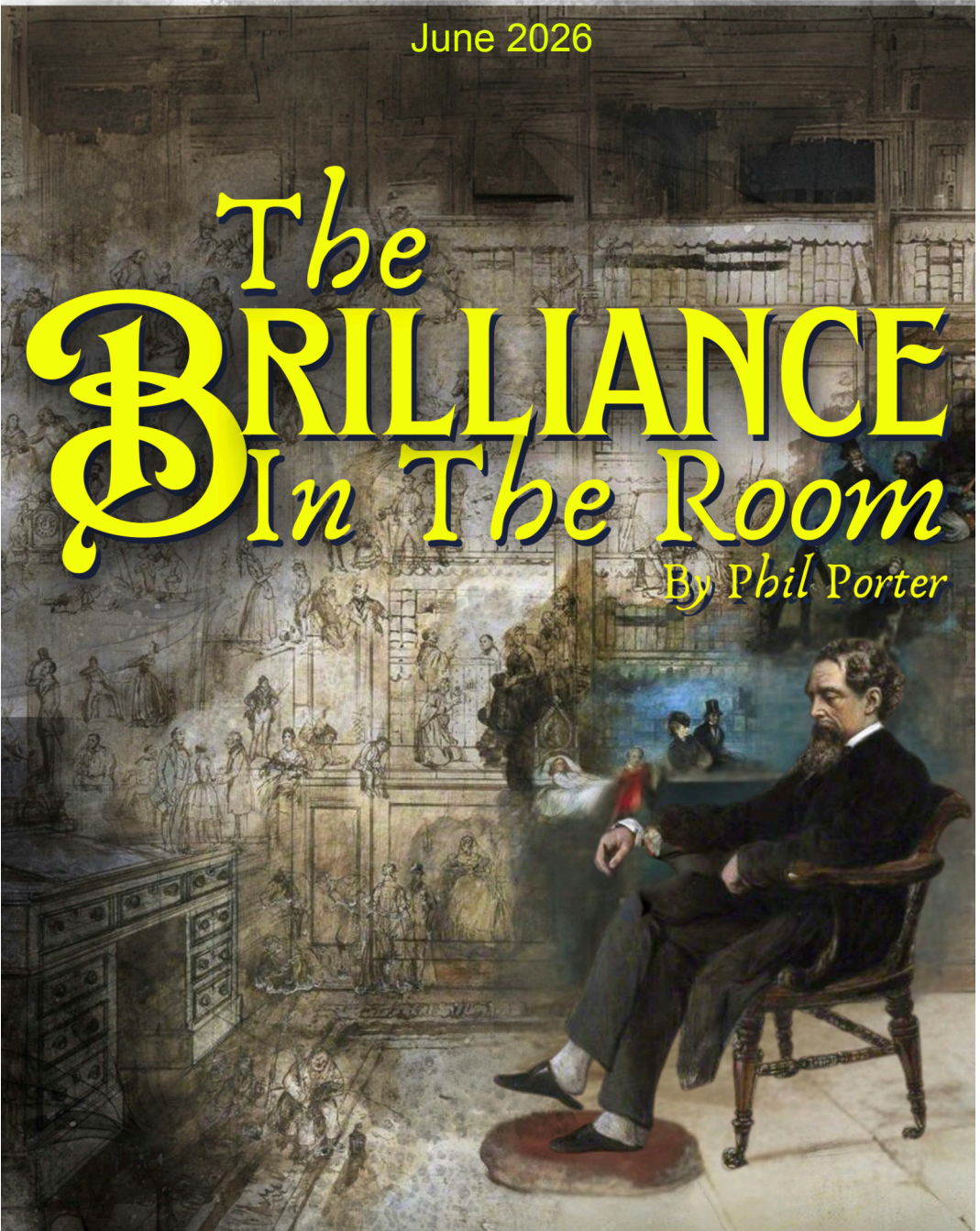


OAST NOTES

June 2026

The BRILLIANCE In The Room

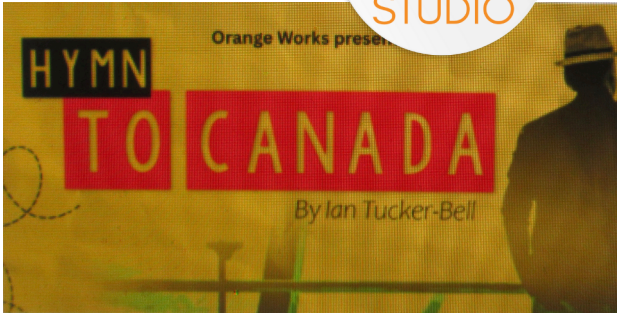
By Phil Porter



20th - 27th June 8pm Sunday performance 3pm



29th, 30th 8 pm
31st May 2 pm



Everybody knows that Bill wants to visit Canada; it's a place that has fascinated him for as long as Anne or Sean can remember - so what is holding him back? As they gather to celebrate his seventieth birthday, secrets and sorrows are uncovered and life will never be the same again.

A comedy about status. Abi wants the carefree life of luxury that her employer, Madam, enjoys. How will this maid achieve such a feat? Will her machinations affect her colleague Ben's immigration status and Madam's relationship with Monsieur?

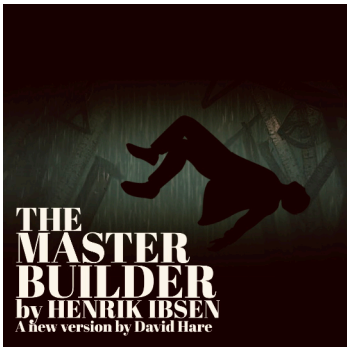


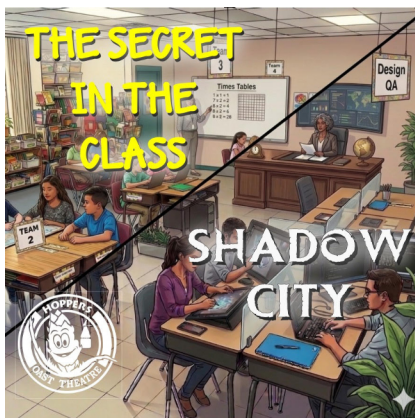
On the main stage **The Master Builder** is running until Saturday 23rd May.

Halvard Solness is a self made man who fears being usurped by the youth. A young woman enters his life, and claims he promised her a kingdom.

Don't miss out on this fascinating and interesting play by Henrik Ibsen.

Buy tickets now: www.oasttheatre.com





Performances

