

Annual General Meeting of the Bancroft Players held on Wednesday, 3rd July 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: 42 members

Apologies for absence had been received from Ian Mutton,, Andrew Piggott, Colette House, Amanda Campbell-Phillips, Laura Freeborn.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July, 2023 were agreed and signed as a true and correct record.

Matters arising none

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR - Elliott Bunker

Good evening everyone and welcome to this year's AGM - so lovely to see so many of you here.

I was looking back at the events of the last year when putting together my notes for tonight and comparing it to the previous year and I'm quite thankful to say that this year seems like it was significantly quieter - this time last year we had just completed Phase 1 of the FoH refurbishment, which I am so pleased to say has been very well received by nearly everyone. We'd just held the 40th Anniversary Gala and we were coming into a new season. So in comparison it has been quieter, but still a great year full of wonderful productions - now I won't spoil Rory's update, but I do want to pull out a couple of personal highlights.

The first of those from December when I walked into the auditorium to see it totally transformed into Neverland, with a pirate ship down the centre of the space. It was truly magical and created such a wonderful and engaging experience for our audiences. I felt totally immersed in the production. I know how much hard work went in to creating that and fully understand that we cannot do that for every show, but boy was it good!

The second moment is actually a couple of combined moments - by our Youth and Junior teams. Now I'll admit I didn't get a chance to see A Midsummer Night's Dream due to a diary clash, but I did get to see Romeo & Juliet and I did see The Laramie Project and I thought both so amazing - but for very different reasons. Romeo and Juliet was a condensed version of the story and it was so brilliantly told by Claudia and the team and I thought it such a great way to bring Shakespeare to both young performers and young audiences.

And The Laramie Project hit a very personal note, as a gay man growing up in the 80's and 90's this story was one of a small few that entered the main news stream at the time, and while harrowing and deeply upsetting because of what happened to the young Matthew Shepard, Big Spirit did a great job in bringing that story to the QMT stage. It helps us reach into new diverse communities that wouldn't normally come to

see our shows and we have to see how we can do more of that to appeal to the rich and diverse community in and around Hitchin.

This last season has also seen The QMT become the home to both Mostly Comedy and NT Live - now all of these events have completely sold out, which is great news and also helps bring new audiences to The QMT - added in that we now ask for all tickets to be sold via our website means we are adding more names and contact details to our mailing list - and we are already seeing the audiences who came to see comedy come and see other events at the theatre, and vice versa.

Earlier I mentioned the Phase 1 Refurbishment of the Front of House and we are keen to plan and schedule in Phases 2 and 3. As a reminder these incorporate the area behind the bar as Phase 2, then the front exterior for Phase 3. We plan to start those conversations with the team at Colin Hill over the summer, but we already know that we'll need to fundraise to complete that work - so we'll bring you more on that as soon as we have it.

Moving on to other news and this month marks the end of a couple of eras for The Bancroft Players. The first of those being with Big Spirit, as after 25 years we say a very fond farewell to Katie Milward, who has been a part of the group for more than 2 decades, first as a member and then taking over from Rory as the group leader. Now Rory will give more updates on the plans for Big Spirit a little later, but I wanted for us all to say a massive thank you to Katie for the energy she has put into running Big Spirit and the quality and standards she has set for the group. (Applause) It's 40 years since The Bancroft Players Youth Theatre was created by Rory, so this year marks a big shift in its next 40 years and I personally hope it goes from strength to strength under its new leadership.

Then secondly onto Mr Reynolds! This time last year Rory announce he would not be standing again as our Artistic Director after 25 years of successfully being voted into the position, so tonight marks the end of an era which has seen Rory oversee almost 300 productions for The Bancroft Players - and that's excluding the Big Spirit shows! Rory has been a driving force in so many ways (and I hope will continue to do that!) but specifically as Artistic Director. Inspiring new directors to try their hand at directing, challenging existing directors to tackle new projects and without his hard work we would not be the local amateur dramatics society we are. Undoubtedly one of the best producers of local theatre in Hertfordshire. We will be hosting an evening in September to recognise and value Rory's contribution, but as Rory keep reminding me - he's not going anywhere and will still be very involved at The QMT. For now though let's please show our appreciation for Rory (applause)

Then finally from me, 2025 will be our 80th year as The Bancroft Players and we would like to hear from you with ideas on how best to mark this important milestone. I'll share a link after the AGM tonight where you can submit your celebration ideas - then these will all be assessed by the EC and the best ideas will then put back out for a final vote. This is a chance for you to help decide how we mark this important year in our history and we look forward to making it a year to remember and use it as a way to reach further out into the community, grow our audiences, grow our membership and celebrate 80 amazing years! Thank you.

