

THE  
gallery  
PLAYERS  
present



# PLAYHOUSE CREATURES

a play by April De Angelis

THE gallery  
STUDIO  
THEATRE  
IPSWICH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

THE gallery  
PLAYERS

THE gallery  
PLAYERS  
present

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

3RD - 8TH  
JUNE

GALLERY STUDIO THEATRE  
GALLERYSTUDIOTHEATRE.CO.UK

TICKETS FROM £12

DIRECTED BY  
BRIAN THEODORE RALPH

'I go to sleep.  
And in my sleep ... I am young again.'

# LOVESONG

a play by Abi Morgan

'A moving portrait of love  
and companionship.'

July  
22to27

[www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk)



THE gallery  
STUDIO  
THEATRE  
IPSWICH

## Director's notes -

*"People come here, high born and low. They come to our theatre to partake in the sublime. To be part of that peculiar something that lifts and transforms"*

– Mrs Betterton, Playhouse Creatures

I loved **Playhouse Creatures** from the moment I first saw it. A play about theatre. That takes me right to my happy place!

Bringing the world of a 17th Century playhouse to life is such a great challenge – I want to really immerse you all in that world of riotous, chaotic theatre. It's a world which seems very different - the acting style seems mannered, full of strange gestures; audiences eat fruit, and make loud comments. But at heart everyone faces the same problems as they do now.... lovers are not what they seem, favourites fall out of style, opportunities abound for a performer with enough charisma. Restoration comedies are still some of the brightest jewels in English theatre – witty, irreverent and blisteringly astute. The theatre was obviously a very exciting place to visit and to work in.

I have been incredibly fortunate to have the support of a multi-talented team in this production: wigs, costumes, scenery, props, lighting, movement and music have all been designed to take you back to the 1660s. They create the world that our fantastic cast bring so vividly to life.

**Playhouse Creatures** shines warm candlelight on an important moment in time. These feisty women – real heroines of their age – are people you really want to know. I hope you enjoy being in their company for an evening.

**Helen Clarke**



**"We spoke and we was the first!" – Nell**



The PIT DOOR.

La PORTE du PARTERRE.



Not at Covent Garden Theatre in 1760, in consequence of the Managers refusing to reduce the price in the Opera of Robinson.

## Restoration Playhouses - audiences behaving badly



### Rowdy audience behaviour is nothing new in the theatre.

Orange-wenches, young girls, chosen for their looks, their approachability, their willingness to pass messages between the rakes in the audience and the actors, and their ability to wittily talk back, stood between the pit and the stage before performances began. Actors had to compete against the noise of the crowd who shouted, hurled oranges and tried to join in with their performance on the stage, booing or cheering loudly. Occasionally riots would break out.

**The Pit - closest to the stage, well-lit, but rough and ready.** The audience here would pay a penny to stand close to the stage and interact with the actors. They included apprentices but also *“Men of Quality, particularly the younger sort, Some Ladies of Reputation and Vertue, and abundance of Damsels that hunt for Prey ...”* (Henri Misson) All these were crushed together, and tensions often ran high. In a letter to a relation John Verney writes of a fight in the pit, *“On Saturday last, at the Duke’s Playhouse, Sir Thomas Armstrong killed Mr Scrope....their quarrel is said to be about Mrs Uphill, the player”*. A circle formed around them, and the two men fought to the death in front of the assembled audience.

People there often made comments on the play. Pepys tells us: *‘[Sir Charles Sedley] was mighty witty ... But by that means I lost the pleasure of the play wholly, to which now and then Sir Charles Sedley’s exceptions against both words and pronouncing was very pretty.’*

### **The Gallery – beware of spit!**

The middle ground was the gallery. The gentry would pay to sit in the galleries, which cost 12 pence as opposed to five shillings for a box, bringing cushions to make themselves more comfortable. However, you were in danger of being spat on. *“And here, I sitting behind in a dark place, a lady spat backward upon me by a mistake, not seeing me. But after seeing her to be a very pretty lady, I was not troubled at it at all.”* (Pepys 28 January, 1661.)

### **The Boxes – more expensive, more visible.**

The boxes were miniature stages in themselves, where audiences could gawp at the sexual politics of the day. At one play Pepys witnessed the onset of the King’s rampant affair with Barbara Palmer, Lady Castlemaine. The King’s mistress, always flamboyantly dressed, often appeared at the theatre bedecked in jewels that the impoverished populace had paid for with their taxes.

