

MAY 2018

Diary of Events for May - June

Friday 4th May	60s Party Night 7.30pm
Sat 5th May	The Mountain Between Us (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
Weds 9th May	Reading of Lord Arthur Savile's Crime 7.30pm
Weds 16th May	Rossiter Books - William Fotheringham 7pm
Sun 19th May	Molly's Game (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
Weds 23rd May	Auditions for Lord Arthur Savile's Crime 7.30pm
Sat 2nd - Sat 9th June	Abigail's Party by Mike Leigh (Phoenix Theatre Company) 7.30pm
Weds 13th June	AGM 7.30pm
Weds 27th - Sat 30th June	The Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show 7.30pm

(Members' calendars for May and June are at the back of this Newsletter.)

Awards for the Phoenix Theatre

At the Hereford County Drama Festival in March, the Youth Group won two awards. The Alex Evans Award for Best Individual Youth Performance went to Maggie Hearne as Jeanette in 'Who's Playing Juliet?' and the Janis Lewer Hereford Players Trophy for A Special Moment in Youth Theatre was awarded to 'Tom', played by Ollie O'Neill, for his exit in 'Who's Playing Juliet?'. You can read the full details of the Youth Group entry inside the Newsletter.

At the NODA award ceremony in Stourbridge on Sunday 15th April, we won Best Youth Production with 'Wendy and Peter Pan' and Best Drama with 'All Things Considered'.

Our production of 'Gaslight' received an excellent review from NODA representative Louise Hickey. You can read the review inside the Newsletter. The June production of 'Abigail's Party' is certain to be featured in next year's awards if rumours emanating from rehearsals are anything to go by.

Graham Russell (Newsletter Editor)

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place on **Wednesday 13th June at 7.30pm**. There will be an opportunity to elect members to the Committee and raise matters for discussion. If you wish to be nominated, please notify our secretary Trevor Jones by **23rd May** at the latest. Trevor should also be notified of matters for discussion by that date. Any other business (AOB) cannot be raised at the AGM. Nominations and matters for discussion will be notified to the membership 2 weeks before the AGM.

Committee posts

To date the following nominations for Committee posts have been received as follows:

President	Howard Owen
Chairman	Alison Clarke
Secretary	Trevor Jones
Treasurer	Amanda Smith
Production Co-ordinator	Suzanne Hill
Publicity Officer	Michelle Cooper
Building Manager	Graham Russell
Members without portfolio	Mary Brigg
	Sarah O'Neill
	Vacancy

Jennifer Wood is standing down from the committee so there is a vacancy for a member without portfolio.

An agenda of the AGM, including details of any further nominations and matters for discussion, will be notified to members 2 weeks before the AGM. The Committee looks forward to seeing you on Weds June 13th at 7.30pm.

To contact Trevor Jones, please e-mail: trevorjones3@outlook.com

Borrowing Costumes

Anyone wishing to borrow items from the costume department please follow the format below.

Contact Lynn Tait : 01989 767609 or e-mail: shellnut04@icloud.com

Lynn will arrange to meet up with you and sort out your requirements. The items borrowed will be recorded on the pad in the costume room, and a date agreed for their return. Returned items should be labelled for Lynn or Suzanne Hill and hung on the freestanding rail in the costume department by the agreed date.

Lynn Tait & Suzanne Hill

Production Co-ordinator's Column

Gaslight

Our March production directed by Brian Jackson was very successful achieving 85% seat occupancy. Much gratitude and thanks must go to Marian Francis and Diana Tubb for stepping in backstage at the last minute. Congratulations to Brian, his cast and crew for a fine production.

Abigail's Party

Renée Field will direct 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh from **Saturday 2nd to Saturday 9th**. The cast comprises Sandy McNeill, Michelle Cooper, Lucy Davies, Tom Lee-Hynes and Phil Field. The play is in rehearsal. You will have seen a props list, so if you can help please contact Renée on 01600 750488 or Suzanne Hill at suzannefredericks@hotmail.com.

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

Amanda Smith will direct 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox from November 17th – 24th. There will be a **reading on Wednesday 9th May** and **auditions on Wednesday 23rd May**, both at 7.30 p.m.

60s Party Night

On **Friday 4th May** there will be a 60s Party Night for members. There will be a disco with DJ and nibbles. Members are invited to dress in 60s clothes for the evening. Tickets are £12. Please contact Mary Brigg or Lynn Tait if you would like to attend.

