



Bailiwick

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Editorial by Phil Hallworth

Welcome to the Spring edition of Bailiwick which I hope you will find an interesting read. Our Chairman looks forward to Elf - the Musical, for which tickets are due to go on sale on March 28th, then Ian Taylor treats us to another set of reviews of shows he has seen and enjoyed (or not!) recently. Jenny Foster is our Desert Island Shows castaway, then sharing their Musical Firsts are Adele Stitch, Bruce Slatton and Chris Sterry. Our series on The History of BLOC is concluded and brought up-to-date by yours truly, Alex Turasiewicz and Chris Parslow, then Alex's penchant for West Side Story prompts him to write a thought-provoking article about the reinterpretation of classic shows. We catch up with Joel Rothwell as he embarks on his course at Italia Conti, sponsored by a BLOC Bursary.

To kick off our series Meet the Hippodrome Staff, I had the pleasure of interviewing Charlotte Fortt who, as the Hippodrome's new Marketing Manager, will be helping us a lot in promoting Elf - the Musical this year. Alex returns to the pages with an interesting reflection on theatrical superstitions and invites you, the reader, to get involved! A What's On column draws your attention to the fabulous shows our friends in other local societies are staging in the next few weeks; Kathy Cooke has compiled a short crossword for you to enjoy over a coffee; and finally there's our usual From the Wings column bringing news from the BLOC family. Something for everyone I hope!

Phil



Chairman's Overture by Andrew Carpenter

I cannot begin to explain the pleasure I had in being able to inform the membership that our production for 2022 would be ***Elf - the Musical!*** Having been in place as Chair for three years it was increasingly frustrating not to have been in position during a run up to a production at the Hippodrome, but that can all change now. The committee took much time in choosing our show, considering box office appeal, company suitability and of course Hippodrome compatibility. After several weeks of due diligence, it was a unanimous decision to perform ***Elf - the Musical*** which, as time goes on, has received tremendous support from the membership and confidence from the Hippodrome that it will 'sell well.' I am, of course, privileged to have been asked by the committee to act as Producer for this production, supporting John, our Director, and the rest of the creative team, so I will be juggling joint responsibilities moving forward.

During our 'down time' one of the things the committee spent time on was investigating our back of house roles & responsibilities and processes & procedures, and during that time we had guest speakers from the world of professional theatre to give us advice. Part of that advice was to appoint a Producer, hence my appointment for this production. The Committee will continue to take on the role of Executive Producer and have overall responsibility for the production, but I will act as the liaison between them and the creative team which we hope will improve matters for all concerned and make the time involved more enjoyable and stress free! In addition, we have changed the role of the Technical Director to Production Manager. For this production, Peter Sutton has been appointed to the role and will oversee all backstage activities including costumes, make-up, wigs etc. Again, this was having taken advice from the world of professional theatre.

Of course, many of our members are taking part in Spring productions elsewhere in Bristol and the surrounding area and I would like to take this opportunity to wish them well. I am hoping to get to most of the productions between 11th March and 28th May and I have tickets to fifteen productions during that time to prove it! Isn't it wonderful for us all to be able to be back on stage



doing what we all love most? One thing the pandemic has done is show the importance of musical theatre in terms of a 'feel good' factor. Audiences have missed their 'fix' and are flocking back to the theatres across the UK, so let us hope that will be the same in November 2022 for our own production – I am sure it will be.

On a personal note, my son, Tom, is getting married on 25th June in South Gloucestershire and I am delighted that Brendan Casey has kindly agreed to arrange and lead the music for the ceremony. We are looking for about a dozen volunteers from the BLOC community to take part in the service between midday and 1.00pm. I can promise you a warm welcome and good hospitality. If you are interested in being part of the BLOC Choir, please contact me on 07889 702587 or at andrew.carpenter@virgin.net.

View from The Royal Box (a.k.a. Ian Taylor's sofa)

Hello again! Times flies and Spring has officially sprung – although our production team already has one eye on Winter and BLOC's forthcoming blockbuster production of *Elf – the Musical*.

Since the last edition of *Bailiwick*, my theatre-going has almost returned to its pre-Covid levels. I've seen a large number of productions – but far too many, I'm afraid, to include all of them in this single column. I won't, therefore, be considering any of the plays that you can no longer see – a category that includes *Cyrano* (bold and astonishing), *Habeas Corpus* (hysterically funny), *Force Majeure* (tedious bore-fest), *Dr Semmelweis* (intelligent and absorbing), *Hex* (dark and intriguing), *The Shark is Broken* (90 perfect minutes) and *Bedknobs & Broomsticks* (old fashioned Disney magic). Instead I'll be considering just three productions that are still running in London's West End: *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*, *Moulin Rouge* and *Life of Pi*.



Cabaret at the Kit Kat Klub

Come inside. In here, life is beautiful. Enter a world of debauchery and glamour as the Playhouse Theatre is transformed into the Kit Kat Klub of Berlin in the early 1930s.

Audience members enter via a subterranean tunnel and are presented with a glass of schnapps or a beer from behind a seedy hatch, while, barely glimpsed in a dim red light, androgynous dancers move to a jazz soundtrack. As we climb the stairs back to ground level, the pre-show performance



continues: actors mingle with the audience, while table telephones ring. This is truly immersive theatre and I advise you to get to the theatre early so as to enjoy the full experience.

When the 'actual' show starts, the performances are on an elevated level. Leading the way, Eddie Redmayne as the Emcee holds our attention completely as he transforms himself into the role – his movements and mannerisms (especially his wild eyes) are utterly extraordinary and unlike anything I have ever seen before. The way in which he consistently engages with the audience makes the production feel even more intimate – and unsettling. The characteristics of the 'other worldly' singing voice that he adopts are perfectly suited to the character. As the iconic character Sally Bowles, Jessie Buckley performs with both swagger and vulnerability, while delivering a compellingly raw and powerful performance. Giving life to every word and phrase, her performance of 'Cabaret' alone is something that I will certainly not forget in a hurry. Spellbinding! I also loved the seemingly natural and quite charming chemistry between Liza Sadovy's Fräulein Schneider and Elliot Levey as Herr Schultz – something that makes the tragedy that's coming their way even more heart-breaking. A special mention is also due to Anna Jane Casey who plays Fräulein Kost with savage and chilling intensity.

This is one of those productions where everything just comes together to create a magical experience. Powerful, provocative, and political, it's a pity that more people won't be able to see it with this cast, either because tickets are in short supply or because any that are available are so expensive. It's being re-cast with Fra Fee and Amy Lennox probably at a fraction of the price – and I'll be going back to Berlin one more time.

Moulin Rouge

It's apt that I saw both **Cabaret** and **Moulin Rouge** on the same day. Both shows explore similar themes and seek to offer their audiences a fully immersive experience. Unfortunately, while **Cabaret** largely succeeds in its aims, **Moulin Rouge** fails to do so.



