

Oxted Players

We ended our 2003/4 season in May with *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley.. Amanda Ryan came up trumps again with her directorial skills and her dedicated cast and production team worked hard to achieve the excellent result. A great deal of interest was shown by students of English as the play formed part of their GCSE curriculum and as a result we welcomed 190+ students from Woldingham School and also many others from Oxted School and other local schools. This boosted ticket sales and we were able to show a healthy profit. The play was reviewed by Tony Flook in the Surrey Mirror's "Guide" and he particularly praised Peter Damesick's performance as the enigmatic Inspector Goole and Michelle Clubb as the sensitive Sheila Birling. Tony also liked Bruce Reed's design which he felt did full justice to the play. "Here, without doubt, was the home of a successful man, loaded with ornaments, pictures and a genuine looking antique telephone. Wall-lighting helped create the right atmosphere and the working pendulum clock added that extra touch." Our thanks go out to Amanda, the cast, production team (including 15 year old Aimee Bow who did an excellent job as Stage Manager) and everyone connected with what has proved to be a very successful production.

Our next appearance in the Theatre is the Young Players Summer Workshop in August with David Rowan. This is exclusively for our own Young Players. This year they are taking on the challenge of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. The workshop runs through the week from 22 August with a performance for friends and family on 28 August. We have adopted a new format this year in which we are not selling any tickets for the performance to the public. All tickets have been allocated to the children participating in the Workshop for distribution among family and friends. Those of you fortunate enough to be friend or family are in for a real treat!

Our next adult production is *Caught on the Hop* by Derek Benfield directed by Chris Hepher. Phil and George are best friends, both married. Phil is an incurable romantic who regularly falls in love with women he has met on the 49 bus, however unsuitable they may be. George has regularly had the job of explaining to Phil's wife Maggie that Phil is off on another of his amorous jaunts, which of course never last. When Phil meets Julie, who asks him to marry her (on a 49 bus), he is in seventh heaven and plans to set up home with her – the problem is that he hasn't told his wife and his intended love nest is next door to his own home, nor has he told Julie that he's married.

Throw in a dotty char lady, a highly confused fireman (Julie's father, whom Maggie thinks is Julie's boyfriend), a stropky and rather drunken ex-girlfriend of Phil's and Alan, a serial chatter-up of women at parties (who Maggie fondly believes is trying to seduce her), and you have a recipe for total confusion. Any member of the audience who, more than 10 pages into the script, can remember who every character believes every other character to be, deserves the Nobel prize.

There is a read through in the Little Barn on 8 August at 2.30 p.m. with Auditions on Wednesday 11 August (and 12 August if needed). We are looking for 4 men and 4 women and if anyone is interested who is not presently a member but would like more information about the characters or the play, please contact Chris Hepher on 0208 656 5554. The play runs from 13 to 16 October at 7.45 p.m.

Although a little way ahead, we would also like to mention our Pantomime for January 2005 which will be *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* directed by Janette White. We have a dynamic team in control and we have great expectations for this production. We are very pleased to welcome back to the Barn Theatre after a long absence Fran Reynolds (nee Newitt) who from treading the boards at the Barn Theatre in her youth, went on to make her career in the professional theatre and appeared in the West End and on the high seas. Fran is presently in "semi-resting" mode having given birth to her daughter, Mollie, last year and was very pleased to be asked to choreograph the Panto. Joining her as Musical Director is Lawrie Houghton, who moved to Oxted a year or so ago. He is an experienced musician and loves Panto. He has fallen in love with The Barn and is looking forward to joining Janette and Fran in putting together this exciting production. The main principal parts are Prince Charming, Queen Evilena (the baddie), Muddles (the likeable layabout), Nursey (the Dame), Sir Dashing (second principal boy), Huntsman (comedy part) and last but not least Seven Dwarfs. Janette wants adults to play the dwarfs and is looking to cast seven men/women who ideally should be no more than about 5'5" tall. Not all the dwarfs have lines to speak but all will be in some musical numbers. We also need two teams of six children who will play palace servants and also woodland animals. Fran would like six good dancers.

We also need a strong adult chorus of villagers. There will be a re-through on Sunday 5 September in the Little Barn and auditions for children (only paid up members as at 31.7.04 please) and dancers will take place on Sunday 12 September at 2.30 p.m. in the Little Barn. Although the children are not being cast as dwarfs, Janette wants two teams of six children who will be very much involved playing palace servants/woodland animals. Auditions for Principals will be on Monday 13 September at 7.00 p.m. If formal auditions have been set for adult chorus and Janette has asked if anyone interested in chorus parts only should give her a ring on 0183 744599 to register their interest if they do not want to come along to the re-through. Panto runs from 7 – 9 and 12 – 15 January 2005 (9 performances including 3 matinees).



The Barn Sinfonietta rehearsing Beethoven's Piano Concerto at the United Reformed Church

The Barn Sinfonietta

The Barn Sinfonietta of Oxted, conducted by Music Director Johan Michael Katz, will open its third season returning to The Barn Theatre on Saturday 23 October at 7:45pm. The programme will include the ever popular Overture to La Scala di Seta by Rossini, the orchestral version of the Vocalise by Rachmaninoff, Summer Evening by Kodaly, Ravel's own orchestration of Le Tombeau de Couperin and Schubert's sparkling Fifth Symphony.

The exciting visit to the United Reformed Church in Oxted at the end of last season made it possible to play piano concertos by Beethoven and Mozart. The space provided by the church also gave us the room for enough musicians to play Beethoven's Symphony No. 2. Excerpts from this performance were played on Radio Redhill during Johan's guest appearance on "Classical Moments". We will again be in the church (Nov.27 at 7:30) to make use of their splendid organ.

Quoting Derrick Graham of the Surrey Mirror: "It was good to see that Oxted had turned out in greater numbers than at previous concerts and judging by the applause, they thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The performance of Aaron Copeland's music for the ballet Appalachian Spring made one long to see it being danced."

As the Tippett centenary approaches we have decided to call our concert on Saturday, Jan 29 '05 "Michael Tippett and Friends". It will of course include a work by Sir Michael but also composers who visited Oxted in the 20 years that he taught at Hazelwood, notably Vaughan Williams and Britten.

Tickets: £15 (£12.50) to include a programme from The Barn Sinfonietta, Rookwood, Quarry Road, Oxted RH8 9HE. 01883 712264. www.barnsinfonietta.org

Apology

In our last issue we reported that CODA had cancelled their Autumn Show. In fact it was their Spring Show that was cancelled. We offer our apologies and are happy to report that they will be performing Calamity Jane at end of October at the Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon.