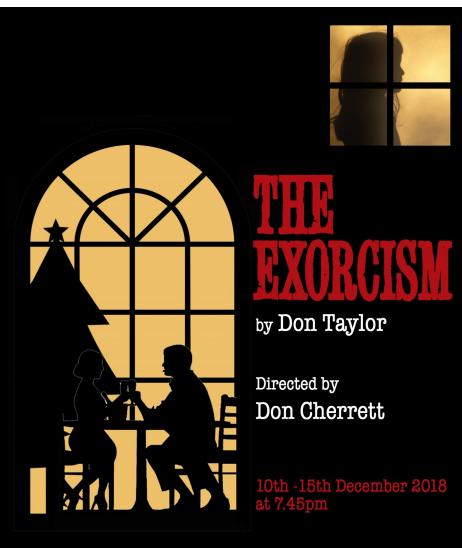


## NEWSLETTER 2018-2019 Season November 2018 Issue 141

Member: Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain www.bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk



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## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Dear Members and Patrons.

The 2018/19 season is in full flow with two enjoyable productions already complete; we thank you for your continued support. Rehearsals for our December production of *The Exorcism* are now also under way (I'm part of the cast!); so do go online and secure your ticket and seat.

Be sure to check the Diary section of the newsletter to see details and dates for upcoming events; especially the read-through and auditions and Unrehearsed Play Readings for the second half of the season. We also have a Christmas soiree planned, please do come along – everyone is welcome!

We were very sad to hear of the passing in October of two long standing BLT members and patrons - Michael Caton and Peter J Smith. These two gentlemen were dedicated in their love of the theatre throughout their lives and we are truly grateful for their contributions over the years as actors, directors, technical designers as well as members of the audience.

Alongside many theatres (amateur and professional) in recent years, we have been experiencing a drop in membership, lower audience numbers and sometimes difficulty in casting roles in our plays. We thought this downward trend was something recent, maybe partly due to the increase in new theatre groups in the area; however, as I was looking through the archive section of old newsletters recently, they made interesting reading. Many of my predecessors have written about their concerns in these areas; we really do need and value your continued support for our Little Theatre.

Do you - our members and patrons, have any thoughts about what we can do to buck this trend? If so, please do email me at <a href="mailto:chairman@bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk">chairman@bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk</a> or write to me at the theatre. This Theatre is part of the local community and we believe in the tradition of "Keeping Live Theatre Alive".

Warmest regards

#### Rachael

#### Deadline for next newsletter 6th January 2019

## **ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS**

Our mailing address for all ticket bookings is:

BLT Box Office, 54 Wentworth Avenue, Bournemouth, BH5 2EG

#### Tickets £10.00 (with concessions) Members £5.00

- ♦ BOOK ONLINE at www.bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk (booking fees apply)
- ♦ WRITE enclosing cheque (payable to BLTC) and SAE to BLTC Box Office (address above)
- ♦ PHONE to book by calling Sue on her home number **01202 417484** \*\*

#### \*\* ONLY between 8.00pm and 9.00pm during the week Monday 3rd to Friday 7th December 2018 \*\*

Tickets will be issued on receipt of a completed booking form, cheque and SAE. Where an SAE is not enclosed, tickets will be retained to be collected at the theatre on the night of the performance.

**During the run of the show**, enquiries should be made direct to the theatre on **01202 513361** either by leaving a message on the ansaphone or, between 6.00pm and 6.45pm, when the Box Office is open for telephone calls or callers in person.

It is also possible to book tickets for some of the visiting companies. Please check the website for full details.

A FINAL PLEA: If you have booked tickets and know that you, or one of your party, will not be able to attend, please let the Box Office know as soon as possible.

Thank you



#### THE EXORCISM

**Don Taylor** (1936-2003) was an English writer, director and producer; active across theatre, radio and television for over forty years. He is most noted for his television work, particularly his early 1960s collaborations with the playwright David Mercer, much of whose early work Taylor directed for the BBC.

He studied English Literature at Oxford University where he became actively involved in student theatre. In 1957 he directed the world premiere of *Epitaph for George Dillon* by the acclaimed playwright John Osborne.

