

NOISES OFF

THANK YOU, MALCOLM!

It is with great pleasure that we are able to report probably the most exciting development for APS in recent years. As announced in our President's Report to the AGM on 21st July (see below), Malcolm Cockburn, one of our longest-standing members, and the present owner of the Theatre, has taken the extraordinarily generous step of making a gift of the building to the APS in perpetuity. As tenants, we had already been benefiting from extremely advantageous terms, by way of a peppercorn rent. Malcolm's latest act of kindness means that any uncertainty about our future home has been removed. Our President, Mark Lambert, included the following tribute of gratitude to Malcolm in his Report:

Malcolm has been a member of The Players for far longer than I have. In fact more or less twice as long, as he first joined nearly 60 years ago. From 1964 to 1985 he took part in Salad Days, Present Laughter, The Boy Friend, An Ideal Husband, Not Now Darling, A Hundred Years Old, Without Prejudice, Outside Edge, Private Lives and Gaslight. Then, for about 15 years Malcolm was not an active member – I suspect he may have moved away for a while. But in 2002 he reappeared to play a small but totally unforgettable part in One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (ask him about that role). He followed that up with roles in Julius Caesar, When We Are Married, A Ghost on Tiptoe and Busman's Honeymoon. Many of you will remember him in his last role as the Narrator in

our 2016 production of Great Expectations, 52 years after his first appearance on the APS stage. And, of course, his is the voice you hear before every performance in this theatre, pointing out the fire exits and loos to the audience and exhorting them to turn off their phones.

So, Malcolm's interest in and loyalty to APS goes back a very long time. And that loyalty has been now been demonstrated in spades. Late last year, in consultation with the other Trustees, Malcolm decided that he would hand this building over to APS. The necessary legal steps have been in process for some time, and I ... can confidently take enormous pleasure in telling you that very shortly the Sherborne Studio Theatre will be the property of APS.

THE AGM

Upwards of 20 members of APS came along to the Annual General Meeting and Summer Party, on 21st July.

The Minutes of the meeting have been emailed out to all members, and are also available to see on the website. What follows is a very brief summary of some salient points. As well as the election of a new Committee (see below), the President presented his Report, focusing on the acquisition by APS of the Sherborne Studio Theatre, and on our gratitude to Malcolm Cockburn. The outgoing Chair, Jessica Colson, outlined the success of our four productions during the year, and reflected on the relatively healthy state of our finances, which the Treasurer, Sarah Webster, subsequently presented in detail.

Two minor alterations to the wording of the Constitution were agreed (one of which will have the effect of reducing the size of the Committee in future years).

Other Business included discussions on discounted tickets, air-conditioning, solar panels, publicity and the need to have first-aiders present during performances.

Once formal business was concluded, all enjoyed the refreshments provided (for which, many thanks to Bev Taylor-Wade), and the Bar was open for all.

THE COMMITTEE

2023-4

We are hugely indebted to the following former committee members, who stepped down from their positions at the AGM. Many thanks for all your time and hard work:

Jessica Colson
Adrian Harding
Adrian Hole
Graham Smith
Roger Chadbourne

The new committee for the coming year was elected as follows:

Sarah Webster
(*Chairperson*)
Richard Culham
(*Secretary*)
Sara Danesh-Pour
(*Treasurer*)
Martin Williams
(*Membership Secretary*)
Richard Jones
Bev Taylor-Wade
Robert Brydges
Nick Baker
David Pileri

TWELFTH NIGHT

As we go to press, the auditions process for our December production of *Twelfth Night* is under way, and nearing completion.

The final auditions will be held in the Theatre at 7.00pm on Wednesday July 26th. It's not too late to throw your hat into the ring - just contact John Crabtree at jcrabbers@aol.com

Please note that it is no longer the intention to perform the show over more than one week. The performances will be between December 4th-9th 2023 (only).

ART

Rehearsals for *Art* are in full swing (and going very well), and the set construction is nearing completion.

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 a large, extremely expensive painting that is in fact completely white. Marc

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.amateurtheatricals.co.uk

TICKET PRICES

Nobody needs to be reminded of the fact that the cost of living is rising rapidly. At APS we are obviously not immune to this: we have been hit very hard by increases in the costs of heating and lighting, and of insurance. What might be less well known is the fact that a substantial slice (sometimes in the region of £600 - £700) of our income for performances has to be handed over for licence fees (royalties) and the purchase of scripts. These costs have also escalated of late.

The Committee has therefore taken the reluctant decision to increase the price of tickets with immediate effect. For evening performances, Standard seats will now be priced at £12, and Premium seats (front row, and raised rows) will be £14. Matinée performances will be £11 and £13.

THE BAR

We recently took yet another step in the development of the Sherborne Studio Theatre as an attractive and viable theatrical venue.

Until now, in order to sell alcoholic drinks to audience members - which forms an important part of our revenue - we have had to apply to the County Council for a temporary licence separately

for each production. This is both a bureaucratic and expensive process. The Committee therefore took the decision to apply for a permanent Premises Licence, and we are glad to report that this process was successful. We are now fully licensed!

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

September 18th - 23rd 2023 - *Art* by Yasmina Reza, directed by Graham Smith

December 4th - 9th 2023 - *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare directed by John Crabtree

January 2024 - *A Wife for all Reasons* by Stef Easton. Directed by Adrian Harding.

March 2024 - *Bouncers* by John Godber. Directed by Sarah Nias.

June 2024 - either: *Relatively Speaking* by Alan Ayckbourn, *Sylvia* by A R Gurney or *Theft* by Eric Chappell

September 2024 - *My Mother Said I Never Should* by Charlotte Keatley. (Director needed)

December 2024 - *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, directed by John Crabtree.

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.

The play is being performed on September 18th - 23rd, with tickets going on sale on Monday August 21st. As always, you are urged to buy your tickets early, to avoid disappointment.

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, or email sst1100club@gmail.com

The next draw will take place on August 12th, and the lucky winner will receive a prize of nearly £40.

NEXT PLAYREADING - "THEFT"

Imagine returning from a pleasant anniversary celebration to find your houses has been burgled. In this witty thriller the culprit is still in the house and , for a while, he convinces the returning couples that he is a policeman. Unmasked as the thief, Spriggs reveals he knows a number of uncomfortable truths that disrupt two seemingly happy marriages and one formerly strong friendship.

Our next social playreading evening (*Theft* by Eric Chappell) will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday August 15th, hosted by Jessica Colson. As always, all APS members and friends are invited to come along and enjoy a relaxed evening in good company. You can join in the reading for not, as you please - and our newly-licensed bar will be open. *Theft* is a "candidate play" for possible performance on our stage next Summer.

An email reminder will be sent out nearer the date of the playreading evening.

FREE TICKETS - DANCE AT STURMINSTER NEWTON

APS members have been invited to benefit from FREE TICKETS to watch *Growing Pains*, a performance by the Project Dance Company, at The Exchange, Sturminster Newton, on Saturday July 29th. The show is described as: *a heart rending original story told entirely through dance. Written for an audience of all ages, this moving piece of dance theatre is guaranteed to take you on a journey reminding you of what it means to live, love and share your life with others. Growing Pains movingly tells interweaving stories about love, loss, youth, hope and the redemptive power of art. Following a sell out premiere last summer, a cast of over 30 young artists present a show like no other. One that has been made for you, whether you love the arts, or have never stepped foot inside a theatre. "A story that will move anyone" "Poignant, honest and gritty subject matters interrogated in the most human of ways"*

To take advantage of this offer, and to join other APS members at Sturminster, please email Adrian Harding: anharding@btinternet.com