A massive thank you goes to Katie Milward for all her work and support for Big Spirit. This was greeted by applause from the audience. In addition Rory's commitment as Artistic Director for 25 years is also marked. It should be noted that in 2025 it will be 80 years since the origin of Bancroft Players.

Reports Treasurer – Mark Weatherbed

Financial Update and Statement Season 2023 – 2024

Bancroft Players Amateur Dramatic Society, Big Spirit Youth Theatre, Ensemble, Junior Bancroft Players

- We have tried a new year of challenges and reviews, the introduction of a comedy night every month and also National Theatre Live, all of which remain very positively received and welcome. The highlights of which are in our account's summary.
- Our overall expenditure for this last season has reduced by 19.2%, our Income by 9.7%, a positive swing. Despite energy increases we have managed to maintain an element of management to keep costs to a minimum.
- Last year saw an investment of £50,000 into the renovation of our Foyer and Bar area (which had not been updated for a while) It's received very fond reviews from across the membership and with visitors, so we aim to work towards phase 2, this will need some funding to support the costs.
- Having turned over £279k in our 22-23 season and spent £309k (-£29k), we have this season turned over £252k, with spend of £249k, so a +the £2.8k nett balance (and a swing of £31k in 12 months).

	Month	Income					TOTAL
		Membership	Bar	Tickets	Hire	Other	
SANTANDER ACCOUNT	July	£ 500.00	£ 2,877.62	£ -	£ 150.00	£ 14,865.87	£ 18,393.49
	August	£ 3,950.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 3,628.97	£ 7,578.97
	September	£ 3,972.00	£ 1,221.30	£ -	£ -	£ 2,600.00	£ 7,793.30
	October	£ 60.00	£ 4,744.96	£ -	£ 300.00	£ 4,239.67	£ 9,344.63
	November	£ 57.00	£ 1,828.48	£ -	£ -	£ 11,682.73	£ 13,568.21
	December	£ -	£ 7,534.86	£ -	£ -	£ 4,528.05	£ 12,062.91
	January	£ 1,095.94	£ 1,086.78	£ -	£ 280.00	£ 8,980.00	£ 11,442.72
	February	£ 184.00	£ 2,245.08	£ -	£ -	£ 8,658.92	£ 11,088.00
	March	£ 92.00	£ 3,585.30	£ -	£ 105.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 15,782.30
	April	£ 685.00	£ 2,315.42	£ -	£ 330.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 9,330.42
	May	£ 1,950.00	£ 2,875.81	£ 252.00	£ 550.00	£ 7,500.00	£ 13,127.81
	June	£ 150.00	£ 4,454.04	£ 288.00	£ 140.00	£ 13,827.00	£ 18,859.04
		£ 12,695.94	£34,769.65	£ 540.00	£ 1,855.00	£ 98,511.21	£ 148,371.80

	Month		Income					
			Membership	Bar	Tickets	Hire	Other	TOTAL
BARCLAY ACCOUNT	July		£ 40.00	£ -	£ 4,253.00	£ -	£ -	£ 4,293.00
	August		£ -	£ -	£ 3,251.00	£ -	£ -	£ 3,251.00
	September		£ -	£ -	£ 6,922.00	£ -	£ -	£ 6,922.00
	October		£ 415.00	£ -	£ 12,374.00	£ -	£ -	£ 12,789.00
	November		£ -	£ -	£ 14,748.00	£ -	£ -	£ 14,748.00
	December		£ 15.00	£ -	£ 7,751.00	£ -	£ -	£ 7,766.00
	January		£ 400.00	£ -	£ 8,418.50	£ -	£ -	£ 8,818.50
	February		£ 100.00	£ -	£ 11,815.50	£ -	£ -	£ 11,915.50
	March		£ -	£ -	£ 7,840.00	£ -	£ -	£ 7,840.00
	April		£ -	£ -	£ 9,203.50	£ -	£ -	£ 9,203.50
	May		£ -	£ -	£ 5,004.50	£ -	£ -	£ 5,004.50
	June		£ -	£ -	£ 11,382.20	£ -	£ -	£ 11,382.20
			£ 970.00	£ -	£ 102,963.20	£ -	£ -	£ 103,933.20

Expenditure by Dept Santander 2023-2024

Expenditure By Department															
Bar Stock	Stock Workshop	Tech Spend	Utilities	Overhead	Marketing	Publicity	Juniors	Big Spirit	COVID	Ticket Refunds/Hires	Banking Charges	Bank Transfers	Productions	TOTAL	
£ 2,302.60	£ -	£ 1,074.82	£ -	£ 17,133.39	£ 410.00	£ -	£ -	£ 377.89	£ -	£ 2,485.00	£ -	£ -	£ 836.25	£ 24,422.41	
£ 43.91	£ -	£ 1,535.40	£ 312.38	£ 1,812.15	£ 995.00	£ -	£ -	£ 443.92	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,266.40	£ 8,259.15	
£ 1,044.74	£ -	£ 338.10	£ 92.97	£ 1,992.82	£ 189.20	£ -	£ 580.00	£ 535.00	£ -	£ 2,485.00	£ -	£ -	£ 1,506.36	£ 8,264.19	
£ 714.35	£ 51.60	£ 740.57	£ -	£ 1,760.38	£ 235.23	£ -	£ 600.00	£ 815.00	£ -	£ 3,250.00	£ -	£ -	£ 748.66	£ 8,915.79	
£ 2,225.84	£ -	£ 509.51	£ -	£ 3,283.43	£ 432.10	£ 580.00	£ 580.00	£ 852.79	£ -	£ 3,905.90	£ -	£ -	£ 3,536.10	£ 15,505.67	
£ 3,147.85	£ 50.73	£ 354.00	£ 238.23	£ 2,197.74	£ 171.32	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 350.00	£ -	£ 2,879.00	£ -	£ -	£ 1,213.48	£ 11,102.33	
£ 616.89	£ 581.31	£ 582.00	£ -	£ 5,838.88	£ -	£ 188.80	£ 580.00	£ 410.00	£ -	£ 2,260.00	£ -	£ -	£ 329.80	£ 11,166.73	
£ 1,999.75	£ 101.27	£ 480.73	£ 258.31	£ 3,119.97	£ 186.62	£ -	£ 664.42	£ 455.26	£ -	£ 4,589.00	£ -	£ -	£ 1,194.20	£ 12,873.93	
£ 1,236.01	£ 452.13	£ 17.28	£ 747.33	£ 3,887.30	£ 109.00	£ 2,579.00	£ 891.99	£ 822.58	£ -	£ 3,536.00	£ -	£ -	£ 824.94	£ 15,620.56	
£ 306.19	£ -	£ -	£ 1,557.30	£ 1,834.35	£ 25.76	£ -	£ 650.00	£ 515.00	£ -	£ 3,010.53	£ -	£ -	£ 227.49	£ 6,125.81	
£ 1,903.06	£ 98.61	£ -	£ 843.45	£ 2,154.27	£ 945.64	£ 25.00	£ 760.00	£ 475.00	£ -	£ 5,487.41	£ -	£ -	£ 2,826.99	£ 15,052.52	
£ 1,971.06	£ 331.19	£ 33.00	£ 3,023.88	£ 5,157.95	£ 557.51	£ 1,510.40	£ 500.00	£ 358.00	£ -	£ 3,299.50	£ -	£ -	£ 2,887.73	£ 19,032.01	
£ 17,108.26	£ 1,595.03	£ 5,665.31	£ 7,054.63	£ 49,392.13	£ 3,855.79	£ 3,958.20	£ 6,106.41	£ 5,997.54	£ -	£ 37,187.34	£ -	£ -	£ 16,110.25	£ 154,030.88	

Barclays Account

Expenditure By Department															
Bar Stock	Stock Workshop	Tech Spend	Utilities	Overhead	Marketing	Publicity	Juniors	Big Spirit	COVID	Ticket Refunds/Hires	Banking Charges	Bank Transfers	Productions	TOTAL	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,200.00	£ -	£ -	£ 164.28	£ 14,885.87	£ -	£ 17,429.00	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 130.57	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ 3,130.57	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 80.73	£ 2,800.00	£ -	£ 2,880.73	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 304.38	£ 4,580.00	£ -	£ 4,884.38	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 228.45	£ 11,882.73	£ -	£ 12,111.18	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 333.37	£ 4,828.09	£ -	£ 5,161.46	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 194.28	£ 8,500.00	£ -	£ 8,694.28	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 258.16	£ 2,300.00	£ -	£ 2,558.16	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 201.61	£ 12,000.00	£ -	£ 12,201.61	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 768.16	£ 6,000.00	£ -	£ 6,768.16	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 164.55	£ 7,500.00	£ -	£ 7,664.55	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 162.29	£ 13,827.09	£ -	£ 13,989.29	
£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,200.00	£ -	£ -	£ 2,442.82	£ 90,583.65	£ -	£ 95,426.47	