After graduating, he joined the BBC in 1960, quickly becoming a television director in the drama department. His first directing work was an episode of the crime series *Scotland Yard*, but he rapidly became more associated with directing single plays. His association with

David Mercer began in 1961 with Where the Difference Begins, the first instalment in what became the "Generations" trilogy, the subsequent instalments of which – A Climate of Fear (1962) and Birth of a Private Man (1963) were also directed by Taylor. He also directed Mercer's Sunday Night Play episode A Suitable Case for Treatment (1962), which explored the writer's experiences of his own nervous breakdown.

Taylor was greatly displeased by the arrival in December 1962 of the Canadian producer Sydney Newman as the new Head of Drama at the BBC. He regarded Newman as an uncultured populist with no theatrical knowledge or background; Taylor himself felt that the BBC should be the "National Theatre of the Air". He also disliked Newman's restructuring of the drama department, one of the features of which was the abolition of the BBC's traditional single producer/director role and the division of responsibilities of producing and directing to separate posts.

Newman attempted to work with Taylor and offered him the producer's role on a series the Canadian himself had initiated – an educational science-fiction serial for children entitled *Doctor Who*. Taylor had no interest in the series. Taylor remained with the BBC for a time, but eventually in 1963 his unhappiness with the department under Newman drove him to resign from the corporation. Although he did return as a freelancer to direct two episodes of *The Wednesday Play* in 1965. He later claimed to have been "blacklisted" from working in the BBC's drama department for the remainder of the decade.

Taylor, however, was able to find work with other departments of the BBC, directing several episodes of *Omnibus*. He also began to find success as a playwright himself, for the theatre, with his first professional play *Grounds for Marriage* being premiered in 1967.

From the early 1970s, he also began to work for BBC television drama again directing versions of his own plays *The Exorcism* in 1972, and *The Roses of Eyam* the following year.

He also worked in television for the ITV network, including two episodes of Nigel Kneale's ATV anthology horror series Beasts in 1976.

He went on to direct mostly classic theatrical adaptations for the BBC, including *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in 1984 for their *The Complete Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare* series, which adapted all of Shakespeare's plays for the small screen. His final television work was his own new translation of *Iphigenia at Aulis* by Euripides in 1990. That same year he published a memoir of his television work, *Days of Vision*, in which he was scathing of the state of modern television drama and the disappearance of the theatrical tradition from the medium.

For the remainder of his career, Taylor was particularly active in radio and the theatre. The same year that he retired from television work, he and his wife established a radio production company producing plays independently for transmission on BBC radio. He both wrote and directed for radio himself, as well as working alongside his wife in the running of a youth theatre company they had established near their Chiswick home. He wrote a number of plays for the company.

**The Exorcism** The first thing people seem to ask when they see the title of this play is 'Is this play of the actual.....you know....is this **the** Exorcism?' – thinking that this is the play of the 1973 film *The Exorcist* about a girl possessed by a demon in Washington DC! Nope, it's a story set (originally in the 1970s) in a country cottage somewhere in rural England about the strange goings on when two couples get together for Christmas dinner.

When Rachel sits down to play a tune on her Christmas present from husband, Edmund, why does she subconsciously play something she has never heard before? Why does the electricity suddenly fail? And what is wrong with the wine and the Christmas dinner?........

## **Director: Don Cherrett**

Don has been involved in local theatre since the mid 1970s. For the first twenty years he primarily concentrated on acting, appearing in numerous roles over that time (one day he says he will write down all that he has done if he can remember it all!) - but after directing for the first time in the mid 1980s he started alternating between acting and directing and the latter has taken over control of his life for most of the last 20+ years, with appearing on stage now being a rare event (in fact, not since 2010 in *Seasons Greetings* at BLT).



With *The Exorcism* Don will be directing for the 16<sup>th</sup> time at Bournemouth Little Theatre since his debut direction of Ayckbourn's *Intimate Exchanges* in April 2000. It is however the second time that Don will have directed this play though as he previously did this with Castle Players back in 2001.

