

# The Bancroft Players

Newsletter  
December 2018

Natalie Gordon (pictured) and Liz Pybus brought some classic Hollywood rivalry to the QMT in Elliott Bunker's production of 'Bette and Joan'. Photo: Julian Newman Turner.

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW FOR:**

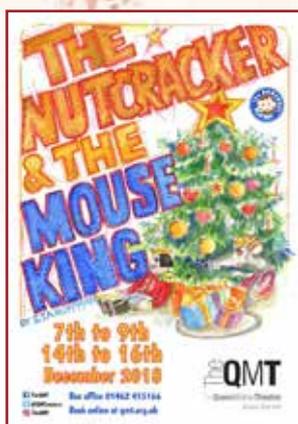
## AUDITIONS

*Constellations*

Tue 11 & Thu 13 December

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

**Tue Dec 18:** The Famous Christmas Quiz!! - yes you get your fave quiz-master and lots of jolly japes in a must-attend Yuletide Celebration!



## The Nutcracker and the Mouse King

"Get your Christmas off to a cracking start with this nutty tale filled with adventure, excitement, romance and rodents!"

**December 7-9 and 14-16**

**Beacons**  
The Studio  
Jan 16-19

**Drums of Mbongo**  
Main Theatre  
(BP Juniors)  
Feb 6-8

**Blackadder II**  
Main Theatre  
Feb 25 - Mar 2

The QMT

 TheQMT

 @QMTweeters

 @TheQMT

 [qmt.org.uk](http://qmt.org.uk)

The Richard Whitmore  
STUDIO

Queen Mother Theatre, Woodside, Hitchin, SG4 9SP. 01462 434875, box office 01462 455166. Reg charity no: 283439.

# 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King': Rehearsal photos

Photos by David Hillelson, Christine Neal and Lisa Hutchins



## Audition notice

# Constellations

*"This exceptional new romantic drama packs more into an hour or so than most manage in three."* Charles Spencer, *Telegraph* on the opening performance at *The Royal Court* \*\*\*\*

*"Who knew that higher physics could be so sexy, so accessible — and so emotionally devastating?"* *Guardian* \*\*\*\*\*

*Constellations* is a multi-award winning play revolving around the idea that we are all a part of a universe in which at any moment several different outcomes can exist simultaneously.

The two characters meet in a variety of scenes, showing different ways in which their encounters could have turned out as a result of factors ranging from previous relationships to the tone of voice used.

The key with this play is the interaction and chemistry between the two characters. It really draws the audience in, making you think about how you approach conversations every single day without realising how heavily this affects the outcome of the conversation, or even the relationship.

This play will be performed with a 'Thrust Stage' with the audience on three sides giving the actors a greater opportunity to connect with the audience in the intimate setting of *The Studio*.

## The Studio

### THE ROLES:

**Roland:** Playing age mid 20's – late 30's. A very laidback bee-keeper, who isn't confident in a lot of things but is confident in the reliability of bees, they have one goal and one life cycle which doesn't falter.

**Marianne:** Playing age mid 20's – late 30's. Very intelligent, witty and works in the field of quantum cosmology. Even when her mind starts to fail her, science appears to still bring her peace of mind.

### THE DETAILS:

**By:** Nick Payne, directed by Grace Reinhold-Gittins

**Auditions:** Tue 11 & Thu 13 December

**Performances:** 13-16 March 2019

**Rehearsals:** Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Scripts:** Available from Box Office.

**Contact:** Call 07857 748 727 or e-mail [grace.reinhold@icloud.com](mailto:grace.reinhold@icloud.com).



Bake-off, Candyland style. Can our heroes earn a Prince Hollywood Handshake? Photo: David Hillelson.

# Once upon a time...

The QMT's Christmas show this year is 'The Nutcracker and the Mouse King'. Director Rosemary Bianchi tells a little of its history.

**Performance dates: December 7-9 and 14-16.**

...A storyteller by the name of Hoffmann enchanted everyone with a tale of a girl and a Nutcracker doll, which was brought to life by a brilliant magician.

Together she and the Prince (for he was a royal nutcracker) fought battles against evil mice, and journeyed to the faraway Kingdom of Sweets, where they found the Sugar Plum Fairy.

