

OAST NOTES

July 2026

*Gentleman
Jack*

by Ross
McGregor

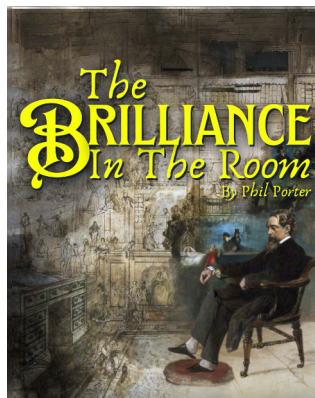


18th - 25th July 8pm Sunday Performance 3pm

Performing Now! Don't miss it!

20th - 27th June - Main Stage

An entertaining gallop through Dickens' novels. There is physical theatre, including rowing across the marshes and building the Commodore coach, using umbrellas as its wheels. Expect fisticuffs, raucous local elections and the sheer poetry of the Yarmouth great storm.



Next Play to Perform

18th - 25th July

Gentleman Jack, oh Gentleman Jack
Watch your back, you're under attack
Their husbands are coming,
You'd better start running
The knives are out for Gentleman Jack."

Christopher Rawson, a Halifax mine owner and Anne Lister's rival, whispers in her ear early on in the play. Gentleman Jack was the unkind nickname given to Anne Lister. She wrote parts of her diaries in a secret code, and they were deciphered by John Lister and his friend, Arthur Burrell. The decoding was completed by Helena Whitbread in the 1980s. And, as a result, the world now knows about this very distinctive woman, Anne Lister. We are using Ross McGregor's script of "Gentleman Jack" for our production. His script revolves around Anne Lister's lovers and her dealings with Christopher Rawson.

The set will suggest the interior of Shipden Hall. Lighting and music composed by Andy Leggatt will indicate changes of location and time. Steampunk is the style for costumes and props, as this grew from the industrial powerhouse that was the North of England in the nineteenth century.

Gritty yet tender, the play is totally absorbing – enjoy!

Tickets: Members £10 non-members £14

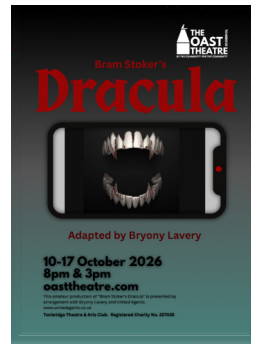
AUDITION

Audition Dates: Sunday 28th June 2026 7.30 - 9.00pm

Tuesday 30th June 2026 7.30 - 9.00 pm

Performance **Dates:** 10th - 17th October

Synopsis: Bryony Lavery's adaptation brings Bram Stoker's classic gothic horror into the 21st century, where the infamous vampire blends supernatural cunning with technological know-how. Our heroes, while styled in their original moulds, are reimagined in the modern era with current references and comedy to lighten the sometimes dark themes. This show is an opportunity for the cast to stretch the framework of classic archetypes while also engaging in the spirit of Bram Stoker's gothic masterpiece.



Characters:

- Dracula** - Male, must be able to do a few accents. Playing age 45+.
- Van Helsing** - Male, mentor and father figure to Dr. Seward. Dutch or German accent. Playing age 50+.
- Quincey Morris** - Any gender. American, talks like John Wayne, loves Lucy, a bit of a geek. Playing age 25-40.
- Jonathan Harker** - Male, a solicitor, unsure of himself, prone to excitement, loves Mina. Playing age 25-40.
- Lucy** - A teacher, loves the idea of love Mina's best friend. Playing age 18-35.
- Arthur Holmwood** - Adorable toff who loves Lucy. Old-fashioned with a modern twist. Playing age 21-40.
- Doctor Seward** - Any gender. A doctor dedicated to work. A surrogate child to Van Helsing. Playing age 25 - 40
- Mina** - Female - Teacher, loves Jonathan and is sure of herself. Playing age 21-35.
- Renfield** - Any gender identity, a psychiatric patient, serves Dracula, any accent. Playing age 35+.
- Mrs Westenra** - Lucy's mother, and has accepted Mina as a second daughter. Playing age 45+.
- Child** - Male, our window into the world of the play. Playing age 15+
(please note, the actor must be over 18).