## Women take the stage!

*“...the day came when everything changed and for the first time, we women were permitted by Royal decree to act upon a stage. A great stir it caused. And I was one of the first ever and when I spoke, a great hush descended on the house, and it was as if the men and women gathered there were watching a miracle, like water turning into wine or a sick man coming to health.”*

– Mrs Betterton, *Playhouse Creatures*



The appearance of professional actresses was one of Restoration theatre's greatest innovations. Within three months of his return in 1660, Charles had granted 'letters patent' (legal documents) to Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant, giving them exclusive rights to each establish a theatre. These patents stipulated that women (rather than adolescent boys) should play women's parts. To begin with, actresses mainly played the roles of boys dressed in breeches to show off their shapely ankles and the curve of their calves. Plays were likely to feature scenes containing sexual harassment and rape threats, intended to attract and titillate audiences. However, within a couple of years women increasingly took on roles of substance. Playwrights such as Aphra Behn could write great parts for them, making them outspoken female characters. Such was the disreputable nature of the profession, especially for women, that actors were mainly recruited from the poorest social groups. Intensive training was required to mimic upper-class speech and adopt the correct etiquette with swords, hats, fans and greetings. Audiences came to see themselves reflected in the plays, which scrutinised and ridiculed upper-class society's manners and rules of behaviour. Everyone knew that they were watching an illusion of high society, and this gave the plays' themes of masking, gulling and deceit an additional edge.

By the end of the 1660s actresses were rooted in theatrical life. However, the association with immorality, promiscuity and prostitution was harder to shake off. It would take many years before acting was widely acknowledged as a respectable job for a woman.

In 1993 April de Angelis was commissioned to write a play by The Sphinx, Women's National Touring Theatre company. The result was **Playhouse Creatures**. It is a sobering thought that many of the obstacles faced by actresses in the play – getting older, falling pregnant, offending powerful men – are still with us.



# PLAYHOUSE CREATURES

## Cast

a play by April De Angelis

### The Actresses

Doll Common - Jenni Horn

Nell Gwynn - Becky Linge

Mrs Farley - Emilia Green

Mrs Betterton - Helena Lyons

Mrs Marshall - Kelly Fletcher

### The Ensemble

Lavender sellers/ theatre dressers –  
Charlotte Sampson, Becky Hutchison

Stage hand - Norman Rutterford

Seller of river water - Hilary Kenny

Preacher/ gentleman – Grant Filshill

Earl of Oxford – Simon Hoyle

**Music** of the period arranged and performed by Ruth Hart (recorder), Des Hart (baroque guitar) and David Leney (violin).



**Favourite Line:** *“One maggot-ridden corpse’s finger. My mistake, it’s an old bread roll.”*

**Dream Role:** Mag in the short play *Winners* by Brian Friel

**Most memorable theatrical experience:** *“Playing Miss Shepherd in the Gallery Players’ production of The Lady in The Van at the New Wolsey Theatre and having an amazing full-sized camper van to work with, made by the inimitable Dave Borthwick.”*

### **Katherine Corey (Doll Common)**

Katherine Corey was first called Doll Common by diarist Samuel Pepys after he was mightily impressed by her performance in Ben Johnson’s *The Alchemist*. She has been suggested as a possibility for the honour of the ‘first English actress’ who played Desdemona in an 8 December 1660 performance of *Othello*. Most commentators, however, think Corey’s plain appearance makes her an unlikely Desdemona. However, one of her performances landed her in jail. Nell Gwyn was quarrelling with the noblewoman Lady Elizabeth Hervey in 1669 after being propositioned by the most famous lesbian of the age. In an act of revenge Gwyn bribed and coached Corey into mimicking and mocking Harvey on stage. Sadly, this act ended with Doll being arrested by the Lord Chamberlain for mocking her betters. Fortunately, Hervey’s rival at court, Lady Castlemaine, got the King to release the actress.

**Jenni Horn** [DOLL.COMMON](http://DOLL.COMMON)





**Favourite line from the play:** *"I'm an actress, not a tart!"*

**Dream role:** *Blanche DuBois in A Streetcar Named Desire – "Maybe one day in the future!"*

**Most memorable theatrical experience:** *"I will never forget when my wig fell off during a performance. I panicked throughout the scene wondering how on earth I was going to make it work."*

### **Nell Gwynn (Eleanor Gwynn)**

Nell is famous as King Charles II's longest serving mistress. Her early years are fascinating.

Her father, Captain Thomas Gwynn, may have been the son of an Oxford University chaplain. He had been a soldier in the English Civil War, and in debtors prison when Nell was still young. Her mother then moved the family to London where she opened a brothel.

