

OAST NOTES

February 2026

A MIRROR

BY SAM HOLCROFT

THIS PLAY IS A LIE

7th - 14th February 2026 8pm Sunday performance 3pm



Performances 23rd - 25th January

Fri + Sat 8pm

Sun 2pm

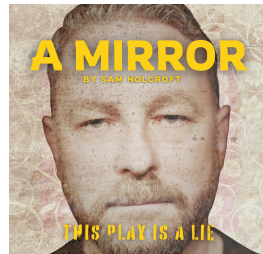
Written by Noel Coward, *Still Life* is a one-act play upon which the film *Brief Encounter* was based. It tells of a chance meeting, a subsequent love affair and eventual parting between a married woman and a doctor. This tender love story is timeless, enchanting and full of Coward's trademark sparkling dialogue. The intensity of Alec and Laura's serious and secretive affair is contrasted with the boisterous, uncomplicated earthiness provided by the characters who run the railway station. Two of these characters hold up a mirror to the main story by simultaneously playing out their own relationship.

The Cassettes, featuring Clare Lois Hayes, Sophie-Rose Jackson and Anna Wood, bring their own brand of sassy, nostalgic pop to the JY studio. The songs of Fred Astaire, the Andrews Sisters and Mama Cass, as well as 1950s Doo Wop, all feature in this feel-good trip back to the pop music of the second half of the twentieth century.

This will be performed under the musical direction of Andy Leggatt. The Cassettes were a big hit back in January 2025, when they first appeared in the JY studio as part of the 'Murder in the Studio' radio plays.

Performances 7th to 14th February 2026

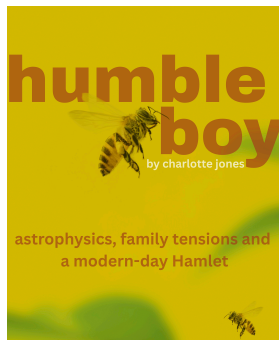
A Mirror by Sam Holcroft is a gripping new play about censorship, truth, and the power of storytelling. What begins as a seemingly ordinary wedding soon reveals a totalitarian society where the Ministry of Culture controls all creative expression. It tells the story of Adem, a former mechanic, who has written a play about the people who live in his apartment block. Adem is summoned to the Ministry of Culture, where the director, Ćelik, recognises his unpolished talent and sets out to develop Adem as a government approved playwright - supported by the nation's most celebrated playwright, Bax, and Ćelik's conflicted assistant, Mei. Full of twists and dark humour, *A Mirror* is a gripping thriller about authority, art, and the fragile line between reality and performance.



Please note: this play contains adult language and themes and is not suitable for children.

Ticket prices: Members £10 & non-members £14

Visit www.oasttheatre.com for all tickets.



Performances 7th to 14th March 2026

Directed by Stuart McCreadie

First performed in 2001, *Humble Boy* premiered at the National and won several awards. It is a modern classic, variously described as joyous, entertaining, emotional yet full of humour, poignant, clever and brilliant. The Daily Telegraph reviewer concluded that "I can't recommend this

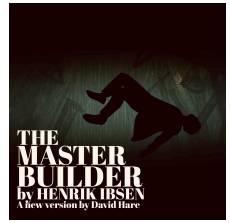
lovely play too highly".

It is now coming to the Oast Theatre and is sure to sell well. Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment.

Audition

Dates: 29th Jan 8 pm Bar lounge
1st Feb 10 am Janet Young Studio

Performances: 16th - 23rd May - Venue: Main Stage



Characters:

Halvard Solness (50s - 60s) Central character. Large part

Hilde Wangel (20s) Free spirit. Large part

Aline Solness (50s - 60s) Halvard's wife. Distrusts him.

Dr. Herdal (50s - 60s) Inept doctor.

Kaja Fosli (20s - 30s) Works for Halvard. Besotted with him

Ragnar Brovik (20s - 30s) Kaja's fiancé. Bitter employee.

