

Noises OFF

RECORD-BREAKER!



under way, the final ticket for the matinee had been snapped up, ensuring that, with all 364 seats sold over seven performances, this was the biggest-selling show since APS moved in to the Sherborne Studio Theatre. Read on for more about our latest hit....

As we never tire of telling people, “APS shows always sell out”. How wonderful it was once again to see how quickly tickets for “Adrian Mole” were flying off the shelf as soon as they went on sale...pretty much like the box office at Glastonbury, of course. Even before performance week was

AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE

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THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE AGED 13 3/4

Date	Start Time	Places Available
Monday 20 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out
Tuesday 21 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out
Wednesday 22 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out
Thursday 23 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out
Friday 24 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out
Saturday 25 March 2023	2:30pm	Sold out
Saturday 25 March 2023	7:30pm	Sold out

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THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE AGED 13 3/4



Adrian Mole featured a large cast (about as large as is possible in our rather intimate surroundings), with several established APS actors bringing their usual touches of stardust. I would like, however, to give special mention to the “teenage trio” - Liam Beard, Hazel Perrett and APS newcomer Jack Stevenson, whose combined ages don’t even come near those of the seasoned campaigners. Also, a warm welcome - or welcome back - to Dee, Jo, Andrew and Iszy. We look forward to seeing more of you!

MW



THE INSIDE STORY. BY A "MOLE"

Continuing our mission of bringing a wide range of dramatic entertainment to the good people of Sherborne, how do we follow Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*?

Well, with a musical comedy, of course! *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾* is well known to everybody as a best-selling book from 1982, but perhaps less well-known as a stage production. We sent off for the 1984 play scripts, but accidentally (fortuitously?) ordered the 2015 musical adaptation instead. APS doesn't do musicals, so the obvious solution was to just learn the words, and ditch the songs. But then we thought...."Shall we give it a try? Just sing a bit? Just once, see how it goes?". After collapsing in fits of giggles at our initial pathetic attempts, Director Bev Taylor-Wade encouraged our efforts, and

recruited a Musical Director, Mike Stanley, to tease the best out of our individual capabilities and limitations. His patience and skill coached us to point where we might not win any singing awards, but at least we weren't going to frighten-off our loyal and tolerant audience.

The key to success for *Adrian Mole* is fun. If we are all enjoying ourselves on stage, with a well-written fun script, fun songs, and a 'Beano comic-style' fun set designed by John Crabtree, then hopefully that sense of fun would be communicated to our audience. We wanted to put smiles on their faces from the first minute, and keep them there to the end. The initial rehearsals felt like the sort of thing that a group of locals might put on at a village hall just to

entertain themselves. But as the process evolved, Bev could see that close attention to detail would extract the maximum comic potential, as well as some genuinely emotional and touching performances, from each member of the cast. It turned into a keenly crafted production that all involved are very proud of; a well-rounded show, that we knew would be appreciated, enjoyed and would be remembered by the audience long after the final rapturous applause had died down.

This has been a success at so many levels; all tickets sold-out before the first performance, a cast and crew who all enjoyed each other's company and encouraged each other to dig deep and deliver our best, and an audience who left the theatre with beaming smiles and fond memories. Isn't that what amateur theatre is all about?

Adrian Harding



THE INSIDE STORY - BY A NEWCOMER

We are delighted to welcome Jack Stevenson as a new member of APS, who cut his acting teeth playing two roles in *Adrian Mole*. He shares his experiences with us....

Amateur dramatics is always something that I have had a passion for, and during my first visit to the Sherborne Studio Theatre to watch *Betrayal*, I remarked how fun and exciting it must be to be on stage. Luckily Bev was in the theatre that evening, and I was contacted to play Barry Kent, a meat-headed bully who hopefully couldn't be more different from myself. Then, before rehearsals had even started, I was asked to play Nigel instead.... and then both Nigel AND Kent! Cue panic!

My fear and nerves were immediately quashed: the welcome I received was one of the warmest of my life. Rehearsals came and went, songs were incorporated, and eventually we were stood in the theatre on opening night.

