

Another year, and things can only get better.....so let me start by wishing you all a Happy New Year that is healthy, peaceful and just a tiny bit more prosperous (let's hope).

As we approach the middle of Studio's Platinum Anniversary year, it's worth reflecting on how things have changed in the last 70 years. Back in 1952, the weather wasn't that great – London was enveloped in the Great Smog, and a new monarch had acceded to the throne with a coronation to come the following year. Al Martino's Here Is My Heart was the Christmas number one and rationing on meat, bacon, cheese, butter and eggs was still in force. Ironic, don't you think, that this year's Christmas number one was Ladbaby's charity single Food Aid.....



70 years on...

But here at Studio we are in good heart with three successful productions under our belt so far this season and a plethora of theatrical goodies to come.

Murder In The Cathedral was a joint production between St Thomas's Church and Studio, originally planned for 2020 to celebrate St Thomas's 800th anniversary. But the pandemic got in the way and the delayed production happily coincided with the start of our 70th year. It was the third time we had staged TS Eliot's masterpiece in the magnificent setting of the city's church – and where better than the building dedicated to Thomas Becket?

Staged over three nights, it sold out completely in advance (and as space allowed for more, tickets sold on the door as well!). This proved a fruitful collaboration between St Thomas's and Studio, so huge thanks to John Bruce-Ball and all at St Thomas's for making it happen, and congratulations to director Ann Acton and to David Hallen, who led the company of priests, knights and women of Canterbury.

The Comedy of Errors was less successful at the box office, but drew some of the best reviews we have ever had from critics and audiences alike. Tyro director Olivia Dutson defied expectation by casting some of our most experienced Shakespearean thespians in parts they should have given up on years ago – and it all worked prestigiously well. Several of the cast immediately discarded Shakespearean togs for piratical gear – or, in one case, wig, frock and falsies – to join the hunt for **Treasure Island**. Our Pirate Panto, penned by our own Ian Flindell, played to full houses with the introduction of a family ticket at reduced rates proving popular. It was the first pantomime we have staged this century – and possibly won't be the last.

And we have played host to a number of activities, including blue badge guide training, a murder mystery fund-raiser for members and friends, a mock trial from History at Large as part of the



Salisbury History Festival plus shows from Elevate Dance, JT Productions and Bishop Wordsworth's School.

Meanwhile backstage....

Work has continued behind the scenes to finish our extension and improve our facilities backstage and front of house. Teething troubles with card readers, I am reliably informed, have been overcome and it's now possible to pay by card for tickets, programmes and refreshments.

Our dressing rooms, now christened The Foyle Rooms after a fabulous grant from the Foyle Foundation, boast new counters and mirrors, and planning is in progress to improve storage of props. We have also benefited from portable staging gifted by Winterslow Village Hall and a wonderfully generous donation of

flats, treads, projection screens, furniture and more from SRS Productions Ltd.

New DoP and Secretary

Our AGM saw longstanding secretary Jill Redston step down and Renata McKinnell pick up her pen and notepad. David Rhodes (left) becomes the Director of Productions for the 2023/24 season and is even now sifting through suggestions. We can also confirm that, despite rising costs on all fronts, we are maintaining our ticket price levels at £12, 16s and under £8. The family ticket may well make a comeback for suitable productions.



Fundraisers and free cash

- A host of fundraising activities for the new year are under discussion with garden parties high on the list.



Our supporters, Rachel and Joe Studholme have opened their lovely garden to us for several years now, and the fundraising team would love to hear from anyone who is prepared to do the same. Contact Rowena Greenaway on rowenagreenaway@hotmail.co.uk or Lorna

Matthews-Keel on lmattthewskeel@hotmail.co.uk if you are interested in learning more.

- Our anniversary badge is still available at £3.50 any time you come to see a show and an anniversary mug at £10 has been added to the merch (as I believe it is known).

- Coffee mornings, talks, and quiz nights – our thanks to the Dusthole landlords Carol and Tony Harding for hosting this last event – have netted more than £300, and donations added to ticket purchases total just over £75. Many thanks to anyone who has supported us in this way.

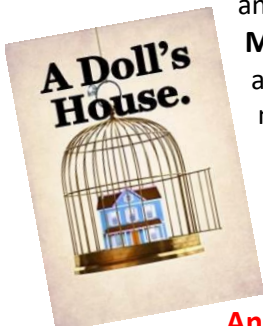
- Smile: Our treasurer, Tom Maskell, reports: "You can now support Studio theatre completely for free by using your Amazon account. If you link your Amazon to Studio theatre then 0.5% of all eligible purchases will be donated to the Theatre with no additional cost to you! Sign up now at smile.amazon.co.uk and make sure you support "Studio Theatre Salisbury, EW"."

Our packed new season looks like this:

February 13-18: The Wolves of Willoughby Chase. Studio Youth Theatre bring Joan Aiken's classic tale to the stage. Two young cousins and a goose boy fight for survival against howling wolves and grim governesses in the bleak, snowy landscape of an alternative Victorian England. Russ Tunney's enchanting adaptation is funny, sinister, heart-warming and great fun.



March 27-April 1: A Fine Bright Day Today. Postponed from 2020, we're delighted finally to present George Goulding's production of his playwright brother Philip's warm and funny exploration of love in later life. Widowed Margaret Harvey has built up a protective barrier of routine and ritual over the years - until visiting artist Milton comes to lodge in her house armed with patience, humour and cheap wine.



May 22-27: A Doll's House. Director Tamsin Jacson tackles Bryony Lavery's modern adaptation of Ibsen's revolutionary classic, which still resonates today. Marriage and motherhood, blackmail and betrayal, truth and lies – Nora's domestic life unravels and a door famously slams.

July 10-15: Steel Magnolias. Truvy runs a beauty parlour in Louisiana where a group of women gather to gossip, discuss Shelby's upcoming wedding and each other. Anthony von Roretz will direct a stellar cast of Studio women. Bring a hankie.

And there's more....

January 25-28: Alice in Wonderland. Salisbury scouts' pantomime, co-directed by our own Cassia Woolley, pays its annual visit to Studio: evening performances at 7pm and a Saturday matinee at 2pm.

March 2023: The Totton Festival of Drama at Hanger Farm Arts Centre. Studio will be fielding three productions: **Tracks** from SYT and **Murder in Little Grimley** and **English for Pony Lovers** by the adult company. It's hoped that dates can be found to stage all three at Studio.

Sadly, we have recently learned that Studio member Helen Harvey-Humphreys has passed away. Helen was never actively involved in our productions, but her association goes back to 1993 when she escorted her daughter, Katherine Reynolds, to our auditions for Daisy Pulls It Off. Katherine got the part and Helen was there most rehearsal nights to pick her up and walk her home. Since then, Helen has remained a strong supporter and advocate for Studio Theatre. Our condolences to her family.

All performances take place at Studio Theatre in Ashley Road, Salisbury, unless otherwise stated. Our box office is Salisbury Information Centre in Fish Row. Seats can be booked on 01722 342860 or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/studiotheatresalisbury