

Home, I'm Darling  
Dir. John Ghent

JUNE 2023

# 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

The Little is gearing up to release the next Autumn/Winter season brochure. We're particularly excited about this one as it'll be the first to feature new official photos that our marketing company Cross Productions and photographers Hitz and Yash Rao arranged with us. They look great! Keep your eyes peeled in the coming months to see if you can spot the photos anywhere else too!

Personally, I've very much

enjoyed the promo for *Bouncers (Remix)*, which will be on our stage from June 12-17. The marketing around it has cleverly used witty lines from the show, indicating that this should be a relatable one for anyone who's ever experienced a night out in the 90s.

We simply must congratulate KW Productions on becoming NODA award winners for their production of *Calendar Girls*, which received the 'Best Musical

2022' award in May. They were also named lockdown heroes receiving 'The Show Went On Award' for their online showing of *The Last Five Years* in 2021. Do you need any other reason to see *Gypsy* June 20-24!?

Finally, we're hoping for a good turn out on June 26 for the *Stags and Hens (The Remix)* auditions. Get in touch with Simon Dickens for more information.

Kerry

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# 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 ► **Amanda Sadler**

Trustee for Productions ► **Joe Middleton**

Trustee for the Studio ► **Jane Towers**

Trustee without specific responsibility ► **Diani Gatenby Davies**

## 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](mailto:hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk).



# Acting Workshops

The Acting Workshops will continue to be held in the studio, led by Michael King. The Summer Term will run until July 13, with no session on June 29.

**Beginners: 6.30-8.00pm**

**Advanced: 8.15-9.45pm**

You can book through the theatre's website.

Non-members: £8 per session

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

**Book 5 or more sessions together and get 20% off.**

Limited bursary places are also available. Call the office to discuss.



# Member Profile

## Simon Dickens

Simon is our society's Honorary Secretary, and co-ordinates our backstage team.

I went to Northampton School for Boys, the same school that former Doctor Who Matt Smith went to. As a teenager, I was heavily involved with the British Red Cross. During weekly meetings there and covering First Aid for events, I met my first girlfriend, Sarah.

As I finished my A levels and got my first full-time job in an accountants' office, Sarah moved to the west country and started her nurse training in Torquay. I got the results of my A levels, and they were not high enough for accountancy, so I had to find a new pathway. I missed Sarah and had no employment direction anymore, so I applied for nursing and got in at Sarah's hospital.

Sarah and I qualified in 1988 and 1989 respectively. After moving about a bit and Sarah's graduation as a midwife, we settled in Leicester

in 1993. We continued with the Red Cross and eventually had our own company doing the same thing. I worked in the operating theatre by day, basically ending up with an 8-6 Monday-Friday job, with occasional weekends and late shifts. This left my evenings free.

I was brought to the Little in 2000 by a really good pal, at a time when I was between jobs and looking for new friends. Having started out doing first aid and costumes, my friend took me to a rehearsal of *Arcadia*, introduced the cast and director to me and told me, "these will be your friends".

After joining the actor's workshop, I was inspired to audition for a small part and got in as Hupfer in *On The Razzle*. I really had no acting talent and knew little about stage craft, but I got the bug. I saw the DSM (Deputy Stage Manager) calling the show and

knew that was what I wanted to do. I set about doing everything I thought would teach me that role. I did some lighting, sound, and dressing, and then shadowed a couple of shows. My first DSM show was a lights-up-lights-down two-hander called *Same Time Next Year*. Since then, I have DSM'd more than 60 shows and SM'd about the same, I may not have acted more than bit parts, but I have met almost everyone now and have loads of friends. I am so, so lucky to have met you all.

My apprenticeship led me to directing; a different route than acting first, but I think I have earned my spurs. I have watched many directors and learned from their good and bad, I have had actors cry on my shoulder and shared in their triumphs, and I go to see at least 50 shows a year. I have directed studio plays, two main house shows, and now I embark on a show that I acted a minor part in and stage-managed years ago: *Stags and Hens*. Full circle.

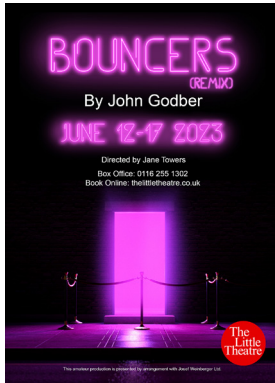
Our theatre is about teamwork and making friends. It is about learning skills and entertaining people. These are the principles I try to remember every step of the way. We are volunteers, and we are here to have a great time.

