



H.A.T.S. SPRING NEWSLETTER 2013

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RECENT PRODUCTIONS

Pantomime 2013 'Jack and the Beanstalk'

Hearty congratulations to Eve Earles & Betty Woodhams and all involved in the panto. This was another great production for HATS - that put bums on seats and has gone a long way towards keeping our theatre viable. What better testament to its success than a congratulatory letter from members of the audience:

I have been asked by the Tavistock Memory Cafe management committee to let you know how much we enjoyed our group visit to this year's pantomime at the matinee on Saturday 2nd February 2013.

It was a delight to be entertained in the classic pantomime tradition. You had chosen an excellent script and we much appreciated all of the clever points of detail which the Director had contrived to introduce. The cast were terrific. So were those responsible for the excellent sets, costume, effects and music. We wonder how many hours of rehearsal were necessary for the chorus to perfect their diction and sing with such clarity, energy and obvious enjoyment.

Nor must I forget the kindness of the front of house staff who went to so much trouble on our behalf, especially when they had to look after those of our members who had slight problems during the performance. In all it was a very successful outing for us. Please thank everyone involved with the production for giving us such a good time and assure them that we will be amongst the first to book next year!

With all good wishes and many thanks, and a special pat for Buttercup.

*Yours sincerely
Alan Payne, Vice Chairman*

National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) SW also had good things to say about the panto. Here is their review:

My first introduction to the HATs Theatre was impressive as I discovered the fantastic theatre they are based in. More impressive is the hard work they have put into it to make this more than a community theatre, but something worthy of professional attention.

But back to the show. My sense of anticipation, largely due to the fantastic venue, was kicked into high gear with the dramatic sound and vision from the video presentation at the beginning. Most of us allow space for future productions in our programmes, but HATS blast you with trailers too! A great example of using all the facilities available to you.

Into the first number and I found my enthusiasm waning a little as the company seemed surprisingly low in energy for the opener and this was something that repeated itself several times. The big company numbers were a bit flat and some extra time spent on vocal arrangements and some simple choreography would give the stage some life.

In stark contrast came the highly energetic Simple Simon, whose quirky charm and great ability to interact with the audience (and improvise at the odd jibe) put the show right back on track. It is in character performance that this society showed off its strength, with additional strong performances from Lady Lotsadosh (was that a NODA long service medal?), the tax collectors (although Leggit must learn not to laugh at his own jokes!), Dawn French Grotviler and that green bean of delight Haricot Vert!

It is to this french emerald of magic that the audience responded with the heartiest laughter, especially when she was being 'in disguise' and her Julie Walters-esque stance had us in fits without tittering a single word! These larger-than-life characters tended to overshadow the other roles, such as Jack and Jill who were solid enough, but not attention grabbers.

There were also a couple of instances where company members' roles were handled well - I particularly noted the 'Old Boy' who spent a of the show dozing or grumbling, suddenly bursting forth onto the stage in full 'Eminem' getup sporting a chainsaw. Great moment!

Plenty of opportunities to get the audience interacting too, with singing, cheering and booing aplenty. On a personal note though, next time can I sit nearer the front, or get someone to throw sweets with a stronger arm – I may be 40, but I'm still a kid at heart!!

Great staging, including the clever use of a house with a hinged front wall that opened to reveal its interior - all painted in true cartoon style. But from the beginning I was wondering what would be done about the beanstalk, I wasn't disappointed! It grew out of its plant pot, encouraged along by dancing fairies, and wound up out of sight, with twisting leaves and branches wound around a glowing green rope light. Very effective! Similarly, there was good use of ultraviolet light for the tap-dancing skeletons number.

The band worked well together to support the company onstage and helped deliver some good solo numbers including Jill's "On My Own", which was a highlight. I would like to see a little more work on timing of introductions to help ease the audience into the number without leaving the company standing waiting for their first lyrics, this is something the MD and director should consider as a 'finishing' touch to keep the pace up.

And that's about it. Hmm. Did I forget someone? Only teasing. Who could stage a panto without a dame?!

Well, HATS certainly found their's to be a force to be reckoned with in Dame Tilly Trott! Always a difficult one, the Dame is a character not to be taken lightly and it is not enough to simply stick a bloke in a dress and recite the lines. Dame TT worked well on stage with the rest of the company (with Jack in particular) and certainly wound the audience up into hysterics, although she tended to avoid being too 'feminine' and this broke the illusion a little. To begin with, I thought her outfits were a little simple, but as each scene unfolded (SO many costume changes!) she became more and more over-the-top and 'fabulous'!

In fact, costumes were of a high standard throughout, especially in the finale.

A quick mention to the giant, who was quite a surprise with his huge head and stilts - no easy job manoeuvring around the stage, set, props and company while in stilts. let alone when you've got a giant's head on too.

Overall HATS did a grand job with Jack & The Beanstalk and their audience let them know that with their roars of laughter. I look forward to seeing how they grow for next year's endeavours!

Ian Goodenough, NODA SW Region

We know we are good, but it is so satisfying when the folks out there tell us so! Please look at the HATS website if you would like to see Rod (Paparazzi) Parrish's photographs of the show, which can be downloaded and printed.

UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

- **Spring Play Farndale Avenue Production of Macbeth 9th – 11th May & 16th – 18th May 2013**

This uproarious comedy introduces the ladies of The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society (FAHETGDS) and their startlingly original production of Macbeth. If you have never seen one of the Farndale series, give yourself a treat and see this one. Produced by Sarah O'Connor

Box office open 22nd April for booking. Doors open: 7.00pm. Show starts: 7.30pm

- **Wizard of Oz by Holsworthy College 27th June – 29th June 2013**

Dress rehearsal 26th June

- **Amanda Brooks Dance Show 12th July 2013**

- **Autumn Play The Right Honourable Gentleman 12th – 14th Sept & 19th – 21st Sept 2013**

- **Panto for 2014** Is there anyone out there that would like to direct our 2014 Panto? The show has to go on to provide funds to keep our theatre afloat. Eve has offered to step into the breach if no one else comes forward. Interested? If so please let Annette know (nettjdennis@yahoo.co.uk) 01409 254757.

THEATRE BUSINESS

- First Aid Cover for events at our theatre has been supplied by St. John's Ambulance up until now with HATS giving a donation for the cover. However because of regional reorganisation there has been a change in policy. Our annual payment for cover will no longer be allowed. We are therefore looking into training our own members - would you be interested in becoming a First Aider? Yes! great! please let Annette know.
- Anna Marshall has joined the committee representing the 'Wardrobe Department'. Jenny Parker has been the representative for many years and has done a sterling job. Many thanks Jenny and welcome Anna.
- A few words from Ron about the changeover of 'management' of the HATS website.
'Having spent the last six years maintaining the Site, I feel the time has come for a change and I am delighted to say that Hannah will be taking over both the design and content of the site, increasingly over the next couple of months. I thank her for volunteering.
When you get a chance, pop over to the website to see our spring paint-job, based on the colour-scheme of the Theatre. For the moment the basic structure is largely unmodified.'

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

- What a night the Dinner and Dance was - plenty of sore feet after boogie-ing the night away. The White Hart provided an excellent meal and Tim Coleman came up trumps with the music. Thank you Fund Raising Committee and here's to next year!
- The Richard Digance show, arranged by the Fund Raising committee, was a very enjoyable evening. Just over 150 attended and went home feeling very relaxed and happy – he had us all singing along as has happened on his two previous appearances. He was very complimentary about our theatre - and hoped to be invited back at some time in the future.
- After the fabulous refurbishment of the dressing rooms, the Fund Raising Committee has the kitchen/greenroom as their next project, which is now underway. Any ideas, materials or help with the work – please contact Phil Hammans or any member of the FundRaising Committee.



MEMBERS' NEWS

- A note from Sarah O'Connor regarding the Spring play:
Plans and rehearsals have started towards the next production and the read-through had us all in stitches! We do still need some help in the props section if anyone has an inclination to participate in that way, as well as the need for a prompt.

Does anyone have any of the following to help us with the production?

- Old copies of The Townswoman magazine?
- A trumpet / bugle / cornet?
- We also need a bird in flight - to look a bit like a hawk of some kind!!
- Also, is anyone willing to make us some jam? We will need about 10 - 12 pots of it!

If you have any of the above or are able to help please contact Sarah O'Connor on 01409 259409

The members of the cast are:

George Peach - Ron Lester

Mrs Reece (Lady MacDuff, Doctor) - Sue Painter

Thelma (MacBeth, Ross) - Terina Ellacott

Henry (MacBeth, Kings) - Colin Burton

Minnie (Banquo, Lady MacDuff's son) - Sarah Leach

Mrs Davina Plummer - Lucinda Appleby

Dawn (1st witch, porter, 2nd murderer, Duncan, Fleance) - Rachel Valance

Felicity (2nd witch, Seyton, 1st murderer, Malcolm, gentlewoman) - Margaret Salter

Kate (3rd witch, MacDuff, messenger) - Di Sluggett)

- A few words from Ken Tyrrell, who is directing the Autumn play:
The September play will be 'The Right Honourable Gentleman'. This is a true story about the biggest political scandal of the 19th century. It deals with the rise and fall of Sir Charles Dilke, Liberal politician in Gladstone's government in the 1860's. He was a high flyer and generally expected to be the next Prime Minister after Gladstone.

Like many great men of history, he had a penchant for the ladies, and it was this that ultimately brought him down. But were the allegations made against him true?..... The play, brilliantly written by Michael Dyne, has everything: love, wealth, power, lies, vengeance, menace, sex and betrayal.

The reading and casting of the play will be Wed. May 29th (and Thur. May 30th if required). It requires seven men and seven women of all ages. The first rehearsal will be four weeks after this, on Tues. 25th June. Rehearsals will take place every Tues and Thurs, thereafter.

This will be Ken's twelfth production for H.A.T.S. and he believes it to be the best..... by far.

If you like good drama, you will want to be in this! Or else come to see it!

- Committee are looking into having hoodies, polo shirts, 'T' shirts with HATS logo - would you like one? They are still looking into price at the moment, but if your answer is yes! then please let a member of the committee know.
- The NODA South West weekend will be held at Bicton College from Friday evening 19th – 21st July. Cost £130 pp. Workshops include Vocal, Acting, Lighting, Script -Write a show etc. Full details are yet to come through and will be pinned on Theatre notice board when available or contact Annette (01409 254757).

- Please remember to let us have your email address so that the newsletter can be sent without postage and stationery costs. Also inform us if you change your address, phone number or email address. Contact the Theatre email on the website, or contact Sue Painter, or Denise Moorley. Many thanks.
- Deadline for next newsletter is Friday 7th June 2013. Send your news and views to share with members and sponsors via HATS website or to Denise Moorley (denisemoorley@hotmail.co.uk) (01409 241033).

