

Dangerous Corner
Dir. John Ghent

JUNE 2024

SCENE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY

The
Little
Theatre

Visit our website for more information: thelittletheatre.co.uk



Editor's Letter

Last month was a true testament to the impact and magic of community theatre, as we witnessed sell-out shows for both the iconic classic *Grease* and the youth theatre's enigmatic production of *Alice in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*. The energy and talent displayed on our stage left us all in a state of pure wonder.

This month, we are thrilled to present the chaotic domestic

comedy *Table Manners*, and in the upcoming months we have the charming production, *The Darling Buds of May* and the delightfully chilling *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors* gracing our stage in July.

But the true highlight is yet to come – the announcement of our brand-new season! We will soon unveil our highly anticipated season line-up, complete with a stunning new brochure that will transport you to the very heart of

the theatrical experience.

The auditions for the new season are already underway, and the casts for the first two plays, as well as all three society musicals, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, have been set

Kerry

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 Head of Wardrobe ▶ **John Bale**
 Premises Supervisor ▶ **Rob Mullins**
 Scenic Workshop ▶ **Dave Towers**
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Scene

Editor of Scene ▶ **Kerry Smith**
 Design of Scene ▶ **Cross Productions**

Contributions to Scene are invited. To ensure your submissions are used, please send them in by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next month's issue. If you have a story, let us know before then to guarantee that we reserve space for you. Contact us via email on scene@thelittletheatre.co.uk

Audition Notice: Gaslight

Production Dates: September 21 - 26, 2024
 (Rehearsals begin late-August 2024 - summer holidays can be accommodated within reason)

Director: John Ghent

Contact Info: 07703764800 or j.ghent@btinternet.com

Description: Written by Patrick Hamilton, this is the play that gave rise to the modern term of "gaslighting". This gripping, suspenseful play gives great opportunities for strong playing. It has been a modern classic thriller since its first production in 1938, and has been filmed on several occasions over the years.

Audition Date/Time: Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Location: Haywood Studio, The Little Theatre, Dover Street

Character	Playing Age
Bella Manningham	35-40
Jack Manningham	35-40
Rough (an ex police detective)	60+
Elizabeth (cook and housekeeper)	50
Nancy (a maid)	19
Two policemen (non-speaking)	

Each character has a life to live and is essential to the whole.

Given ages are a guide only, as balance is all. It's essential you are familiar with the play before the audition, and it would be helpful if you could advise me as to your intention to attend.

If you are interested please get in touch.

From the archives: 1952 Romeo & Juliet Review

Words by Lisa Thirlby

For the first thirty years or so of its existence, Leicester Drama Society produced a Shakespeare play each season. Initially, this was always in April, around the time of the bard's birthday, but later it was more likely to be in the autumn. In November 1952, LDS produced *Romeo and Juliet* and received this review. 'MS' wrote reviews for the *Evening Mail* for years and was not always as disparaging about us as this...

DRAMA SOCIETY - 'ROMEO AND JULIET'

The presentation of an "annual Shakespeare" is one of the more dutiful customs of Leicester Drama Society, and this season's choice is *Romeo and Juliet* (at The Little Theatre).

Anthony Harris gives us a careful production, chaste enough for any schoolgirl audience and calculated to excite the emotions far less than a "U" picture.

His version is well-costumed, decorously set, admirable in groupings and such matters as crowd scenes and fencing displays.

GOOD-LOOKING

It is a good-looking period piece, but it is not what it should be – an impassioned telling of a great love story.

John Thacker and Pamela Sawley strive hard to image an affection near idolatry; but the truth is neither has

the range to do so.

Miss Sawley is of the age for Juliet. She is tender and appealing, at her best in the final terror of the tomb.

Mr Thacker seems to me altogether too sensible a Romeo. I cannot imagine him riding post-haste from Mantua to meet his destiny beside his love. Nor are his stance and gesture particularly right.

Joyce Harris would, I should have thought, have revelled in the role of Nurse. Yet here she is, presenting her as a quite sprightly dame, almost bereft of foibles, and not the antique windbag we remember.

Her masculine counterpart in garrulousness, Friar Lawrence, is but drably represented by Eric Buxton.

Douglas Goodlad appears miscast as Benvolio. Indeed, he has little to do but laugh and nod his head and slap his thighs.

BRAVADO

Is there, then, any acting I do like? Yes, I admire the dash and devilment of David Lyall's Tybalt, the swift bravado of Victor Bonfield's Mercutio, Leslie Gillot's stately Prince, John Graham's mean apothecary.

And Arthur Williams, when he can recollect all his lines, will make a very good Capulet indeed.

M.S.

Michael Shuttlewood writes a full-length feature on *The Amateur Stage* in *The Evening Mail* every Monday.



What's On

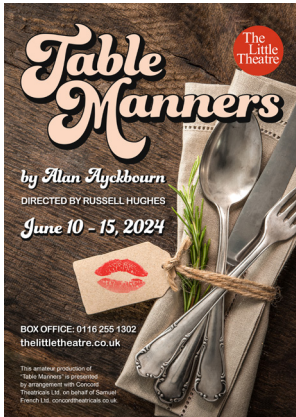


Table Manners

by Alan Ayckbourn

June 10-15, 2024

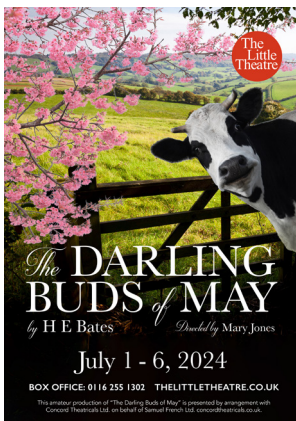
Directed by Russell Hughes

Reg finds food rather scarce, despite having it thrown at him by Sarah... Sarah is scandalised by Annie... Annie is disappointed by men in general and Tom in particular... Tom knocks down Norman... Norman's romantic proposals are ruined thanks to Ruth... Ruth loses her patience, her temper, and her glasses... and everyone has trouble deciding where to sit. The events of one weekend, as seen from the dining room in this serving from Ayckbourn's 'Norman Conquests' trilogy.

VISITING PRODUCTIONS

The Counterfeit Seventies (June 1) – Having toured extensively with The Counterfeit Sixties show they now bring you their unique Seventies show from a decade of glam rock through to new wave music, and everything in between.

COMING SOON



The Darling Buds of May

by H.E. Bates

July 1-6, 2024

Directed by Mary Jones

A wonderfully warm-hearted adaptation by H.E. Bates of his novel that led to the 1991 television series.



Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors

by Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen

July 10-13, 2024

Directed by Nikki Favell

A quick-changing, laugh-out-loud reimagining of the gothic classic, Dracula.

REMINDER
**£10
TICKETS**
FOR LDS
MEMBERS

Don't forget that LDS members are entitled to one ticket (per member per show) at the discounted rate of £10 for the five LDS plays in our spring/summer season. These are available to purchase within a month of the production.

ELIGIBLE FOR THIS DISCOUNT ARE:

Table Manners (June 10-15)

The Darling Buds of May (July 1-6)



Sleeping Beauty



The
Little
Theatre

PANTO
2024-25

Principal Auditions

NOTE: Amateur Status only – Unpaid

Briar Rose: The Good Fairy

Female – 16-35

Strong vocals and delivery with some ability to move.

Carabosse: The Bad Fairy

Female – 25-35

Strong vocals and delivery with some ability to move.

Princess Aurora: The Sleeping Beauty

Female – 16-25

The Principal Girl: Strong vocals and dance experience needed.

Prince Valiant of Euphoria

Male or Female – 18-30s

The Principal Boy: Very much a character part with plenty of attitude.

Strong vocals and some ability to move.

Tickles: The Court Jester

Male – 16-30s

Charismatic lead comic, needing good rapport with the audience.

Some experience in singing and movement an advantage.

King Caractacus of Arcadia

Male – 40s

Another charismatic lead comic, needing good rapport with fellow comics and audience.

