

Entertaining Mr Sloane  
Dir. Sally Bruton

DECEMBER 2022

# SCENE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY

The  
Little  
Theatre

Visit our website for more information: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)



# Editor's Letter

A magnificent turnout has been had at The Little this month, with many bums on seats, which is great to see as buying habits seemed to have changed quite a bit since the pandemic. It used to be that many tickets would be bought well in

advance but now, buyers are more likely to purchase tickets the week before or of the show. This can cause quite a bit of stress for production teams, so it's been hugely positive to see great audiences throughout the season so far.

Black comedy Entertaining Mr Sloane was our in-house production this month, shining a spotlight on the work of Leicester's own Joe Orton. And The Little Theatre saw its second-biggest audience of the season when KPAOS brought 9 to 5 the Musical to the stage in November (behind only Black Coffee). As a committee member of the society, I can tell you it was greatly appreciated to feel so included in all The Little Theatre's marketing. And, as Judy Bernly was my first lead role, I will never forget this experience. Thank you to everyone who made KPAOS feel very



much at home during dress and tech rehearsals and show week.

Excitingly, but unsurprisingly, panto is close to selling out with only 12% of tickets left. It has a stellar cast and rehearsals are looking fab! Get your tickets while you still can – best availability is after Christmas.

Keep an eye out for our spring/summer 2023 brochure, which will be released this month, and get booking tickets for our upcoming shows.

And finally, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Kerry**

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# The Team

Theatre Manager ▶ **Graham Muir**

Deputy Theatre Manager ▶ **Carolyn Young**

## Leicester Drama Society Ltd Board of Trustees

Chairman & Technical Trustee ▶ **Andy Crooks**

Company Secretary ▶ **David Moore**

Honorary Secretary ▶ **Mary Jones**

Treasurer ▶ **Jenny Harding**

Trustee for Facilities ▶ **Martin Scott**

Trustee for Front of House ▶ **Frances Harris**

Trustee for Marketing & Outreach ▶ **Tom Young**

Trustee for Membership ▶ **Jackie Caunt**

Trustee for Productions ▶ **Joe Middleton**

Trustee for the Studio ▶ **Russell Hughes**

Trustee without specific responsibility  
and minutes secretary ▶ **Simon Dickens**

## Scene

Editor of Scene ▶ **Kerry Smith**

Design of Scene ▶ **Cross Productions**

## Scene

Contributions to Scene are invited. Our deadline is a week before the end of each month. If you have a story, let us know before then to guarantee that we reserve space for you. Contact us via email on [hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk](mailto:hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk).

# 200 Club Winners

## November

1st	010 (£250)
2nd	079 (£100)
3rd	082 (£50)

You can join the 200 Club monthly draws now for a payment of £25. This payment will include you in the five remaining draws for this year (December 2022 – April 2023). Your payment will provide valuable support to The Little Theatre and give you an excellent chance of winning a prize of £250, £100 or £50 each month.

Call The Little Theatre Box Office on 0116 255 1302 to join and make your payment.

# Panto Kids' Bar

Every year, our Panto Kids' Bar and our colouring contest are an intrinsic part of The Little pantomime experience. They're a key differentiator from our competition and our customers arrive year after year, queuing up to get involved in the magic.

## Can you help?

We need three people every performance to make the Kids' Bar work. Whether it be selling flashing lights and cheap sweets or helping and encouraging young people to complete the colouring competition.

If you can spare time to help on one or more performances, Jenny Harding will be delighted to hear from you... ("oh yes she will!")

**Get in touch via email [j.a.harding@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:j.a.harding@lboro.ac.uk) or call 0116 272 0767.**



# Trustees' Board Report

The Trustees met in both October and November, so this summary covers both meetings since Scene's last issue.

## Ticket sales

Jenny Harding (Treasurer) reported that whilst we were not reaching the target number of seats sold for each LDS play, current-year sales are higher than the lowest capacities last year (when we were coming out of lockdown), which was a good sign of recovery. Jenny also noted that the annual audit of our financial statements had commenced in November. The Board has agreed to a recommended rise in seat ticket prices by £1 for the 2023-24 panto, Puss in Boots. Even with this rise, it will still make our seats cheaper than any other Christmas show in Leicestershire.

