

Fallen Angels
Dir. Noël Coward

DECEMBER 2023

SCENE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY

The
Little
Theatre

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



Editor's Letter

I always enjoy Christmas at The Little, as the decorations come out and a vat of glitter is poured into the auditorium for panto season. It was wonderful to help jump-start the festive season this year, by appearing on stage in *Nativity!* with KPAOS last month.

I'm very excited to see this year's pantomime, *Puss in Boots*. The cast have already moved

to the stage and, as usual, the costumes look incredible. Well done to John and the team!

We're still seeking volunteers to run the kid's bar during panto. It'll be a fun experience and commitments can be flexible to suit your Christmas plans. We also need more people willing to help out by staffing the main bar and front of house – more information

about both needs on page 5.

Also, the new spring/season brochure is now available to pick up from the theatre, and in flyer boxes across Leicestershire. There's so many great shows to look forward to in the new year!

Have a very Merry Christmas – I want everyone to sparkle and shine!

Kerry

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Scene

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Contributions to Scene are invited. To ensure your submissions are used, please send them in by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next month's issue. 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 November's draw:

1st Prize (£250) – 8
 2nd Prize (£100) – 2
 3rd Prize (£50) – 79

Join the 200 Club for a chance to win upto £250 every month

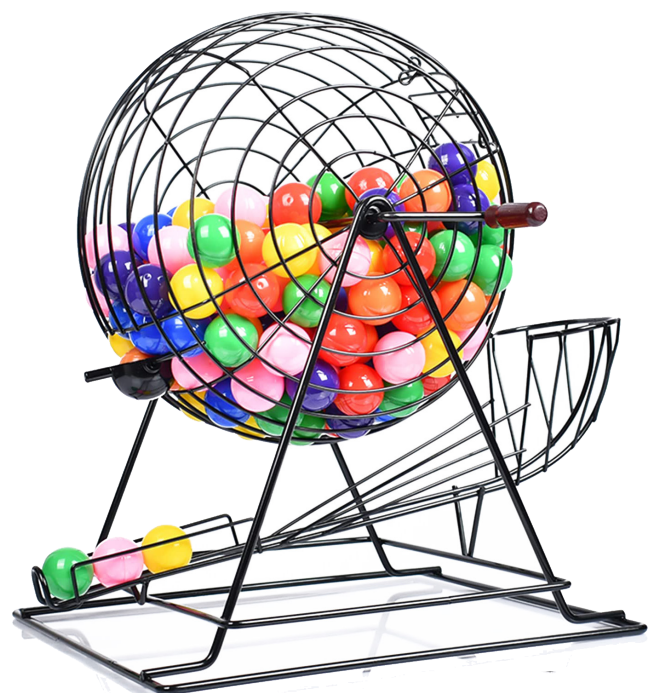
The Little's big cash-prize lottery

Donate £25 to The Little Theatre to enter the remaining 5 monthly lottery draws for 2023-24.

The next draw takes place at the end of December

Call us to enter:

0116 255 1302
hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk
thelittletheatre.co.uk



Member Profile

Tom Young Words by Jackie Caunt

Introducing Tom Young, a relatively recent addition to the talent at The Little Theatre, a Leicestershire lad, and also the Trustee for Marketing – a very onerous, voluntary role.

Tom attended Robert Smyth School in Market Harborough, where he also worked for a year, before going to the University of Northampton. He studied for a BA in Creative Writing, and Tom says he learnt the skill of creative writing but didn't learn any actual information to write about – I think this is a bit self-effacing on Tom's part.

In 2008, whilst at university he joined an improv troupe called Indescriptable, though Tom feels this was a terrible name compared to the previous group, Scared Scriptless!

A year later, Tom started doing stand-up comedy, which would take him all over the UK, as well as New York and Dublin. I asked Tom about his experience in New York, and he said, "I'm an international comedian, provided you don't dig into the details too much..." He informed me he'd done a gig in the basement of a Mexican restaurant to just six other comedians. Scary! Brave or what?

Tom also told me that he performed a new stand-up show in every Leicester Comedy Festival from 2011 to 2018 (the final one being a greatest hits, that's now on YouTube), and also did improv in every festival from 2009 to present day (excluding 2021 – the less said about that year the better).

When Tom finished university in 2011, he had already joined another improv group, called Unidentified Flying Improv, which he eventually left to form his own group, The Same Faces (alongside fellow LDS member, Allan Smith, who is now in Tom's one-act play). The group has performed regularly in and around Leicester

and Northampton since 2013. They have also gigged across the country and have been two-time award finalists at Leicester Comedy Festival.

I caught The Same Faces production at The Little Theatre earlier this year – it is very clever. You need to have a good imagination, good word association, and be able to think very fast on your feet. They'll be back at the theatre in January 2024, for anyone who's not seen them.

Tom also co-founded the British Improv Project in 2015 which is a biannual conference for UK improvisers, with the aim of boosting the standard, profile and perception of improv in Britain.

Gigging and teaching workshops were Tom's main source of income for over a decade, during and after university. Tom now works for Cross Productions as a feature writer, writing articles for Niche Magazine and various other bits of marketing copy.

Tom says his involvement at the theatre was accidental. He was never interested in becoming a straight actor until the pandemic shut down his whole career and he was looking for something creative to do. His then-girlfriend dragged him into The Little's community, starting his acting career in the post-pandemic production of *Chariots of Fire*. Since then, Tom has also had fun parts in *Black Coffee*, *The Railway Children* and *Shakespeare in Love*. Tom is currently directing a one act play,



Breaking and Entering, in the studio, and you will also be able to see Tom in *The Secret Garden*, which will be on Little's stage over Easter 2024.

Tom grew up in a loving family with Mum, Dad, and younger sister, Kathryn, who recently got married. He suspects his theatrical side came from his Grandad, who grew up doing scout pantos in Liverpool. He used to joke to Tom, "I played the ugly stepsister – it took them *hours* to do my make-up." He was joined in those productions by two mates who went on to become professional actors: Norman Rossington (the only man to be in films with both Elvis and The Beatles) and Kenneth Cope (*Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)*).

Tom's Grandad took him and his sister on their first-ever trip to the West End to see Norman playing Maurice in *Beauty & The Beast*, and they got to go backstage after and visit Norman in his dressing room. Tom says it feels quite special to him that *Beauty & The Beast* is coming to The Little Theatre in 2024, as it feels like he's come full circle.

Thank you, Tom, for letting us into your world.

Obituary:

John F. Hyman (1945-2023)

Fred Hyman joined LDS in the 1990s and became one of two doormen whose role was to open the foyer doors and welcome patrons.

Occasionally, Fred also worked backstage on fit-ups and for a while looked after the theatre's furniture store at Adelaide Buildings in Belvoir Street. Later, he completed a first aid course and joined the rota of first aiders attending performances.

Fred was quite a character but did not make friends easily. However, if you got talking to him about theatre, literature, or classical music – particularly opera – he showed an extensive knowledge and love for all. Sadly, after his wife died, Fred found it difficult to cope with life on his own and eventually this caused some difficulties for him at the theatre. But Fred loved The Little Theatre and gave it his best; he will not be forgotten.

Words by Lisa Thirlby

FOH Help Needed for Panto!

Calling All Members

Panto is on the horizon, with *Puss in Boots* making her way to Leicester. We need help on Front of House to ensure that Puss arrives safely on our stage.

If you feel you can help by ushering folk into the auditorium, selling ice creams or programmes, and generally being the welcoming face of our theatre, please get in touch with Hilary Cooper, Pat Thompson et moi, Jackie Caunt.

You can reach me by email jackie.caunt@thelittletheatre.co.uk and I will pass your details to Hilary and Pat.



Panto Kids' Bar Help Wanted

Each year during panto, we convert the studio into a special space where families can sit, children can enter the colouring competition, and we sell light up toys and pocket money sweets.

We need 3 people to staff the Panto Kids' Bar each evening (a mixture of duties, including making people welcome, selling merchandise, keeping crayons sharp and facilitating the colouring of pictures). Colouring is very popular and highly competitive!

If you can help out – or would like more information – please email jenny.harding@thelittletheatre.co.uk.

Connections Report

Words by Jackie Caunt

November 7, 2023

Goodness how time flies – Tuesday Connections again! We had five folk turn up, three of whom have joined the membership.