HCDF

The Phoenix Theatre entered the **Herefordshire County Drama Festival** in March with three entries. "Coffee Break" by David Tristram, directed by Renée Field; "All through the Night" by Frank Vickery, directed by David Pollard and Tim Betts, and a Youth Theatre entry entitled "Who's Playing Juliet?" written and directed by Zoe Hutton. In total we received 9 award nominations and won two awards. The Alex Evans Award for Best Individual Youth Performance went to Maggie Hearne as Jeanette in 'Who's Playing Juliet?'. The Janis Lewer Hereford Players Trophy for a special moment in a Youth Production was awarded to 'Tom', played by Ollie O'Neill, for his exit in 'Who's Playing Juliet?'. Congratulations to all involved. The 2019 HCDF will take place at the Market Theatre Ledbury from 21st – 23rd March.

NODA

More great news! The Phoenix Theatre has been nominated for 4 awards by NODA for 2017. 'Ruddigore' for Best Musical, 'Wendy and Peter Pan' for Best Youth Production, 'All Things Considered' and 'Arsenic and Old Lace' for Best Drama. At the award ceremony in Stourbridge on Sunday 15th April, we won Best Youth Production with 'Wendy and Peter Pan' and Best Drama with 'All Things Considered'.

Rossiter Books

On **Wednesday 16th May** there will be a Rossiter Books event with William Fotheringham.

The Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show

The show will take place from **Wednesday 27th to Saturday 30th June**. This show will celebrate 10 years since the Singers were formed.

Suzanne Hill

Review of Gaslight



I want to start by mentioning the set for this production as it was as much a star of the show as the cast themselves. I always feel that, due to the size of the auditorium, the audience is a silent participant in the action at the Phoenix and this was no exception. The set was everything I remembered of the old black and white film I saw many years ago. The working double doors at the rear opened to expose stairs and a hall

and was used well. The sitting room was dressed in the most tasteful manner with even a chenille tablecloth over the dining room table and a fireplace with mantle on which ornaments had been placed. On either side of the mantle were two strategically placed gas lights (electric obviously) which were controlled simultaneously as the actors turned the lights up and down; timing and acting in perfect sync. The lighting was just right, adding to the atmospheric gloom that the title depicted.

The small cast moved the play along at a great pace. Amanda Smith convinced me that, as Bella Manningham, she was a wife who was slowly going mad because of the devious machinations of her



manipulative and menacing husband, superbly played by Gareth Wigg. As their portrayal of tormenter and victim unfolded, the audience felt both uncomfortable and outraged in equal measure. Michelle Cooper added to this tension as the parlour maid Nancy who openly ridiculed the wife and had a brilliant sneer that was aimed at the wife but seen face front by the audience. Jacky Bedford as Elizabeth the Housekeeper, acted in a nice and gentle way that showed the empathy she felt for her mistress. Rough, the retired Police Inspector, was played by Brian Jackson who, having directed the play, stepped in to take on this role himself just two weeks before the show opened and Brian was perfect for the part. He was utterly convincing as the man who was going to protect the vulnerable Bella. His timing and delivery, particularly in the final scene, when unveiling his knowledge of the history of the house and previous owner, was brilliant.

The cast performances were slick, polished and a joy to watch. I loved the production in its entirety and the attention to detail was spectacular. Thank you Phoenix.

Louise Hickey (NODA)

Phoenix Youth Group

Herefordshire County Drama Festival - PYT bring home the Silver!



On Thursday 8th March, six of our oldest and more experienced PYT members took to the stage at Ledbury Market Theatre to perform their original entry into this years Herefordshire County Drama Festival. Following our Members Preview Evening at The Phoenix the night before, which was a huge success with a whole audience in stitches, our cast and crew woke on the Thursday full of anticipation, nerves and excitement.



During the entire day, a real team effort was displayed by all, with van collection and loading, unloading, a PYT family pizza tea, briefings, sound checks and getting each other made up and ready for the big show. A buzz filled the air amongst our young people as they confidently waited for the curtains to open to a supportive, wonderful audience and adjudicator Chris Jeager. As the first group to open the festival weekend out of a total of 13 entries, our actors were simply captivating, delivering comic timing with ease, facial expression and emotion in bucket loads and not forgetting our award-winning ending which had the audience laughing away. Our actors truly did PYT and The Phoenix Theatre proud, winning a total of 7 nominations including Best Original Play, Best Set, two for Best Individual Youth Performance and Best Producer/Director. Most importantly however we are proud and elated to announce the winning of not one, but two awards! Maggie Hearne (left) wins Best Individual Youth Performance for her stunning performance of 1920s flapper girl Jeanette.