Some experience in singing and movement an advantage, but not essential

DATE: Wednesday, June 12, 2024

TIME: 7:00pm

PLACE: 52 Down (Rehearsal room
at 52 Albion Street)

PRODUCTION DATES:

25 performances

Dec 13, 2024 to Jan 5, 2025

Rehearsing from Mid-October

If you are interested and would like more information about the audition and commitment, please email the director, John Bale: johnrbale@hotmail.com



Sleeping Beauty



The
Little
Theatre

PANTO
2024-25

Dancers Audition

NOTE: Amateur Status only – Unpaid

Leicester Drama Society are looking to cast six to eight senior dancers for our annual pantomime.

We encourage both male and female identifying candidates.

The successful applicants will be required to perform in all 25 shows, between Dec 13, 2024 and Jan 5, 2025.

Dates and times of all performances can be found on our bookings website.

Must be a minimum age of 16 by August 29, 2024.
Upper age is early 30s.

Requires a good level of dance training/performance experience.
Singing ability is an advantage, but not essential.

Beginning from Sunday, October 20, 2024, dance rehearsals
take place at The Little Theatre on:
Sundays: 11:00am-2:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:00pm-9:30pm

DATE: Sunday, June 30, 2024
TIME: 10:30am - 12:30pm
PLACE: The Haywood Studio at
The Little Theatre

PRODUCTION DATES:
25 performances
Dec 13, 2024 to Jan 5, 2025
Rehearsing from October 20, 2024

If you are interested and would like more information about the audition and commitment, please email the director, John Bale: johnrbale@hotmail.com

Little Memories

David Lovell recalls a favourite memory of The Little Theatre

As someone who's been performing at The Little Theatre for 30 years now, I have many, many uplifting, life-affirming, joyous memories of players, crew, shows and audiences. One being of a last night power cut just before the beginning of act two of *Me and My Girl*, leading to an impromptu 'gang-show' of numbers from the musical, including my co-star and I repeating "The Sun has Got his Hat On" (with tap routine) more than a few times until full power was restored. Another is the moment as Chitterlow in *Half a Sixpence*, I sailed across the stage into the wing on my heavy butcher's bicycle with practically no brakes and nearly took out stage manager Nadine Hall, lifting her off the floor and quite badly winding her – I think she's forgiven me! However, the memory that perhaps best epitomises my time at The Little concerns many of the elements that the theatre is best known for: panto, camaraderie, and a certain Mr John Bale.

It was Christmas 2012/13 and

my second panto, *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood*, playing Dame Tulisa Trixie Tixlix. As always, the panto family was very dear to me and although the usual coughs and sniffles plagued the company, everyone gave their all and Doctor Theatre did the rest. However, at one particular matinée, things didn't quite go to plan. At the interval, our Little John, Tom, was looking a bit pale and peaky, but insisted he was all right and OK to carry on with the performance. Towards the climax of the show, Robin and his band had defeated the witch, and I, dressed in a candyfloss pink fur coat with an improbably tall blonde beehive wig, had snapped out of a trance as the spell broke. I was suddenly aware of a tall figure staggering towards me with a blank look and a face the wrong shade of puce! The timing was perfect. My line to the Fairy Gossamer was "Who are you?" as Tom stumbled at me, I wheeled around and bundled him over toward the DSM's desk and off, returning to continue the dialogue



David Lovell

with the fairy. It wasn't until the end of the show – when Tom hadn't reappeared – that I found out he'd made it to the waiting area before projectile vomiting everywhere! By the time I made it down to the dressing rooms, the amazing backstage team had scrubbed the area clean, and the only evidence was the overwhelming smell of bleach!

Tom recovered enough to stay for the tea between the shows but was not deemed safe to do the evening performance that night. But who could 'bale out' the show? Who knew the show well enough and would fit the costume of Little John? None other than Mr John Bale himself! So, with a few tweaks – and for one night only – it was a privilege to share the limelight with John, who couldn't resist a few scene-stealing looks to the audience... and who could blame him?!

If you have a Little Memory to share, please submit it to scene@thelittletheatre.co.uk, along with a high-resolution photograph to accompany the story.