Lots of its features ought to have worked. The dazzling and lavishly eye-popping production spills out into the auditorium, while the opulent red-velvet sets, complete with a blue elephant and a moving windmill, are quite simply a feast for the eyes. There is, however, an enormous flaw, in that the Piccadilly Theatre is quite simply the wrong venue. The Dress Circle overhangs the stalls so comprehensively that anyone sitting further back than row J of the stalls cannot see any of this stunning design and will be, therefore, at a major disadvantage – especially given the extortionate prices that they will have paid for their tickets. If you want to enjoy the full visual impact that this production offers, the front of the Dress Circle is the place to be.

Incidentally, any fans of the Baz Luhrman's 2001 film may be perplexed at the stage musical's choice of songs. The numbers are mashed up together to embellish the action and, as a result, the show feels like an elongated episode of TV's **Glee** (on speed). With so many different covers and other snippets of well-known hits shoe-horned into the action, the overall effect is, quite simply, something of a mess.

I might have felt a little more charitable if leads Jamie Bogyo (Christian) and Liisi Lafontaine (Satine) had managed to replicate the charisma exhibited by Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman in the film but, sadly, there is no emotional connection between them and they don't. While I hadn't particularly expected to be intellectually challenged by the show, I was surprised that almost the entire focus was on how it looked rather than what - if anything - it was trying to say. It displayed no emotional core and offered us no reason whatsoever to care for any of the characters. While its choreography, costumes, lighting, and incredible sets are a joy to behold, **Moulin Rouge** is essentially a case of style over substance. By halfway through the second Act, I was glancing at my watch and wondering whether it was worth trying to catch last orders at the bar. *Voulez vous coucher avec moi ce soir?* No thanks, I'd rather have an early night.



Life of Pi

Life of Pi, adapted from Yann Martel's award-winning novel by Lolita Chakrabarti, offers a masterclass in both puppetry and sound, with this magnificent production transforming Wyndham's Theatre into a floating zoo. The story, recalled in flashback, sees a cargo ship sinking in mid-Pacific, after which five survivors – a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan, a hungry Bengal tiger named (for reasons that need not concern us here) as Richard Parker and a naive, sweet-natured 16 years old boy named Pi - find themselves on a lifeboat. Who, ultimately, will survive?

The Wyndham's stage is seamlessly transformed from a hospital bedside to a ship to a busy Indian street scene according to the needs of the story. Headed by Hiran Abeysekera who offers a beautifully-captured performance in the role of Pi, the small cast is uniformly wonderful – but the real stars of the show are the puppet animals that they skilfully manoeuvre around the stage and bring believably to life, especially the majestic and near life-size tiger. The show's sound and its visual effects, of core importance to the production, are of the highest quality that I have ever seen. There's also some impressive stage trickery that draws audible gasps from the audience, most notably when Pi appears to dive into the sea.

By the end of *Life of Pi*, it is clear that we have enjoyed something much more profound than a mere puppet show. Unlike *Moulin Rouge*, it offers an audience an experience that embodies both style *and* substance. Unmissable!



Desert Island Shows by Jenny Foster

I'm so grateful for all those Saturday afternoons when I was a child when they used to show old musicals on telly and I became an avid fan! From Esther Williams to Fred and Ginger, I loved them all. The first album I bought (on tape!) was **Hans Christian Anderson**, closely followed by **Grease**, so I was an early devotee of musicals.



My first role in a musical was when I was the pussycat in **The Owl and the Pussycat** aged 8 – and I made my director cross by needing the loo before I went on and my costume was a full bodysuit! My favourite roles include Mrs Anna in



The King and I in sixth form, and Maisie in **The Boyfriend** at Uni, but neither show makes it into my list, just thought I'd sneak those in for the intro! Many of my favourites are BLOC shows because these have been such brilliant experiences for me, performing with such a great company and at the Hippodrome – even after 22 years it's still a massive thrill. Choosing only 8 shows is really hard! But in no particular order, here's my current favourites:

Evita

This was only my second show with BLOC and

what a fabulous one – from the moving 'Requiem' to the rousing 'A New Argentina', it's a great show to be in. And such a buzz to have the Sold Out sign outside the Hippo! I still listen to this soundtrack regularly, it's such witty and clever storytelling.

White Christmas

This (joint with **Witches of Eastwick** – see below) is one of my favourite BLOC shows I've performed in. I LOVED it – I got to be a dancer which was wonderful, and there were so many different fun scenes and characters for the company. I also enjoyed my cameo as Ian Taylor's secretary, despite rather tricky props - I'm not sure he's forgiven me for nearly burning him by handing him a lit cigarette the wrong way round! It's such fabulous music, and the joy in the audience when it started snowing was just the best (great decision by then Chair, the wonderful Sue Donovan). I watch the film every Christmas, and it would bring me great joy on a desert island!

Witches of Eastwick

My joint favourite BLOC show to be in, again the music and characters are just fabulous. I thought Jacquie Bell's choreography was brilliant – tea towel-ography was second to none in 'Dirty Laundry'! Another soundtrack I love to listen to on a regular basis, and a brilliant female-centric show. Our flying witches were outstanding – a great theatrical moment (overtaken recently by the flying car in **Chitty**).

My Fair Lady

I've always loved this show – the gorgeous music is matched by the witticism of the lyrics, based faithfully on Shaw's *Pygmalion*. And to perform as Mrs Higgins in the BLOC show was such a joy, with special thanks to John Cousins for my splendid dresses and hats! It was also a delight to





be in the downstairs dressing room (my first and only time!) with the wonderful Charlotte Hunter and Laura Stanley.

Come From Away

I've seen this twice now and want to go again soon! Despite the subject matter, it's such a life-affirming and wonderful show that demonstrates the best of community spirit and humanity. I laughed, I cried, I felt totally uplifted by the whole experience. And the music is cracking!

Wicked

Such an amazing show visually and musically, it's everything musical theatre should be. I love how cleverly they wove it into the *Wizard of Oz* storyline and made the characters so much richer. It was fabulous to perform just a few of the numbers in BLOC's *Westenders* show (special mention to Emma Griffith's spine-tingling rendition of 'Defying Gravity').

Hamilton

One of the joys of my life has been introducing my two girls to musical theatre and seeing them love it as much as I do. They asked to see this show and I wasn't sure, having only heard snippets of the soundtrack (they, on the other hand knew every word by the time we went!). As it was so expensive, we took them as a Christmas present

and oh my gosh, I was blown away by the brilliance of the storytelling, the music and the slick movement. A superb show that really lived up to the hype.

Amelie

A beautiful, whimsical show with the most evocative soundtrack and stunning Parisian set. I didn't want it to end and wanted to stay and watch it all over again when it finished! Utterly brilliant.

What musical soundtrack would you take to the island?

It would be ***Come From Away*** – I could laugh, cry, dance and spend those long hours finally learning the lyrics!

What theatrical (luxury) item would you take?

The incredible car from ***Chitty*** – I didn't get to ride in it so I could have hours of fun 'flying' (and maybe it would double as a boat...?!)

What show would you love BLOC to do?

Mamma Mia – middle aged women's paradise, pure fun, and I know most of the lyrics already! And ***Come From Away*** – a perfect company show – and BLOC could provide a full plane load of passengers!

