporting cast are equally strong, with Helen Taylor's slightly underwritten role of stage manager Madge being particularly memorable. Director Sue Baxter uses the modest stage space well, especially during scenes that require action to take place outside the central location of the dressing room.

If there are faults, they are with the play; on occasion the tone veers too suddenly, and Harwood tends to overwrite some of his dialogue, with a

little too much self-conscious quoting from Shakespeare. However, otherwise this is a fine production of an intelligent, entertaining play. It continues until tomorrow evening at the OFS Studio.

James Benefield



Alex Rogers and Philip Cotterill

We also received the following e-mail...

"Wow! What a fascinating production. The acting, direction and staging was of a very, very high standard. I have spoken to Alex on his first-class performance but would like to pass on my congrats to the team. During the interval I spoke to Sue the director and thanked her for the show.

"The OFS is a small and has a very intimate atmosphere – it struck me that an excellent show for the OFS would be *Jeffrey Bernard is Unwell*... perhaps you might consider it...

Mike Huntington



Alice Fearn

CAST:

*Sir
Her Ladyship
Norman*

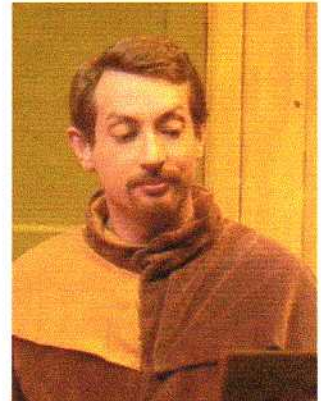
Colin Burnie
Gloria Deacon
Alex Rogers

*Madge
Oxenby
Irene
Thornton
Kent
Gloucester
Albany*

Helen Taylor
Philip Cotterill
Alice Fearn
Peter Roberts
Marc Ives
Matthew Fell
Julian Johnson



Peter Roberts



Philip Cotterill

CREW:

*Director
Production manager
Stage manager
Deputy stage managers
Properties
Lighting design
Stage design
Set production
Set builders*

*Set painting
Lighting operation
Sound design
Sound operation
Costumes, make-up*

Costume assistants

*Publicity
Poster design
Production support*

Sue Baxter
Joanna Matthews
Nayo Butler-Puttock
Carrie Dodd; Zoe Simmons
Zoe Simmons
Colin Silvester
Jimmy Keene
Jimmy Keene; David Long
Louis Spiteri; Brian Plater; Gareth Morris
Roberta Catizone
Graham Lockey
Julian Johnson
Fiona Sinclair
Emma-jane Jones; Joanna Matthews
Carrie Dodd; Verity Walker; Sue Tibbles
Ralph Watson
Stuart McLellan
Julian Johnson



Colin Burnie and Alex Rogers

Works In Progress

Easter 2008

Plaza Suite by Neil Simon, to be directed by **Janet Bolam**, 15th to 19th April 2008, The Oxford Playhouse.

The director writes: "It's great to be working with faces familiar and new in our small cast... Rehearsals are moving on apace; so far we've been working on it as separate plays, but now we're putting them together to form the show – it'll give the cast a chance to see the whole play. To help with the American accents, we've been working with dialogue coach Richard Ryder, who has also worked with Creation Theatre company and the BBC. Meanwhile, the set is taking shape at Burcot, especially the massive hotel windows, and costumes and props are well on the way..."

Janet Bolam

CAST:

Karen Nash	Sam Knipe
Sam Nash	Simon Vail
Jean McCormack	Katherine Callison
Bellhop	Adam Potterton
Waiter	John Mansfield
Muriel Tate	Emma Way
Jesse Kiplinger	David Crewe
Norma Hubley	Cathy Oakes
Roy Hubley	Nick Quartley
Mimsey Hubley	Katherine Callison
Borden Eisler	John Mansfield

CREW:

Director	Janet Bolam
Production manager	Mary Henely Magill
Production assistance	Carrie Dodd
Stage manager	Gareth Morris
Technical manager	David Long
Stage design	Peter Ledwith
Lighting design	David Long
Set construction	David Long, Brian Plater, Gareth Morris, Louis Spiteri, Peter Ledwith
Costumes, hair and make-up	Trish Bower
Properties	Kay Richardson
Flyman	Brian Plater
Transport	Joe Kenneway, Stephen Ashworth
Publicity	Joanna Matthews, Ralph Watson
Poster design	TBI Communications

Meanwhile, if you'd like to help out backstage on the illustrious and highly esteemed Playhouse crew, please do contact Janet Bolam or Mary Henely Magill...