Below is the year on year finance comparisons

	Season 2022 - 2023				
	Income		Expenditure		
Activity					
Membership	£	17,578.00			
Bar	£	29,614.72			
Tickets	£	96,440.82			
Hire	£	1,539.79			
Other	£	134,081.19			
Bar Stock			£	14,940.75	
Stock Workshop			£	1,153.54	
Tech Spend			£	8,871.55	
Utilities			£	9,872.60	
Overhead			£	82,782.43	
Marketing			£	1,463.50	
Publicity			£	4,413.97	
Juniors			£	4,840.00	
Big Spirit			£	4,610.00	
COVID			£	-	
Ticket refunds/hires			£	11,461.27	
Banking Charges			£	2,068.27	
Bank Transfers			£	132,294.18	
Productions			£	30,052.55	
	£	279,254.52	£	308,824.61	
Nett	£	(29,570.09)			

Season 2023 - 2024			
		Income	Expenditure
Activity			
Membership	£	13,665.94	
Bar	£	34,769.65	
Tickets	£	103,503.20	
Hire	£	1,855.00	
Bank Transfer/Other	£	98,511.21	
Bar Stock			£ 17,108.26
Stock Workshop			£ 1,595.03
Tech Spend			£ 5,665.21
Utilities			£ 7,054.63
Overhead			£ 49,392.23
Marketing			£ 3,855.78
Publicity			£ 3,958.20
Juniors			£ 7,306.41
Big Spirit			£ 7,197.54
COVID/H & S			£ -
Ticket refunds/hires			£ 37,187.34
Banking Charges			£ 2,442.82
Bank Transfers			£ 90,583.65
Productions			£ 16,110.25
	£	252,305.00	£ 249,457.35
Nett	£	2,847.65	

Production budgets 2023-2024

SEASON 2023- 2024										
12.06.24										
	Production 23-24	Period	Tickets	Books & Licence	Agency	Production Costs	Total Production (Actual)	Production Budget (Estimated)	Surplus against Sales	Stage of GP v Sales
1	Juniors Summer Workshop	Jul-23	500	0		0	0.00	0	500.00	100.00%
2	Big Spirit Workshop	Aug-23	0	75		0	75.00	0	-75.00	#DIV/0!
3	The Height of The Storm	Sep-23	4,554.00	684.00		607.78	1,291.78	1,500.00	3,262.22	71.63%
4	Vagina Monologues	Oct-23	3,418.00	435.74		716.14	1,151.88	250.00	2,266.12	66.30%
5	Peter Pan	Dec-23	20,251.00	741.60		5,348.40	6,132.50	4,000.00	14,161.00	69.93%
6	Elsie & Norma Macbeth	Jan-24	2,862.00	472.94		630.50	1,103.44	250.00	1,758.56	61.45%
7	Juniors Sat Romeo & Juliet	Jan-24	1,141.00	0.00		110.56	110.56	150.00	1,030.44	90.31%
8	Bleak Expectations	Feb-24	5,518.00	723.96		2,304.02	3,027.98	1,200.00	2,490.02	45.13%
9	Low Level Panic	Apr-24	2,373.00	373.96		657.09	1,031.05	250.00	1,341.95	56.55%
10	The Laramie Project	Apr-24	1,643.00	351.00		264.20	615.20	850.00	1,027.80	62.56%
11	Juniors Monday Midsummer Nights Dream	Apr-24	946.00	0.00		139.72	139.72	150.00	806.28	85.23%
12	Present Laughter	May-24	8,307.00	944.62	456.00	1,420.06	2,820.68	1,200.00	5,486.32	66.04%
13	Krapps Last Tapes	Jun-24	1,637.00	200.00		29.72	229.72	250.00	1,407.28	85.97%
		Totals	53,150.00	5,002.82		12,228.19	17,729.51	10,050.00	35,462.89	