After making introductions and learning a bit about our new members, we took them to 52 Down where a dance rehearsal for panto was in progress, ably led by choreographer Caroline Walsh. I have to tell you; I made a complete faux pas and asked them if this was their first rehearsal. As they were completely synchronised and amazing, I should've realised they were further along; I can only blame my having just returned from holiday. I think my mind and body clock were still on another continent.

These dancers were so talented, I suspect they *could* have done these routines on the first rehearsal. I am always in awe of dancers, and how they use the space, create patterns, and move so gracefully. I love tap dancing, and I joined a tap-dancing group as a child, but gave it up at seven years old. I do admire the dedication these dancers have put into their art over the years.

We then went to 52 Up, where

the final stages of *Fallen Angels* (directed by Jordan Handford) were taking place. In the short excerpt we saw, Julia (played by Cathy Sullivan) and Jane (Ranata Maynard) – upper-class ladies with their lah-de-dah accents, discussing men (not always kindly) – and Saunders the maid (Charlotte Emily Beaver), who seemed to be the only one with any common sense. I am so looking forward to this production, and it gave our potential new members a good laugh. I hope you got your tickets for this one as it will be done and dusted when you read this (Ed: Jackie's review is on page 9).

We continued our journey, and David Taylor took the group down to the prop room which is a bit like Aladdin's cave – fortunately, he didn't have to use any magic words to get them out of there. We then ventured into the studio where one of the final rehearsals for a one-act play, *Breaking and Entering* (directed by Tom Young), was in progress, and again when you read this it will be done and dusted. One of our group bought five tickets for it the following morning!

Finally, we went up to the

auditorium and were invited on stage by trustee and company secretary, David Moore. He was designing the lighting for *Fallen Angels*. The amazing set was created by Gem Greaves. I have great admiration for set designers and all the work they put in before the show, only to take it all down after the run, as if it never existed. But there's always another show to get ready for, and in this case, it'll be KPAOS's sold-out run of *Nativity! The Musical*.

Our next Connections is on December 5, where we will see more rehearsals for our panto, *Puss in Boots*. Hope you all have your tickets! If not, you'd better hurry, as a well-known phrase involving "hot cakes" comes to mind.

CONNECTIONS DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

December 5

January 16



What's On



Puss in Boots A traditional family pantomime
December 14, 2023 to January 7, 2024 An LDS Production
Devised and directed by John Bale

When the miller's sons inherit the family mill – along with all its pets and debts – they could never have imagined all the adventures that await them. Queen Camilla is feeling the pinch too and must cook the Princess's birthday cake herself. What could possibly go wrong? However, never fear, as the Good Spirit of Catland is on hand to steer their fortunes beyond anyone's wildest dreams. With the aid of a pair of magical boots, the Millers' faithful moggy is transformed into a very clever, walking, talking cat. Our very own Puss in Boots! Surely, not even the Evil Wizard can stand in their way? Join us as Puss talks the talk and walks the cat-walk.



The Same Faces: Improvised Comedy
January 13, 2024

Friends of the theatre and Leicester's longest running improvised comedy group, The Same Faces, return to our main stage following last season's successful debut. The two-time Leicester Comedy Festival award finalists deliver their unique blend of sketches, songs, and one-liners – all made up on the spot and based on your suggestions! If you've ever seen Whose Line Is It Anyway?, you'll know what to expect. This is The Same Faces' flagship show that's been running for close to 11 years; come and enjoy this night of improvised hilarity!



April in Paris By John Godber
January 22-27, 2024 An LDS Production
Directed by Leigh White

Al and Bet have been married for several years and the cracks in their marriage are beginning to show. Al has lost his job and loves to paint. Bet works in a shoe shop, and dreams of a better life. When Bet wins a romantic night for two in Paris, the city of love, Al wonders who she'll take with her. Resigned to taking her husband, Paris reignites their relationship as never before...

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.

