

NOVEMBER 2017

Diary of Events for November - December

- Sat 11th Nov **“Their Finest”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
- Sat 18th -
Sat 25th Nov **“Arsenic & Old Lace”** (Phoenix Theatre Company) 7.30pm
- Sun 26th Nov **“Hidden Figures”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
- Thurs 7th -
Sat 9th Dec **Xmas Show** (Phoenix Theatre Singers) 7.30pm
- Sun 10th Dec **“The Accountant”** (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
- Fri 15th Dec **Theatre Xmas Party** 7.30pm

(Members’ calendars for November and December are at the back of this Newsletter.)

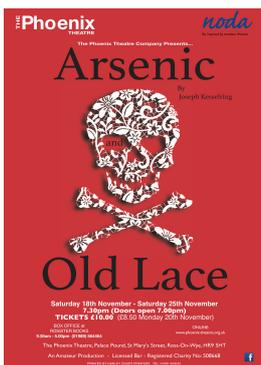
Inside the November Newsletter



Reviews of “Wendy & Peter Pan” (Phoenix Youth Theatre)



Review of “Their Greatest Hits” (Phoenix Theatre Singers)



Preview of “Arsenic & Old Lace” (Phoenix Theatre Company)

Graham Russell
(Newsletter Editor)

Production Co-ordinator's Column

The Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show, entitled '**Their Greatest Hits**', was a great success. Congratulations to Mary Brigg and all concerned.

'**Arsenic and Old Lace**', by Joseph Kesselring, will be our November production running from **Saturday 18th to Saturday 25th**. The play is being directed by David Pollard. The cast comprise Tony Hearn, Gareth Wigg, Suzanne Hill, Jane Bovell, Les Davis, Tim Betts, Zoe Hutton, Tom Lee-Hynes, Nigel Patrick, Sam Callen, Roger Williams, Jacky Bedford, Gordon Brigg and Brian Jackson. Please book your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

There was a reading of '**Gaslight**' by Patrick Hamilton on Wednesday 20th September with auditions on Wednesday 4th October. Brian Jackson will direct this play from **17th to 24th March 2018**. The play has been cast. Amanda Smith, Gareth Wigg, Ray Smith, Jacky Bedford and Michelle Cooper are taking the roles.

The Phoenix Youth Theatre performed '**Wendy and Peter Pan**', by Ella Hickson, original author J. M. Barrie last month. The show played to full houses and was breath-taking. See a review later in this Newsletter. Congratulations to Sarah, her cast and crew.

There was a **Member's Evening** on Saturday 21st October when we held two rehearsed readings for members. Michelle Cooper directed, '**Aspects of Betrayal**' by David Pollard and Tom Lee-Hynes directed '**Almost an Evening**' by Ethan Coen. Both plays were most enjoyable, showing fine acting and directing skills. Congratulations to all involved.

Keith James performed to a full house on 22nd October with '**The Songs of Leonard Cohen**'. The planned performance on 17th December with 'Duende, the Poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca', has been cancelled, but Keith will be returning to the Phoenix Theatre in Spring 2018.

Our annual **Performathon** was held on Saturday 28th October, followed by a **Gala Concert** in the evening performed by The Phoenix Theatre Singers with invited guests. The Gala Concert in the evening played to an almost full house, 91% seat occupancy and was a great success. Performances by Julienne Reeves, Guy Brigg and Richard Watson were highlights of the evening. Together with the events earlier in the day and a most successful raffle, we have raised **£1111 for Children In Need**.

BBC Hereford and Worcester returned to the Phoenix Theatre on Sunday 29th October to hold another of their Open Recording Sessions when about 5 local groups performed. This was a free event to promote local talent. The recordings will be aired at later dates on BBC Hereford and Worcester.

The **Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show** will take place on **7th, 8th and 9th December**.

The **Theatre Xmas Party** will take place on **Friday 15th December**.

There will be a **Ukulele Concert** in aid of the Hope charity on **Saturday 20th January 2018**. Tickets are £15 and will be available via the theatre website and Rossiters.

Suzanne Hill

Review of Wendy & Peter Pan



For years one of the highlights of the London pantomime season has been 'Peter Pan'. This week's production by Phoenix Youth Theatre was far more challenging. In taking on the Royal Shakespeare Company's version the company's director, Sarah O'Neill raised the bar for her young cast. Far removed from panto it is more a fantasy drama, presenting challenges in staging; from the children's bedroom to Neverland and the pirate ship. As with previous PYT productions creative sound

effects helped to establish changes of mood and location. The flying sequences were brilliantly achieved by clever lighting through the theatre's newly acquired gauze. Huge challenges for the backstage team but clever costuming also contributed, as in Peter's first appearance trying to find his shadow, (black from head

to toe, mirroring Peter's every movement); from the Edwardian elegance of the parents to the flamboyant swashbuckling style of a superb Captain Hook played by Dan Canham.



