



APOLLONIUS

THE IN-HOUSE MAGAZINE OF THE APOLLO THEATRE, ISLE OF WIGHT

Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff

Remember: a read-through is not an audition!

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT ISSUE:

Wednesday 5 February 2025

Other diary dates

- Coffee Every Saturday, 10.30-12.30 mornings
- AGM of the Apollo Theatre Players Saturday 23 November: 7.30pm in the auditorium
- Gateway Choir Christmas Concert of 'Carols and verse' Thursday 12 December from 7.00pm

RIP DOT STEVENS

8.10.2024



ISSUE NO. 306

NOVEMBER 2024

It's not often the word 'epic' appears in the same sentence as 'comedy'. But 'Sheila's Island', by Tim Firth, the Apollo's latest production, definitely qualifies for both. That assumes that 'comedy' is the best description of one of the darkest and most concentrated litanies of sarcastic, undermining 'jokes' at the expense of work colleagues ever presented on the well-trodden boards.



The curtain opened on a beautiful natural scene. The premise is attractively simple: Sheila from marketing (Carole Crow), Julie of HR (Julie Stonestreet), Denise, a production manager (Vicki Cook) and Fay from finance (Caroline Read), take a wrong turning on their week-end team-building jolly, hit a rock in their



borrowed rowing boat, and are stranded on an inhospitable island in Derwentwater, in the Lake District. Their single permitted mobile phone is disconnected soon, and they have one sausage for sustenance. A perfect recipe, it seemed to me, for initiative, resourcefulness, cooperation to be exercised to the full. But how wrong I was.

All four actors were fully credible, spoke and presented their individual positions so well. I felt a strong rapport with each except for Denise, the overpoweringly dominant one, and prayed for Firth to engineer the longed-for adjustments to be argued by Sheila, Julie and Fay, to lead to recon- sideration by Denise, and a return to the emotional stability each of them deserved and craved. At one point, after Denise's cruel attack on Julie's absent husband Angus, supposedly



for philandering because he hasn't answered his phone (that well-known sign!), Julie comes close to taking Denise properly to task for her constant jibes, but then quickly backs away. This is where I realised that Firth wanted us to suffer, along with the characters, a kind of uncorrected abuse - anti-Christian, anti-Sheila's mistaken logic, anti-Julie's rather charming liking for gadgets. I know of no office staff who would allow such things today.

Apart from relieving the tension which dominated the evening, this would

have given perfect opportunities for each character to develop further. I wanted to know more about them all, especially Denise: I felt that a gentle coaxing from the others could have helped us to discover her reasons for extreme bitterness, and whether her constant barrages bring her true happiness. That way lay the catharsis so prized by the ancient Greeks, and which would have enhanced our last half-hour in the theatre.

Ironically, it's left to the bird-watching, church-going Fay to release the tension of the final scene. The gyrfalcon she worships and pursues becomes a source of food,

just in time for a search party to spare us the spectacle of consumption of raw meat. Phew!

So many congratulations to the actors and directors. Movement and continuity were faultless, and the narrative forged ahead. I can't wait for the next production now.

Philip Fryer



EDITORIAL: THE VIEW FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Hearing the sad news that Dame Maggie Smith had rung down the final curtain on her unparalleled theatrical career (the word 'legend' is regularly—and justifiably—used), I was reminded of an anecdote that Miriam Margolyes told her rapt audience on the lawn at Northwood House back in the summer. It appears that Dame Maggie had been invited back to their old school in Oxford to open and dedicate a new theatre centre. Would she consider it? 'No!' she said, in that absolutely inimitable countess-of-Grantham falling tone; 'Nothing would give me less pleasure!' In the end as a favour MM went along in her place and the centre ended up being dedicated to her instead. Talk about seizing the mo-



ment!

One of the many joys of seeing Dame Maggie's face in the media—though for a sad reason, of course—is that most of the photos are of her at a certain age and she's got at least as many wrinkles as I have. Such a change from the smooth plasticised characterless faces aimed at by younger actors. Celebrate your wrinkles, I say—one's husband says kindly that they're laughter lines, but

my response tends to be 'Nothing's that funny ...'. Mind you, the delightful Ken Hom comes at it from a different standpoint when he says 'I laugh a lot—that hides the wrinkles,' though frankly at 75 he has barely a wrinkle to his name. He must laugh a great deal! At the age of 88, Dame Maggie became the 'face of Loe-we' for its spring/summer 2024 campaign; the lines on her face and bony fingers went un-retouched, her age something to celebrate.

So—another great loss as the wonderful actors of yesterday one by one fall off the edge of the stage. One final thing that made me laugh: when asked whether she would take a particular show to Broadway she said, 'Broadway? I wouldn't take this to Woking!'

NEWS FROM THE APOLLO THEATRE TRUST



THEATRE DIRECTOR'S REPORT


A brief update on the CIO transition. As reported previously we are now registered as **The Apollo Theatre (Isle of Wight) Trust**—our legal name. The committee proposed and it has been agreed by the Charity Commission that our working title is **The Apollo Theatre Players**. This should distinguish us from the numerous other Apollo theatres around the world which sometimes get confused with us on Facebook. This title should now be included in all public facing communication going forward, including publicity and social media and we will be updating our logo.

This will be my last report as Director as my three-year term ends at the AGM later this month. It has been a great privilege to carry out this role as the first director under the revised Player's organisation in readiness for the merger with the Trust. Looking back over the period, which has passed far quicker than I would have liked, I feel that I have achieved only a small fraction of what I had hoped for. Sadly, we haven't developed plans to make better use of The Unit. The plans to link the Theatre to Hancock House remain stalled waiting for Building Control approval and we

haven't developed a strategy for the fundraising to pay for this work. Some people have commented, and I quote, on the 'down at heel' feel of the Apollo, and it had been one of my objectives to rid the theatre of some of the 'tat' in the public areas.

Fortunately, others have made progress. The Youth Group has gone from strength to strength. We have a new stage lighting system which provides greater flexibility and reduces our carbon footprint. Our involvement with NT Live has boosted income and brought a new, possibly more sophisticated audience to the Theatre. We have delivered well-balanced seasons of plays and opened auditions to a wider pool of talented actors outside our membership. The bar has been subject to a makeover to make it more comfortable and welcoming. My appreciation to those on the committee and beyond, who have made all this possible.

The new committee, taking office at the AGM, will need to address the things so far not achieved and will face other challenges including developing, and hopefully benefiting from, the relationship with the Trustees. I wish them every success.

 **MANAGE**

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING ON 6 NOVEMBER

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Continuing heartfelt thanks to all volunteers on front of house and elsewhere, that enables the theatre to put on productions. Rotas are available for every production, including hirings, before each play, and you can volunteer online, by email, or in person on a Saturday morning. We have many more experienced box office staff now than in the past - Handling TicketSource is a lot easier than you may think. Handling money is much easier due to audience generally buying online or with cards at the box office. The bar has also gone 'card only' without any particular objections. Ticket handling: our practice of checking audience members on arrival is simple, quick, cheap and effective, and the public seem happy with it. Staff must remember however not to say 'You don't need a ticket'. You DO need a ticket, but you might not need to show it.

MEMBERS' REP

Very little to report to the Committee this time around. Alan is concerned about the number of scripts accumulating in the ASM box: are we storing them? The only suggestion put to me is not to stage performances during school holidays, to make it easier for Members to volunteer for duties.

NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

ARTS MANAGER

At the time of writing we've just finished a very successful run of 'Sheila's Island', which has received mostly very positive responses. Thank you to Michael and Kate for all your hard work in terms of directing, props and set design—a truly lovely set indeed, so well done to all involved with the building and painting. The cast were absolutely great too, with some beautifully poignant moments contrasting with the fast-paced comedy. Well done, ladies.

As you will see on page 7, Amy and Dan have cast their next production, 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'. This promises to be an interesting ensemble piece, with challenging technical elements as well as interesting characterisations. Thank you both for putting so much thought into the audition process—it was quite insightful.

I am, as always, thinking about the next season and have already decided on 'The Unfriend' as the first play, which will be the Gala Night production piece. It's a very modern and funny play and I hope you will enjoy watching/performing/helping and supporting. Meanwhile, please support our theatre when you can in terms of volunteering for FOH, Box Office duties, ushering etc. I seem to see the same faces helping at every play and would encourage anyone with a free evening to come along and help.

We are in need of new and experienced directors for the next season. Please let me know if you are interested. If you are worried that you don't have any experience I might be able to give new directors an experienced

director to assist them so that you can learn on the job as it were. Directing is a really fulfilling and exciting role, in spite of the hard work. If you have an idea for a play too that would be great!

BUSINESS MANAGER

Work to upgrade the power supply, which is the final part of the lighting rig upgrade, is underway. The existing dimmers have been removed, and a new fuse board is in their place. The unexpected part was that each and every cable needs to be extended - this has slowed the installation down slightly. Thank you to everyone who has offered help, but as I have explained to most people a lot of the work is in the eaves, and there's only enough space for one person at a time ... so there isn't a great deal that having a second pair of hands will achieve. I do appreciate the offers of help, however, and will be taking this up on future projects!

On the topic of the LED project, as I mentioned in my last report one part we are looking forward to seeing is a reduction in our electricity bills. At a quick glance, I can see that we are using somewhere in the region of 150kWh per month less, which I believe to be a result of the upgrade. This is good news, and means we are paying less out on electricity. This (as I have said before) can be helped by people thinking about what they are turning and leaving on when working in the theatre - it is quite often that I've found every single house and working light on in the auditorium ... and quite often lights being left on after people have left the theatre. We do use a considerable amount of electric-

ity on a monthly basis (in the region of 800-1000 kWh for the theatre building alone, which is 3-4 average homes) and anything we can do to reduce this helps.

I have been sent further information on the Theatre's Green Book - we initially looked at some of the information when Steve Reading and I were looking into grant funding, but I've now got the full details. The Green Book scheme is a set of guidance and best practice information on how we can work more sustainably. Beyond the environmental effects, this also means we can look to reduce costs and make savings in most areas of operating the theatre. The guidance is written by theatres, so we are not trying to apply a set of guidelines intended for another industry to our work.

We already score highly in a lot of areas: set, costume and props are often re-used or re-purposed for other productions, and materials such as timber are used in ever decreasing sizes until they're used as firewood. Hopefully, as we look to work through this, there will be other useful advice that we are able to use and incorporate in our day-to-day practices.

As I've previously said in my reports, if there's anything that you think we should be looking to purchase to make your lives easier, or the theatre a nicer place to work and visit, please do let me or any of the committee know. Equally, if there is anyone out there who is willing to assist (be it paying bills and expenses payments, looking for sponsors, assisting with grant funding ... or anything else!) please do let me know. Many hands make light work, and historically members have taken an active role with this.

YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Theatre Director & Chair of Executive Committee (elected 3-yearly): **Paul Jennings** (2021-24) director@apollo-theatre.org.uk

Arts Manager (elected 3-yearly)	Helen Reading (2021-24) artsmanager@apollo-theatre.org.uk	Members' Representative (elected annually)	Carole Crow (2023-24) membersrep@apollo-theatre.org.uk
Business Manager (elected 3-yearly)	Dan Burns (2022-25) treasurer@apollo-theatre.org.uk or business-mgr@apollo-theatre.org.uk	Operations Manager (elected 3-yearly)	Ian Moth (2021-24) operations@apollo-theatre.org.uk

MANIFESTOS FROM CANDIDATES FOR COMMITTEE POSTS

As you will all know by now, the forthcoming AGM on 23 November will include the usual business of the Players, but also the essential activity of electing individuals to the posts of Theatre Director, Arts Manager, Operations Manager and Members' Rep/Membership Secretary. Four members have put themselves forward as candidates for these roles and have written 'manifestos' to help you, the membership, understand their plans for the theatre. Please read them carefully and contact the candidates if you want to ask them any questions.

THEATRE DIRECTOR

I would like to put myself forward for the role of theatre director as I believe I can make a positive contribution to the Apollo.

I've been an active member for over 25 years in various roles both on and off stage and currently help run the bar, the box office, hiring and the social team. Prior to retirement 3 years ago I have a sound business background and understand the vagaries of running a business. As a business adviser I worked with a few Island charities helping them to develop and grow their volunteers and helpers.

Paul Jennings, our current Theatre Director, has successfully guided the Apollo through a challenging time and I look to continue his good work as we develop under our new guise as a CIO.

My main priorities will be customer experience, including but not limited to:

- Continuing the redevelopment of the theatre bar and toilets;
- Redeveloping the foyer and toilets and generally making customers think 'wow' when they step across our threshold;
- Making our 'atrium area' fit for purpose;
- Ensuring that our sound/vision systems are fit for purpose;
- Finding ways of growing our volunteer count;
- Ensuring that our volunteers feel a sense of 'worth' when giving their time.

Steve Reading

ARTS MANAGER

I have been your Arts Manager for the last three years and I believe, in spite of many challenges, that the seasons have been varied and mostly well received and the majority of plays have been of a high quality as well as appealing to a wide audience.

I have been a member of the Apollo for 28 years and have run my own theatre company for 17 years. During that time I have produced, directed or acted in over 70 productions. I have been a secondary school drama teacher since 2001. Until 5 years ago I ran a youth theatre where I produced both scripted and original work for young people. I have written and presented workshops and plays for schools, tackling issues such as Equality & Diversity, Anti-bullying, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, Confidence Building, Resilience and Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

My reason for wanting to stand as Arts Manager again is that I would like to help take the theatre forward in terms of the quality, diversity and originality of what we put on the stage. Being committed to the idea that theatre should be for everyone who wants it, whether it is creating theatre or watching it, I often feel concerned that there are people we are not reaching or representing and we need to have something to offer them. Finding a balance between keeping our existing loyal customers happy and creating an audience for the future will be paramount in my planning. I would encourage and welcome the involvement of other Apollo members in the Arts team.

Helen Reading

OPERATIONS MANAGER

I would like to stand for Operations Manager because I believe I have the necessary skills and experience to perform this role. I have previously been a successful ops manager for St. John Ambulance in the West Midlands. I enjoy working with volunteers and want to extend the current operations team to include more people who can bring a broader knowledge and experience to the Apollo.

I am passionate about the Apollo and keen to move us forward with the times, to introduce new ideas and/or systems in order for that to be achieved.

I would also like to focus on updating aspects of the Apollo to create a better customer experience, so that their view of us, from entering the theatre at the foyer to leaving us at the end of an evening, is a positive and pleasant experience.

Vicki Cook

MEMBERS' REP/MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

I have represented the Membership over the last year and have successfully acted as a neutral voice for the Members. My chosen role at Saturday coffee mornings gives me the ideal opportunity to speak and hear from you all. I am happy to continue as your representative.

I have held the post as Membership Secretary for over six years. I have succeeded in managing all aspects of the position and feel combining the two roles will be to the Theatre's advantage.

Carole Crow

The Macmillan Coffee Morning was a great success—thank you to everyone who came along to support it and brought such lovely cakes!

The Gateway Choir is working hard on a Christmas Concert of 'Carols and verse' to invite you all to. The date is now been con-

firmed as Thursday 12 December from 7.00pm – there will be nibbles! Everyone welcome!

Staffing the Theatre during performances is getting more and more difficult. If you have any ideas on how we can encourage more members to volunteer, please let me know.

Our Membership continues to grow! Please welcome Brian Jones, Julie Stagg, Marilyn Thorpe, Rufus Omisakim, Stephen and Susan Double, Suzy Jacobsen and just this week Donna Thornal and Derek and Dawn Joseph—plus the welcome return of Abbi Leverton.