Summer 2008

As You Like It by William Shakespeare, to be directed by **Joe Kenneway**, 15th to 26th July 2008, Trinity College Gardens, Oxford.



The director writes: "As You Like It. As you like what? As you like who? In some ways, *As You Like It* keeps a low profile in the Shakespearean portfolio. It doesn't have quite the same atmosphere of the *Dream*, it's perhaps not quite so romantic as *Much Ado...*, and the tensions at court are as nothing to *Lear*."

"But it has the largest part for a female character in Rosalind, one of the most endearing clowns in Touchstone, one of the great comic scenes as Rosalind in male disguise teaches Orlando how to woo a woman, and among its verse are some of the most memorable lines both in instantly recognisable Shakespearean 'speeches', but also phrases that have become so commonplace we just speak them as part of our everyday language:

'All the world 's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts' – Act II, scene VII

'Can one desire too much of a good thing?' – Act IV, scene I

'True is it that we have seen better days' – Act II, Scene VII

'For ever and a day' – Act IV, scene I

'The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool' – Act V, scene I

"In short, *As You Like It* offers actors enormous scope. No matter if you consider yourself a comedian or comedienne, a dark character actor, a comic turn, a comely wench or handsome fellow, a rough diamond or a polished gem, there is a part in the play that will appeal.

"The setting of the show is largely ideal for a college garden. Its themes of nature, and man in the natural landscape, are enhanced by removing them from a black box theatre and placing them in the open air. And this year of course, we WILL have a summer to echo that when the Guild last did *As You Like It* in 1984.

"However, the court must still be represented, and one of our major design challenges will be the depiction of a material and corrupt court in contrast to life in the state of nature. Set, lighting, costume - all

have a role to play in presenting the rich tapestry of themes and moods, to simply create a show with something for everyone.

"I'm looking forward to approaching such a rich and enjoyable text with a large and varied cast of characters. As director I have thoughts on the overarching shape of the play, but a keen anticipation of what the actors and creative crew will bring to develop a fully-fleshed, richly-textured show for our audience.

"What's to like in *As You Like It*? The poetry, the comedy, the life spirit. Who's to like in *As You Like It*? Choose your character. I look forward to seeing you all at auditions!"

Joe Kenneway

As You Like It

by William Shakespeare

Auditions to be held on Tuesday 22nd, Wednesday 23rd and Monday 28th April 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at the hall of the United Reformed Church, Banbury Road, Summertown

Audition pieces are available for viewing and download from the web site: www.oxfordtheatreguild.com.

Everyone welcome! We need actors and help with design, lighting, costume, make up and stage management, etc. Actors, please come on Tuesday or Wednesday if possible, with possible re-calls on Monday...

Autumn 2008... and beyond

At recent meetings of the OTG committee we've been discussing how best to harness the talents of experienced and future directors, to develop a strong programme of productions for the coming years. To that end, we held a Directors' Forum to which all, past, current, and potential future directors were invited. Here, Georgina Ferry gives us the low-down on what happened...

WHAT IS THE COLLECTIVE TERM FOR theatrical directors? A note? A block? Whatever it is, a very large

one assembled in the Circle Bar at the Playhouse (it was serving only tea and coffee, honest) on 19th January to discuss with committee members the way forward for programming OTG productions.

The ultimate aim of the discussion was to find a way of getting some continuity and long-term planning into our programming. Currently the committee invites bids from directors for each of three or four productions per year, in specific venues. Sometimes there are many bids for a slot, sometimes none at all. Those whose bids are not accepted have to go through the whole process again the next time round, if they don't just go away disillusioned.