ELIGIBLE FOR THIS DISCOUNT ARE:

The Same Faces (January 13)

April in Paris (January 22-27)

The Good Life (February 5-10)

Dial 'M' For Murder (March 4-9)

Cast Announcements

Dial 'M' For Murder

by Frederick Knott

March 4-9, 2024

Directed by Mary Jones

Sheila Wendice: Amber Goddard

Max Halliday: Sam White

Tony Wendice: Andy Longley-Brown

Captain Lesgate: Paul Large

Chief Inspector Hubbard: Adam Jones

Set Design: Gem Greaves

Lighting Design: Martin Scott & Jenny Harding

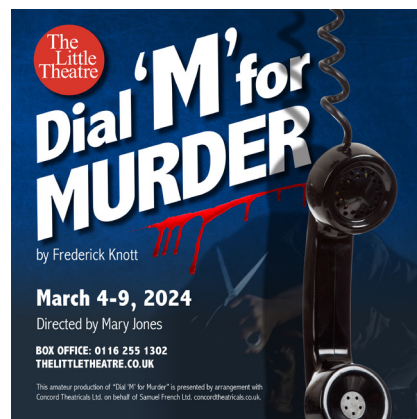
Sound Design: Stew Wale

Costume Design: John Bale

Stage Manager: Russell Hughes

DSM: Andy Mear

Prompt: Sandra Brown



The Secret Garden: The Musical

by Marsha Norman & Lucy Simon. Based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

March 22-27 & April 3-6, 2024

Directed by Keiran Whelan-Newby



Mary Lennox – Olivia King

Lily – Rose Bale

Archibald Craven – Keiran Whelan-Newby

Dr Neville Craven – Russell Webster

Colin Craven – Edward Lander / Harry Woodward

Dickon – Simon Butler

Martha – Kerry Smith

Mrs Medlock – Karen Gordon

Ben Weatherstaff/Major Holmes – Martin Bell

Captain Albert Lennox – Tom Young

Rose Lennox – Olivia Phillips

Lieutenant Wright – Luke Evered

Mrs Claire Holmes – Karen Hamilton

Mrs Winthrop – Amanda Sadler

Alice – Scarlett Hubbard

Fakir – TBC

Ayah – TBC

Director: Keiran Whelan-Newby

Musical Director: Grace Bale

Musical Supervisor: Paul Timms

Set Designer: Gemma Greaves

Costume Design: John Bale

Stage Management: Simon Dickens

Lighting Design: Alex Crooks assisted by Andy Crooks

Sound Design: Tom Brooks

Props: Amy Crighton

Prompt: Liz Kavanagh



Audition Notice

Table Manners

Production Dates: June 10-15, 2024

Director: Russell Hughes

Location: Haywood Studio, The Little Theatre, Dover Street, Leicester

Contact Info: russell.hughes@thelittletheatre.uk or 07922 979 801

Description: A dysfunctional family gathering for the weekend reunites three siblings and significant others in the kitchen family home with farcical consequences.

Audition Date/Time: Tuesday 6th & Friday 9th February 2024

Roles: As far as age goes, I'm looking at a late 20s to 50s. This is not set in stone, but everyone needs to be roughly in the same age bracket (or at least believable as a family group).

| Character | Gender | Description |
|-----------|--------|--|
| Annie | Female | The youngest sibling, stay at home carer for 'mother' |
| Tom | Male | Annie's neighbour and 'hanger on', an indecisive vet |
| Sarah | Female | Annie's highly strung sister-in-law, would rather be anywhere than here |
| Reg | Male | The middle sibling, married to Sarah for 8 years |
| Ruth | Female | The oldest sibling, married to Norman who she seems to view as more of an inconvenience than anything. |
| Norman | Male | Ruth's husband, Annie and Reg's brother-in-law and the cause of an awful lot of trouble |

If you intend to audition, please let me know. If you can't make the audition date but would still like to, again, please let me know and we'll sort something out.

Review: Fallen Angels

I came to see this play on the Wednesday and thoroughly enjoyed it. Now and again, I think you need to watch something really daft to take your mind away from everyday things, and this did that for me.

The cast were superb, and the play was well-directed by Jordan Handford. It gave me a real feeling of the 20s. I particularly enjoyed the interaction between Julia (Cathy Sullivan) and Jane (Ranata Maynard), both of whom had had pre-marital love affairs with the same man, Maurice Duclos (Steven Feeney), a suave, romantic Frenchman. Ooh la la!

Both the ladies were very bored with their English husbands – both "stiff-upper-lip" types, very

convincingly played by Freddie Dobrijevic and John Moulding. Throw the 'force de la nature' maid, Saunders, into the mix (brilliantly played by Charlotte Beaver) and most of the time, you could have been forgiven for forgetting who the mistress of the house is, as Saunders knew everything about everything. She even told Julia's husband, Fred, to only take his irons to the golf course as he wouldn't need the rest on the short fairways. Saunders could also speak French, sing like a songbird, and play piano to a standard much higher than her mistress. We soon learn that Saunders



had had a lot of different jobs!

