

Bedroom Farce
Dir. Mary Jones



APRIL 2023

SCENE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY

The
Little
Theatre

Visit our website for more information: thelittletheatre.co.uk



Editor's Letter

What a wonderful month we have ahead of us with three exciting shows; our charming production of *The Railway Children: A Musical*, the chirpy *Anything Goes*, and enchanting *James and the Giant Peach*. I think these are just the right kinds of shows to give us those much-needed temporary escapes in what are tough times for many.

Last month, *Bedroom Farce* was a treasure trove of talent giving us much amusement and the *One Act Play Festival* was

a feast of genres. We gained some valuable coverage for our upcoming performances on Summaya Mughal's BBC Radio Leicester show. March also saw the LDS AGM, during which the society's new Code of Conduct was introduced – copies have been emailed to all members, so please do have a read. It also saw Jane Towers join the board (Trustee for the Studio), the re-election of Fran Harris (Trustee for Front of House), and the election of Simon Dickens to Honorary

Secretary Elect. Special thanks to Andy Crooks, Mary Jones, and Russell Hughes who stepped down from the board after years of dedicated service.

In this issue of Scene, we've covered the cast announcement for *Shakespeare in Love* – congratulations all, I hear this was a busy yet productive day where over 50 people auditioned. And I'm glad to hear acting workshops are returning soon with Michael King leading, who was last seen on our stage in *Black Coffee*.

Kerry

Contents

Editor's Letter	2	Connections	7
The Team	3	<i>Bedroom Farce</i> Review	7
200 Club Winners	3	Cast Announcement	8
Acting Workshop	3	<i>Bedroom Farce</i>	9
Member Profile	4	In The Spotlight	10
What's On	5	Upcoming Shows	11
Auditions	6		

The Team

Theatre Manager ► **Graham Muir**

Deputy Theatre Manager ► **Carolyn Young**

Head of Wardrobe ► **John Bale**

Premises Supervisor ► **Rob Mullins**

Scenic Workshop ► **Dave Towers**

Youth Theatre Leader ► **Andy Longley-Brown**

Deputy Youth Theatre Leader ► **Kate MacIntyre**

Leicester Drama Society Ltd Board of Trustees

Chair ► **To be appointed at next board meeting**

Minutes Secretary ► **To be appointed at next board meeting**

Company Secretary ► **David Moore**

Honorary Secretary Elect ► **Simon Dickens**

Technical Trustee ► **To be co-opted**

Treasurer ► **Jenny Harding**

Trustee for Facilities ► **Martin Scott**

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

Trustee for Marketing ► **Tom Young**

Trustee for Membership ► **Jackie Caunt**

Trustee for Outreach ► **To be co-opted**

Trustee for Productions ► **Joe Middleton**

Trustee for the Studio ► **Jane Towers**

Trustee without specific responsibility ► **To be co-opted**

Scene

Editor of Scene ► **Kerry Smith**

Design of Scene ► **Cross Productions**

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.

200 Club Winners

The winners of March 2023's draw:

1st	126 (£250)
2nd	132 (£100)
3rd	016 (£50)

You can join the remaining 200 Club monthly draw for a payment of £5. This payment will include you in the final draw for this year (April 2023); we will then be starting afresh from May. 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.

Revamped Acting Workshops

Acting Workshops will resume on Thursday, April 20, in the studio, led by Michael King.

Beginners: 6-7.30pm

Advanced: 8-9.30pm

Register interest with the office for further info and to book in. This should also be live on the website soon.

Non-members: £8 per session

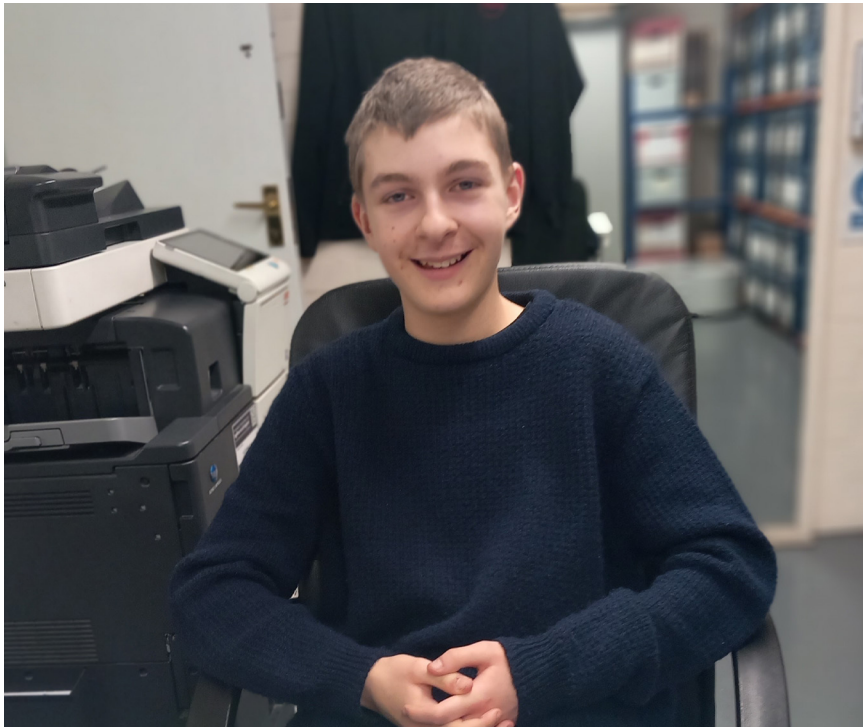
LDS members: £4 per session (50% discount)