## Little Theatre Guild

Mary Jones (Honorary Secretary) reported very good feedback from the delegates attending the Little Theatre Guild (LTG) annual conference which we hosted in October. Delegates had travelled from all over England. Curve kindly gave the conference a backstage tour of their theatre, with the host telling us there could be opportunities to share their facilities and that they would like to work closer together with us. Mary noted that LTG delegates experienced a lively improv session led by Tom Young, had a lovely meal hosted by our sponsor Café Roma, and closed the day seeing the final performance of Alphabetical Order, after which they commented on how wonderful the acting and set was.

## Brand awareness

Tom Young (Marketing and Outreach) was pleased to report an increase in our social media reach, which has increased six-fold, meaning 180k people are now seeing each of our posts and hearing about our theatre. On certain productions, this has led to an increase in ticket sales of up to 20% of capacity during show week. The brochure for our spring/summer season was recently sent to the printers and will be available soon. He reported some challenges with the low numbers attending the acting workshop recently, (which is run as improvised comedy and theatre training) and wanted to encourage others to join the group – this is in the studio on Thursday evenings (7pm-10pm) and free to members. *David Moore, Company Secretary*

## Member Profile



## Andy Crooks

Andy Crooks (also known as 'Sooty') is one of the Little Theatre's longest-serving members. He's our Technical Trustee and Chairman of the board. Quite onerous roles in addition to all the other things he does for the theatre – "dedicated" is what I'd call it! His association with drama started

over 50 years ago when he was in the sixth form at Gateway Grammar School. He worked on sound and lighting for school productions: on one of these, the reel-to-reel tape machine developed a fault and Andy had to spread its tape out all over the floor and feed it in to avoid stopping the show! His efforts were appreciated by one of his teachers, who happened to be Head of Sound at The Little, and Andy was invited to run sound for his first production here.

Andy also tried his hand at lighting in his early days, and that's where his passion has been ever since. He has designed for many plays, pantos, musicals and specials over the intervening years, with many great memories of these productions and the people who were part of them. He has name-dropped some current comedy stars who appeared on

our stage before they were famous: Michael McIntyre, Chris Addison, and Rob Beckett.

Away from the theatre, Andy's day job is as an independent funeral celebrant, conducting Celebration of Life services. Andy has two sons – his eldest, Alex, also works backstage at the theatre. Andy has four grandchildren, ranging from three to seven years old, and he enjoys spending plenty of time with them. *Jackie, Trustee for Membership*

**FUN FACT:** Andy got the nickname 'Sooty' when he was working with colleague Geoff Wooton whose nickname was Woody. The pair were christened 'Woody and Sooty'. This is actually quite helpful as we have several Andys working backstage and it can get very confusing!



# A Christmas Message

Here we are again: December, Christmas and panto season. It doesn't seem two minutes since the last one!

Deputy Theatre Manager Carolyn has been in Christmas mode since the end of October. Baubles are now beginning to make an appearance in the office. Rob – our man of all trades – seems to be in league with her as mince pies appeared in the office the other day.

The connections evening on November 8 had quite a good turnout again. We visited *Entertaining Mr Sloane* which was in final rehearsals. I went to see the finished production, even though I was a bit nervous as I knew it contained violence – it was very well done (not in your face), and I enjoyed what we saw.

We also popped into a rehearsal of *Aladdin* (oh, yes, we did!) and got to see Rose Bale playing Aladdin and Amy Hollis as Jasmine being put through their paces by

choreographer Caroline Walsh. I felt it was good to see our pantomime continuing the tradition of a girl playing the principle boy. We also observed from a distance as Mary Jones's *Bedroom Farce* cast did their read-through. We also went into the studio where John Ghent was conducting an audition for *Home, I'm Darling*.

On a serious note, our lovely theatre in the heart of the city, and the membership monies we pay to belong to it are very important. As you'll have read in the last issue of *Scene*, we need £1,500 per day to keep it running, therefore, please ensure you pay on time and by the date stated when you get your renewal notice. It helps us to plan for the future!

Hope you all have a Merry Christmas (not too merry) and a happy 2023.

Jackie, Trustee for Membership

## Obituary Susan Vials

May 18, 1944 - November 10, 2022

LDS members and friends will be greatly saddened to learn of the death of Sue Vials on Thursday, November 10.