The show belonged to Sarah's young cast. They delivered their lines with faultless assurance and I must mention a few. Lucy Roberts, such an accomplished young actress playing the mother, Mrs. Darling, a role she took on at less than four weeks notice, then switching character to double as Tiger Lily. The fairy Tink, an hilarious characterisation by Lily Hampson, straight out of Coronation Street! The audience loved her. Is Lily from the Forest? – hard to believe; Rochdale for me! Peter Pan superbly played by Eben Harris. Eben has everything, pace, agility, stage persona, clear diction. Eben simply was Peter Pan.

The scenes when the cast of pirates and 'lost boys' filled the stage was superbly managed. And so we come to the final scenes. The reconciliation of Mr and Mrs Darling played with such maturity by Lucy Roberts and Ollie O'Neill; and the touching reunion between Wendy (The delightful Maggie Hearne who also took on the role at four week's notice!) and her mother with Peter hovering wistful and unseen beyond the window. The audience applauded and cheered; two curtain calls were demanded. In the foyer as they left some of the audience were seen weeping, so emotional was the climax. 'A wonderful show' they said. Phoenix Youth Theatre continues to go from strength to strength.

Brian Jackson



NODA Review of Wendy & Peter Pan

The Phoenix Youth Group portrayed the RSC adaptation of Wendy and Peter Pan very well. There were many similarities to the RSC production particularly in the way Lily Hampson played Tink; an irreverent version of the Tinkerbell we all know and love. Lily played the part with gusto and her mannerisms and body language remained constant throughout. She was funny, angry and slightly scary in equal measures and very good.

The relationship between the Darling family was lovely and for a young cast they portrayed incredible maturity. Maggie Hearne was a great Wendy and gave me a lump in my throat on several occasions because of her need to find her younger brother and when she said he had gone because she hadn't sown on his button was so moving. Ollie O'Neill and Lucy Roberts were excellent as Mr and Mrs Darling and again, their emotional scenes were very mature, and they looked comfortable with each other and the other members of the Darling family. Leo Mudie-Jones and Toby O'Neil complimented the others well.



Eben Harris as Peter Pan was a really good choice. His enthusiasm and agility were just right for the mischievous Peter. Eben's interaction with Maggie as Wendy, was poignant at times and he showed good acting skills with each changing mood. The lost boys (and girls) were lovely and Harriet Storey was very good as Nibbs.

Dan Canham as Captain Hook and Charlie Bosticco as Smee had great fun leading their band of pirates who also got into the swing of things, quite literally,

although my favourite pirate was Martin the cabin boy played brilliantly by Holly Manning. Lucy Roberts made a remarkable transformation from Mrs Darling into Tiger Lily and was great in both roles.

A couple of negatives would be, the use of the rope, which I felt didn't really add to the production and the time it took to attach brought the pace to a halt and broke the action unnecessarily in my opinion. The choice of background music didn't quite match the dialogue, particularly in the more emotional scenes and, as is often the case, was too loud. And finally, the taking of photos directly in my eyeline was extremely distracting.

Well done the Phoenix for giving us a wonderful production.

Louise Hickey (NODA)

Review of “Their Greatest Hits” (Phoenix Theatre Singers)



If you didn't manage to buy a ticket for the Phoenix Singers latest concert 'Their Greatest Hits,' then you missed a treat.

The programme began with the full company singing Judy Garland's hit, 'That's Entertainment' and that's just what the Singers provided us with for the rest of the evening. It was a delight to be cajoled by a new Master of Ceremonies, Di Hughes, who was informative, amusing and set the tone for the performance.

The full company performed exceptionally well, especially when singing without the words in front of them! I particularly liked the Ladies' Chorus rendition of the highlights from Chicago. Their black cocktail dresses were stunning and the movement and singing was enhanced by them. The men, on the other hand, were completely bowled over by the 'Pretty Woman' who appeared in their midst! The Bohemian Rhapsody is particularly difficult to sing without copies and the Company performed it magnificently.

The overall impression of the evening was one of colour, enthusiasm and vitality. I must, however, mention some of the soloists. Kevin Passey's Al Jolson's medley had us all joining in with him and his empathy with the audience was excellent. 'Elvis' seems to get better with every performance! Michelle's acting skills came into play with her rendition of Barbra Streisand's 'Don't Rain on My Parade' and the strength of Sandy's glorious voice was evident when she sang 'At Last'. Mary always does justice to Ella Fitzgerald's works and 'My Funny Valentine' was no exception.