ENJOY THE SHOW





# What's On This Month

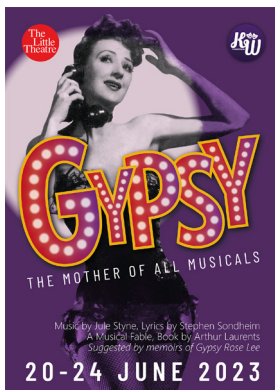


**Bouncers (Remix)** By John Godber  
**June 12-17** An LDS Production  
Directed by Jane Towers

It's a Friday night, wages have been saved and beers and Bacardi are on the agenda. We're gonna party like it's 1993... once we get past the doormen.

From lads on the pull and girls dancing around their handbags through to punks, Hooray Henrys, and stag parties, John Godber's much-loved comedy explores the inhabitants of northern nightclub Mr Cinders through the eyes of its four bouncers.

One of the most performed plays of the twentieth century.



**Gypsy**  
By Stephen Sondheim, Jule Styne, and Arthur Laurents  
**June 20-24** KW Productions  
Directed by Kieran Whelan-Newby

Following the success of Calendar Girls: The Musical, KW Productions is proud to present a fundraising production in collaboration with the Leicester Drama Society.

Gypsy tells the true, humorous and powerful story of the rise to fame of Gypsy Rose Lee – star of 1930s burlesque and her tempestuous relationship with her ambitious mother, Rose.

The 'King Lear' of musical theatre roles, Rose is a force to be reckoned with as she throws all love interests aside, ambitiously pushing her daughters June and Louise to stardom.

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:

**Bouncers (Remix)** (June 12-17)

**Shakespeare in Love** (July 3-8)

## ALSO AVAILABLE ON THIS RATE IS:

**Gypsy** (KW Productions, June 20-24)

**The Same Faces:Uncle Armando** (Sept 17)

**The Same Faces:Improvised Comedy** (Jan 13)

## VISITING PRODUCTIONS

**The Very Best of Tommy Cooper (June 3)** Daniel Taylor's one man show, focusing on Tommy's legendary comedy act.

# New Season Announcement

Our full Autumn/Winter brochure is set to be released by the end of June, but we wanted to give advanced notice to our members of the exciting line up we have over the coming months.

## September

A Murder is Announced by Agatha Christie.  
Directed by John Bale.  
Sept 11-16

I ♥ Musicals Concert – LAOS  
Sept 23

## October

Stags and Hens (The Remix) by Willy Russell.  
Directed by Simon Dickens.  
Oct 2-7

School of Rock – The IDOLS  
Oct 10-14

The Innocents by William Archibald.  
Directed by Diani Gatenby Davies.  
Oct 23-28

## November

Fallen Angels by Noël Coward.  
Directed by Jordan Handford.  
Nov 13-18

Nativity: The Musical – KPAOS  
Nov 21-25

## December

Puss in Boots – Devised and directed by John Bale.  
Dec 14 - Jan 7

## January

April in Paris by John Godber. Directed by Leigh White.  
Jan 22-27

Tickets for all these plays/musicals will be on sale soon –  
LDS members can get discounted tickets for plays when  
booked within a month of the show.

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# Cast Announcement

## A Murder is Announced

by Agatha Christie

**September 11-17, 2023**

Directed by John Bale

John was delighted to have had 47 people attend over the two audition dates and is excited to reveal the cast for the first play of our 2023-24 season.

**Miss Marple** - Jane Towers

**Letitia Blacklock** - Alexandra Elliott

**Dora Bunner** - Liz Kavanagh-Knott

**Julia Simmons** - Rose Bale

**Patrick Simmons** - Simon Butler

**Mitzi** - Diani Gatenby Davies

**Phillipa Haymes** - Rachael Humphrey

**Mrs Swettenham** - Cathy Rackstraw

**Edmund Swettenham** - Luke Collins

**Inspector Craddock** - Michael King

**Rudi Scherz/Mellors** - Abdullah Henly



## Review: *Home, I'm Darling*

After seeing part of this play in rehearsal, I'd got an idea in my mind of what it was going to be about, but I was totally wrong. *Pleasantly* so. This play was a triumph, brilliantly directed by John Ghent. From the very beginning, those who arrived in the auditorium early had a taste of what was to come from the images projected onto the stage's back wall. Depicting 1950s Britain, it was accompanied by era-appropriate music that recurred throughout the play, carefully chosen to reflect the drama on stage. The play begins in a 50s living room and kitchen – very upmarket, I thought – as Judy (played by Caitlin Mottram) came on stage in a very fashionable 50s style dress, complete with a pinny. She set about doing the usual housewife things, like setting the table and preparing a meal for husband Johnny (Gary Hunt), ahead of his return from work. It was all lovey-dovey and sweet. The play continued in this vein with Fran (Tracey Holderness) arriving with some shopping for Judy, which consisted of three cans of food. "That's a bit up to date," I thought. But we then get a surprise when – once on her own – Judy produces a laptop! We realise they are actually living in the modern day and the 50s aesthetic is part of their chosen lifestyle. As the play

