

# BLOC BAILIWICK

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## EDITORIAL BY JACK BLACKMORE

Welcome to the latest issue of the BLOC Bailiwick. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is well underway: rehearsals have begun, the cast is great, the crew is strong, and everything is all very exciting. As always I'd like to thank everyone involved in this month's edition: Tom Creswick, Jaleelah Galbraith, Ewan Poole-Gleed, Anna Sutton, and Alex Turasiewicz.

But for now, read on and enjoy.

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Who are the new members?
- Whistle-stop script
- Where was nearly BLOC's forever home?
- How should you behave at rehearsals?

## BLOC CLUB NIGHT

Just a reminder that although many of the cast are likely to find themselves in the pub for a drink after every rehearsal, it would be nice to see everyone, (members involved in the current production or not), at The Highbury Vaults after every rehearsal on the second Monday of every month: 11<sup>th</sup> June, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 13<sup>th</sup> August, and 10<sup>th</sup> September. The more the merrier!

### Did you know?

Baron Bomburst's castle in the film is Neuschwanstein, built between 1869 and 1886 for the Bavarian King Ludwig II, "The Mad King of Bavaria". This castle is also famously known as the model for both the *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) Castle at Disneyland, which was the symbol of the Disney television program Walt Disney's *Wonderful World of Color* (1954), and the Walt Disney Pictures studio logo.



# GETTING TO KNOW YOU - MEET SOME OF THE NEW MEMBERS



Danielle Cox



Hannah Bardle



Tuki Attuquayfio II



Ella Sophia Brown



Rob Tilke



Leah Farmer



Daniel Tallamy



Jadine Griffiee

### **Did You Know?**

*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang's* main song was used as a wake up call for Commander Pamela Ann Melroy and the Space Shuttle Discovery crew on November 7, 2007.

## J A L E E L A H ' S B L O G

At the start of May, the production team spent an evening and a day auditioning the company to create our *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* cast and the talent on show was overwhelming. Now that we have our principals and "phantasmagorical" ensemble we are all set to fly into rehearsals! We have Donna Podesta as Choreographer, Lauren Davies as Musical Director, and Alex Turasiewicz as Director; we are all excited to see this show come together over the coming months. Those working behind the scenes to create the set, costumes, and props are already putting in the hours to create such items as a Windmill, a breakfast making machine, as well as Chitty herself. Last week some of the cast and

production team were lucky enough to get a quick tour of the Hippodrome to get an idea of how the show is going to look and feel on that huge stage in front of nearly 2,000 people. Ticket sales are already impressive, the Saturday matinee is almost sold out and we are still three and a half months away from show week. This show has everything: a flying car, a dog, colourful costumes, a large company, child actors, and circus tricks! Talking of the children, we have twenty-four on board who will be appearing every night as the 'Sewer Children'; this is currently a working title as we feel we need something a little more flattering... at the moment, however, all we can come up with is 'Vulgar Children'. These twenty-four had a sing

through rehearsal recently and sounded brilliant; they all worked together well and had lots of excitement and enthusiasm and they are sure to add lots of energy to the show. Our Jeremys and Jemimas (we have four due to double casting) were hard to pick out of the auditions as all the children were great. This is going to be a production with a LOT of talent on show! Just over 100 days to go.

### Did you Know?

In an interview during filming in October 1967, Dick Van Dyke revealed that he only accepted the role of Caractacus Potts on the condition that he would not have to attempt an English accent.

## M Y F A V O U R I T E T H I N G S

Last month we asked you to vote on your top five Movie Musicals and the results are in.

- 1st Singing In The Rain
- 2nd The Sound Of Music
- 3rd Mary Poppins
- 4th West Side Story
- 5th Little Shop Of Horrors

This month we would love to know your Top Five Musical Composers, simply follow the link below

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8T79MZX>

## SIXTY SECOND SHOW – JALEELAH GALBRAITH

Our production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is based on the touring version there are, therefore, a couple of modifications and it's had a bit of time in the workshop but we have an exciting show coming our way. You might have seen the film but you won't have seen it quite like this.

The story is based on the book by Ian Fleming, author of the *Bond* series, and there are some similarities; gadgets and gizmos, international espionage, overseas adventures, and a ridiculous villain (or two). In 1910, known as The Panther, Chitty won the European Grand Prix, much to the dismay of the Vulgarian Vulture, another competitor. Years later, Chitty lies forgotten and unloved in an old junk yard until it is found by the motherless Jeremy and Jemima Potts; who both love to sit in it and pretend to be racing champions. After finding out the car will be made into scrap unless bought and saved, the children beg their father, the inventor Caractacus Potts, to buy it for them at the costly sum of 30 shillings. It is at this garage that they literally bump into Truly Scrumptious when her motorbike collides into them. At first she and Caractacus don't see eye to eye but this is a definite meet cute of (all) sorts. Meanwhile in Vulgaria, the Baron and Baroness enlist the help of their useless pair of spies Boris and Goran to find Chitty and bring it to them as they have never gotten over the defeat at the Grand Prix. Caractacus, Jemima, and Jeremy meet Truly again when they visit the sweet factory of Lord Scrumptious to sell him a new invention, Toot Sweets, to raise money to buy Chitty. Truly tries to help convince her father, the owner of the factory, however it all goes wrong when the sweets produce a whistle that attracts all the dogs from the surrounding areas (we may just have one dog but it will still cause

commotion on the Hippodrome stage). Truly and the children start to become firm friends and this allows Caractacus to see her in a new (maybe romantic) light. Caractacus is able to get the money together to buy Chitty (this involves a hair cutting machine, a fun fair, and some Morris dancers with sticks) and starts work on her straight away, turning her into a "fuel burning oracle". It's when all four are on a picnic with the newly pimped out Chitty (named after the sounds she makes: "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang") that Boris and Goran find them and advise they "surrender the car". The four make it home just in time to see Grandad Potts (also called Caractacus) taken away in the air by a blimp orchestrated by the spies, while he is somewhat otherwise engaged in the outhouse. As Truly, Caractacus Jr, and the children race after Grandpa in Chitty and end up driving over a cliff, it is revealed that Chitty, not only drives and swims but also, flies!

