



# Playbox Theatre

## Members' Newsletter

July 2024

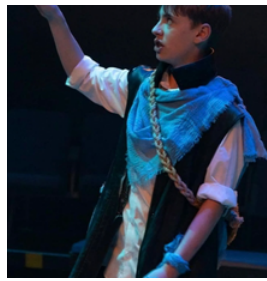


### ODYSSEY



This July, Playbox Theatre's Young Production Company brought to life the epic journey of Odysseus in a mesmerising adaptation of Homer's ancient Greek poem. As the hero battles his way back to Ithaka after the Trojan War, he encounters witches, monsters, and the capricious interference of gods and goddesses.

The young actors transported the audience to another world, their exceptional performances enhanced by stunning costumes, evocative lighting, and an immersive set design. Through their combined talents, the production captured the essence of Odysseus' perilous quest and his eventual homecoming to a changed Ithaka.



### YOUNG ACTOR INTERVIEW

*Max Footman played Telemakhos in Playbox's recent production of Odyssey and so we wanted to ask him what it was like to be in his first ever Playbox production.*

#### **How was your experience of your first Playbox production?**

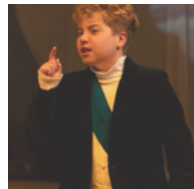
I loved it, I felt happy the entire time. I enjoyed making friends and being part of a production that challenged my ability to develop a character. The standard of the whole production was high, which continuously drove me to improve.

#### **How did you build your character?**

Telemakhos is a character that has grown up without a father and only a grieving mother. Therefore, my performance of the character needed to make him bold and strong. I did this by working on my volume and projection, strengthening my posture and heightening my confidence.

#### **What was the best thing about your experience?**

Growing as an actor at Playbox, as well as making lots of friends in the cast. Also observing the talent of the other actors and the how cool and impressive the technical elements of the production were.



## WELCOME

Hello! My name is Elle, and I'm excited to be your guest editor for Playbox's July newsletter. I've been spending my summer on a marketing placement at Playbox Theatre before starting my third and final year at Cardiff University.

This month has been filled with incredible productions and events celebrating the summer season. In this issue we reflect on Playbox Theatre's Young Production Company's rendition of Odyssey, directed by Mary King, and our annual Midsummer Revels. We also got the opportunity to speak to Playbox alumni, Jess Clews, as she reflects on her first year at East 15 Drama School.

This year's top holiday destination is Playbox! Be sure to check out our amazing holiday workshops that are still available before they sell out!

I'd love to work in communications in the arts, and I have loved exploring that here at Playbox this summer.

*This month's guest editor:  
Elle Footman*





## MIDSUMMER REVELS



No matter what the weather is doing, you will always find us celebrating Midsummer Day at Playbox Theatre, each year on 21st June. This summer was one of the best yet! The sun was almost shining throughout the evening, and audiences were treated to a range of special events.



The evening was beautifully launched by the resident band, The Doomsday Band, who first played together in Playbox's production of The Mysteries in 2023...these young people's talents are endless! Next up was the fabulous Hannah Hampson, leading us through some raucous and uplifting country dances on the terrace. The event was exquisitely concluded with the final moments from A Midsummer Night's Dream, inspired by Mary's Christmas 2022 production – as the sun set, we were treated to lines of fairies carrying candles, as Oberon, Titania, Puck and The Changeling were reunited in those enchanting closing speeches, as peace is restored.



A massive thank you to our supporters, AUBREY ALLEN, who donated delicious sausages for the BBQ, and enormous gratitude to the Friends Of Playbox and our parent volunteers for keeping us fed and watered throughout the evening.

We can't wait to see what next summer's line-up looks like – get it in your diaries right away for the 21st June 2025!

## AUTUMN PRODUCTIONS

*After a great Playbox summer so far, let's take a peek at one of our upcoming Autumn productions: lets trade immersive adventures for spooky families*



### The Addams Family

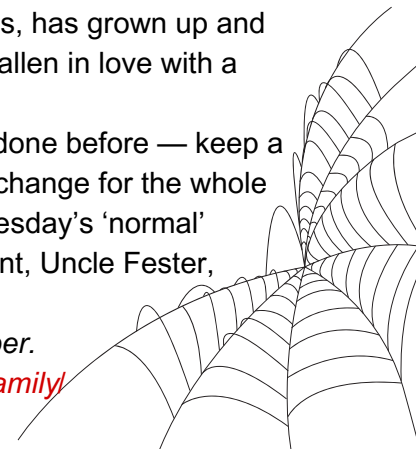
The Addams Family is a musical comedy which will be directed by Juliet Vankay, with Musical Direction by Richard Norris.

Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and has a shocking secret that only Gomez knows; she's fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family!

Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before — keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's 'normal' boyfriend and his parents. All the usual clan are present, Uncle Fester, Lurch, Pugsley et al.

*Appropriate for all ages, running from 10th-13th October.*

<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/events/the-addams-family/>



## ALUMNI INTERVIEW

**Jessica Clews** attended Playbox for several years as a teenager, where she gained the confidence to successfully apply to drama school, East 15, where she has just completed her first year. Jess' reflections are especially important as the upcoming holiday project **'The Actor as Artist'** is a very useful asset to anyone also considering applying to university with a career in theatre in mind. (see Holiday Projects on the Playbox website.)



### **Introduce yourself Jess, what are you up to?**

I am Jess Clews, an actor and singer currently training at East 15 Acting School on the BA World Performance course. I attended Playbox Theatre for around 7 years, participating in many classes including acting, musical theatre and professionals. Going to Playbox hugely boosted my confidence in the performance and audition space both for singing and acting. I am an aspiring opera singer and hope my future is set in Covent Garden's Royal Opera House!

### **Nearly 12 months later, can you give us any reflections on your experience on applying to drama school and the experience of it so far?**

Drama school! Where do I even begin? I got into drama school after having taken a gap year and was absolutely gobsmacked when I got in. In my summer before auditioning, I think research was my best friend. Every drama school is different in terms of specialities, conduct and fields of strength. I looked at all the big names like RADA and LAMDA, but nothing caught my eye like the smaller drama school courses did, where they have more unique and specialised courses. So, research, research, research is my biggest first step.

### **To add to that, what would you suggest anyone who is looking at applying to drama schools can do to prepare?**

Get into reading plays! With the stress of picking audition monologues, it is very easy to fall down the hole of googling 'monologues for teenagers' and finding something that fits the needs but doesn't truly resonate with you. I spent my gap year summer reading many plays, both classical and contemporary, to pick out a handful of monologues that I felt I could truly understand emotionally and felt I would entirely enjoy performing over and over again, as getting your best take of a monologue often takes time. There is no point in picking monologues that bore you!

Once you have found your monologues, get learning them as quickly as possible. You will likely be performing them many times for many different schools and many different takes of a filmed audition. Find a friend or family member to help you as quite often I find I get frustrated when I am learning alone.

Besides from audition prep, open your eyes up to the world of acting we have around us. At the touch of a button on a remote, you can access millions of incredible TV shows and movies that showcase the very best of talent in the acting world. If you are lucky enough to be in a financial position to go to the theatre, go to see as much as you can as well. From West End musicals to small street performances, always make time for experiencing acting. Even art exhibitions, museums and concerts can open your eyes up to what art is happening around you and to keep up what is relevant right now.



*A note from me (Elle):*

*If anyone needs anymore reassurance that Jess is a good person to take advice from, not only is she one of the best friends I could ever have, but the most talented person I have ever met,*

*Thank you Jess*



## ALUMNI ON STAGE

Fancy a trip to the theatre over the summer? Then keep your eyes out for a Playbox alumnus! You can see some of our fantastic former members on stage in these shows:

### THE SECRET GARDEN, Regent's Park Open Air Theatre

Holly Robinson has refreshed another classic children's tale at Regent's Park Theatre this summer with her adaptation of *The Secret Garden*. We've loved reading the beautiful reviews for this piece, and when our Playbox directors went for a visit, they found it even more enchanting in person. The play is not only written by Holly, but also stars fellow Playbox alumnus George Fletcher as Dr Craven. The show has proven to be a wonderful success, and we're extremely proud of both of their achievements. Get yourself to London to see it this summer!



### THE MOUSE TRAP, St Martins Theatre

Another alumnus double bill, Lynton Appleton and Lucy Doyle are performing in the world's longest running play, *The Mousetrap*! It's not the first time Lynton and Lucy have been on stage together - we saw them as Jesus and Mary in the *Mysteries* at Playbox. We're so proud to see these two in such a classic West End production. We can't wait to hear all about their time with the production, but what we're really desperate to find out is... whodunnit?



PLAYBOX  
THEATRE

# HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS THIS SUMMER



You don't need a plane to reach  
the **holiday activities of the**  
summer



## THE ACTOR AS ARTIST

- Led by director Alfie Jones, this intensive week-long course extends young actors ability to create theatre. This is an exciting opportunity to work alongside a mentor to expand your skills and experience

Ages 13+



## HIGH JINKS

**Big adventures for little people! 3-5 Years**

3 stops on this summer journey from 6th-

8th August

1. The Jungle Jam
2. Blast off!
3. Under the sea



For more information on any of our holiday projects please visit  
<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/holiday-projects/>  
Thanks so much for reading.