**Artistic Director Report - June 2025**

It has been a busy and eventful year at The QMT, with some great productions and shows we can be really proud of.

I will let the Production Manager’s go through this year’s shows, but my first priority is to thank Claudia and Matt for taking such good care of both Main House and Studio. Without Production Managers for each space, everyone’s roles become much harder, these jobs are vital to the smooth running of the theatre- they are often not appreciated as much as they should be - thank you both!

A huge thank you to The Stage Management Team led by Emma Saunders, the Tech Team led by Len and Chris, and the Set Team – your work is wonderful and we are so grateful to you all.

A shout out to Matt, Amy and Elliott who managed publicity so well – it is not an easy job, especially when we have 3 back-to-back shows to promote, and limited areas to actually advertise – thank you.

Thank you to Laura who has taken on costumes and building her team – huzzah!

Thank you to Faye and Susie at Raymond James – Hitchin, we are so lucky to have their sponsorship and support, please do not take it for granted, other societies would jump at this opportunity.

Taking over as AD was never going to be easy, and it hasn’t been. From day one there have been challenges and issues to be resolved, some I have managed, others unfortunately I haven’t. I don’t want to dwell on these here – but it has not been an easy or fun time for me.

I am delighted that this season we have had 3 new directors this season Amy Walker, Yvonne Patterson and Julia Fraser. I hope you found the experience a positive one, and that you will return with fabulous ideas for your next productions.

To all the Directors this season – thank you. Until you have directed a show it is difficult to understand the amount of energy, time, patience, creativity, deep breath taking and ball juggling it takes – Huzzah to you all!

As AD, I have introduced Saturday matinees, for Main House, which are proving popular, the audiences for this will grow as they get to know about them. I have attended meetings at The Little Theatre Guild, NODA and Visit Hitchin on behalf of The QMT – these have mostly proved helpful, and very interesting.

For next year we have trimmed the diary to 4 Main House, 3 Studio, 2 BS and a showcase, and 2 Juniors and a showcase. The diary has been crazy this year- especially with 3 back-to-back productions in June and July, this was poor planning and has stretched our resources to the limit. Next Season we need time to breathe and re-build.

We have an incredibly exciting season ahead; it was so important for me to invite new directors into the fold. I am delighted I have achieved this with some wonderful directors and productions lined up - please look after them, support them and help them thrive!

I am very sad not to be standing as AD this year, I am so proud of the work I have done, and the season I have managed to create for next year. It has been an incredibly difficult decision, but quite frankly the way I have been spoken to by certain members of the Society has been unacceptable – sadly, they always get away with it. I hope to continue to be actively involved and support where I can, and wish the new AD all the very best, I am just sorry it isn’t me.

We are so lucky to have this wonderful theatre – we need to look after not only the building and our legacy, but each other. Be kind!

Nicki Pope

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