I was as ready as I was going to be. The adrenaline was flowing and the cast were hyping each other up. There was a buzz in the air which I thrived off. This wasn't a rehearsal any more. I couldn't stop and re-try a scene. I couldn't grab my script or ask for Bev's advice. It was all on us to ensure that the audience left happy. I don't know if it was nerves or excitement, but it got

me through and left me itching for more.

To summarise: I have thoroughly enjoyed my time during this production of *Adrian Mole*. I cannot speak highly enough of the cast and crew and the welcome that they have provided, and although the name is the "Amateur Players of Sherborne" there is nothing amateur about any of them. They have saved me and guided me on many occasions throughout the production, and for this I cannot say thank you enough.

**Jack Stevenson, aka Nigel,
aka Barry Kent**



A happy family of Moles!

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome **Maureen Nethercott, Mike Stanley, Tracey Brown, Iszy Harvey, Ian Berry, Charlotte Berry and Anna Carter-Brown** as new members of APS. We hope you will have a long and active association with us, and look forward to seeing you at APS events, and either on, or behind the scenes in future productions. Membership is currently very buoyant - since September we have welcomed no fewer than 14 new members, and the total number of paid-up members is now 89.

100 CLUB

It is a pleasure to welcome **Jan Pain** as a new member of the 100 Club.

As we regularly report, the 100 Club exists to give vital support to our fund-raising efforts on behalf of the Theatre, and in its short existence we have already raised nearly £1500. But there are plenty of tickets remaining, and more than a half of the total of APS members have not yet joined up - **please do so as soon as you can**. The 100 Club, as of now, raises around £2000 per year, which is ring-fenced to fund our ambition to instal new seating. If all remaining APS members who have not yet joined, were to join the 100 Club, we would raise around £5000 each year, and our new seating would soon be within our grasp.

Please see "Support Us" on the website for details of how to join, or email sst100club@gmail.com

The most recent draw took place on February 11th, and the winning ticket-holder received a prize of £35.20. The next draw will take place on April 8th.

NEXT APS EVENT - PLAYREADING, APRIL 5TH

Art, by Yasmina Reza, won awards for Best Comedy in the 1990s in both Paris and London. *The Times* described it as "remarkably wise, witty and intelligent". It combines two abiding themes: what we count as 'art', and how we value it; the nature of friendship, and how we define ourselves through our relationships with others. The dialogue is simultaneously lively, thought-provoking and funny, and the play culminates in an

action both shocking and hilarious, followed by a final profound contemplation.

Art is written for three male characters, all well established in life, neither very young nor very old, but it is not impossible that at least one of these parts could be adapted and played by a woman. It would be interesting to hear how that sounds. The play is scheduled to be staged by APS in September, directed by Graham Smith.

An informal reading of the play will take place in the theatre at 7.30 on April 5th.

(This is not an audition: that will happen later, probably in May, and members will be notified.)

All APS members and friends are welcome to attend the playreading on the 5th and to participate (or not) - further details will be emailed out in a few days.

This will be an entertaining read for anyone, prospective cast members or otherwise.

MORE NOMINATIONS

Following our extraordinary FIVE nominations for Rose Bowl Awards last Autumn, we are delighted to announce that we have received further recognition for two of our most recent productions. The National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) have nominated ***Billy Liar*** for the award for BEST COMEDY PRODUCTION, and ***Betrayal*** for the award for BEST DRAMA PRODUCTION. These honours come as no

surprise to us, given the resoundingly complimentary reports received, as well as the hugely positive audience feedback. Nevertheless it is wonderful news, and we look forward to being able to report further good news when the actual awards are announced at a ceremony on May 20th. Congratulations to the directors, Jessica Colson and Graham Smith, and the casts, of both productions.

APS APPAREL

This year's must-have fashion items can now be yours for a bargain price! Yes, APS sweatshirts (£17.40) and polo shirts (£12), embroidered with the APS logo can be ordered in almost any colour, by contacting fiona@kitzok.co.uk

PLANNED....

