

BACK STAGE

DIARY DATES

2021

MARCH

“O Brave New World” will be shared amongst you.

APRIL

The KDA Radio plays will be judged and winners announced

NOTHING ELSE IN DIARY SO FAR!

Note new CATS dates

2022

JUNE 1 - 4

CATS

Sinden Theatre

TODS are always looking for ideas for future productions. If there is a show or play that you would love to see us do, don't be shy, drop us a note.

Perhaps you fancy directing? Don't be afraid, you will get all the support you could possibly need. Drop us a note to productions@tods.me.uk or call one of the committee.

Please contribute to the newsletter. If you see something that you think might amuse or be of interest to others, please share it by sending an email to todsnewsletter@gmail.com or newsletter@tods.me.uk.

Let us know your birthday; then we all have an excuse for having another glass of wine as we wish you well.

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Write to:

The Chairperson, TODS, “The Roundels”, Grange Road, Tenterden, TN30 6EE

TODS



TENTERDEN OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 2102

FRONT OF HOUSE

WELCOME

Hello dear devoted readers of TODS newsletters, I hope this finds you on the edge of sanity, holding on tight to the fading memories of how joyful life in the world of amateur dramatics used to be. My apologies for failing to produce a newsletter in January, but I blame you for failing to send me any news! Such are the times in which we are currently living, if it's not Covid or Brexit it's not news - sad times indeed.

What have you been doing to occupy yourselves during lockdown? It would be really interesting to hear, perhaps you could inspire some of our other readers. Isabel and I walk the dog on the beach most days, we are blessed to have a lovely coastline within easy reach. Of course that North East wind is well known and it does blow from time to time, but we are hardened to it. On the positive side we rarely get any snow (none so far this year apart from a brief flurry). But dog walking doesn't fill the day, so I have taken to writing! Since the first lockdown I have written two plays, two sketches, two monologues, and made a start on a 5000 word true story which if I complete I will enter into the “King Lear Prizes” competition. I have managed to get a cast of ten together to read/perform the second of the plays via zoom, and I'm delighted there are some TODS members among them. It is called “Who is Doris?”.

Honestly, if I can write rubbish so can you. It is time and mind consuming, and you will be surprised where your imagination takes you. I thoroughly recommend it as a pastime.

Anyway, you didn't sign up to receive the TODS newsletter to read about me, but no one else has anything to say, so I'm doing the best I can to fill this space. If it's not too late, may I take the opportunity to wish you all a happy 2021.

When restrictions are eased we will be among you, with our mad dog. Until then please take care, and please let me have any news, thoughts, or objections.

Barry

ACT ONE

SNIPPETS

'An actor is the kind of guy who, if you ain't talking about him, ain't listening.' **George Glass** (US film producer.)

Describing playing King Lear, Laurence **Olivier** said: 'When you've the strength for it, you're too young; when you've the age, you're too old. It's a bugger, isn't it!'

On being congratulated on his performance as the Captain in Strindberg's bleak play about the misery of marriage, cheerily titled *The Dance of Death*, **Olivier** replied: 'It wasn't difficult. There isn't a line that I haven't said to one of my three wives.'

'The difference between being a **director** and being an **actor** is the difference between being the carpenter banging nails into some wood and being the piece of wood the nails are being banged into.' Sean Penn.

GEORGE CARDEN (Director / Choreographer)

A dancer reprimanded by George came back with the comment "But Mr Carden I'm not queer," whereupon Carden advanced on him from the stalls with the pronouncement, "Never mind: no-one will know from the front."

From Gyles Brandreth

One or two of these stories feature in the new one-man show I'm doing at the moment here at the Edinburgh Fringe. It's called *Break a leg!* and it's inspired by my wife's anthology of theatrical quotations and by some of the legendary performers I have been privileged to encounter over the years. Before the show I warm up with an exercise taught me by Sir Donald Sinden, who gave me a master-class on elocution, explaining that 'it's your vowels that give you volume and your consonants that give you clarity.' In front of my dressing-room mirror, following a deep breath, I shall repeat his mantra: 'Hip bath, hip bath, lavatory, lavatory, bidet, bidet, douche.' And after the show, I shall follow Sinden's advice, too, and not read the reviews. 'If it's good, it's good,' he told me. 'If it isn't, you'll know.'

Register

The warmest best wishes from TODS to the following folk who have birthdays in January & February

- Heather Coles 31/1
- Daisy Fermor 7/2
- Steve Bowen 15/2
- Les Fenton 17/2
- Bryan Deverell 18/2
- Steve Coles 25/2
- Andy Clarke 25/2
- Gillian Davis 26/2
- Olive Neal 26/2
- Kay Fitzgerald 29/2

If you would like a birthday or anniversary acknowledged in these pages send an email to newsletter@tods.me.uk

ACT TWO

Kay Fitzgerald (cont)

The lighting team were unexpectedly called away, a certain Fiona Edwards who is now also with TODS was supposed to help out but was delayed. To make matters worse I hate any form of technology and knowing this one of the members had decided as a joke to place an official card from Southern Electric stating that there would be a power cut between 8 pm till 9 pm. After scraping me off the floor they decided to let me in on the joke. I have never gone anywhere near a lighting board since. We did a couple of musicals, only one was I in and this time I discovered that the band just could not keep up with me. Amateurs hey?

I also joined at this time a society in Croydon, yet more musicals but this time I just turned the mike off and danced (something I love) around. I was lucky to perform with The Miller Centre Players , where all I seemed to do was get parts where I took most of my clothes off. In 2004 I joined Lewes Little Theatre playing some lovely leading and characterful parts & by this time I had married Fitzy & got him involved. We both were approached and asked to perform in Horsham one of the Talking Heads, this was probably the second most terrified I have ever been. Once again, I tried a musical, had the lead in the little-known Hamelin & discovered again that the band could not keep up with me. From the mid-nineties until 2013 I was lucky enough to be in one or two plays a year. My favourite part was Maggie in Outside Edge. I played this part 3 times with three different societies and also directed it. Other roles included little cousin Cecily in The Importance of Being Earnest, several parts in Travels with my Aunt. Other plays included Bazaar and Rummage, Pardon me Prime Minister, Chapter Two, to name a few of my favourites.

The part time flying job then enabled me to start working as an Extra, for TV and Films. One of the most exciting was 5 days' work on the set of Harry Potter, Fitzy & I are in the crowd scenes, blink and you miss us. I was in several adverts for EE with Kevin Bacon (he is not very nice, and did not speak to the Extras! !)An advert for Burger King on Beachy Head. A funny story there whereby The Police were called as a lady (me) was seen with a duster and rubber gloves close to the edge. They thought I was unhinged and ready to jump! There are so many funny stories with filming, though it also goes hand in hand with hanging around in the cold and wet, whilst the Stars all get pampered. Have also been in a Bollywood film. Yet another incredibly long day.

Fitzy & I moved to Tenterden in 2014 where we find ourselves now, enjoying all that goes with TODS ,I joined an all-female cast in The House of Bernarda Alba and found that same sense of camaraderie and very talented bunch as in my first drama group all those years ago.Fitzy & I were later lucky to be cast together in Abigails with an amazing cast & crew led by Heather Leslie/Coles.

I decided that as my musical endeavours are never well received, I would help Heather Coles out in Sister Act. I was stretched beyond belief in sorting costumes for Sister Act, however with great help and an amazing director & cast it all came together & I loved being backstage helping the amazingly talented Monica Green with very quick changes and found it strangely rewarding. You understand so much more when you have been both on and off stage, how vital every piece of costume and prop is .