CAST ANNOUNCEMENT WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SEPTEMBER 9-15, 2024

CAST

Greta: Kate Grant

Carter: Iain Hamilton

Mr Mayhew: Jon Worthy

Leonard Vole: Steve Feeney

Sir Wilfrid Robarts: David Lovell

Inspector Hearne: Freddie Dobrijevic

Romaine: Leeann Rana

Clerk of the Court: Carla Smith

Mr Justice Wainwright: Carolos Dandolo

Mr Myers QC: Charles Moss

Janet Mackenzie: Clare Snow

Miss Clegg: Cathy Rackstraw

Dr Wyatt: Ian Salmon

The Other Woman: Charlotte Brown

Policeman I: Darren Wright

Policeman II: Ajay Parmar

Prosecution Barrister II: Nisha Vegad

Alderman: Mike Bull

Judge's Clerk: Steffi Parker

CREATIVES

Director: Ruth Cheetham

Scenic Design: Nadine Hall

Costume Design: John Bale

Lighting Design: Andy Crooks

Sound Design: Andrew Northcote

Stage Manager: Nadine Hall

DSM: Becky Bell

Props & Prompt: Keziah Caldwell



The
Little
Theatre

Review: *Alice in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*

Youth Theatre Production; directed by Andy Longley Brown and Kate Macintyre

Words by Jackie Caunt

I saw the final performance of this show and was so impressed with the ability of these young people. I know that working with children isn't easy and hats off to Andy Longley Brown and Kate Macintyre for all the hard work they put in to bring us this production and give the kids stagecraft.

They knew their positions, the timing was spot on, their use of props, and delivery of words. Some of the voices of the little ones were a bit faint at times, but I sat on the back row and caught all the action. I'd like to name every kid as they were all amazing, but don't really have the space in *Scene*.

Our first Alice, played by Jemima Moulder, was superb. Jemima owned the stage and we saw the mind of a child wanting to go through the tiny door. I loved the magic as she managed to shrink with the aid of cake, and her fantasy journey began. Jemima never stopped acting; she reacted to all the characters she met along her journey and got very cross with the Queen of Hearts (Eve Hopkins). Hopkins also played Humpty Dumpty and was very convincing in both roles.

The Queen's answer to all disobedience was to "chop off their heads" and I was very impressed how Eve manipulated the glove puppet (which looked a lot like Zippy from the children's programme, *Rainbow*), and I actually thought it was talking – very well done. I loved Jemima's reaction to all the incorrectly spoken nursery rhymes.

I loved the transition of the

two Alices, where Jemima saw her reflection (in the shape of Amelie Wilson-Knight) in the looking glass and the two girls swapped places.

And another great performance from Amelie, who also owned the stage. I particularly loved the scene where the White Knight (James Cowen) got into a fight with the Red Knight (Thom Jones) and decided to sing, and Alice said "it's not going to be long is it?"

Of course, it was long, and every time she thought they were coming to an end, her expressions said it all. Each time it continued on, so you began to sympathise with her, yet I thought both lads were brilliant.

I particularly enjoyed James Cowen's performance of trying to ride a broomstick. I also had a soft spot for Dormouse (Thomas Burton) who yawned spectacularly, and I was very worried he would not finish his sentence before he fell back to sleep; well done Thomas.

We have some stars-in-the-making in our youth theatre and I'm sure we

will see some of these actors go on to have a good career, if that is their aim. The set was brilliantly designed by Jake Smart, and last but not least was Mary Jayne Harding Scott who was the Musical Director for this production and ably saw the kids through this production.

I was on FOH Sat Matinee and after the show a lady came up to me and observed that Andy had kept the production true to the book and she was delighted. I have to confess I've never read the book, but I loved this show and am looking forward to their next production.



Review: *Dangerous Corner*

Words by Jackie Caunt

I hadn't seen this play before and didn't know anything about it; I decided not to look it up as then I would have a really fresh look at it without anything to compare it to.

