



# NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 1999

The new season is under way and is clearly going to be a busy one.



Three main productions and two workshop productions are planned, in addition to the regular players evenings. Do have your diaries to hand as you read on.

So far this year we have **10 new members** (marked in bold type below), to whom we extend a warm welcome. If you haven't done so already, please pay your subscription soon; otherwise I'm afraid you will not receive any further Newsletters.

## Future productions

### 2000

Spring	<i>The Constant Wife</i> (Somerset Maugham).	Director: Jessica Colson
Summer	<i>As You Like It</i> (William Shakespeare).	Director: Jason Hepple
Autumn	<i>Uncle Vanya</i> (Anton Chekhov).	Director: Geoff Lewis

### 2001

Spring	<i>Lost and Found</i> (Jason Hepple).	Director: Jason Hepple
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## Players events

The opening night went with a swing and as the Crown had unexpectedly laid 40 places around the table, it was fortuitous that exactly 40 people turned up. The entertainment consisted of a number of Franglais sketches featuring Gill and Tony Manns and Jason Hepple, songs from Jennie Ward and Amanda McEvoy, accompanied by Jason on violin and yours truly on guitar, and a short play by Jason entitled *Sitting it Out*, and featuring Elsie Lombard and Jennie Ward as two old ladies in a nursing home.

The season of workshops got off to a great start with John Sutherland-Smith's excellent drama workshop. Improvisation was the theme of the evening and those who came found it both entertaining and informative. Among other things we learned the nuances of high and low status and how to cope with a completely unknown situation.

Do make a note in your diary for April 5th next year, when there will be another acting workshop and in the meantime why not come to the directing workshop on November 5th, when Michael Baatz will lead an exploration of the activity we call directing. Even if you are not actively considering directing a play, you may well learn something about the process of directing that could be of help to you as an actor.

Jason Hepple's 'Face the Music' was a great success. Jason, aided by the lovely Louise Lambert as scorer and the rather less lovely present writer as button pusher, hosted a remarkably good facsimile of the television panel game, with musical clips ranging from the easy to identify (The opening chords of Beethoven's 5th) to the apparently impossible (Gee Officer Krupke played backwards). The success of the show was in no small part due to the erudition of

## Membership 1999-2000

(24th October 1999)

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Michael Baatz           | Joan Miller            |
| Graham Baker            | <b>Joy Parkinson</b>   |
| Barbara Beak            | Monica Parsons         |
| John Bowles             | Dod Pearson            |
| <b>Jan Bridgeman</b>    | Anne Russell           |
| Daphne Clapperton       | Jim Schofield          |
| <b>Charlotte Colson</b> | Bob Service            |
| Jessica Colson          | Jill Service           |
| Steve Evans             | David Smith            |
| Tony Field              | Sylvia Smith           |
| Margaret Field          | Eve Snell              |
| Suzanne Ford            | Anthony Stephens       |
| Sue Francis             | Mytyl Stephens         |
| Jo Freestone            | <b>Jane Stein</b>      |
| Mark Freestone          | Patricia Stewart       |
| Pauline Gardner         | <b>John Sutherland</b> |
| Gregory                 | <b>Lucy Sutherland</b> |
| Jakki Gregory           | John Sutherland-Smith  |
| Freda Hance             | Peter Thomas           |
| Jean Harrap             | Iris Trump             |
| Patricia Harris         | Jack Tucker            |
| Marilyn Hawkins         | Vivian Vale            |
| Peter Hawkins           | Janet Vincent          |
| Jason Hepple            | Jennie Ward            |
| Adrian Hole             | Anthea Watson          |
| Jill Hudson             | <b>Aysha Webb</b>      |
| Anna Jerzykowski        | <b>Peter Welby</b>     |
| Lucy Kneller            | Arthur Whittaker       |
| Louise Lambert          | Jean Whittaker         |
| Madeline Lambert        | Meg Whittingdale       |
| Mark Lambert            |                        |
| Tamsin Lambert          |                        |
| Elsie Lombard           | <b>Life members</b>    |
| Amanda McEvoy           | Jack Dodge             |
| Gill Manns              | Meg Hulme              |
| Tony Manns              | Mary Micklewright      |
| Colin Mayes             | Margery Morgan         |
| <b>Edward Messinger</b> | Gerald Pitman          |
| Kathy Messinger         | Pam Richardson         |
| <b>Tim Messinger</b>    | Joy Saunders           |
| Kieran Millar           | Hrolf Trump            |

## Where were you?

The notice on Prompt Corner announced a 'Drama Workshop. "Shall I go?", I thought. "See how I feel on the night". "What other things should I be doing out of duty rather than enjoyment?". I'm sure we all asked ourselves the same questions as well as thinking "What's the weather like?" and in some cases "Oh, the football is on tonight". But I decided to go and then my next problem was what I was expected to wear to such a function? Is it the form to turn up in sweatshirt and legwarmers and call everyone 'luvvie'.

