



The Bancroft Players

Newsletter
March 2017



A moment of honeymoon happiness before the horror begins for Cameron Fraser and Amy Chiswell in *The Ghost Train*. Photo by Julian Newman Turner.

Rory Reynolds

Looking ahead to the change of season

What season is sweeter than Spring? When the cold morn is edged with the promising warmth of a summer in prospect... Yeah, enough of that! What we need to talk about is that other season.

No, not Summer or Autumn, but the season of new plays for next year at the good ol' QMT. What wonders await us in 2017-18? Ah dear friends – all will be revealed as soon as we can decide just what could possibly top this season.

Hey, did you see *The Ghost Train*? Wasn't it good?

The team breathed bags of life into a script that was possibly old hat in 1925. The audiences loved it. There was so much to compliment – the set, the acting, the effects, the sounds, the rain and, of course the direction.

Great work guys – an ensemble piece presented with virtuosity and great imagination! And – lest we forget – it sold out every night. That's music to any theatre's ears.

And there's so much still to savour. I hope you're all booking tickets like crazy for

Artistic Director's blog

The History Boys and *Legally Blonde – the Musical* coming up in April and – if this newsletter gets out in time – for *hang* in the Studio, which is a real gem. Then later we have *Steel Magnolias*, *Flare Path* and *Much Ado*.

So you see it's a tough act to follow, season 2016-17. So many great shows and record takings to boot – you've just got to hope that the new kid on the block, season 2017-18, can match up. D-d-don't panic Mr Mainwaring, don't panic – I'm sure it will.

Rory

COMING SOON:



hang
15-18 March,
Richard Whitmore Studio.



The History Boys
(*Big Spirit*)
5 - 8 April,
Richard Whitmore Studio.



Legally Blonde - the Musical
(*Big Spirit*)
26 - 29 April,
Main Theatre.

SAVE THE DATE

Bancroft Players AGM
Wednesday 28 June

The QMT



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

Audition reminder

Pronoun

Josh and Isabella are childhood sweethearts. They were meant to spend their gap year together... but Isabella has now become a boy.

Pronoun is a love story about transition, testosterone and James Dean for young actors by Canadian-born playwright Evan Placey. The play predominantly explores the theme of gender, a potent topic in our modern world, through the journey of transition of Dean, a teenage transgender boy.

There is a requirement for seven actors and the character ages are between 15 and 18 years. Although there are adult characters in this play, these will be played by younger actors. As a Studio production, the roles are all open to those who can play the ages.

There are many characters in the play, which means that everyone other than Josh and Dean will have to multi-role. Therefore, there is nothing to prepare for this audition, but please come with an idea of which character you would like to audition for and the readiness to play others.

THE ROLES:

This is a Studio production and therefore open to all who can act the ages shown.

Dean: 16, female actor. Dean is a girl (formerly Isabella) born into a boy's body. She is kind, confused, frustrated, the centre of our story and - most importantly - in love.

Josh: 16, male actor, Ex boyfriend of Dean.

Loves Isabella more than anything in the world, but struggles to come to terms with the fact that she is a boy. And she's now calling herself Dean. Does this mean he's gay? This wasn't the way it was supposed to happen.

Kyle: 17, male actor, Josh's best friend. Just as confused as anyone and, to make it even more confusing, is getting married in a few

months. Multi-roles as Dean's Mum.

Amy: 16, female actor, Dean's best friend. Sensitive to Dean's situation but acutely aware it might ruin her beautiful wedding to Kyle. Multi-roles as Dean's dad.

Laura: 16, female actor, third member of Dean and Amy's trio of friends. She is slightly less sensitive. A classic 'girly girl'.

Dani: 14, female actor, Dean's younger sister. Can't understand Dean - mourns for the sister and friend she had, and struggles (try as she might) to accept that Isabella no longer exists.

James Dean: Male actor, as in the movie star circa 1955. *Rebel Without a Cause* teenager look - blue jeans, white T-shirt, red jacket. American.

The Studio

THE DETAILS:

By: Ewan Placey, directed by Barney Taylor

Auditions: Mon 27 & Wed 29 Mar.

Performances: Wed 7 - Sat 10 Jun.

Scripts: Available from Box Office

Further information: Barney Taylor at barnabyjstaylor@hotmail.com

Casting news

Here are the casts for the BPs' May and June productions of *Steel Magnolias* and *Flare Path*. If you were among those who attended the auditions, thank you for taking part.

The standard was extremely high for both shows and Brian, Nicki and Elliott (*Steel Magnolias*) and Nicki, David and the team (*Flare Path*) tell me they were very impressed by all of you, which made casting a real challenge.

The cast for Steel Magnolias is:

Annelle: Merrin Sharples-Moore

Truvy: Nery Martin

Clairee: Vivien Kerr

Shelby: Emily Miles

M'Lynn: Sian Spencer

Ouiser: Elizabeth Shaw

The cast for Flare Path is:

Doris: Laura Mead

Peter Kyle: Matt Gray

Mrs Oakes: Ali Hancock

Dusty Miller: James Kirwan

Percy: Cameron Fraser

Count Skriczevinsky: Russell Hurn

Teddy: Peter Matthews

Patricia: Natalie Clayton

Maudie: Jo Roskilly

Sqn Ldr Swanson: Doug Brooker

If you were not cast on this occasion, then we really encourage you to come along and audition for a forthcoming production - you will find all the details in this newsletter each month.