Multi-buy discounts are available (five sessions for the price of four).

Limited bursary places are also available.

Member Profile

James Cowen



James Cowen will be playing the lead role in this month's youth theatre production of *James and the Giant Peach*.

Fourteen years old, James attends English Martyrs Catholic School, where he is studying GCSE Drama. He lives with his mum, dad and older sister, Anna.

When he was seven years of age, he became interested in drama and quickly joined the LDS youth theatre (YT). He told me he learned a lot of very valuable skills from Paul Phillips and is really enjoying his time with the current YT leader, Andy Longley-Brown.

James's previous roles include Harlequin, a carpenter, and Günther, an escapologist, in last year's YT production, *Pinocchio*. He tells me the comic escapologist was a part that he created himself for the circus scene of the show and that the

audience seemed to really enjoy it. Last year, he also played Michael Banks in a school production of *Mary Poppins*. James told me that he gets a lot out of coming to the youth theatre, particularly because they get a chance to show what they can do on the big stage.

A lover of music, James plays piano, organ, clarinet, and violin, as well as being a singer. He sings bass in Leicester Cathedral Choir, which he says helps him a lot with diction, projection, and performance in general. Additionally, James plays the organ at St Mary's Parish Church in Anstey once a month, and for school assemblies. Last year, he played the organ at Christ Church Oxford, as part of an evensong that his school liturgical choir, Schola Cantorum, participated in.

He also writes his own music and this year entered one of his

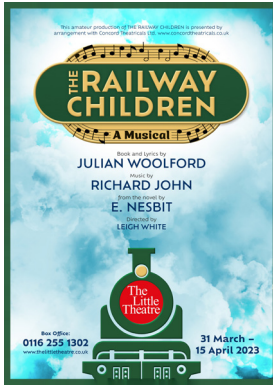
compositions into Leicester Musicfest, where he was awarded first prize in the under-18 Junior Composition Competition category.

James is really enjoying taking the lead in *James and the Giant Peach*, and obviously, with his name, he was made for the part! One of the reasons why he loves the youth theatre so much is the camaraderie with his acting peers. He hopes to go to university in the future to study Music Composition as he would like to write musicals. I really enjoyed learning about James and I know he's going to be one to watch out for in the future. Thanks to James for his time.

James and the Giant Peach is playing at The Little Theatre, April 28-29. Please come and support our talented youth theatre.

*Words by Jackie Caunt,
Trustee for Membership*

What's On This Month



The Railway Children: A Musical

By Julian Woolford and Richard John, based on the novel by Edith Nesbit

March 31 to April 15 An LDS Production

Directed by Leigh White

The much-loved tale of the three Victorian children (Roberta, Peter and Phyllis) and their mother, who are forced to move to the countryside after their father is wrongly imprisoned for espionage.

Mr Perks, the local stationmaster, introduces them to the wonder of the nearby railway. There, they meet an old gentleman, who may be able to help reunite the family.

Brought vividly to life in this musical adaptation, the show keeps the novel's spirit of humour, tension, adventure, and the final triumph of good over evil.



Anything Goes

Original Book by P.G. Wodehouse & Guy Bolton and Howard Lindsay & Russel Crouse.

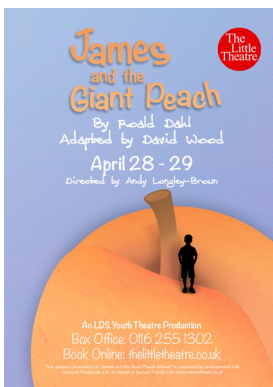
New Book by Timothy Crouse & John Weidman.