Musical Firsts by Adele Stitch, Bruce Slatton and Chris Sterry

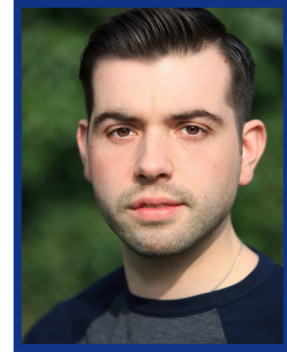
This edition's Musical Firsts are shared by: Adele Stitch, who has been dance captain/assistant choreographer for many BLOC shows; Bruce Slatton, our resident Texan who has been a member since 2013, and Chris Sterry, a more recent member who is now serving on the management committee.



Adele Stitch



Bruce Slatton



Chris Sterry

<p>First musical you remember seeing?</p>	<p>42nd Street - on a special trip up to London with my dance school. I remember the first bit of the curtain going up to reveal all the amazing tapping feet and was blown away. Who knew one day I'd do it with BLOC?! I saw Catherine Zeta Jones make her debut as Peggy. Carol Ball, who played Annie, later became an examiner for my dance school students.</p>	<p>On Film, The Sound of Music. I saw it in the cinema when I was three or four. It's one of my first memories and I recall desperately wanting Maria to be my nanny. On the stage, it was Camelot in the Festival Theatre in El Paso, Texas. There was a young lad with a page boy haircut, clearly having the time of his life and I wanted to be like him.</p>	<p>The first stage musical I saw was Chicago on a sixth-form trip to New York when I was 17. It was a revelation to see just how incredible live musicals could be. My only exposure up until then was a VHS of The Sound of Music my nan had, she would put it on to keep me and my sister entertained when we were little.</p>
<p>First musical that made you want to take to the stage or work backstage?</p>	<p>I danced on the Hippodrome stage at a very young age (eight) in pantomimes – first with Gary Wilmot in Aladdin then two more the following year with Su Pollard and Michael Barrymore. I knew from those first steps on the Hippodrome stage that I wanted to perform.</p>	<p>Camelot – see above. I was mesmerised by the costumes, the acting, and above all, the music, “ask every person if he’s heard the story and tell it strong and clear if he has not, that once there was a fleeting wisp of glory, called ‘Camelot’” – love it!</p>	<p>In another trip to New York at 19, a friend and I saw Avenue Q. I couldn’t believe they could put that on stage, as it was just so outrageously funny. That’s the first time I recall thinking something like “Man that would be such fun to be in.”</p>
<p>First musical audition or technical experience?</p>	<p>My first real audition was for the Royal Ballet, but after being put through a long audition progress, my limbs stretched, they decided I was too small. I was very lucky to not have many auditions - I was asked to join companies - so I think BLOC was my first musical one with Vicki as choreographer and John and Sue on the panel. I was so nervous, but so pleased that I got in!</p>	<p>My very first audition was for a high school production of Gypsy – I was eight or nine years old and I was cast as a newsboy. For my BLOC audition Graham Lewis, Phil Hallworth and I sang ‘Fugue for Tin horns’ from Guys and Dolls and I remember John glanced over to Adele and said “Well, I don’t know what to do with that!” I then sang ‘On the Street Where You Live’ and squeaked in!</p>	<p>My first musical audition wasn’t until I’d finished Uni at 21, and strangely enough it was for Rolfe in The Sound of Music. I knew the director from school and was itching to get on stage, so I figured “Why not?” I didn’t get the part because I couldn’t sing it well enough. I took singing lessons soon after!</p>

Adele Stitch
Bruce Slatton
Chris Sterry

First role you had in a musical either onstage or backstage?	Principal boy in the <i>Jack in the Beanstalk</i> – I even sung ‘On My Own’ from <i>Les Mis</i> for the audition and nailed the high note! I can’t believe I learnt a whole script as now I class myself as a dancer. I’ve had a couple of ‘on my own’ singing bits with BLOC which I’ve been really pleased with and sang a solo in <i>BLOCKBUSTERS</i> at the Colston Hall.	Newsboy in <i>Gypsy</i> ! I can still remember the lyrics to ‘Baby Jane and Her Newsboys/Let Me Entertain You’ to this day!	I did get offered the part of Herr Zeller in the above production - it’s a purely speaking part with a little dancing. I always enjoy playing an antagonist and it was fun to take on the character, though I was terrible at the dancing! However, I was suddenly surrounded by musical lovers and had my eyes truly opened.
First musical personality you admired?	Idina Menzel from <i>Wicked</i> .	Julie Andrews, clearly... as I said, I wanted her to be my nanny!	I recall really enjoying Sondheim’s and Jason Robert Brown’s musicals early on; and Bertie Carvel on the <i>Parade</i> soundtrack really sticks out.
First impressions of BLOC?	I did the <i>42nd Street</i> audition at the Hippodrome but was only 14 so didn’t really notice much! Coming back to BLOC as an adult was different and I love being part of a fantastic club in which everyone makes you feel so welcome.	Loved it! I loved the vibe, the welcoming attitude of the veterans, the humour and, above all, the patience with my appalling dance moves and ability to mess up lines.	I saw BLOC do <i>Sister Act</i> the year I started working at the Hippodrome and just remember being so impressed that an amateur company could put on such a high-quality production.
First Choice - if you could choose any role in any show?	It would have to be Elphaba from <i>Wicked</i> - the end of the first half still gives me goose bumps after watching it so many times.	Will never happen, but I would love to play Javert in <i>Les Mis</i> just to be able to sing ‘Stars’.	Has to be the Trunchbull in <i>Matilda</i> ! Equally terrifying as she is hilarious. A difficult show with a thousand hurdles for any non-professional group to put on, so I don’t fancy my chances too much!

The History of BLOC (2015-2021) by Phil Hallworth, Alex Turasiewicz and Chris Parslow

The previous chapter in The History of BLOC concluded thus: “BLOC had enjoyed artistic success after artistic success and was, in 2014, in a strong position both artistically and financially. So how to follow ***Sister Act***? However, this decision wasn’t only going to be about the choice of show as other changes were being considered. But that’s for the next chapter...”

If “The Cousins Years” era was defined by continuity, then the next seven years would certainly be defined by change; one of the most significant being the way in which BLOC appointed the Creative Team for each show. Society in general was pushing organisations to consider equal opportunity, transparency and accountability in making all appointments; so in line with this



trend the management committee made the decision that, starting from the 2015 show, the roles of Director, Musical Director and Choreographer would be advertised annually with appointments made after a comprehensive interview process.

For 2015 BLOC was offered ***Sunset Boulevard*** by The Really Useful Group. Although not one of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s better-known shows, its dramatic storyline and powerful operatic score made it too tempting an offer to miss out on. Advertising for a Director for the first time unexpectedly resulted in the appointment of a professional Director and Choreographer in Andrew Wright - a double Olivier Award nominee, double WhatsOnStage and Carl Alan Award winner, who had previously directed and choreographed ***Beauty and the Beast*** and ***Witches of Eastwick*** for Glastonbury and Street Musical Comedy Society, both winning NODA Best Musical awards.

All involved would agree that ***Sunset*** was a roller-coaster ride – one which nearly derailed before it even started when the appointed Musical Director withdrew just before the first rehearsal! Andrew’s work commitments demanded a completely different rehearsal method and schedule to that with which BLOC was traditionally familiar and comfortable. Each Act was set by Andrew during an intensive six day period, after which he would leave rehearsals for a few weeks in the capable hands of an Assistant Director (Alex Turasiewicz) and an Assistant Choreographer (Adele Stitch), before returning to apply the final polish (or not quite so final in the case of ‘Let’s Have Lunch’!). Matt Ramplin had come to the rescue to step in as Musical Director, but he too had professional commitments in London and limited availability, so at times there was also a heavy reliance in rehearsals on Assistant Musical Director Harry Haden-Brown. The Company didn’t always find all this change of faces and routines easy to cope with and absences at rehearsals was (as always) an issue; but it was undoubtedly a privilege for BLOC to work with Andrew, for the principals in particular. His disciplined approach and attention to detail in rehearsals left a lasting impression on everyone involved in the show and his running of the Technical Rehearsal in The Hippodrome was a masterclass in itself.



On first seeing the set on stage, Andrew declared it to look more like a brothel than Norma Desmond's house and sent Sue Donovan on a frantic search for two enormous chandeliers and two lavish white flower displays (which were refreshed by the florist before each performance!). Also, Stewart MacPherson was commissioned to enlarge several of his publicity photos of Maureen Wycherley (as Norma Desmond) to fit huge portrait frames hung to adorn the set. Maureen went on to play Norma again in Bridgwater, so the portraits were sold to them after our show.

Everything slotted into place perfectly in show week and the NODA's report said: *"This was yet another outstanding and professional BLOC production and congratulations must go to Andrew Wright and all the many people too numerous to list who helped to create and work as a team. But the praise must also go the principals and ensemble who all worked hard and put 200% effort into the production to create a superb professional style show."*

Sunset was undoubtedly an artistic success, with three Rose Bowl nominations: for Best Musical, for Best Actress (Maureen Wycherley as Norma Desmond) and for Best Actor (Mike Griffiths as Joe Gillis); but unfortunately it was not a box office

success, putting pressure on BLOC's financial reserves and making the choice of the next year's show a particularly important one.

A change in BLOC's leadership took place at the 2016 AGM when Eric Arnold was elected as Club President, succeeding Bob Latham who sadly died the following year. Eric had served as Club Treasurer for many years before passing that baton on to Graham Lewis.



So, for the 2016 show, BLOC returned to an old favourite and traditional box-office success, ***Fiddler on the Roof***, for the fourth time; with Alex Turasiewicz appointed as Director, Harry Haden-Brown as Musical Director and Naomi Jeffery as Choreographer. Marilyn Norton-Smith and Lauren Davies were the Assistant Director and Assistant Musical Director respectively. Although an 'old' show dealing with events a century ago, it was successfully marketed as being just as relevant to modern society, with its universal theme of 'tradition' cutting across barriers of race, class, nationality and religion.



Inviting Jewish consultant, Leonard Glynn, to speak to the cast about Jewish families and traditions early in the rehearsal period really helped to set the tone. With a strong group of principals forming the central family (Simon Vardakis as Tevye, Lucy Pope as Golde, and Grace Macdonald, Kathie Sharp and Sarah Huckle



as their three elder daughters) and with a large ensemble including two talented teams of children, *Anatevka* turned out to be a real community of tightly knit families, some of which last even now!

Flying Fruma Sarah in the dream sequence was a technical highlight but mention must also be made of Lu Jeffery who combined playing *The Fiddler* up on the roof with playing Violin C in the orchestra down in the pit; and the bottle dancers who kept their nerve and balance for every performance! The size of the cast created pressure in the dressing rooms, in the wings and on stage, not least when squeezing the entire company into a much smaller than expected space behind the curtain before the 'Tradition' opener!

The Rose Bowl adjudicator concluded that it was *"from start to finish a more professional style show than most professional shows. This was a supremely well-directed production and I congratulate the Director for managing an enormous cast and a big stage, whilst preserving moments of poignancy and altering the pace for maximum dramatic effect."*

Simon Vardakis received a Rose Bowl nomination for his performance as Tevye. The adjudicator said of his performance: *“This is a pivotal role and from the moment you addressed the audience I knew we were in for a truly accomplished performance that would support the entire show. Tevye is such a well-known role and almost all your songs are classics; I think it is a difficult role to make your own. But you did just that.”*

This production also highlighted the importance of BLOC always having well-prepared understudies for principal roles, as Kathie Sharp lost her voice and was unable to perform in the Wednesday matinee as Hodel. Sam Steadman stepped in seamlessly and was faultless. Also, Chris Hobbs stepped in to cover for Mike Ludlow to sing the Russian lead in one performance.

Directed and performed with humour, warmth and honesty, **Fiddler** happily made a profit (£3,000) and it also put a lot of joy into BLOC’s human bank.

Another old favourite was re-visited in 2017 when Robbie Burns was appointed to direct **My Fair Lady**. Robbie had been an excellent cast member of **Fiddler** and was a very experienced Director and Producer in his own right, having produced many shows in Weston-super-Mare. He had some exciting ideas on how the show could be made to flow more easily and also to make sure it came down by 10:30pm. The consequence of a late finish is that the band has to be paid overtime as well as the risk of audiences leaving early to get their last bus! The Musical Director, Lauren Davies, had worked before with Robbie and the Choreographer was Courtney Jackson; so, a completely new team as far as BLOC was concerned. Their Assistants were John Cousins, Richard Lennox and Adele Stitch.

Who for Eliza? Again, an exciting development for BLOC as Charlotte Hunter, who had been a member for several years but had never had a major lead, was cast as BLOC’s Fair Lady. She was joined by Pete Cottell, Chris Parslow, Simon Vardakis, Jenny Foster and two new principals in Craig Rees and Laura Stanley. As is often the case in a BLOC production, it was an exciting mixture of well-known leads and some newcomers.





Robbie had a very clear vision for the show and how some scenes could be turned into one to save on scene changes and 'Get me to the Church on Time' was developed into a much bigger number including a visit to the Music Hall. Although most of these ideas were warmly received, there was some tension between the Director's vision and the committee. Robbie felt The Ball Scene was unnecessary as everything that happens in it gets reported later by Higgins. However, the committee felt this was an iconic scene which the audience would expect to see. The discussion went back and forth until eventually a compromise was reached and the scene was done as a short dance sequence.

Occasionally a show demands a spectacular effect and in **My Fair Lady** this is the hats for the Ascot Scene. Cecil Beaton's designs are so well known that productions are invariably compared to them. Fortunately, BLOC invariably knows someone to call upon who can help and in this case a hat making session with members of the company was led by one of our regular hairdressers, Neville Griffiths. The result? *"The Hats for the Ascot Scene were stunning!"* (NODA adjudicator). Despite the inevitable challenges during the



rehearsal process, show week was a triumph. *"Robbie Burns put his own fresh stamp on the production."* (NODA adjudicator) and *"You must be in no doubt as to the great success of your phenomenal production of My Fair Lady... The chorus numbers were outstanding; the vitality and energy was jaw dropping at times."* (Rose Bowl adjudicator). Other aspects received fabulous comments from the Rose Bowl adjudicator: Musically *"the orchestra played with inspirational energy"*, the choreography *"was superb"* and the costumes (under wardrobe mistress Amanda Hayden) *"were another outstanding feature"*. The individual performances of all principals were consistently praised. And what of the missing Ball scene? *"I missed the Ball Room Scene... the interaction of Eliza and Higgins with various guests and the comedy role of Karpathy all adds to the dramatic tension... however, I am sure a lot of your audience wouldn't have noticed!"*

My Fair Lady made a profit at the Box Office and received three Rose Bowl Nominations: for Chris Parslow as Colonel Pickering, Simon Vardakis as Alfred P Doolittle and Courtney Jackson for his Choreography.



