

NOVEMBER 2018

Diary of Events for November - December

Mon 5th Nov	Members' Coffee Morning 10.30am
Sat 10th Nov	All the Money in the World (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
Sat 17th Nov - Sat 24th	Lord Arthur Savile's Crime (Phoenix Theatre Company) 7.30pm
Sun 25th Nov	Funny Cow (Screen at the Phoenix) 7pm
Weds 28th Nov	Auditions for And Then There Were None 7.30pm
Mon 3rd Dec	Members' Coffee Morning 10.30am
Mon 3rd Dec	Auditions for Arris in Wonderland 7.30pm
Thurs 6th Dec - Sat 8th	Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7.30pm
Fri 14th Dec	Theatre Xmas Party 7.30pm

Phoenix Youth Theatre

As some of you will be aware, Sarah O'Neill and her team are off to pastures new. We wish them every success in their new adventure and thank them for all of the years that they have given to our PYT.



I am pleased announce that Lizzie Nicholson (left) will be taking over the reins of the PYT on 11th November and running workshops every Sunday from 3.30pm to 6pm. Lizzie has been leading drama workshops for over 10 years for various age groups including young children, teenagers and adults. Since completing her degree in drama from the Royal Holloway University of London in 2014 at the age of 30, Lizzie has been working in primary schools as a drama coordinator. She has co-directed several productions for the Shakespeare Schools Festival as well as directing and choreographing year six leavers shows and whole school productions. Lizzie is currently doing a teaching assistant apprenticeship at Walford Primary School and runs an after school drama club for the juniors. She is delighted to have been appointed as the Phoenix Youth Theatre leader and is looking forward to commencing with the drama workshops and future productions.

Alison Clarke (Chair)

Production Co-ordinator's Column

The Phoenix Youth Theatre

Their productions of 'The Railway Children', directed by Sarah O'Neill, and 'Goodnight, Mr Tom', directed by Zoe Hutton, were a great success and played to full houses. Sarah and Zoe will now leave the Phoenix Theatre. Our new PYT leader will be Lizzie Nicholson. Sessions will start on Sunday 11th November from 3.30pm to 6 pm. We look forward to more excellent productions from the PYT with Lizzie and her team.

Performathon and Gala Concert

On Saturday 27th October Mary Brigg presented our annual Performathon and Gala Concert in aid of Children in Need. The concert played to a nearly full house achieving 94% seat occupancy. The event will have raised £1319. The raffle alone raised £500. Congratulations to Mary and everyone involved in this great day.

And Then There Were None

Michelle Cooper, assisted by Gordon Brigg, will direct 'And Then There None' by Agatha Christie, for our March 2019 production. Dates are 23rd to 30th March. There was a reading on Monday 17th September. **Auditions** will be on **Wednesday 28th November**. Do come and get involved in what will be a great show.

Arris in Wonderland

There was a play reading for 'Arris in Wonderland' by Brian Jackson on 11th July. Brian will be entering this play in the 2019 Herefordshire One Act Drama Festival next March. The play was not cast on 25th September as it was too long for the festival, so Brian has redrafted the play and reduced the number of characters. A final reading and **auditions** will be on **Monday 3rd December at 7.30 pm**. Unfortunately, the festival clashes with our March production, so you would not be able to be in both. We are requesting our festival entry takes place on Thursday 21st March, so that Trevor Jones will be able to provide technical assistance for both productions.

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

From 17th to 24th November, Amanda Smith will direct 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde, adapted by Constance Cox. The cast comprise Robin Haig, Alison Clarke, Brian Jackson, Gordon Brigg, David Pollard, Alan Chacon, Diana Tubb, Jane Bovell, Suzanne Hill and Penny Field. Get your tickets now to avoid missing a very entertaining production.

Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show

Mary Brigg will present the Singers Xmas Show on 6th, 7th and 8th December.

Theatre Xmas Party

Our Christmas Party will be on **Friday 14th December**. There will be the usual disco and nibbles. Do come and join the party! Tickets are £15 and available from Mary Brigg (wbrigg@btinternet.com).