I love the way Noel Coward writes – so much innuendo and sometimes *he gives you one* when you least expect it. As one patron said, this play probably wasn't one of Coward's best, but he still enjoyed it. In fact, I had a lot of folk telling me how much they enjoyed it.

Jackie Caunt

"I don't know, it's a mystery!"

Here at the Scene editorial offices, we've been literally *inundated* with a letter...

We've been asked to help solve the mystery of identifying one of our alumni, who is currently working at the Gillian Lynne Theatre in London.

If you can help, please send in your answers on a postcard. Alternatively, email hello@thelittletheatre.co.uk with the subject line, "Mystery Solved".

Dear Kerry

I have a bit of a mystery which I hope might be resolved, with your help, via 'Scene'.

The source of the mystery is a WhatsApp exchange with an old work colleague of mine. He and his wife were in London and had been to the Gillian Lynne Theatre to see Crazy for You. Extracts from his messages are reproduced below (after some minor tweaking) and are, I hope, self-explanatory.

"Just back from the Gillian Lynne Theatre (on Friday, October 20). Had been talking to an usher/actress-in-waiting. She said she was from Leicester which led to a conversation about her parent's involvement at the Little Theatre. She knew you, but I didn't like to ask her surname. Famous as ever!

"The lady said both parents worked at The Little Theatre and she had recently finished drama school, if that's a clue?

"Do ask, because her parents should be really proud. It is a family with a lot of history at The Little Theatre and I think her parents were on the board of trustees when you were. She worked there as a junior too.

"She was definitely at drama school rather than uni; about five and a half feet tall, long dark hair, and quite petite."

I had a couple of ideas, which I ran by Lisa Thirlby, but she was able to discount them.

I would love to be able to tell our friends that we'd been able to solve the mystery.

So, can someone help, please?

Regards,

Tim Watson

Review: Nativity!

Wow, wow, and WOW!! What a show! To say I enjoyed every minute would be an understatement. And in the words of Strictly's Craig Revel Horwood: Ahh. May. Zing!

Let's start at the beginning. We were introduced to three graduates from the arts and drama college: the very ambitious, Jennifer (Grace Bale), who takes herself off to America to claim fame and fortune.

Then there's primary school teacher, Mr Maddens (Daniel Rowberry) who's in love with Jennifer, and finally, the very-full-of-himself, private school teacher, Gordon Shakespeare (Alex Thompson).

All were very believable and quite lovable – ok, perhaps not Mr Shakespeare, who seems to think it's ok to portray Herod, backed up by his class, and all dressed in punk rock outfits, while looking for the

prophesised baby boy.

Rushing onto the stage were the children, and what a joy they were! I got to see team 'Shine', but I'm reliably informed team 'Sparkle' were just as brilliant.

Then last but definitely not least, we meet Mr Poppy. What can I say to describe him? Childish and irresponsible, and of the belief that it's ok to send a child down a 23ft death slide in Coventry's cathedral ruins! Irrepressible, undeniably lovable, and a little bit poignant, but nothing gets Mr Poppy down for long. Played by the brilliant Ed Turner, he has the remarkable ability to engage with

the kids.

What I enjoyed most about this show was the enjoyment of all the performers, which spread to the audience. This show was fast-paced and full of energy.

The lighting and set were brilliant, as was the orchestra. I would've loved to see this again but alas, it was sold out – sad for me, but amazing for the theatre. I would also like to make a special call out to Autumn Lisseman, who played Evie/Star - such a talent!

Finally, I would like to say, wouldn't it be fantastic if we all had a Mr Poppy in our lives.

Jackie Caunt



Recent Photos

Fallen Angels

Our November play was Noël Coward's *Fallen Angels*, directed by Jordan Handford. This slick comedy was a story of bored and uninspired housewives, who long for the kind of excitement their husbands are long beyond providing... but a shared former lover and French lothario may be able to help.



"Thoroughly enjoyed this - well done everybody."



"Acted extremely well!"



"A brilliant performance- really enjoyed it."



"Congratulations to the director and the whole cast and company. Absolutely brilliant."