Actually, no. John Sutherland-Smith led an informative and entertaining evening of drama improvisation, and opened up our minds to some things we probably knew and didn't realise, and some things we didn't know. The session began with an insight to 'blocking', which in this context had nothing to do with moves. We had to experience showing a negative reaction to the person we were partnered with when they tried to approach us with an inquiry. This proved more difficult than you would think—we are obviously all too nice in APS! As we ran through John's agenda for the evening, the loudest sound was of the laughter from everyone. But it was communal laughter; no one person was singled out for amusement.

It is always a problem to know whether an APS evening is really your thing, but why not take your courage in both hands and give it a try next time. You may find your trepidation turns into a fun time, socially and from the acting angle.

Suzanne Ford

# ARCADIA

by Tom Stoppard

Thomasina Coverly	Rebecca Hill
Septimus Hedge	Mark Freestone
Jellaby	Michael Baatz
Ezra Chater	Kieran Millar
Richard Noakes	Peter Thomas
Lady Croom	Madeline Lambert
Captain Brice RN	Peter Welby
Augustus Coverly	Edward Messinger
Hannah Jarvis	Amanda McEvoy
Chloë Coverly	Jan Bridgeman
Bernard Nightingale	Steve Evans
Valentine Coverly	Tim Messinger
Gus Coverly	Edward Messinger

**Director** Tony Field  
**Stage Manager** Margaret Field

the two teams of panelists, with Jane Stein and Tony Stephens on one side, and Peter Thomas and Tim Messinger on the other. We were all very impressed with their knowledge of music—on occasions they were even able to correct the host, and Peter Thomas, whose musical knowledge turned out to be positively encyclopaedic, even managed to get Gee Officer Krupke! The teams were well matched and it was a close fought contest throughout, with Peter and Tim winning by 58 points to 57.

Jason hopes to present another 'Face the Music' evening next year, and judging by the audience reaction this time the evening could well become one of the most popular of the season.

## Future productions

*Arcadia* is now fully cast—those listed in the last Newsletter have now been joined by Tim and Edward Messinger, much to Tony

Field's relief. Des Armour is constructing the set, Adrian is planning the lighting and I, together with Jason Hepple, am working on the sound and music. Robert Doling has designed an excellent poster and volunteers will shortly be needed for distributing these; contact Tony Manns (01935 4742906) who is handling the publicity. Anyone who would like to help front-of house, please contact Tony Stephens (01935 477567).

For some time now production planning has been a somewhat last minute affair—a situation that has worried successive committees. This year, however, we have at last got our collective act together and productions are now planned through to Spring 2001 (see the panel overleaf) and we hope to continue this level of forward planning.

## The Man Born to be King

By Dorothy L. Sayers

The twelve plays, first broadcast in 1941/42, will be read as a series of unrehearsed play readings to mark the end of the second millennium since the birth of Christ.

I was asked by APS to arrange a play reading one Easter several years ago and chose parts of some of the plays to tell the Easter story — I remember that we all enjoyed the evening. Other readings at Cheap Street Church followed and now we have a chance to read the entire play cycle at this appropriate time. In order to complete the cycle before Pentecost 2000, I will start on Sunday December 19th at 7.45 p.m. in the Cheap Street Church Hall, continuing on the second and fourth Sundays from January 9th to June 4th. As up to 40 voices are needed, I would like to think that many Players will join me in making this a memorable reading of a fine work.

*Margaret H. Field*

## Forthcoming evenings

I have already mentioned the Directing Workshop on November 5th; do come if you can. On Wednesday 8th December, just after the autumn production finishes, an additional evening to the programme has been arranged at 7.30 at the Cheap Street Church Hall. 'ACT IV US' will be an open evening whose purpose is to discover hitherto unknown or forgotten actors. We hope to attract members who have not acted for some time and may feel they are being overlooked and members who do not normally act but who feel they would like to give it a try to find out what they can do. The evening will also be widely advertised, in the hope of attracting potential new members. If any of you has a friend who you think might be interested, do encourage them to come along.

The session will consist of a series of extracts from plays, each about ten minutes in length, and will be led by Jason Hepple,

## Prompt Corner

7.30 p.m. at The Crown Inn, unless otherwise stated.