Other roles to be played by members of the cast.

Interested? Contact Director - email: laurence.plumb@oasttheatre.com

AUDITION

Dates: Thursday 16th July 7.30 pm Bar Lounge

Sunday 19th July at 10.30 am – 1pm Janet Young Studio

Performances are in December:

11TH – 13TH Evenings 7 pm Two Matinees 2 pm

17TH – 19TH Evenings 7 pm Matinee 2 pm



We will more than likely have to put in another evening so will sort this out with the cast.

I NEED A CAST OF ABOUT 18 - THAT IS WITH TRIPLING!

Parts that cannot be doubled or tripled

Alice	Female
Queen of Hearts	Female
King of Hearts	Male
March Hare	Male
Mad Hatter	Male
Dormouse	Either gender
White rabbit	Either gender

Parts which will be doubled or tripled

Duchess in two acts	Female.	Red Queen, White Queen,	Female
Tweedledum	Tweedledee	Male	
Humpty Dumpty		Male	
Cheshire cat		Male	
Frog footman	Fish footman	Male	
Mouse, Caterpillar, Gryphon , Mock Turtle, Cook , 2, 5 ,and 7, of Spades,			Either gender.
Numerous other parts.			

Interested? Contact director, Sandra Barfield email: sandrapbarfield@gmail.com

Scripts: a lot are out, so could you please return them to the Drama box so others can read them.

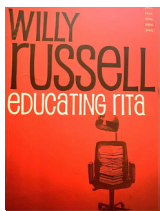
AUDITION

Sunday 5th July 2026 2.00 – 4.00 pm JY Studio

Tuesday 7th July 2026 7.30 – 9.30 pm JY Studio

Performances: 14th - 21st November

Characters: Frank – Male 50s Slightly gone-to-seed academic
Rita – Female 20s/30s Liverpudlian Hairdresser



Synopsis: Educating Rita is set in the chaotic splendour of a university lecturer's study. It follows twenty-six-year-old Liverpool hairdresser Rita returning to education. Tutor and failed poet Frank is reluctant to teach this needy, unconventional would-be student, preferring to ease his way through his teaching duties with the help of booze. For Rita, though, Frank is the perfect teacher. Her determination finally persuades him to oversee her studies.

Interested? Contact Marc Evans email: marcjamesevans@gmail.com

COME TO THE CABARET!

Saturday 26th September

7.30 for 8.00 pm

You are invited to the Oast for an evening celebrating the joys of Musical Theatre, featuring LUCY GARRIOCH - West End singer, actress, vocal coach, choir leader and much else besides. Look her up online - you will be impressed! Lucy has toured far and wide with her one-woman cabaret show and she will entertain us for the first half of the evening; after the interval the programme will also feature YOURSELVES - a chance to sing some of the best songs ever written for the theatre, to the original backing tracks. How could you miss it?



Lucy Garrioch

This is a members' event and the cost for the evening is £12, to include light refreshments; it will all happen in the Bar Lounge (the bar will be open, of course) and so numbers will have to be limited. To book, preferably please email valerie.armstrong@oasttheatre.com (or call Valerie at 01892 723459/07792 079451). All bookings will be acknowledged, with details of how to pay - online direct to the club, or by cheque or cash if you prefer. The Box Office will not be booking this event. We really look forward to welcoming you to an exciting and fun evening!



SAFETY TRAINING DAY

Wednesday 29th July.

As some of you may know, we have recently asked Arts Safety to come and do an audit and, as a result, we have to do some training, which involves all members who carry out activities at the Oast Theatre, so we have arranged a training day on the above date.

There will be more details later.

The day will be a refresher for those who attended the previous training or are attending safety training for the first time. The day will be tailored to the activities that people undertake at the Oast.