However, I think the highlight of the evening for me was Gareth Wigg's 'Nessun Dorma'. Fittingly, this week is the tenth anniversary of Pavarotti's death and had he heard Gareth singing 'his' song he would have been proud of him.

None of the concert could succeed without the indefatigable playing of talented Richard Watson. He really is a star who works so hard for the Singers and they would be lost without him.

Finally, a thoroughly enjoyable evening's entertainment where Mary and her Singers are to be congratulated once again.

Judith Landau

Our Autumn Production - Arsenic & Old Lace

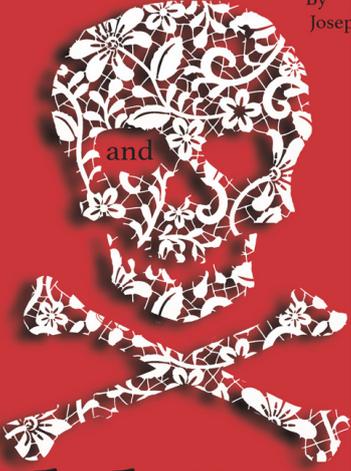
THE **Phoenix**
THEATRE

noda
Be inspired by amateur theatre

The Phoenix Theatre Company Presents...

Arsenic

By
Joseph Kesselring



and

Old Lace

Saturday 18th November - Saturday 25th November
7.30pm (Doors open 7.00pm)
TICKETS £10.00 (£8.50 Monday 20th November)

BOX OFFICE at
ROSSITER BOOKS
9.30am - 5.00pm (01989) 564464

ONLINE:
www.phoenix-theatre.org.uk

The Phoenix Theatre, Palace Pound, St Mary's Street, Ross-On-Wye, HR9 5HT

An Amateur Production - Licensed Bar - Registered Charity No: 508668

PRINTED BY HANLEY COURT PRINTERS TEL: 01291 623010



Our Autumn production brings to Ross-on-Wye a tall tale of mass murder, home surgery and elderberry wine set in 1940's Brooklyn.

The Brewster Sisters – played by Suzanne Hill and Jane Bovell - are two of the sweetest old ladies you could hope to meet, always working for charity and always on the look-out for poor souls to help. Even if that means poisoning them and stashing the bodies under the stairs!

Their nephew – reluctant theatre critic Mortimer Brewster – played by Tony Hearn – should be on cloud nine having become engaged to the girl next door. But he's just discovered his aunts' little hobby and – understandably – his mind is elsewhere.

Helped along by a cast of misfits and the criminally insane, *Arsenic & Old Lace* is a fast-paced, vintage comedy with a killer punchline that will keep you on the edge of your seat and convulsed with laughter.

The show will run from **Saturday 18 November to 25 November** at 7.30pm. Tickets are now on sale at £10 online through the theatre website at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the phoenix theatre> and from Rossiter Books.

Early booking is strongly advised – don't be disappointed and support your fellow thespians.

David Pollard

Members' Calendar for November 2017

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
30 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	31 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm	1 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	2 Phoenix Theatre Singers in auditorium 7:30 pm	3 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	4 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	5 PYT Group Auditions 2017/2018 season 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
6 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	7 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Phoenix Committee Meeting 7:15 pm	8 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	9 Phoenix Theatre Singers in auditorium 7:30 pm	10 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	11 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix- Their Finest 7:00 pm	12 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
13 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	14 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	15 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	16 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm	17 Arsenic and Old Lace rehearsal 7:30 pm	18 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Arsenic and Old performance 7:30 pm	19 PYT in foyer 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
20 The Drama Company in foyer 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm Arsenic and Old Lace performance 7:30 pm	21 The Drama Company in foyer 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm Arsenic and Old performance 7:30 pm	22 Arsenic and Old Lace performance 7:30 pm	23 Arsenic and Old Lace performance 7:30 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm	24 Arsenic and Old Lace performance 7:30 pm	25 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Arsenic and Old Lace performance 7:30 pm	26 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix - Hidden Figures 7:00 pm
27 Strike set for Arsenic and Old Lace 10:00 am The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	28 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm	29	30 Phoenix Theatre Singers in auditorium 7:30 pm	1	2 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	3 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers dress rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm

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27 Strike set for Arsenic and Old Lace 10:00 am The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	28 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm	29	30 Phoenix Theatre Singers in auditorium 7:30 pm	1	2 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	3 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers dress rehearsal in auditorium 7:30 pm
4 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	5 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers in auditorium 7:30 pm	6	7 Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	8 Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	9 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	10 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix - The Accountant 7:00 pm
11 Oak House Nursery School private booking 9:00 am – 1:00 pm The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	12 The Drama Company in auditorium 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm	13	14	15 Phoenix Theatre Xmas Party 7:30 pm	16 The Drama Company, in auditorium 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	17 PYT in auditorium 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December 2017