Rory

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

hang

(Richard Whitmore Studio)

15 - 18 March

Audition: Pronoun

27 & 29 March

Playwriting group

(meet in John Coxall Room)

28 March

The History Boys (Big Spirit)

(Richard Whitmore Studio)

5 - 8 April

Legally Blonde (Big Spirit)

(Main theatre)

26 - 29 April

Steel Magnolias

(Main theatre)

15 - 20 May

Bancroft Players AGM

28 June



Kelsey Duffy, Laura Mead and Natalie Gordon in rehearsal for 'hang', in the Studio from March 15 - 18. Book online at qmt.org.uk.

'hang', written by
debbie tucker green
and directed by
Keith Swainston. The
Studio, March 15-18.

'hang': a sharp and powerful tale of pain

As this edition of the newsletter goes to press, the tense and tightly-scripted *hang* is about to open in The Studio for a four-night run.

The story of a woman allowed to choose how a criminal who

harmed her family should be executed, it's a powderkeg of raw pain, uncomfortable silences and black humour that delivers an intense and memorable experience for audience and cast alike.

With the characters, the setting and the exact crime committed all left deliberately ambiguous, *hang* invites audiences to find their own answers to the powerful questions it poses.

Coming in April: Alan Bennett's 'The History Boys'

Big Spirit presents *The History Boys*, by Alan Bennett.

This is a brilliantly funny and acerbic look at modern education through the lives of seven Sixth Formers as they apply to Oxford and Cambridge.

Hector is an old-fashioned teacher but his methods and his behaviour just don't fit in when league tables are at stake.

With Charles Plester, Alison Hancock and Ken Torbett joining the Big Spirit lads, this is a show you will definitely want to catch.

Wednesday 5 - Friday 7 April.



Who's who in the Bancroft Players

Executive Committee

2016 to 2017

Richard Whitmore
President Emeritus

Frank Pratt
President

Les Edwards
Chairman

Susan Mellor
Secretary

Tim Hallas
Treasurer

Rory Reynolds
Artistic Director

Nicki Pope
Production Manager (Main Theatre)

David Lester
Production Manager (Studio)

Chris Lane
Theatre Manager

Julian Newman
Turner Business Manager

David Borner
Committee Member

Elliott Bunker
Committee Member

Emma Saunders
Committee member

Zara Schafer
Committee Member

Appointments

2016 to 2017

Vice-Chairman
Chris Lane

Box Office Manager
Vacant

Bar Committee
Frank Pratt, Roger Nobes

Bar Rota
Maureen Nobes

Bookings Manager
Edith Pratt (evening),

Keith Crook (day)

Diary Organiser
Keith Crook

Fire Officer
Chris Lane

First Aid Officer
Paula Downes

Front of House
Manager

Paula Downes

Health & Safety
Coordinator

David Hillelson

Junior Theatre Group
Alison Hudson

Keys Distributor
Keith Crook

Licensing Manager
Tim Hallas

Membership
Edith Pratt

Newsletter
Rosemary Bianchi

Properties
*Audrey Hawkins,
Julie Chamberlain*

Publicity Manager
*Julian Newman
Turner*

Refreshments/
Stewards

Lyn Bryars, Mo Mutton

Set & Design
Manager

Rosemary Bianchi

Technical Manager
Alan Bailes

Workshop
Coordinator
Clive Hall

Wardrobe Liaison
Sally Hull

Welfare:
Vacant

What's On
Distribution

Susan Mellor

Youth Theatre Group
Rory Reynolds

200 Club
Paula Downes

First Aid boxes now installed around the theatre

I am sure the more observant of you will have noticed that a number of green First Aid boxes have suddenly appeared in strategic places around the theatre.

David Hillelson and I have been very busy – well, my task was to wield the dust pan and brush. Thanks to David for the more skilled job of using the drill!

These boxes are strictly for emergency use only. Should you cut or graze yourself, we do now have easy dispense plaster boxes scattered around and they have been joined by anti-bacterial wipe dispensers.

A list of the location of First Aid boxes and plaster dispensers is now displayed on the BP members' notice board, together with an up to date list of First Aiders.

Following last month's piece about our course, one or two people have approached me to say they didn't know I was running a course in January and they would have been interested.

If anyone missed my notices last year promoting the course and would like to go on one, please let me know and I will see if I can organise another one. I do need at least 12 to 14 people to make it financially worthwhile as we pay by the course, not the number of people attending it. If you have already said something to me, please contact me again – one name I can remember, the other I can't!

*Paula Downes
First Aid Officer (to give my full title!)*

Bancroft Players' 200 Club winners

A brief report this month, as a lot of my effort recently has gone into sorting out the First Aid boxes and notices. However I hope to be back with a bang next month, trying once more to drum up business!!

So just time for a quick congratulation to our February winners.

Paula Downes

February Winners

£25: Brian Seal

£20: Sarah Chapman

£15: Roger Newman-Turner

£10: Anthony Golding

SAVE THE DATE

**Bancroft Players' AGM,
Wednesday 28 June**



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.