Sue had already been in charge of props on a number of productions for Ratae Co-operative Players by the time she joined the props team at The Little for *Much Ado About Nothing* in 2004. For the next fifteen years or so, until the pandemic-enforced closure of the theatre, Sue worked on props for over thirty plays, including leading the props team for eight pantomimes. Everyone involved in those productions will recall her detailed lists, creativity, thoughtfulness, sense of humour and calm, professional approach, both in the rehearsal room and during show week. Every actor felt supported, knowing that props would always be in the right place at the right time... and that props should be *returned* to the right place, too!

Apart from props, Sue was Programme Editor for three dozen or more productions, typed up the pantomime scripts, and could always be relied on to fulfil any proofreading requests. She was a hugely efficient Chair of the marketing team, overseeing many aspects of the work that team does, including ensuring that the LDS brochure was prepared on time.

The last major project in which Sue was involved was the creation of the book to mark the centenary of the



Leicester Drama Society, *In Our Time*. She was part of the small editorial team, which, for almost four years, met every second week to trawl through the archives, read countless sets of minutes and plan the structure of the book. As it took shape, Sue's proofreading skills were put to very good use. On January 28 of this year, Sue was at the theatre for the Centenary Book launch, working – as always – to ensure the success of the evening.

Although we think of Sue at this particular time, we know that her husband Ron was there working alongside her at The Little Theatre. Together, they formed a wonderful team and we are hugely grateful for the contribution they have made to the life of Leicester Drama Society.

Sue's funeral will be held at 11:30am on Thursday, December 8 at Great Glen Crematorium, LE8 9DJ.  
Adam & Mary Jones

# Cast Announcements

## ALADDIN

Production dates: December 15, 2022 to January 8, 2023

### Cast:

Aladdin – Rose Bale  
Princess Jasmine – Amy Hollis  
Widow Twankey – John Bale  
Wishee Washee – Tim Stokes  
Abanaza – Simon Butler  
Empress – Karen Gordon  
Grand Vizier – Russell Webster  
So-Shy – Lydia Rushton  
Spirit of the Ring – Nikki Favell  
Genie of the Lamp – Joe Middleton

### Ensemble/Dancers

Tillie Foster  
Caoimhe Gavagan  
Georgina Hall  
Paige Norwood  
Olivia Phillips  
Lydia Rushton  
Eden Walsh  
Olivia York

### Creatives

Written and Directed by John Bale  
Co-Director – Keiran Whelan-Newby  
Musical Director – Paul Timms  
Choreographer – Caroline Walsh

## THE YORK REALIST

Production dates: February 6-11, 2023

### Cast:

George – John Moulding  
John – Joe Allen  
Mother – Sue Dale  
Doreen – Natalie Tebbutt  
Barbara – Victoria Flowers  
Arthur – Paul Beasley  
Jack – Joshua Thompson

### Creatives

Director – Nadine Beasley  
Scenic Designer – Gem Greaves  
Stage Manager – Lydia Clemence  
DSM – Mo Carberry  
Lighting Design – Jeremy Thompson  
Sound Design – Amanda Priestly  
Props – Emma Bamford  
Prompt – Andrew Thompson

## THE RAILWAY CHILDREN: A MUSICAL

Production dates: March 31- April 15, 2023

### Cast:

Mother – Amanda Sadler  
Father/Szczepansky – Michael Holland  
Roberta – Scarlett Hubbard  
Peter – Harvey Griffiths  
Phyllis – Ava Colford/Hollie Longley-Wilford  
The Old Gentleman – David Lovell  
Mr Perks – Tom Young  
Mrs Perks – Kat Lenthall

Colin Perks – Rhys Pettit/Harvey Clarridge  
Elsie Perks – Lilly Mcglynn/Ciara Daisley  
Ginger Perks – Hattie Moore/Elodie Dakin  
Patch Perks – Autumn Lisseman/Elika Clarke  
Cook/Mrs Ransome – Jane Towers  
Ruth – Rachel Draper  
Gert – Helen Vye Francis  
Dr Forrest/Engine Driver – Luke Evered  
Jim – Dylan Kelvey

### Creatives

Director – Leigh White  
Assistant Director – Joe Middleton

## HOME, I'M DARLING

Production dates: May 8-13, 2023

### Cast:

Judy – Caitlin Mottram  
Johnny – Gary Hunt  
Fran – Tracey Holderness  
Sylvia – Elaine Rook  
Alex – Becky Orton  
Marcus – Laurence Jackson

