

## **Hound of the Baskervilles**

## **Educating Rita**

## **Moonlight & Magnolias**

This has been a great season in the studio theatre and is testament to the epic BP commitment involved in each production.

We effectively opened the season in January this year with *Hound of the Baskervilles* directed by Pam Chohan – a fast and furious 3-hander staged with minimal set and a multitude of props and quick costume changes! Great fun and very well attended with knock-out performances from Lewis Clarke, Charlotte McKinney and Sammy Jolly. Images of Lewis as a sexy Spanish Señorita still haunt my dreams...! This was Pam's first stint directing at the QMT. Tech was admirably handled by Ella Townsend and Doug Robinson, providing a complicated and quick-fire change of cues to match the pace of the play.

Then in April came *Educating Rita* directed by Max Davis – again, his first stint as director at the QMT. The popularity of this play will never cease to amaze and sell-out shows meant we added extra performances. The set and stage management were largely and magnificently handled by Nick and Anne-Marie Muxlow, with expert help provided as always by our resident head-honcho of stage management, Emma Saunders. The set was a fantastically detailed replica of a slightly tatty 1980s university office that entailed a request to the membership for book donations to fill the bookshelves! This show also welcomed the addition of two new, professional, members to the BPs in the form of Anna Morris and Richard Herring. Lighting was provided by Elena Hancock and sound by Ella Townsend and Martha Ford. A highly successful production all round.

Last (but not least) in the season and finishing last Saturday was *Moonlight & Magnolias* directed by Yvonne Patterson. Originally due to be staged in September and coming hard on the heels of Backstairs Billy and up against both the World Cup, Wimbledon and impromptu barbeques given the hot weather, this production held its own. Another fast and furious show with a memorable face-slapping scene and a plethora of bananas and peanuts (fake of course as the QMT is a nut-free zone!). All bananas and some of the peanuts were crafted by Verity Spinks who is proving to be worth her weight in bananas for both stage management and prop-producing! The cast of Amy Walker, Charles Plaster and Graham Bussey along with a comic double-act of secretaries in the form(s) of Elena and Emily Hancock coped splendidly with both high temperatures and a demanding script. The set beautifully depicted the 1930s office of David O. Selznick & thanks go to Stacy Kempe and Chris Lane for this. Tech was provided by Peter Smith handling another epic soundscape, Len Seymour and Jason Banks.

I cannot stress enough how much work has gone into these shows, and the way everyone pulls together to make the magic happen is nothing less than inspiring. Special thanks go to go to our wonderful set and tech teams and in particular Chris Lane and Len Seymour for their expertise and support. Wardrobe have come up trumps in the costume department so huge thanks go to Laura Freeborn and Jill Mayhew for helping the directors' visions come to life. Thanks too to Paul Boichat for his splendid production photos.

The studio theatre is a lovely intimate space to perform in and this year has seen the inclusion, while having quite small casts, of some pretty big plays, both in the sense of script demands and set and tech. There's nothing the BPs rise to more than a challenge and I'd say this season has really seen our collective creative juices flow!

Well done us, I say!

Ali Hancock x