



Playbox Theatre

Members' Newsletter

September 2023

THE SCARECROW & HIS SERVANT – OPENS TODAY!



Isaac Hope as the Scarecrow



James Hesford as the Farmer



Annalise Milburn as the Actress



Jasper Dance as Jack

Young Production Company is a very important project in the Playbox calendar – each year, a company of actors aged 5-14 years create a full-scale production that will really challenge Playbox's younger members, and allow them to get their teeth into some fantastic material, taking on major roles.

This autumn, Mary and her cast have tackled Simon Reade's adaptation of Phillip Pullman's bizarre and beautiful story, *The Scarecrow & His Servant* and this opens at The Dream Factory tonight, playing until Sunday.

With a complex text, many strange and marvellous characters and a host of different accents, this is a very special piece of work and we are proud of everyone involved.

Thank you to Lucy Barriball Photography for lovely production pictures!



Sam Hughes-Webb as Signor Rigatelli

WELCOME

Hello Playbox Families and Friends, It's been a wonderful start to the autumn season at Playbox, and tonight we have the opening of the first production of the autumn season, which is always a special occasion!

Good luck to Mary and the whole team working on *The Scarecrow & His Servant* – we are very proud of you and can't wait to share this bizarre and beautiful tale with you.

Rehearsals are continuing apace for *Chimes At Midnight* and costumes are well underway for a spectacular Christmas production of *Cinderella*, so the rehearsal rooms are all very busy.

It has been great to listen to the super reports of excellent work coming from the workshop floors in Kenilworth, Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, where members continue to thrive and amaze us with their intelligence and creativity.

We are heading into a very busy period, and we couldn't be more pleased to have you with us! Here are a few updates for you...

Emily Quash

Artistic Director

Next edition due October 2023

If you have news to share email - info@playboxtheatre.com

NEW MERCHANDISE - Next order: 8th November 2023

We are really excited to open sales for our Winter 2023 merchandise range. There are some lovely items including joggers, tote bags, beanies, water bottles, hoodies and t-shirts. The order will be placed early in November, so please head to www.playboxtheatre.com/playbox-merchandise/ to take a look and to place your orders



MILLENNIAL WIZARD REHEARSALS IN FULL SWING

Amèlie Friess provides an update on the mysterious goings-on of the Playbox resident company.

It's been full steam ahead for the Wizards this month as we prepare to open our first show, THE DUCHESS OF MALFI, at the end of October. Our Company came to life when we set our hearts on doing something exciting with our gap years, seeing what would escape our strange little minds onto the stage if we set ourselves the challenge of creating shows. We've all been shocked by how well we've taken to the work, blended as a group and pushed each other.

Our directors (Ed Buckley, Miriam Clements, Amèlie Friess and Corin Alford) began production in early September. After Corin created a perfect edit of the script, we began the monumental task of finding a new angle for a show that's hundreds of years old. Our pondering led us to the chic, cut-throat, and gaudy society of the Italian designer fashion boom in the 1980s.

Now that we've welcomed the rest of our cast to the rehearsal room, the show is growing into a production fizzing with excitement and style.

We'd love for you to join us on this epic adventure, we're so proud of what we've managed to make! Keep up to date with what we're up to on the Playbox website, and on Instagram at @millennialwizard.

Tickets are on sale now for the 28th and 29th of October.

For more information visit:

www.playboxtheatre.com/events/the-duchess-of-malfi/



The full cast includes the four 'Wizards' as well as six talented senior Playbox members



MIRIAM ON HER FIRST MONTH AS PLAYBOX STAFF

You may have noticed that many of the staff of Playbox Theatre were once members themselves, Juliet, Emily, Izzie, Stacey and Owen were all Playbox members at various times since Playbox opened in 1986. We love employing Playbox young people, as they bridge the transition from school to 'next steps', and this year Miriam Clements takes on a new position with Playbox, as well as continuing to train and perform with us, alongside her work with Millennial Wizard. Here, Miriam shares some thoughts from her first few weeks...



