

Noises OFF

LATEST NEWS

It has been a very busy few weeks at the theatre since the last edition of "Noises Off". As reported previously, a bid was made to support funding for the acquisition of raised seating for the back few rows in the auditorium. Just before Christmas, we were delighted to hear that Sherborne Town Council awarded us a very substantial grant (our gratitude to them, and to Adrian Harding, who put in the hard work of making the application). This, together with the generosity of other anonymous benefactors, meant that we were able to go ahead with the purchase of excellent-quality raised flooring, manufactured by Felix Design of Tiverton, Devon.

We took delivery of this in January, and it will, of course, be properly "christened" at our performances of *Table Manners* later this month. The outcome is that totally unobstructed views of the stage can now be enjoyed by audience members in rows A and D-G. Only those in rows B and C have less-than-perfect views if there are audience members sitting in front of them. However, as the auditorium is so small, and the stage so close,

we honestly feel that there can be no cause for complaint.

The other major development - which we are sorry to say is not one which the audience will appreciate as much as the cast and crew - has been the completion of the installation of a CCTV system, allowing backstage to have a clear picture of exactly what is happening onstage. This is of enormous benefit to actors' timing of their entrances, and for the stage crew's knowledge of the positioning of props etc, when quick changes have to be made. Additionally, the lighting and sound crew in the gallery will be able to time their cues accurately as they will be able to see (via infra-red images) the situation on stage during black-outs. Adrian Hole worked tirelessly to set up the system and its complex wiring, and we are enormously grateful to him for his efforts.

The set design and construction for "Table Manners", led by John Crabtree and assisted by the team of usual suspects - Mark Lambert, Adrian Hole and Adrian Harding - has come on apace and all is now in position. We are sure you will agree that, as always, the set is a stunner.

For the first time - and as a sign of things to come - our ambitious

programme of productions has meant that rehearsals have been overlapping, with the last few weeks of *Table Manners* running concurrently with the first few weeks of *Waiting for Godot*. The great blessing of having our own theatre has meant that this has been achieved easily and with no difficulty at all.

QUIZ NIGHTS

Our plans to try to hold a monthly Quiz Night have been modified slightly. The turnout in January was disappointing, despite Adrian's excellent work in producing very accessible and enjoyable rounds of questions. We therefore cancelled February and decided to have one more go in March, and Geoffrey Martyn - a regular attender, with Daphne - has kindly offered to be quizmaster. The quiz will take place at 7.30 on March 18th - entry £2.50, plus (optional) fish & chips. Do please come along - unless these evenings are better supported, we will not be able to continue them.

COMING UP...

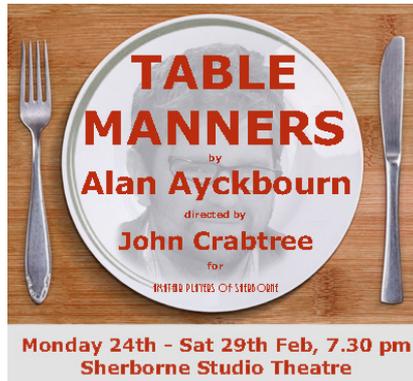
The Production Committee has met and drawn up the programme of productions for the rest of this year. Along with *Table Manners* and *Waiting for Godot*, we are planning to perform *Billy Liar* (by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall) in July, and *Gaslight* (by Patrick Hamilton) in November. Much more information about the read-through and auditions for *Billy Liar*, in March, will appear shortly in the next edition of "Noises Off".

FOR YOUR DIARY

- February 24th - 29th** *Table Manners*
 - Wed March 18th** Quiz night
 - March** - tbc - *Billy Liar* read-through
 - March** tbc - *Billy Liar* auditions
 - April 9th - 11th** *Waiting for Godot*
 - Wed April 15th** Quiz night
 - Tue April 28th** Drama event
 - Wed May 20th** Quiz night
 - Tue May 26th** Drama event
 - Wed June 17th** Quiz night
 - Tue June 30th** Drama event
 - July 6th - 11th** Summer production - *Billy Liar*
 - Wed July 15th** Quiz night
- All events begin at 7.30pm

"TABLE MANNERS"

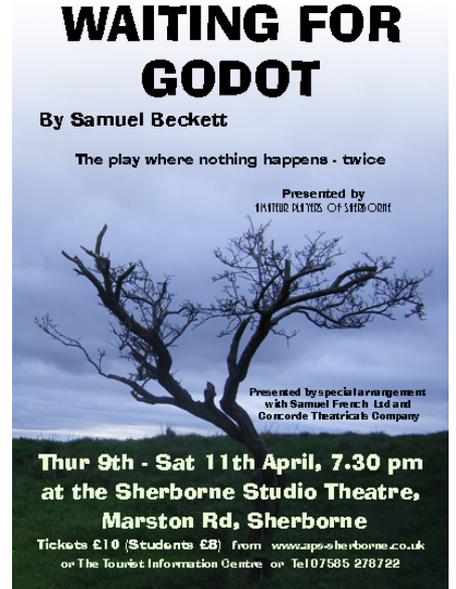
At the present moment, there is great excitement and anticipation concerning *Table Manners*. Rehearsals have been going extremely well (despite the endeavours of Ciara and Dennis to interrupt things), and we are expecting a highly successful run. At the time of writing, Wednesday and Thursday are sold out, there is a tiny handful of seats left for



Friday and Saturday (probably gone by the time you read this), and a dozen or so left for Monday and Tuesday. Have a look at some of the rehearsal photos printed below.

We have been very pleased with our arrangement with the Sherborne Tourist Information Centre, which has enabled a substantial number of customers to purchase their tickets though them - possibly people who might not otherwise have heard about the show. Our own online Box Office continues to run very smoothly, and it is most useful that very few requests for tickets now have to be dealt with over the phone.

"WAITING FOR GODOT"



Our production of *Waiting for Godot* follows hard upon the heels of *Table Manners*, being performed on April 9th -11th, with two preview performances at Shaftesbury Arts Centre on April 3rd and 4th. It is hard to imagine a greater contrast between the two plays, and we believe this provides an excellent example of the range and variety of our repertoire. It's probably fair to say that everyone has heard of *Godot* - it is widely held to be one of the most influential and important plays of the 20th century - although it does rather defy attempts to explain what it is "about"! With a small but highly experienced cast, and under the talented direction of Jerome Swan (a newcomer to APS, but not to the local am-dram scene), we expect this to be a memorable performance. Publicity has not yet been launched, although tickets can in fact already be bought through the APS website and the Tourist Information Centre. Further details will follow.

"TABLE MANNERS" IN REHEARSAL



Photography by
Nick Baker