April 18-22 LOPs

Directed by Steve Elliott

The classic Cole Porter musical, from our extended family at Leicester Operatic Players.

All aboard S.S. American, where nightclub singer Reno Sweeney is sailing from New York to England. Her friend, Billy Crocker, has stowed aboard to be close to his true love, who is engaged to wealthy English aristocrat. Billy's boss and Wall Street tycoon, Eli Whitney, is also on board... Billy must avoid discovery at all costs. Aided by Reno and Public Enemy #13, Moonface Martin, Billy sets out to win Hope's heart through a variety of high-jinks, cunning disguises and even blackmail!



James & The Giant Peach

By Roald Dahl; adapted by David Wood

April 28-29 LDS Youth Theatre

Directed by Andy Longley-Brown

Our youth theatre production is an adaptation of Roald Dahl's much-loved children's tale.

When a peach in James' garden magically grows to gigantic proportions, he makes new and unexpected friends and sets off on an adventure like no other.

REMINDER

**£10
TICKETS**

FOR LDS
MEMBERS

Don't forget that LDS members are entitled to one ticket (per member per show) at the discounted rate of £10 for the five LDS plays in our spring/summer season. These are available to purchase within a month of the production.

THE PLAYS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS DISCOUNT ARE:

Home, I'm Darling (May 8-13)

Bouncers (Remix) (June 12-17)

Shakespeare in Love (July 3-8)

ALSO AVAILABLE ON THIS RATE IS:

Gypsy (KW Productions, June 20-24)

LITTLE THEATRE **OPEN** **AUDITIONS**

WHEN

Sun 21st May, 2023
10am

WHERE

The Little Theatre

Dover Street, Leicester, LE1 6PW

All auditionees will have the opportunity of taking part in a morning workshop session which will be led by David Cross. This will culminate in a short presentation in front of a group of Directors.

After a break for lunch, there will be individual auditions and a chance to show what you can do!

To book a place or find out more, please contact Adam Jones by e-mail on adamjones506@btinternet.com

Please note the closing date for applications is Friday 12th May

WWW.THELITTLETHEATRE.CO.UK

ARE YOU 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?

DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR PERFORMING?

ARE YOUR ABILITIES AS AN ACTOR BEING RECOGNISED?

DO YOU FEEL TYPECAST?

HAVE YOU AUDITIONED FOR PLAYS, BUT NOT YET BEEN CAST?

WOULD YOU LIKE THE CHANCE OF BEING SEEN BY A RANGE OF DIRECTORS?

Recent Productions

Bedroom Farce

In March, we staged a production of Alan Ayckbourn's *Bedroom Farce*, directed by Mary Jones. A comedy featuring four couples, set in three bedrooms, on one long night, the play tickled audiences throughout the week, with some memorable performances from the cast.



"Very inspiring work."



"We really enjoyed it... well done."



"Good to see some of our 'regulars' back on stage."



"Thoroughly enjoyed it. Well worth the trip down the M1."



"We had a super time. Folk who do not visit do not know what they are missing. Cast brilliant and Front of House staff so friendly."



"Absolutely brilliant, we loved it... another Little Theatre triumph."

Cast Announcement: Shakespeare In Love

The full company for LDS' production of Shakespeare in Love, directed by Steve Illidge, on stage July 3-8.

Will Shakespeare - Edward Turner

Viola De Lesseps/Thomas Kent - Nicole Collins

Kit Marlowe - Max Mayer

Queen Elizabeth I - Jane Durant

Henslowe - Ian Carr

Fennyman - Pete Bing

Wessex - John Moulding

Burbage - Graham Muir

Tilney - Michael Holland

Nurse - Susan Dale

Ned Alleyn/Mercutio - Tom Young

John Webster/Proteus - Abdullah Henly

Lady Roberta De Lesseps - Suzanne Barlow

Lambert - Natalie Tebbutt

Frees - Emma Bamford

Ralph/Nurse/Petruchio/Guard 2 - Ben Harris

Nol/Benvolio/Samson - Matt Zebrowski

Robin/Lady Capulet/Catling - Andrew Webster

Adam/Gregory/Benvolio/Servingman - Alex Thompson

Wabash/Boatman/Guard 1 - Jon Worthy

Sam/Juliet - Joe Allen

Peter/Tybalt - Luke Evered

Valentine/Burbage Heavy/Abraham - Daniel Creedon

Barwoman/Waitress - Charlotte Brown

Molly - Marina Themistou

Kate - Nikki Favell

Anne Hathaway/Mistress Quickly - Charlotte Wilson

Ladies In Waiting - Ro Jordan, Megan Goodman

Review: Bedroom Farce

March 6-11

Directed by Mary Jones

What a pleasure to leave the theatre with a lighter step. Directed by Mary Jones, Bedroom Farce was a delight. Very well acted and all totally believable. Staged during the week of International Women's Day, it felt appropriate as it showed up that men aren't as superior as they may like to think!

