



The Bancroft Players

Newsletter

August 2017



Andy Darley

Take the leap – your theatre needs you

Well, this edition marks a full year since I took on the job of laying out the BPs' newsletter - so, while the cats are all away, this mouse has seized the chance to play on the front page.

With Players and Big Spiriters scattered to the four winds (and Edinburgh) there's a different feel to the theatre at the moment. But it's not quiet - as Rory said in his blog last month, in some ways this is the busiest time of the year.

Creatively, no fewer than six shows are cast, rehearsing or ready to go: in the main theatre, *The Ladykillers* and *The Thrill of Love*; in The Studio, *Reasons to be Pretty*; due in from Edinburgh, Big Spirit's *Shakespeare's Big Brother*; and, excitingly, the winning plays from the two QMT Playwriting Group

contests - Amy Chiswell's *Kill Trump* and Emma Allerton's *One Sweet Kiss*. Plus, Alison Hudson casts *A Christmas Carol* early next month.

But it's behind the scenes that some of the most important work is being done.

Chris Lane's rebuild of the main stage proceeds apace (beware taped-off doors with sharp drops behind them) and new committee member Charlotte Ryan is busy finding ways to fill the void left by Roger and Maureen Nobes as they take a well-deserved rest from the bar.

A training session early this month saw new volunteers learn the dark arts of till operating and pint pulling, with more hopefully to follow.

And this is where I come in, as someone whose

From the Subs' Desk

comparatively recent QMT involvement has been rather a life-changer. Sure, I've had (and enjoyed) a couple of sneeze-and-you-miss-me roles on stage, but the theatre is far more than strutting players and attendant lords. It stands or falls on the unheralded organisational roles - the bar, box office, front of house and many more. And, yes, they're fun too.

So, if you've wondered about getting involved but haven't been sure - please take the leap. I'm glad I did. And if your sole involvement so far has been acting or directing then brilliant, the theatre's reputation is built on your work and talent - but we need you behind the scenes too, helping the show go on for everyone.

Andy Darley
Newsletter Chief Sub-Editor

Work under way on the new stage for the main theatre.
Photo: Clive Hall.

COMING SOON:



Shakespeare's Big Brother
(Big Spirit, Edinburgh Festival Show)
20 August,
The Studio.



One Sweet Kiss
(QMT Playwriting Contest Winner)
9 September,
The Studio.



The Ladykillers
15 - 23 September,
Main Theatre.



A Christmas Carol

Christmas, the most wonderful time of the year...

Well, it is for everyone except the miserable miserly Scrooge. He has no time for friends, family or fun, celebrating Christmas with misery and meanness rather than mistletoe and merriment. Bah Humbug!

But one dark, cold Christmas Eve, Scrooge is paid a surprise visit by the ghost of Marley who tells him that he will be called upon by three spirits each of whom will take him on a magical and mysterious journey to reveal the error of his ways.

Can Scrooge really change in time for Christmas day, and discover the true wonder and meaning of Christmas?

Stephen Sharkey's adaptation of this timeless Children's classic tale takes us on a breathless and exciting ride through the darkest night of Scrooge's life and on to a bright new dawn on Christmas day.

The action is fast paced and there are plenty of opportunities for song, dance and fun. As well as some bits that may be a little bit scary, and maybe even some work with large puppets.

This is an ensemble piece with plenty of parts for both young and old and lots of opportunity for character acting as I will be doubling up a lot of the smaller roles.

THE DETAILS:

By: Stephen Sharkey, directed by Alison Hudson

Auditions: Mon 4 & Wed 6 Sep at 7.45pm

Performances: Fri 8 - Sun 10 and Fri 15 - Sun 17 Dec (matinees Sat/Sun)

Rehearsals: Mon & Wed at 7.30pm

Contact: Alison Hudson. allyhudson1@yahoo.co.uk or mobile 07751 400230

THE ROLES:

Scrooge: Older male, playing age can be anything above 30. The character is on stage throughout.

Chorus: A mixed group of around six people male/female young/old. They comment on the action in free verse, move the props around, sing and possibly dance. The Chorus are on stage most of the time. I will also be using them as the ghosts of Marley, Fagin (past), Present and Sairey (future).

