

FOOTLIGHTS

The Newsletter for Barton Theatre Company
Issue 33: January 2014

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1. EDITORIAL

Happy New Year.

Welcome to 2014's first issue of Footlights.

I'm currently watching the Doctor Who Fan Orchestra on YouTube (Check them out, they're brilliant!) and it struck me that this month's issue is a bit like the Doctor's TARDIS as it too travels backwards and forwards in time. First we go back a month or so and tell you all about Babes In The Wood, our wonderful pantomime. Then we hop forward to later this year for news of our next production. Finally, it's all the

way back to the beginning of last year for a review of what happened in 2013.

Unfortunately, time travel isn't instantaneous, it takes time. So whilst you're waiting for us to arrive at our various destinations, we provide in-flight entertainment with a review of someone else's panto, the return of the quiz and, of course, those dates for your diary.

There's only one thing left to say... Do you know how to fly this thing?

Andrew Nevill (Editor)
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2. BABES IN THE WOOD

It's over now so I can admit it. I was nervous about this one.

Even for us, the rehearsal period had been problematic. Fantastically, we were joined by several new members and so the script was expanded to accommodate them. However, an ever-changing script did not help with learning lines or rehearsing scenes. (With hindsight, director/writer

Elaine would admit that the script did end up causing problems.) This together with the struggle of getting everyone to attend rehearsal meant that by the time we came to the theatre some of the scenes still needed a final polish and we hadn't yet managed to do a run of the play. At Barton, we have made an artform out of getting it right at the last minute. But this

time, even I was wondering if we were riding our luck.

However, on arrival at the theatre, that was a problem for later on. Right then it was ten o'clock on a Sunday morning and the start of a very long day of construction, painting and sewing. It must be said there was a fabulous turnout and everyone was certainly very busy. In the theatre *more* lights were going up (Tom & Derek having already spent several nights earlier doing so), on stage the set was being built with construction spilling outside. In the foyer people sewed or used the time to go over their lines.

That evening with most of the cast assembled we had our first run through on the stage. Some things worked, some things didn't. Elaine gave notes. She went away and made changes. We rehearsed again on Monday. Different things worked, different things didn't but it had got better. Elaine gave notes, went away, and tweaked more things. And so on. By the end of Wednesday's dress rehearsal we had a show.

It was a difficult first night, the audience seemed a bit flat and the older members were struggling with attending Iris's funeral that day. Still the feedback we got later indicated the audience did actually enjoy it. The difference an audience can make to a show was never more obvious than the following evening. It was not a large crowd but it was a loud and enthusiastic one, determined to enjoy themselves. They succeeded too, inspiring us to shake off the First Night Blues, delivering a terrific performance - and enjoy ourselves too.

Saturday was all about the discovery that there are two types of loud audience. In the Matinee audience were loud because they could be, a lot of the time we were shouting over them, rather than along with

them. In fact, Elaine feared some of us might lose our voices and have problems during the evening show.

But the worries were unfounded as the evening Evening audience were the right type of loud - loud because they were laughing and booing and singing and clapping and having a ball. On the stage we were having a ball too - and our voices, far from being lost, were in fine form.

The Sunday matinee, was a full house. The audience was another good one and got the show they deserved as we went all out to end the run on a high.

After the show it was rapidly back down to earth as we struck the set and loaded up the van in a dark rainy December evening.

So from our point of view a successful show week but did we sell lots of tickets? Did we make any money? We all met up on 16 December for the Post-Mortem meeting to find out.

With regards to audience figures, we sold 304 seats. And yes, we made money - a healthy profit of £443.71.

Perhaps even nicer were all the positive comments. Everyone at the meeting remarked on how much they'd enjoyed it. We'd also received some audience feedback that had been overwhelmingly positive.

Perhaps the best of these was the comment that we all seemed to be one company, as if we'd all been acting together for years. When you consider that half the people on the stage were new members, it's a wonderful testament to the attitude of all the cast; being welcoming and welcomed - able to fit in as if they've always been here.



3. REVIEW: CINDERELLA

So from one pantomime to another, this one being Salford Arts Theatre's own production of perhaps one of the most popular pantomimes.

It was a fun and lively production with all the traditional ingredients in the mix - songs, jokes, everybody insulting each other and of course LOTS of audience participation.

Salford's production did not have a large cast but the small ensemble all knew what was expected of their characters and gave it lots of energy and enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, I've lost my program so can't name names. However, Cinderella was suitably sweet and sympathetic. The Prince (the traditional principal boy here) was suitably and with that accent is assured of a job as a glass cutter in the off season.

The Fairy Godmother played her part with a wonderful resignation as all her plans

kept going wrong. Buttons was the comedy heart of the play and worked the audience well.

There was an air of Steptoe about the Baron which works for the role - but if you're going to play the Baron as Wilfred Bramble then surely Buttons must be played, at some point, as Harry Corbett.

The two ugly sisters, one of whom was Scott Berry in his debut as a dame, were one of the highlights of the show. They must have got tips off our Brian. What's more they played off each other beautifully

However, the best person on the stage was the Baroness. Obviously relishing the part of the villain she stalked, snarled and sneered her way around the stage.

All in all a great night of fun and entertainment.

4. SHAKERS

Our next production will be Shakers by John Godber and Jane Thornton. Shakers focuses on the nightclub's female customers.

The first read through will be on January 13 at Smiths with rehearsals then ongoing until the performance.

Shakers will be performed at Salford Arts Theatre Arts from 8th May April 2014. to 10th May 2014

5. QUIZ

I'm writing some of the newsletter just before Christmas. And it should still, just about, be the Festive Season when you get this so this month's quiz has a Christmas theme.

