



Players Patter No 196 - March 2021

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Well, things continue to be very odd in the world but at last it looks like we might have light at the end of the tunnel. The COVID vaccination programme has rapidly gathered pace and the government have put a clear roadmap in place which, if we're able to stick to it, means we'll soon be back on stage enjoying what we all love.

SHOW STOPPERS, *The Show Must Go On*

We're pleased to announce that we plan to do a Show Stoppers (sub-titled *The Show Must Go on*) from 29th to 31st July and delighted that one of our newer committee members, **Alex Boughton**, has agreed to take on the role of Artistic Director, accompanied by (ooh....pardon the pun!) the wonderful **Lizzie Hales** as MD. You'll be able to read more from Alex elsewhere in the newsletter explaining how we plan to put the show together, rehearsing in groups of 6, each with its own director, to allow for social distancing until we're all able to rehearse together. Alex is ideally placed to oversee the overall vision for the show with a career in musical theatre programming and we're all excited to get started.

LEGALLY BLONDE

We're also really excited that if things go as planned, we'll *finally* be able to bring you our long-awaited production of *Legally Blonde*. We're delighted that we've managed to keep most of our original cast and director, **Fiona McGregor**, will be starting to make plans for how we can get back to rehearsals in early August, as always remaining mindful of everyone's safety, particularly since many of the cast may not have had their COVID vaccinations by then. Let's all keep our fingers crossed.

PLAYERS SING RHYTHM OF LIFE for Haslemere Hall

No doubt the challenges of recording your part for *Rhythm of Life* are a dim and distant memory but our production team are continuing to work hard on the project with **Chris Snelling** editing the music and **Adrian Stent** the video. We're hoping to go live later this month with all money raised going to The Haslemere Hall.

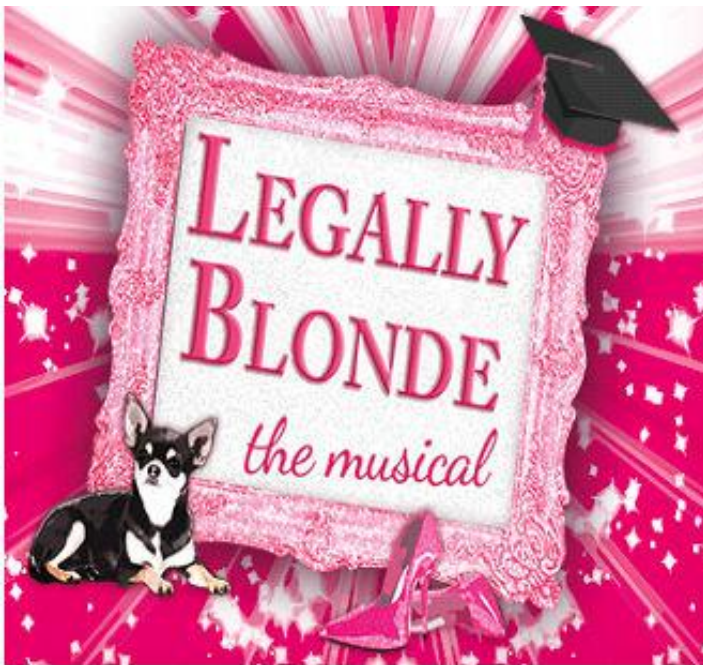


SOCIAL

Thanks again to our Social Secretary, **Fiona McGregor**, and her team **Verity Foster**, **Becca McGregor** and **Arran Treacher-Evans** for the fabulous lockdown Bingo night. It seems that Hamish's numerical skills extend to spotting bingo numbers.... he won far too many times for my liking!!

Please all continue to stay safe and well and let's look forward to seeing one another in our gardens....in the pub....and hopefully on stage very soon.

Vicki Gavin
chairman@haslemereplayers.com



SHOW STOPPERS

Following the recent announcement from the government suggesting social distancing may not be in place from the end of June, it feels like there's some light at the end of the tunnel after a very long year. And with that we are delighted to share that we're now working on our next production! Before we jump back in to rehearsals for Legally Blonde for October, we have started preparations for *Show Stoppers: The Show Must Go On*, from 29th to 31st July 2021.

With the entire industry shut down since March last year, the theme is along the lines of 'all the shows we missed in 2020', which will celebrate the shows in the West End or on tour that were unable to go ahead as planned. Lizzie Hales will be joining me, taking the reins as MD, and while we're currently working on the programme, it will follow the usual format of solos, duets and small group numbers from shows such as; Dear Evan Hansen, Six and Matilda.



I am delighted to announce that we will be back onstage with Legally Blonde from the 26th – 30th October 2021.

If you are a cast member, it is time to dig out those rehearsal videos and start practising the songs! In the **unlikely** chance that you have forgotten anything/ everything I will soon be sending our reminder videos to get you started.

If you are coming along to see this show and do not yet have your ticket, please go onto the website and do so now.

<https://tickets.haslemerehall.co.uk/sales/genres/theatre/legally-blonde>

Treasurer's Report

Life through lockdown has been very quiet for us all. Becoming the new treasurer just as we entered the lockdown has possibly given me a false sense of security about the level of time and energy required for the role – in short, there hasn't been too much to do!

With that said, we are weathering the storm reasonably well. Whilst incomes have clearly been reduced by the lack of activity and ticket sales etc, we are still being supported by membership fees and some small incomes from other activities and rentals. These incomes are going towards offsetting some of our fixed annual costs and leaving us still in reasonable shape and ready for an exciting and fun packed year of theatre ahead.

Mike Byrne

We are looking to start rehearsals in mid May, but we will need to plan rehearsals a little differently while restrictions are in place. We will be working to the 'rule of six' with several teams working on four or five songs each, led by a group director. Rehearsals will be a combination of virtual, one on one, and very small groups as and when appropriate. With this in mind we're looking for some group directors, who will work with each team on their selection of songs. These team leaders can also be in the show, so you don't have to choose. We are hopeful that restrictions will have been lifted by the time we perform the show giving us a bit more freedom and perhaps a full cast finale!

If you're interested in taking part, being a team leader/group director, have song suggestions, or doing a solo please do get in touch. Lizzie and I would love to hear from you!

Alex

alexandraboughton@hotmail.com

If you receive this newsletter by post and would be happy to receive it by email, please send an email to linda.haslemere@btinternet.com



Social Committee News

What a relief to see the new road map which will bring us cautiously out of lock-down. We need to remain patient for a little longer so we propose the following social events and hope that you will be able to join in.

Zoom Bingo

Thank you so much to so many of you for joining in the Zoom Bingo. I think at final count there were 44 people playing. After a few teething problems (and a change to the random number generator) I think we all found it quite good fun. The addition of the break out rooms for a catch up and a gossip in between games was very well received and it was so nice to see everyone and their families too. Here are the results:

Bingo 1	Debbie Bowyer	Row
	Debra Allen	Column
	Debra Allen	BINGO
Bingo 2	Helen Coyte	Column
	Hamish & Linda Donaldson	Row
	Adrian Stent	BINGO
Bingo 3	Hamish & Linda Donaldson	Column
	Jo Weller and Karen Hatchell	Row
	(and Pam whose Microphone wasn't working)	
	Chris Lawrance	BINGO
	(and a very late call from Verity Foster)	
Bingo 4	Hamish & Linda Donaldson	Row
	Hamish & Linda Donaldson	Column
	Kim Seymour	BINGO

Well done to everyone who joined in the fun.

Zoom Easter Quiz

Following on from our successful Christmas Quiz we are hoping to bring you an Easter Quiz. Bring your Easter eggs and a cup of tea or a glass of wine. As we won't be out of lockdown, we will use the same format as the Christmas Quiz where we split out into teams at the end of each round. I think it was generally accepted that this format was more fun than trying to do the quiz on your own. Date and details to follow soon.

PLAYERS SING!....Rhythm of Life for Haslemere Hall

Work is underway editing our second song: Rhythm Of Life. Thank you to all those who sent in a video, we've got a fabulous cast and it should be available to watch later this month. This time round we are going to be raising money for Haslemere Hall. As many of you know, as an independent charity they are responsible for raising their own income and other than self-funding through the sale of tickets, hire and refreshment sales they do not receive any government funding, so it's important to support them however we can. The JustGiving page has been set up ready for when the video goes live here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/haslemereplayerssing>



Dates for Your Diary

27 – 29 May	Honk by Grayshott Stagers
17 – 19 June	Just What the Doctor Ordered by Haslemere Thespians
29 – 31 July	Show Stoppers in Haslemere Hall
26 – 30 Oct	Legally Blonde in Haslemere Hall
19 August	Hairspray at the London Coliseum.

Tickets £36. Please email Fiona by 21 March if you would like to go on this trip. mcgregor@hotmail.co.uk

Desert Island Discs with Hamish

Linda has asked me to be the castaway in this edition of Players Patter and to choose my favourite 8 songs from musicals. In fact, I am changing it slightly to be songs from the 8 best musicals I have enjoyed in my time with the Players (I seem to have ended up with 9...). As I made the selection, I continue to be humbled by the extraordinarily high standard of our company. It's not just the principals and minor leads, it is the chorus as well, where the individuals add to the overall result by making their stage characters as real-lif as possible.

1. "Sunrise, Sunset" from Fiddler on the Roof

Linda and my first show with the Players was 'Fiddler on the Roof' (actually it was our first time on stage at all) and it was an outstanding production by Doreen Wylde with Graham Maguire as Tevye, Anne Manning as Golde and Robert Cantan as MD. I was cast as Lazar Wolfe, the butcher, and sang a memorable drinking song (To Life!) with Graham. Mazel Tov indeed. There are so many great songs in this musical but I have chosen the haunting 'Sunrise, Sunset'.

2. "When the foeman bares his steel" from Pirates of Penzance

Pirates was another of Doreen's great productions. I was cast as a comic Sergeant of Police, nearly blind, with pebble glasses, but somehow always ending up with the girls. Dave Sillett was the Pirate King, Andy Boughton the Major General and Christine (now Foster) was Mabel. Again, many wonderful songs but this one combines great humour with its full cast movements

3. "Who's this geezer Hitler?" from Blitz!