I always like leaving the theatre when I know my concentration has been 100% engaged, and not having had a sneaky look at my watch to see if ice cream time is near etc. This play did it for me.

Dangerous Corner had so many twists and turns, it got mind boggling. It all started when the radio wouldn't work and Olwen (Kat Lenthall) remembered a chocolate-containing music box which had been offered to her, although she couldn't place where. That led to the rest of the play's revelations as Robert Caplan (John Moulding) – whose brother, Martin, had committed suicide – started to delve into the reasons why, and then we found out that Freda Caplin (Joy Brankin Frisby), Robert's wife, had been in love with Martin. It seemed everyone was having an affair

with someone else's partner! As the plot thickened, we realised that this gathering of friends had a lot going on behind the façade they presented to the outside world.

This play was amazingly directed by John Ghent, and the timing was superb. He knew when it was getting too deep, and how to balance the humour and dramatics. The set by Gem Greaves was amazing and well thought out.

I thought all the cast (also including Stuart Bryan, Rachael Humphrey, and Angela Hill) were brilliant and utterly believable, but I did enjoy the humour and delivery brought to the play Paul Beasley as Charles Stanton. I got quite miffed when he announced three reasons for a particular scenario to have happened, only gave two, and said the third could wait; I thought, "No! How can he do that?"

I knew the audience was as invested in the play as I was when, at the end of the first act, Olwen

dramatically steps forward and announces, "Martin didn't kill himself", and the blackout was followed by a collective "Ahh!" from the audience. During the interval, folk around me were discussing who they thought was the murderer. Then in the final act, they reprised the first scene up until we get to the radio, and lo and behold, it works! Everyone starts to dance and have fun; just that one change could've prevented the whole series of revelations.



Recent Photos: *Dangerous Corner*

April concluded and May began with our production of JB Priestley's *Dangerous Corner*, directed by John Ghent.

A group of friends gather in a country house, and a chance recognition of a music box prompts a series of secrets to be revealed, unravelling the events of a year earlier, and the previously unquestioned death of one of their friends.



"Excellent play."



"Superb play and excellent acting."



PHOTOS BY POYNER + MEE

"We thoroughly enjoyed last night's production. Great performances from all the cast, a fabulous set and great costumes. Congratulations to all involved."



"Super production all-round from a stellar cast to sublime set, costume, sound and lighting, slick stage management, and masterful direction, all coming together seamlessly in creating a memorable theatre experience and a first-class performance."



"Brilliant production, fantastic actors, we had another lovely evening at the Little Theatre. Thank you."



"Thoroughly enjoyed the show tonight. Which boasted a very fine cast, who all performed brilliantly. The set was excellent too. Another very entertaining evening at The Little Theatre."

Recent Photos: *Grease: The Musical*

Last month, we were delighted to welcome our extended family from WAOS back to the theatre for their production of *Grease: The Musical*, directed by Sarah Varnam.

The iconic musical set in a 1950s American high school see the Burger Palace Boys and the Pink Ladies involve themselves in the romance between Danny Zuko and Sandy Dumbrowski. The perfect musical to lead into all those "Summer Nights"...



"Absolutely incredible, saw it tonight!"



"Amazing! Well done everybody! "



"Saw this this evening, incredible!"

PHOTOS BY SARAH VARNAM

Recent Photos: *Alice in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*

The youth theatre's annual production saw them take on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*, adapted by Adrian Mitchell, and directed by Andy Longley Brown and Kate MacIntyre.

Alice's encounter with a tardy white rabbit leads her into a fantastical and nonsensical world called Wonderland. Later, after passing through the large mirror in her home, she finds herself caught between the White and Red Queens.



"An amazing performance, you should all be very proud. Thank you, Andy Longley Brown, for all your support and effort, which goes to the rest of the backstage crew too."



PHOTOS BY JENNY HARDING

In The Spotlight



Name: Holly Matusiewicz

Age: 37 (but deduct 10 years for my playing age!!)