Art, by Yasmina Reza, directed by Graham Smith, will be performed in September 2023. Shakespeare's ***Twelfth Night***, directed by John Crabtree, will be on a date to be confirmed in November/December 2023, and ***Bouncers*** by John Godber, directed by Sarah Nias, will take place in the Spring of 2024. Full details of all of these will, of course, be published both in *Noises Off* and on the website.

SUMMER PRODUCTION

The casting process for *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* has been successfully completed, and rehearsals are about to begin, ahead of performances on June 5th-10th. We are excited once again to be introducing several new faces to APS, and

look forward to working on our interpretation of this fascinating and absorbing work. More details will follow in due course, on the website, by email, and in *Noises Off*. Tickets will go on sale on May 8th.

5th - 10th June 2023 at 7.30pm
with 2.30pm matinee on Saturday 10th



Amateur Players of Sherborne present

whose life is it anyway?

by
Brian Clark

directed by
Martin Williams

Sherborne Studio Theatre
Tickets £10 / £12
www.aps-sherborne.co.uk
07786 070093

This amateur production of 'Whose Life Is It Anyway?' is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

GEOFF LEWIS

It was with much sadness that we learned of the recent death of Geoff Lewis. Geoff and his wife Fizz were the leading lights of BADS (Buckland Newton Amateur Dramatic Society) and in addition Geoff will long be remembered in Sherborne for his highly acclaimed 1992 production of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, performed in Sherborne Abbey. In 1995 we managed to persuade him to come and direct for APS for the first time and his production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, performed in the round in the Digby Hall, was a huge success.

Although Fizz and Geoff preferred to concentrate on BADS, they returned to APS several times over the next few years. In 2000 Geoff directed *Country Life* (Geoff's version of Anton Chekov's *Uncle Vanya*), again performed in the round at the Digby Hall. In 2002 Geoff appeared as Mathieu in *Hotel Paradiso* and as Malvolio in our outdoor summer production of *Twelfth Night* the same year. In December 2004 Fizz directed *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomens's Guild Dramatic Society Production of A Christmas*

Carol, in which Geoff played the part of the long-suffering Gordon (playing Mrs Cratchit; Jacob Marley and the bottom half of the *The Ghost of Christmas Present*).

Geoff was a gentle, quietly-spoken, thoughtful man, but when he spoke, you listened. He was kind, warm-hearted and always seemed genuinely pleased to see you. He was also



self-effacing and modest; I think he lacked confidence in some ways, but I never understood why, as he was a very talented actor and one of the best directors I have ever come across. He and Fizz were very much a team and when Geoff was directing, Fizz was always

there in the background supporting him. Geoff would study a play he was going to direct for about a year, and by the time rehearsals started he was familiar with every nuance; by then he knew exactly what he wanted from his actors. However, he had a light touch and his actors hardly knew they were being directed. He never once criticised or raised his voice, but being the fine actor that he was, he had the knack of demonstrating what he wanted very clearly, and could draw out the best in each and every one of his cast.

Geoff spent the latter part of his working life as Clerk to the Court In Dorchester. One of the magistrates remarked after his funeral that Geoff could always be relied on for common sense when it came to deciding what to do with miscreants up before the bench. Geoff is much missed by all of his many friends, and, of course, by his family, Fizz and their sons, Ben and Rupert. Our heartfelt condolences go to them. Rest in peace, my friend.

Mark Lambert



Geoff Lewis: Here (and previous page) as Mathieu in *Hotel Paradiso*

AMATEUR PLAYERS OF SHERBORNE present
William Shakespeare's
Twelfth Night
directed by
Jason
Hepple
Mon. 12th
to
Sat 17th
August
7.30 pm
Gate open
from 6.30 pm
at Newland House, 68 Newland, Sherborne



As Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*) 2002

With Jakki Gregory in rehearsal for *The Farndale Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Production of "A Christmas Carol"* (2004)

