

News Bulletin

The Latest News from Lewes Little Theatre

It seems hard to believe that the theatre has now been closed for well over a year, the last live presentation on stage being the much acclaimed *A Christmas Carol* in December 2019.

At long last, though, it looks as if light is appearing at the far end of the tunnel. If current Government guidelines are not changed, we will be opening the building in the middle of May to allow rehearsals on stage, and Artistic Director Shaun Hughes hopes that we will be able to present live theatre on stage once again before the current season finishes at the end of July. After that, Shaun is working to put in place a full season of productions for 2021/22, beginning in October. Exciting news will be coming your way soon.

Over the last year, when lockdown rules have

allowed, a dedicated group of volunteers have been working hard doing essential maintenance and safety work to ensure the theatre will be fit for purpose when it reopens. When you return, you will notice that the front of the building has been upgraded, and the auditorium has been redecorated.

The fact that the building has been closed does not mean that we have not been making theatre. At the end of last year, we presented our first radio play, an adaptation of Bernard Shaw's *Press Cuttings*, directed by Chris Bowers, as well

as *Dickens at Christmas*, an anthology directed by Shaun Hughes performed live on line by a very talented cast. Then only last month we presented *Our Little Surprise*, a brand new one act play written specifically to be performed live online. This was incredibly well received by a truly international audience, thanks to the wonders of technology!

Following on from these successes, we will be presenting two more online events between now and the middle of May, *A Conversation with Philip Ayckbourn*, and *A Celebration of Shakespeare*. Details of both are given in this bulletin. Please support them: the revenue they generate is very important to our financial welfare.

For the time being, however, stay tuned: in the weeks to come, there will be a lot of exciting news coming your way from Lewes Little Theatre!

A Conversation with Philip Ayckbourn

**Friday 23 April 8pm.
Tickets £7.50, book online.**

Philip Ayckbourn is a successful and prolific playwright, author and director who trained at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. Previously he founded Quorum Theatre Company and PCK Productions. Philip, who follows in his father's footsteps, the playwright Sir Alan Ayckbourn, is a skilled director who often directs his own works in both the UK and in Europe.

Philip lives in Lewes and Lewes Little Theatre have been greatly honoured in recent years to have the premiere of some of Philip's plays, including: *Loving Androids*, *Timeshare* and *Psychic Connections*.

Shaun Hughes, the new Artistic Director of Lewes Little Theatre, will be taking a moment from Philip's very busy schedule to talk about his life and the art of writing.

The writer's impulse, the structure of plays and development of works old and new will also form part of the evening. The online Zoom audience will also have a chance to ask questions at the end of the interview via the chat box.

Please join us on Friday 23 April 2021 at 8pm for a lively interview with one of theatre's great writers to find out what makes a playwright 'tick'.

A Celebration of Shakespeare

**Tues 4 May - Sat 8 May 8pm.
Tickets £7.50, book online.**

William Shakespeare was an English playwright, poet, and actor, widely regarded as the one of the greatest writers in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the 'Bard of Avon'. His works, including collaborations, consist of some 39 plays and 154 sonnets. The plays have been translated into every major language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith. Around 1585, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, under Queen Elizabeth I, and later known as the King's Men, in the reign of James I. At age 49, he retired to Stratford upon Avon, where he died three years later.

Following the successful online productions of *Press Cuttings* by Bernard Shaw and *Dickens at Christmas*, and most

recently *Our Little Surprise* by David Lindsay, Lewes Little Theatre presents *A Celebration of Shakespeare*, directed by Shaun Hughes, to be performed nightly via Zoom. The performances will be given live each evening.

The show will consist of some of the most famous speeches from William Shakespeare's plays including *Richard III*, *Henry V*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Henry IV*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*; all considered to be among the finest works in the English language.

The immensely talented actors of Lewes Little Theatre will perform the speeches and duologues live each evening to give a 'live performance' feel to the online production. Feedback from recent online productions has been amazing and Lewes Little Theatre are pleased to continue keeping theatre 'alive' for audiences whether they be local or across the other side of the world.

Please join us for *A Celebration of Shakespeare* from Tuesday 4 to Saturday 8 May 2021

at 8pm for a festival of some of the greatest speeches and sonnets the world has ever known.

