



NEWSLETTER

For Members, Patrons,
Vice-Presidents and Friends of the Society



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Hello Again!

It has been a few months since our last newsletter, and with some important events coming up soon we felt it was time to write to all our members, ensuring everyone is up-to-date with Society activities.

In this issue we'll be covering the forthcoming Concert Tour, the AGM, the start of our Autumn production and future shows.

Spring Concert 2005

Rehearsals are continuing for our next production – the Spring Concert Tour, entitled *A Night At The Movies*.

The programme of songs this year has raised some particular challenges - who would have thought that a 'Disney medley' would turn out to be so difficult to learn? - but it will all be worth it in the end, and this is going to be another excellent showcase for the talents of the Society's members.

Just a reminder to everybody of the dates and venues:

First performance is on Friday 13 May at 7.30pm, at St Matthias and St George Church, Church Road, Astwood Bank. Tickets are £6 each, and include refreshments.

The next performance is on Saturday 14 May at 7.30pm, at St Peter's Church next to Coughton Court. Tickets are £6 each, and include wine and nibbles.

Then we've got our special tea-time concert at Cookhill Village Hall on Sunday 15 May starting at 6.00pm. Tickets are £8 each, and at the time of writing we have very few (if any) left, so if you want to come to Cookhill, then please check with our

ticket secretary, Ann Duffin (see below).

The following week we resume on Friday 20 May at 7.30pm at the Ecumenical Centre in Redditch Town Centre. Tickets are £6 each, and include drink and cake.

Finally, we end the tour on Saturday 21 May at 7.30pm at All Saints' Church in Bromsgrove. Tickets are £6.50 each, and include light refreshments.

Tickets for all venues are being sold by Ann Duffin on 01527 527363. Please note that tickets will not be available 'on the door' at Cookhill Village Hall, and there is a (small) chance that the other venues may declare a 'sell out' - so we urge you all to book your tickets via Ann as soon as possible.

We particularly look forward to seeing all non-performing Society members in the audience at one, or more, of the concerts.

Happy As A Sandbag

Our major production this year will be at the Kingsley Theatre (formerly the Lees High School Theatre) during the week commencing Monday 28 November.

Most of you are aware that the Palace Theatre is closed for refurbishment for this next year, so we are delighted to have found a suitable alternative venue in town.

A Few Words from our Producer:

"I am delighted that the committee has given me the opportunity to direct an Autumn show and I must say that I am very excited by the prospect.

Although my original ideas of what to do this year were scuppered by difficulties with performing rights, I believe our choice of *Happy As A Sandbag* has been just right!

Happy As A Sandbag is a compilation musical (revue) using songs of the World War II years. The show was subtitled 'all the fun of the 1940s' although it is really a collection of wartime songs strung together with linking dialogue.

Written by Ken Lee, the show was first performed in 1975 at the Ambassadors Theatre, London.

This will be a different show for the Society - there are many different scenes, and lots of opportunity for everybody, since there are no major roles that stand out above others.

Nevertheless, I believe that this is the strength of the piece because we can have a great deal of flexibility on staging and a greater involvement of members of the Society in key areas of performance. There is also lots of opportunity for audience participation!

I really do want this to be a big team effort because of the challenges ahead with performing at a new venue. This should be a fun and happy show to stage, and a chance for us all to have a heart-felt sing-song due to the fact that these are very well known songs and there isn't much, if any, harmony!

We will be able to give some real power to songs such as *Knees Up*, *Mother Brown*, *When The Lights Go On* and *The White Cliffs of Dover*.

As with any show, the committee has agreed that this production will work within a budget, but it won't be as expensive as our recent major productions at the Palace.

Obviously, with the restrictions of the Kingsley Theatre, I really do not want great lumbering sets, but the stage will be dressed. And, as part of the stage dressing, I will want to use you!

In addition, monies will be set aside for wardrobe and a three-piece orchestra.

Although I haven't dotted the 'i's or crossed the 't's I have already formulated a few ideas for this production. I am very grateful to those who have already agreed to support me in this venture and I know I can rely on the rest of the Society to give their full support and commitment.

There is one other, crucial thing I would like to mention. This is the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II. *Happy As A Sandbag* will allow ROS to present its own unique way of commemorating this event in reflection as well as celebration.

So, please join us all, and be part of a truly 'Society' team show which will be performed at the Kingsley Theatre this year."

Marcus Bridger, Producer

As Marcus says, this should be a really good fun show to be in, with lots of parts for lots of people. It's such a good choice of show for this year - we had to choose something on a smaller scale due to the Palace's unavailability, but being able to tie our production into the sixtieth anniversary of the end of war makes it a most appropriate choice.

Rehearsals will start on Tuesday 21 June, at Community House, Easemore Road. As usual, this first meeting will be a 'social evening' where we will hear all about the show, including some of the music, and the ideas that the production team have for the show. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM this year is being held on Tuesday 17 May (in between the two concert tour weeks), at Community House, Easemore Road, starting at 7.45pm.

We have been concerned by the low attendance at recent AGMs, and would urge all members to attend this important meeting. If, for any good reason, you cannot attend please ensure your apologies are passed on to our Secretary, Jean Chalk, in advance of the meeting.

As well as hearing how the Society has fared over the past year, and nominating members of next year's committee, there will be the nicest part where we hand out all the awards - the NODA Long Service Awards, the Society's own 'fun' awards, and the Norman Wheeler Memorial Award.

You never know, if you don't come along you might miss out on your own award!

Future Shows

The committee recently got together to compile a list of shows that we would like to consider for the next few years. We realise that we need to plan our shows well in advance, and have been looking at our return to the Palace Theatre in 2006, as well as the years beyond.

We think we've come up with an exciting, and diverse, selection of shows that will appeal both to our members and the public alike.

Topping the list are Rogers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* (which was last performed by ROS as long ago as 1978) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (which will be

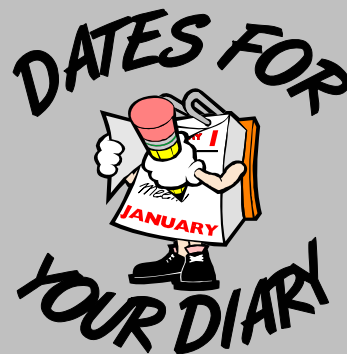
another new, exciting departure for us). Other shows in the 'hot list' (in no particular order) include *Barnum*, *Orpheus In The Underworld*, *Crazy For You* and *Hot Mikado*.

Looking even further ahead, when they become available for amateurs we will also be going for *Chicago* and *Beauty And The Beast*.

At the time of writing, we are still pursuing the contracts for our 2006 and 2007 shows, but as soon as we have them 'signed, sealed and delivered' we will make the announcements to you all.

We hope you agree that this list provides something for everybody - whether it be traditional or modern, serious or comical, musical or operetta.

Regarding next Spring, the decision on what we do in May 2006 will be made by the new committee members elected at the AGM.



Fri 13 May, Sat 14 May, Sun 15 May, Fri 20 May, Sat 21 May
Spring Concert Tour dates.

Tue 17 May

AGM, at Community House, Easemore Road starting at 7.45pm.

Tue 21 June

'Social Evening' (first meeting) for the launch of *Happy As A Sandbag*.

w/c Mon 28 November

Happy As A Sandbag, at The Kingsley Theatre, Woodrow, Redditch.

For further details on social events, see any member of the committee.

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