Hello, I'm Miriam and I'm taking a gap year this year, spending most of it at my favourite place: Playbox! I've been a member of Playbox since 2021 and since then I have been in MARINER as the wife of the doomed Ancient Mariner, ORESTEIA as the fortune-telling Cassandra, and most recently THE MYSTERIES as Jesus. THE MYSTERIES, which tells the story of the Bible through medieval language but modern dress, was one of my favourite experiences and made me even more motivated to pursue a career in theatre because I loved it so much!

This year, I'm working at Playbox as an Admin Assistant, Workshop Assistant and Duty Manager. I'm also in CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT - an adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry IV Parts 1 and 2 - playing Lady Percy, CINDERELLA playing Princess Madeline, and Millennial Wizard's THE DUCHESS OF MALFI playing the Duchess of Malfi. Despite my constant state of busyness, I have absolutely loved joining the Playbox team as a staff member, getting up to all sorts during my shifts while I rehearse for the upcoming shows.

As a Duty Manager I love being a friendly face welcoming anyone and everyone through the doors of The Dream Factory and being able to answer (almost) all of their questions while keeping our front-of-house looking spotless. Watching Playbox members and their families and friends enjoying the delicious treats of Cafe Whirl, making the most of our library corner or just generally relaxing in the front-of-house makes me proud to work for the best youth theatre ever.

My favourite part of being a Workshop Assistant - both with Toby on his Thursday sessions and with Stacey on her Early Stagers sessions - is knowing that I will get to see the children who attend every week really grow in confidence and enthusiasm as time goes on. I love being part of the children's Playbox journeys as they realise their potential as creators, makers and storytellers because I can see them as the creative, bold and brilliant leaders of the future.

My work as an Admin Assistant is easily the most varied and exciting job I've ever done because I just get up to ALL sorts. From designing invitations to making important phone calls and from keeping the website up-to-date to putting together this very newsletter, every day is a new adventure!

After my gap year is over, I will miss Playbox so much but I know I will use the plethora of skills it has taught me in my future. Whether it is how to do a quick-change in under 60 seconds or how to evacuate people during a fire alarm, when I study Theatre or Acting at university or drama school and then go forth into the scary but amazing world of the arts, Playbox will always be with me.



Mariner - 2022



Oresteia - 2022



The Mysteries - 2023



Cinderella Rehearsals - 2023

OCTOBER HOLIDAY PROJECTS OPEN FOR BOOKING!

We have opened booking for a range of half term holiday activities, including ½ day Halloween Parties, Addams Family Musical Theatre, W.O.L.F epic day of devising, and an evening murder mystery festive event.

There are sessions for all ages and only a few places left, so do head over to the website to explore and to make a booking www.playboxtheatre.com/holiday-projects/

Holiday workshops are open to both members, and non-members, of Playbox Theatre and also include lunch/tea and refreshments throughout the activity.



The Addams Family Musical
MONDAY 30TH OCTOBER 10.00-16.00

Age: 6 – 8 year olds

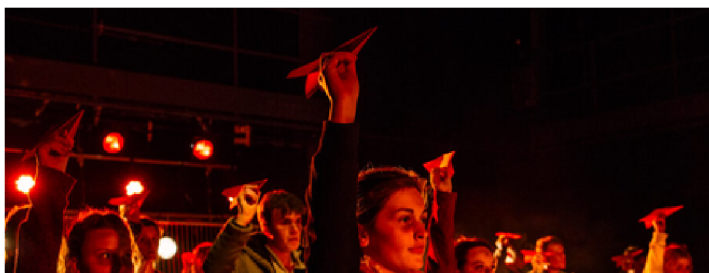
Cost: £65 to include lunch



Werewolf – The Ultimate Halloween Party Game
THURSDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 17.00-20.00

Age: 11+ year olds

Cost: £40 to include refreshments



W.O.L.F – A Day of Development
THURSDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 10.00-16.00

Age: 8+ year olds

Cost: £65 to include lunch



Winnie The Witch's Halloween Spooktacular
TUESDAY 31ST OCTOBER 10.00-13.00

Age: 3 – 5 year olds

Cost: £40 to include lunch

WORK EXPERIENCE – ETHAN’S REPORT

Did you know that we run work experience programmes throughout the year? This is a really important part of Playbox, enabling young people to come and spend time with the company, working across lots of different departments and shadowing members of the team.

