

BARN THEATRE

NEWS



Volume 23 Issue 1 February 2019

Why on earth would you want to see an opera?

You would hardly be surprised to know that here at Merry Opera, we love opera. If you asked us why, we would respond by saying that opera is thrilling. But it isn't always: we've fallen asleep in many a traditional performance. But if you find a production sung in a language you can understand, where you hear the words clearly, in which the singers convince you about the characters, then you will surely feel the thrill.

You don't need to pay a fortune or wear formal evening dress to see operas like this. You don't need to know anything about the music or the story before you go. You don't even need to travel too far, because you can see our live performances in towns and villages all round the south of England (and next year in Northern Ireland as well.)

You could say that at least once a year

we are at a church or theatre near you.

If you're an opera fan already, then you may well have come across our stage and music directors, all of whom have international careers. You may also have seen some of the singers from our shows, for we are often a stepping stone on their way to the top.

Many of the operas that are rarely performed burst into life with one or two hidden musical gems. You may know that music theatre is the direct descendant of opera by way of Victorian music hall, Edwardian parlour songs, jazz and cabaret. So our shows often bring these musical strands together, offering you a romantic, comic, wicked or just plain silly selection from over 400 years of music.

But you don't have to accept what we say. Since our first production ten years ago, over 54,000 of you have seen our performances, and many of you have written to us. Here are a few examples:

"Thank you for opening my eyes to how opera can be such a fundamentally moving experience"

"I have never been to a concert before where the entire audience stood and cheered at the end"

"I was astonished, to say the least. The energy, the singing, the acting and the playing were all beautiful"

"Immediate and full of emotion and passion...one of the most inspirational things I have ever seen"

Pirates of Penzance comes to the Barn Theatre for one night only on Friday 8th March so book now and enjoy a splendid evening of Gilbert and Sullivan.



Southern Counties Drama Festival

is acknowledged as the premier preliminary festival of the All-England Drama Festival in the South of England. The only one-act play festival in the UK and celebrating its 68th year, it returns to the Barn from 26th February to 2nd March with new host Paul Hyde and adjudicator Nick Wilkes G.o.D.A. Eleven teams have entered this year and will battle through the week to win the new cash prize of £500 and the opportunity to travel the UK to the semi final, British Final and English final. Competitive drama festivals offer groups the opportunity to stretch themselves and seek to improve, with the benefit of expert guidance from fully trained adjudicators from the Guild of Drama Adjudicators, whilst learning from what other groups are doing. The SCDF is generously sponsored by the ICB group and looks forward to an exciting week here at the Barn.



When Baby Jesus got stuck in the toilet!

Limpsfield School had always held the annual nativity in the school hall...however, when the school expanded and we could no longer fit 180 children plus their parents into our hall, we looked around for another venue and where better than the Barn Theatre in Oxted.

The logistics of getting all our children, dressed in costume, plus benches chairs and props to the theatre was a logistical nightmare – but we used our “Limpsfield Learning Power” of Resilience and soldiered on.

Bruce, Caro, John and the Barn team have been absolutely brilliant, nothing is too much for them and, for the last three years, thanks to them, the performances have run smoothly and feedback has been great.

This year we had one or two hitches which made us smile. We were sharing the theatre with the Glow Theatre Company and therefore their scenery provided the back drop. When we arrived at the theatre to find graffiti at the side of the stage stating “Skid Row sucks” we decided that, although Mary and Joseph were technically on “skid row” perhaps the terminology was not quite suitable for an infant nativity. As always Bruce came to the rescue and the graffiti was covered by a demure black cloth. Problem sorted!

We were asked to store our props in the back stage disabled toilet overnight and this we duly did. Next morning when we arrived, plumbers repairing a leak, had helpfully locked the door to the toilet and when the children and teachers came in they were met with cries of “Baby Jesus is locked in the toilet - don't worry Bruce will get him out before we start!” Of course Bruce did and everyone enjoyed another brilliant performance. As one child wrote afterwards “I felt proud of myself because I said my words in front of all those people, Thank you Barn Theatre team for letting us on the stage”.

Jenny Baird

Head teacher, Limpsfield CE Infant School



Our annual January pantomime, *Robin Hood*, has proved to be one of our most successful pantomimes in recent years, both as to audience and cast enjoyment and seats sold.

After three months of rehearsals, Jane Maisey (Writer and Director), Andy Rapps (Musical Director) and Cathy Blundell (Choreographer) and the very talented cast of 43, produced an amazing show based on Jane's hilarious script, with lively music and dancing. The colourful costumes were provided by Karen Durrell and Mike Mckenzie, with loads of props managed by Paul Morgan and Katie Bartholomew. The very positive comments from those who have seen the show whether verbal, on social media or elsewhere, are testament to its success. Huge thanks go to Jane, Andy, Cathy and all the cast, musicians, technicians and helpers for their commitment and enthusiasm throughout.

We now preparing for our very popular February Half Term Workshop with David Rowan, when two age groups of our young members separately spend two days working with David rehearsing two plays and then perform these in the Barn Theatre on Friday 22nd February at 2 pm. The results they produce are great fun and well worth seeing. Anyone interested in seeing the plays please email secretary@oxtedplayers.co.uk.

On 8th and 9th March some of our older Young Players are presenting a youth play at St. Peters Hall, Limpsfield. "I'm Spilling My Heart Out Here" is directed by Fern Simmons who some 10 years ago joined

as a junior in panto and since then has appeared many times on the Barn stage and elsewhere. The play follows a group of secondary school students through their need to grow up and it draws on the life experience of its author, Stacey Gregg, who wanted to render a truthful portrayal of adolescence – to dramatise the trauma of daily life with its emotional turbulence and physical change, while also expressing the trust and compassion that exists between friends. The play has featured in past National Youth Theatre Festivals and is age appropriate for teenagers upwards. Tickets are £6 and available on 01883 724852.

We are also pleased to announce that *Pride and Prejudice* directed by Peter Reed will start rehearsal later this month and will run from 15th to 18th May. Tickets for this colourful adaptation by Gary Andrews of the Jane Austen classic are available on Ticketsource on www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk (card payments only) or for cheque or cash payments and general ticket enquiries on 01883 724852. Our cast includes Sean Eldridge (*Darcy*), Peter Calver (*Bingley*), Beckie Wilkes (*Elizabeth*), Steve Jones (*Mr. Collins*), Richard Peachey and Sophie MacTavish (*Mr. & Mrs. Bennet*), Katie Bartholomew (*Lydia*), Carol Moss (*Mrs. Gardiner*), Jo Silcox (*Lady Catherine*), Jackie Barrett (*Mrs Reynolds*), Catherine Elliott (*Miss Caroline Bingley*), Philippa Lucas (*Charlotte Lucas*), Lily Brown (*Kitty*) and Phoebe Sleeman (*Mary*).





Well we only have one show to report on since the last Barn Theatre News was published but what a production. It was our aim in making the decision to go ahead with "The Wizard of Oz" to include as many children from the O.J.O.S. as possible, as sadly they had missed out on their own production as it was a "Minack Year" which makes it very difficult to find the production and back stage teams which are so necessary when producing musicals. However the turn out for auditions back in the summer was superb, we ended up with over twenty young performers, talented and willing to give their all, and give their all they did. The adult cast was hard put to keep up with them but the end result was one to be immensely proud off.

One sad note to add was that two stalwart juniors had to make it their last Barn and O.J.O.S. appearance, Grace, the amazing Dorothy and Tali Rumsey have now left Oxted for Wiltshire where their father has taken up a position as a Bishop under the Diocese of Salisbury, O.O.S. would like to wish them all good fortune and a sad farewell.

Looking forward to the near future we have cast all main parts in our next production of "Iolanthe", a wonderful G&S fairy story with slight political overtones but light enough to waft you away from anything in today's political world. Directed and choreographed by Fiona Steel, a long-time favourite with the "Operatic", and M.D'd. by Zoe Humphries, who was last with us for "My Fair Lady", this should prove a great success with not only the "Savoyards" but also the younger audiences who still believe in the little folk.

Please do not forget that this year our A.G.M. will be held at the Barn Theatre on Tuesday 12 February, details will be circulated as usual and we expect to hold a small social event after the meeting with refreshments and a small quiz. If you wish to nominate someone for the Committee please remember to fill-in the appropriate form and please get the candidates permission first.

During the spring we will be holding auditions for this year's O.J.O.S. show which looks likely to be a choice of "Grease" "Oklahoma" or "Guys and Dolls". Sadly it was not possible to get a performance licence for "The Boyfriend" so that will have to wait for another year. The rest of the year looks very exciting with "An Old Time Musical Spectacular" in September, and "Scrooge" the musical in November, please watch this space for further information.

David.



FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY
★ ★ FEATURING ★ ★
JAKE AND ELWOOD



Blues Brothers Little Brother pay tribute to the Blues Brothers, the Commitments and Sweet Soul Music.

Jake and Elwood are on a 'Mission from God' to make you dance, sing and laugh. Backed by an excellent 12 piece live band, Jake and Elwood belt out two hours of hits associated with the Blues Brothers films whilst entertaining with an energetic and amusing stage show.

Packed with hits such as Everybody Needs Somebody, Minnie the Moocher, Rawhide, Soul man, Shake your Tailfeather, plus many many more, this is an evening not to be missed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Jake and Elwood Blues

The Blues Brothers!

Friday 24th May 2019!

Tickets available now www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk



Simon Evans is one of the most exciting and distinctive talents to emerge on the comedy circuit in recent years. He is a familiar voice on BBC Radio 4 as a regular on The News Quiz, The Unbelievable Truth and Armando Iannucci's Charm Offensive. 'Absolutely brilliant' according to Caroline Aherne, and he has

justified the tag, regularly selling out shows in Edinburgh and racking up TV and radio credits. Plus, he dresses smartly and uses no bad language whatsoever...!

Make a date for **September 21st** and tickets are available now www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk or 01959 561811



Aquarian Opera to perform at the Barn again

After a ten-year sabbatical, the Barn's resident opera company, Aquarian Opera is returning to the stage. Oxted-based Director and operatic soprano, Melanie Vinall has taken over as Aquarian Artistic Director. Barn regulars will know

Melanie as the director of The Pirates of Penzance for Oxted Operatic and more recently The Wizard of Oz. Melanie plans to fully stage Opera, Operetta and some G&S, with the first production at the Barn in the Autumn of 2020. Opera enthusiasts can get in touch by email on melanie@aquarianopera.com

Back, (*despite*) popular demand ..



Wickham's Wandering Old Time Stagers return with another nostalgic mix of Music Hall Mayhem, Mirth and Merriment with some good turns in between. Always a fun packed evening at the the Barn, a wonderful venue for Music Hall with Song Sheets and Salubrious Scenas, subtly sequestered for your delectation and delight!

So, blow the dust off your big hats, warm up your vocal chords and book your tickets soon, for what promises to be a stroll down Memory Lane.....

Book now for **Saturday 16th March**, a date not to be missed. Tickets from 01959561811 or www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk



Kevin Black former editor of the County Border News for over 30 years has passed away after twice battling cancer.

A keen photographer, Kevin began his journalism career at local newspapers in Scotland in 1969 before spells at music paper Melody Maker, the Hendon & Finchley Times in London and the Oman Daily Observer in Muscat. Editor of the County Border News series since 1987, Lingfield resident Kevin covered thousands of community events in East Surrey and West Kent.

He was a very good friend of the Barn and often seen at the theatre taking photos of casts and shows, giving his time freely and publicising what was on regularly in the County Border News.

On leaving Tindle Newspapers last year, he set up his own website to cover news in the Oxted area. Sigrid Sherrell, a colleague of Kevin's at Tindle News for more than 20 years, described him as a "real character" who was "well respected" for his commitment to covering local events.

A recipient of two awards for community journalism, Kevin was a regular contributor to BBC Radio Surrey, whose presenter Mark Carter tweeted: "Shocked to hear of the passing of journalist Kevin Black, a huge supporter of BBC Surrey over the years and one of the most hardworking journalists I've come across." Twitter poster John Lazenby added: "He was generous with his time and always happy to help promote a local fundraising event. Very sad news."

On December 6, Kevin told his 2,000 Facebook friends that he had been diagnosed with cancer for a second time. He wrote: "Four and a half years after getting the all clear, the cancer is back, this time lung, kidney and liver. "This is not a new cancer - it's the same one as before. But this is going to be much more dangerous and gruelling. I'm ready to tackle it for the second time. If you are going through a second term fear not, I'm here to help you along."

Kevin lived in Ash Close, Lingfield with his partner Christine. He passed away in hospital on New Year's Eve.

To all our readers

If you no longer wish to receive this Barn Theatre News and the show information pack in paper then please do let us know at publicity@barntheatreoxted.co.uk.

Electronic copies are available on our web site at www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk/btn.html

The Editor of the Barn Theatre News is Bruce Reed and contributions are always gratefully received.

Copy should be sent to barntheatre@btinternet.com

Press deadline for the next issue is Friday 18th April

FRIENDS OF THE BARN THEATRE



During the winter period the Barn is once again very busy with various performances and as I write we are in the middle of the Robin Hood Pantomime. No apparent damage has yet been attributed to the band of outlaws, although it seems that one of the crew was shot with an arrow.

The introduction of card payments has progressed smoothly and has been welcomed by the bar staff and customers alike. Roughly 30-50% of payments have been made by card.

Our AGM will be held in the theatre on Monday 11th March at 7.30 pm and I hope that you will be able to attend. Details will be mailed to members in the middle of February.

Alan Jackson



Richard with Bruce at tea, from Hickory Dickory Dock 1981

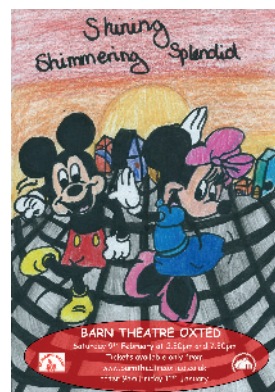
Richard Lawrence, brother of June Brown and Heather Lloyd and consummate actor passed away just before Christmas.

Richard joined the Student Players 60 years ago. He appeared in many pantomimes starting in the chorus and progressing to Ugly Sister and Dame. He also performed in many plays, both comedy and drama including a major role in "Lion in Winter".

In later life he was diagnosed with Parkinson's and over 18 years was always working towards a cure, raising thousands of pounds for charity. Always busy with a project, he never gave up on his love of life, happy to crack a joke with whoever he came in contact with. A regular visitor to the Barn at Panto time, when able, his last one being in 2018.

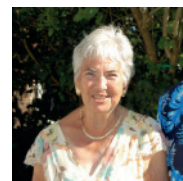
He is missed by all who knew him.

Excitement builds at St Mary's Primary School



156 children of St Mary's Primary School are very excited to be bringing **Shining, Shimmering, Splendid**, A Whole World of Disney Entertainment to the Barn on Saturday 9th of February.

A spectacular of music, dance and song, the tickets for both shows sold out, a total of 492, within 48 hours. The Barn has a long association working with the St Mary's production team to bring these shows alive and are delighted to welcome them back.



Carol Pickett, died peacefully in her sleep at Pembury Hospital on November 14th aged 77.

Carole first appeared on the Barn Stage in January 1960 in the pantomime "Puss in Boots" as one of the dancing girls. She would perform in seven more pantomimes during the 1960's choreographing many of the routines herself. She also appeared in Oxted Operatic shows "The Vagabond King" in 1968 and "Guys and Dolls" in 1971. When she wasn't on stage she was in the audience, in fact her engagement in 1961 was announced by Jimmy Rogers at the end of "Teahouse of the August Moon" in which Don was appearing. Her final appearances on the Barn stage were at the theatre's Diamond Jubilee Night of Entertainment show in 1984 where she performed a solo tap number and at the 50th anniversary of the Student Players Revue in 1996 where she was one of the old timers dancers.