

OCTOBER 2022

Latest News

Since the last Newsletter in July, we have celebrated the centenary of the Phoenix Theatre with a concert by the Phoenix Theatre Singers entitled “A Hundred Years of Song”. The Phoenix Youth Theatre, under the direction of Ellen Dorsett from the Courtyard Theatre, has performed “Fantastic Mr Fox” by Roald Dahl. Reviews of both these shows are in the Newsletter.

Alan Smith has stood down from the position of Building Manager and currently this post is vacant. Members of the Phoenix are invited to apply for this post. Please contact our secretary Alison Clarke for more details.

At a recent Screen at the Phoenix film, we were pleased to welcome a group of Ukrainians who were involved with the theatre in Mariupol.

Our website has been redesigned to make it easier to find out what’s on and book tickets.

Graham Russell (Newsletter Editor)

Production Co-ordinator’s Column

Phoenix Youth Theatre

The Youth Group restarted on Saturday 17th September with our new facilitator from the Courtyard Theatre in Hereford, Kate Ross. There will be two sessions each Saturday, Phoenix Kids, ages 4-7 years, from 9.30 to 10.15 am, (£41/term) and Phoenix Juniors, ages 8-11 years, from 10 to 11.30 am, (£45/term), in term time.

‘Inspector Quaker of the Yard’ in ‘The Return of the Cecil Vessel’ by Peter Stallard

This one-act play will be performed for a **Member’s Evening on Wednesday 5th October at 7.30 pm for an 8 pm performance**. Maurice Thompson will direct the play as an introduction to directing a full-length play at the Phoenix Theatre in the future. It is our practice to ask new potential directors to direct a play for a member’s evening before taking on a full-scale production to the public. The cast comprises Suzanne Hill, Jenny Spencer, John Spencer, Bob Houghton, Tony Hearn, Les Davis and Tim Betts. Amanda Barrett will stage manage, assisted by Lynn Tait who will also provide costumes. Amanda and Lynn will provide nibbles for us to enjoy with a drink after the performance.

Do come along for an entertaining evening and catch up with old friends!

Screen at the Phoenix

“Operation Mincemeat” will be the screening on **Saturday 8th October**. It’s 1943. The Allies are determined to break Hitler’s grip on occupied Europe and plan an all-out assault on Sicily; but they face an impossible challenge – how to protect a massive invasion force from potential massacre. The cast includes Colin Firth, Johnny Flynn, Kelly Macdonald, and Matthew MacFadyen

Performathon and Gala Concert for Children in Need

THE Phoenix THEATRE Palace Pound, Ross-on-Wye

Saturday 15th October at
The Phoenix Theatre:

A PERFORMATHON for Children in Need

11am - 4pm
with a different performer every 15 minutes!
Refreshments available
Come along and support or
contact wbrigg@btinternet.com
to book a performance slot.

EVENING CONCERT

7:30pm
Put on your best bib & tucker
for an evening with
THE PHOENIX THEATRE SINGERS.
Programme chosen and sponsored by our supporters
Tickets £10 with all proceeds going to
Children in Need

Book your tickets early, available from:
BOX OFFICE at ROSSITER BOOKS
9.30am - 5.00pm (01989) 564464
or online:
www.phoenix-theatre.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 308998

Mary Brigg will conduct a **Performathon** from **11 am on Saturday 15th October**. Members and the public are invited to perform at booked slots during the day. In the evening there will be a **Gala Concert at 7.30 pm performed by the Phoenix Theatre Singers**. Monies raised will go to Children in Need. Please contact Mary on wbrigg@btinternet.com to book a slot in the day and do support us by buying tickets for the Gala Concert in the evening. Previous Performathons have raised in excess of £1000 pounds. Come on Phoenix members - visit the theatre during the day and/or book tickets for the evening concert !!!

‘Murder Mystery – The Play’ by Our Star Theatre Company

Ben Mowbray and his Our Star Theatre Company

will perform this comedy for three nights on **Thursday 20th, Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd October at 7.30 pm.**

November 2022 Production

Graham Russell will direct ‘**How the Other Half Loves**’ by **Alan Ayckbourn**. The production dates are **Saturday 19th to Saturday 26th November**. The cast comprise Alison Clarke, Robin Haig, Lynne Casey, Tom Lee-Hynes, Amanda Barrett and Steve Banner. The characters are a suburban trio of married couples, linked by the work of the husbands. It is set in the 1970s. The set represents two living/dining rooms at once. The furniture, and often the people, of the two homes are intermingled, most notably in the scene that closes the first act, when one hapless couple is having Thursday night dinner with another pair and Friday night dinner with the third. **Do get your tickets early to see this hilarious production!**

The Phoenix Theatre Singers Xmas Show

This popular Christmas Show will take place on **1st, 2nd, and 3rd December**.