In Act Two, we are now in Vulgaria, where Boris and Goran have taken Grandpa. We see the Baron and Baroness order Grandpa to make another flying car thinking he is Potts the inventor. Truly and Caractacus find out from a kind Toymaker, 'who is called, the Toymaker' (AKA Benny Hill from the film) that there is a ban on children in Vulgaria due to the Baroness' dislike of them. Children are caught and hidden away by the Childcatcher (picture the head of Pinocchio on the body of a preying mantis). The Toymaker takes Caractacus under the castle of the Baron to find a way in and save Grandpa, while Truly is left to look after Jeremy and Jemima. Truly decides, however, to look for food for the children and leaves them unattended (she had one job!) and so the Childcatcher hits his quota that day and takes the "little kiddie

winkies" away. Under the castle, Caractacus meets a group of Vulgar children who are hiding from the Childcatcher. Truly rushes in with the news about Jeremy and Jemima and they all hatch a plan to save, not only Grandpa but, all the children. In the castle, they are celebrating the birthday of the Baron and the Toymaker brings in the two 'toys' he has made especially: a Doll on a Music Box and a Jack in the Box. Really these are Truly and Caractacus in disguise and, after their song, they call in all the Vulgar children to swarm the castle. The Baroness in total panic calls the Childcatcher, who threatens to catch them all. At this point Chitty arrives to save the day with Grandpa in the driver's seat. The Childcatcher is forced into, and taken away in, the large oversized birthday cake. The Toymaker calls it a happy ending as all the children are reunited with their families; the Potts are all back together again, the spies confess they never liked the Baroness after all, and she finds out she has a little gebäck in the oven. Caractacus then finds the lid to his Pott when Truly proposes to him. They all then fly back home in Chitty.

The above is a light hearted telling of the story but we want there to be a real sense of warmth from these characters and peril from the villains; but as always good wins over bad. The audience has to fall in love with this family, and care about them, and that is our aim throughout rehearsals.

## HELPFUL HINTS

Digging through the BLOC archives, we came across 'A Few Helpful Hints (by the Producer) to Members of the Bristol Light Opera Club.' In this document, John Edwards, one of the founders of BLOC, sets out a few rules for new members back in 1938. Here's a little selection from that document:

- "Applause should always be waited for; the audience may seem a long time about it; but you should remember that it does not seem a long time to them."
- "To practice in front of your mirror, and in front of your producer makes perfect in the end."
- "Make a big movement when referring to big things, and a small one when dealing with small things."
- "Don't giggle if anything goes wrong. The chances are the audience will not notice it unless you broadcast the fact."
- "Don't act so hard during someone else's scene, the attention of the audience may be drawn from them to You."
- "Remember not to make yourself a nuisance at rehearsals."



## BLOC THROUGH THE DECADES - 1946-1956

After the war ended, BLOC were quick to get back to mounting their first production, *The Rebel Maid*, in 1946. They performed all over Bristol in venues such as The Colston Hall & The Victoria Rooms. In 1953, following a successful production of *Pink Champagne*, John Heming a founder member, director, and Chairman tried to find the society a permanent home: The Empire Theatre in Old Market. In a state of crisis and threatened with closure John called a meeting with other drama and musical societies to take over the theatre. Sadly this didn't pan out and the hunt for a permanent home was on again. Further productions that were performed in that time were *The Vagabond King*, *My Lady Molly*, *Veronique*, *Duchess of Dantzig* *Rose Marie*, *Song of Norway*, *The Dubarry*, and *Night in Venice*. A decade later, BLOC found their new home in a place many will be familiar with...



## WHAT'S ON

If you have an event you would like us to share please let us know.

**Bristol Shakespeare Festival. 6<sup>th</sup> June-29<sup>th</sup> July. Various Venues**

More information and tickets available from <http://www.bristolshakespearefestival.org.uk/>



**Stage Struck – the Wayfarers Drama Group. 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June. The Theatre in the Hut, Weston Super-Mare**

Tickets available from <http://wayfarersdrama.org.uk/upcoming-events/4584833623>

**Singin' In the Rain – Muses Theatrical Productions. 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June. The McMillan Theatre, Bridgewater**

Tickets available from <https://mcmillantheatre.com/event/singin-in-the-rain/tickets/>



**Secret Cabaret. 29th June. Piano Bar, Bristol Hippodrome**

Tickets available from <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-secret-cabaret>

**Dual Identities – Shenanigans Productions. July 15<sup>th</sup>. Bristol Improv Theatre**

Tickets available soon.



**Disenchanted! The Hilarious Hit Musical – Exit Stage Left. 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> July. Rondo Theatre, Bath**

Tickets available from <http://rondotheatre.co.uk/whats-on/>

**Avenue Q – OOOH ARRR Productions LTD. 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> July. Rondo Theatre, Bath**

Tickets available from <http://rondotheatre.co.uk/whats-on/>



**Secret Cabaret. 27th July. Piano Bar, Bristol Hippodrome**

Tickets available from <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-secret-cabaret>