

# NOISES OFF

## BOYS BEHAVING BADLY...



*Bouncers* was chosen by the National Theatre as one of 100 'plays of the century'. In the 40+ years since it was first performed at the Edinburgh fringe, it is now 'not so much a play as it is a social phenomenon... there is barely a language it hasn't been translated into, not a country it hasn't conquered' [*The Guardian*].

Even so, would Sherborne in 2025 be ready for the scatological nightmare of the Gents toilet in Mr Cinders night club in the days of Disco? A scene from Dante's *Inferno*, as we were told by Les, the youngest of the four men in black. We heard a lot about bodily fluids in the course of the evening - to the

point that I could literally hear the stickiness of the floor of the night club with every footstep on stage - and about the booze, the birds and the *braggadocio* that made for a top night out in 1980.

Did we flinch? We did not. Sherborne could take it. In fact, Sherborne loved it. For the older members of the audience, it was a nostalgia-fuelled joyride down Memory Lane to the days of our misspent youth. For younger ones, there was something like envy for we who had strutted our stuff to Chic or Frankie Goes to Hollywood in those primal, un-woke times. In those days, a pint of lager





cost 45p, Aramis was the aftershave of choice for the lads, and repeats of *Till Death Us Do Part* were still on the telly.

The set was minimalist – steps up to the club's double doors, 'Mr Cinders' in pink neon above, and a glitter ball above that. And the lighting was equally straightforward – we met the bouncers in harsh, directional light from above, casting shadows down their faces. Tough guys.

The boys are Lucky Eric (Freddie Wopat), Judd (Gary Brooks), Ralph (Jordan Wiseman) and Les (Harry Wopat). Two of them (Freddie and Gary) were recently seen multi-roleing brilliantly in *The Thirty Nine Steps*, but in the case of *Bouncers*, they and their fellow cast members have to transform in the blink of an eye from boy to girl, from punk to punter, from DJ to porn star to toff with no help from the costume department or the set. In *Bouncers*, every change is achieved solely through the physical and vocal skill of the actor. The one and only prop they were allowed was a glitzy clutch bag each when Eric, Ralph, Les and Judd became Maureen, Suzy, Rosie and Elaine.



It is a huge credit to each of them, and to the Director, Sarah Webster, that these fully individuated characters flashed confidently into and out of existence simply by changes of voice, expression, posture and gait.



Jordan made his APS debut as Ralph - 'Mr Inner Calm' – whose quiet physical presence was every bit as menacing that of his noisier companions. A bouncer you would not choose to mess with. Which of course made his comic transformations all the funnier, as sleazy DJ Michael Dee, Nobby the Swedish postman, and especially as Suzy, the last girl left at the club - ever hopeful - at 2am.



Gary was the confrontational Judd, forever needling Eric for being soft and over the hill. Then, with a change of pitch and body language, Judd becomes Cheryl, the hair stylist who overcooks Suzy under the dryer and talks High Street fashion with Maureen. Moments later, Cheryl morphs into a male barber cracking terrible jokes to his customers, adding the inevitable: 'Anything for the weekend, sir?' And finally, Gary turns into the determined 'plain Elaine' who physically overpowers Kev and means to have her way with him.

Another debutant at APS, Harry, played feisty, aggressive Les and a range of clubgoers of every gender and accent with energy and pin-sharp precision – a shrill scouser, a braying toff, a pogoing punk, heartbroken Rosie, and of course Kev (up-for-anything-except-Elaine). It was virtuoso stuff.



Harry's Dad, Freddie Wopat, played the older, (slightly) wiser bouncer Eric, the last guttering candle of civilisation left in the jungle. Freddie has shown us his comedic chops many times at APS, but he added real poignancy here, delivering his 'big speeches' quietly, sadly, as monologues directly to the audience.

He told the story of the very drunk, very young girl who allowed herself to be abused by six leering men in a crowded pub. Eric intervened, pleading with her: 'Go home. Just go home.' Fred did this masterfully. We listened in rapt silence. Proper theatre, that was.

Well done lads – and well done Sarah, who trusted the audience to enjoy this show on its own terms, and be moved by it too.

Robert Brydges

## AGM

APS's AGM and Summer Party were held on Friday 15th August, and were very well attended. Our President, Mark Lambert, congratulated the retiring Chair, Sarah Webster on a most successful 2-year term, and we elected her successor, Jessica Colson, as well as two new Committee members, Adrian Harding and Gilly Savage, both already well stuck into the hard work of running many aspects of the Club behind the scenes. The following officers were elected:

President:	Mark Lambert
Chair:	Jessica Colson
Treasurer:	Patrick Knox
Secretary:	Richard Culham
Membership Secretary:	Martin Williams

## THE 100 CLUB

The 100 Club exists to give vital support to our fund-raising efforts on behalf of the Theatre, and has already raised £7,250. It is largely due to the funds raised through the 100 Club that we were able to replace the old seating, and can now afford to renew the dilapidated main door and frame, as announced above. But more than half of the APS membership have not yet joined the 100 Club. Please consider joining, either by going to 'Support Us' on the APS website, or by emailing [sst100club@gmail.com](mailto:sst100club@gmail.com). You would have a chance of a cash prize in the bi-monthly draw, and would be helping APS maintain the fabric of the building.

Our lucky winner in August scooped a prize of £46.20.

