

Whitefield Garrick

Newsletter

Summer 2021

Hello Everyone! Welcome back! Great News!

Hopefully, from 21st June 2021 the Government will be lifting restrictions to allow us to open our doors once more. We are of course delighted to be welcoming you back to The Garrick and hope to continue the feeling of warmth, support and friendship our audiences have come to expect. Obviously, we are being optimistic about the future of our theatre, but also remain cautious. Our main concern is for your safety and security in the Theatre and for this reason we have taken Professional advice. Together with the Government Guidelines and taking into consideration the comments and replies received from our recent Survey, we are working towards re-opening The Garrick in July 2021.

We will be giving our Theatre Club Members an opportunity to book tickets for 'Skylight' by David Hare. This marvellous play had to be cancelled in March 2020 due to the first Lockdown. The cast, Director Garyk Barnett and the whole team, are very excited to be bringing this very special play to you once again. The dates for the production are Monday 5th July to Saturday 10th July 2021 and booking forms detailing the restrictions in place will be sent out in due course.

We are thrilled and proud to be one of the first Theatres to re-open and look forward with enthusiasm to seeing you all again.



Skylight

by David Hare

5th to 10th July 2021



STAGE STRUCK

During the Lockdown, our members have been working on their own, to continue to provide excellent entertainment. We have been surprised and thrilled at the 'well' of talent we have within our own membership. Poetry, Sonnets, Stories and What's My Lie? are a few of the projects introduced by Janet Leather to encourage people to stay involved with the Theatre.

Carol Butler, John O'Connell, Bob Howell and many others have very kindly made their contributions towards the Garrick's Facebook Page. If you are familiar with our Social Media pages then probably you will have seen their wonderful contributions.

One of the short plays produced as a result of all the hard work is a little gem called 'She', written by Nick Eccles and beautifully performed by Pat Hill. Pat has been a regular performer at The Garrick for many years and is also a very hard working Garrick Secretary. Nick Eccles is a well known face in Amateur Theatre. He has often performed with Worsley Intimate Theatre and Farnworth Little Theatre, but his talents obviously also lie in his writing.



Pat Hill in 'She' by Nick Eccles.

This play is available to view on Facebook and our You Tube Channel

'A Dog in The Road', An Audio Play, performed by Julie and John Cunningham.
John has written this interesting insight into how the play came into being.



We were asked by Jane Murphy on behalf of the Committee if we could do a two-hander radio play. We have some recording and editing facilities to make the recording and Phil Cohen is a whizz with sound effects. We had to think how to do this without breaking any lockdown rules, but we agreed to give it a go. But what could we use for our material? Duncan Battman is a wonderful story writer and playwright and a great friend of ours from Altrincham Garrick Theatre. I phoned him and explained what we wanted and asked if we could use one of his stories. He was immediately enthused and said, "Leave it with me." Within a couple of hours, he got back to us with a two-hander adapted from one of his short stories. Duncan is very generous and he allowed us to edit the script, which we did, then sent it back to Duncan to put his own voice over the edits. The final result was 'A Dog In The Road'. Recording was going to be a challenge because Sarah's voice was in her car and Mick's voice was over a telephone call. So we borrowed the Whitefield Garrick voice recorder and sent Julie out in her car to record all her opening dialogue with live sound effects (car engine, windows up and down, windscreen wipers etc). Julie then parked up and phoned me on my mobile and we did the dialogue with Julie sitting in her car and me at my desk on the phone. Mick's voice was recorded in the car over Julie's hands-free speaker, this gave the telephone effect without having to do any clever editing. Naturally we sent the intro and end credits to Mark Bloomfield to record in his best BBC voice. 'A Dog In The Road' was recorded in segments then sent to Phil Cohen to work his magic by removing pauses, reducing background noise and adding further sound effects (dog barking, children etc) and joining the segments together to produce the whole thing. Duncan has contacts at Radio Alty (Altrincham) and he thought the finished play was good enough to broadcast, so he sent it to Pete Scotson at Radio Alty. He liked it so much that he decided to broadcast it on Tuesday of the following week. The broadcast was a good plug for Whitefield Garrick. In fact Pete liked it so much, he wanted a second episode of 'Mick and Sarah'. Duncan immediately set to work and we now have 'Back from the Walk' currently available on Whitefield Garrick's You Tube Channel.