In late 2017 the Committee informed the membership that the 2018 show would be **Guys & Dolls**, but it was all change again when MTI contacted the Club and offered us first option on **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**. The committee didn't take long to decide that this change of plan was a sensible one; a well-known family show would surely be big box office attraction - and it would need to be, because somehow they had to build a flying car - and this is exactly what happened!

James Hartland had worked on the show when it was touring and had copies of the plans, both for the car and for the sets. The Club had access to a large barn outside Almondsbury where James was able to build the car; and, ably assisted by Sam Davies, John Cousins and others, built the set. Another team made and hand-painted all the props, down to every sweet in the jars! As the Rose Bowl adjudication recognised: *"How could they achieve a car that flies? On a budget? How? Well, this is one of the amazing things about Amateur Theatre – there are so many people willing to help; unpaid; in their free time. It becomes a shared, community vision. BLOC Productions have had the help of many, under the leadership of James Hartland. He must be congratulated for his vision and perseverance in seeing this through from design to finished production."* The Company was also able to use the barn for rehearsals in the fortnight running up to the show, which meant that the cast was able to rehearse with the stage crew, something which made the tech and dress rehearsals in The Hippodrome go much more smoothly than might have otherwise been expected.

The production team for the show was led by Alex Turasiewicz as Director, assisted by Jaleelah Galbraith. Lauren Davies was Musical Director, this time in the orchestra pit in front of the audience rather than stuck behind the set as she had been during **My Fair Lady** when the pit was out of action; Lauren was once again assisted by Richard Lennox. Donna Podesta was Choreographer and was ably assisted by Adele Stitch. In addition, Geraldine Gregory coached the team of 24 'children of Vulgaria' along with the two Jemimas and Jeremys.

Critical reaction was very positive and again to quote the Rose Bowl adjudicator: *"This was a triumph of a show. The standing ovations said it all. Indeed, a member of the public sitting next to me asked if I knew which city you were touring to next – she couldn't believe that your version of 'Chitty' wasn't indeed a professional show. You can all be hugely delighted with the work that you have done here."* The production went on to win Best Musical at the Rose Bowl awards. There were also nominations for Grace Macdonald (Best Actress) as Truly Scrumptious and for Alex Milner and Peter Cottell (Best Supporting Actors) as the spies, Boris and Goran. And, to crown all the hard work, the flying car was nominated for the First Corporate Coup de Theatre award.



The overall budget for the show was c. £250,000. Ticket sales were excellent, with the theatre having to search for their 'House Full' signs for the Friday evening and Saturday matinee performances. Despite this, the production lost c. £10,000. Building *Chitty* from scratch was never going to come cheap, but flying the car at the end of the show is the 'wow factor' essential to its success and, as the Rose Bowl adjudicator said, "it was *breathtakingly fabulous*". It was a great week in the theatre. Who knew then that BLOC would not be back at The Hippodrome for another four years?!

At the AGM of 2019, another significant change took place when Andrew Carpenter (who had previously been Chairman of Frome Musical Theatre Company and had recently understudied Professor Higgins in BLOC's *My Fair Lady*), was elected Chairman to succeed Sue Donovan; bringing to an end a chapter in BLOC's history during which, under Sue's warm and dedicated leadership, the Club had embraced change, weathered a few storms along the way, but had consolidated its reputation as a happy Club producing shows at The Hippodrome of a truly professional standard.

More change was soon on the horizon. After the euphoria of Sue finally getting her hands on a Best Musical Rose Bowl in her last year as Chairman, it was very disappointing to be informed by the Hippodrome management that ATG had cancelled BLOC's week at The Hippodrome in favour of an extended run of *The Lion King*, and could only offer us two days (maximum three shows) at another time of year. After considerable debate and consultation, the Committee made the decision not to do a show in 2019. The decision was not taken lightly, but there was a lack of viable shows available and the committee (as Trustees of BLOC) were not prepared to put BLOC's future at stake by budgeting for a financial loss or producing a show that failed to come up to BLOC's high standards. The committee felt that, as had happened in the past for similar reasons, BLOC could easily survive having no show for (as they believed at the time) just one year.



Oblivious to what was just around the corner, in late 2019, at the request of members, a **BLOCBUSTERS** concert was staged at The Newman Hall. The aim was to keep the Club spirit alive and to allow as many members as possible to showcase their talents. The show was Designed and Directed by John Cousins, with Ian Taylor as Assistant Director, Brendan Casey as Musical Director and the choreography shared by Will Ferris and current members Ali Dickens and Sam Hardy. The rousing opening number, from **The Greatest Showman** was followed by solos, duets and company numbers performed by a cast of 26. Off stage, the committee managed to serve cream teas to 100 audience members from the John James Foundation at the interval of the matinee performance and then cope with a building evacuation when the fire alarm went off! There may have been no show in 2019 but there was still plenty of drama!

In 2020, for reasons that are all too well known, theatres were closed and there was never any prospect of staging **Kiss Me, Kate** that year as planned. With no show to produce, under Andrew Carpenter's business-like strategic leadership the committee set about a thorough review of all its roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures. Members' Forums were arranged on Zoom as the committee set about trying to answer the question "What Is BLOC?" – the process concluding that BLOC is "A members' Club with the strategic approach of a Production Company."

Assuming all would be back to normal by September 2021, when the Hippodrome was booked for BLOC's next show, the plan was to go ahead with the postponed **Kiss Me, Kate** – but continuing uncertainty over social restrictions, the inability to rehearse and questions over the willingness of audiences to return once theatres re-opened, meant that it soon became clear that to go ahead was both impractical and too great a financial risk. The committee continued to meet regularly on Zoom, organised several quizzes and discussion evenings for members, and planned for the future; for example making operational changes to the way productions are to be managed through the appointment of a Producer for each show, and the Technical Director's role being expanded to that of Production Manager with responsibility for all backstage functions. Also, BLOC successfully applied to change its charitable status to that of a Charitable Incorporated

Organisation (CIO) bringing with it the potential benefit of being eligible to apply for theatre tax credit and also offering greater personal liability protection for Trustees.

And so to the future. Towards the end of 2021 the committee had a change of heart regarding **Kiss Me, Kate** and decided to look for a different type of show to return to the Hippodrome with in 2022. Then, another enforced change landed when The Hippodrome informed the committee that ATG were re-scheduling some postponed shows and could not give BLOC the full week it wanted in November 2022. A further 'dark year' with no show was not an option anyone wanted, so the decision was made to bite the bullet and to choose a show that could sell well for five performances, rather than the usual seven, and still therefore be profitable. A little over four years after the curtain closed on **Chitty Chitty Bang Bang** it is due to go up (in November 2022) on **Elf - The Musical**. Like **Chitty**, it is a well-known family show with a history of having box-office appeal up and down the country. It will be the first time it has been performed at The Hippodrome. Four years is a long gap by anyone's reckoning, but BLOC has survived and is in a good place to come back stronger than ever.