Company: Again a mixed group of around six people male/female young/old. Lots of Character acting here as the company take on most of the roles as we travel through Scrooge's past and present. A little singing and movement may be needed for some of the roles. Roles included are as follows:

- **Female:** Miss Lemon, Elizabeth, Mrs Scrooge, Mrs Fezziwig, Belle, Mrs Cratchet, Betty, Fan, Falkner, Lucy

- **Male:** Bob Cratchet, Fred, Mr Lambert, Mr Scrooge, Fezziwig, teenage Ebenezer, Richard, Alf, Wally, Topper, King

Children: About six Children, they take on the roles of John, factory children, Young Scrooge, Fezziwig's workers, Belle's children, Belinda, Peter, Tiny Tim, Martha, Boy.

Ensemble: A small mixed group male/female young/old. Ideal if you want to just be a part of this exciting project. The company will also be included in some ensemble scenes.

2017-18 membership subscriptions are now due

Full Membership: £40 - £30 if paid before 30 September.

Under 18, unwaged, Student, Over 60s: £20 - £15 if paid before 30 September. **Please Note:** this does not include BP Juniors or Big Spirit Members

Club Membership: for those who do not participate in productions. This applies to someone who *only* carries out the following duties: Box Office; Duty Theatre Manager; Steward; Coffee or Bar. The subscription is £20 - 'early bird' discount of £5 applies if paid before 30 September = £15

Cheques - should be made payable to The Bancroft Players, placed in an envelope marked for my attention and left in the box office, or send to **Bancroft Players (Membership), FREEPOST, ANG6544, Hitchin, SG4 9YA. (no stamp required).**

Debit or Credit Card - Please contact me and I can take payment over the phone on 07874 025501 evenings only.

Standing Order (paid on the same date each year). If you would like to take up this option then please let me know and I will send you the necessary banking information.

Internet Banking - if you bank online let me know and I will give you the necessary information for you to pay this way.

QMT Website Booking System - if you have an account for booking tickets then you can pay your sub through this system. There should be a Membership category. If you try this and have any difficulties then please let me know.

Many thanks,

Edith Pratt, Membership Secretary

Tel: 07874 025501 - e-mail: qmtmembs25@hotmail.com

Training on tap at bar event

A gentle introduction to bar volunteering was served up at the first of what could become a regular series of training events.

Organised by new BP committee member Charlotte Ryan and run by Tim Hallas, the session was planned as a no-pressure introduction to the tasks involved in working behind the theatre bar.

Also covered were some of the rules, regulations and laws that volunteers need to be aware of.

Charlotte said: "The bar is going through some changes, with some of the fantastic team taking a well-deserved break. It's in need of some more people to jump in, but that can seem like a scary prospect.

"The aim of the evening was to let people find out what it's all about while having a drink and chat. Hopefully there will be more - anyone and everyone is welcome, no matter what experience you have on the bar. We would love to have you there."

Top: Tim Hallas shows Charlotte Ryan how to pull the perfect pint. Bottom: Fay Worboys at the pump.



Casting news

Here are the casts for the BP productions coming up in October / November:

The Thrill of Love:

Jack Gale: Russ Hurn

Ruth Ellis: Natalie Clayton

Sylvia Shaw: Liz Pybus

Vickie Martin: Laura Eason

Doris Judd: Emily Miles

Reasons to be Pretty:

Steph: Jenna Jay

Greg: Paul Boichat

Kent: Divyesh Thakerar

Carly: Merrin Sharples-Moore

Additionally, the cast for the winning play in the QMT Playwriters' contest, *One Sweet Kiss* by Emma Allerton, which will be staged on September 9 in The Studio, is:

Tony: Charles Compton

Sophie: Emma Orr

Sarah: Stephanie Seal

Ross: Andy Darley

Bancroft Players' 200 Club

A much shorter report this month, after I seemed to ramble on for ages last time! So just a quick congratulations to our July winners.