Although Don has been with BLT since the late 1990s he has been active longer with Brownsea Open Air Theatre – since 1984 when he made his first appearance on stage there. Since 1999 Don has directed Shakespeare there eight times, including the challenging *Titus Andronicus* this summer.

# **AUDITION NOTICES**

# SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER by Tennessee Williams Directed by Brian Woolton

In the garden of her New Orleans mansion, the wealthy and reclusive Violet Venable still grieves over the sudden death of her beloved son Sebastian the previous summer. Only Mrs Venable's niece Catherine knows the truth of how Sebastian died, but she has been so traumatised by the event that her mind appears to be shattered and her version of the truth is too terrible to believe.

Mrs Venable seeks the help of Dr Cukrowicz, the leading specialist in a controversial new technique for removing harmful ideas from the mind – he proposes to literally cut the hideous story out of her brain. However, Dr Cukrowicz first needs to be sure of Catherine's mental state and insists on questioning her in person. What she reveals about Sebastian's true nature and how he died threatens to destroy Mrs. Venable's fond memories of her son and expose a dark history that none of them wants to believe.

Tennessee William's gothic drama strips back the veneer to expose the grim reality beneath, and asks us a profound question - is "the truth" just a story that we choose to believe, even if that choice causes pain and suffering? Can we choose which "truth" to believe? Savagely poetic and brutally eloquent *Suddenly Last Summer* is an intense and moving story from a writer at the height of his creative powers.

#### FRIDAY 11 JANUARY 2019 7.30pm

Read through BLT Green Room

#### SUNDAY 13 JANUARY 2019 7.30pm

Auditions BLT Stage

Performances: 8-13 April 2019 7.45pm

Anyone interested in taking part or helping with the production please come to the reading/ audition.

If you wish to audition and cannot make either of the above dates please contact Brian Woolton at bwoolton@btinternet.com

Auditions are open to all but, if you are cast, you must become a member of Bournemouth Little
Theatre.

#### Roles listed in order of number of lines. Ages are a guide only

**Mrs Venable** (Female, over 50, Southern American accent)

A wealthy widow. Very sure of herself and her position, demanding and unforgiving. Physically frail but mentally strong.

**Dr Cukrowicz** (Male, thirties, good looking, any American accent)
A young doctor. Charming, intelligent, insightful, prone to self doubt.

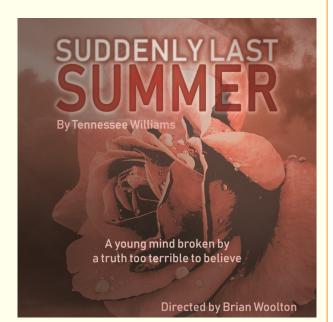
**Catherine** (Female, twenties, pretty, Southern American accent)
Mrs Venable's niece. Suffering from severe shock and believed to be "mad" she is confined to an asylum. Passionate, fiercely independent, but broken.

Mrs Holly (Female, over 40, Southern American accent)
Catherine's mother. Devoted to Catherine, but desperate to please
Mrs Venable.

**George** (Male, 25-35, Southern American Accent)
Catherine's brother, a bit of an oaf, not very bright but tries hard.

**Sister Felicity** (Female, any age, an American or Irish accent)
A nun and nurse taking care of Catherine. A bully, physically strong and morally absolute.

Miss Foxhill (Female, Over 30, Southern American accent)
Mrs. Venable's housekeeper. Downtrodden, sullen, but loyal. Physically strong.



## **AUDITION NOTICES**

# DOUBT, A PARABLE by John Patrick Shanley Directed by Rachael de Courcy Beamish

In 1964 the winds of change are sweeping through St Nicholas Church school in the Bronx where the first black student, Donald Muller has just been accepted. The Church school is run by Sister Aloysius, a rigidly conservative nun, who insists upon constant vigilance. Father Flynn the beloved, charismatic parish priest, is advocating reform of the school's strict customs.

When the impressionable but inexperienced teacher, Sister James expresses her observations to Sister Aloysius about Father Flynn calling Donald Muller out of class and that on his return he acted differently and "I think there was alcohol on his breath"; Sister Aloysius begins a personal crusade against the priest - despite her lack of evidence.