Ollie O'Neill (left) wins A Special Moment in Youth Theatre for his outstanding exit as Juliet.

Our awards stand with pride currently at The Phoenix and we are glad to have set the standard so high for the rest of our PYT members, some of whom are new and still learning their craft. Our young festival actors are ambassadors for our group, leading the way and guiding our younger members until it will become their chance to shine in extra special experiences such as The County Drama Festival. It is events like these that work our members super hard for a huge reward, with the cast still buzzing from their experience and their wins.

We are grateful to LADs and the festival organisers, particularly Barbara and David Newton, David Coker and of course, adjudicator Chris Jeager for taking the time to chat to us at length after the performances and give such valued advice. Thanks also to all of the Phoenix members, cast family and friends who supported us – some even taking the time and making the effort to appear and watch our piece twice – what a wonderful overwhelming support we received. Finally to my crew, who grafted long hours and put hard work into making our performance an award winning success – what a wonderful team we have on board here at PYT. We are so very proud of our young people and so very pleased. Watch this space... maybe you'll see PYT at the festival again next year!

Our March Showcase 2018 was a roaring success!

With a full house on both days, the PYT March Showcase performance was a roaring success. Despite a three week break due to the snowy weather conditions in late February, all four of our small cast groups pulled it out of the bag and gave our audiences a real treat! With 26 performers in total this was a huge event, particularly for some of our newest and youngest members of whom it was their first experience of performing on the Phoenix stage. Our audiences saw a range of ages play a variety of colourful characters from the BFG to some blue vodka-drinking Star Trek style aliens, where they laughed, cheered and watched in awe.

We began the afternoon with a piece from 'The Boy Who Fell Into a Book' by Alan Ayckbourn, which the boys acted with maturity and some brilliant comic timing, bringing back this favourite from last year. Second was 'The BFG' by David Wood, where our giants ate little chiddlers, ripping their limbs apart and throwing them distastefully at the audience.. not to mention some roaring great whizzpoppers which filled the room with laughter from those watching! After a short interval where a selection of scrummy donated cakes were devoured, we saw 'Galactic Odyssey', an original sci fi play written and directed by our very own Julie Church. Performed by a cast of some of our older members, the group had the audience laughing with its witty script and their slapstick comedy – a brilliant piece. Finally, 'Daisy Pulls It Off!' by Denise Deegan was performed by a mix of our oldest and youngest girls. The girls delivered the piece with style and professionalism, showing fantastic characterisation and pace. A real treat, and commented on greatly by the audience afterwards, who gave huge applause to the whole group for a wonderful afternoon.

Congratulations to all PYT members and crew involved – what a fantastic success, setting the standard for our two October productions which we are launching very soon. We cannot wait to see what is in store!

Hereford County Drama Festival - Saved?

At one time last year it looked like the Hereford County Drama Festival (HCDF) would not be able to continue due to lack of funds. The Market Theatre Ledbury offered the use of the theatre to the Festival free of charge but a sufficient level of entries and audience support was still required to enable HCDF to continue. Fortunately some twelve entries were submitted from drama groups across the county – including three from The Phoenix – and a very good level of audience support was attracted. This, together with £1000 worth of sponsorship from well-wishers, has enabled the HCDF organisers to repair the Festival's finances and to be in a position to continue putting on the Festival. Likewise, this year's success has encouraged The Market Theatre to offer the theatre for the Festival in 2019 albeit for a – very reasonable – fee. The 2019 HCDF will therefore take place at Ledbury from 21 – 23 March.

Although this is a 'good news' story it must be recognised that HCDF has simply acquired a breathing space thanks to this year's hard work. In 2019 support from both participant groups and audiences will still be vital. Additionally it has been pointed out that an injection of new blood and fresh ideas would be welcomed by the organising committee. If anyone in The Phoenix membership would like to get involved please do contact myself in the first instance.

David Pollard

Preview of Abigail's Party

The play is a satire on the aspirations and tastes of the new middle class that emerged in Britain in the 1970s and made Alison Steadman, who played Beverly, a household name.

Beverly, a would-be social climber, and her estate agent husband Laurence have invited new neighbours Angela and Tony over for drinks together with Susan whose daughter Abigail has taken over the house for a party. The gin and tonics and cheesy pineapple chunks are being passed around and Jose Feliciano is on the record player. As the evening progresses tension escalated as the marital strain between Beverly and Laurence surfaces. Susan's anxiety accelerates as Abigail's rock music permeates the room. Eventually reality breaks through culminating in an evening of hilarious and embarrassing revelations.