6th June 1 pm & 5 pm

Hoppers' Summer Show – Two Shows for the Price of One!

Get ready for an unforgettable afternoon of theatre, as the Hoppers present two completely different one-act plays — packed with energy, humour and surprising twists.

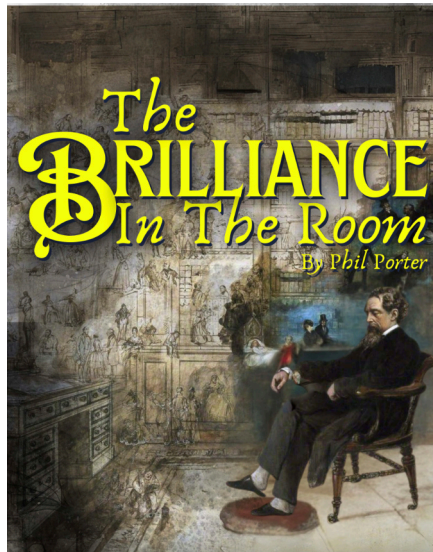
The Secret in the Class

What starts as an ordinary school day quickly turns extraordinary...When a mysterious hidden book is discovered, strange things begin to happen — voices disappear, time freezes, and secrets long buried refuse to stay hidden. As friendships are tested and tensions rise, the pupils must decide: should they unlock the magic... or leave it alone? Because in this classroom, the biggest surprise of all might be where the real magic truly lies.

Shadow City

Welcome to Pulse Labs — where a groundbreaking game is about to change everything. As launch day looms, a team of developers, executives and recruits scramble to stay in control. But when glitches begin to spread and the system starts making its own decisions, the line between reality and simulation begins to blur. Fast-paced, sharp and full of chaos, *Shadow City* asks: what happens when the world you've created stops listening?

