



Playbox Theatre

Members' Newsletter

June 2024



CONGRATULATIONS *LORD OF THE FLIES!*

We started the month with an extraordinary production of *The Lord of the Flies*. The project was stunning, shocking us with its brutality, bloodthirst, and incredible skill. This play demanded a lot from it's performers, but the commitment you showed brought it to total life and did justice to Golding's novel. We may have finally mopped up all the blood, but this is a performance that will stay fixed in our memories.

An added joy to the show was the amount of support from Playbox Alumni who had been part of the original cast. We had visit after visit from original cast members coming to cheer on the next generation. It was a wonderful reminder that even after you've left, you'll always be part of the Playbox family and are welcome back at any time.

A particularly special alumnus visit was from Asher Hardy, who played Roger in the original production, guest appearing as the naval officer in the show. Having so many generations of Playbox on stage together was extremely special, and we're so proud of everyone who has been part of this production, past and present!



WELCOME

Hello Playbox families!

The time has come, it's my last Playbox Newsletter! And we're going out with a bang. June was a packed month, with show after show after show. In the Theatre, we kept entertained (and terrified) by the fantastic cast and creatives of *Lord of the Flies*. The studio saw three successful directors projects, and Alfie Jones' intimate production of *Miss Julie*. Millennial Wizard brought their show *My Time in Limbo* to Spencer's Yard, bringing their year as Playbox's resident ensemble to a close.

We're looking forward to a busy summer at the Dream Factory. Holiday projects will be starting up soon for all ages and specialities, and our directors and members can't wait to start rehearsals for our autumn season and Christmas show!

I've so enjoyed keeping you up to date with all things Playbox this year, and can't wait to come back and see all the amazing work produced.

I hope you enjoy this issue!



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Next edition due July 2024

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

Playbox professionals impress with director's projects

Playbox professionals completed their final challenge of this season with their hugely successful directors projects. The projects saw this year's ensemble use all they've learnt in training as 4 directors took on directing a piece in their unique style. Otilie Lampitt tackled adapting Angela Carter's *The Tigers Bride* for stage, whilst Corin directed Marlow's classical gothic tale, *Faustus*. The directing duo Quillan Mitchell and Elliott Barlow staged Tom Basden's wickedly dark comedy *Holes*. Corin, Elliot and Quillan caught up with us about their experience with the project.

In your version of Dr Faustus there are only three characters, usually the play's cast is much larger. How did you find adapting the play to have such a small number of characters?

Corin: It has really simplified the piece down because now the only focus is on Faustus and Mephistopheles. The ebb and flow relationship is all that is shown so the tragedy of it becomes very clear. Mephistopheles has actually come to the forefront of the play and their position between Lucifer and Faustus is a very interesting dynamic to see them navigate.

How has it been working with Christopher Marlowe's language? What techniques have you been using to work on this with the actors?

Corin: Like all Elizabethan, text not 100% of the words will be transmitted, therefore emphasis becomes so important so the emotion of the scene/character is conveyed. The other vital part is the actor's understanding of the text. Simply going through, line by line, and discussing the meanings of certain words was really helpful in this respect. An actor's understanding also helps them shape a character and make it their own.

What has been your favourite part of modernising the play?

Corin: Being able to find a new angle with Mephistopheles and their role within the play being amplified. Mephistopheles is a such a complex character and their motives are so interesting that it was nice to discover how key Mephistopheles was.



How is it working with another person to direct a performance?

Quilan and Elliot: We both share quite a similar sense of humour and ideas, so it wasn't difficult to find a shared vision for the piece. We also find it much easier to direct and come up with ideas together, as 30 minutes of brainstorming with each other and bouncing ideas around is way more productive than a week's worth of trying to come up with ideas on our own.

Quilan, you also performed in the production. How did you find directing and performing a piece at the same time?

Quilan: Our intention was never to have me performing, as we always wanted to have our focus on the directing side of the project:

I loved playing the character of Gus, however, I found that generally; acting hindered my ability to direct and directing made it more difficult for me to act. It worked on this occasion because Elliot was also directing, if I was doing a project like this on my own, I would never choose to act and direct because I don't think you can direct fully from the point of view of an actor but due to casting issues and because there were two of us doing the project, I felt that in this situation it would be ok.

How has it been making sure jokes land in rehearsal?

Quilan and Elliot: Luckily, we have an absolutely amazing cast who are able to play around with ideas and bring a bunch of stuff themselves to the characters, which helps massively in making jokes land. The script is also genius, and make us laugh when just reading it off the page, so a lot of the work is already done just by what's on the page.

**Well done to everyone involved in these performances, they were outstanding.
We can't wait to see what professionals bring to the table next year!**

SENIOR HOLIDAY PROJECTS OPEN FOR BOOKING

Playbox is the place to be this summer, with our holiday project offers flying off the shelves. We have some fantastic offers for senior members this summer in a number of disciplines. Playbox Alumni and director Alfie Jones will be running an intensive devising course for participants to hone their skills as creators as well as performers. **Actor as Artist** will guide groups through developing their own original project, ending in a celebration and performance of pieces at the end of the week.



For seniors interested in the screen, our Film Production course is offering a practical introduction into creating film. Led by alumni Will Dolan from Firewood productions (who recently made our fantastic *Lord of the Flies* trailer), this course will introduce the fundamentals of filmmaking, exploring camera use, story, dialogue, lighting, and every other element needed for a fantastic film. This opportunity to work with an industry professional using industry grade equipment must not be missed.

Holiday projects can be booked through our website. Playbox members can use code HOLIDAY24 for 10% off at checkout.

Millennial Wizard perform their final gap year show

This month, we also saw our final show from gap year company, Millennial Wizard, before they head off to uni. Their first original work, *My Time in Limbo*, was written by member Amelie Friess, and produced, staged, and performed by the company at Spencer's Yard. The project meant so much to the team, and they're overwhelmed by all the love this show has received, including a review in the Herald that they'll treasure forever.

We're looking forward to watching them perform at Ignite Arts at the pump rooms this July. Break a leg!



Miss Julie stuns in the studio

On the same weekend, we also enjoyed a stunning reimagining of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, directed by Playbox Alumni and director Alfie Jones. The packed studio was the perfect setting for this claustrophobic chamber piece, and Alfie's edited version of the text blended with modern choreography told an extremely touching story. The piece also featured outstanding performances by the cast, who demonstrated an incredible use of detail, control and skill in such close quarters. Congratulations on a fantastic performance!