As the session's chairman Joe Kenneway explained, the committee would like to be able to programme a year or more ahead. Perhaps this would be possible if bids were allowed to 'lie on the table' for consideration at another date or another venue. Or perhaps the committee might proactively collect ideas for plays suitable for particular slots, which they might then invite directors to bid for.

But before we got down to considering these possibilities, Joe sounded out the assembled directors on their general experience of directing Guild shows. We reviewed the available venues, both those we use regularly and those (such as the new North Wall) that we would like to in future. Clearly the best venues cost the most: some suggested paring other parts of the budget to compensate but David Long argued that in recent history we have been good at budgeting and any losses we have made have not been too serious.

The biggest headache that emerged for directors was developing a strong core of happy, skilled and willing backstage crew. There was a general feeling that crew should be made to feel part of the production at an earlier stage, with adverts for technical support coming at the audition stage, and that more senior technical types should train up 'apprentices' who might take on more responsibility in future. Aldyth Thompson proposed that 6th formers on performing arts courses could gain their necessary practical experience in this way, as long as directors and other crew members were prepared to devote a little time to training them.

This led to a discussion of Guild membership, and whether the need to join (and pay the membership fee) might be perceived as a barrier to becoming involved in supporting productions. Should we have a fee at all? It's not very encouraging for folk who turn out at Burcot in the dead of winter to paint scenery to be told they need to pay £20 for the privilege. More opportunities to get together between productions were seen as a good thing to promote cohesion, but Felicity Peacock pointed out that play readings designed for this purpose had been poorly attended. However, the excellent turnout for the Directors' Forum suggested that perhaps other Forums for specific groups, such as production teams, might be

more successful.

Auditions can be a focus of grumblings from both directors and would-be actors. Janet Bolam had wildly differing numbers for the three Plaza Suite audition dates, and pleaded for the third to be a call-back only audition in future so that directors could see enough of the most promising performers while giving everyone else an equal chance. Anyone who can't make either of the first two dates has always been able to make a different arrangement, if the director is prepared to make the time. There is also a common belief that key roles are often effectively pre-cast. The Guild's policy is that it's perfectly acceptable for directors to invite specific people to audition, but that the roles must be given to those who give the best auditions.

Finally we got down to the problem of programming. Programming over a year or even longer gives the opportunity for more members to suggest plays for consideration – there's no reason why actors should not put forward ideas as well as directors. Ultimately the committee must make the final choice, as it has to take into account factors such as other similar productions that are on at the same time, or what plays are most appropriate for different venues. It can also try to ensure that there are regular large-cast productions (I mistily recall my Guild Playhouse debut in Candleford, which had a cast of around 30), which provide lots of opportunities for those who might not be cast in more challenging roles to share the limelight. We might also hold a Director's Showcase, so that new directors can demonstrate their ideas.

The immediate problem is that at the time of the Forum, no one had yet offered anything for the summer garden slot, though the date and venue are already fixed. Are directors put off by the threat of bad weather, or the complexity of building an outdoor theatre? David Long argued that on the model of the Globe Theatre's touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*, much simpler styles of outdoor production without stage or seating can be very effective. Last year's experiment with a non-Shakespeare production was a success (or would have been if not for the terrible weather) – should we make the same choice again, perhaps with a Dickens or Jane Austen adaptation that will catch the tourist's eye? Gerard Gould argued against, on the grounds that OTG has built up over the years a tremendous expertise in Shakespeare which could all too soon be lost. However, there is no reason why we should not do Shakespeare in the Playhouse or any other venue, and for once not have to compete with bells, car horns and drunken students to get our beautiful iambics heard.

When Joe finally asked each of us, without much forewarning, what plays we'd like to direct he received a response that could keep the Guild going for another decade, never mind a year. A few Shake-

speares, a surprising amount of Ibsen, but most of the suggestions were for modern plays that were all potential audience pleasers in the right venue. Which left in the air the question why, if all these directors are burning to direct all these plays, is there a problem?

