



2016

"Curtain Call"

Our bi-monthly publication with news from the RHTC

January 2016 – welcome to the 7th edition of our newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity of wishing a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year to all our supporters, and we look forward to seeing you at a future production.



PITMAN PAINTERS, November 2015 - In 1934, a group of Ashington miners hired a professor to teach an art appreciation evening class. Rapidly abandoning theory in favour of practice, the pitmen began to paint – prolifically. Within a few years avant-garde artists became their friends and their work was acquired by prestigious collectors; but every day they continued to work, as before, down the mine. The play was expertly directed by Clive Harmston and featured many popular actors from the company who played real characters. David Baliol-Key played George Brown the Union man with plenty of assertiveness whilst Jonty Redgate as the teacher Robert Lyon, played the role with patience and kindness. Justin Day portrayed the character's communist sympathies with conviction. Tony Smith's performance of Harry Wilson delighted the audience with his comic timing. Rebecca Smith as the heiress and patron was suitably haughty and newcomer Rebecca Crowe as Susan Parks made a brave debut by revealing all. Mark Homer was excellent as the most earnest of the painters, and Ziemek Kaczmarek played the youngest painter convincingly. The paintings were all cleverly recreated by the Director of Design, Jackie Rogers. *The 'Pitmen Painters'* was highly amusing, deeply moving and always entertaining as it examined the lives of a group of ordinary men who did extraordinary things. It is extraordinary for all sorts of reasons, but chief among them is the fact that it managed to be both a great night out and gravely serious. It is a funny play that asks big questions about education, culture and the working classes without ever being patronising, stupid or boring. It was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who saw it.



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RHTC 200 Monthly Prize Draw

SUPPORT THE THEATRE AND WIN CASH PRIZES!

If your membership number is drawn, you win a cash prize.

Subscription of £12.00 per annum, open to all supporters of the RHTC.

Proceeds of the draw will be used to purchase equipment for the theatre.

Pick up a form at your next visit or from our programme. If you want more information contact Sue Smith at ssconsulting15@yahoo.co.uk.

Theatre Donation

The Robin Hood Theatre has been given a cheque for £1000 from the theatre's Ladies Luncheon Club. It was presented by Elaine Dixon and is for renovations and repairs at the theatre, which are on-going.

'Ladies' Day ' by Amanda Whittington . January 26th – 30th 2016



'Ladies' Day' was first produced at Hull Truck Theatre ten years ago and won critical acclaim. The Guardian said it was, "Exuberantly up-to-the minute comedy". The play tells the story of four women working as fish filleters in a factory in Hull. It is hard work but their fortunes are set to change when they find tickets to Ladies' Day at Royal Ascot the year it relocated to York. If their luck holds, they could hit the jackpot.

Out go the hairnets, overalls and wellies as the four leave work and do themselves up to the nines. They head off to the races for a drink, a flirt and a flutter. They discover a lot more than they bargained for, about each other and about themselves. They meet various male characters during their day out, all of whom will be played by David O'Brien.

The four women are played by Liz Morgan as Pearl, the happily married woman with a guilty secret, Kerri Saxby is Shelley, the aspiring celebrity, Sally Williams plays Jan who would like to move on with her life but is over protective of her teenage daughter and Lindsey Follen is Linda, a sad character who is constantly kept poor by her grasping mother. Geoff Morgan directs.

Tickets are £10 and £8 for members and are available from the website www.robinhoodtheatre.co.uk or call 07733 179986.

Tangram Theatre The Origin of the Species Thursday 4th February at 7.30 A Village Ventures Production

Calling all monkeys! Edinburgh Fringe sell-out & international smash hit, The Origin of Species... is a show for young and old alike. It tells the incredible story of how Charles Darwin came to discover the secrets of evolution and why it took him over twenty years before plucking up the courage to publish his remarkable idea. It's a show packed with big theories, terrible puns, brilliant physical comedy and six cracking original songs about everything from blasted boring barnacles to the perils of marrying your cousin.

Tickets for all productions are available on our box office number 07733 179986



SPOT LIGHT on NICK TIMMS

Nick and his wife Mary have been active members of the RHT for over 30 years. The first role Nick can clearly remember was playing a junior lead in Tartuffe, wearing a rich, auburn wig, which made him look disturbingly like his sister.

