

WHOSE LIFE? SPECIAL

NOISES OFF

WHOSE LIFE IS IT ANYWAY?



The dust has not yet settled fully after *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*, which played to full houses in the second week of June, but there seems to be a unanimous verdict that it was a huge success. From the outset, we knew that filling the theatre would be harder than usual, given the “challenging” nature of the subject. However, with only a handful of seats

unsold on the Monday, and with the matinee performance three-quarters full, such anxiety proved ill-founded. All other houses were full to bursting. The intense focus and concentration of the audiences was extraordinary, and the cast thoroughly deserved the fulsome plaudits which followed. Typical of the messages received from

audience members was: *I watched this thought-provoking production tonight and was moved and challenged and riveted for the entire play. The connections between the characters and the relationships forged on that stage were so real and believable that it was hard to switch off when it came time for the curtain call. The final*

tableau - the lighting, the music and the emotion from each individual - was electrifying and was a fitting end to a powerful and poignant play.

The professional reviews can be read on the APS website: they are stuffed with comments such as “consummate performances” and “an extraordinary cast”. Special mention should be made of Robert Brydges, a newcomer to APS, who gave a bravura portrayal of Ken Harrison, whilst showing extraordinary stamina (and superhuman bladder control), and also of Adrian Harding, bravely and generously stepping in as a last-minute replacement in the substantial, and tricky, role of Philip Hill.

VIEW FROM THE STAGE MANAGER:

Whose Life? was a risky and bold choice of play: the hospital setting and the concentration on moral and legal arguments demanded of the audience could have made it a difficult

watch. And asking an amateur (or indeed any) actor to remain absolutely immobile, save for his head, under the lights for 3 hours and at the same time portray a range of emotions via half the lines in the play was itself a gamble. The cheers that hailed Robert Brydges’ extraordinary performances showed how supremely he rose to the challenge. I had never before seen such unwavering skill and stamina from an actor.

APS members have to strike a balance: we are all amateurs, we have jobs, commitments and interests elsewhere, but alongside the teamwork and companionship we know that the reward for our investment of time and energy comes in large part from delivering productions that provide audiences with theatre that is as near professional quality as we can get. This shared purpose and dedication to the cause was clearly evident from my perch beside the stage. Despite the discomfort and cramped backstage space it

was clear that the whole cast, from teenaged to those well into retirement, were committed to getting right every detail of their respective roles, every time. This was my first time as SM, but the cast eased the load for me. All I really had to do was admire the clockwork turning, as a well-drilled team devoted themselves to doing justice to the script and the audience experience.

Martin Williams took on a lot of responsibility by putting this play forward. It took months of perseverance, set adjustments and sourcing of props to make it a success. It was not easy. He is vindicated by the ticket sales (late bookers disappointed yet again when they came up against sell-outs), the rapt silences during the emotional peaks of the play, the reviews (“stunningly brilliant”), and the comments we heard on stage during the applause (“excellent!”, “wow!”). The bar has been raised yet further for future productions. We’ll be up for it.

Graham Smith



Bev Taylor-Wade, Sara Danesh-Pour

Robert Brydges, Charlotte Berry





Sara Danesh-Pour, Annalise Carter-Brown



Robert Brydges, Liam Beard

WLIIA? – FROM OUR NEWEST AND YOUNGEST ACTOR

In *Noises Off*, we always like where possible to highlight the work, the response and the opinions of our newest members. It helps to stop us getting either stale or complacent! We are very grateful to Charlotte, who played Nurse Kay Sadler, and who is still a school student, for giving us her viewpoint:

Wow, what an experience! I don't know where to start. Amateur dramatics has always been a big part of my life, and I am very pleased that now includes APS. I first heard of APS when doing a quick search for amdram in the local area and when I saw that they were doing Whose Life Is It Anyway? with the auditions coming soon, I immediately got in contact with Martin as the play looked both challenging and exciting, and I imagined that there was a large scope for both comedy and tragedy

within the play. We got through the audition process and got to the read-through where Martin was kind enough to supply wine and cheese, a gesture that we were made well aware was not going to be the case for every rehearsal! The rehearsals were brilliant as the regulars of APS were introduced warmly to the new members, characters were starting to develop, and the props and the set began to arrive and build the perfect hospital atmosphere. And then

it came to opening night, and what an opening night it was! I was so nervous, as was everyone I think, and yet what a great start to such an enjoyable week. Thank you so much for such a wonderful opportunity; it has been amazing to get to know such a demanding and thought-provoking script while also working with extremely talented and kind-hearted people. I hope to work with you all again in the future.