SEASON 2024- 2025										
27.06.24										
Production 24 - 25	Period	Tickets	Books & Usance	Agency/Design	Production Costs	Total Production (Actual)	Production Budget (Estimated)	Surplus against Sales	Usage of GP v Sales	
Juniors Summer Showcase	Jul-24	£ 405.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 230.00	£ 405.00	100.00%	
Juniors Summer Workshop	Aug-24	£ 500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 300.00	£ 500.00	100.00%	
Silly Cow	Sep-24	£ -	£ 676.80	£ -	£ -	£ 676.80	£ 1,200.00	£ (676.80)	#DIV/0!	
Brimstone & Treacle	Oct-24	£ -	£ 420.00	£ -	£ -	£ 420.00	£ 258.00	£ (420.00)	#DIV/0!	
Sleeping Beauty - Panto	Dec-24	£ 1,204.20	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,500.00	£ 1,204.20	100.00%	
Beautiful Thing	Jan-25	£ -	£ 450.00	£ -	£ -	£ 450.00	£ 258.00	£ (450.00)	#DIV/0!	
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime	Feb-25	£ -	£ 651.99	£ -	£ -	£ 651.99	£ 3,000.00	£ (651.99)	#DIV/0!	
Blackbird	Apr-25	£ -	£ 420.00	£ -	£ -	£ 420.00	£ 258.00	£ (420.00)	#DIV/0!	
Black Adder Goes Forth	May-25	£ -	£ 450.00	£ -	£ -	£ 450.00	£ 2,000.00	£ (450.00)	#DIV/0!	
Side BY Side	Jun-25	£ -	£ 1,040.00	£ -	£ -	£ 1,040.00	£ 2,500.00	£ (1,040.00)	#DIV/0!	
Twelfth Night	Jul-25	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 1,800.00	£ -	#DIV/0!	
Totals		£ 1,704.20	£ 4,108.79	£ -	£ -	£ 4,108.79	£ 15,900.00	£ (2,404.59)		

And finally, any questions.

CIO Securing our future, remembering our heritage

A Reminder of the process

TRANSITION TO A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)

REVISE OUR STRATEGY

Focus to lead on;

- Refining the vision so that it is fit for purpose
- Formulating a long-term (phased) facility improvement plan
- Work on increasing active membership and community involvement
- Form a new CIO
- Engage help to draft a new constitution
- Transfer all the assets and liabilities of the existing charity across

CIO - Association model

Chairman – Treasurer, Secretary and Artistic Director

**Bancroft Players –, Junior Bancroft Players, Ensemble, Big Spirit A.N.
Other, A.N. Other**

There is typically a multi step process to incorporation

1. The Trustees of the Charity are satisfied
 - Their house is on order
 - The charity to incorporate and that incorporation is in the best interests of the charity
2. Members give “in principle” approval to the proposed incorporation

3. Obtaining consent, as necessary of any third parties (e.g. Landlords and funders)
4. Obtaining consent, as necessary of any regulators and umbrella bodies
5. Assessing of new DBS certs are necessary and applying for them if so
6. Assessing the position on endowments, legacies or restricted covenants
7. Submitting the CIO constitution; the Charity Commission application for registration; the Charity Commission *Trustee Eligibility Declaration* to the Charity Commission
8. Once registered with the Charity Commission : HMRC charity tax reference number, apply for the CIO to be registered for any other umbrella bodies as appropriate
9. Any transfer of employment – **There is none**
10. Hold respective meetings with Trustees of unincorporated charity and CIO whereby they resolve to proceed with the incorporation and execute the transfer agreement
11. Giving effect to transfer agreement by:
 - Leases/licenses - execute consent to assignment, as necessary
 - Plant and Equipment – This will pass by delivery
 - Bank Accounts – Banks usually want new accounts opened for a CIO, if the case it will be necessary to transfer funds form the existing account to the new account
 - Third party contracts – Subject to any third-party consent, transfer contracts to CIO
12. Arranging for all membership declarations to be signed by all prospective members of the CIO (This is a specific requirement of a CIO)
13. Complete the statutory register of trustees and members
14. Obtaining the registration number of the CIO
15. Once the position of legacies and endowments is clarified then arranging for the Charity Commission to remove the unincorporated charity from the charity register
16. CIO:
17. Our letter of adjustment to the Council has been received and accepted, to a point. The changes requested include us being able to hire out our space and charge other societies (which isn't in our current lease). The lease amends and an extension, will cost if £2,500

to process with the Council. These have now been signed off in principle.

18. A revaluation of our performance licence was also completed by the Council and accepted to our current state of activity
19. Companies House has confirmed that permission to have QMT (or anything Royal related) in our title is agreed in conjunction with Clarence House. We have written consent from The Treasury and Companies House
20. This is also the case with the Charity Commission too, they have agreed in principle based on the acceptance of others
21. The Crown in our logo is now also agreed its use as a Royal Crown.
22. The move to the CIO, to be clear, will also continue to use the plaque to the Bancroft Players as part of the QMT transition (as this has been part of the process since 1983)
23. Communication with Clarence House continues requesting a copy of the letter to Richard Whitmore from HMTQM's archive, but we have received acceptance of our claim to use her name in writing.
24. We have a new draft Constitution to approve.
25. We have a draft CIO proposal for the Charity Commission ready to submit.
26. Having applied and accepted a gaming licence with the Funding Regulator for the 200 Club, we then had to apply to the Council for a local gaming licence too, this has also been accepted.

