

NOISES OFF

WORK IN PROGRESS

If you have the impression that things have gone quiet at the APS - think again! We do have a longer than usual gap between *A Wife for all Reasons* and *Theft*, because of the much earlier-than-usual scheduling of the former, but we are still on track to mount four productions during the course of 2024.

The reasons for the planning of this "gap" are so that essential maintenance and development work can take place at the Theatre. Already, the side walls of the stage have been replaced, insulated and painted, and the enormous task of insulating the main body of the auditorium has been begun. The forward part of the wall to the right (as you look at the stage) has been insulated and re-boarded, and painted with matching theatrical red paint. It is looking extremely handsome, and already gives an indication of how splendid the whole place will look when finished.

Huge thanks are due to Mark Lambert, Adrian Hole, John Crabtree and new APS member Robert Yeo for their tireless hard work in bringing about these improvements. Once the

insulation is finished, we look forward to warmer winter and cooler summer experiences during our performances! But this is not the only work going on:

- Attention is also being given to the wiring of the stage lights, with work expected to begin shortly.
- A company has been employed to lay a new floor in both the auditorium and the foyer, and again, work is expected to begin shortly. As well as providing an attractive and sympathetic appearance, appropriate for the building, we expect that the covering-over of the many cracks and holes in the existing floor will bring huge dividends in terms of the reduction of heat-loss in the winter.
- Another specialist contractor is standing by to begin work outside, in front of the main doors to the Theatre, to provide a safe and attractive surface (free of weeds!), and also a new ramp for ease of access to the doors. Funding for this is dependent on the outcome of a grant application: we expect to hear news of this within the next few weeks, and if successful,

work will begin very soon afterwards.

- Two further medium-term projects are in the pipeline: we are looking into enhancing the area around the bar, and the bar itself, possibly replacing the existing spiral stairs to the gallery; and as has been frequently reported, we are wishing to replace all of the (comfortable but extremely dilapidated) seating in the auditorium with more suitable modern theatre seating. The cost of new seating will be predominantly met by funds raised through the 100 Club - which is why we are so grateful to its members, and so eager for more APS members to join!

As we hope you can see, these are exciting times for APS and for our home, the Sherborne Studio Theatre. We hope you look forward to your next visit and will appreciate the various developments, both in hand, and ongoing.

AWARDS. NOMINATIONS. HONOURS!

You will be pleased to hear that APS productions, and those involved with them, continue to receive recognition at both local and regional level. The latest honours include 4 nominations for NODA awards, to be presented at a ceremony in Plymouth in May:

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole - **Best Comedy Art**
Twelfth Night - **Most Innovative Production**
Twelfth Night - **Visual Excellence**

These are in addition to the 2023 Rose Bowl awards already reported:

Whose Life Is It Anyway? - **Coup de Théâtre** nomination
Whose Life Is It Anyway? - Charlotte Berry - **Best Youth Actor** nomination
Whose Life Is It Anyway? - Robert Brydges - **Best Actor** winner
The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole - Liam Beard - **Best Actor** nomination
Betrayal - Sarah Nias - **Best Actress** nomination

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have joined APS since the last edition of *Noises Off*. We are delighted to welcome you, and hope that you will have a long and productive association with the Players.

Jane McKenna
Brenda Psyk
Robert Yeo
Samantha Elgar
Peter Villiers

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The cost of membership of APS had been frozen for many years, but it will come as no surprise that last year, the Committee was forced to increase the charge. The costs of heating the theatre have hit us particularly hard, but so also have increases in performance fees, and the cost of construction materials. Also, having assumed ownership of the Theatre

(courtesy of Malcolm Cockburn's extraordinary generosity), there are new insurance responsibilities to be undertaken. So it was with regret that, as from January 1st the annual subscription fee for adults was increased to £20. The fee for students still in full-time education remains at £5. Most APS members pay online by credit card, and you will automatically be

charged the new rate. However, some pay by Standing Order, and we must therefore ask you to contact your bank in order to increase this. We will send you a reminding email in advance of the date of your Standing Order, to make sure that you have remembered!

NEXT PRODUCTION - "THEFT"

Auditions have been held for our next production, *Theft*, which will take place in the first week of June. The Director, Jessica Colson, is pleased to be able to announce that the play has been

fully cast, and that work has already begun on the construction of the set. Rehearsals are expected to commence in early April.

The play, written by Eric Chappell (*Rising Damp*,

Home to Roost, *Only When I Laugh*, *Duty Free*, *The Bounder* and others) is a sharp, witty and dark comedy, with a small cast, very well suited for the SST stage.

Tickets will go on sale on 6th May, and APS members will of course be notified by email well in advance.



100 CLUB

We are delighted to welcome another new member to the 100 Club: **Barry Ward**. We wish Barry the best of luck in all future 100 Club draws. As we regularly report, the 100 Club exists to give vital support to our fundraising efforts on behalf of the Theatre, and in its short existence we have already raised nearly £4000. This puts us well on our way to our dream of being able to put new seating in the theatre. But there are plenty of tickets remaining, and more than a half of the total of APS members have not yet joined up - **please do so as soon as you can**.

Please see "Support Us" on the website, or email ss100club@gmail.com in order to join.

The most recent draw took place during the Quiz Night on February 9th, and the lucky winner was awarded a prize of £43.20.

The next draw will take place on April 13th.

QUIZ NIGHT

After a hiatus of many months, APS members were able once more to enjoy our ever-popular Quiz Night with Fish 'n Chips, in the Theatre on February 9th. Almost too popular, as it turned out, as we quickly hit the capacity of the auditorium (and stage), and very reluctantly and sadly had to disappoint some would-be quizzers.

The Committee has decided that, for future evening social functions of this nature, we will

make advance tickets available (through the same channel as production tickets) for online booking. This will mean that, if you book early enough, you can be guaranteed admission, whilst the organisers can be sure that maximum numbers are not exceeded.

On this occasion, the quiz host was Robert Brydges, who presented rounds of wide-ranging questions (quite challenging,

some of them. It was a definite advantage to have a working knowledge of Klingon!) to the packed house. The quiz also broke new ground, using technical wizardry to involve both visual and music rounds. In a nail-biting finish, the overall winners were "Music Goes Mad in Dorset".

As well as Robert, particular thanks go to Richard and Ruth Culham, who had the unenviable task of co-ordinating and collecting the food orders, and also to the various people who helped run the bar. Being able to have the bar open (courtesy of our new Premises Licence) certainly helped lubricate the evening and make it such a success, as well as bringing in very welcome additional funding.