I have made and continue to make amazing friends through drama and along with others look forward to returning to the stage soon and hopefully one day finding a band that can keep up with me!! I nominate **KAREN Wright** for next edition

INTERVAL

“The Dumb Man” by Sherwood Anderson

There is a story - I cannot tell it - I have no words. The story is almost forgotten but sometimes I remember. The story concerns three men in a house in a street. If I could say the words I would sing the story. I would whisper it into the ears of women, of mothers. I would run through the streets saying it over and over. My tongue would be torn loose--it would rattle against my teeth.

The three men are in a room in the house. One is young and dandified. He continually laughs. There is a second man who has a long white beard. He is consumed with doubt but occasionally his doubt leaves him and he sleeps. A third man there is who has wicked eyes and who moves nervously about the room rubbing his hands together. The three men are waiting - waiting. Upstairs in the house there is a woman standing with her back to a wall, in half darkness by a window. That is the foundation of my story and everything I will ever know is distilled in it.

I remember that a fourth man came to the house, a white silent man. Everything was as silent as the sea at night. His feet on the stone floor of the room where the three men were made no sound. The man with the wicked eyes became like a boiling liquid - he ran back and forth like a caged animal. The old grey man was infected by his nervousness - he kept pulling at his beard. The fourth man, the white one, went upstairs to the woman. There she was - waiting.

How silent the house was - how loudly all the clocks in the neighbourhood ticked. The woman upstairs craved love. That must have been the story. She hungered for love with her whole being. She wanted to create in love. When the white silent man came into her presence she sprang forward. Her lips were parted. There was a smile on her lips. The white one said nothing. In his eyes there was no rebuke, no question. His eyes were as impersonal as stars. Down stairs the wicked one whined and ran back and forth like a little lost hungry dog. The grey one tried to follow him about but presently grew tired and lay down on the floor to sleep. He never awoke again. The dandified fellow lay on the floor too. He laughed and played with his tiny black moustache.

I have no words to tell what happened in my story. I cannot tell the story. The white silent one may have been Death. The waiting eager woman may have been Life. Both the old grey bearded man and the wicked one puzzle me. I think and think but cannot understand them. Most of the time however I do not think of them at all. I keep thinking about the dandified man who laughed all through my story. If I could understand him I could understand everything. I could run through the world telling a wonderful story. I would no longer be dumb. Why was I not given words? Why am I dumb? I have a wonderful story to tell, but know no way to tell it.

DRESS CIRCLE

THIS IS THEIR LIFE

From this vantage point up in the Gods we are able to look down upon the TODS community. This month we take a look at **Kay Fitzgerald**. **As there is little news and Kay has such an interesting story, I have allowed her the luxury of two pages. It occurs to me that some of our earlier contributors were restricted so they may be given the opportunity to tell us more in future editions.**

My love of drama started as a very small child. Age 5, I was actually “discovered” at a local village hall reciting a poem. A lady spotted me and asked my parents if they would be happy for me to go to some auditions in London. Thus, started my illustrious career! As a child of 5 without inhibitions I went from studio to studio in and around London & was lucky enough to be cast in many adverts. I was in adverts for Lego, Bobo Bunny (a comic) a Bisto kid, Trutex T-shirts and was in an advert with Patsy Kensit. (I am sure she remembers me) all of this from the ages of 5- 12 years. I modelled for a catalogue called " Empire Stores" and was even in a rather racy 1969 movie “ Three into Two won't Go “ with Rod Steiger & Judy Gleeson. I had to walk down the road with Mr Steiger I think that was probably my finest hour as since then I have been more of a B list celebrity !

Sadly, by the age of 12 I had peaked I became a washed-up actress, I just could not get the parts studios no longer wanted me. I had become very tall and thin with bad acne and cast aside. So, my parents decided that schooling was more important.

Legos loss was Amateur Dramatics gain.

After I left school, I went to work in The Nat West Bank where I joined their drama group. We put on The Pyjama Game. I went to the auditions at The Nat West Towers in London full of hope. However, they expected me to sing, something which sadly I am unable to do to this day. I ended up as a clock running around to Tick Tock Tick Tock Tempest Fugit, probably my finest hour!