The story became a classic, beloved by generations, and

now the Bancroft Players are bringing this Tale by Hoffmann to life on the stage of the Queen Mother Theatre, just in time for Christmas.

Rehearsals have been great fun, and very lively for the cast which is made up of a healthy mix of seasoned BPs, several new members, and a handful of Junior Bancroft Players there to keep order.

The theatre adage of not working with children or animals doesn't apply here as

adults are playing children, children are playing animals, and we won't mention the dancing unicorn!

There are also original songs by our own Charlie Preston, and some exciting audience participation which hopefully won't result in a soggy bottom.

So get your Christmas off to a cracking start with this nutty tale filled with adventure, excitement, romance and rodents.



Photo: Maureen Nobes

## Nutcracker cast take part in Hitchin Christmas Lights switch-on parade

A crowd of thousands gathered along Bancroft and packed the Market Square for the Hitchin Town Centre Christmas parade and lights switch-on.

Among those marching in the parade, entertaining the crowd and handing out show flyers, were *Nutcracker* director Rosemary Bianchi (sporting a vivid fright wig) and some of her cast and crew from the adult and junior Bancroft Players.

A prime spot in the parade - just ahead of Father Christmas - and a shout-out from the event PA meant lots of publicity for the show.

# 'Christmas extravaganzas, Christmas quizzes – and the new season taking shape'

I feel like young Mr Grace when I say 'You have all done very well!'. And so you have.

The shows so far have all done splendidly at the Box Office and brought a great deal of joy to the casts, the support crews and, of course, our audiences.

I hope you're ready to watch our Christmas extravaganza, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, with a new script and tunes especially

written by Charlie Preston - the go-to guy for new songs.

Also this month (December) the youth theatre will be presenting another new script about the issue of transgenderism. Hard-hitting stuff so please come along and support.

You'll remember that last month I talked about the new programme being announced in January. Well the play selection committee are doing their job and hopefully in the next

issue we'll have more news. Anyway – it all looks very exciting!

So what else? Oh yes – you must come along to the Xmas Quiz at the QMT bar on Tuesday 18th December at 7.45pm with Brian Hull. Lots of giggles – you can build a team or just join a table when you come down. The prizes will be earth-shattering as usual.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Rory

## Safety warnings: keeping the QMT secure and danger-free

The QMT is generally a pretty safe environment to work in, but two recent incidents have led to warnings being issued to make sure it stays that way, *writes Andy Darley*.

While there's no need for people to worry unnecessarily, we all need to make sure we're alert to potential dangers - and to take responsibility for ensuring that anything we spot is promptly addressed.

Keith Crook reports that a plug socket in the Studio foyer was left in a dangerous condition thanks to damage that wasn't reported.

He said: "One of the double power points was damaged when part of the faceplate was knocked off. The piece which broke off had been removed.

"The socket was left in a potentially lethal condition with live terminals exposed, albeit with some difficulty reaching them. Fortunately Chris Lane noticed it and the faceplate was repaired.

"Accidents will happen in a busy

theatre like ours so we just repair the damage and get on with it. What is intolerable isn't the damage but not reporting it."

And Rory Reynolds warns of the need to ensure the theatre is secure when the main foyer is unstaffed.

He said: "Just a little note to all of us who use the theatre regularly and have keys - keep it locked! Even if you're working in the theatre it's worth keeping the front door locked unless you are sitting in the foyer.

"Apart from the endless chain of people wanting to use the loo, we get the occasional ne'er-do-well as we did on Sunday.

"Guy in a top hat wandered into the auditorium when the Xmas show was rehearsing and then refused to leave causing a bit of a hiatus.

"Nothing stolen on this occasion but of course it could have been more dangerous. So remember - keep your valuables with you and keep the doors locked."

## Bancroft Players' 200 Club

Another of my brief reports, you lucky people!! Apart from listing the November winners, I thought I would add that December is our biggie – the Grand Christmas Draw for £100! Sadly it is too late for anyone to join to be eligible for this. However there is always the £50 draw in June. For further information on the 200 Club please contact me on either 07778 014428 or paula.downes@ntlworld.com.