Those of you who weren't able to make it to Anthea Weekes' concert at All Saints' church in Gurnard in September missed a real treat. Anthea gave us a selection of 'songs from the shows', ranging from 'The Sun Whose Rays' from 'Mikado' to 'All that Jazz' from 'Chicago', including a variety of stunning numbers which showed off her astonishing vocal range and power to perfection. Frankly, I feared for the windows. Stephen Weekes was as always the (electrical) power behind the throne ...



The welcome return of Poetry Corner! Steve Taverner has been composing again ...

THE RUT

Clashing antlers, roaring stags, the autumn rut's begun,
Fighting with your rivals to be the only one
To mate with a dozen females and make sure your
genes are passed
Onto the next generations; well, if I were a stag, I
couldn't be arsed.

Maintaining a harem is terribly tough,
And I find that one female is more than enough.
As things stand at present I'm always to blame,
If I had a dozen that's twelve times the pain.
And that's not the end of it, furthermore,
I'd have a dozen mothers-in-law,
And I don't even want to start thinking about
The time to get ready before going out.

So I'd leave the Rut to others and enjoy a gentle graze.
I don't care if my genes die with me, no matter what
Darwin says.



I thought members might like to see this photo taken in The Range of Pam Underwood and me in a clinch! We literally bumped into each other, naturally hugged and Pam's daughter snapped us. It was lovely to meet this lovely lady again and of course we started reminiscing about old Apollo times. She and John epitomised the Apollo for me: members who did what they could for theatre, cheerfully and with no vanity or expectation of praise. She is now 93 - hey ho. We arranged to meet again 'up there' and start a drama group.

Michael Arnell

FROM DAVID BALLARD: Many people will already know that following 9 months free of cancer, I had a stroke on 4 October. The emergency response was a very smooth operation and I have nothing but praise for the efficient response of the emergency services. I was also very lucky that my wife, Esme, remembered FAST: Face (my face had fallen on the left side); Arm (I couldn't use my left arm); Speech (I couldn't talk properly); Time (act quickly). I can only really remember that my left leg had suddenly given way. The rest felt like a bad dream. The paramedics who responded to the 999 call did some tests and confirmed the stroke. Then it was a speedy journey from Freshwater to St Mary's hospital where a scan confirmed a blood clot on the right side of my brain and a blocked main artery on the right side of my neck. This now has a stent. IV drugs failed to deal with the clot and the team contacted the hypercritical stroke unit at Southampton General who agreed to accept the transfer—which is where the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance comes into the picture. The helicopter took 10 minutes to cross the Solent—brilliant teamwork all round! Every minute counts. The next day I was back at St Mary's for recuperation, this time by road and Red Funnel ferry.

I should like to thank the air ambulance in particular with the proceeds from a live-music fundraiser. At this early stage I am looking for the support of Island musicians from all genres - blues, folk, opera, popular songs from the American songbook—something for everyone! Duos of some kind are preferred but the term is flexible. The event also needs sponsors. Venue, date and time to be confirmed. Expressions of interest please to david@albany-ballard.co.uk



Carole Crow
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Your letters



Macmillan Coffee Morning

A big thank you

Thank you so much for paying in £152.00 and being part of this year's Coffee Morning.

We hope you and your guests enjoyed spending time together over a cup of coffee and some yummy treats.

We'll put the money you've raised straight to work. It could mean someone with cancer can get help with how they're feeling on our Support Line. Pay their bills during treatment. Or turn to a Macmillan nurse for vital medical, practical and emotional support.

You will receive your official thank you letter and certificate in the post. We send these monthly, so there may be a bit of a delay. But please rest assured that your funds have been safely received and we're very grateful.

Your donation reference is: 46273840

Thanks again.

As I write this, I am smiling, as Dot always referred to our newsletter as The Apollonius, which I found endearing and so I never corrected her. Now she's appearing in it!



Memories of Dot Stephens

by
Christie Blow

My dear friend of 40+ years, Dottie, passed away on 8 October 2024, just 20 days short of her 81st birthday. If only she could see the lovely messages of condolence on Facebook from Apollo members she would have been surprised and very touched.

We joined the Apollo together some 20 years ago, starting off as assistants on 'coffees'. In those days there was a team of 3, with coffee being served both in the bar and the box office. There was a waiting list for

members wishing to train for box office duties which we eventually joined, though we had to wait several years for the privilege!

From 'coffees' we moved to help Maggie Bradsell on props. We did this for several years under our talented SM, Dan Burns, known to us as 'Boss'. We certainly had to face challenges but had lots of great fun. Dot had a major health issue which coincided with there being vacancies in the box office and so we moved across to become involved in less strenuous activities. Dot's last session was earlier this year before she was diagnosed with another serious health issue.

Dot's debut on the Apollo stage was in Kevin Wilson's first play 'The Sins of the Past' where we both played two elderly ladies in a care home alongside the lovely Evie Watts. Despite being poorly, Dot being the strong, determined and loyal person she was, never missed a rehearsal and played her part well in a successful run.

Quite by accident, Dot appeared in David Hare's 'The Breath of Life' in a two-hander with the talented Maggie Cardew. The Director, Di Evans, had asked Dot to read in at an audition for this play. She was so im-



Dot in 'Breath of Life' (2013)

pressed that she asked Dot to consider the part. She agreed and came up trumps, putting on superb performances.

Dot and I also appeared together in a variety show and enjoyed dressing up and singing in the chorus. Dot's last performance was in 'Oliver, The Musical' in August 2022. With her lovely singing voice she was in her element; we had lots of fun and she made new friends from the cast. Sadly, our plans to audition for 'Around the World in Eighty Days' didn't come to fruition because of her poor health.

Dot will be remembered at the Apollo for her humour, loyalty, willingness to help and her occasional 'Dottiness'!!

PRODUCTION NEWS

After my initial reading of the script of 'Sheila's Island', I realised that this was not a female version of the hugely successful 'Neville's Island' and was prompted to read the countrywide reviews of its one-and-only professional provincial tour. Whereas they generally praised performances, staging, etc., they were almost universal in their criticism of the script. However, after casting four very capable and cooperative actors, we 'tweaked' the beginning and the ending and added a few extra comic touches and the outcome appears to have been well received.

I must thank the whole production team for their hard work and unwavering support. The reality of Apollo teamwork was an aspect we

were able to demonstrate when the IW Federation of Women's Institutes booked nearly half the theatre on Tuesday and asked for a photograph of them all with the cast.



It gave me the opportunity to point out that the four actors were the tip of a very big production iceberg and I ensured that Alan Gaskin and Suzie Chilton stood alongside

the cast and that Anthea and Stephen Weekes got a wave.

Unfortunately Kate Fysh was ill and the set-builders, backstage and FOH staff could not reasonably be included. However, I feel it would be good to use the photo to illustrate this often unrealised fact in a future press release.

Lastly, may I reiterate the final sentence I wrote many years ago in the very first version of 'Guidelines for Directors' which

happily is still there:

'Remember—neither press criticisms nor box-office receipts are a yardstick of quality.'

Michael Arnell

The next production at the Apollo will be Simon Stephens' 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time', an ensemble piece based on Mark Haddon's book of the same name. Following the success of open auditions for the recent Apollo production 'The Girl on the Train', the directors, Amy and Dan Burns, held open auditions on 3 November and were delighted to be able to cast the 10 actors needed, as follows:

Christopher Boone: **Abbi Leverton**

Siobhan: **Helen Reading**

Ed: **Peter Gale**

Judy: **Suzy Jacobsen**

Mrs Alexander/Posh Woman/

Voice 6: **Anthea Weekes**

Mrs Shears/Mrs Gascoyne/

Voice 1/Woman on Train/

Woman on Heath/Shop-

keeper: **Ginnie Orrey**

Roger (Mr Shears)/Duty Ser-

geant/Voice 2/Mr Wise/Man

Behind Counter/Drunk 1:

Paul Gwinnett

Policeman 1/Mr Thompson/

Voice 3/Drunk 2/Man With

Socks/London Policeman:

Philip Griffiths

No 40/Voice 5/Lady in Street/

Information/Punk Girl: **Susan**

Simpson

Rev Peters/Aunty Terri/Voice

4/Station Policewoman/

Station Guard: **Anne Wal-**

pole

For any more information

please contact Amy and Dan:

social@apollo-theatre.org.uk.