After a year in the Bank, I started my flying career. Due to the irregular hours I was no longer able to pursue my hobby, although trust me a lot of acting skills are needed to deal with the general public. I loved people watching & the amazing thing about my job was that as you never worked with the same people twice you could become anyone you wanted. Sometimes I would be a Scottish stewardess or my favourite would be one from the Southern states. It was an amazing place to hone your skills with different characters.

I eventually went part time which enabled me to see if I could revive my acting career.

I joined an amazing society called FRDS in East Sussex where I made many life long-friends. I was fortunate enough to be directed by an actor and playwright the lovely Sidney Sadgrove Sidney and I did The Homecoming together, we had so much fun in such a serious play, we could not look at each other on stage (very unprofessional) and would dissolve into uncontrollable laughter every rehearsal. I am still amazed we ever got thru the run. FRDS achieved a few awards for that play. Whilst at FRDS I tried my hand at directing & with the help of my amazing team we also won several awards for Sandcastles. I acted, directed, helped sweep the stage, ran the bar and even had to do the lighting. This was probably the most terrified I have ever been before curtain up.

STAGE RIGHT

O Brave New World

**A Radio Drama to commemorate the heaviest night of the
London Blitz,
29th December 1940.**

*'How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O
brave new world, That has such people in it!'*

from The Tempest by William Shakespeare

"....In this continued tumultuous year of lockdowns and restrictions which is affecting all of us to varying degrees. It was nice to do the unimaginable which was, and still is for many Drama Groups, to take part in the KDA Radio Festival of 2021. With so many of us missing the intimacy of personal contact and socialising, it seemed to me that taking part in Drama was a distant memory and something to be done in the distant future! So it is with gratitude that KDA has given many of us in the world of local drama an opportunity to work together and present an outlet for our efforts. Tony Powell, has very kindly given us permission to present his wonderful original radio play O Brave New World.

With the play decided upon we have cast and rehearsed it. We, well when I say '**We**', I really mean '**George**' is now doing the not so insignificant part of putting the recording and sound track together! No mean feat! I might add, his creative talents aren't limited to being our sound technician. No, not in the least, he is also one of the cast members too!

It has been really wonderful working on a drama project with a talented and fun bunch of people. We have a lovely cross section of long established members who have supported TODS for many a-year, middling members, newish members of two years AND two really new - first time members! A very warm welcome to Gabby and Thomas. We look forward to being able to work with you both again in person in the not so distant future. I'd like to say a great big 'Thank you' to all of the team who have given the project their time, and who have patiently put up with my incessant chatter and saying 'Let's try that again!'.

In April KDA will be publishing the Adjudicators decisions. Sometime in March, if not before, we will be providing an opportunity for members to hear TODS Radio Play entry. More news on this to follow...."

Regards,
Louisa

STAGE LEFT

RADIO FESTIVAL PLAY



The Cast:

Walter Cripps	Station master	Colin Barnes
Reg Tyler	Lou's husband	Peter Huxley
Robert Ansell	Military Officer	Barry Thomas
Donald Stanton	A Man on business	Thomas Foley
Clifford Bates	Young Soldier	George Wheeler
Hans Friedman	German refugee	Peter Huxley
Joys Father	Printer	Brian Fagg
Lou Tyler	East Ender	Angela Woodcock
Doris Gates	Pub Landlady	Jane Barton
Joy Bridges	Pregnant young wife	Fiona Edwards
Angela Simpson	Young Society Girl	Heather Barnes
Maureen Sutherland	Mother of evacuated children	Gabs Brooks



Ever wondered what a Zoom rehearsal looks like?

Here are some of the cast and crew, supposedly gathered in a London underground station, while all hell is breaking loose above them. They look very calm and comfortable, considering.