Georgina Ferry has directed The Real Inspector Hound and co-directed Arcadia for OTG, Henry V and Much Ado About Nothing for the Abbey Shakespeare Players, and at least six operas for the Anonymous Singers.

Historical Notes

Jack Scarr, one of the founding members of the Guild, and who sadly passed away a couple of years ago, wrote an article in 1978 (with a footnote in 1988) on the genesis of the Guild in its early post-war years – a sort of Rock Family Tree for theatre, if you will. Here, we reproduce the content to show where we came from. Many thanks to Jack's son Peter Scarr for the scans!

Written 34 years later...

The Oxford Council for Drama and Music was formed in 1947 with the aim of encouraging drama and music in Oxford. The music section never really got off the ground, so some years later the name was changed to the City of Oxford Theatre Guild.

One of the first activities organised by the OCDM was a one-act play festival under the auspices of the British Drama League. The first took place at the Clarendon Press Institute, Walton Street, in 1949. At the end of each evening, each entry was criticised by the adjudicator, who gave marks for various aspects of the production. Certificates of merit were issued for outstanding performances.

In 1953 I offered to take over the organisation of the one-act festival from Leslie Taylor, who had for six years been the OCDM secretary and had borne a heavy burden for the cause of drama. His splendid efforts were warmly appreciated.

The festivals flourished until about 1960 and then faded away. This was a pity, but to make a festival worthwhile, one needed at least six clubs to contribute. Unfortunately, the festival often clashed with the regular production of full-length plays, which most clubs felt were more worthwhile, so support for the festival fell away.

The Societies

In the years after 1945 there was a resurgence of drama clubs, the city alone counting some fifteen different groups. The OCDM was formed in order to raise funds for what was desperately needed in Oxford – a place where drama clubs could rehearse and

paint scenery, and where plays could be performed. Neither city nor university possessed such a place.

The OCDM also aimed at co-ordinating and encouraging as much as possible the activities of city groups. It issued a newsletter with information about club activities and criticisms of their latest productions. There was strong feeling that it would be better to have one large drama group instead of having all the local talent dispersed into smaller groups, but it was some time before this view gained ground.

The OCDM's one-act festivals, begun in 1949, formed the first stage of the qualifying round of the British Drama League's National Festival. Profits from these festivals went towards the fund for a new theatre. Several of the clubs, notably the Theatre Players and The Thespians, were highly commended by the adjudicators for their productions.

In 1953, The Thespians, who had started in 1945, amalgamated with the City of Oxford Drama Club, whose origins dated as far back as 1907. In the 1959 one-act festival, this club, with Daphne Levens's production of Act II of *The Unquiet Spirit*, reached the national final when the play was performed at the Scala Theatre, London, but narrowly defeated.

The CoDC then reached the national final for four years in succession and finally won with their production of *The Bald Prima Donna*. The two constants in these years were Malcolm Russell as leading actor, and Daphne Levens as producer.

In 1951 when the Festival of Britain was organised, the Oxford societies united for a joint production of *The Alchemist*, directed by Robert Levens in the hall of Merton College. This was such a success that the idea of uniting all Oxford societies for at least one performance annually gained hold, and the Alchemist Players came into existence for this purpose. They were replaced in 1955 by the OCDM when Daphne Levens was asked by an international medical conference to mount an afternoon entertainment in Worcester College gardens. This conference was composed of gynaecologists, so Daphne promptly offered a production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This was accepted and £100 offered towards expenses.

The Merry Wives won wide praise, and equally importantly, it brought in a much-needed profit. From this sprang the idea of an annual open-air Shakespearean production in a college garden, which has proved such a successful feature of Oxford summer drama ever since. These open-air productions, and later, the annual productions at the Playhouse (something which no *small* club could ever have afforded) have been big events ever since, gaining steadily in popularity and attracting the best talents of Oxford.

In 1964, the OCDM was renamed the City of Oxford Theatre Guild, which was felt to be more appropri-

ate as the OCDM's activities by that time had become almost exclusively concerned with drama. In the years that followed most of the city's societies joined forces with the Guild, although a few continued on their own.