July Winners

£25: Brian Seal

£20: Ann Mulholland

£15: Bev Bollons

£10: Sarah Chapman

Paula Downes

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Shakespeare's Big Brother

(Richard Whitmore Studio)

Big Spirit Edinburgh Festival Show)

20 August

Auditions: A Christmas Carol

4 & 6 September

One Sweet Kiss

(Richard Whitmore Studio)

Playwriting Group winner)

9 September

The Ladykillers

(Main Theatre)

15-23 September

Playwriting group

(John Coxall Room)

26 September

'One Act Bites' launch

(New directors opportunities)

29 September (date TBC)

End of 'early bird' discount

for membership subs

30 September

Who's who in the Bancroft Players

Executive Committee 2017 to 2018	Diary Organiser <i>Edith Pratt</i>
Richard Whitmore <i>President Emeritus</i>	Fire Officer <i>Chris Lane</i>
Frank Pratt <i>President</i>	First Aid Officer <i>Paula Downes</i>
Les Edwards <i>Chairman</i>	Front of House Manager <i>Paula Downes</i>
Susan Mellor <i>Secretary</i>	Health & Safety Coordinator <i>David Hillelson</i>
Tim Hallas <i>Treasurer</i>	Junior Theatre Group <i>Alison Hudson</i>
Rory Reynolds <i>Artistic Director</i>	Keys Distributor <i>David Lester</i>
Nicki Pope <i>Production Manager (Main Theatre)</i>	Licensing Manager <i>Tim Hallas</i>
David Lester <i>Production Manager (Studio)</i>	Membership <i>Edith Pratt</i>
Chris Lane <i>Theatre Manager</i>	Newsletter <i>Rosemary Bianchi</i>
Julian Newman Turner <i>Business Manager</i>	Properties <i>Audrey Hawkins, Julie Chamberlain</i>
David Borner <i>Committee Member</i>	Publicity Manager <i>Julian Newman Turner</i>
Charlotte Ryan <i>Committee Member</i>	Refreshments/ Stewards <i>Lyn Bryars, Mo Mutton</i>
Emma Saunders <i>Committee member</i>	Set & Design Manager <i>Rosemary Bianchi</i>
Zara Schafer <i>Committee Member</i>	Technical Manager <i>Alan Bailes</i>
Appointments 2017 to 2018	Workshop Coordinator <i>Clive Hall</i>
Vice-Chairman <i>Chris Lane</i>	Wardrobe Liaison <i>Sally Hull</i>
Box Office Manager <i>Vacant</i>	Welfare: <i>Vacant</i>
Bar Manager <i>Vacant</i>	What's On Distribution <i>Susan Mellor</i>
Bar Committee <i>Frank Pratt</i>	Youth Theatre Group <i>Rory Reynolds</i>
Bar Rota <i>Mark Castell</i>	200 Club <i>Paula Downes</i>
Bookings Manager <i>Edith Pratt (evening), Keith Crook (day)</i>	

Newsletter: Last date for copy

Items for publication should be submitted to the editors at newsletterqmt@live.com no later than the 15th of the month. We aim to publish the next issue by the 26th of the month.

Rebuilt stage taking shape for new season



By the time the new season begins, the Main Theatre will have a new stage area: work is currently under way on a complete rebuild that will allow the space to be used more creatively and give directors more options as they plan their shows.

In particular, it will be much easier to remove the stage completely and work at floor level. In turn, this allows more flexibility with audience seating - and adds an extra 3ft in height for set designers to work with.

Photos by Clive Hall, who is keeping a picture diary of the work.



Peter Hazell

I have received the following from Kathy Chandler, writes *Keith Crook*.

"I regret to inform you that my Dad Peter Hazell passed away in his sleep at the age of 92. His funeral will be at 2pm on 16 August at Colchester Crematorium.

"Please pass on this message to all those at the Queen Mother Theatre who might remember him. He loved his time at the theatre, and I know that he missed coming and helping work on the sets when he was no longer able to do so.

"I have very fond memories of running around the theatre and the Dell as a kid,

with him working hard in the workshop, and he was always proud of what you all accomplished together."

Kathy Hazell first appeared on stage in 1999. Peter and I were, for many years, the backbone of the set-building activity as we were both retired and had free daytime to enjoy the workshop.

Peter's last activity was to help me relocate the workshop from what is now the youth wing to its new home.

Keith Crook

Rosemary Bianchi adds: Peter's name lives on at the QMT as the wooden batten that we use to attach flats to the cyclorama is known as the 'Hazell Bar'!