develops, we realise that it's Judy's fantasy and everything around her is falling apart. It was brilliant and poignant. Issues from her childhood mean Judy cannot deal with the real world. At one point she's willing to sell herself to Fran's husband Marcus (Laurence Jackson) after he is suspended from work for alleged sexual misconduct, so she can afford to keep her fantasy going. Money is getting tight, so she needs a job again, but Judy's reluctant to step into the world. Judy's mother Sylvia (Elaine Rook) brings the 50s into perspective, reminding her daughter (who hadn't even been born in the 50s) that it wasn't all Doris Day and Rock Hudson. It was hard; there was still rationing, hardships and rebuilding from the aftermath of war, and marriage wasn't the best thing as women were still subordinate to their husbands. The delivery of this speech was brilliant, and Rook deserved the applause she received. There was not a weak spot on the stage. I do a stint with FOH on Thursdays, and an audience member asked me what repertory company this was; they were amazed when I informed them that everyone on stage (plus backstage staff) were amateurs. A big round of applause for the team.

Jackie Caunt

## Review: *James and the Giant Peach*

I was so impressed with the whole production of *James and the Giant Peach*. We got the lot, including a bit of rap, comedy and realistic mime. I loved the part where James was miming chopping the wood and his horrible aunts, Sponge and Spiker, were so awful to him – making him chop til he dropped; James Cowen's performance was so realistic that I felt quite sad for him. Another piece of mime that I thought was particularly well done was when Spider was spinning silk to help James and his friends bring the giant peach to safety. Even though Spider was spinning off stage and then passing the thread to the others, it was so realistic I began to see the thread despite it obviously not being there. James' friends Grasshopper, Ladybird, Earthworm, Spider and Centipede were all superb and the comic timing between the friends was so impressive. I loved the characterisations: Spider's movement was creepy, Grasshopper's little hops were all in keeping with the character, and Centipede was a bit suave and kept

reminding us he had 50 pairs of feet – even though our grumpy Earthworm kept insisting he only had 41 *pairs*. I was a bit surprised by this as I always thought centipedes actually did have 100 feet – I think she might have been jealous as earthworms can only really slither! When Grasshopper played her violin, it made everyone in the audience cringe, and soon, just a look from her friends was enough for her to reconsider. Last but not least, Ladybird, who – like all ladybirds – was charming and bubbly and kind. I thought the comic timing between the Captain and his first and second officers was very well done. I could go on and on as I felt all the main parts were amazing. The juniors – with their shark fins, fishes and flags – knew when to perform. The direction of these kids was brilliant and – from the juniors up – they all knew their places and we must thank director Andy Longley-Brown and deputy director Kate Macintyre for this wonderful production.

Jackie Caunt

# Audition notice

## Stags and Hens (The Remix)

*A comedy of wedding eve nerves by the author of Educating Rita*

**Audition Date/Time:** Monday 26, Wednesday 28 and Friday 30 June 2023  
7:00pm

**Production Dates:** October 2-7, 2023

**Director:** Simon J. Dickens

**Location:** Little Theatre (studio), Dover Street, Leicester

**Contact Info:** 07866 459 971 / [nomorespamforsimon@gmail.com](mailto:nomorespamforsimon@gmail.com)

**Description:** This exuberantly cynical play, set in 1978, combines the comedy of wedding nerves, club toilets and young love with bitter truth. Willy Russell portrays a young engaged couple unwittingly rolling up at the same seedy Liverpool venue for their stag and hen nights. Mayhem ensues for both parties.

Characters:	M/F	Age
<b>Linda</b> – Bride	Female	20-30
<b>Dave</b> – Groom, non speaking part	Male	20-30
<b>Eddy</b> – Best-Man with an ego	Male	20-30
<b>Robbie</b> – Friend	Male	20-40
<b>Billy</b> – School friend	Male	20-30
<b>Kav</b> – Must be able to draw		20-30
<b>Peter</b> – Previous boyfriend	Male	20-30
<b>Frances</b> – Best Friend	Female	20-30
<b>Carol</b> – Work Colleague	Male	Any Working Age
<b>Bernadette</b> – Bit bossy	Male	Any Age
<b>Maureen</b> – Emotional	Male	20-40
<b>Roadie</b> – Work Obsessed Southerner	Male	Any Working Age

Remember, playing age isn't your real age—it's what you can get away with!