Knut Brovik (60s - 70s) Father of Ragnar. Ambitious for his son

Interested? Contact Director Andy Taylor
email: andy.taylor@oasttheatre.com

Audition

Dates: 15th February 1 pm - 3 pm Bar lounge
16th February 7.30 pm - 9 pm Janet Young Studio



Performances: 29th - 31st May - Venue: Janet Young Studio

Characters:

Ben (18 - 40) Chauffeur and butler. Options on accents. Confident

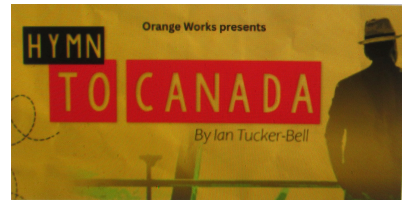
Abi (18 - 40) Maid and personal assistant. Cold. Manipulative

Madam (50 +) A once-famous actress. Slightly deluded

Monsieur (30 +) Madam's current partner. Struggling actor

Interested? Contact Director Laurence Plumb
email laurence.w.plumb@gmail.com

AUDITION



Dates: Wednesday 18th February 7.45pm Bar lounge

Sunday 22nd February 3.00pm Bar lounge

Performances 29th - 31st May Venue: Janet Young Studio

Synopsis

For as long as anyone has known Mike he has been fascinated by Canada, but for reasons unknown and which he is reluctant to go into. Mike blames it on a fear of flying, but the truth is something else entirely: a long-held secret, and an event that tore a family apart creating a guilt which has lasted a lifetime. On his seventieth birthday, with his partner, Anne, and his ex-colleague, Sean, the truth is finally revealed. This play is in ensemble style, actors multi-role and are on stage all of the time. This play may be taken to festivals later on in the year.

Characters:

Mike - 70s

Anne - 60s

Sean - late 40s

Lauren - late 20s

John - mid 40s

Interested? Contact Director and writer Ian Tucker-Bell

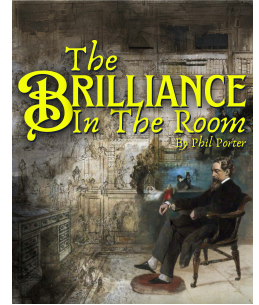
email: ian.tucker-bell@oasttheatre.com

Audition

Dates:

Sunday 8th March 2.30pm Janet Young Studio

Monday 9th March 7.30pm Janet Young Studio



Performances 20th - 27th June

Synopsis:

The Brilliance in the Room is a full-on, period costume, Dickensian extravaganza. Dozens of familiar characters battle the vagaries of fate, living dangerously near the edge of survival while an indifferent and heartless authority looks on. The play is compassionate, deeply poetic and often comic, with many stunning images and numerous special effects.

Characters:

The play is an ensemble piece, so there are no main characters in the accepted sense. There are, though, several cameos: Pip, Sergeant Buzfuz, Mr Krook, Miss Havisham and Mr Crummles to name but a few.

There are two tone poems: *The Yarmouth Storm* and *London Fog*. Both are spoken by one person.

Eight actors, more if possible, play all the parts. The play is gender neutral and all ages are welcome.

Interested? Contact Director - Phil Porter
email: porter077@talktalk.net

Artist of the month



Tony Pegg is the Oast Artist of the Month for January. His exhibition, in the Oast bar, is a collection of sketches created during the art group's weekly Tuesday afternoon sessions over the past couple of years. Most depict a study of faces, in charcoal and pastel. He has always scribbled away at human and animal faces, with varying degrees of success. Achieving a likeness is difficult, which is why he never accepts requests for portraits! Further shows this year will include work in watercolour and acrylic, as well as a photographic exhibition.



DECADES OF PLAYS



A Man for all Seasons 1978

Jane Cooper, Margaret Gill
& Don Cumming,



Pack of Lies 1988

Annie Young & Ann Darby



The Old Country 1990

Val Armstrong & Marian Brearley



A Letter of Resignation 1999
George Kirk



Death and the Maiden 2000
Samantha Comfort & Philip Sharnock



Top Girls 2014

Becks Relf, Yvette Walters, Elizabeth McCreadie, Pat Adams,
Sara Molyneux, Karen Dix, Cheryl Storer & Jean Erxleben

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Review (Cast 1)

General scholarly opinion of C S Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, and particularly of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, is that it is a moral tale with overt religious meanings. The army of children with whom I shared the Oast Theatre's performance prefer to treat it much more sanguinely as a children's tale with a 'Good triumphing over evil' story.