We begin with the older couple, Ernest (Adam Jones) and Delia (Karen Gordon). We knew who wore the trousers; Ernest didn't say much, but his demeanour said it all. Adam Jones is such a clever actor and I found myself waiting for him to come back on stage – a perfect foil for Delia. They were two people living together with totally different agendas.

Their dysfunctional son Trevor (Andy Longley-Brown), who really is everybody's nightmare 'friend' (the sort when you see him coming down the street, you lock all the doors and hide under the bed). Trevor is being pursued by his equally dysfunctional, lacking-in-confidence wife Susannah (Helen White).

Then we move to Nick (Jordan Handford) who has put his back out and is making sure his long-suffering wife Jan (Diani Gatenby Davies) knows it, as did the whole of the audience. I don't think I'll ever forget the scene in which he tried to retrieve his book, or when Jan tries to help him back into bed – so hilarious.

Finally, we have Kate (Rachael Humphrey) and Malcolm (Simon Butler) – the young couple setting up for married life in a dilapidated, fixer-upper home, who are hosting a housewarming party. Kate filled Malcolm with anxiety when she revealed she sometimes gets bored during intimate moments and thinks about varnishing the floorboards!

I don't think I'll ever get over the flatpack gift he'd bought Kate as a surprise. We've all been there, haven't we ladies, when a) it's all the instruction manual's fault, b) they've put in the wrong screws, or c) they didn't tell you, you need a Phillips screwdriver. The banging and cursing you hear off stage lead to complete comedy gold when you see the 'finished' article.

I thoroughly enjoyed this play and would've seen it again, if I'd had time.

Words by Jackie Caunt



Connections Report

We had a good turn out for Connections on February 28, and as usual, we went on a tour around the theatre. We visited 52 Up, for one of the last rehearsals of *Bedroom Farce*. We got to see Ernest (Adam Jones) and Delia (Karen Gordon) enjoying pilchards on toast in bed to celebrate their wedding anniversary (each to their own), albeit Delia preferred sardines. I have been in to see a few bits of rehearsals and am amazed how observant director Mary Jones is; whilst everything is going on, Mary picks up on little things which, when retried, make a difference you wouldn't believe.

We then went to 52 Down to see a rehearsal of *The Railway Children*, where director Leigh White was putting the children through their paces. It was lovely to see the kids enjoying themselves and so committed. It's looking good – hope you've all got your tickets.

When we eventually arrived in the auditorium, the fit-up for *Bedroom Farce* was in progress with Martin Scott, stage manager Russell Hughes and scenic designer Phil Newman all hard at work. Phil agreed to talk to the group about how he designs a set; preferring not to use a computer, but instead making an open 3D effect box. This is a scale mock-up of the stage with all the components built in miniature form. In effect, you can see exactly what it will look like. It's so aesthetic to touch and look at, and – for me – better than viewing on a computer. It was like

having a miniature doll's house. Phil explained that he has to take exits and entrances into consideration because it's a farce, and the action on the stage will eventually move faster. It's almost a shame that on the last night of the production, as soon as the audience has left the auditorium, the strike gang move in and pull it all down (I'd cry). At least Phil has the box to remember and keep.

Returning to the auditorium, Tim Neville and Stew Wale were working on sound design and Jenny Harding on lighting. Goodness, when you sit in the audience, you really have no idea how much work goes on to make the production all come together – and let's not forget: these folk are all volunteers. When you read this, the play will be done and dusted, so I hope you all managed to see it.

Whilst in the auditorium, Ali Levy and I saw a Remembrance Plaque attached to a seat in Row L. What a good idea to remember a loved one, who so enjoyed their time at the Little Theatre. If you are interested in a plaque, please inform the office and they can direct you to Jenny Harding and Martin Scott for more information.

The next Connections is on May 2 – please come and refresh your memory of the theatre and bring a friend! There's no obligation to join the membership. Just let the office know you're coming and we'll add you to the list.

Words by Jackie Caunt, , Trustee for Membership

In The Spotlight

Name: David Lovell

Age: 54, but my playing age seems to be 70+ these days!