Wednesday 10th November  
**Workshop on directing**  
Led by Michael Baatz  
Griffiths Room,  
Digby Memorial Hall, Digby Rd

Saturday 27th November  
**Move into Digby Hall**

Thur. 2nd, Fri. 3rd, Sat. 4th December  
**Arcadia performances**  
Digby Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Sunday 5th December  
**Strike set and get out of Digby Hall**

Wednesday 8th December  
**ACT IV US**  
A chance to try your hand at acting  
Cheap Street Church Hall

Friday 17th December  
**Christmas Party**  
With an entertainment entitled '1000 years of Christmas', arranged by Patricia Stewart.  
Silver Birches, The Avenue, Sherborne.  
Food £2.50 per person

Sunday 19th December  
**A Man Born to be King**  
The first of a cycle of play readings  
Arranged by Margaret Field  
Cheap St. Church Hall, 7.45 p.m.

Tuesday 11th January  
**Give us A Clue**  
Devised by Meg Whittingdale  
Cheap St Church Hall

Wednesday 26th January  
**Rehearsed play readings**  
Arranged by David Smith and Steve Evans  
Cheap St Church Hall

## Theatre Goers Club

This club, which is run by Jean Harrap, was originally started for the benefit of APS members. Today, however, few Players even know about it and Jean runs it as a completely separate organisation. The annual membership fee is £4.00, which covers the cost of photocopying and regular mailings to members, and at present the membership is around 80, which is as many as Jean feels she can cope with; there is in fact a waiting list. However, Jean writes as follows:

"I book performances each month, excluding August, December and January (weather and pantomimes!). We go to Salisbury, Bath, Bristol or Poole—to matinées usually on a Saturday. We leave Sherborne at 11.00 a.m. to allow for time for lunch and some free time in the town we are visiting.

The plays I book tend to be 'middle of the road', as most of my group are looking for a pleasant day out. I make a provisional booking to be confirmed a month before the performance and I frequently have seats available for anyone interested. If you think you might like to join us, will you give me your phone number and I will get in touch with details if I can offer you a ticket."

Jean's telephone number is 01935 814278.

led by Jessica Colson, David Smith and Steve Evans, and these four will be on the lookout for talent that they can include in the two rehearsed play readings on January 26th and perhaps the forthcoming spring and summer productions.

So come on all you forgotten actors, backstage people and coffee-makers, you have nothing to lose; this is your opportunity to find out whether or not you might enjoy being on stage and to show others what you can do. We're not looking for 'Rose Bowl' performances, merely an interest in having a go, so even if you find that you hate being on stage or that you really cannot act, it truly doesn't matter; at least you will have tried.

Following this there is the Christmas Party at Silver Birches on December 17th. Food will be provided, as last year, at a charge of £2.50 per person, and Patricia Stewart is arranging an entertainment. After Christmas don't forget to make a note in our diary for 11th January of 'Give Us a Clue', which will, of course, be devised by Meg Whittingdale—always one of the most popular evenings of the year.

#### **Nominations and awards**

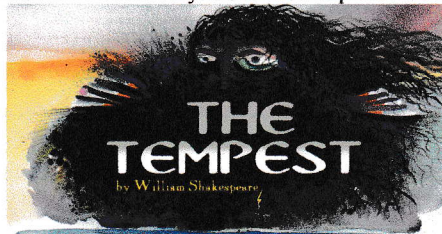
Shortly after the last newsletter went to press the news came in that David Smith had received a richly-deserved Rose Bowl nomination for his portrayal of Spriggs in *Theft*. The nomination was for Best Supporting Performance, which was curious as to us Spriggs was clearly the lead part; the adjudicator maintained, however, that this was the way she saw it.

The award ceremony took place in Bristol on Sunday October 10th and several members of David's 'fan club' attended. Sadly, David did not win the award, which went to an actor who had played Stephano in Kondo Theatre's production of *The Tempest*. But it was clear that David's nomination showed that the panel recognised the high standard of his performance.

This is not the most exciting of evenings to attend, particularly if you don't come away with an award, but it is nonetheless interesting to see who does win and to get a glimpse of the very high standard of productions being staged in the area. In fact David did not come away empty-handed, as he won a prize in the raffle—three bottles of bath essence, which he immediately donated to his director, Margaret Field.

I forgot to mention in the last Newsletter that Jason Hepple is also owed congratulations, as his play *Go to Sleep My Darling* won a special commendation in the original writing section (Geoffrey Whitworth Award) of the Britain and Northern Ireland Drama Festival. We are lucky to have someone of Jason's talent and enthusiasm in our midst.

Music from Amateur Players of Sherborne production of



Compton House, Sherborne (5th, 6th Aug)  
Castle Pantokratoras, Préveza, Greece (13th Aug)  
Ridge Farm, King's Stag (21st Aug)

#### **SIDE 1**

1. Act 1 Scene 1; master, bosun, storm and music; Mendelssohn: Extracts from Fingal's Cave; London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Peter Maag.
2. Handel: Concerto grosso in B flat (Op.3, No 2), Largo (Prospero's theme); English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Raymond Leppard.
3. Lullaby - While you do sleep; Bach: Minuet; arr. Jason Hepple; Tamsin Lambert (vocal).
4. Henryk Górecki: Quasi una Fantasia (String Quartet No.2, Op. 64), II Deciso (Caliban's theme); Kronos Quartet.
5. Full Fathom Five. Bach: Prelude pour la lute; arr. Jason Hepple; Tamsin Lambert (vocal).

6. Respighi: The Birds, Preludio (Royal theme); Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.
7. Respighi: Three Botticelli pictures, La Primavera (Clown theme).
8. Respighi: The Birds, La Columba (Lover's theme).
9. Jig. An original composition by Jason Hepple.
10. Respighi: The Birds, Il cucù (Banquet music).
11. Mozart: Requiem in D minor, III Sequenz, No 5 Confutatis (Harpy music); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan.
12. Respighi: Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite I, No 1 Balletto detto "Il Conte Orlando" (Dance music).
13. Wagner: Der Ring des Nibelungen, The Ride of the Valkyries; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

#### **SIDE 2**

14. Respighi: Three Botticelli pictures, No 3 La Nascita di Venere (Magic theme).
15. Where The Bee Sucks. Bach: Violin sonata in E maj; arr. Jason Hepple; Tamsin Lambert (vocal).
16. Vaughan Williams: Extract from The Lark Ascending, with lark singing (Ariel's theme); Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields.
17. Mendelssohn: Fingal's Cave; London Symphony Orchestra; conducted by Peter Maag
18. Vaughan Williams: The Lark Ascending; Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields, Neville Marriner (conductor); Iona Brown (violin).

Finally, this seems an appropriate place to congratulate Jo and Mark Freestone on their performances in Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society's production of *Sweeney Todd*. Mark showed the extraordinary range of his voice in his polished performance as Signor Pirelli, and his change from suave 'Italian' to streetwise Irish was beautifully accomplished. Jo's performance as Mrs Lovett was a *tour de force*. From the time she first appeared on stage to her fiery death in the oven, she electrified the audience and one could only marvel at her ability to cope with all those words, tunes and movement, most of which she accomplished at high speed. Their performances, combined with those of the other members of the highly talented cast, inventive and slick set changes, excellent orchestration and effective light and sound, made this one of the best productions I have seen at the Octagon.

#### **APS Concert Party**

Following the highly successful musical evening arranged by Kathy Messinger last May, some of us who were involved performed extracts from the evening as a 'cabaret' at the Sherborne Churches Harvest Festival Supper. It had been said after the May evening that this show deserved a wider audience, and in view of this and of the obvious success of our 'cabaret', we now feel we have the nucleus of a Concert Party. The aim is to perform in old people's homes and any other venues we can get ourselves invited to. We hope to widen our range of material and encourage others to join us. Chorus singers are welcome, but we are particularly looking for people pre-

pared to perform as soloists or in small groups (duos, trios, quartets etc). If you feel you have something to contribute and would like to join in the fun, contact Kathy Messinger (01963 363376).

#### **APS mailing list**

The mailing list has recently undergone one of its periodic overhauls. My thanks to all those who have checked names and addresses. Prior to the latest overhaul the number of names on the mailing list stood at 339, and after some deletions and additions it now stands at 334, which is disappointing, as I had hoped to increase the number to over 350. So if you know of anyone who might like to receive advance details of our productions, please do let me have their names and addresses.

#### **Tempest tapes**

Several members have purchased copies of the tape of music used in our production of *The Tempest*. This tape, the contents of which are shown in the panel above, has proved to be very popular. It consists largely of complete pieces of music, rather than the extracts used in the play, although the opening scene and 'The Lark Ascending' extract that accompanied Ariel's final exit are as in the production; complete versions of 'Fingal's Cave' and 'The Lark ascending' have been included at the end of the second side. If anyone would like a copy of this tape (£5.00 each; profits go to APS), I still have some available.

The next Newsletter will appear in December, I hope. Meanwhile, we all wish the director and cast of *Arcadia* every success.

Mark Lambert