Mark was asked by there were two different banks and he replied that for ticketing purposes there needs to be a merchant bank, i.e. Barclays. He also reported that budgets on productions were mostly exceeded and it would be appropriate to consider whether there should be an increase. This would all be monitored closely and it is likely that discussions would be taking place to increase the cost of the tickets to productions.

Mark was officially thanked for his work on the CIO by the members present at the AGM.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR REPORT TO THE AGM – 3 July 2024

The year in the Theatre has gone very well. While not all the shows we presented have sold as well as we would have liked – I think artistically it has been a triumphant season.

We started the Main House season in September with **The Height of the Storm** which was beautifully realised throughout with an excellent cast and a mysterious storyline. This was modern drama which is a genre we love here at the QMT. It was I think Charles is cornering the market in confused old men, as an actor I mean.

The Christmas show was an incredible **Peter Pan** directed by Katie. It was literally an assault on the senses with a sensational set complete with a pirate ship. It showed the QMT at its best I think with all departments working together to produce a memorable result. Thanks particularly to Chris for making it his life's work to get a strong serviceable structure to the set and great lighting effects and our set crew for their peerless construction of the pirate ship (a work of art!). Never have backstage and actors had to work together so closely together and I think that was a good thing. Great houses too for this show.

The production of **Bleak Expectations** in February was a hoot! Putting a radio play onstage seems to be the coming thing and this production, directed by Brian Seal, was full of our top comic performers. And, wonderfully for the actors, you get to keep the script in your hand! Another excellent production and it was a lot of fun for the performers.

The last show of the Main House season was **Present Laughter** directed by Nicki Pope. This light comedy requires a deft directorial hand, and the result was, I think, as good as amateur theatre can aspire to be. That is – as good as any professional show. So well done to all our excellent directors actors, technical and backstage members for your crucial support.

My thanks to Matt who heads up our Studio plays – another cracking season in the smaller space, the details of which are outlined in his report.

The coming season in both houses is now published and I think represents a balance of popular and new writing that will appeal to members and punters alike.

As this is my last AD report, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish my successor the very best. It's been my pleasure to serve the Society and I am sure they will have fun too!

Rory Reynolds

Artistic Director, QMT & Bancroft Players

Studio Theatre Report 2023 – 2024

This year the Studio has presented a number of very different plays, all of which have attracted different audiences.

We started with the Vagina Monologues directed by Hannah Conway, which brought some new members to the Bancroft Players as well as a lot of new audience members. This was an important piece of theatre performed fearlessly by a strong cast.

Then we had Elsie and Norm's Macbeth directed by Allie-Marie Hunter. This was a traditional comedy with the two actors frantically playing the whole cast of Shakespeare's tragedy, and brought some welcome laughs to our winter blues.

Next up was Low Level Panic directed by Amy Sheilds. This was another female led play with a young and talented cast examining the effects of society's objectification of women. A funny and moving piece of theatre.

Finally, we had Samuel Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape directed by myself. This along with the short 'bonus feature' (Act Without Words 2) showed that there is still a place classic, and sometimes challenging, theatre at the QMT.

All these plays have been supported by our Tech and Set Build teams, and despite the limited budgets and resources, they have consistently delivered high quality production values, so special thanks to them for this.

This year the studio has also branched out into one off events, with a preview of Juno Theatre Company's Formally Big Fish and the Shout & Whisper poetry event. These shows brought new people to the QMT and on both occasions sold out (which was good news for our bar takings!).

There have been challenges though, Elsie and Norm did not initially attract anyone to the auditions despite this being a play chosen to offer opportunities to older members of the Bancroft Players. Luckily the team persisted with the project and found a work-around with the original director taking one role and handing the directing duties over to Allie-Marie. However there was a good chance that this play would have had to have been cancelled and so it is a shame that more older members did not wish to audition.

Moving forwards, next seasons plays again are an eclectic mix of classic and new theatre, plus a musical as well which will be an exciting challenge to all involved. I wish all the upcoming directors the best of luck with their projects, and as ever support will be on offer if needed.

Finally, again I'd like to thank all those who have supported the Studio this season, whether that has been via involvement in shows or just by coming to see them. Your support is always appreciated.