If you would like to audition, please contact me for more information. If you cannot make the audition dates, please let me know and I will try to arrange an alternative date.

Please note that Friday 30th June is to be left available for recalls if needed.



# Audition notice

## The Innocents

A ghost story, based on the novel *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

**CHILDREN'S auditions:** Wednesday 12 July 2023 - 7pm

**ADULTS auditions:** Friday 14 July 2023 - 7pm

**Production Dates:** October 23-28, 2023

**Director:** Diani Gatenby Davies

**Location:** Little Theatre (studio), Dover Street, Leicester

**Contact Info:** diani.davies@thelittletheatre.co.uk

Characters:	M/F	Age
Miss Giddens	Female	25-35
Flora	Female	8-10
Mrs Grose	Female	40-60
Miles	Male	10-12

**Description:** *The Innocents* is a psychological thriller by William Archibald. A repressed woman becomes a governess for two children in a mysterious country house, becoming convinced that they are possessed by the spirits of deceased former staff members. The governess and cook are terrified, but the children welcome their visitations.

If you are unable to make one of the dates, please do get in touch as I'm happy to arrange an alternative date.

# Connections Report

May 2, 2023

It was lovely to see a good number attending once again. Beginning with the usual brief talk by Richard Payton, followed by David Taylor talking about Front of House (FOH). We have to congratulate David as he's just finished his training to become a FOH Manager, as has Teresa Jones who works in the Box Office. Ali Levy joined us to talk about acting and DSM work. We did the usual tour backstage, props, and workshop auditorium.

Next, we went into two rehearsals, the first being *Home, I'm Darling*, directed by John Ghent. Running May 8-13, this may be done and dusted by the time you read this, so I hope you all got to see it. Watching the rehearsal, I noticed how the actors had got all their words, knew their positions and it was going like clockwork. I also observed how the props people (Jon Worthy, Mo Carberry and Aditi Kotach) went about setting the stage and placing cups, saucers, and plates in position; I was amazed how unobtrusive they were but so efficient. I worked on props many moons ago with a previous drama group, and had forgotten how important it is to a play. When you think about it, these folk cannot switch off for the entire duration of the play.

I also observed Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) Victoria Kirk and Stage Manager Russell Hughes connecting to

every action and having to be aware of so many different aspects of the play. Finally, the prompt, Graham Austen (assisted by Jenny Page); I have also prompted before and found it quite intense because you have to be sure whether a prompt is needed or if it's just a natural pause or movement. Just imagine how tiring it is to read the same thing for seven performances and remain focused, but you also get a sense of achievement that you all got it right.

We then went into the early rehearsal stages of *Bouncers (Remix)* directed by Jane Towers, which will be performed at The Little June 12-17. The four guys cast in this play are Steve Feeney (playing Lucky Eric), Steve Finlay (Ralph), Steve Elliott (Les), and Allan Smith (Judd), and believe me, they all look the part – I certainly wouldn't pick a fight with any of them!

I don't know this play, so I grabbed a copy in the office and had a quick look through and got a bit confused – there's definitely only four actors in the play, and yet... No. I'm not going to tell you! Best to come and see for yourselves because I have a feeling it's going to be so funny. I'm definitely getting tickets to see how it all pans out.

Our next connections evenings – and final two for the current season – are on June 6 and 27, 2023.

Words by Jackie Caunt, Trustee for Membership

# Recent Productions

## Home, I'm Darling

In May, we staged our Easter production of *Home, I'm Darling*, directed by John Ghent.

Laura Wade's Olivier Award-winning comedy proved a hit with audiences – the clever play explored our expectations surrounding relationships, what it takes to make them work, and the dangers of living in a fantasy world. It was also very funny!



**"Only two words for this production: Just brilliant."**

**"Fantastic production! Well done to everyone."**



**"What a brilliant production the actors were superb and we loved the set and posters at the beginning."**

**"Brilliant production... such talented actors. Have a wonderful week... Hope all your audiences for the rest of the week are as appreciative as we were tonight. Well done to everyone involved... On and off stage... So much to do!"**



**"Wow, I have just been to see this production with 2 friends. I cannot explain how much we enjoyed 'Home, I'm Darling'! The acting, cast, and music were superb! It was funny, refreshingly poignant, very clever and a little naughty OMG, we loved it!"**



# Ghost: The Musical

Last month, we were delighted to welcome our extended family at Wigston Amateur Operatic Society (WAOS) back to the theatre for their production of *Ghost: The Musical*, directed by Sarah Varnam. This heartfelt production was one of the more emotional stories to grace our stage this year, featuring great chemistry between the two leads, strong vocal performances, and contemporary staging.



**"This was sooooo good! You're all amazing! Loved every minute!"**



**"Wow, what an outstanding production. Congratulations everyone."**



**"I was gripped by this performance. EVERYTHING was perfect, clever and I didn't want it to end"**



**"I don't want to pick anyone out especially. There wasn't a weak link. It was on my mind when I went to sleep and I'm still reliving it."**



**"I was absolutely blown away by the show. EVERYTHING was incredible. It is years ago that I watched the film and I'd even thought that it was Molly who died!"**



**"Went last night, it was a brilliant performance by everyone. Moved me to tears and laughter. Absolutely fantastic"**



# In The Spotlight

**Name:** Steve Elliott

**Age:** 64

**Profession:** Just retired!

**Upcoming production:** *Bouncers (Remix)* by John Godber

**Noteworthy:** I am very proud of being a guest soloist for the Bardi Wind Orchestra at the De Montfort Hall for four years. I've been paid by the BBC! And I reached the televised section of Channel 4's *Musicality*

## What was the first theatre show you saw?

I was thirteen and saw the play *Gaslight*. I went with my mother to see it at Leicester's Haymarket, and I have never forgotten the chill down my spine as Mrs Manningham screamed with every bit of reality in her body! Mrs Manningham was played by Cyd Hayman who was in the original TV series *Manhunt*, back in 1969.

## What was the first play/musical you were in?

*South Pacific*. I was 42 years old and had just started some singing lessons. My singing teacher suggested I audition for the Loughborough society, LAOS. I was cast as Emile, the lead male role, and I loved it! It was an incredibly lucky opportunity to be given, which sparked a desire in me to do more. It also lit the fire in me to direct.

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

I am equally split between two roles. Without any doubt, playing the part(s) of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde in the musical *Jekyll & Hyde* was an amazing experience. The role is played with huge passion in bucketsful of love, anger and sadness. Plus, it's a physically

demanding part and a huge sing. The other role is as Jefferson Steel in the play, *A Bunch of Amateurs*. The role that spins from being the most unlikable, bombastic, egotistical character, to one that has empathy, love, tenderness and is incredibly lovable. A great challenge! I enjoyed them both immensely, and I have too much fondness for them both to make one a winner!

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

It has to be Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*. The role has immense strength, empathy and desire. Truly a dream come true to play!

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

*Les Miserables* in London, 2005. The first professional musical

I had ever seen. I cried and laughed, a lot! I was in awe of the incredible talent I witnessed on stage... so much so that I literally sat in complete shock for a good two minutes after the first act.

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

The smell of the stage and the paint shop! It has a magic about it.

## Tell us about your upcoming production!

It is well worth coming to watch! It's *Bouncers* which is concerned with the drinking culture of the working classes, and the violence and power play that is a part of the bouncers' profession. Depicting the extremes of sexual relationships, exacerbated by drinking, it's one of the most performed plays in the UK.

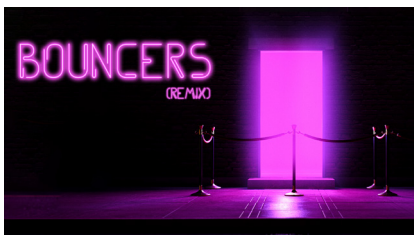


# At a glance

## What's on this season

### JUNE

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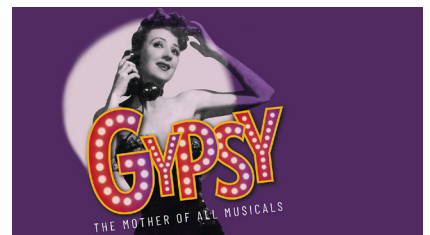


#### **Bouncers (Remix)**

June 12-17

#### **Gypsy**

June 20-24



### JULY

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#### **Shakespeare in Love**

July 3-8

#### **Celebratory Centenary Old Time Music Hall**

July 21-22



## Coming this September

# A Murder is Announced

A Miss Marple mystery, adapted by Leslie Darbon

Directed by John Bale







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