

## DIARY DATES

 A Ghost Story Fledglings DNA	 From the Chaos	 Bull	 The wind in the willows
20 - 21 - 22 May 2021	10 - 11 June 2021	29 June - 3 July 2021	8 - 11 July 2021

## ART DIRECTOR'S BLOO

So-o-o-o after over a year of lockdown, kickdown and staying at home catching up with stroking the cat - things are beginning to open-up again!! Oh my golly-gosh ,I hear you say (do people still say that?). Yes the QMT is wiping the sleepy-dust from its eyes and we are open once again from May 17th . Groups of 6 adults can from that date meet at the QMT, moving rehearsals from online to on-live. It'll be wonderful to be together again, won't it?

We have arranged a strong programme of events to get the place up and running throughout the summer of 2021:

- Thurs 20th – Sat 22nd May – Youth Theatre shows: DNA, Fledgeling and A Ghost Story
- Thurs 10th – Fri 11th June – BP Juniors show: From the Chaos
- Tues 29th June – Sat 3rd July – Bull , directed by Maisie Brooker
- Thurs 8th – Sunday 11th July – The Wind in the Willows, directed Sam Powell
- Thurs 29th – Sat 31st July – A Midsummer Night's Dream, Performed in the Dell, Woodside Open Air Theatre as part of the Hitchin Festival

We have a whole new season booked, not just for this summer but from August onwards too. So there is lots of opportunity to act and help the theatre thrive in the months ahead.

We'd like to get you going immediately so we are casting "A Midsummer Nights Dream" on Zoom. Catch the audition notice in this newsletter.

Please, please, please come and support our work – we not only need actors but front of house (FOH) staff, coffee shop, technicians and backstage people not only to run shows but to build sets and run the theatre. It takes a lot of volunteers to make a theatre work and I hope we can rely on not only our existing members but many new people to join us too so that the QMT goes from strength to strength.

I know the last year has been a uniquely stressful time for all of us. But, do you know, there is strong correlation between being happy and feeling creative and that is something we really can offer here at the QMT. When the Youth Theatre came back into the QMT recently they were so excited they said over and over: 'this is just where we want to be' (an unlikely story but true!). I want all of us to feel that same joy and excitement as well. See you soon!!

*Rory Reynolds*



The Dell 's opening performance in 1951 was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when the Bancroft Players were just 6 years old. This July, in our 76th year, we are getting to ready to perform the same play again at the open air as part of the Hitchin festival. Read more ...

## COMING UP AT THE QMT:

### DNA, FLEDGLINGS & A GHOST STORY

- ◆ **DNA** – by Dennis Kelly—directed by Katie Milward (Thursday & Saturday)
- ◆ **Fledglings** – by —by Tamsin Daisy Rees—directed by Jenny Wall (Friday & Saturday)
- ◆ **A Ghost Story** –written & directed by Rory Reynolds (Thursday & Friday)

**May 20-22—MAIN THEATRE**

We are proud that our youth Theatre will open the summer season with 3 brilliant plays performed you Big Spirit Youth Theatre. From Thursday to Saturday, you can enjoy 2 of the 50 minute plays so book your two tickets so you don't miss out. Tickets £5.

[Read more in our newsletter and book on our QMT web page](#)

*(no bar)*



### FROM THE CHAOS

Written & Directed by Claudia O'Connell

**June 10-11 —MAIN THEATRE**



Inspired by the Greek myths of Mount Olympus, Zeus, Hera and the relationship between the Gods and Mankind.

It tells us of the creation of the Earth and the disruption caused by the elements upon it.

[More information can be found in our next news letter](#)

*(no bar)*



### BULL

Written by Mike Bartlett

Directed by Maisy Brooker



**June 29 - July 3 —QMT SUDIO PRODUCTION AT WOODSIDE THEATRE**

Three youngish business people meet near a water cooler, waiting to hear which of them will lose her or his job. A razor sharp dark comedy about office politics and power games This award-winning play drills into the head and heart like a screwdriver.

*Bookings from 17 May.*



### THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Adapted Rosemary Bianchi

Directed by Sam Powell

**July 8-11 —MAIN THEATRE**

A wild tale about the thrill-seeking Mr Toad and his furry friends comes to life in a fantastical and fun play based on the famous book by Kenneth Grahame.

*Bookings from 17 May.*

*(no bar)*





## OPENING OUR QMT SEASON:

### 3 PLAYS BY BIG SPIRIT YOUTH THEATRE:

### DNA - FLEDGLINGS - A GHOST STORY

During the long lockdown, Big Spirit have continued to rehearse their shows online and, much more recently, at long last inside at our Theatre. The result is three fabulous Youth Theatre shows, ready to open the QMT Summer Season.

*Each of the shows are about 50 minutes long. Each night we will perform two plays so you may have to come back if you want to see all three!*

#### **DNA**

by Dennis Kelly  
directed by Katie Milward

Being part of the in-crowd can make us do cruel things. Dennis Kelly's play recalls his own school days and how he went along with things that now appal him just to be part of the gang.

#### **Fledglings**

by Tamsin Daisy Rees  
directed by Jenny Wall &  
Emma Fisher

Best friends Kelsey and Alice hang out in Kelsey's Grandad's birdwatching hide, making lists of birds and of boys they fancy. But they move into young adulthood, things start to change. A funny and touching play that explores the messiness of growing up and finding your identity.

#### **A Ghost Story**

by rory Reynolds  
directed by Rory Reynolds

In an old school, generations of children have heard whispering voices in one particular corridor. When they investigate further, they find something amazing and disturbing.

#### **Order of Plays:**

**Thursday 20 May** – A Ghost Story & DNA

**Friday 21 May** – A Ghost Story & Fledglings

**Saturday 22 May** – Fledglings & DNA

All tickets £5

Come along and support your brilliant Youth Theatre!

*Rory Reynolds*

#### **More about Big Spirit Youth theatre ...**

The Big Spirit Youth Theatre was founded in 1984 at the Queen Mother Theatre to offer actor training and performance opportunities to young people aged 14 to 18. Since then, Big Spirit (formerly known as the Bancroft Youth Theatre) has helped actors learn the skills of performance and many have gone on use their talents professionally.

Over the past few years the Big Spirit has presented several excellent productions including Shakespeare's Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet and A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as an adaptation of Oliver Sachs' book The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, Brecht's Mother Courage and a physical theatre version of Golding's The Lord of the Flies. In April 2006 Big Spirit performed Brecht's Mr Puntilla and His Servant Matti.

Big Spirit have also written a number of original productions and regularly send productions to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

# AUDITION NOTICE

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

By William Shakespeare

**Performed in the Dell as part of the Hitchin Festival on 29, 30 and 31st July 2021**

After years of petitioning the local council and through the sterling efforts of Keith Hoskins and Judy Billing, the council have recently agreed to re-launch the venue and they have asked the Bancroft Players to open the new Dell with – what else – A Midsummer Night's Dream as part of this year's Hitchin Festival.

Seventy years ago (in 1951) the Dell Theatre was opened by the then Hitchin Urban District Council (now NHDC) as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations. The Council built the theatre for what they thought may just be a one-off occasion and the show was A Midsummer Night's Dream, directed for the Bancroft Players by Maurice Keeley, a local schoolteacher. In fact, the Bancroft Players went on to use the Dell Theatre for several years into the 1960s, presenting the gamut of Shakespearean comedies. When, the QMT was built and opened in 1983, the Dell had long grown into disuse so it was left to the wonderful Rosemary Bianchi to lead the charge to get it re-opened, especially as the QMT was bang next door to the venue. And from the 1990s until about 2011 the Bancroft Players continued to use it each year.

**This year's performance will include the whole-Bancroft Players with Juniors, Big Spirit youth and the senior Society involved. To make the rehearsing easier we will rehearse in teams and each team will have an experienced director assigned.**

### Team 1 – the Court

Theseus – King of Athens  
Egeus – father of Hermia  
Hippolyta – Bride to Theseus  
Philostrate – master of revels

### Team 2 – The Lovers

Demetrius – a young swain  
Lysander – in love with Hermia  
Hermia – in love with Lysander  
Helena – in love with Demetrius

### Team 3 – the Mechanicals

Peter Quince – the troupe's director  
Bottom – a weaver who is a bit of an ass  
Snug – a joiner  
Flute – a bellows-mender

### Team 4 – The Fairy folk

Titania – Queen of the fairies  
Oberon – their King  
Puck – a mischievous sprite  
Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mustardseed and Moth – fairy folk

**So there are many adult roles to be cast, guys. We are taking a gender-neutral approach so don't be put off if you feel the wrong gender for a particular role – go for it!**

The audition pieces will be put on the BP members FaceBook page . Auditions will take place on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th of May at 8pm **via Zoom**. Zoom details will be published before the audition. Pieces can be emailed if you wish. Contact me on [bigspirittheatre@hotmail.com](mailto:bigspirittheatre@hotmail.com) and I will send them out.

Its going to be a big welcome back play for everyone so I want all of you to be part of it one way or another. Rehearsals start on Monday 17th May (first day back in the Theatre!).

As we are doing the play in modules, it will be super easy to rehearse, and you will only be called to rehearsals you are involved in with your particular team..

Rehearsals will start on Monday 17th May - full schedule to be published soon.

*Rory Reynolds*

[More information can be found online on the QMT noticeboard and the BP members FB page.](#)

## POTTED HISTORY BANCROFT PLAYERS AT THE DELL

The Bancroft Players and the Hitchin Urban District Council had worked together to design and construct an open-air theatre in the Dell at Woodside . The Bancroft Players were just 6 years old at this time. The opening performance on 24 July 1951 was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* .

The Council's official opening leaflet stated "The Bancroft Players presentation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be in a setting which would surely have delighted the author's heart".

The logistics of staging such a performance are staggering. Electricity was wired in from a junction at the top of Windmill Hill. Water was piped in and temporary closets were erected. Then all the scenery had to be carted there, tents erected for changing rooms and fires lit to drive away the insects. The birds were also a problem. The whole area, including most of the present car park area was wooded and was a rookery. The interval had to be precisely timed to coincide with the rooks coming in and settling down. No actor in the world could be heard over that din.

The weather generally was kind to the Dell although one performance had to be abandoned and the audience asked to return another night. Despite all the difficulties 7 plays were put on there, the last being in 1963.

***Extract from the Bancroft Players archive, written by Keith Crook.***



## Get Involved—Volunteers needed

*No one can do everything,  
but everyone can do something.*

**Your theatre needs more volunteers to get involved and be part of running our unique facility. Bancroft Players are one of approx. 100 theatre companies in the UK theatres to own their own facilities. Running the theatre requires many volunteers.**

Besides acting, there are other roles that are vital for running shows, for giving our audiences a great experience and to support fundraising efforts that are much needed to make our theatre thrive.

Here are just some of the roles needing to be filled urgently:



*Roles that need to take centre stage to reopen the QMT*

### Thinking of getting involved or wish to know more?

Head for the [Get Involved](#) page on the QMT website for an overview of the roles above. Other areas of the theatre such as wardrobe, bar and back-stage are also always looking for new enthusiastic people.

Contact us on [getinvolved@qmt.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@qmt.org.uk) and we will contact you to answer any questions you may have.

# QMT OPENING PLANS AND SAFETY MEASURES

The QMT is proud to opening its doors to the public from 17 May as per the roadmap. We are starting with limited audience shows end of May. If all is well, we can welcome full audiences again for our show scheduled from the end of June.

Volunteers at the QMT have worked hard to create a COVID-SECURE environment. The theatre has been certified under the See it Safely scheme by SOLT. Here are just some of the measures in place:

## Theatre safety measures

- On-line bookings**  

- Wear your mask**  

- Follow directions & one way systems**  

- Maintain social distancing**  

- Temperature checks**  

- Please bring minimal baggage & coats**  

- Wash hand frequently for 20 seconds**  

- Hand Sanitiser Stations**  

- Enhanced cleaning is taking place**  


### See it safely

#BackOnStage

in Partnership with Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre

[More information is available on our website.](#)