

DAG DIGEST

Reviews, news and previews from Dewsbury Arts Group May 2021

NOW, WHERE WERE WE?

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There are no words left to describe how utterly bereft everyone connected with the Group felt on hearing the news of the passing of David Wood. 6th June will mark a year since we lost him. We were not able to give him the “send off” we would have wished. However, we hope as many as could shared the order of service and musical items in real time. It would be someone with a hard heart indeed who did not shed a tear on hearing *Is That All There Is?* His spirit and influence are all around at the Artspace from the owl mosaic to the portrait by the bar. Sundry pieces of scenery in his unique style trigger happy memories of sumptuous sets. To those we have added the orange door, symbol of a gateway to a welcoming artistic community. A book of commemoration containing contributions from countless friends has been collated by Zahoor Sakharkar. One volume was presented to Judith Wood and another is available for perusal at the Artspace. A rhododendron has been planted and it is hoped to unveil a plaque on 17th July.

Wow, terrific and again wow are just some of the words used by committee members to describe the response to the Group’s appeal for funds to carry out adaptations to the Artspace to make it COVID safe; THANK YOU one and all for everyone’s contribution to the £9,950 raised. It means that the Group has been able to install a new climate control system and heat curtain to make the auditorium cosier and healthier and create socially

distanced seating for as long as needed. Outside, better external lighting means the garden entrance can be the main way in to the auditorium. The quicker route avoids conflicting movements in the narrow corridors leading to the bar and as it is fairly flat, it will make it easier for wheelchair users. A start up grant from Kirklees, when added to the fighting fund, means that a ramp and handrails can be installed. Thank you, all of you, for making this possible.

Before the great unpleasantness nobody had heard of Zoom. Paid for as part of a grant of £1,000 from Dewsbury Endowed Schools Foundation the Youth Section's Zoom account has been an essential tool for Maria Bailey and her team to keep youth members engaged. The regular sessions have been a welcome escape from the tedium of lockdown. The virtual Christmas party, in particular, stretched everyone's creativity. Two radio plays have been written and recorded. Look out on the Group's Facebook page for details of when they will appear on You Tube. There is still no substitute for the sociability and interaction of face to face sessions and everyone is keen to meet up again in September, particularly those who are "zoomed out". New members are always welcome. Please contact Maria Bailey on 078629792 or mandm90@btinternet.com for details.

During lockdown, there has, understandably, been very little activity in the Art Section. Initially it was believed we would get back into art classes soon. That didn't happen. There has been little appetite to do much on line and everyone has been saddened by the passing of David Wood who made such an immeasurable contribution. The feeling seems to be that it is important to have live classes and places where work can be exhibited. All Kirklees exhibition venues remain closed with organisers working from home and unsure when things will open. The current uncertainty means that it is nigh on impossible to plan. Art Secretary Zahoor Sakharker (07979316858 haseemmultimedia@gmail.com) would like to revive an interest in an online gallery and encourage members with some sort of competition. Using his laser cutter, he has it in mind to scan their drawings and produce wooden coasters or a custom cutting mat of their (or a winning) design. These would then be for sale. Zahoor would very much like to hear from anyone with ideas as to how the art section can be revived

Jacky Fletcher has kept everyone's brains ticking over with regular quizzes "Just For Fun". Meant to test people's knowledge of past productions, these have been circulated by e-mail to members. Currently, we are up to number 33 in the series. Thank you Jacky for stirring happy memories and for keeping people in the Group engaged.

Meanwhile, Maria Bailey has hosted regular team quizzes by Zoom. These have drawn upwards of a dozen teams to pit their wits. Keep your eye out on the Group's Facebook page for details of the next one. Thank you Maria.

We might not have been able to tread the boards but we have been able to flex our performing muscles through regular play readings. Sue Saville has organised these through Zoom and to date have had much fun with *Bedroom Farce*, *Seasons Greetings*, *The Bad Seed*, *Billy Liar* and *Abigail's Party*. Keep an eye on the Group's Facebook page for details of upcoming readings. Thank you Sue for choosing plays that everyone gets a chance to have a go at.

All being well we hope to take advantage of the easing of restrictions by presenting three nights of *DAG Returns*. Based on the successful *Act Sing It* formula, David Fletcher has compiled a programme of live sketches interspersed with film of past musical productions. Performances are on 24th, 25th and 26th June. Tickets are free but limited to 47 per night. To secure yours on a first come first served basis please email dewsburyartsgroup@ntlworld.com or telephone David Fletcher on 01924 505861

The programme planning committee have put together next season's programme. The previous season was brought to an abrupt end after only one performance of *Ask Me Tomorrow*. As time went on it became impracticable to simply warm it up, as it were, with a couple of rehearsals and restrictions remain on how many can rehearse at one time. Similarly, it was a tough decision to cancel *Murder Margaret and Me*, which had been in rehearsal. However, we hope that there is plenty in the new programme to whet the appetite. Season ticket holders will be invited to renew their season tickets in anticipation of a full season. The cost has been held at £65. Should the season be curtailed a proportionate discount would be carried over to the next season. There will be a slight increase for general ticket sales to £12.

Please find attached information and consultation for members and season ticket holders. The information is important and we really do want to hear from you.

FOR THE NOTICE BOARD

Next Season's Productions.

- *2nd-9th October 2021*
Dry Rot by John Chapman
- *20th – 27th November 2021*
It's A Wonderful Life
Adapted from the Frank Capra film by Mary Elliott Nelson
- *15th – 22nd January 2022*
Switzerland
by Joanna Murray Smith
- *5th – 12th March 2021*
Bazaar and Rummage
by Sue Townsend
- *30th April – 7th May 2022*
Company
By Stephen Sondheim and Georg Furth
- *20th – 21st May 2022*
Youth Plays
- *2nd – 9th July 2022*
Curtain Up
By Peter Quilter

Mark the Date

DAG Returns

Three nights of entertainment to welcome you back

24th – 26th June 2021

(subject to restrictions being relaxed)

Summer picnic – in the garden

17th July 2021 from 2 p.m.

A chance to meet up and work your way through the beer and wine in the bar that needs to be drunk up. It is intended that the plaque to accompany the rhododendron planted in memory of David Wood will be unveiled.

Auditions – DRY ROT

Monday 28th June 2021 at 7.30 p.m.