Phoenix Theatre Xmas Party – Saturday 10th December

There will be a Christmas Party at the theatre at 7.30 pm on Saturday 10th December. Lynn Tait will organise the evening and Bob Houghton will be our DJ. Details to follow.

‘Venice Revisited’ by Richard Elgood and Richard Watson

This new musical will now take place from **Tuesday 21st to Saturday 25th March 2023**. The open reading and open auditions were well supported. We are holding some extra auditions on Tuesday 4th October, after which we will be able to cast the show. Rehearsals to start in January. More details to follow.

Our Star Theatre Company presents

our star theatre company presents

MURDER MYSTERY THE PLAY

20th - 22nd October at 7:30pm

THE Phoenix THEATRE

Tickets £13 (Students £10)
BOX OFFICE: phoenix-theatre.org.uk | 01989 564464
in person from Rossiter Books, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye

Suzanne Hill

How The Other Half Loves (November Production)

How The Other Half Loves is one of Alan Ayckbourn's classic plays and was first performed at the Lyric Theatre in 1970. The play was also performed at the Phoenix in 2005 including Howard Owen and Jane Russell in the cast.



This is a brilliant comedy and features the lives of three couples all linked by the husbands working for the same company but at different points in their careers.

The senior couple – Frank and Fiona Foster – are played by Robin Haig and Alison Clarke (*centre*). The young couple – Bob and Teresa Phillips – are played by Tom Lee-Hynes and Lynne Casey (*right*) whilst the remaining couple – William and Mary Featherstone – are played by Steve Banner and Amanda Barrett (*left*).

The play revolves around a misunderstanding by Frank Foster as to the whereabouts of his wife when staying out until 2 in the morning (“wheel in the flowerbed actually”). Teresa is also put out by Bob coming home late the same evening (“talking about work and other things”). In order to resolve the matter Frank

and Teresa both invite the Featherstones to dinner. Whilst the dinners are held on different nights, the two dinners are acted out simultaneously on stage in a masterpiece of creative writing.

Find out whether Frank ever gets that screwdriver repaired, Bob gets something to eat for breakfast other than a peanut butter sandwich, and how William wets his trousers, by visiting the Phoenix Theatre in November (19th – 26th).

We started rehearsals in early September and I am very pleased with progress so far. The rehearsal have been a hoot with the cast struggling to complete their lines on many occasions before bursting into laughter. The cast is supported by Chris Robertson as stage manager and new member Kathy Ashford as his assistant. Jacky Bedford is prompt with Maurice Thompson and Ian Godsave combining to provide light and sound. Lynn Tait will do costumes and thanks to Lyn Smith for organising the bar rota.

Graham Russell (director)

THE **Phoenix**
THEATRE

noda
Be inspired by amateur theatre

The Phoenix Theatre Company presents

HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES

a comedy by Alan Ayckbourn



Saturday 19th - Saturday 26th November
7.30pm (Doors open 7.00pm)
Tickets £10.00 (£8.50 Monday 21st)

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

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Review of “A Hundred Years of Song” by The Phoenix Theatre Singers

Acknowledging the 100th anniversary of the Phoenix Theatre which originated with the Ross Operatic & Dramatic Society, the Phoenix Theatre Singers provided a fitting tribute to the occasion by presenting a wide-ranging concert with popular songs throughout the period. We were reminded of the huge amount of work and fund raising that took place over many years culminating in the transformation of a former fire station to the beautiful and intimate Phoenix Theatre we have today. The concert was devised and led by the musical director Mary Brigg with other introductions by Michelle Cooper and Di Hughes.

The stage was organised in concert style with two rows of chairs on raised platforms, backed by a star cloth and the players were attractively dressed; ladies in red and black whilst the gentlemen sported tuxedos with red bow ties.



With 26 sections in total it will be difficult to mention them all here. However, the concert took off with the full chorus singing ‘Another Op’nin Another Show’ from Kiss Me Kate, with an early opportunity to harmonise which was continued well throughout the concert. This was followed by a great medley from Irving Berlin’s ‘Rags to Ritz’ including ‘Play a Simple Melody’, ‘Blue Skies’ and ‘Puttin on the Ritz’. ‘Yours’ sung by Di Hughes was poised and sensitive and a tribute to the Everley Brothers was well received along with Natalie Smith’s ‘Call Me Irresponsible’.