Doubt, A Parable, by John Patrick Stanley; won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and 8 Tony Awards, including Best Play. Doubt was turned into an Academy Award-nominated film starring Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams and Viola Davis.

#### FRIDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2019 7.30pm

Read through BLT Green Room

#### **SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2019**

7.30pm

Auditions BLT Stage

Performances: 3-8 June 2019 7.45pm

Anyone interested in taking part or helping with the production please come to the reading/ audition.

If you wish to audition and cannot make either of the above dates please contact Rachael de Courcy Beamish at chairman@ bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk

Auditions are open to all but, if you are cast, you must become a member of Bournemouth Little Theatre.

#### Cast:

#### Sister Aloysius Beauvier

The head nun and principal of St Nicholas School. Driven by a high sense of duty but rigid and conservative.

#### **Father Brendan Flynn**

A middle aged priest. Articulate and personable.

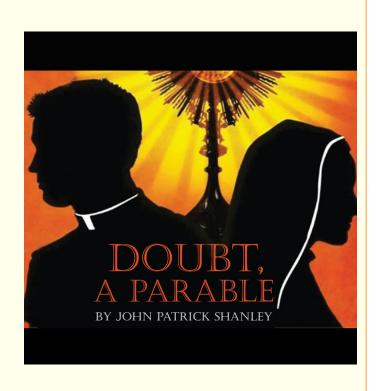
#### **Sister James**

A young impressionable nun. Enthusiastic but inexperienced teacher.

#### **Mrs Muller**

The mother of Donald Muller, the school's first black student.

(Please note, Mrs Muller only appears in one scene)



## **DEVIEWS:** Heroes



It's August 1959 and three French World War I veterans have become increasingly disillusioned by life in their convent military nursing home, despite the relatively peaceful and idyllic setting of their own terrace, overlooking not just the local cemetery, but also a view of beautiful poplar trees, a view which leads to them deciding to make a break for freedom. While reminiscing about their lives and past battles, grumbling about the staff, dreaming of chasing younger women and worrying about the potential

consequences of multiple birthdays on the same day, they hatch a plot to escape across the fields.

However, their plans are mildly hampered, to say the least, by the facts that one is a severe agoraphobic, one has a severe limp and the other becomes unconscious periodically due to the piece of shrapnel that is lodged in his brain, all presumably consequences of their wartime experiences.

Originally a French play, *Le Vent Des Peupliers* by Parisienne playwright Gerald Sibleyras, it was translated into English by Tom Stoppard and entitled *Heroes* to avoid the literal translation (*The Wind Of The Poplars*) becoming confused with *The Wind In The Willows* as a title and because Stoppard claimed that his preferred title of *Veterans* was already taken. It won the prestigious Laurence Olivier award for Best New Comedy; it's easy to see why, as this is a compelling observational comedy, often politically incorrect, somewhat bawdy but ultimately poignant, reminiscent of the original trio of mischievous and grumpy old men in a Gallic version of *Last Of The Summer Wine*.

The three actors are all on stage for virtually the entire play and maintain great energy, focus and strong personalities throughout, capturing the different physical and emotional manifestations of the battle scars that they each carry with clarity, comic value but also some sensitivity. Individually they each give strong performances: Noel Davenport as affable, possibly naïve, bumbling Henri, Lindsay Jones as suave, debonair, haughty Gustave and David Vinter as curmudgeonly, suspicious and shameless Phillipe. However, they also collectively gel together in a convincing cohesive unit as war veterans who have lived together in the home for years, complete with their shared empathies and verbal bickering.

Director Tony Hessey has ensured that this production is a very good combination of pace and pause, a very difficult balance to achieve. If the three actors have forgotten or stumbled over any of their lines – and there are a LOT of lines in this play! – then it is kept in character and becomes an integral part of their characterisations, although perhaps at times the physical ramifications of neurological conditions are slightly overemphasised and would benefit from a subtler approach.

The scenery and set dressing, enhanced by atmospheric lighting and good rural sound effects, bring a feel of the French Riviera to the intimate Little Theatre and Rocky the stone dog is a vital component of the production, both to the narrative and aesthetically. The costumes capture the mature late 1950s style for gentlemen, despite them wearing the same clothes over the time span of the play.