Matt Gray – QMT Studio Theatre Manager

Theatre Managers report for AGM 2024

If I was writing this as a Chris Lane end-of-year report, I would say I've had another great year. Following on from the fun of creating the Equus set and horses heads, this year I got to create a multi-level set with trussing bridge and led-light steps for

Company, a full-on adventure playground for pirate and lost boys and fire canons at the audience! for Pan, and got to help create contemporary sets for Big Spirit and Juniors with the latest in lighting fixtures. It just shows what wonderful opportunities there are within our theatre when you choose to get involved, whatever your discipline. What's the relevance of this? The first two showed the flexibility of the space we own and the experience we have gained in our level of inventory of stock we hold. Peter Pan just about used all the platforms, legs and rails we own and managed to maintain a high audience capacity while delivering an exciting space to perform in. This achieved a recording breaking income for a show, which helps support all the shows throughout the year which can then be more challenging ones but maybe not such an audience draw. This is important tradition we continue to uphold. Our investment in stock helps us to maintain a high level of production standard by recouping the cost over multiple shows even if one show bares the cost initially by returning a lower profit. This is the advantage of owning our own space, over performing in external theatres. Continual investment in capital items in future will ensure we stay at the forefront of design for shows.

The second two shows above illustrate the recent advances made in technology and the benefit of investments. As of last September, fluorescent lamps are being phased out, they are still available but not being manufactured. This means we are having to replace them with the current technology which is LED at the moment. We are continuing to do this around the theatre on an attrition basis as a fitting fails or the tubes give out. This is allowing us the spread the cost as we earn income rather than a large-scale replacement all at once. There are certain areas that will need a swap out all at once, the biggest being the auditorium, which I am exploring and costing at present ready for the inevitable.

The reason all these points above all come together is that the stage light fittings I borrowed for Laramie and Midsummers' Nights Dream, might be the future of LED development or they may just remain another variation of the list of fittings available, we have to wait and see. The reason these fittings are different is that they are battery powered. We have got used to LED lamps being quoted as say 10x more efficient than filament, and that is a big saving, but they still use that energy at the time you want it illuminated and that can be at peak rates (especially for us), the reason battery powered lamps are different is that although they still need a mains power lead to them to charge up this can be down at a time of your choosing.

So it might be that if this form of technology takes off, it is not so relevant how efficient the LED fitting is, as to what rate you can negotiate for your off-peak electricity for the time you choose to charge the fittings, typically overnight. I will be sounding out the industry over the next year to see which way the trend is going as this scaled and affordable than the units produced can significantly determine our form of investment in the general light fittings we choose as well as the stage lighting fittings which will also need replacement shortly, as the concessions of filament lamps currently in place for theatre will not last for ever. Stage Lighting

manufacturers are already conscious of this financial burden that schools, uni's and theatres like ours will have to bear shortly, and are designing ranges of lanterns that will be more for large theatre and stadiums. So at least the voice of theatre is being listened to in this country and impending impact on us understood. So this year coming will be one of continual replacement on that front. Change and investment is coming so we just need to be ready to make the best choices when it is required.

The theatre has been supported by its wonderful team of helpers again, Oksana has continued with us on cleaning, Amanda has taken on the refreshing of many areas inside plus many other jobs, and Keith Swainston looking after the exterior grounds. We thank them all for their continued great efforts. Thanks also to members of the set and backstage team who have assisted with improvements around the theatre outside of their production duties.

I have managed to find a method of refurbishing the red auditorium chairs that makes them more robust for now and easily changeable in future when the untouched ones fail. When I have finished the last few of the broken chairs it will give us a stock of over 180, which means that we can consider storing row D in future if we want for shows and the potential increase in ticket sales at 181 seats.

We had the flooring repaired in the studio auditorium without complete replacement, and the team will be returning shortly to repair the section around the bins storage area. In the first full week of August we will be having the tarmac replaced at the front of the theatre to improve our image on arrival. I will ask anyone without a direct need to use QMT parking spaces not to occupy them during this week to allow staff doing essential deliveries and collections. There will also be new lining and notices to accompany this as well.

Chris Lane, Theatre Manager.

BIG SPIRIT REPORT TO AGM

It's been another storming year for the Youth theatre. Actually, we have been so very lucky to have had Katie Milward nee Rallison with us for the last 20 years or so. In fact, she never left Big Spirit but moved seamlessly from being a member starting at age 13 to being the leader of the group without taking any gap years.

The first BS production of the season was combined with the BPs and was the wonderfully exotic production of **Peter Pan** in December. It was full of Katie's creativity and it took a splendid team from the QMT to realise her dream. The youth theatre loved doing the show and they always enjoying working with the adult company. Something that is happening again next summer in Twelfth Night.

Our second show was **The Laramie Project**. It is a piece of verbatim theatre about the murder of a young gay man in Laramie and is often played just by voices or by mainly still

actors. In Katie's hands it was transformed into vocal and a movement presentation and it was a tremendously emotional experience.

In some ways it is the end of a cycle for Big Spirit. So many of the older ones are moving on, leaving a much younger group behind. Don't worry – we've been here many times before, and the younger ones always take up the baton. But it is especially sad this year for Big Spirit as Katie too is leaving. She is moving on to other challenges and of course we wish her well. Katie has been an inspiration for generations of Big Spiriters and is very much loved by them all so, as you can understand, it's a tough time.

However, we have a wonderful new youth theatre leader starting soon - Megan Burke. Megan too was a member of Big Spirit for many years (who wasn't?) and has been working with the National Youth Theatre and as a professional actress. So she is perfectly qualified for the role! Megan will start in August and she will be introducing herself to everyone as soon as she can.

Thus the see-saw of fate moves irrevocably on and next year we will focus on increasing the group size up to around 25 members. Big Spirit have two shows slated for next season – in November and in April as well as being part of Twelfth Night - so please support us.

Rory Reynolds on behalf of Katie Milward.

Junior Bancroft Players Report for the AGM Wednesday 3rd July 2024

The Juniors are successfully running two groups now. One group meeting on Saturday mornings and the other group meeting on Monday evenings. There are 37 children across the two groups.

The Saturday morning group performed a modern version of "Romeo and Juliet" in February this year, selling out on the Friday evening. The Monday evening group performed a traditional, all female version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", playing to good houses both nights.

Both groups are combining to perform a short end of season showcase in the studio in July, consisting of a selection of monologues and physical theatre with a short opening dance. Following on from last year's Summer Workshop we are very well subscribed again this year. The workshop runs Monday to Friday 10am to 3.30pm for one week during the school holidays, with a performance on the Friday for friends and family.

We have a healthy waiting list that should fill the places of those moving up to "Ensemble" from both groups.

Thanks to everyone who has supported the Juniors this season. Big thanks to Christine and her team for two absolutely stunning sets. It is really appreciated by myself and the children who definitely step up a level once they have such an amazing set in place. Also thanks to Chris and the Tech Team for their tech support and for creating a fabulous forest lighting

design for “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, which the children were amazed by. It makes such a difference to them to have such a professional set and lighting experience.

Huge thanks to Leanne and Evie, Oscar and Imy for all their wonderful help and commitment.

Thanks also to those who come and help during the production week and for those who support the Juniors by coming to see the shows which is so very very much appreciated.

Claudia O’Connell

Team Leader

Junior Bancroft Players

BANCROFT PLAYERS 200 CLUB REPORT July 2024

Yet again, I have to report that sadly five of our members have passed away in the last 12 months. It would be great to have younger people join, to balance out our age profile! But two have joined via the website – well one was a renewal, whose membership lapsed a couple of years ago but I am still counting that as a new member.

This year the 200 Club will be donating £310 to the theatre. Usually I like to put the money towards a specific project but am leaving it to the EC to decide on this occasion. Why the odd £10 you might be asking. Well, in December last year, Peter Linnett won £10. However a few weeks later Diana told me that they were unable to bank the cheque as their cat had destroyed it by walking over it with wet paws and could I please put it toward theatre funds. So thank you, Sassy for your kind donation! (And I am reliably told that Sassy will be thrilled to have her named mentioned in this report!)

As ever, I optimistically look forward to influx of new members! And thank you to our existing members for their continued support.

Paula Downes

Membership Elliott reported that 222 members had paid their memberships. He also went through the survey which had been sent out and reported on honorary memberships which had been given to Charles Plester and Christine Neal in recognition of their work over the past few years. Elliott also asked members for future nominations.

Election of Officers Chairman – Elliott Bunker, Secretary – Vivien Kerr, Treasurer – Mark Weatherbed, Artistic Director – as there were two nominations a vote was held and Nicki Pope was elected as Artistic Director, Studio Manager – Matt Gray, Theatre Manager – Chris Lane, Main Theatre Production Manager – no nomination but this would likely be settled within a short time; Business Manager – no nomination received.

Election of 3 Committee members Emma O'Connell, Emma Northcott, Rory Reynolds, were elected.

Members comments and questions It was asked whether the Comedy Nights and productions could be separated in the Whats-On. Sugar Zoo are looking at this issue. There was some discussion on how to reach people who do not use Facebook social media and whether advertising on other Facebook local pages might be useful. It was also suggested that local libraries might take leaflets etc. Matt was thanked for sending production information to the Comet. Nicki Pope was thanked for arranging for her form to sponsor the QMT. Elliott was also thanked for the considerable amount of work he carried out in support of the theatre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