TICKET ANALYSIS

The Master Builder

Total tickets sold 462

Members 195

Non members 264

% of seats sold 51.23

Hymn to Canada

&

Abi's Apartment

Tickets sold 135

% of seats sold 100

Artist of the Month

Ken Smith

I realised I had a talent for drawing and painting while still at school. Friday afternoon art lesson with Mr Oliver was the highlight of the week. He would let me draw or paint any subject I wished and, at the end of the lesson, would take the time to provide me with constructive feedback. Having spent most of my working life in the wider field of engineering, I base a high proportion of my artwork on mechanical subjects (aircraft, trains and ships). In my early 20s, I became involved in amateur theatre, which took up most of my spare time. It wasn't till we moved to Kent, when we joined *Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club*, that I really started to paint again. Many hours have been spent in my little studio in the loft, doodling and waiting for inspiration, as well as actually painting. At least, with this dedicated space, I don't have to clear everything away at the end of a session. I hope my works gives you as much pleasure as creating them has given me.



DECADES OF PLAYS



The Killing of Sister George 1977

Evelyn Smith & Annie Young



She Stoops to Conquer 1988

Rita Carpenter



The Country Wife 1990

Val Armstrong, Ann Matthey, Mark Doshier & Sue Johnson



The Children's Hour 2001

Yvette Walters & Lizzie Goodall



The House of Bernarda Alba 2011

Lynn Short



Playhouse Creatures 2020

Cathy Bourne, Emma Harrison & Kate Peters

The Master Builder Review

Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder* is one of his most psychologically intricate works, exploring regret, ambition, fear and desire. David Hare's adaptation, with its modern language, made the play more accessible without losing its emotional depth.

The audience was greeted by a sparse, open stage: pale flats washed in changing colours, with black-and-white projections dissolving seamlessly throughout. White-painted furniture clearly suggested the setting and atmosphere. Ian Burns (Knut Brovik), Joel Friend (Ragnar Brovik) and Katherine Salter (Kaja Fosli) silently occupied the stage, quietly working and immediately establishing the world of the play as we settled into our seats.



David Adams & April Stansfield

Ian Burns gave Knut Brovik dignity and frailty, while Joel Friend convincingly captured Ragnar's frustration at living in Solness's shadow. Katherine Salter brought warmth and sympathy to Kaja, despite occasional issues with audibility.

David Adams delivered a nuanced and compelling Halvard Solness, balancing authority with deep insecurity. He portrayed Solness as both domineering and haunted, with his gradual unravelling fascinating to watch. April Stansfield's Hilde Wangel injected danger and excitement into the production. Although her pacing occasionally felt rushed, her diction and projection were excellent, and she skilfully presented Hilde as both muse and disruptor.

Emma Harrison's Aline Solness was quietly devastating, her restrained performance revealing layers of grief and tension surrounding the loss of her children and family home.

Chris Parnell provided calm and humanity as Dr Herdal. His understated delivery worked well against the tension surrounding Solness and Hilde.

In the final scene full use was made of the crew casting Jo Pierce (wardrobe), Elizabeth Taylor-Moon (continuity) and Alex Noble-Jennings (props) as the crowd.

Director Andy Taylor's spare, uncluttered approach kept the audience engaged throughout this demanding and word-heavy play. Supported by Andy Leggatt's atmospheric music, particularly in scenes involving Solness and Hilde, the production felt absorbing and strikingly contemporary in its themes of ambition, ageing, power and self-delusion.

Sara Lacey

Abi's Apartment Review

Abi's Apartment, by David Pemberton, is a comedy which is set in the lounge of Madam's luxury apartment. As the play opens, we meet Abi, Madam's maid and Ben, the chauffeur, who await the return of their employer. Madam is at a court hearing involving her boyfriend, Monsieur. Abi is desperate to enjoy the finer things in life, like Madam, and embarks on an elaborate role-playing game with Ben, which runs throughout the play.



Sophie Adair, Anná Rumgay & Taz Bulman

This sophisticated production was stylishly executed. Director Laurence Plumb cast the play perfectly. Sophie Adair thrived as Abigail as she prowled around the space, luring Benjamin, ably played by Taz Bulman, into her web of deceit. Taz and Sophie worked well together. I enjoyed their performances as their characters' relationship was established, and Abi began to take control. Anna Rumgay swished through the door, her movement and deportment immediately conveying Madam's status, owning the stage in her scenes. Finally, we met the rogue Monsieur, brilliantly portrayed by Fiona Adams. Her swagger and physicality for this character were great choices, and I particularly enjoyed her accent for Monsieur, all of which contributed to a very believable role.

The play was enhanced by the stunning costumes, which Lizzie Goodall organised with her usual flair. Props by Alex Noble-Jennings were spot on and contributed to Madam's lavish world. I loved the flashes of pink and red in the rubber gloves and flowers, bringing colour and richness to the surroundings. The gorgeous music added to the atmosphere, and I enjoyed the small touches with the record player. Well done to Dave Mackin and Lauren Barnes for their sound and lighting design, and to Lauren for operating it. Thank you to the cast and crew for a charming and chic production of a play, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Victoria Whitworth.

Conversation with Jason Lower

Ed. Do you know when the Oast Youth Theatre began?

Jason: I think the Oast has had a children's or youth section for years. Rita Carpenter ran it, and then Ken Banister took over in 1981 or 82. That's the version of the youth theatre which we know today. Ken ran it until he passed away in 2014, and I've been looking after it since then.

Ed. Looking after it; is that how you see it?

Jason: Yes. I joined the Hoppers, which was run by Mrs Perry in the year 2000. I was eleven. I joined the youth theatre when I was thirteen, and still helped out with the Hoppers. I think Ken would recognise it. I don't think he'd recognise the amount of health and safety and safeguarding which now goes into it though.

Ed. How big an influence has Ken been on you?

Jason: A huge amount. Ken shaped the youth theatre. He has shaped me. I want it to continue being similar to the sort of stuff Ken would do. He described it as a youth group that does a lot of theatre. And it does a lot of theatre. Charities now work with things called a Theory of Change - what are we trying to change, who are we trying to change, and how? We have the outputs - the shows, and the outcomes - the more important bit. The outcomes for the youth theatre are for them to develop their theatre skills, their communication skills, their sense of confidence and their sense of community. I've have had many parents say to me "this is where they found their tribe. This where they found their people." That was definitely true for me. And that's down to Ken's influence.

Ed. What do you do in the workshops?

Jason: Today, we are doing long-form improv based on their stories. They will come in and tell a story or have a rant about something that's going on, and then we will create scenes off the back of it. Sometimes we do that, sometimes we do script work, sometimes we'll do things that are related to certain skills. We might do more games, particularly around June, because they are going through exams. It's a mixture of things, but it is led by the people in the room.

Ed. What have been your favourite experiences in running the youth theatre?

Jason: There are a few. Putting on plays such as Brainstorm, The Laramie Project, Pronoun and Bassett. We do residentials once a year, which are a mixture of games, improv, and water fights. It's just the fun and a sheer joy. Last year was so much fun. As quite a lot of them have been, and I think it's the laughter and that sense of them all coming together, and seeing those who hardly say anything in the room become the loudest in the room. Seeing them develop and their confidence grow.

continued next page

Ed. I know many go off to university, but do you encourage them to come back?

Jason: Yes. So Ken, in 2011, said to me, “No one ever comes back,” and I feel I’ve spent the last fifteen years trying to prove him wrong. Now we have Luke Morrison, who was a big part of the youth theatre. He has directed a couple of plays. Many others, too, have come back and support the shows. Many have gone into the industry and come back to help.

Ed. Do you do technical workshops?

Jason: We don’t at the moment, but we’re lucky to have Will Dunn, who helps with the lighting, and I hope, once he has more time, we can start bringing the young people into it more.

Ed. Would you say acting is important?

Jason. Yes, I think it provides an opportunity because it gives young people the chance to be themselves. Not in every play, but there are plays such as DNA or Brainstorm where you can empathise with different people. It’s important that it promotes different representations on the stage. The Laramie Project, for example, is a way to challenge views, and I think it’s one thing reading an article about discrimination, and it’s another to see it portrayed and to put yourself in the shoes of those people. I think Be My Baby was really good at provoking discussions around those homes for young mothers. It is also a form of escapism.

Ed. Do you still enjoy it?

Jason: The young people we have at the moment are incredible. I really enjoy being in this group. I think they are one of the funniest groups we have had.

Ed. Would you like more adults to be involved in the youth theatre?

Jason: I’m grateful for the team I’ve got. I’d love to have more adults involved, as long as they understand it doesn’t run like an adult show. The outcomes are the important thing. I want the shows to be good, but I’d rather the shows be middling, and everyone have a good time doing it.

Ed. Where would you like to see the youth theatre going in the future?

Jason: Maybe get some more of the former youth theatre back to direct shows. I’d love to feel confident that I could step away. I’d love to know it is being taken care of by others. I hope Ken would be proud of what we’re doing.

Hymn to Canada Review

Conducted by Phil Holden, Ian Tucker-Bell's 'Hymn to Canada' was beautifully orchestrated, weaving solos, duets before eventually bringing the full chorus together. The cast were powerful, but the Sound & Lighting Design of Ian Crawford & Dave Mackin, operated by Lauren Barnes, was the real star of the show. The play opens with Mike, played by Andy Vass, seemingly surrounded by the rest of the cast as his heart beats faster. With each line, the cast step closer, the world gets smaller, and Mike finds it harder to breathe.



Seb Junemann, Ian Tucker-Bell, Cheryl Storer, Kate Robbins & Andy Vass

The play centres around Mike's 70th birthday party. It is anchored by monologues from Kate Robbins as Anne, Mike's new girlfriend. What begins as a gentle melody develops into something far more complex. Mike is scared of flying, but has dreams of travelling the world. Sean (Ian Tucker-Bell) has known him for nearly 30 years and has never been able to understand this fear. It is only when Anne forces the issue that the truth begins to come out. A mysterious birthday card, an otherwise confident man reduced to silence, and a lost connection.

The beauty of Tucker-Bell's writing is how he composes notes of humour throughout. Even at the worst moments, as we sit in the silence of Mike's decisions, Lauren (Cheryl Storer), Anne's daughter, bursts in from a drunk night out. All this is underscored by a solo performance from Seb Junemann as John, a Canadian man retelling the dramatic moments in which he was thrown halfway across the world. The script is beautifully orchestrated, each revelation arriving on cue. There may only have been one song, but 'Hymn to Canada' crescendos towards a finale. The powerful emotion in the final tableau will stay with the audience for a long time.

Louis Robinson

100 CLUB WINNERS

- £100 Miss R Beale
- £10 Mrs M Adams
- £10 Messrs P&I Tucker-Bell
- £10 Mr S Walters
- £10 Mr H Dawson

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QUIZ

1. First woman to earn her living through playwriting
2. Kate Bush number one song in 1978
3. Playwright who wrote *Our Country's Good*
4. The wife of Jason in Euripides Greek tragedy
5. Poet at the centre of a Hugh Whitmore play
6. Playwright who wrote *Blasted*
7. Author of *Mrs Dalloway*
8. The pen name of Mary Ann Evans
9. The actor who played *Gentleman Jack* in the TV series
10. Playwright who wrote *Top Girls*

Answers next month

Answers for last month's quiz

1. Portsmouth
2. Chatham
3. 1837
4. 1842
5. Daily News
6. Household Words
7. David Copperfield
8. Staplehurst
9. Gads Hill
10. The Mystery of Edwin Drood

Season 2026/27

September: She Kills Monsters

March: Pygmalion

October: Dracula

April: Youth Theatre

Lady Bracknell

May: Oleanna

November: Educating Rita

June: Hoppers

December: Alice in Wonderland

June: Lady Windermere's Fan

January: Youth Theatre

July: Baskerville

February: Perfect Pitch

THE OAST THEATRE

Committee Members



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Deadline

Please send in any copy you wish included in the Oast notes by the
6th of the month. Copy to be sent to:
Andy Taylor - editor@oasttheatre.com