Change is, of course, good for any organisation, but hopefully when the next chapter of BLOC's history is written, it will tell a story of more certain and stable times.

Classic shows re-interpreted by Alex Turasiewicz

“The current concern with authenticity is complicated. It’s a meeting point of so many issues, all of them related but still significant in their differences, concerns such as various hiring patterns and practices, historical and cultural representational accuracy, ownership of one’s identity and communal histories, appropriation and mis-appropriation... artists need to ask themselves the need people have to see themselves represented in art, about imagining lives and times other than one’s own, about how real and unreal art should or shouldn’t be. Complicated.

***West Side Story** is a musical that is of its time and also about its time. As soon as people start singing and dancing, we think the audience will get this isn’t a documentary. However, we wanted people to feel good about the way they were represented... Every single prop, costume, picket-sign, the exact shade of the flags was authentic.”*

Steven Spielberg

In this comment Spielberg summarises the dilemma that modern productions of musicals have to consider. On the one hand, we are staging a musical, an imaginary story which means we have a wide range of characters set in a variety of time frames and locations; but at the same time in contemporary society there is a demand for ‘authenticity’ - and what does that mean for those of us who are involved in this genre?

Using the new film version of **West Side Story**, this is a discussion that we would like to begin in the pages of *Bailiwick*. Although amongst the professional critics there has been a debate as to whether there was a need for a remake and which one is better – not the point of this article – there has been a general consensus that the Sharks are more effectively portrayed as Puerto Ricans as all the cast are South American by descent. Having watched the 1961 film it never actually struck me that the cast weren’t indigenous to the country they were representing. I do now watch it slightly differently, but does it make the original film a poorer version, as the performances are so strong? To me, probably naively, the story isn’t about Puerto Ricans particularly, but a more universal story of acceptance and integration (a theme which strikes a personal note as my father had to leave Poland and somehow find his place



in a new country with a very different culture and language.) In his new version, Spielberg also uses chunks of Spanish conversation which are not translated with sub-titles, which also contributes to a feeling of reality.

As many members of BLOC know, I’d love BLOC to stage **West Side Story**, but has the new film made this impossible with this emphasis on authenticity? (Ignore for the moment any other reasons for BLOC not to do it!)

The other big change was the casting of Anybodys. In the new film, this character was played by Ezra Menas who identifies as a non-binary performer. Again, I hadn’t realised that the character had been a contentious issue in the LGBTQ community. To me Anybodys is a tom-boy who doesn’t fit in with the girls and isn’t accepted by the boys. Tony’s line “*You’re a girl, be a girl*” to me summarises the character’s dilemma – that of fitting in. Menas plays Anybodys as a trans-male seeking to be part of the Jets’ gang. This change, according to one critic, fixes a lot of the problems the character had in the original film. The new interpretation gives the character an arc and prevents it from being a ‘throw away joke.’

So, what do you feel about these changes introduced by Spielberg? What impact do these changes have on your reaction to the film and will it have any impact on the staging of future productions? Please send in your comments to the Editor (phallworth@me.com).

In the next edition I’m going to look over some of BLOC’s past productions and consider the challenges they may present if we ever considered staging them again in the future.

From BLOC to Butlin's... and beyond by Joel Rothwell



Hello, it's Joel here! For those of you that don't know me, I was previously a member of BLOC for four glorious years. I started my BLOC journey in *My Fair Lady*, followed by *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and I even managed to do the fabulous **BLOCBUSTERS** review before that lovely pandemic hit us! However, in the last few years a lot has changed for me since my days of working in ASDA, behind the checkouts. So, here's a little account of what I've been up to over the past twelve months or so.

Once lockdown hit, I found myself, like so many at a loose end. Whilst sending in self-tapes for drama schools, my singing teacher suggested auditioning for Butlin's as she had seen they were looking for production singers/dancers. Although I may not quite be an Adele Stitch on the dance floor, I thought I'd give it a go. After a few rounds of Zoom interviews and self-tapes consisting of dance routines in the kitchen, kicking chair legs and various kitchen appliances, I was offered a slightly different role, one they thought I'd be more suited to, as the fun-loving, joker of the gang... 'Sprout' in the Skyline gang at their Minehead resort.

After months of pushbacks due to another lockdown, the day finally came to start the three-week intense rehearsals at Bognor Regis. At first it was slightly overwhelming to be walking into my first professional performing job and away from

home. However, the moment I walked through the door, all those fears melted as the entire team were so welcoming and friendly. However, the real magic happened when I met my six fellow Skyline gang members, straight away they took me under their wing and made me feel a part of their family. During rehearsals we learnt two shows "The Skyline Goes Pop" and "The Skyline Gang in the Wild West". The rehearsal process came with its long hours and challenges, but they were completely out-weighted by copious amounts of fun and the sheer thrill that I was performing again and this time for a living!

Once rehearsals were complete, it was time to head to our resort in Minehead and open the doors to thousands of excited guests - all thrilled to be holidaying and seeing live performances again. I remember the feeling when I came off stage after my first show, the excitement and buzz amongst the gang was beyond anything we'd felt before, just with the thrill to be back on a stage performing again.

After just a couple of weeks in the job I'd received offers from two of my dream drama schools - Mountview and Italia Conti. After a lot of back and forth, I accepted the offer at Italia Conti as their training is incredibly progressive and diverse which is so important to me as a young queer person.

In my final few months at Butlin's I had the best time making the most of playing a character that I loved as well as making memories for families and putting smiles on kids' faces. That was the special thing about that job, it didn't matter how tired you were or that it was the fourth show on a Sunday, the minute that intro music started and I'd run out and see all the little kids faces (some of whom dressed as my character) nothing else mattered except for giving the best performance I'd ever



given. That will forever stay with me and I am so grateful to Butlin's for giving me such incredible memories.

My first term at Italia Conti has been a real whirlwind. It has been everything I thought drama school would be and more. I have laughed, cried and everything in-between! Already in just a matter of weeks I have seen massive improvements in my technical ability across all disciplines and I am loving being brought back to basics and seeing this new performer emerge.

The first term consisted of an initial assessment week which put us in sets for the year. Naturally, I'm in the lower set for dance... however, if they'd have seen the BLOC show where Carrie and I were dance partners, I think it would have worked out differently! In all seriousness, the teachers and training are phenomenal and feedback from my teachers after the first term has been so encouraging. I'm just looking forward to being pushed and pushing myself to the heights that a school like Italia Conti has to offer.

I must also give a huge thank you to BLOC, who generously granted me funds towards my Conti uniform which I cannot thank the committee and trustees enough for. To have a uniform that I'm proud of is one thing, but knowing how I came to receive it makes me wear it with the utmost pride. I can't wait to keep you all updated as my training

continues, but for now it's back to Guildford and seeing if those splits have come on over Christmas... I promise I've been practicing Adele... honest!