John Cunningham

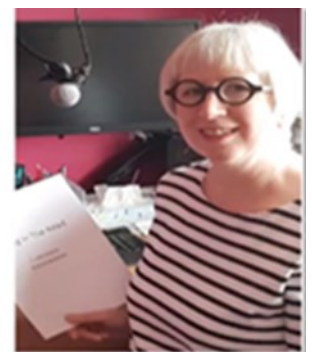
(Both of the Audio Plays are available on our Website, Facebook page and You Tube Channel)



John Cunningham—Mick



Duncan Battman—Author



Julie Cunningham—Sarah

OBITUARY

Written by Jane Murphy

JOHN STILL



HEROES



QUARTET



RUTHERFORD AND SON



THE MISER

The members of Whitefield Garrick were so sad to hear about the death of John Still. He was a treasured active member of the society for over 20 years and a firm favourite with audiences and actors alike. John was quite a private man and what follows is a snapshot of the John Still we knew at the theatre.

He was modest and unassuming. He never, to my knowledge, volunteered his name for a part. When future seasons were announced, he would politely wait to be approached by the casting committee and then gratefully and immediately accept. The offer could have been the demanding eponymous lead character in Pinter's 'The Caretaker' where he snarled and wheedled his way through the entire play, never leaving the stage, or conversely, the demented father in 'The Aristocrats', where his total lines probably wouldn't have filled a full page of dialogue. Whatever it was, he would accept it graciously and apply himself assiduously to the role and always aspired to being word perfect. John was a quiet, contained man. He would slip into rehearsals or the dressing room, choose a seat in the corner and sit, with legs crossed, his head in his script, which served to make his slight frame even more compact and obscure. He was kind and polite but rarely initiated conversation.

Interesting then, that when casting him in a play, we regularly consigned him to roles that required him to lambast, castigate, condemn and censure. Only think of him in 'The Miser' playing the complete antithesis to his own gentle persona. He was always very courteous to the cast and backstage crew but unfailingly at the end of the rehearsal or performance, he would slip away unseen, not wanting to partake in after show socializing, but not wishing to sound ungrateful in declining. He was a team player even when he had the lead role, he would look out for others, fill a gap, move the dialogue on, retrieve a wayward prop and never, ever attribute blame for any mishap.

His final performance for us was in March 2018 as the vitriolic lead in 'Rutherford and Son', which unfortunately turned out to be his 'Swan Song'. I'm not sure he knew how good he was and how much he will be missed.

Sometimes, when John was on stage, even if the main action in a scene was elsewhere, your gaze would be inexorably drawn in his direction because it was pure delight, just watching him being
.....Still.

The Theatre is Magic by Roger Turner

There is magic in live theatre
It can't be understood
For even watching a bad play
Is really something good
The footlights and the curtains
The sound of actors on the boards
Of orchestras and the sound effects
Of cheaply painted swords



The theatre is a special place
It excites me to no end
It's a long lost brother coming home
It's a warm and welcome friend
Sitting in a theatre
Waiting for the overture
Is an illness I suffer happily
And one for which I wish no cure

Good theatre is transporting
Takes you where the actor lives
You sense it in the speeches
That every actor gives
You get lost in what's going on
You feel hurt and you feel pain
And when you get another chance
You splurge and go again



Live theatre is hypnotic
It's a world that stands alone
It's a place inside your being
You learn how love is shown
It's where you listen to great music
Played by artists never seen
Where you hear the actor's heartbeat
Unlike on the silver screen

Live theatre is true magic
I can't tell you how I feel
when I see a live performance
I know exactly what is real
The lights are slowly dimming
I hear them closing the lobby doors
Shhhhh.....the orchestra is ready.....
.....Here comes the overture.....



New Season !

September 2021 to May 2022

Two

by Jim Cartwright
Directed by Andrew Close
18th to 25th September 2021

These Shining Lives

by Melanie Marnich
Directed by Julie Cunningham
13th to 20th November 2021

Dangerous Corner

by J B Priestley
Directed by John Cunningham
15th to 22nd January 2022

The Anniversary

by Bill McIlwraith
Directed by Glenn Robinson
12th to 19th March 2022

Tons of Money

by Will Evans and Arthur
Valentine
Adapted by Alan Ayckbourn
Directed by Andrew Close
7th to 14th May 2022

This Newsletter has been compiled by Carole Taylor, with thanks to Jane Murphy and John Cunningham for their contributions.

If you would like to comment or contribute to this twice yearly Newsletter, please contact Carole Taylor:

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