The audience also enjoyed a reminder of ‘On My Lips Every Kiss Is Like Wine’ (Franz Lehár) sung by Mary Brigg with amusing interaction with Richard Watson on piano, Victor Borge style. The chorus’ ‘Rock around the Clock’ went with a real swing and perhaps the biggest ovation during Part 1 was reserved for Emma Lewis and ‘Moon River. Part 1 concluded with Phoenix’s own Beverley Sisters: Suzanne Hill, Margaret Harnett and Lyn Smith complete with armography and another great chorus number ‘Thank You For The Music’ by Abba.

For Part 2 the ladies changed into a very smart selection of evening wear and the full chorus started with a medley from ‘West Side Story’ which reminded us what a fantastic score it has. Jacky Bedford sang ‘Love

of My Life' (Queen) with great feeling, followed by the chorus with 'Seals Lullaby' with more gentle harmonies. Part 2 actually consisted of one great number after another with an impressive selection from Gershwin and to add some variety, Sue Nicholson gave us an excellent and amusing portrayal of Pam Ayres poem 'In Defence of Hedgehogs'.

Julienne Reeves provided a very tuneful and controlled 'May Each Day' and was joined by Andy Doyle for a beautifully sung 'If I Loved You' from 'Carousel'. More super harmonies in 'If I Fell' by Lennon and McCartney and this was followed by Michelle Cooper's excellent 'She Used to be Mine' from 'Waitress'. Owen Fitzpatrick gave a cool rendition of 'I've Got You Under My Skin' (and looked cool too in his white tuxedo) and the concert concluded with a tribute to Queen.

Bruce Wyatt (NODA)

Review of "Fantastic Mr Fox" by Phoenix Youth Theatre

Some may have heard of 'Fantastic Mr Fox' as an American animation film or Disney movie, but it is more likely known as an adaptation of a Roald Dahl's classic children's story. Whilst the story actually features a lot of scheming and violence, the Phoenix Youth Theatre's production by director Ellen Dorsett is quite charmingly innocent given the group's youngsters are all between 7 and 14 years of age.



With a cast of 23, many of which had lines to say, it is impossible to comment on them all here, never the less they all contributed in many ways. The fixed set depicting a countryside scene on two levels was excellent in construction and well painted and during the opening whilst the youngsters played games the

three main farmers in the story were introduced: 'Boggis' (Lottie Lockwood), 'Bunce' (Millie Welch) and 'Bean' (Iris Williams). All three spoke up well with good characterisation.

We are soon introduced to Mr and Mrs Fox and their four young cubs. 'Mrs Fox' was played by Sophia Shakespeare with a warm motherly feel whilst 'Mr Fox' played by Amelie Kempshall was played with great confidence and spoke up exceedingly well - one to watch for the future. All four 'small foxes' (Paisley Comri-Bowcott, Hywel Jones, Arwen Jones and Archie Corbin) were all good.

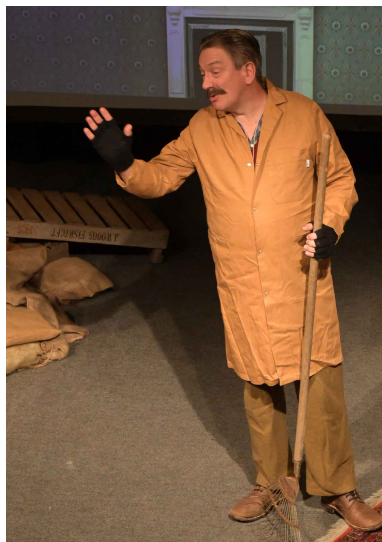
The three farmers were determined to eradicate the fox family and after failing to dig them out of their home with shovels, resorted to mechanical means and the ride-on tractor created for the scene was very impressive. The Fox family escape by digging their way out further and seek revenge by looting the farmers of their chickens, cider and other produce which they offer to the other animals. I was impressed by Gethin Jones as 'Rat' for his clarity and also 'Mrs Bean' (Rose Davis) and Keira Beard ('Mabel') who gave great support.

The costumes and make-up were superb and although there were some moments when first night continuity lapsed – well hey most were no older than 11 years of age - this was an overall delightful production which the audience and I enjoyed.

Bruce Wyatt (NODA)

Peter Gill - Meet Tommy Atkins

This show was performed on Saturday 1st October. Ian Godsave took these photos from the technical gallery:



Subscription Renewal

A reminder that subscriptions were due for renewal on 1st September. If you have not renewed, please complete the online form at:

<http://www.phoenix-theatre.org.uk/member-area/membership-forms/>