Meet the Hippodrome Staff: Charlotte Fortt, Marketing Manager



BLOC's long-standing relationship with The Hippodrome is one we want to continue to build on, so we thought it would be helpful if our readers found about more about the people who work there and who are so helpful to BLOC in choosing, promoting and staging our shows. In a previous edition we met Ben Phillips, the theatre Director, and now we are delighted to meet Charlotte Fortt, the theatre's Marketing Manager, who is responsible for all the paid-for advertising and marketing of their shows. Phil Hallworth chatted to her about her role and her interests.

Q. How long have you been working at Hippodrome and what doing before that?

A. I'm very new, having only started last June! I worked at the Bristol Old Vic a few years ago, then at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh in a comms officer role. I then moved back to Bristol, where I grew up, was lucky that this job came up soon afterwards and I got it!

Q. Is marketing and communications something you have always wanted to do?

A. My original plan was to study Ancient History at university but having looked round a few unis I didn't feel particularly inspired, so I took a year out and did an internship with a PR company in Bath. That's when I discovered I really enjoyed this type of work, so I studied for a degree in Marketing, Communications and Advertising, during which I did a year of paid internship with Disney Theatrical Group in London.

Q. Is theatre a passion as well as a job?

A. Definitely a passion! The job at Disney was great because it allowed me to combine my two loves. My family knew I loved theatre from an early age, because when they took me to my first panto I kept being offered sweets but was too enthralled with the show to eat them, which was very unusual for me at the time! I've been hooked ever since then. I don't think you can beat the thrill of a live show and the emotion at the end with everyone clapping, which is when I usually tear up! For years I didn't know it was possible to be involved in theatre if you weren't on stage, so for me it's amazing to be able combine work and pleasure.

Q. Have you ever performed on stage?

A. Yes. I was in an am dram group growing up from about age 12 (The Barthomolites, a small community group in St Andrews) and we did annual pantos which were always great fun. I performed in them and also helped with make-up. My dad used to be on stage too, which made it particularly enjoyable. I loved the friendship side of it all and every show created special bonds with people you wouldn't otherwise have met and talked to.

Q. So, how much a part of a Hippodrome show are you able to feel, being on the admin side of things?

A. Because I'm blessed to have seen so many musicals over the years, whenever they come in I can quickly feel part of it, especially with the longer runs when there's more time to get to know the cast and chat to the producers about how the tour is going, how audiences are enjoying it and how tickets are selling across the country.

Q. As a non-professional group, BLOC is always grateful for the support your department provides. Do professional companies need the same level of support?

A. They are obviously fairly well-oiled machines, but what we can bring is detailed, data-backed knowledge of the local and regional audiences. We know what they like and don't like, how they prefer to be marketed to and how and when they buy tickets - it's surprising how much these things can vary a lot across the country.

Q. So, can you identify the main characteristics of a Bristol audience for us?

A. It's difficult for me to say at the moment because the 18-month gap has skewed the data so much and we don't yet know whether audience behaviour will return to pre-pandemic patterns, or whether it has changed for ever. I don't think we'll have clear picture until another two years down the line because so much has been re-scheduled.

Q. Have audiences changed since theatres re-opened?

A. What I can say is that the Bristol audience has responded very favourably to everything we've done so far since the theatre re-opened, but many people are understandably still hesitant to come out in big crowds. There is also still uncertainty over Covid guidelines and knowing if and when they will change. I think the trust will build up slowly so hopefully it will be more back to 'normal' by the time you do *Elf*. People are generally booking well when popular shows are announced, and I definitely think they'll be excited about *Elf*.

Q. Do you and your team have any input into the theatre's programming schedule?

A. Not really, it's all done centrally by ATG. With the exception of your show in November, most of the remaining 2022 shows are all shows that have been re-scheduled, so we don't have any fresh shows coming in until January or February 2023.



Q. How has theatre marketing changed in recent years?

A. It's certainly less print and more targeted social media campaigns these days. Online is better for us because we can capture a lot of data which increases our understanding of our audiences and our ability to sell each show in the most effective way. We have reduced our flyer print runs massively but do still use some carefully targeted direct mailings. With Covid around, people have been reluctant pick up flyers, which has increased the risk of wastage, which raises the sustainability issue that's very important to us. Also, there's been an increase in the amount of online or radio messaging required to produce a sale. A couple of years ago the average was six, now it's more than ten. This is maybe because people have been more reluctant to come out in the last couple of years and also because they have less money to spend and are therefore very selective about what they book. We've seen that people are more willing to spend on the well-known shows with trusted titles, in the knowledge that they're going to enjoy it and get value for money. They are being less experimental and risk-taking, for now at least.

Q. West End prices are high. Has this meant more people are looking to see shows at provincial theatres?

A. Possibly, but we don't have enough evidence to tell at the moment. My gut feeling is that if people really want to see something, they will pay for it, whether it's The West End or at a provincial theatre.

Q. Many of our members are sad to see the box office disappearing – what should I be saying to them about that?!

A. Covid and staff shortages made this transition inevitable in the last couple of years, but moving forwards I think online booking is something we're all now used to and it is a more cost-effective way for us to operate. The Box Office is still open 90 minutes before every show to process that event and there is still a telephone helpline if you feel more comfortable speaking to someone.

Q. Your favourite musical?

A. *Memphis* in The West End was incredible, but I love a good old-fashioned musical – there's nothing quite like it! So overall I'd probably say *The King and I*.

Q. A dream part if you had the chance?

A. If I was a better singer... Eliza in *Hamilton*.

Q. Finally, what's been the best thing so far about working at the Hippodrome?

A. Seeing audience reactions for sure! I feel very lucky when I'm able to look around at the faces of people enjoying a show I helped to market. In some jobs you never get the chance to see the results of your efforts. The opening of *Beauty and the Beast* after 18 months of theatre lockdown was an incredible moment I'll never forget. It was a privilege to share that experience and certainly a career highlight. Witnessing the cheers and tears the moment the overture started up was unbelievable and a great reminder of how important live theatre is in our lives.

Thanks very much Charlotte. I know our Marketing Manager, Jo Phillips, is looking forward to working closely with you and the Communications team at the Hippodrome to help us sell *Elf - the Musical*; and it's great to know that you have such a love and understanding of musical theatre yourself.



Theatrical Superstitions **by Alex Turasiewicz**

"Theatrical Superstitions will be respected." This line from an American Equity document caught my attention. Most of us will know the usual superstitions such as not whistling in the theatre or not mentioning 'the Scottish play' by name and usually we get to know the origins of these. However, when I started looking into them, I discovered that one article listed over forty 'theatrical superstitions' and by the end it seemed a surprise that one could ever get on stage to actually do the performance!