Suzanne Hill

Reviews of Phoenix Youth Theatre Productions

Goodnight Mister Tom

This play is one of two dramas staged by Phoenix Youth Theatre on alternate nights with different sets and a different cast for each. Set during the war the play is also challenging because of the emotional issues it deals with. 'William' a silent, introverted boy is evacuated from London and billeted with 'Mr. Tom', elderly and brusque, a solitary man who we learn is carrying a deep sorrow. The casting of Adam Warner as 'Mr. Tom' and Noah O'Neill as the boy 'William' was sublime. They complemented each other beautifully and



the opening exchanges between Noah and Adam were taken at just the right pace; the body language, gesture and facial expression soon established both actors' characters, enabling them to draw on deep emotional responses in the later scenes. And some of those scenes were intense: the violence of the London air-raids; William's nightmare broken by his terrified scream in the darkness. Mr. Tom lost and ignored by uncaring crowds during the Blackout – a subtle use of lighting. The appearance of William's abusive mother, an East-end 'drab' was wonderfully played by Winnie Major in her vital scene with William. Powerful stuff! And then there was 'Sammy' – 'Mr. Tom's' dog. Hardly ever off the stage Nuala Callanan spent the whole time costumed on hands and knees in a portrayal of 'Sammy' that never faltered as she sniffed, snuffled, barked and responded to 'Tom's' commands and whistles in a perfect canine characterisation. Congratulations Nuala! William's friend 'Zach' was played with great verve by Eben Harris. Eben seized the character in a full-blooded, captivating performance; his exuberance a counterbalance to the underlying drama and Zach's death at the end added another twist to the story. It is impossible to name all the cast individually but 'Mister Tom' was a production greater than the sum of its individual parts. True some voices were soft, odd lines were subdued but nothing was lost with this young cast (youngest aged 8!). But all the necessary 'business' was handled by director Zoe Hutton with assurance. With tears in evidence all around the play ended with a rousing ovation.

The Railway Children

The problem for theatre directors is that people will remember the Lionel Jeffries film that touched our hearts. PYT's 'Railway Children' is an equally delightful telling of Nesbit's story. The pathos worked because it wasn't overplayed. The playing of the leading characters was compelling from the opening lines on, with young actors demonstrating dramatic power beyond their years. I cannot name everyone but that should not detract from the satisfaction that the whole ensemble should take from this evening's performance. We were particularly struck by the acting that continued in mime by the 'other' characters during 'crowd scenes'. Which brings me to the point that there are no such things as 'small' parts and when



actors with few lines manage to create rounded characters from their fleeting opportunities then it keeps the whole production in balance and the true value of any character is seen. My point was made by Harriet Storey ('Mrs. Perks' the stationmaster's wife) in her 'Perk's birthday party' scene. Most delightfully played, 'Mrs. Perks' was a stand-out character. Mr. Perks was played by Ruben Richardson with just enough in his accent to convince us that he was from the Yorkshire Pennines. Another lovely character; well played. Similarly with Leo Mudie Jones, the Russian refugee whose opening foreign language lines rang true. And so through the whole cast, properly rounded characters played with strength and assurance. Which brings us to the Railway Children themselves. The trio of Lucy Roberts (playing Phyllis), Maggie Hearne ('Bobbie') and Ollie O'Neill ('Peter') hold the whole thing together; if they fail the play doesn't work. I am saying ecstatically that they most certainly triumphed! The sibling interplay was beautifully realised and the pace of their delivery, projection, stage awareness and expressions were faultless. Holly Manning, playing their mother with an air of tristesse and elegance like a young Ingrid Bergman needed no histrionics to hold our attention. This play was a delight to watch. Congratulations to director Sarah O'Neill and her team and to all you PYT Railway Children for a thoroughly professional production.

Brian Jackson

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

Please come along and see the production of Lord Arthur Savile's Crime - it's on from Saturday 17th to Saturday 24th November at 7.30pm.

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



Cast played by our following members (left to right):

Sybil Merton, his fiancée - Alison Clarke
Lord Arthur Savile - Robin Haig
Mr Podgers, a cheiromantist - David Pollard
Lady Windermere, his aunt - Jane Bovell
Baines, the butler - Brian Jackson
Lady Julia Merton, Sybil's mother - Suzanne Hill
The Dean of Paddington, his uncle - Gordon Brigg
Lady Clementina Beauchamp, his great-aunt - Diana Tubb
Nellie, the maid - Penny Field
Herr Winkelkopf, an anarchist - Alan Chacon

The play is a brilliant comedy with some wonderful character parts to keep you entertained for the evening - so come along, sit back in your seat and find out more

Amanda Smith (Director)

And Then There Were None

Our production for March 2019 will be Agatha Christie's - "And Then There Were None" to be directed by Michelle Cooper assisted by Gordon Brigg.

The play is set on Solider Island where eight strangers are lured to the house of Mr and Mrs Owen and along with two house servants are marooned until the next boat arrives. When the guests arrive they soon discover that their hosts are no where to be found, then a mysterious voice echoes from the shadows accusing each of them of murder. On the mantel piece stand ten statuettes of little soldier boys along with a children's nursery rhyme, telling how each soldier dies until there are none. One by one the guests meet the same ghastly fate of the soldiers in the rhyme but will anyone survive?

Characters:

Rogers - a man servant (45-60)

Mrs Rogers - house servant and wife of Rogers (45-60)

Fred Naracott - boatman who ferries the guests to the island (any age)

Vera Claythorne - former governess, recently employed as Mrs Owens secretary (25-40)

Philip Lombard - mysterious, confident and resourceful man. Seems to have been a mercenary soldier in Africa. (25-40)

Anthony Marston - a rich, good looking young man, with reckless tendencies (25-30)

William Blore - a former police inspector (35-45)

General Mackenzie - a retired General who fought in World War I (60-70)

Emily Brent - an old spinster, who has a sharp tongue and an air of righteousness (50-70)

Sir Lawrence Wargrave - a recently retired judge (60-70)

Dr Armstrong - a gullible, slightly timid doctor (could be male or female) (40-50)

Auditions will take place on **Wednesday 28th November at 7.30pm**

The performance will run from Saturday 23rd - Saturday 30th March 2019.

If you are interested in being in the production but can't make the audition date please get in touch with Gordon or myself and we'll see what we can do to accommodate early or late auditions.

Michelle Cooper

Hereford County Drama Festival March 2019

First of all the play "Arris in Wonderland" should not be confused with a story by Lewis Carroll (of a similar title). Set in the early 1990s it is based on meticulous research. The main character Harris is a man faced with the daunting procedures of bureaucracy when his business fails, leaving him and his wife facing penury. It traces the travails of Harris and his increasingly desperate wife Rhoda as he attempts to make sense of an irrational, irreversible decision. Faced with official disinterest and grasping at straws he descends into a wonderland of procedure which eventually leads to tragedy.

Characters:

Harris Businessman. Late middle age.
Rhoda Harris's wife. Middle age.
Harry Dover Accountant. Mature, worldly.
Clerk #1 Female, 30s upward.
Tort Male, early middle age to mature.
Sara Givings Female 30s.
Cab lady Female 35 – 50.
Williams Male solicitor, early middle age upward.

Cast: 2 M & 3 F with 'doubling' of characters:

Male:- Dover/Tort/Williams

Female:- Clerk/Sara Givings/Cab lady.

The final reading and auditions are on Monday 3rd December.

The preview performance to members is on Wednesday 13th March 2019.

The performance in the Drama Festival is on Thursday 21st March 2019.

Brian Jackson

Phoenix Production for June 2019

I am planning to direct 'Harvey' by Mary Chase for The Phoenix's second production next year. I am sure many members will be familiar with the film based on the play which starred James Stewart. Rest assured I will not be looking to recreate either the film or Mr Stewart's performance. Similarly, American accents will not necessarily be essential.

'Harvey' is an out and out comedy – almost bordering on farce – and depends for its humour on physical as well as verbal dexterity. Mary Chase wrote the play to give people a lift in the bleak days of wartime and she won a Pulitzer prize for her efforts. My aim will also be to provide a light-hearted romp to send our audiences away chuckling.

For those who don't know the play – the plot revolves around good-natured, unambitious Elwood P Dowd who is befriended by a playful spirit that takes on the form of a large white rabbit and chooses to go by the name of Harvey. Harvey is invisible unless he chooses to reveal himself. In the play we see the effect this strange relationship has on Elwood's family and the mayhem that ensues when they try to commit him to a 'rest home.'

The cast consists of eleven characters:

Myrtle Mae Simmons – Elwood's sister who is desperate to get her spinster daughter a nice young man.

Veta Louise Simmons – the spinster daughter and Elwood's niece

Elwood P Dowd – Amiable and charming man who is everybody's friend who enjoys a convivial drink

Mrs Ethel Chauvenet – An old friend of the family

Ruth Kelly RN – Head nurse at Chumley's Rest clinic

Marvin Wilson – A male nurse

Lyman Sanderson MD – A young psychiatrist and Dr Chumley’s right-hand man
William R Chumley MD – The proprietor and chief psychiatrist
Betty Chumley - his wife
Judge Omar Gaffney – The family attorney
E J Lofgren – A taxi driver

A reading of ‘Harvey’ is scheduled for Monday 21st January 2019, followed by auditions on Monday 28th January 2019.

Rehearsals will commence from 1st April with a schedule to accommodate cast availability.