## NEW MEMBERS

Jordan Wiseman  
Catarina da Silva  
Harry Wopat

Olivia Kippax  
Peter Sangston  
Valerie Turk

We are delighted to have you with us. Stay long, and prosper!



# WHAT'S ON

## SHERBORNE STUDIO THEATRE



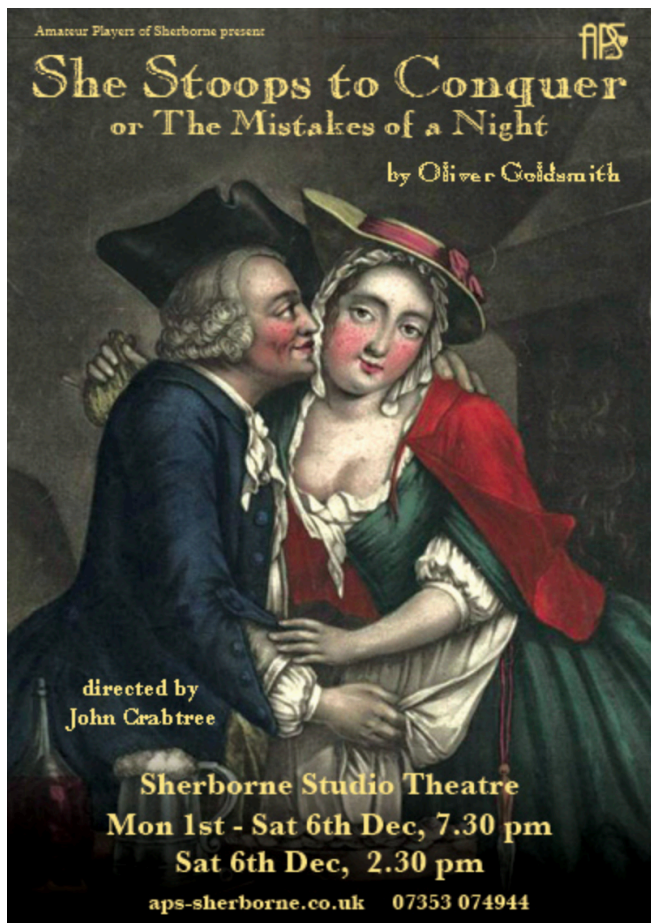
Falstaff is a role that Giles Shenton was born to play.

In this new comedy by Simon Downing, we find the fat knight in the Boar's Head tavern, nursed by the ever-hopeful Mistress Quickly. Will Falstaff marry her to pay off his debts? Will he turn teetotal? Will he mellow in old age? Join Sir John for an evening of jollity, frivolity and more Shakespearean insults than ever previously heard on any stage!

Fri 31 Oct, 7.30pm; Sat 1 Nov, 2.30pm and 7.30pm

Tickets now on sale

APS's December production is to be *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith - a much-loved, much-revived classic, of which Dr Johnson wrote: 'I know of no comedy that has answered so much the great end of comedy - making an audience merry.'



It will be directed by our own John Crabtree, who has cornered the market in Christmas costume dramas, and has many NODA and Rose Bowl awards to show for them! His talented cast includes:

Richard Culham  
Bev Taylor-Wade  
Catarina da Silva  
Cameron Thrower  
Sam Frost  
Peter Sangston  
Constantia Bingley  
Roger Chadbourne  
Gilly Savage  
Adrian Harding  
Olivia Kippax  
Barbara Stanzi

## DOORS!

The last major work required for the fabric of the theatre was the replacement of the main and stage doors and their frames, which were no longer fit for purpose. We were delighted to accept a very competitive quote for replacements in Sapele wood from Maurice Watts, who did such an excellent job on the staircase last year. The work is now complete, and APS is secure and weatherproof for decades to come, we trust!.



Huge thanks go to Richard Culham for organising it all, and to Martin Williams, who did much of the painting, as well as others on and off the Committee who also pitched in, in particular Rob Yeo and Mark Lambert.

## DIARY DATES

### SHERBORNE STUDIO THEATRE

#### APS Social Evening

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> September 7.00pm

#### Poetry Evening

(In conjunction with  
Sherborne Literary Society)  
Fri 10<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm

#### Much Ado About Falstaff

Fri 31<sup>st</sup> October 7.30pm  
Sat 1<sup>st</sup> November 2.30pm & 7.30pm

#### Gilly's Film Quiz

Fri 7<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm

#### She Stoops to Conquer

Mon 1<sup>st</sup>-Sat 6<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm  
Sat 6<sup>th</sup> December 2.30pm

## HELP WANTED!

We will be striking the 'Bouncers' set and starting to build the set for 'She Stoops' on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September. However, for the four weeks after that our very small team will be one man short, as Rob Yeo will be away. We would be very grateful for extra help during that time – and indeed at any time. We generally work on Sunday mornings from 9.00 am to about 12.30 pm.

You don't have to be a highly skilled carpenter, but the task does require a basic knowledge of woodworking and the ability to handle power tools. Ideally, you would be someone who can work independently at times and be able to work out how to build what's required -- and solve problems as and when they occur.

There's no remuneration, of course, but you get the satisfaction of seeing a job well done – and a mention in the programme. :)

If you are willing to help, please contact Mark Lambert ([info@mark-lambert.co.uk](mailto:info@mark-lambert.co.uk); 01258 817270).