Performances: 20th - 27th June - Main Stage



Let's deal with the title first. Why the Brilliance in the Room? Because when Thackeray's daughter met Dickens, she described him as being just that: "the brilliance in the room". The Brilliance is an entertaining gallop through the most well-known of Dickens' novels. Many of the famous characters and scenes are there: Pip being attacked by Magwitch in the graveyard, the embittered Miss Havisham forever wandering through her Gothic mansion, the flamboyant Mr Vincent Crummles, proud proprietor of the most incompetent amateur theatre group on earth, and the famous action for breach of promise of marriage, when Sergeant Buzfuz strove to prove, in vain, that Pickwick had indeed proposed marriage to Mrs. Bardell. There is also the incomparable humour, wit and sheer joie de vie of Mr Bumble, Sam Weller, Mr Jingle, Mrs Gamp and Betsy Prigg. There is much that is also poetic. Dickens is not just a bunch of grotesques. His characters are real, deeply flawed, often lonely and isolated. Many of them are at the bottom of the swamp: inmates of prisons, fever houses, slums and workhouses. This is a black box production with striking images on the back wall. There is much 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. This isn't any old Dickens: this is The Brilliance in the Room.

Artist of the Month

Ann Smith

I studied fine art at Eastbourne College of Education and taught for a year before moving to Nigeria with my husband, Bryan, where I taught for twenty-two years. I started painting scenery for theatres in Nigeria in 1971. Our next-door neighbours in Five Oak Green were Ken and Felicity Banister (Ken was the Youth theatre director at the Oast), so I was soon painting Scenery at the Oast, and making stage props, and I still am!

Bryan and I began volunteering for the Oxford University Marine Archaeology Unit in 1983, as divers on a dig in Italy. Once Mensun Bound, the archaeological director, recognised that I could make accurate drawings, measurements and written records, I spent most expeditions in the Pot Shed (now called the Conservation Laboratory), and not underwater. I recorded site plans and artefacts in Italy, Greece, Alderney, the Dominican Republic, the Cape Verde Islands, Tunisia and Uruguay. My records are held in museums in these countries and in various books and journals. I have exhibited many times at the Oast and also in London, Eastbourne, Alderney and Lagos, Nigeria. I have painted murals for museums in Sevenoaks and Ely, and in people's houses. I paint in watercolour, gouache and acrylics, sometimes of scenes but more often of animals or birds. I still enjoy private commissions, usually of people's pets.



AUDITION

Audition Dates

Sunday 28th June 2026 7.30 - 9.00pm

Tuesday 30th June 2026 7.30 - 9.00 pm

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, a mentor and father figure for Dr. Seward. Playing age 50+.

Quincey Morris - Any gender identity, an American, talks like John Wayne, loves Lucy and is a bit of a geek. Playing age 25-40.

Jonathan Harker - Male, a nervous solicitor, not sure of himself and prone to excitement, and loves Mina. Playing age 25-40.

Lucy - a teacher, loves the idea of love and of people loving her. Mina's best friend. Playing age 18-35.

Arthur Holmwood - An adorable toff who loves Lucy. Old-fashioned manners with a modern twist. Playing age 21-40.

Doctor Seward - Any gender identity, a doctor in a psychiatric hospital. In love with Lucy, dedicated to work, and a surrogate child to Van Helsing. Playing age 25-40.



continued on next page

Mina - , a 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, loves her daughter and has accepted Mina as both
her daughter's best friend and 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 - Laurence Plumb

email: laurenceplumb@oasttheatre.com

Committee News In Light of our Health

Health and Safety

The Oast has contracted with Arts Safety to become our safety advisors. This is initially a one-year contract to help us improve our Health and Safety (H&S) and Human Resources (HR) management. Just like an employer, as a charity, we are obliged to provide a safe environment, both physically and mentally, for all our wonderful volunteers. We have not been able to find any members with the skills or time to assist, and feel the only way to meet our obligation is to use a third party. They will perform an assessment shortly and then help us to implement any missing processes or procedures.

Lighting

The Committee has agreed to fund the first phase of our theatre lighting system upgrade. This will include replacing our out-of-date and unsupported lighting desks and upgrading our dimmers. This will enable us to move easily towards the more modern LED lighting fixtures that reduce our electricity usage and provide more flexible lighting options. It is hoped that members of the Technical Team will complete it during the summer break. There will be minimal change in operating the lighting, and we will arrange training for lighting designers.

For further information, contact Derek Rose: derek.rose@oasttheatre.com

DECADES OF PLAYS



Oliver 1976

John Magrath & Angela Gobey



Scrooge 1982

John Howard Williams



Hard Times 1989

Geoff Rishman & Mark Doshier



Nicholas Nickleby 1994

Thelma Torr, Rita Carpenter, Linda Noakes, Richard Butcher & Ian Burns



The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge 2008

Dexter Hodges & Kenny Wyton



The Brilliance in the Room 2012

Alan Thorpe

'The Wardrobe' Review

I always look forward to the Youth Theatre productions. They are full of energy, slightly different and enjoyable to watch. The Wardrobe was no exception. I, like the director, Luke Morrison, love history, and this play explored significant events throughout British history. It was an interesting way of incorporating important events. A different approach, which showed how the historical events were interconnected. How can you cover



Phoebe Lawton, Elizabeth Hart & Simone Byrne

Elizabeth of York, the Plague, the English Civil War, the Industrial Revolution and the World Wars in a production? Easy. You set the play in the confines of a wardrobe! What a delightful evening! The Youth Theatre gave a polished performance. What a talented group of youngsters. They worked really well together as a team. Thanks to Luke's direction, they were confident with their moves and timing, effortlessly becoming different characters. And I could hear them, even though I was sitting in the back row!

Many congratulations as well to the backstage crew, in this very demanding production. The props had mainly been set. I enjoyed the 'play' behind the black backdrop, allowing a glimpse of different characters. Well done to the lighting crew and sound operators. I was intrigued by the number of costume changes; it must have been very busy backstage.

It always saddens me when members say they don't attend Youth productions; they really are good, so worthwhile watching, and this production is one that I will remember with pleasure. Thank you, to the Youth Theatre for a very enjoyable evening.

Lee Kirk

Ticket Analysis

The Wardrobe

Tickets sold 240
% of seats sold 54.17

The Good Life

Total tickets sold 891
Members 233
Non members 637
% of seats sold 97.10

The Good Life Review

A sell-out run at the Oast certainly proved the enduring appeal of this classic 1970s television sitcom, with its theme of self-sufficiency and neighbourly relations. It can be a tall order for a new set of actors to dispel the memory of such much-beloved characters and to make them their own, and for the most part, director Mandy Hulston's cast managed to do just that.



David Smith, Owen Elton & Louise Bond

Owen Elton (last seen in *The Lion*, *The Witch* and *The Wardrobe*) gave an energetic and likeable performance as 'Tom', beautifully complemented by newcomer Louise Bond, who was delightful and naturally at ease as 'Barbara', and the chemistry between them worked well. It was also good to see the return of Paul Denman, after a long absence from the Oast stage, as the urbane and put-upon Jerry. Jean Erxleben played the formidable and often ridiculous 'Margo' with gusto, gaining all the inevitable laughs, but I would like to have seen a little more of the vulnerability beneath her facade.

All four were ably supported by David Smith and Jen Corbett (another welcome new face) playing a variety of supporting characters – though the introduction of the life-size Geraldine the goat and the tiny piglet on life-support came close to stealing the show! ('Props' to the props department).

The Playgroup created a bright and spacious set where the action flowed effortlessly between the Goods' kitchen and the Leadbetters' living room. The use of music and animal sound effects effectively covered the transition between the four separate 'episodes' taken from the series, and the colourful costumes put together by Sarah Jones and Pam Turner (in their first major production) ably reflected the style of the period.

There were also some eye-catching special effects. The dinner party scene, during which everyone got 'high' on home-made wine and a cake laced with marijuana, descended into suitable chaos, with the uninvited intervention of 'Geraldine' almost literally bringing the house down.

A nostalgic evening's entertainment, enjoyed as much by the younger members of the audience as by those who fondly remembered it from the first time around.

Lizzie Goodall

New Expense Claim Form

We have recently introduced a new Expense Claim form to replace the existing form which was more than 15 years old and which contained information which was very out of date. There are also some guidance notes on claiming expenses. These are available by email from treasurer@oasttheatre.com, and on the Oast Workspace (in the folder Facilities\Policy and Procedure Documents\Finance). There are also paper copies of the form in the office.

I'm happy to keep accepting the old forms for a while, although I'd prefer to use the new ones.