So, with this in mind, I'd like to present a Compendium of Superstitions – not as a quiz (the answers are too easily Googled), but as an invitation to you, our readers, to add any others you know of to the list, and maybe even to invent some new BLOC-specific superstitions - the more humorous and far-fetched the better! Please send them to the Editor at phallworth@me.com

In the next edition I'll share the best of the new suggestions and also provide the 'correct' or historically perceived explanations for the following superstitions:

- *Give the Director a graveyard bouquet.*
- *A bad dress rehearsal means the show will be a hit.*
- *Never light a trio of candles.*
- *Never give a performer flowers before a show.*
- *Rehearsing on a Sunday is very bad luck.*
- *Peacock feathers and real money should never be brought on stage.*
- *You should never wear a hat backstage.*
- *Always exit your dressing room on your left foot.*
- *Absolutely no knitting in the wings.*
- *Never say the last line of a play during rehearsals; only when an audience is present.*
- *It's bad luck to wear the colour blue on stage.*
- *If a baby doll is used on stage, when it's off stage it must be placed face down.*
- *A man from the company has to enter the theatre first on opening night.*
- *Wearing a tee-shirt of the production before opening night is bad luck.*



What's On? Support our fellow societies

It's important that we support our fellow am-dram societies in Bristol whenever we can, so we are pleased to share some information about their forthcoming Spring productions – all to be performed at **The Redgrave Theatre** in Clifton. Tickets for all these shows are available via The Redgrave Theatre website: www.redgravetheatre.co.uk.



9 to 5
The Musical

BASED ON THE 20TH CENTURY FOX PICTURE

MUSIC & LYRICS BY DOLLY PARTON BOOK BY PATRICIA RESNICK
ORIGINALLY PRODUCED ON BROADWAY BY ROBERT GREENBLATT, APRIL 2009

5-9TH APRIL 2022
THE REDGRAVE THEATRE
CLIFTON, BRISTOL, BS8 3LE.

7:30PM & 2:30PM SAT MAT.
BOX OFFICE: WWW.BAOSBRISTOL.CO.UK

@ILoveBAOS Registered Charity: 1069065



TITANIC

THE MUSICAL

19th - 23rd April 2022
Redgrave Theatre
www.smpmtc.co.uk

SMP
Musical Theatre Company

Story & Book by Peter Stone
Music & Lyrics by Maury Yeston

BAOS (Bristol Amateur Operatic Society) presents **'9 to 5' the Musical**, 5th - 9th April, 7.30pm (+ Saturday matinee). Tickets are £16.00 and are available NOW! Group discount available. NB: This production contains comic sexual reference, light drug use and the occasional curse word.

SMP (St Mary's Players) present **Titanic - The Musical**, 19th - 23rd April, 7.30pm (+ Saturday matinee). Tickets £12.50 Tuesday, £15.00 Weds-Sat.

BMT (Bristol Musical Theatre) present **The Wedding Singer**, 27th - 30th April, 7.30pm (+ Saturday matinee). Tickets £16.00 or £13.50 for groups of 10+ from The Redgrave website or www.bmtgetswed.com



The Wedding Singer

27th - 30th April 2022
the Redgrave Theatre, Clifton
www.bmtgetswed.com

BMT
BRISTOL MUSICAL THEATRE

BMCC (Bristol Musical Comedy Club)
present *Rent*, 3rd - 7th May, 7.30pm. Tickets £15.



BAOS YOUTH is presenting *Oliver!*
from 2nd - 4th June.



Also...

SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS are touring their latest production, *Ben Hur*, and will be at St Thomas The Martyr Church in the city centre on April 23rd, before finally being streamed "on demand" online to the Edinburgh Fringe. For further details, see: <https://www.southdevonplayers.com/benhurbristol.html>.

Tickets are available via their box office page at www.southdevonplayers.com. The show creates opportunities for local Devon actors and creative talent of all backgrounds, but especially those from marginalised backgrounds, to showcase their skills.

THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY
PRESENT

BEN HUR

The 2022 theatre tour

Churches Conservation Trust

Saturday, April 23rd 2022: 7.30pm
Tickets £10 (£8 Concs)
St Thomas The Martyr Church
Thomas Lane, Bristol, BS1 6JG
BOOKING: www.southdevonplayers.com (box office)

Content advisories:
General Suitability: Teens & Adults | Strong Language: mild | Violence: strong | Nudity: none

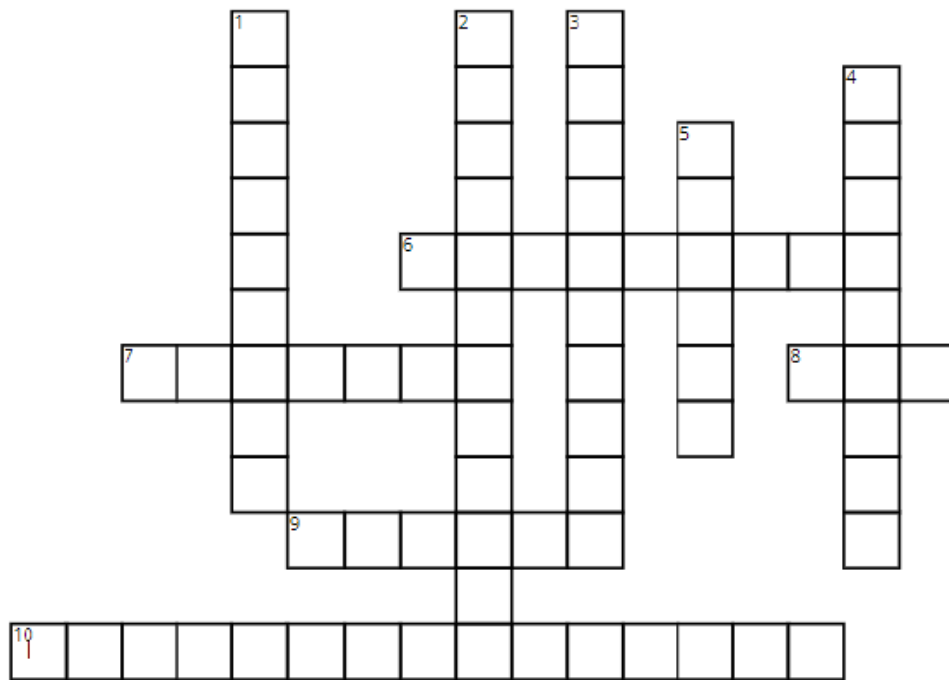
Rehearsal space supported by Brixham Town Council

www.southdevonplayers.com

[f sdevonplayers](https://www.facebook.com/sdevonplayers) [t sdevonplayers](https://twitter.com/sdevonplayers) **TESCO** Community Grants

Crossword!*compiled by Kathie Cooke*

Musicals

**Across**

6. 'They buy me ----- because they say that they admire my brain' Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (9)
7. The mad Man of La Mancha. Don ----- (7)
8. Who debuted the role of Eliza Hamilton in the Broadway production of Hamilton? (3)
Phillippa
9. Richard, half of the duo who wrote Oklahoma (6)
10. Miss Saigon is one of the West End's longest running musicals following its 2014 revival tour. On which 1904 opera is the tragic tale based? (15)

Down

1. Evita is a musical based on the life of Eva Perón, the First Lady of which country? (9)
2. Original 'Evan Hansen' actor Ben Platt starred in which teen musical movie along side Anna Kendrick (12)
3. Shrek the Musical was based on the 2008 film made by which animation studio? (10)
4. The concept for the musical '9 to 5' was originally the brain child of which American actress and model? (9)
5. Ms Paige of West End renown (6)