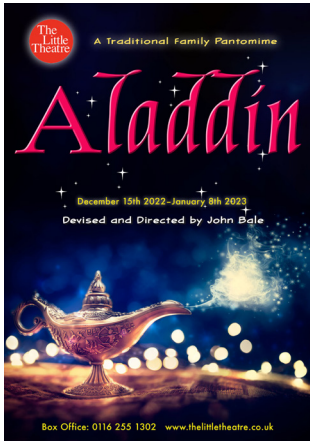
### Creatives

Director – John Ghent  
Set Design – Alec Davis  
Costume Design – John Bale  
Lighting Design – Jeremy Thompson  
Sound Design – Andrew Northcote  
Assisted By Dave Morris

Stage Manager – Russell Hughes  
Dsm – Victoria Kirk  
Props – Jon Worthy  
Prompter – Grahame Austen



# What's On This Month



## Aladdin

**December 15, 2022 – January 8, 2023**

*Dir. John Bale*

It's PANTO SEASON!

Let us take you on a magical carpet ride to old Peking as we follow the adventures of Aladdin and his magic lamp. Will the evil magician Abanazar outwit the mystic genies in his attempt to rule the universe? Will Aladdin ever win the hand of the beautiful princess? Will Widow Twanky ever get the Empress's dirty laundry clean in time? The answers to all these questions and more will be found in our sparkling, ever-popular pantomime.



# Coming Soon

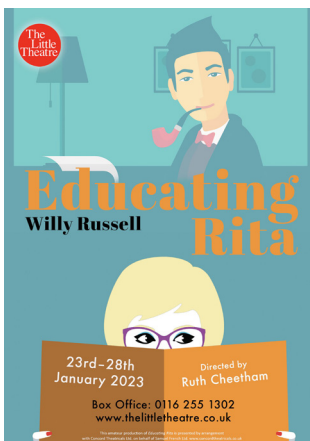


## The Same Faces: Improvised Comedy

LDS Fundraiser

**Saturday, January 14, 2023**

In this special fundraiser for LDS, The Same Faces deliver their unique blend of sketches, songs and one-liners – all made up on the spot and based on your suggestions! 100% of ticket sales are going to LDS, so don't miss this!



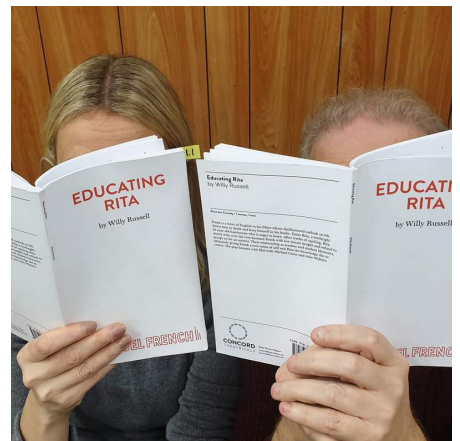
## Educating Rita

by Willy Russell

**January 23-28, 2023**

*Dir. Ruth Cheetham*

Rita has enrolled on an Open University course to discover herself and better her circumstances. Her tutor Frank is a frustrated poet and academic, an alcoholic, and less than enthusiastic about taking Rita on as a student. Yet he's fascinated by her take on life and realises she has potential.





# Recent Productions

## Entertaining Mr Sloane

Our first show in November was our production of *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, directed by Sally Bruton. This black comedy was written by Leicester's most famous playwright, Joe Orton. A dark character study of four troubled people, as a brother and sister compete for the affections of a psychopathic young man.

**"Well done all. Fantastic performance "**



**"Loved it this evening! Go see Leicester's most famous playwright!"**



**"Anything with Carlos Dandolo in is going to be quality"**



**"Went tonight. Enjoyed the show. Well done to all involved. Hope the rest of the week goes well."**



# Recent Productions

## 9 to 5: The Musical

We were delighted to welcome our extended family from Knighton Park Amateur Operatic Society back to the theatre. Their production of Dolly Parton's upbeat musical adaptation of 9 to 5 delighted audiences throughout the week, and a couple of new stars were born.

**"Excellent show I really enjoyed it. Well done."**



**"Saw it and would highly recommend Really enjoyed the show; I laughed. I clapped. I cheered."**



**"Absolutely loved this play last night. Excellent performances and a really thought-provoking premise; can't get it out of my head!"**



**"Amazing opening night!! Thoroughly enjoyable, recommend seeing it to anyone!! I loved it!"**

# A letter from The Little Theatre Guild

The Central Regional Conference of The Little Theatre Guild was held in our theatre on Saturday, October 29. We welcomed the central region secretary, Jackie Blackwood, and around twenty-four delegates from across the region, as well as members of Leicester Drama Society.