Charlotte Berry



The Moment of Truth!

NEXT PRODUCTION - "ART"

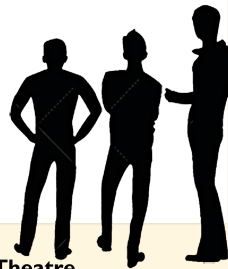
Our next production will be *Art*, by Yasmina Reza, which will be performed on Monday 18th - Saturday 23rd September. Auditions and casting have taken place successfully, and rehearsals are already under way. Tickets will go on sale on August 21st

Art is a comedy that raises questions about art and friendship. Set in Paris, the play revolves around three friends, Serge, Marc, and Yvan. Serge, indulging his penchant for modern art, buys

Amateur Players of Sherborne present

ART

by Yasmina Reza



directed by Graham Smith

Sherborne Studio Theatre

Mon 18th - Sat 23rd September, 7.30 pm

Sat 23rd September, 2.30 pm



www.aps-sherborne.co.uk 07786 070093

This amateur production of Art is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

a large, extremely expensive painting that is in fact completely white. Marc is horrified, and their previously solid 15-year friendship starts to suffer considerable strain as a result of their differing opinions about what constitutes "art". Yvan, caught in the middle of the conflict, tries to please and mollify both of them, but his attempts only serve to attract his friends' criticism for his vacillation and apparent lack of opinion.

NEW MEMBER

We are delighted to welcome **Jake Harrison** as a new member 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 16 new members; the total number of paid-up members is now 90.

NEWS FROM THE SST 100 CLUB

We are also delighted to welcome **Lynne Doodney** and **Fred Few** as new members 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 over £2100. 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](http://www.aps-sherborne.co.uk), or email ssst1100club@gmail.com

The most recent draw took place on June 10th, and the winning ticket-holder received a prize of £38.20. They very generously returned a portion of the prize to further support the theatre funds.

The next draw will take place on August 12th.

WINTER PRODUCTION - "TWELFTH NIGHT"

Twelfth Night or What You Will, is one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. It is not clear exactly when it was written, but the consensus is that it reached the stage in or about 1601, and, as the title suggests, it was intended to be staged as a conclusion to the Christmas festive season.

The play centres on the twins Viola and Sebastian who are separated during a shipwreck. Viola, who disguises herself as the pageboy, Cesario, falls in love with her employer Duke Orsino, who at the start of the play is wooing Countess Olivia. But, on meeting Cesario, Olivia falls head over heels in love with her thinking she is a personable young man. From this point on, the scene is set for a series of comic

cross-sexual complications. In a series of sub-plots, we are introduced to Olivia's pompous, officious steward Malvolio and her permanently sozzled uncle Sir Toby Belch together with his foolish friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

Although it is generally regarded as a romantic comedy, looking at from a 21st century perspective, *Twelfth*

Night is in many ways a dark and cruel play. It also places an increased emphasis on questions of sexual ambiguity, androgyny, gender identity and unrequited love.

Nevertheless, *Twelfth Night* is a joyous, witty play with memorable scenes, classic scenes and colourful characters.

There will be a reading of the play on Wednesday 5th July at 7.30 in the Sherborne Studio Theatre to which all are very welcome.

Auditions will be held later that month.

As this will prove to be a popular production, performances will take place in an extended run from 30th November to 2nd December and from 4th to 9th December 2023.

Twelfth Night
or **What You Will**
by **William Shakespeare**

Amateur Players of Sherborne

directed by **John Crabtree**

Sherborne Studio Theatre

Thur 30th Nov - Sat 2nd Dec, 7.30 pm
Mon 4th - Sat 9th Dec, 7.30 pm
Matinée Sat 9th Dec, 2.30 pm