There have been many stories that have been set around Christmas. Here are just five of them. Can you name the authors?

Answers as always at the end of the newsletter.

1. Hogfather
 2. A Christmas Carol
 3. The Gift of the Magi
 4. The Snowman
 5. The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle
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6. 2013 IN REVIEW

It's been quite a year for Barton Theatre Company. Here we present a month-by-month look back at the events of 2013

January: The year started with us temporarily moving to Smiths as work was undertaken to improve St Michaels. In hindsight, this would turn out to be foreshadowing later events.

As we'd forgotten to have one in 2012, we had an Interim AGM to present the accounts for 2011/12. Happily we'd made a profit.

February: Iron by Rona Munro was selected as the spring production and rehearsals began in earnest at St Mikes – now with shiny new loos. Elaine McCann having never written a pantomime decided she'd like to have a go. (So that was Christmas sorted nice and early.)

March: Several Barton members go 'moonlighting' variously writing, directing and acting in someone else's show! A good thing too as Smith's Dinner Theatre production Acts of Charity was the best piece of theatre I saw last year.

April: More moonlighting as Dave Milne acts alongside Scott Berry in an evening of Harold Pinter plays and Iris Sharples becomes a national treasure in ITV's 'Off Their Rockers'

May: Iron is performed. The performances are stunning. So were the audience figures - but in the opposite direction.

We hold the AGM on time. 2012's productions made a profit. Overall we make a miniscule loss. Mags and Cathy are elected onto the Committee.

Good News: Our community spirit is recognised with a grant for the Rotary club.

Bad News: We learnt that St Mike's were putting up the rent – and asking us to give back the Wardrobe & Props room. We start looking for a new home.

June: Work begins on our variety night 'That's Entertainment'

A new home is found as we decide to move to Smiths



July: The Big Move. A van and several carloads of props, costumes and scenery, speedily and efficiently taken one place to another. If only all moves went as smoothly as this one did.

August: The End and Start of an Era. We say good bye to St Mikes as we have our last rehearsal there and our first one at Smiths

We apply for a grant from the BBC

September: A brilliant night is had by all as we finally do the performance of That's Entertainment.

Losing no time we immediately start rehearsing Elaine's still-being-written pantomime, Babes In The Wood.

We also get busy recruiting and drumming up interest in the panto by handing out leaflets at our own pitch at the Farmers Market

October: The Recruitment Open Day is a massive success. Lots of fun for those taking part and more new members than we ever dreamed off.

Halloween finds us hanging around Winton Park in weird costumes as we take part in the Winton Witches event. So just a normal Saturday night!

November: We learn our grant is application was unsuccessful
After a long fight against cancer, one of our stalwart members, the wonderful Iris Sharples passes away.

December: Iris' funeral & Panto opening night on the same day. All agreed she'd have loved that!

In a fitting tribute to someone who loved panto, Babes in the Wood is a wonderful production.

7. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Barton Theatre Company: Shakers

by John Godber and Jane Thornton

First Script Read: 13 January 2013, First Floor, Smith's Restaurant, 1-3 Church Road, Eccles, M30 ODL

Rehearsals: Monday & Wed, 7:45pm,

Club Night: on Thursdays for the duration of the Shakers rehearsal only.

First Floor, Smith's Restaurant, 1-3 Church Road, Eccles, M30 ODL

Performance: 8 -10 May 2014.

The Lowry

Pier 8

Salford Quays

M50 3AZ

Bookings: Tel: 0843 208 6000

Fax: 0161 876 2001

Email: info@thelowry.com

Web:

<https://tickets.thelowry.com/Online/default.asp>

Salford Arts Theatre

Kemsing Walk

Off Liverpool Street

Salford

M5 4BS

Bookings: 0161 925 0111 (Theatre)

www.salfordartstheatre.com/whatson

(Online card bookings)

Palace Theatre:

Listings:

<http://www.atgtickets.com/venues/palace-theatre-manchester/>

Palace Theatre

97 Oxford Street

Manchester

M1 6FT

The Lowry

Listings: <http://www.thelowry.com/>

[events/theatre-shows](http://www.thelowry.com/events/theatre-shows)

Opera House

Listings:

<http://www.atgtickets.com/venues/opera-house-manchester/>

Opera House
3 Quay Street
Manchester
M3 3HP

Bookings (Palace & Opera House)
Palace Theatre Box Office – address above
Web: <http://www.atgtickets.com/>

Royal Exchange Theatre

Listings:

<http://www.royalexchange.co.uk/page.aspx?page=453>

Royal Exchange Theatre
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7DH

Bookings: In person at Box Office above
Tel: 0161 8339833
Fax 0161 615 6696
In person: 11.00am - 5.00pm
Email: box.office@royalexchange.co.uk
Web: www.royalexchange.co.uk/bookonline

8. THE FINAL CURTAIN

That's all for this edition of Footlights. We will be back again next month.

Thank You's: Elaine Hayton for proof reading

Back Issues: Terry maintains an archive of back issues on our website: <http://www.bartontheatre.co.uk/footlights.html>

Contributions: Always welcome. Please submit any contributions to the email address below. You will receive full blame credit for anything used in the newsletter.

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Quiz Answers:

1. Terry Pratchett
2. Charles Dicken
3. O. Henry
4. Raymond Briggs
5. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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Barton Theatre Company Committee

Chair: Brian Cogswill, *Treasurer:* Elaine Hayton, *Secretary:* Andrew Nevill
Officers: Joan Breen, David Milne, Mags Ridings, Val Ridings, Cathy Warburton

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