Owen Elton, Jessica Harding & Julie Atkinson

The large cast makes it difficult to review in depth, but at the outset it must be said that this staging, directed by Sandra Barfield, was a near-professional show with exceptional performances from the actors, great scene settings and lighting, and outstanding sound effects. The four children, Peter (Owen Huxford), Edmund (Natalie Smith), Susan (Megan Archer), and Lucy (Sophie-Rose Jackson), are the main characters and their journey and subsequent adventures when they entered the world of Narnia through the wardrobe drew solid performances from each. Peter, the eldest, was suitably aloof until persuaded that there really was a world through the wardrobe. Edmund, the rebel, with his contorted facial expressions, was for me the standout characterisation. Susan and Lucy twittered together, changing from ecstatically happy to solemnly sad in a moment and dominating the stage for much of the show. Their journey through adversity, when they met the White Witch (Julie Atkinson) surrounded by her cohorts, to eventually return to the 'normal' world, was a triumph of innocent goodness over selfish evil.

Aslan the Lion (Owen Elton) had a big voice as the righteous force for good, and his performance dominated all the scenes he appeared in. The fight scene showed expert co-ordination, which was necessary as there were several large and unwieldy 'weapons' in use. Costumes were provided by Alison Miall and Lizzie Goodall, assisted by the Oast Wardrobe Ladies and were, as has become expected, up to the Oast's high standard. The Lion's and the Queen's costumes were most effective, and I particularly liked those of the Leopards. The sound and lighting effects were really in keeping and the props, dominated by Terry Haskell's superb sleigh and 'stone' table, matched the standard of the set, a major feature of which was the cunningly concealed wardrobe door which could be positioned into the background when the scene changed from the Professor's old house into the forests of Narnia.

Overall this was an ambitious show with a large cast, played by different actors on the various nights of the run, and with the support of demanding lighting and sound scripts. It was carried off with great panache. Congratulations to Sandra and everyone concerned with the production.

Chris Wickham

Many hands make light work

For the production of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, we needed a full-sized, working lamp post—old-fashioned, the sort found on street corners. "How do you want to light it?" we asked. "By battery," came the reply, "and by the way, we need to carry it on and off."

In our workshop, we have a couple of tea chests filled with short ends of wooden mouldings, architrave, and so on, and it was here that the makings of a lamp post were found.

So, our best lamp post builder set to work. Working plans were drawn up, and construction got underway. There was a suitable lamp top in the props store, which was a start. Clearly this was going to end up heavy and unwieldy, so it was agreed that it needed to be on casters.

It took shape on the workbench, piece by piece. It gradually came to life until it was decided that the battery idea was not bright enough, so it needed to be on the mains electricity supply. This entailed fitting a suitable new bulb socket in the lamp and running a lead up through the hollow stem. This meant it did not have to be a major re-build, although one was called for and undertaken. Finally, the remarkably life-like lamp post was produced.



Barry Nicholls

TICKET ANALYSIS

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Total tickets sold 995

Members 166

Non members 612

% of seats sold 98.02

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Review (Cast 2)

What a way to end 2025 at the Oast! This magical, classic tale, directed by the talented Sandra Barfield was such pure entertainment for adults and children alike, and I was lucky to buy one of the last tickets available. There was such an equally high standard for every part of the show, from the acting to the costumes and the set and the props. The backdrop was outstanding, with the beautifully painted forest scene stretching away into the distance, and by simply opening and closing the wardrobe door, it was such a simple but effective way of establishing when the characters were inside or in Narnia. The lighting was spectacular, showing the snow falling and lighting up Mr Tumnus' cave (played very well by Tim Beacock) to differentiate between scenes and locations.



Nic Hoskins, & Natalie Smith

The costumes and makeup were a highlight for me, particularly the leopards, the beavers, Mr Tumnus, the Lion, Maugrim, Santa, the elf, and of course, the villain - the White Witch - who looked fantastic. The props, set and effects were carefully designed and thought-out with the dramatic entrance of the witch's sleigh and the crack of the stone table, which broke apart before our very eyes! The play was very well cast with 2 sets of actors split across the performances. The four children were constant for both and perfectly portrayed the children entering Narnia through the wardrobe and meeting the other characters. Natalie Smith brought so much humour as mischievous Edmund, and Owen Huxford and Megan Archer gave compelling, strong performances as Peter and Susan. Sophie Rose-Jackson once again showed her versatility and strong acting skills in her role as wide-eyed, apprehensive Lucy. Nic Hoskins was convincingly evil and bossy as the White Witch and Andy Leggatt was a great contrast as the hero of the play, Aslan the Lion. The rest of the cast were also fantastic and supported each other so well. The fight scene was very well choreographed. I laughed out loud at Mr and Mrs Beavers' walk and tail wagging (played by Wendy Challis and Anna Wood).