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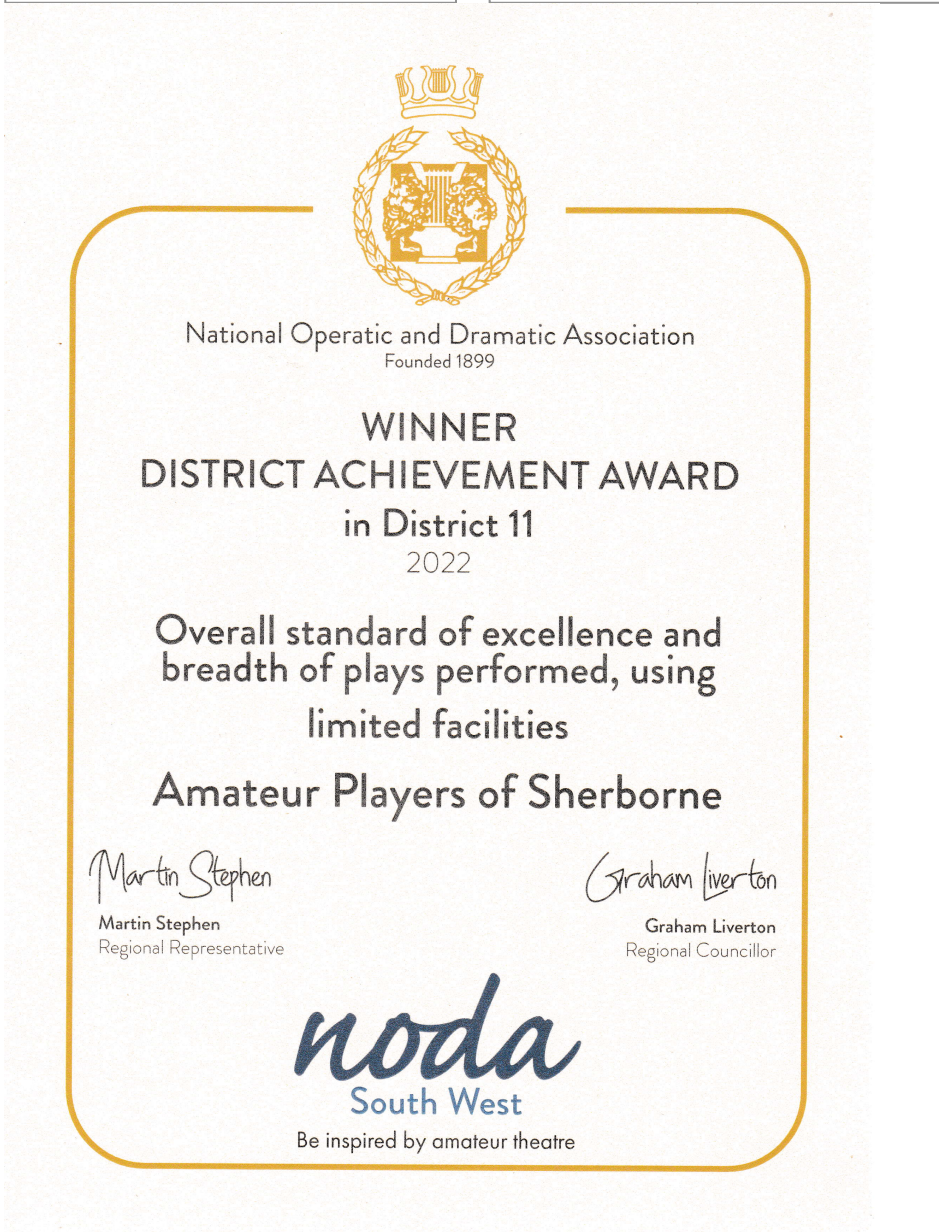
OUR LATEST ACCOLADE

We are very pleased to announce that our much-decorated society has received yet another award - the NODA District Achievement Award, which, specifically, was awarded for “Overall standard of excellence and

breadth of plays performed, using limited facilities.”
 The citation read as follows: During 2022 the Amateur “Players of Sherborne staged four plays (*Educating Rita, Billy Liar, Keeping Our End Up* and *Betrayal*) which, in the wake of the pandemic

was an achievement in itself. What makes this society particularly worthy of the award is the range of style encompassed by these very different plays, the surmounting of the restrictions imposed by the small space available, and above all the quality of the productions.

What is apparent is the consistently high standard achieved through the year in direction, acting, set and technical elements. Each production told the story with clarity, conviction and creativity and superb teamwork was demonstrated by all. The acting, in particular, was excellent, frequently worthy of a professional company. The relatively small stage was used, with great creativity, to maximum effect, and made to punch above its size. The very high standard extended to the Front of House, which was brilliantly managed on each of the performances I attended.”



Martin Stephen
 (Regional Representative,
 NODA South-West)

"A WIFE FOR ALL REASONS"



On June 14th, we all enjoyed a play reading in the Sherborne Studio Theatre, which took us back to Tudor times.

A Wife for all Reasons describes the turmoil at the court of Henry VIII from the point of view of his wives. The play comprises six monologues, one for each of his queens; "Divorced, Beheaded, Died, Divorced, Beheaded, Survived." Each one also contains a poem within it, which is read at the start of each queen's speech and is then cleverly woven throughout the delivery.

The fascination with Henry and his six wives will be forever enduring and, seen from the woman's point of view, it gives the familiar "history lesson" a different perspective too.

A Wife for all Reasons was recommended to APS by the NODA Regional Councillor,

Graham Liverton, who had seen it first performed by the Torrington Players in October 2019 and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was received enthusiastically by the audience, and was awarded a NODA Certificate of Excellence. On that occasion, the monologues were performed to capacity audiences in the Oak Room of the Torrington Town Hall, which, as the name suggests, is an oak-panelled room holding about forty people. Since the monologues are quite intimate, Graham considered that a small venue such as the Sherborne Studio Theatre would be an ideal setting for an unusual performance of this type.

We were expecting eight or nine people to turn up for a reading on a baking hot June evening. This would have easily given us enough to work with. However, in the end, it

attracted 20 APS members and some new faces. Each took a fair share of the script so everyone could have a bash at a part and make their own unique contribution. The mix of voices and personalities added welcome colour to the spoken performance and brought the script to life.

Feedback at the end was universally positive, and it could have been cast three times over. The plan now is to perform the play on stage in short run of three performances early in 2024, accompanied by mulled wine and mince pies as a 'Winter Warmer'. The proposed dates for these shows are **Thursday - Saturday January 18th - 20th 2024**, at 7.30pm.

Adrian Harding

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

ART

by Yasmina Reza
Directed by Graham Smith
18th - 23rd September 2023

TWELFTH NIGHT

by William Shakespeare
Directed by John Crabtree
30th November - 9th December
2023

A WIFE FOR ALL REASONS

by Stef Easton
Directed by Adrian Harding
18th - 20th January 2024

BOUNCERS

by John Godber
Directed by Sarah Nias
March 2024

Other plays under consideration for play-reading and possible performance during 2024 are:

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

by Alan Ayckbourn

SYLVIA

by A. R. Gurney

THEFT

by Eric Chappell

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

by Oscar Wilde

These "candidate" plays are likely to be trialled as play-readings, and we are also likely to be seeking offers from prospective Directors.

AGM AND SUMMER PARTY

All APS members are cordially invited to the **Annual General Meeting**, which will take place in the Sherborne Studio Theatre at 7.30pm on Friday 21st July 2023.

The meeting will be followed by our annual **Summer Party**. Please make a note of the date - more details will follow

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

We are very lucky indeed to have acquired a copy of the catalogue in which the original Coombe Baptist Church - latterly reincarnated as the Sherborne Studio Theatre - was first advertised for sale as a prefabricated corrugated iron building in the 1880s. Amongst the fascinating descriptions of this "product" by the manufacturers, we find that "the advantages of (such buildings) are at once so apparent it hardly becomes necessary to point them out.

On the ground of CLEANLINESS they have no equal. They are NEAT in appearance. The risk from FIRE is minimised, and from an ECONOMICAL POINT OF VIEW they are cheaper, commensurately, than any other form of temporary structures." The manufacturers, William Cooper Limited, of 751 Old Kent Road, London, would no doubt be proud to think that one of their "temporary" buildings is still going strong after more than 140 years -

and would also consider that the price paid - £300 - was quite a bargain! (£300 was the price "erected complete". If our predecessors had collected it from Sherborne Station and erected it themselves, it would have been a snip at £200!) We are extremely grateful to SST 100 Club member Andrew Wallace for kindly donating the complete catalogue to APS for our archives.

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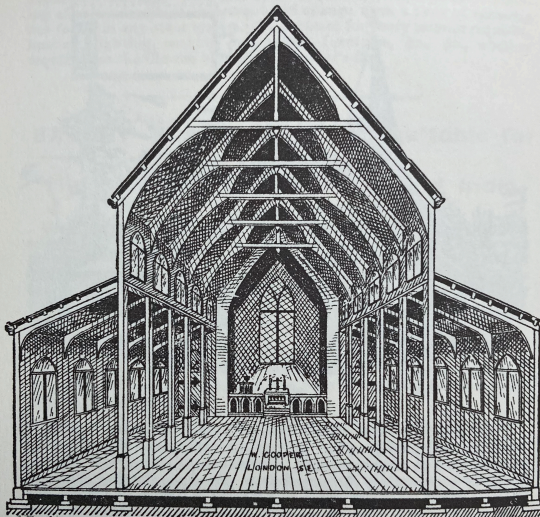
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Sectional Interior View of No. 276.



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