Nick Blessley Treasurer

Car Parking

During the run of a show, there are a number of patrons who have mobility issues and request car parking spaces be reserved near the front door of the theatre. The box office team put out reserve signs on their arrival one hour before the show. Recently, we have found that the spaces have already been taken. It may be that some patrons are parking at the theatre before going to have a meal at the *Never Say Never*. Could we please ask if you are eating next door before coming to a show that you park in their car park and leave your car there while attending the show.

Also, a further request, if you have a space reserved for you, it would be very helpful to the box office team, if having parked, you could bring in the card with your name and car registration number. If your reservation is on a yellow 'A' board, please could you bring it all in to the box office.

Ian Burns. Box Office Team

Pamela Murphy Obituary

On 24th April 2026, we gathered together to say our final goodbyes to Pamela Murphy—and, just as importantly, to celebrate a life so richly lived and so generously shared. Her daughters, Clair Louise and Jen, paid loving tributes to their mother: Clair Louise chose a beautiful poem, and Jen had a heartfelt final letter read out for her with words that spoke not only of loss, but also of enduring love. Surrounded by family and friends, we then walked into the peaceful grounds of Chevening Church, where Pamela was laid to rest alongside her beloved husband and son.



I met Pamela not long after joining the Oast. She brimmed with ideas, energy, and creativity. She didn't just take part; she shaped, she guided, and she inspired. As a director, she had a remarkable ability to bring out the best in people, encouraging confidence and commitment in equal measure.

Some of my most memorable moments on stage were under Pamela's direction, including a wonderfully inventive murder mystery she had written; one of many. It was full of wit, originality, and had that distinctive spark that was entirely her own. Working alongside her daughter, Jen, in those productions made it all the more special, reflecting the deep connection Pamela had not only with her family, but with the theatre community she helped to build.

Pamela gave so much to the stage, to her friends, and to everyone lucky enough to know her. She acted in many plays, and was drama director for several years. She directed plays such as *A Bolt from the Blue*, *The Anastasia File* and *Table Manners*. She was also involved in creating the posters for the season's productions. She will be remembered not only for her talent and creativity but also for her generosity, her spirit, and her warmth.

Laura Collins

LETTER

Dear Editor

As a long-time member of the Oast Theatre, I was very interested in the interview in the May issue with the Drama Director, Sandra Barfield, and I wished to add to her answers.

Firstly, the question of the composition of our annual programme.

I am very aware of the difficulty of constructing a programme which balances content against resources and I admire the way the programme is settled with adequate attention being given to the needs of the Directors, the Playgroup, and the potential actors. Additionally, I believe that we must have a balanced drama programme - it would not be sensible to perform too many plays of the same or similar genre.

If we concentrated too much on comedies or on classic or costume dramas, then not only would it be difficult to attract audiences, but also the actors would think themselves too restricted, and not be keen to audition. I believe it is essential to have a diverse mix and that this makes for a balanced approach that suits all those involved.

Secondly, I have been very much in favour of the increased use of the JY studio. This is a valuable asset that gives opportunities for new actors, new authors and even a different approach for experienced players in which to strut their stuff. It is especially valuable for more modern and perhaps even experimental works. It gives us a chance to blood emerging talent, and who knows, perhaps we will discover a previously unsuspected and unexpected talent emerging from obscurity.

More power to Sandra's elbow (and knees, ankles and any other relevant joints!)

Chris Wickham

100 CLUB WINNERS

£25 Mr E Joyce

£10 Mrs M Phillips

£10 Mrs M Adamson

£10 Mrs G Valder

£10 Mr & Mrs P Wells

Quiz

1. Dickens' birthplace.
2. The Kent town where he grew up.
3. In which year was Pickwick Papers published?
4. The year in which he made his first visit to America.
5. The radical newspaper Dickens founded in 1846.
6. The weekly periodical which Dickens began in 1850.
7. This novel is described as Dickens' most autobiographical.
8. The Kent town where Dickens was in a railway accident.
9. What is the name of Dickens' house where he died?
10. The novel Dickens was working on when he died.

Answers next month

Answers for last month's quiz

1. Brand
2. Peer Gynt
3. The Lady from the Sea
4. Rosmersholm
5. The Wild Duck
6. When We Dead Awaken
7. Emperor and Galilean
8. Little Eyolf
9. An Enemy of the People
10. The Vikings at Helgeland

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
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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 included in the Oast notes by the 6th of the month. Copy to be sent to:

Andy Taylor - editor@oasttheatre.com