"Really enjoyed the matinee today! Really funny play and the cast were all great!"

PHOTOS BY POYNER + MEE

Recent Photos

Nativity

Our extended family from KPAOS visited in November, for their production of modern festive favourite, *Nativity! The Musical*, directed by Joshua J Knott. Featuring some incredible young performers, alongside an adult cast of Little Theatre veterans and an incredibly exuberant Mr Poppy, it's the story of grandiose school Nativity, that gets slightly out of hand once the promise of Hollywood comes a calling...



"Absolutely Brilliant Best show I have seen in a long time. Congratulations to all the cast!"



"Absolutely fantastic; all the cast were brilliant."



"The performances are fab, it looks great, and the whole audience loved it. A great way to begin the festive season. If you've got tickets, you'll love it."



"Absolutely brilliant show. Everyone was fantastic. Loved it. Well done."



"One of the best shows I've seen in a while! The cast were all brilliant – couldn't fault it. Knighton Park are as good as any professionals. Thank you all!"

In The Spotlight



Name: Rose Bale

Profession: Secondary English Teacher

Upcoming production: *Puss in Boots*

Noteworthy: Roles include: LDS: Julia in *Christie's A Murder is Announced* (2023); Barbara in *Black Coffee* (2022), *Aladdin*, *Cinderella*, Alice Fitzwarren, Fairy Briar-Rose, and Princess Jasmine in LDS Pantomimes (2015-2023). KW: Louise in *Gypsy* (2023). WAOS: Emma in *Jekyll & Hyde* (2018), Clare in *Made in Dagenham* (2017), Bertha in *Acorn Antiques* (2016).

What was the first theatre show you saw?

One of my first theatre memories is watching *The Sooty Show* with my dad when I was a pre-schooler and being enthralled by the spectacle. Souvenirs (a signed poster, programme, and Sooty puppet) were beloved to me: I remember obsessing over them, recreating the show through play and poring over the programme for years after. I still have the puppet, yet my puppetry skills are only coming into fruition now – you'll have to watch this year's pantomime to understand!

What was the first play/musical you were in?

My first musical was *Oklahoma!* with WAOS at The Little Theatre, when I was sixteen. It enabled me to transfer "out of my dreams" onto the mainstage; it was the beginning of many incredible experiences at The Little.

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

It's impossible to choose a favourite, so I'll give you three: *Cinderella*, in LDS' 2021 Pantomime – gosh, that dress was so beautiful, and the show was such a special return to

the stage. Secondly, Clare in WAOS' 2017 production of *Made in Dagenham* – the juxtaposition of playing the dizziest character whilst standing up for women's rights was unforgettable. Finally, being entrusted with Louise in *Gypsy* for KW Productions in June 2023 was my biggest challenge to date. In my teens, I saw *Gypsy* at Curve and thought, 'yes, I could definitely embody the awkward Louise', but never dreamed of playing the sophisticated Gypsy Rose Lee she transforms into.

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

Anyone who knows me will guess this: Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*. I've always had an affinity with this strange, bookish character, who sees beyond a dreadful exterior and falls in love with the beauty within. The musical score is beyond dreamy, and the story sends the perfect message: don't judge a book by its cover.

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

The best theatre show I've ever seen is *Wicked* on the West End – I've seen it three times

and would watch it again in a heartbeat. You've got to love a twisted backstory, and 'everyone deserves a chance to fly'!

What's your favourite thing about The Little Theatre?

My favourite thing about The Little Theatre is that it feels like home and the community is like family. The hours people dedicate voluntarily to create opportunities for amateurs is unbelievable. I am forever grateful to everyone who works tirelessly to keep this amazing family together!

Tell us about your upcoming production!

I'm *Puss in Boots* in this year's LDS Pantomime – a meowvellous adventure awaits our audiences: I love the glitter, singing, dancing, and yes, even the pantotastic puns. Oh yes I do!



At a glance

What's on this season

DECEMBER



One Act Play Festival

Nov 30-Dec 2

Panto: Puss In Boots

Dec 14-Jan 7



JANUARY



The Same Faces

Jan 13

April in Paris

Jan 22-27



FEBRUARY/MARCH



The Good Life

Feb 5-10

Dial M for Murder

Mar 4-9



Coming Soon





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