Production dates will be

14-22 February 2025.



I know I've been banging on about this for years and years, but it is nevertheless true. You can only learn to do something well, or really well, by actually doing it! That's why even amateur footballers, etc., practice every week (I know because our house backs onto Cowes FC ground and we hear them every Tuesday evening!).

I had been a member of Newport Repertory Club, only backstage, but getting married in 1967, starting a family, teaching etc. took all my spare time. However, we still went to all their plays, especially when they purchased the old Pyle Street Methodist Church. We audiences marvelled at the professionalism of the actors, like a couple from the mainland, John and Pat Hancock, or locals like Colin and Marylyn Ford. 'However did they learn all those lines and move and act so naturally?' When I began 'treading the boards' over 40 years ago at the Apollo, it was with great reluctance after being bullied by a fellow schoolteacher into auditioning for a small part in 'The Provoked Wife'. I remember being told by the director not to use my arms when delivering lines: 'You look like a bloody windmill.' He, of course, was absolutely right.

I am convinced that good acting is not really about talent; but a lack of vanity is vital.

Over many years, from every director and during rehearsals I have learnt so much about stagecraft and am therefore very keen to pass on these 'tricks of the craft'. To act well you have to learn not how to 'ACT' but learn how to 'BE'.

To this end may I suggest a strategy I proposed years ago. All novice actors should approach the director of any play and ask to attend rehearsals. This was the case recently when a member auditioned unsuccessfully for a part in 'Sheila's Island'. Nevertheless, she attended rehearsals, even reading in if a member of cast was absent. The bonus is that, not only is she learning, but we may have an understudy if the worst happens!

'SHEILA'S ISLAND': DIRECTOR'S NOTES

STAGECRAFT

or

LEARNING THE TRICKS OF THE CRAFT

by

MICHAEL ARNELL

(or Mog but never Mike!)



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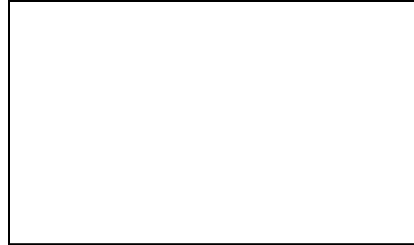
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To book tickets or find
 out more about our
 productions, go to:

www.apollo-theatre.org.uk

**Any unsigned
 copy in this publi-
 cation is the work
 of the Editor,
 Ginnie Orrey, and
 expresses her
 opinions.
 Contributed copy
 must be signed.**

Bringing good theatre to the Isle of Wight for more than 50 years



The Apollo Players' next production



PERFORMANCE DATES 29 NOV-1DEC

The Apollo Youth Theatre present an exciting new piece of physical theatre in their adaptation of Carlo Collodi's 'Pinocchio'.

Leaving other versions far behind, this story tells the real tale of the puppet's adventures until he finally becomes a real boy. Written by Karl Whitmore, devised by Pink Cow Theatre participants and directed by Mish Whitmore, this production takes the audience on Pinocchio's journey as he encounters many trials and tribulations along the way in his pursuit to become who he really wants to be. The production is suitable for all ages, though it contains some darker themes throughout.



On **23 February** we'll be screening a joyful reimagining of Oscar Wilde's most celebrated comedy. While assuming the role of a dutiful guardian in the country, Jack is let loose in town under a false identity, while his friend Algy adopts a similar facade. Hoping to impress two ladies, the gentlemen find themselves caught in a web of lies they must carefully navigate.