Profession: Executive Assistant

Upcoming production: *Table Manners* by Alan Ayckbourn

Noteworthy: I first joined The Little Theatre many years ago, when I actually was my playing age... My first play was *Absent Friends* – I didn't say much, but had impeccable timing on when to pop my bubble gum at an awkward moment. I played Corrie in *Barefoot in the Park* and had the pleasure of working alongside Andrew Joshi. Last October, I played Linda in *Stags and Hens*, and taught myself a Liverpudlian accent the day before the audition.

What was the first theatre show you saw?

Oh, now I'm going back... I think it was *Rent* in New York. Now that was incredible. I was 21 and with my college friends on a trip arranged by the Drama Academy. I remember thinking how amazing the dancers were and you couldn't take your eyes off them. I can't dance – at all. I also remember it was February, and I was shocked by how cold it was.

What was the first play/musical you were in?

The first play I was in, I was 19... I think it was *Miss Julie* at the Drama Academy. She was an amazing character to play; I had to learn a huge monologue and was terrified of forgetting it. The play also required you to be very well spoken, so I had to really try to hide my Leicester accent! I wanted to get involved because 1. We had to! 2. I absolutely love acting; I can't explain the buzz I get from it.

What's your favourite role you've played to date?

To be completely honest, my favourite role I have played is Annie in the play I am doing now, *Table Manners*. She's shy and underestimated. I've really

enjoyed speaking in a different tone of voice to my usual not-very-well-spoken one. It's the first time I have felt more of a challenge in portraying this type of character.

What's your dream role that you're yet to play?

I love most roles really and I try to do different things (where I can). If the Little was ever able to do a stage version of *The Holiday* (please!), I would love to play Iris. She's a down to earth character with some really emotional scenes.

What's the best theatre show you've ever seen?

It must be *Only Fools and Horses: The Musical*! Yep, there's a musical of it. Knowing I was a huge fan (who isn't?), my other half took me to London as a birthday surprise.

It was so enjoyable and light-hearted, and made me belly laugh. We all need that. It was just fantastic and surprisingly... it worked as a musical!

What's your favourite thing about The Little Theatre?

This will sound very cheesy, but when I come to rehearsals here, I feel like I'm home. I love how everyone cares about it so much and you build a

temporary little family unit whilst working on a play together. It's also cosy and tea is always available. I am so happy and glad to have come back. I've been lucky enough to work with some lovely people.

Tell us about your upcoming production!

With a good mix of characters, it's funny, dysfunctional, quirky, warm, chaotic... it's *Table Manners*! I hope everyone sees the light-hearted humour and enjoys the mad moments!



At a glance

JUNE



Table Manners

June 10-15

JULY



The Darling Buds of May

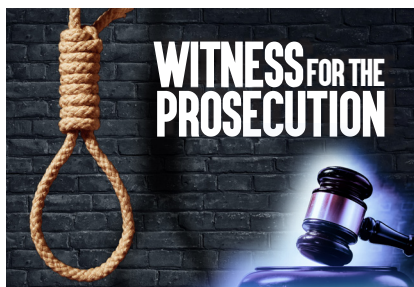
July 1-6

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors

July 10-13



SEPTEMBER



Witness for the Prosecution

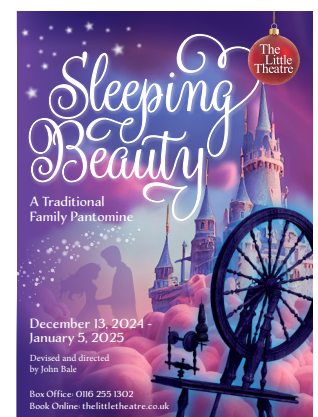
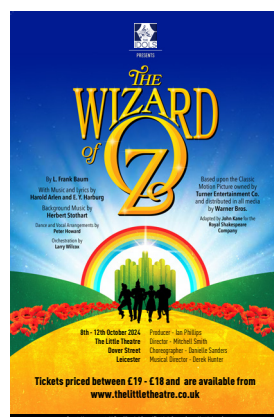
September 9-15

Disney's Beauty and the Beast

September 17-21



COMING SOON





Visit our website for more information: thelittletheatre.co.uk