



Playbox Theatre

Members' Newsletter

February 2024



STARRY NIGHTS

A huge congratulations to everyone involved in this year's wonderful Starry Nights! After only three days of rehearsal and a speedy dress, the team put together a show giving us a taste of all the talent and magic Playbox has to offer. With everything from Shakespeare to Peter Pan, we were so impressed by your versatility, and how you put together such a professional show in just a few days! Thank you for your hard work, it was a huge success and you should be so proud!



I & YOU

Millennial Wizard's second show, 'I & You', had a brilliant weekend run this February. We were so thrilled by our the response, and even though there weren't many dry eyes in the audience, we're glad you enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed making it! The love and support we get from the Playbox community is incredible (how many audiences decide to stay after the show to help take down the set?), so we can't wait to share a brand new, original show this summer!



WELCOME

Welcome back! We've had a cracking February here at Playbox, and even more Playbox goodness to look forward to over the Easter period.

Another sparkling *Starry Nights* kept our main stage busy, whilst us folks at Millennial Wizard kept the studio full with a production of *I & You*.

The theatre has been transformed into an 'in the round' set-up as we prepare for a season of immersive, exciting productions! *Three Sisters* is in rehearsal, readying a stunning performance of Chekhov's tragedy for March.

With Easter round the corner, we've got a whole bunch of activities for all ages, including the Friends of Playbox Easter Celebration with our first Playbox bakeoff, and easter holiday project to keep little ones busy.

As a future film student myself, I'm particularly looking forward to welcoming back Playbox Alumni from Firewood Studios to teach summer filmmaking workshops, currently open for booking.

We're also excited for Edward's Boys to return for their third Playbox guest production with '*The Maydes Metamorphosis*', coming to the stage for the first time in 400 years!

There's lots to keep up to date with, so I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!



Guest Editor
Amelie Friess

Next edition due March 2024

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

THREE SISTERS



The cast of Three Sisters

Rehearsals for Chekhov's famous tragedy, 'Three Sisters' is well underway. Directed by Mary King, the show follows the lives of three sisters in Russia, 1900, full of hope and youth, longing to return to the thrill of Moscow. But the challenges of love, family, power and secrets will change their lives more than they could have imagined. We got together with two cast members, Mery Sutherland and Quillan Mitchell, to find out more.

Tell us a bit about your characters.

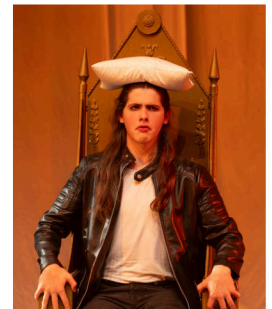
QUILLAN: The character I play is André, he is the brother of the sisters and husband to Natasha. He wants to be a university student but is stuck as a member of the council in the small town where the play takes place.

MERY: I play Natasha, who is married to Andrey and becomes sister-in-law to the titular 'Three sisters'. Initially she is mocked and teased by the other characters due to her class and horrible fashion sense; yet, the tables turn as she gains authority, becoming a wife and mother and developing a brash personality.

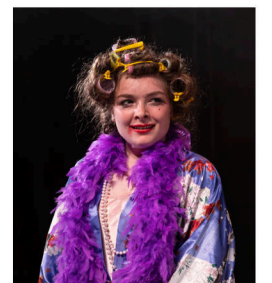
The show is extremely naturalistic. How is playing a naturalistic character different from other characters you've played?

QUILLAN: It's very different to what I have done previously. A couple of the characters that I have had the opportunity to play in the past have been comedic, and even when I have played more naturalistic roles they have still had larger than life personalities. I enjoy playing parts like this very much, I find it fun to play entertaining characters and I like working with other actors in comedic scenes, I have found it a bit odd playing a naturalistic part and it has taken some getting used to, however I am enjoying the opportunity to develop a character that is more grounded in reality and less caricature.

MERY: Natasha has been a wonderful and challenging character to play around with, I've really been focusing on trying to make her seem 'real' - as many of the characters I've played previously have been big comic characters or emotionally raw tragic Greek characters. At the same time, there are comic moments and she is a very dramatic character, so it's been challenging trying to obtain that balance.



**Quillan in
*Chimes at
Midnight***



Mery in *Annie*

THREE SISTERS

The characters in this play and the relationships between them are very complex. Do you think any of them, including yourselves, are 'bad' people?

QUILLAN: I think it depends which way you look at it, the characters in this play are so complex and layered that you could dissect them so many different ways and come up with many different answers, I have different opinions of all the character and the play as a whole every time we do a rehearsal. I generally don't think that my character is an actively bad person, however I do think he is thoroughly apathetic and wrapped up in his own world to the point that his actions do hurt other characters in the play.

MERY: Wrapping my head around all the different complicated dynamics between the characters has been difficult. Initially, I think it's easy to label some characters as 'bad' people, as some of their actions seem completely heartless; however, I don't really think any of the characters are innately 'bad' (including Natasha who admittedly makes some... questionable choices). But it is clear to see how the characters are products of their environment and how that shapes their actions and personalities-acting selfishly but not necessarily making them 'bad' people.

This production will be set in 1900's Russia, the same time the play was written. What will a modern audience relate to and take away from the show?

QUILLAN: I think that the characters and the relationships between them are very current and fresh and many of the themes within the play related directly to people in this day and age.

I believe that a modern audience will still connect to the characters and the narrative and that they will still take away something meaningful at the end of the show despite it being set years ago and many miles away.

MERY: I think the overall struggle and feeling of lost hope in the play is timeless and universal, despite the context of it. I hope the audience will take away the importance of living a passionate life and hopefully they won't feel too disheartened afterwards!!

***Performing 21st-23rd March.
Tickets available on the Playbox website.***

EASTER HOLIDAY PROJECTS



A SQUASH AND A SQUEEZE

Oink! Moo! Baa! This preschool workshop will incorporate all the fun of the farm from one of our favourite Julia Donaldson stories. There will be plenty of springtime songs, crafts and a picnic lunch included!

27th March 10-1pm

Ages 3-5



THE STINKY CHEESE MAN AND OTHER FAIRLY STUPID FAIRY TALES

Forget the stories you know and welcome to Playbox Theatre's Fairy Tale Mash Up! You might find Cinderella climbing up the beanstalk and Rapunzel in the gingerbread house- anything can happen during this day of theatrical creativity.

25th March 10-4pm

Ages 5-8

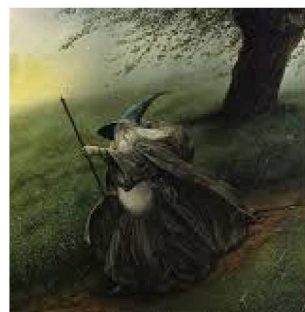


THE EASTER BUNNY HOP

Our annual preschool Easter party makes a return for 2024, but this time with even more eggcellent activities! There will be acting, singing, dancing, Easter crafts and make sure you bring your egg hunting skills!

28th March 10-1pm

Ages 3-5



LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN TO MORDOR

Fans of Tolkien will be in their element during these jam-packed two days of theatre. Expect devised movement, voice and character work all inspired by the epic tales of The Lord of the Rings.

26th March 10-4pm

Ages 8-12

Discount code (for Playbox members only) - HOLIDAY24

EDWARD'S BOYS



Edward's Boys returns to Playbox with a production of 'The Maydes Metamorphosis'. Founded in 2005, the boy's company from King Edward VI school, Stratford-upon-avon have been performing rarely-seen plays from the repertoire of the early modern boys' companies. Directed by Perry Mills, these performances allow contemporary audiences to experience plays often forgotten, performed by a company of boy players as the Elizabethans would have. Whilst the text is kept untouched, the company adds a contemporary flare to their staging for modern audiences.

Edward's boys have toured extensively, performing for and collaborating with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Théâtre d'O, Montpellier, the Royal Shakespeare Company Swan and Other Place Theatres, and the Globe, London.

The Maydes' Metamorphosis is an anonymous Elizabethan comedy, and was last performed by Paul's boys in 1600. It follows Ascanio, the son of a duke, searching for his love in a magical forest which is home to God's, Goddesses, fairies, fools and magicians. Naturally, confusion, deception, and adventure ensues.

Friday 15th March, 7pm

Tickets available on the Playbox website.

FRIENDS OF PLAYBOX: EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA!

Friends of Playbox have been busy preparing a day of Easter fun for the whole family. With everything from a Playbox bake-off to bonnet decorating, it must not be missed!

Events include egg rolling, an egg hunt, face painting, guess the name of the bunny, and much more! You can even bring a hat to up-cycle at our Easter bonnet decorating station. We'll be operating a simple voucher system, where vouchers can be bought and then exchanged for different events so you can make the most out of your day.

If you fancy yourself a bit of a Mary Berry, then enter our first ever Playbox bake-off! Deliver your Easter themed cake to Playbox between 15th March 4pm- 16th March 12pm to have your cake judged by our expert judges. Please bring it on a named paper plate, and give a list of ingredients (no nuts). This bake-off will be judged in age categories, so there's plenty of chance to win!

It's going to be a highlight in our spring calendar, and we can't wait to see you all there!

Join us on Saturday 16th March, from 2pm-4:30pm