Profession: College Manager

Upcoming production: The Old Gentleman in *The Railway Children* and Elisha Whitney in *Anything Goes*

Noteworthy: I was privileged to be the first voice on The Little Theatre stage when we returned after lockdown in May 2021 with *Spread A Little Happiness* – a proud, but sobering occasion, and a very great honour.

What was the first theatre show you saw?

My first theatre show should have been *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Palace Theatre, London, around 1975, but thanks to a bout of colic, my poor parents and I had to miss the show. The first show that truly resonated with me was one of Robert Mandell's outings of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* at Haymarket Theatre, Leicester in the 70s. I was in the Leicester Cathedral Choir and some of my fellow choristers were lucky enough to be in it. For quite a while, I claimed to have been in it too, but this was wishful thinking!

What was the first play/musical you were in?

In my school drama group in 1985, I played Arthur Dent in a bootleg production of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*. The budget meant we couldn't have afforded stage rights to perform it, so we just underlined the dialogue in the books and ran with it. I still have those defaced books. My first proper onstage experience was at Newcastle University in 1988, in the chorus of Gilbert & Sullivan's rarely performed, last collaboration, *The Grand Duke*. I joined because I quite fancied the Chairman, which was a challenge as I wasn't out at the time, and he

was most definitely straight! Thirty years later, in 2018, I returned to *The Grand Duke* playing the title character for Trent Opera at the Royal Hall, Harrogate, as part of the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival, for which I received a Best Male Performer nomination.

What's your favourite role you've played to date (and why)?

They don't get much better than Frank in *Educating Rita*. To work with the supremely talented Leeann Rana as Rita and spend almost the entire two hours on stage exploring this deeply flawed but equally inspirational character, was an experience I'll never forget.

What's your dream role that you're yet to play (and why)?

I once played Buddy in Sondheim's *Follies*, a tragi-comic role who has a bit of a breakdown in the middle of the show. I found I enjoyed the catharsis of 'losing my mind'. I'd love to try a good tragedy – anybody fancy doing *King Lear*?

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

The Producers, Theatre Royal Drury Lane, 2004. My (now) husband and I were staying in London for a few days and had seen all the publicity on the Underground with Richard Dreyfus and Lee Evans as Max and

Leo. When we read that Dreyfus was given the boot four days before the first preview performance and that Nathan Lane had been flown over to reprise his Max, we had to try to see it. We maxed out the credit card, but it didn't disappoint, even when Lane tripped over the set, ad-libbing about how his office seemed different, but couldn't tell how!

What's your favourite thing about The Little Theatre?

Community, opportunity, escape. It's the people who make The Little such a home-from-home. Whenever I'm at the theatre I know I'm part of a family who appreciates everything everybody does. The Little has given me the most amazing opportunities to play, have fun, and work with wonderful actors, directors and techies. Where else can I forget my day job and pretend to be a renowned phonetician, a doctor, an Oxford don, the boss of Ford UK, a police inspector, an alcoholic university lecturer, an over-blown amateur ham actor? Well...

Tell us about your upcoming production!

The Railway Children is a charmingly told story about coping with a missing loved one, and learning about fighting injustice. Then I sail away on the S.S. American, where *Anything Goes*, apparently!

At a glance

What's on this season

APRIL



Anything Goes

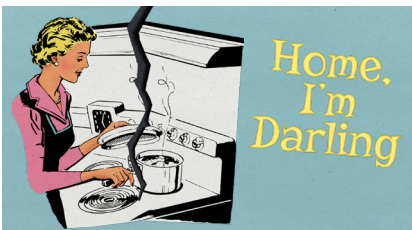
April 18-22

James and the Giant Peach

April 28-29



MAY



Home, I'm Darling

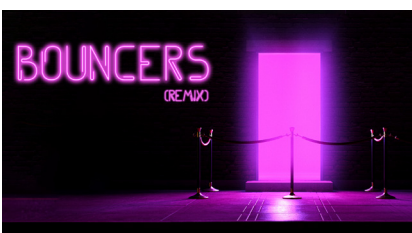
May 8-13

Ghost

May 16-20



JUNE

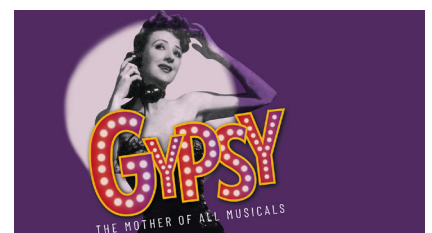


Bouncers (Remix)

June 12-17

Gypsy

June 20-24



JULY



Shakespeare in Love

July 3-8

Celebratory Centenary Old Time Music Hall

July 21-22





Visit our website for more information: thelittletheatre.co.uk