Thank you so much to the cast and crew for this festive feast!

Karen Gorbutt

Membership Invited

The newly refurbished Hilden Manor, now called 'The Never Say Never' is having a launch party to celebrate their opening, to which the Oast membership is invited.



For Oast theatre audiences, there will be a 20% discount on pre-show food on the production of your show ticket.

It's in the bag

The marketing team is pleased to announce that the Oast Theatre tote bags are now available for purchase. They are made of sturdy cotton, have a spacious main compartment and can hold up to 5kg. They cost £8 each and will be on sale on Wednesday mornings and during show weeks. We hope you enjoy using them.



A Deserved Christmas Lunch

Another delightful Workers' Christmas Lunch was held at the Oast. It is always a popular and happy occasion. The Sociable Committee made the soups which were courgette and cream, broccoli and stilton, butternut squash, and tomato. It really is the Oast Family Soup Day and, as usual, there was a friendly, warm atmosphere which is why we all go! Tables were carried down from the JY Studio by the Playgroup, and seating for 60 was arranged in the bar. Crackers, bread, cheese, mince pies and oranges were set out, the bar was open and we were ready to go. What a lovely way to start the Christmas Celebrations.

So who are the 60 workers? They are the workers who turn up every week, come rain or shine, to put the show on the road. The Playgroup, the bar, the painters, the electricians, the garden group, the sewing ladies, the ice cream ladies, and the Yellow Glove ladies. Many thanks to the Sociable Committee for organising this very popular event.



100 CLUB WINNERS

£25 Mr Weston Smith

£10 Miss J Beer

£10 Mrs A Welch

£10 Mr & Mrs Butson

£10 Mr J Gregory

You can join the 100 Club for just £13 per year. Call Valerie Shields on 01732 355919 or email 100club@oasttheatre.com

QUIZ

1. A Harold Pinter political play first performed in 1988
2. 1976 film concerning Watergate
3. James Graham play about the seventies Labour government
4. Novelist who wrote *The Trial*
5. It was said to have outlasted the premiership of Liz Truss
6. Shelley's poem inspired by the Peterloo Massacre of 1819
7. 19th century novelist who became Prime Minister
8. David Hare play concerning the Iraq war
9. Banned Stanley Kubrick film from the seventies
10. 2006 Stoppard play about power, persecution and protest

Answers next month

The answers for last month's quiz

1. Fallen Angels
2. Waiting in the Wings
3. Nude With Violin
4. Cavalcade
5. The Vortex
6. Hay Fever
7. Easy Virtue
8. This Happy Breed
9. Design for Living
10. Sail Away

THE OAST THEATRE

Committee members

Chairman:	Phil Porter chair@oasttheatre.com 01732 835460
Vice-Chair:	Kate Robbins - kate.robbsins@oasttheatre.com
Secretary:	Sara Lacey - secretary@oasttheatre.com:
Treasurer:	Nick Blessley - treasurer@oasttheatre.com
Head of Drama:	Sandra Barfield - sandra.barfield@oasttheatre.com 07973 657311
Youth Theatre :	Jason Lower: youth@oasttheatre.com
Marketing:	Mandy Hulston - mandy.hulston@oasttheatre.com
Publicity:	MaggieHoiles-maggie.hoiles@oasttheatre.com 01622 813573
Wardrobe:	Jo Pierce - wardrobe@oasttheatre.com 01892 528166
Art Group:	Tony Pegg - tony.pegg@oasttheatre.com
Security manager:	DerekRose-security@oasttheatre.com 07860304765
Room & Rehearsal Bookings:	Kate Robbins - hire@oasttheatre.com
Box Office:	Ian Burns: ian.burns@oasttheatre.com
Member:	Ian Tucker-Bell - ian.tucker-bell@oasttheatre.com

Deadline

Please send in any copy you wish to be included in the Oast Notes by 6th of the month. Copy sent to:

Andy Taylor - editor@oasttheatre.com