Since then he has enjoyed too many roles, large medium and small, to recall the details, but remembers a surprising number of dog-collared clergymen, and in one case a Shakespearean friar. In those early and simple days, being a member of the RHT involved acting, a bit of set building, a stint behind the bar and a sessions in the lighting box; now it feels like an alternative career. In the past few years, there have been many challenges. The first indication of what was to come after being evicted from our theatre, was to discover that the play we had chosen involved seven functioning doors, which had to be positioned on the bare floor of the Magnus school hall, and then moved after each night. The following production involved constructing a full-size gothic folly with spiral staircases. Nick was a very happy part of the team which solved these 'little problems'. During the touring days, he continued to act, with some very enjoyable parts provided by Eric Chappell, although perhaps his favourite role was in Titfield Thunderbolt, where he played both the arch villain and an inebriated local squire. For 2 years before we re-opened, Nick spent almost all of his free time (with others) re-constructing the front-of-house area, finally replacing almost every door the theatre contained with modern fire doors. The highlight of his whole time with the RHT was directing the music for our opening production of Little Voice.

Now his main focus is with the technical team, producing sound effects to order, and - more recently - film and visual effects.



Youth Theatre's First Show

What do you get when you mix a suspicious wedding party, a stressed wedding planner, a rather useless butler, an old country house and a snowstorm? You get "Twelve Days of Darkness" by Robin Hood Youth Theatre! We were invited to join the wedding of the year, where not every guest made it to the 'I Do's! ' This was an original show, written by the members of the Youth Theatre.

They had obviously worked incredibly hard and were very excited to perform their first ever show. It was an amusing tale with strong characterisation throughout and some very impressive performances. Credit goes to Shauna Dennett, the leader of the group. The theatre's technical crew served them well with good lighting, sound and set.

The play had been written and rehearsed in just twelve weeks. It was performed at the Robin Hood Theatre on December 13th at 6.00p.m. The new term begins on January 10th, 4pm -6pm. New members have the first class free. Costs are £6 a session, payable half termly in advance.



For further information visit our web site – robinhoodtheatre.co.uk



Review of the Year

As many journals and media outlets use this time of year to take stock of the old year and look forward to the new I thought we should do the same. 2015 was a really good year for us in many different ways.

We have produced some cracking plays, filled our theatre building with activity and have continued to improve the buildings and facilities out of the financial success.

Our membership has grown and is now back at pre-closure levels

We started the year with a superb production of *The Ladykillers* which filled up the stage with a huge wonky set to cover the house, the station and the roof top fight scenes. This also allowed some members who have shied away from the stage to appear heavily disguised and ad libbing raucously as the Lady's friends. We moved swiftly on to *Sense and Sensibility* seeing some new young faces on the stage giving some delightful performances of Jane Austen's robust characters and nobody noticed that mother wasn't there! For the summer new director Chris Lebeter turned the theatre into *Maplins* with bunting and splat the rat even before we were in the auditorium. The large cast then augmented the script with some splendid running gags and lively songs. The autumn saw us come forward 20 years to the 1970s for a revival of *Abigail's Party* again under the control of new director David O'Brien who wound the cast up to produce a fast paced run through the delights of suburban manners and one-upmanship. Finally our time machine took us back to the 1930s and 40s and a serious and challenging drama about the *Pitmen Painters*. Such a large male cast ensured that we welcomed back some actors we have not seen for a while who combined into a very strong crew.

We have also staged productions by Newark Operatic and Argent Theatre; two local dance schools; NAPA; and most significantly by our newly re-established Youth Theatre. We have had our first go at a Village Ventures scheme bringing professional performers to the stage for the first time in over a decade. We have also been pleased to host The Wolfit Endowment Fund events. There have been many other hirings of the building by local groups and for social events too – we are now the home of the Averham etc WI.

All this activity has generated funds which we have already put to good use improving the building, most notably by the addition of heating to the stage and backstage rooms; the permanent electrical installation to the backstage rooms and the replacement of the windows at the front of the theatre. With volunteering teams from Vodafone and the huge efforts of June and David Horton the garden areas are much neater and at the end of the year we saw the removal of the huge sycamore trees which had been blocking our gutters and drains with leaves and seeds for years. In April we appointed an Architect - Clive Brooks - to help us to plan the completion of the remainder of the building. He submitted a report in June of the likely stages we would need to go through to that will lead to developing a plan for the completion of the building as a Studio Theatre.

Coming up we have a feisty modern comedy – *Ladies Day*; the classic thriller *Gaslight* and our season finale will be a humungous production of *Brief Encounter*. We have two more Village Ventures nights; an Old Time Music Hall in May and the Youth Theatre will be back with their summer production. We are already planning our next season which we will announce in the Spring

This has been a brilliant year. We have been able to build up our financial reserves whilst undertaking modest development work. The audience response since we re-opened has been strong but we cannot afford to be complacent in our programme selection, production quality or customer services. We are trying new ways to make the audience experience even better. We have achieved our long held objective to re-establish the Youth Theatre and the front of the theatre building is looking better than it has done for many years. We are all set for a busy 2016.

Geoff Morgan, Chairman