This has been my first visit to Bournemouth Little Theatre; it is unlikely to be my last. The last words of their programme are "Be alive to live theatre and keep theatre alive" and with quality productions like *Heroes* (which, although not perfect, fully deserves a larger audience than the one I was a part of this evening), BLT will no doubt achieve this for many more years to come.

Rocky was specially created for this production by Andy Gent the owner of Arch Model Studio the multi award winning, stop motion puppet, marionette and set design workshop. The original puppet design on which he is based was created for the character Chief (voiced by Bryan Cranston) in the stop motion feature film *The Isle of Dogs*.



Anne Waggott, Scene One Plus

# BLT CENTENARY SEASON: 2019/20

## **CALL TO ASPIRING DIRECTORS:**

As you may know, during 2019/20 we celebrate our Centenary. We will be looking to select a wide variety of plays that recognise and reflect the best of the last 100 years.

If you would like to direct one of the Centenary Season's productions for Bournemouth Little Theatre, we invite you to register your interest either by contacting a member of the Play Selection Committee (contact details on the back page of this newsletter) or in writing to Bournemouth Little Theatre; please stated if you have a preferred production slot (September, October, December, February, April or June) please let us know, although this cannot always be guaranteed.

Plays for the "2019/20 Season" will be selected by March 2019, **DON'T DELAY**, please tender your interest and play choice(s) as soon as possible.

PLEASE NOTE: You will need to become a member should you wish to direct or act for Bournemouth Little Theatre.

## **Unrehearsed Play Readings**

Friday 30th November 2018, 7,30pm Bournemouth Little Theatre, Green Room

#### Letter from the Hen House

Brian Freeland's dramatisation of the lives of British women in India during the second half of the Raj drawing heavily on the diaries, letters and biographies of the people involved, from an army sergeant's wife to a Viceroy's consort.

This reading has a cast of six ladies and four men and will commence at 7.30pm in the Green Room at Bournemouth Little Theatre on Friday 30th November 2018.

The event will be hosted by Don Gent and the bar will be open, all are welcome.

#### **Unrehearsed Play Readings**

The Green Room

Bournemouth Little Theatre

7.30pm

Hosted by Gillian Linford

## **FREE ADMISSION**

- Friday 30th November 2018

  Letter from the Hen House
- Friday 25th January 2019
- ♦ Friday 22nd February 2019
- ♦ Friday 22nd March 2019

## MEMBERSHIP

### **Membership Subscriptions**

May we take this opportunity to urge all readers to support the Club by becoming members or encouraging existing members to renew their membership?

A membership form is enclosed and further copies may be downloaded from our website **www.bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk**.

As a Registered Charity we rely entirely on the support of our members and, as we approach our Centenary, we are planning a variety of events to commemorate this special milestone.

As a member, you are entitled to discounted ticket prices and the opportunity to play a full part in the Club's activities.

## **Keeping Live Theatre Alive!**

## **GIVING SUPPORT**

As well as attending productions, events and activities, there are many other ways to support Bournemouth Little Theatre. You could make a donation, leave a legacy, name a seat, sponsor a production or part of the building, give goods and services, hire our facilities or take an advertisement in our programme.

We are currently raising funds for the refurbishment of the theatre to relaunch BLT at our Centenary celebrations in 2019. Any donations will be gratefully received by cheque to BLTC or by BACS to:

Bournemouth Little Theatre Ltd, Sort Code: 30-91-08, Account Number: 00958587 Thank you.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

30 November 2018
Unrehearsed Play Reading
Letter from the Hen House
Host Don Gent

10-15 December 2018

The Exorcism

By Don Taylor

Directed by Don Cherrett

16 December 2018

Members' Christmas Party

Entertainment, bar, nibbles and raffle

20-22 December 2018

Arena Theatre: She Kills Monsters

by Qui Nguyen

25 January 2019
Unrehearsed Play Reading
Host Gillian Linford

11-16 February 2019
Nocturnal

By Juan Mayorga Directed by Hayley Tucker

22 February 2019
Unrehearsed Play Reading
Host Gillian Linford

22 March 2019
Unrehearsed Play Reading
Host Gillian Linford

# **OBITUARY NOTICE**



Peter J Smith (7 February 1956 to 10 October 2018)

Theatre was an absolute passion for Peter, both professional and amateur and he liked to see as many productions as possible. But he also enjoyed participating; he joined Brownsea Open Air Theatre in a backstage capacity in 1995 and was involved for some sixteen seasons until 2010. However he was persuaded to take small parts in four productions *King Lear, Merry Wives of Windsor, Measure for Measure* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.



To quote Peter's own words from an article he wrote in the Bournemouth Little Theatre Newsletter in 2011: "Those of you who have seen me act know my limitations – in fact it was years before I was coaxed from backstage. So with an avid interest in theatre was there any other role for me? When, three years ago I was offered the chance to direct a one-act play for Castle Players – Jimmie Chin's *A Respectable Funeral* – I plucked up the courage and happily it was well received.

The opportunity to direct a full length play for them came some months later ... it was to be *The Herbal Bed*, a drama about Shakespeare's daughter, which thanks to an excellent cast was also well received.

I offered various plays to Bournemouth Little Theatre - Bennett, Lorca, Pinter ... but was asked to do a thriller *Trap for a Lonely Man*; I thought if it was good enough for Hitchcock to consider filming, it was good enough for me!

So preparation begins – my thoughts on music, lighting, sound, blocking, dynamics, creating tension etc.. A favourite task is going through my extensive CD collection for music which suits the period, location and especially the mood of the play."

Trap for a Lonely Man was very successful with the reviewer writing "I was gripped by the story, and was kept guessing right to the very end, which is a testament to both the play itself and to the players. It would be a crime to miss it."

#### **Don Gent**

I never knew Pete before he was sadly afflicted with Parkinson's disease, but when I first met him at BLTC he was still working at Bournemouth & Poole College where he taught Accountancy and was still driving his own car. He unfortunately had to abandon both of these, but he was fiercely independent and continued to play the piano and even tennis for many years. As a Season Ticket holder of Bournemouth FC he was a regular at their home games and enjoyed the match atmosphere and particularly their more recent success in the Premier League.

The main thing I'll remember about Pete was his love of music and drama. Theatre was an absolute passion of his. He acted in a number of plays including several appearances with Brownsea Open Air Theatre, although he never rated himself as an actor. He loved Shakespeare and was given life-time membership of BOAT. But his greatest passion was to direct and was probably best known for his direction of *Trap for a Lonely Man* performed at BLTC in April 2011.

Despite his illness Pete liked to get out as much as possible to see professional theatre as well as being a great supporter of amateur productions. He even manged to get down to his local pub on occasions. Unfortunately, often the side effects of the drugs he was taking would cause him to be effected by dyskinesia (jerky movements), and then he would sometimes be afflicted by stiffness and pain which meant he would have to go home before the end. Straight talking - Lancashire born and intelligent, Pete was only 62 when he died and I feel that it was a great shame that he wasn't able to pursue his passions in later life. Although I didn't see that much of him, I will miss him and I will try to remember him for the times when he was more able to enjoy life.

#### Fiona Sinclair

## NOTICEBOARD





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Printed by Big Print Little Print, 1 Ensbury Park Road, Bournemouth



#### Your Council Members:

(Chairman/Play Selection Committee/Facebook Administrator) Don Gent (Marketing/Programmes/Bar Rota Organiser/Play Selection Committee) ... 01202 389725 

(Hon Secretary/Designated Premises Supervisor/Membership Secretary/Newsletter Editor)

Rachael de Courcy Beamish (chairman@bournemouthlittletheatre.co.uk)................. 07557 957648

#### Not on the Council:

June Garland (Coffee Shop Rota Organiser)	01202 700516/07867 801348
Alastair Griffiths (Lighting Design)	
Chris Huggill (Bar Stocks Manager)	
Sue Hyder (Box Office/Programmes)	
Gill Martin (Costume Supervisor)	
Andrew Whyatt (Play Selection Committee)	