The play, directed by Renee Field, is currently in rehearsal at the Phoenix.



The cast comprises (left to right):

Tony - Phil Field
Angela - Michelle Cooper
Beverly - Sandy MacNeill
Susan - Lucy Davies
Laurence - Tom Lee-Hynes

Performance dates: 2nd - 9th June.

The Phoenix Theatre Singers Rise from the Ashes

Ten years ago a small group of us met in the Theatre Dressing Room to start a mixed choir. Mary Brigg was to take charge. There were no auditions and singers of all ages and experience were welcome. The theatre bought us an electric piano and Howard Owen, the theatre chair, said 'You are welcome here and I wish you good luck'. Suzanne Hill was there to help us get going .

Now we are a choir of about forty people. We have lost some singers and gained some over the years. We now have a repertoire of over a hundred pieces, of a wide range of genre. We have a great pianist in Richard Watson and there is an abundance of talented performers, some of whom 'didn't know they had it in them'! We perform at the theatre and in local venues doing a number of charity concerts each year and we have raised thousands of pounds.

Our emphasis is on enjoyment and having fun and we have a good sense of comedy in our varied programmes. Only last evening one of our members said: 'That rehearsal is just what I needed - *Why we Sing*'. So please come along to share our entertainment or you may like to join us. You will be made to feel very welcome.

Our next production is a 'Celebration of our 10 Year Anniversary' here at The Phoenix on June 27th - 30th so please put these dates in your diary!!

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are" - Theodore Roosevelt.

Gordon Brigg

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

Please come along to the **play reading** of Lord Arthur Savile's Crime on **Wednesday 9th May at 7.30 pm**. If the play reading goes well, the auditions will be on **Wednesday 23rd May at 7.30 pm** - and the performance dates will be **17th to 24th November 2018**.

The play is based on an 1890's story by Oscar Wilde. Lord Arthur Savile is engaged to the lovely Sybil Merton. Sybil's mother has a pet cheiromantist, Mr Podgers, who reads Lord Arthur's palm and tells him that he is going to commit a murder. Lord Arthur wants to have a happily married life and so feels duty bound to get the murder over with first. Despite help from his butler and the cheerful anarchist, Winkelkopf, attempt after attempt fails

Baines, the butler
Lord Arthur Savile
Sybil Merton, his fiancée
The Dean of Paddington, his uncle
Lady Windermere, his aunt
Lady Clementina Beauchamp, his great-aunt
Lady Julia Merton, Sybil's mother
Mr Podgers, a cheiromantist
Nellie, the maid
Herr Winkelkopf, an anarchist

It is a brilliant comedy with some wonderful character parts and so should be great fun to produce and perform - please come along to find out more

Amanda Smith

Members' Calendar for May 2018

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm		Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	Members night - 60s Party with disco 7:30 pm Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' in rehearsal room 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix film showing of 'The Mountain Between Us' 7:00 pm	PYT 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	Reading of 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	PYT 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	Rossiter Book event - William Fotheringham 7:00 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	The Drama Company 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix film showing of 'Molly's Game' 7:00 pm	PYT 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm	The Drama Company 4:00 pm – 7:15 pm Phoenix Committee Meeting in foyer 7:15 pm Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	Auditions for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm		
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
	Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	Technical rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	1st dress rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm	2nd dress rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	

May 2018

Members' Calendar for June 2018

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28	29 Rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	30 Technical rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	31 1st dress rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm	1 2nd dress rehearsal for 'Abigail's Party' 7:30 pm	2 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	3
4 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	5 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	6 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	7 Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	8 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	9 The Drama Company 9:00 am - 2:00 pm 'Abigail's Party' by Mike Leigh 7:30 pm	10 PYT 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix film showing 7:00 pm
11 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm	12 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	13 Phoenix Theatre AGM 7:30 pm	14 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	15	16 The Drama Company 9:00 am - 2:00 pm	17 PYT 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
18 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm	19 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	20	21 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	22	23 The Drama Company 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Screen at the Phoenix film showing 7:00 pm	24 PYT 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers dress rehearsal 6:30 pm
25 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm	26 The Drama Company 4:00 pm - 7:15 pm	27 Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show 7:30 pm	28 Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show 7:30 pm	29 Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show 7:30 pm	30 The Drama Company 9:00 am - 2:00 pm Phoenix Theatre Singers Annual Show 7:30 pm	1 PYT 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm