**Production Manager’s Report Sep 2019 - Sep 2021**

Two years ago, when we last met at the AGM, who would have known what lay ahead for us all.

It seems such a long time ago, but our 2019 - 2020 season started off with Rory Reynold’s production of The Importance of Being Earnest - a rather fabulous season opener, which was very well received by the audience, and I know the cast and crew had a great time working together on this.

Next up we had MOJO, skilfully directed by Katie Rallison - who successfully brought together the old guard and the younger “ex Big Spiriters” – mind you they’re not so young now… It was important for us on the Play Selection Group that we encouraged younger members into the BP’s and it is great to have returning Big Spiriters on board.

Our Christmas show was our first foray into proper panto, and what a foray it was. The Lovelocks who have directed many pantos in Luton, came to us with bags of talent, enthusiasm and energy, and delivered Cinderella which was a huge hit with cast, crew and audience alike – we will be welcoming them back in future.

Our final production was Davd Lester’s Macbeth – with an ambitious set design (which involved trips to Scotland), and slick direction and performances.

We had just cast Pride and Prejudice – with Brian Seal at the helm – sadly this had to be cancelled, but hopefully will appear in future.

During lockdown, even though the theatre was quiet – technical and production tidy ups took place, and I also ran (alongside Matt Gray), our weekly Member Zoom calls where we performed playlets and generally kept each other engaged during lockdown. Emma Allerton debuted her Corona Chronicles with a cast taken from the BPS. Jules produced BP Live, and we screened The Heisenberg Principal (Studio production), and streamed from our archive – Cinderella, Hamlet and The Importance of Being Earnest – there may have been others…

Sam Day was invited to direct our Christmas “Welcome back to the theatre” Christmas production of The Wind in the Willows, a fabulous adaptation by Rosemary Bianchi. Due to lockdowns we finally managed to perform this in June this year, and what a cracking show – Sam and her cast and crew’s patience is commendable, so many false starts and Sam kept everyone motivated and at the top of their game, I loved it! – thank you!

We are in rehearsal for Shirley Valentine, and we have Rory directing our Christmas show – more on this from the Artistic Director.

I would like to thank my wonderful HODs – in no particular order.

Rosemary Bianchi for leading our amazing set crew, including Christine, Matt, David and Clive – what would we do without them all – thank you!

Emma Saunders for ensuring we have a backstage crew for all shows, and what a fabulous band they are – thank you!

Roman and all our Technical team for taking on such a huge task. Roman, your enthusiasm is amazing – thank you for stepping up into the TM role, in such sad circumstances.

Sally Hull and Maureen Nobes for all your hard work and talent with costumes, we are going to miss you so much, and who is going to keep all the pesky moths under control??? Also thank you to all your helpers over the years.

A special thank you to the Hillelson’s who are always there to help and support – under so many different banners.

Julian – thank you for all your wonderful posters and publicity – you will be missed. Your break into live streaming our shows has been remarkable – thank you!

If I have forgotten anyone I apologise.

This has been a stressful time for everyone, at The QMT many of our FOH and BOH Members have decided to step down from their posts, some for personal reasons and some as the sheer quantity of shows they have been expected to support in the past has been too much! We need to look after our volunteers which is meant to be fun, not a stressful chore where our department heads are often heard saying “there isn’t anyone else to do it, so I have to”

We need to encourage our acting members to get involved with the FOH, BOH jobs. The committee, department heads and volunteers really do try their hardest, however their contribution is often overlooked and underappreciated. I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has volunteered over the 25 years or so that I have been a committee member – your enthusiasm, passion and support are so appreciated, and I hope that you have had fun!

On a personal note, I would like to say a huge thank you to Alan Bailes – he was invaluable at Technical Manager, and such a talented Lighting Designer. Alan worked so hard both here and at The Thespians, his gentle good humour was a joy, and I used to love working with him on my own productions. Most recently his work on Anne Boleyn was superb, the whole cast and crew had such an amazing time on this show – I would ask him for the moon and the stars, and he would always look at me as if to say really? But he would always deliver. You will be missed Alan, thank you.

On that note, many thanks and here’s to many more fabulous productions.

Nicki Pope AGM 2021