Blitz! Was the first show I was asked to direct for the Players. It is a powerful show and it atarred Judy Fowler as Mrs Blitzstein. Barry Day as Alfie Locke, Philip Jay as Earnie Nearmiss with Caroline Foster and Edward Roberts in the young roles. The set design (where Alan English shared his great expertise with me) was right up my street with the burning warehouse silhouetted by St Paul's Cathedral and the finale when we used a strobe to show the falling masonry (polystyrene of course) after a bomb fell. There are lots of catchy songs – like 'The Day after Tomorrow' (when Lionel Bart enjoys a musical joke by using the same introductory notes as



'Colonel Bogey') and 'We're going to the country' (sung by the children), but I have chosen 'Geezer Hitler' which has echoes of the Dad's Army theme tune.

4. "The Anthem" from Chess

Chess is a stunning musical and I have been lucky enough to direct it twice. The first time the leads were Edward Roberts and Caroline Foster with Peter Barber as Molokov. The second time they were Alan Thornhill and Alex Boughton with Adrian Stent as Molokov. The most famous songs include 'I know him so well' and 'One night in Bangkok' but I have chosen the spine tingling ending to Act I – 'The Anthem'

5. "A more humane Mikado never did in Japan exist" from The Mikado



Teresa Marsh directed this Gilbert & Sullivan classic. I was cast as the Mikado (who is talked about a lot but doesn't appear until Act II). As we were a bit short of men, that meant I was in the chorus for Act I, and was made up by Barbara Thomas to be the Mikado in the Interval. The other principals were David Wilson as Nanki-Poo and Ruth

Sanders as Yum-Yum (they subsequently got married), Tony Ostime as Pooh-Bah (Lord High almost Everything), Barry Day (Ko-Ko), Mary Coyte (Katisha) and Chris Bridge (Pish-Tush)

6. "Singin' in the Rain"

Another memorable show which I have directed twice. The first time the leads were Edward Roberts, Angela Cantan, Barry Day and Clare Jutsum; the second time they were Peter Coxon, Joanna Richardson (now Weller), Peter Lucas and Rachel Perkins. Of course, the main scenery challenge is creating the 'rain'. In fact, creating rain is not too difficult and I am indebted to Roland Couvella who carried out experiments in his garden (the holes were best at 4mm). The real problem was getting the rain to run away though gutters through the trap door and under the stage

7. "Bidin' my time" from Crazy for You

Crazy for You is a wonderful romantic musical set in the Nevada Desert and in New York. There is plenty of humour with Bobby Childs (Tony Creasey) made up to look like impresario Zangler (Tony Krause). The make up was so good that I couldn't tell which was which in the wings. Alisa Creaser was Polly, the inn-keeper's



Tony Creasey as Bobby and Tony Krause as Zangler - or is it the other way round?

Daughter. One of the highlights was the almost instant transition from the desert to a New York night club. Our (Haslemere built) set was bought by Portsmouth who sold it on to a Welsh company. All the music comes from earlier Gershwin shows – and one of the best is ‘Bidin’ my time’, almost barbershop, sung by the trio and other cowboys

8. **“God speed Titanic” from Titanic the Musical**

Titanic is an astonishingly well written musical. There are plenty of good songs and their pace quickens as the show progresses – to match the way the Captain is persuaded to steadily increase speed. It is no surprise that it swept the board and won 5 Tony Awards following its staging on Broadway in 1997. What is a surprise is that it has not been staged professionally in the West End. Perhaps it is the problem of trying to sink the ship on stage. Our production accomplished it by having the ship on stage tilting up and the breaking in the middle before seemingly sinking (the star-cloth being raised make the ship look like it was going down).



Another feature of our production was the way the ship’s Bridge was set in front of the proscenium arch (stage left) and the wireless room also in front (stage right). It meant we could switch scenes very rapidly with scene changes being done by lighting. It was Alan English who built these two parts of the set so well. But our cast was strong too. There were 13 singing men and the last (Bob Fells – he drowned) had to be as good as the first (Peter Barber – he drowned too). ‘God speed Titanic’, the powerful song used both at the beginning of the voyage and at the end, was (in Andy Boughton’s words) a deeply emotional experience.

9. **“Springtime for Hitler” from The Producers**

The Producers is another great society show – good music and plenty of humour. In our production the principals were Tony Creasey (Max Bialistock the producer), Tim Spindler (Leo Bloom the accountant), Carolyn Beaumont (Swedish Ulla), Bill Hudson (Carmen Ghia) and Jonathan Foster who rather stole the show with his rendering of a rather camp Hitler. The ‘Springtime for Hitler’ number was stunning with the storm troopers, parachute army descending, tanks on stage and a V1 rocket flying across



What a great list of musicals from the past – but, with recently The Full Monty and Evita plus Legally Blonde to come, there is no doubt that the quality of our Haslemere Players shows going forward, is as good as ever. You will have picked up that I think imaginative sets are an important part of making musicals ‘special’ and we are indeed fortunate that our current team (with Gary, Luan, Duncan, Graham and Adrian) is so talented.