For any further information on the proposed production please feel free to contact me.

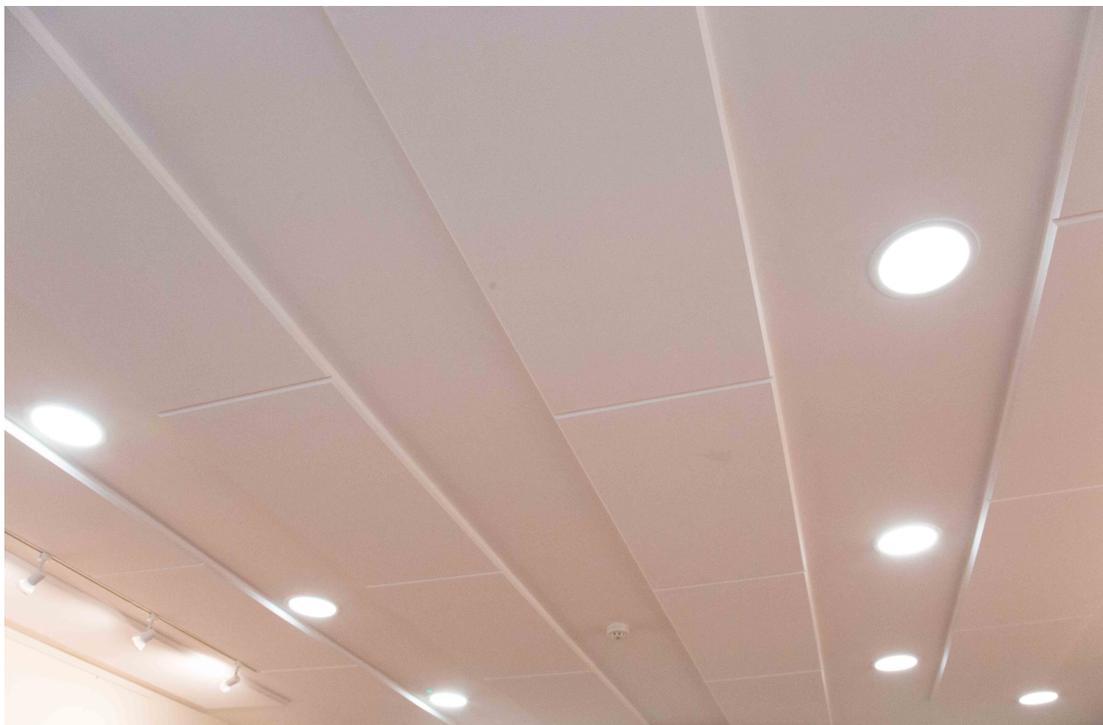
Best wishes

David Pollard

Telephone 01432 860208 Email: davidandalexpollard@gmail.com

A Sound Investment

Following comments from members that it can be difficult to hear conversations in the foyer when the foyer is full, sound-deadening acoustic panels have been fitted to the foyer ceiling.



Graham Russell (building manager)

Members' Calendar for November 2018

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29 Decorator in foyer 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Phoenix Committee Meeting 7:00 pm	30 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	31	1 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	2 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	3	4
5 Coffee Morning 10:30 am – 12:30 pm Lord Arthur Savile's Crime rehearsal 7:30 pm	6	7 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	8 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	9 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	10 Screen at the Phoenix film showing of 'All the Money in the World' 7:00 pm	11 Phoenix Youth Theatre in foyer 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm
12 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	13 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	14 Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	15 Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm Rehearsal for 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' 7:30 pm	16	17 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	18
19 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	20 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	21 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	22 Phoenix Theatre Singers - out of theatre 7:30 pm 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	23 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	24 'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime' by Oscar Wilde and Constance Cox 7:30 pm	25 Screen at the Phoenix film showing of 'Funny Cow' 7:00 pm
26	27 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:00 pm	28 Auditions for 'And Then There Were None' by Agatha Christie 7:30 pm	29 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	30	1	2

November 2018

Members' Calendar for December 2018

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26	27 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:00 pm	28 Auditions for 'And Then There Were None' by Agatha Christie 7:30 pm	29 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:30 pm	30	1	2
3 Coffee Morning 10:30 am – 12:30 pm Final reading and auditions for 'Arris in Wonderland' 7:30 pm	4 Phoenix Theatre Singers 7:00 pm	5	6 Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	7 Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	8 Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show 7:30 pm	9
10	11	12	13	14 Phoenix Theatre Xmas Party 7:30 pm	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

December 2018