This brief note does not attempt to assess the work done by many of the city's societies, for example, the Theatre Players, who were an outstanding local society that produced a great deal of talent, including Ronnie Barker, who later moved to the Playhouse before becoming nationally famous on TV, and their gifted producer Margarethe Bayliss, who was much loved and whose untimely death in 1953 was mourned by us all. *Jack R Scarr, 6th August 1978*

Committee News

It's AGM time again, when all matters Guild will be discussed and debated – the open forum where YOU, the members, can tell US, the committee, exactly what you think of us and the way we run OTG.

This year's AGM will be held at our favourite haunt – the Summertown URC, at 7.30 pm on 30th April 2008. It's the easiest time of the year to hear how the Guild has performed over the past reporting period, and to raise all those sticky questions about funding, shows, casting, auditions, membership fees, directing and a host of other issues.

This year's AGM will see the departure from committee of secretary **Felicity Peacock**, treasurer and membership secretary **Bill Moulford** (who also boils the pot that coughs up issues of Guild News once in a blue moon), and **Ralph Watson**. This opens up opportunities to YOU, the membership, to get involved at *grass roots level* – and there are big changes and big times ahead for The Guild in 2008 and beyond.

Also in this year's AGM, we have policy issues to discuss – another of our policy change ideas is the withdrawal of the bursaries, to be phased out over this year for complete withdrawal by 2009. The bursaries were instigated in 2001, and have since benefited eleven students for drama schools and workshops, but now we feel it's time for the membership to consider other ways of using any spare money from returns on plays. One of these ways is currently in process by **Joe Kenneway** – collaboration with the Pegasus Theatre as a future venue. And the Pegasus will be sending a guest speaker to the AGM to talk about their development programme.

All in all, it's one of the most important AGMs we've had for a while, so we really, *really* hope to see you there!

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.

HAIR AND WIGS FOR THE STAGE: to be led by Sue Wigglesworth, Sunday 27th April 2008 at Grove Village Hall, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. We've arranged for experienced freelance theatrical wig mistress and make-up artist Sue Wigglesworth to hold another workshop, this time concentrating on dressing hairpieces and wigs and how to fix them so that they look like real hair. The fee is just £10 for ODN / OTG members (and those in ODN-affiliated groups), with £8 concessions. For non-members, the fee is £16. Payment is due with your booking form (included on the back page of this issue of GN), which should be sent to Sheila McKean as soon as possible - this is likely to be a popular workshop!

WOT is supported by OTG and ODN

The WOT Committee is planning workshops on Street Theatre and on Directing, and in the autumn, another "Shakespeare Unpicked" with Rob Clare. Comments and ideas from OTG members are welcome!

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.

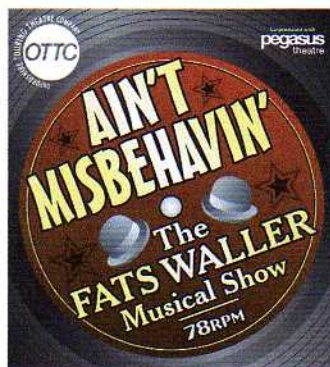
REMINDER: GUILD GRANTS FOR WORKSHOPS

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

Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company: *Ain't Misbehavin'* by Murray Horwitz, Richard Maltby



Jr and Fats Waller; venues around Oxfordshire and beyond, 5th March to 12th April around Oxfordshire and beyond... The sexy, sultry, sassy musical soul of 1930s Harlem lives on in this finger-snapping, toe-tapping musical revue. *Unmissable!*

For tour details visit www.ottc.org.uk or call 01865 249444.

Abingdon Operatic Society: *The Wizard of Oz* by L Frank Baum; Amey Theatre, Abingdon School Arts Centre, 31st March to 5th April 2008 at 7.30 pm with a matinee on Saturday 5th April 2008 at 2.30 pm; Ticketline 01235 834383, or visit www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk for more details.

Sinodun Players: *Private Fears in Public Places* by Alan Ayckbourn; The Corn Exchange, Wallingford, 31st March to 5th April 2008 at 7.45 pm; Ticketline 01491 825000.

Old Gaol Theatre Club: *The Constant Wife* by W Somerset Maugham; The Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, 2nd to 5th April 2008 at 8.00 pm; Ticketline 01235 525131 or Frugal Food (01235 522239).

St Peter's Players, Wolvercote: *Dame Agatha's Greatest Case* by Robert Sheppard – a spoof country house musical mystery murder thriller; Wolvercote Village Hall, 2nd to 5th April 2008 at 7.30 pm; tickets £7 adults and £5 senior citizens and children; box office 01865 556120 or 01865

725186, or call in at The Post Box, Lower Wolvercote.

Oxford Impro: *The Improfessors* (as part of the Oxford Fringe Festival); The Burton Taylor Theatre, Oxford, 3rd and 4th April 2008 at 9.30 pm; additionally, an improvisation workshop will be held at the Oxford Playhouse on the 2nd April 2008, to focus on the benefits improvisation can have away from the stage... For more details, or to book tickets, please visit www.oxfordimpro.co.uk.

Chinnor Musical Theatre: *The Pajama Game* by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross; Wheatley Park School, 15th to 19th April 2008; Ticketline 07983 666314, or visit www.chinnormusicaltheatre.org.uk for more details.

Woodstock Players: *The Final Twist* by Ken Whitmore and Alfred Bradley; Marlborough Enterprise Centre, Woodstock, 16th to 18th March 2008 at 8.00 pm; tickets available from Dulcies Sweet Shop in the Woodstock High Street, or via 01993 811715.

Abingdon Drama Club: *Separate Tables* by Terence Rattigan; The Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, 16th to 19th April 2008; Ticketline 01235 524538 or The Bookstore, Abingdon Precinct.

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

Sinodun Players: *Dangerous Corner* by J B Priestley; The Corn Exchange, Wallingford, 4th to 7th June 2008 at 7.45 pm; Ticketline 01491 825000.

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



THE GUILD COMMITTEE, 2007 – 2008

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And so we reach the end... This will be the last GN you receive with yours truly at the helm – the next issue will be produced by a brand new editor, possibly with more up-to-date word-processing software. It's been an interesting nine years (yes, *nine* years, give or take a hiatus or two), and the articles and snippets have literally flooded in for every issue. All right, they haven't. But wouldn't it be nice to welcome the new editor with an over-stuffed inbox of theatre news, stories, articles, opinions, letters, brickbats, photos and rough sketches on napkins? Go on, you know you want to... **Byeeee!**

The Oxford Theatre Guild is a registered charity, number 294056. *Guild News* is published for the very last time from GN Towers, which is now being bulldozed to make way for an international business training centre. Readers with exceptionally long memories will recall that at the end of 2006, Bob the manservant and I were fruitlessly investigating space-time folds to find an alternate reality where Lizard Men from Ganymede hadn't taken over the old homestead. Well, big business has succeeded where we failed, after Osbert the gardener's over-enthusiastic tree-stump removal revealed an extensive flannel mine beneath the estate. Flannel is essential for developing business techniques and processes, and GN owner Lord Sock, whose fortunes had been much diminished in the recent crash of the prime mortgage market (a uniquely pointless practice, in which financial institutions will only lend sums of money that are divisible by themselves and one), immediately saw the chance to turn flannel into money, as all good business men do. The Lizard Men and their Queen were gone within a day, offered lucrative film and TV contracts from the media wing of Lord Sock's enterprises; unfortunately, the rest of us from GN Towers were gone the next day, although Bob has been very well pensioned off and the rest of the staff have been allocated new jobs at the conference centre. Meanwhile, Lord Sock could find no particular position for me, despite my degree in Mesopotamian pottery and high-school certificate in raffia-work, and a small severance package was proposed. And so it is that I am now the proud owner of a nicely restored VW camper van running on bio-fuel, in which I intend to live while investigating the myriad space-time folds around the grounds, and the multiplicity of amateur theatre possibilities within. I may return some day to stun an incredulous world with news of my discoveries. In fact, given the physics around here, I may already have done so a few hundred years ago. Toodle-oo!