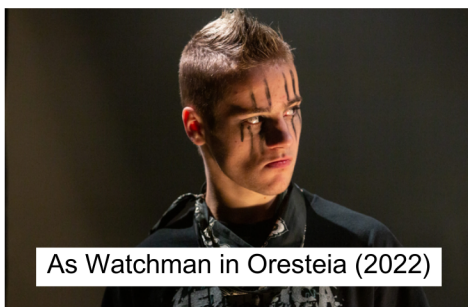
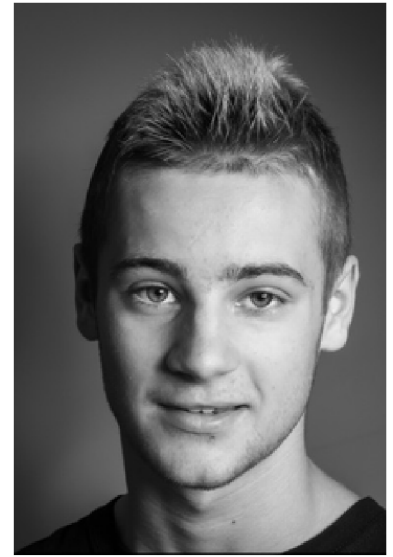
This week, Playbox long-timer Ethan Phillips has been working with us (and is responsible for lots of the new merchandise range!). Here, Ethan shares a few words about being on the ‘other side’ of Playbox Theatre.

Hello, I'm Ethan! Today I want to talk a bit about what it has been like the past few days doing work experience at Playbox.

I have been going to Stratford playbox since I was about three years old, so now being sixteen years old and doing work experience at The Dream Factory almost seems surreal!

From being in shows, attending my weekly sessions and assisting Apple Club, the last thing I saw myself doing was being sat at the box office designing Playbox's winter merchandise (buy on the website now!). This week has truly been eye-opening for me and just overall a fantastic time away from the usual repetitive routine. I have learnt vital skills regarding how to stay organised and have become much more capable on a computer and know how to use multiple different websites and softwares. More importantly, I have just had a great time and have found working around The Dream Factory very calming and less stressful than other workplaces because I am so familiar with the building and even more familiar with the directors.

If you are looking for a place to do work experience, personally I couldn't recommend The Dream Factory more, you learn key life skills and simultaneously have an incredible time.



ALUMNI NEWS

We are always proud of past Playbox members, and we love following their future adventures, and sharing their success. Here are some current highlights!

Alice Lowe

Kenilworth Playbox alumna, ALICE LOWE, is currently appearing in the shocking Channel 4 docudrama, PARTYGATE, where she plays Shelley Williams-Walker, former special adviser to Boris Johnson.



Asher Hardy, Will Dolan & Oli Fitzgibbon

A triple whammy! Past Playbox members, ASHER HARDY, WILL DOLAN & OLI FITZGIBBON are the people behind Firewood Pictures. Their original film, RED PILL, has been selected to appear at Birmingham Film Festival, and stars Playbox actor, NATHANAEL SALEH, who has also been nominated for Best Young Actor.



Joe Sutherland

JOE SUTHERLAND was a member of Playbox during his whole childhood, and is now a hugely celebrated comedian. Described by The Mirror as “taking to the stage like an old pro, oozing star power from every pore”, Sutherland was a finalist in the prestigious NATYS awards and was nominated Leicester Square Theatre New Comedian. His recent appearances include Dave’s *Hypothetical* and the BBC’s *Eastenders* as well as a sell-out run at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2019.



We can't wait to bring you more updates in a few weeks. Thank you for being a part of the busy Playbox World!