### November Winners

£25: Jane Sherry

£20: Mike O'Neill

£15: Amanda Campbell-Phillips

£10: George Gregory

Paula Downes

## THE BANCROFT PLAYERS XMAS QUIZ

Prizes! Giggles! Fun! Elephants!\*

TUESDAY 18th  
DECEMBER at 7.45pm.



\* Not really elephants

# What works for me... WHEN REAL LIFE INTERVENES

*In this month's look at techniques that Bancroft Players actors find useful, we look at how to keep focus and intensity when a play's rehearsal period is disrupted by day-to-day life. It's an issue faced by the cast and crew of 'Beacons', who have the Christmas holidays right in the middle of their rehearsals. So, how are they coping?*



**Vivien Kerr (Director)**

In theory Christmas Eve is one of our rehearsals and so is Boxing Day, so obviously we will have a break. However, I'm always open to putting in extra rehearsals. It's difficult for the cast so that's why I want to keep something going over the Christmas period. Depending on what the cast are doing, if they are away, I will work with just some of them.

The danger if you don't is that all the work you've done before Christmas - and we have done some really good work - has gone. When you come back, you won't be starting from scratch, but you will be from a lower base. I think it's important to keep things going to avoid this great lapse.

**Alison Hancock**

A break will only be as damaging as you let it be. You have a responsibility not to allow it as you won't be doing the play justice and you'll be letting each other down. It gets to a point where you have to keep the momentum going so, apart from continuing to work at it individually, we will also try to get together.

In general, if I go away the script comes with me. It feels like unfinished business, so it becomes a chance to reflect on what you're doing. The more you get into a play the more your character sits with you so, if I am driving anywhere, I'll start thinking about it and going over things and I might come to a line and I'll try different ways of doing it.



**Kelsey Duffy**

Just keep going over it when you have spare time. If it is something you find interesting it's easy enough to come back to it and still have the same enthusiasm once you're with everybody again. If you have done the work, it will be the same when you come back to it.



**Doug Brooker**

For me, time off is absolutely deadly to a play because you lose momentum. I find I need to keep going with it - without a regular rehearsal you can all go off the boil.

So many other things inevitably occupy your mind over Christmas, even if you want to be focused on the play. You find yourself rehearsing it when you're out with the dog. Similarly, in the summer it's always very disjointed because people are on holiday.

*Beacons* has quite a small cast so we can do impromptu get-togethers. Even if it's only one or two hours, it keeps your eye on the ball and helps get into the swing of the part.



**'Beacons', by Tabitha Mortiboy. Jan 16-19 in The Studio.  
Tickets from [qmt.org.uk](http://qmt.org.uk) or the Box Office.**

*Alison Hancock and Kelsey Duffy in an early rehearsal for 'Beacons'. Photo by Doug Brooker.*

# How to assemble the QMT 2018 minibook



As the year comes to an end, it's time to look back on the shows staged by the Bancroft Players, Big Spirit and the BP Juniors during 2018 - and, as ever, what a range of theatre there's been!

This month's newsletter celebrates that achievement with a cut-out-and-fold minibook featuring all the shows from the three companies - thanks to the great

photography we have access to from (mostly) Julian Newman Turner and Paul Seaby.

The covers and endpapers of the booklet are on the half page below and the inside is the back page of this newsletter. You'll need to print those pages out if you have this as a PDF, or detach them if you have the printed version.

Here are the instructions for assembly:



**1** Start with the inside of the booklet. Fold along the short guide lines (across the page) to make an M shape



**2** Fold along the long guide lines (up and down the page) to make a W shape



**3** Carefully cut along the solid lines - but NOT the dotted ones



**4** Fold in a spiral direction from the first endpaper and page 1, folding 4 onto the back of 3 to continue, and so on to the end



**5** You should now have a concertina of pages, with the endpapers facing pages 1 and 14. Put this aside to make the cover



**6** Fold back along the long guide lines of the cover



**7** Fold the short guide lines to make the spine and the pockets the endpapers will tuck into



**8** Carefully tuck the endpapers into the pockets on the cover. Tidy it up and you have your minibook.

			<p>2018 at the Queen Mother Theatre: <b>a year in pictures</b></p> <p>Re-live the year with this minibook of photos from each of the 14 shows staged at the Queen Mother Theatre by the Bancroft Players, Big Spirit Youth Theatre and the Bancroft Players Juniors during 2018.</p> <p><i>Photos by Julian Newman Turner, Paul Seaby, or members of individual shows' production teams.</i></p>

## BELLES OF ST CLEMENTS

Here we have some photos of the November Big Spirit production, *The Belles of St Clements*. It was a big show that included all the youth theatre plus Charles Plester and Emily Miles as the teachers. Glorious noisy fun!

Rory



## Big Spirit developing hard-hitting new play on transgenderism

A new play about young people and transgender issues is under development by a team of Big Spirit members, with performance dates likely in the next couple of months.

Charlie Preston, who is coordinating the scriptwriting, said: "The importance of this play isn't so much the issue of being transgender in a modern world - in fact, that isn't the main story line. It drives the plot, but the main feature of the piece is the relationships between people and how easily they can be broken by ignorance."

"Being transgender is no longer a taboo subject - at least not for my generation - however some people just always have a problem with difference, which is one of the biggest flaws in our society."

The piece is still in development but, at the moment, the cast is Charlie, Violet Morris and Lily Simpkins. The working title is *Four*, and it's pencilled in for December or January in The Studio - but that all may change.

Charlie said: "It is a self written and devised piece, so it is changing consistently. That's what makes it so exciting,

and this cast list could well have grown by the time of the performance. Thus far I also am light and sound designing."

Although Charlie was in last year's *Pronoun*, Evan Placey's play about a transgender teenager, the inspiration for this show has not come directly from that experience.

"This was prompted by Rory," said Charlie. "Originally it was going to be a piece he would write himself, however it wasn't flowing the way we wanted it so he passed us the pen. We used the same characters but slightly altered the concept. We all took different sections to write and I made final edits to piece it all together, like a dysfunctional jigsaw."

"This doesn't have a connection with *Pronoun*, but of course being in *Pronoun* impacted my writing and mindset. However, that's the way with anything you are writing - it will always be influenced by plays you have been in or written."



Charlie Preston in 'Pronoun'

End paper: tuck into folded cover



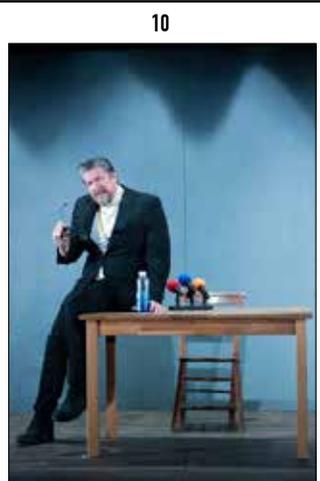
Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons

8



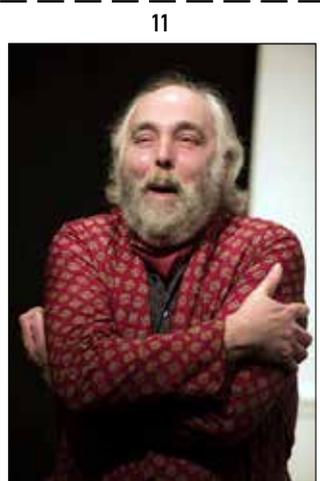
A Midsummer Night's Dream

9



A Bunch of Amateurs

10



The Father

11



Quartet

7



Spring Awakening (Big Spirit)

6



I Don't Like Mondays (Big Spirit)

5



The Effect

4



Sex With a Stranger

1



To Catch a Unicorn (BP Juniors)

2



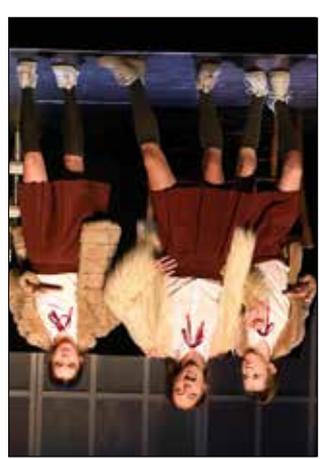
A View From the Bridge

3

End paper: tuck into folded cover



14



13



12

The Nutcracker and the Mouse King

The Belles of St Clements (Big Spirit)

Bette & Joan