We were also pleased to be joined by members of the National LTG Committee: Jo Matthews (Chair), Nick Morley (Vice-Chair), Anne Gilmour (National Secretary) and Mike Smith (National Liaison Officer).

Jo was kind enough to send us the below letter. It was heartening to hear so many positive comments about our theatre and I would like to express my very sincere thanks to all those, who worked to ensure the success of the Conference.

**Mary Jones**

*LDS Little Theatre Guild Representative*

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Good morning, Mary and Adam,

Thank you so much for such a great day yesterday. It had all the elements that add up to a good conference and you both worked so hard to make it all happen.

I was very impressed with the way you keep your building spick and span, with everything in its place. It is seriously impressive. I love your production photos. You have a very talented photographer in your midst.

Anne-Marie Greene is a great speaker, I'm sure you'll agree. Everyone I spoke to said she'd make them think deeper, and they will have more conversations on the subject back at their own theatres.

The Curve is a fabulous building, and it was extra-special for me to be able to catch-up with Chris Stafford, who I worked with at Shakespeare's Globe. Julia Thomas was a great guide; I heard her say at the end that she wanted to come and see your theatre, so do follow that up and invite her! I know professional theatres have a history of being stand-offish with amateurs, and I'm sure The Curve is the same – but knowing Julia might be a way in and at the very least she should know more about you. She said The Curve is very good at encouraging projects; you never know she may think of something she could initiate with you.

It's the first time we've run the AGM and Open Forum over lunch, and I think it worked well and made for a more relaxed atmosphere. We might well repeat that. It helped a lot that your spread was easy to manage. No tricky dips!

Sharon Clement did a great job, especially as some of us are not au fait with social media, but we need to be, as it is, as she said, the future. No point in moaning that we don't get enough young people in our theatres if we don't engage with their world!

How lucky we were to have a lovely autumn afternoon to walk to the Richard III Centre, and it is very good indeed. I could easily have had a tea there and stayed for much longer.

I managed to catch the last of Tom Young's workshop – it was obviously great fun as we could hear the peals of laughter from outside! Do pass on our thanks to him.

The play was excellent – I always find it fascinating to look back at times I've lived through, and Paul Beasley's programme notes were so interesting. I have to say, I did feel for the props person, then saw that it was a team of three – I hope they shared the load each night after curtain down, and then – of course – the careful stuffing afterwards.

Thank you for everything!

**Jo Matthews,**

*National Chairman of The Little Theatre Guild.*





# MUSIC HALL AUDITIONS

*Music Hall is coming back to The Little Theatre in July 2023 for special fundraising shows produced by Last Word Productions.*

Show Dates: Fri 21st July 2023 7:30  
and Sat 22nd July 2023 2:30 + 7:30

If you would like to be involved, auditions will be held in The Haywood Studio at The Little Theatre on:

Sunday 15th January 1pm to 4pm

Tuesday 17th January 7pm start

Wednesday 18th January 7pm start

The following roles are available:

**Beaux and Belles:** (4 males and 4 females). Good singing voices essential.

**Soloists, Comedy Performers and Ensemble:** for comedy sketches and solo spots.

## Rehearsal Commitments:

Singing rehearsals will begin in March, initially on Sundays or 1 evening per week. Full company rehearsals will begin in mid-June.

**If you would like to audition or be involved further details are available from...**

Jenny Harding (Director) [jenny.harding@thelittletheatre.co.uk](mailto:jenny.harding@thelittletheatre.co.uk) or 0116 2720767

Mary Jayne Harding Scott (Musical Director) [mail@lastwordproductions](mailto:mail@lastwordproductions)

Martin Scott (Stage Manager)



# In The Spotlight

**Name:** John Bale

**Age:** 61

**Profession:** Head of Wardrobe and Costume Design for LDS

**Upcoming production:** *Aladdin*

**Noteworthy Productions:** I have been working as head of wardrobe and costume design at the LDS for just over 20 years (with a little break in 2020 because of you know what).

## What was the first theatre show you saw?

When I was at school in the '70s, I was taken to the old Phoenix Theatre (now the Sue Townsend Theatre) to see a production of *Toad of Toad Hall*. From that moment, I was mesmerised. I can still remember the smell and the audience reactions. "The smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd".

## What was the first theatre show you were in?

I didn't appear on the stage until I was 17 (other than school productions, notably as a robot, a Christmas cracker, and an evil queen! Good to see that some things don't change!). This was in a local panto in Countesthorpe as Idle Jack in *Dick Whittington*. Of course, it was!

## What's your favourite role you've played to date?

Anyone who knows me will know the answer to that one... Panto Dame, all the way. However, I have been lucky enough to play some fantastic roles with the LDS over the past 30 years. My favourites being C.S Lewis in *Shadowlands* and Osborn in *Journey's End*. Both very serious roles to counterbalance the panto mayhem.

## What's your dream role that you're yet to play?

Alas, it's passed me by... but I've always wanted to play Professor Higgins in the musical, *My Fair Lady*.

## What's the best theatre show you've ever seen?

I saw a professional production of *The King's Speech* on tour at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham a few years ago, and that blew my mind. And the London version of *Billy Elliot* is up there too.

## What's your favourite thing about The Little Theatre?

Striving for the best we can achieve in all departments. That wonderful feeling when you know you're on to something good... Most of the people here aren't too bad either!



## Tell us about your upcoming production!

I'm working on our annual panto, which this year is *Aladdin*, as director, writer, dame and costume designer. I just love panto and I'm in my element whenever I'm working on it. From creating the costumes with my fabulous volunteers in the wardrobe department via all the fun of rehearsals to when the production hits the stage, we are all flying high (with a little help from a carpet)! Come and join us to see what the fun, glitter and camaraderie is all about!





February  
6-11  
2023



**THE YORK REALIST**  
By Peter Gill  
Directed by Nadine Beasley

Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)

This amateur production of "The York Realist" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. concordtheatricals.co.uk



Directed by Mary Jones

**Bedroom Farce**  
By Alan Ayckbourn  
March 6-11 2023

Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)

This amateur production of "Bedroom Farce" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. concordtheatricals.co.uk

By Laura Wade  
May 8-13 2023  
Directed by John Ghent



**Home, I'm Darling**

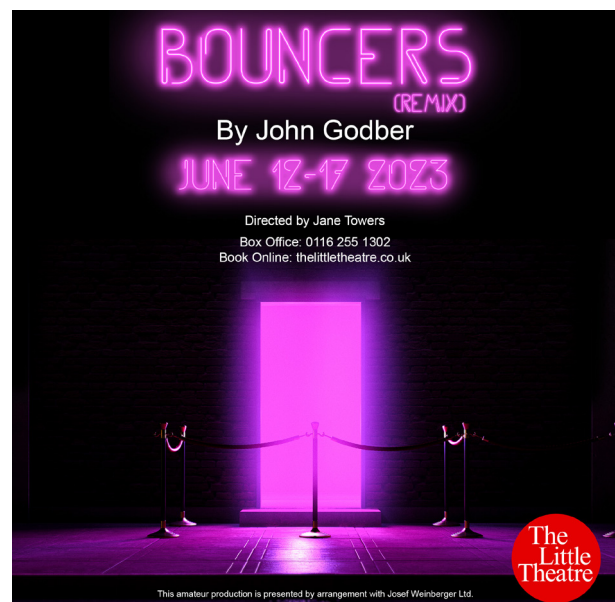
Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)

This amateur production of "Home, I'm Darling" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. concordtheatricals.co.uk

**BOUNCERS**  
(RE-MIX)

By John Godber  
JUNE 12-17 2023

Directed by Jane Towers  
Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)



This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd.

Leicester Drama Society's production of



Based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard  
Adapted for the stage by Lee Hall  
Music by Paddy Cunneen

**Shakespeare in Love**  
July 3-8 2023

Directed by Steven Illidge

Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)

This amateur production of SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. concordtheatricals.co.uk  
Originally produced on the West End by Disney Theatrical Productions & Sonia Friedman Productions, directed by Declan Donnellan, and designed by Nick Ormerod



**Puss in Boots**  
A Traditional Family Pantomime

December 14 2023 - January 7 2024

Devised and directed by John Bale

Box Office: 0116 255 1302 Book Online: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)





Visit our website for more information: [thelittletheatre.co.uk](http://thelittletheatre.co.uk)