At 14 Nell was selling oranges when she caught the eye of actor-manager Thomas Killigrew - she joined his Drury Lane Company in 1665. With her lover and mentor Charles Hart, she invented the conventions of what is now known as farce. She swiftly became a favourite of theatregoers, who praised her comic timing, her ability to improvise and her lively relationship with the audience.

In 1670 Nell became Charles II's mistress and remained so until his death in 1685.



**Favourite Line:** *"I neversat still. I had worms."*

**Dream Role:** *"I loved playing Pam in A Day in The Death of Joe Egg (Gallery Players 2015), I had so much fun playing her!"*

**Most memorable theatrical experience:** *"I went to see Mrs Doubtfire the Musical recently and loved every minute of it. It's one of my favourite films, so seeing it live on stage is something I will never forget."*

### **Elizabeth Weaver (nee Farley)**

Elizabeth Farley was a member of The King's Company from 1660 to 1683. She took several leading roles and even had one play written especially for her. However, she came to public notice when James Weaver took her court claiming she had taken his name although they were not married and had built up debts of £30. Samuel Pepys wrote that he was told that she had lost her virginity to King Charles II before the King started his affair with Nell Gwynn. She was sacked when it was discovered that she was pregnant, but not married. She continued to act but not in such major roles. In 1671 she returned to the name of Farley. The last mention of her is when she played parts in new plays staged by the King's Company in 1678.



**Favourite Line:** *"I shall approach my husband once more for tomorrow's performance – I am not above a woman selling artichokes."*

**Dream Role:** Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds

**Most memorable theatrical experience:** *"Watching my mother, Shirley, direct On Golden Pond with Pat Taplin and Dick Glover for The Gallery Players."*

### **Mary Betterton (nee Saunderson)**

Mary Saunderson (1637–1712), later known as Mary Betterton following her marriage to actor Thomas Betterton, was considered one of the finest early English actresses. She was the grand-daughter of leading Elizabethan actor-manager Richard Burbage, who worked alongside Shakespeare. Appropriately, she is best known for being the first female actress to portray several of Shakespeare's woman characters: Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, and other female roles in *The Tempest*, *Hamlet* (as Ophelia), *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*. Unlike many actresses of the time, who had somewhat tarnished reputations, Mary Saunderson had a reputation for virtue; actor Colley Cibber described her as leading 'unblemish'd and sober life'. She played a key role in training some of the leading actresses of the next generation and was so well regarded that Charles II asked her to teach his nieces.

**Helena Lyons** **MRS BETTERTON**



**Favourite Line:** *“Give us a rip. I get taken against my will in the second half.”*

**Dream Role:** Rita, from Educating Rita

**Most memorable theatrical experience:** *“Playing the Wicked Witch in The Wizard of Oz and being catapulted almost off the top of the 6 foot high house as the crew thought it would be funny to send me up in the lift at warp speed. I’ve never been so scared in my life!”*

### Becky Marshall

Becky Marshall was the younger sister of another actress, Anne Marshall, and worked consistently from 1663-77. She began acting with the King’s Company, under the management of Thomas Killigrew, in about 1663; she remained with that troupe for her full career, except for a final year with the rival Duke’s Company in 1677.

She participated in two of Killigrew’s famous all-female productions: his own *The Parson’s Wedding* and *Beaumont and Fletcher’s Philaster*, both in 1672.

Samuel Pepys repeatedly refers to both Marshall sisters in his Diary; he calls the younger ‘Beck Marshall’. Rebecca had a reputation as a beauty, which apparently caused her difficulties: she twice petitioned King Charles II for protection from lustful men in her audience. She had a habit of feuding with fellow company member Nell Gwynn.



**“the town comes to see .... actresses in the flesh,  
living and breathing, the real creatures” –  
Mrs Betterton**



**Samuel Pepys** was an enthusiastic theatregoer, and his diaries are full of fascinating comments and information.

**3 January 1661:** ‘To the Theatre ... and here the first time that ever I saw Women come upon the stage.’

**19 March 1666:** ‘After dinner we walked to the King’s play-house...

My business here was to see the inside of the stage and all the tiring-rooms and machines; and, indeed, it was a sight worth seeing. But to see their clothes, and the various sorts, and what a mixture of things there was; here a wooden-leg, there a ruff, here a hobbyhorse, there a crown, would make a man split himself with laughing. But then again, to think how fine they show on the stage by candle-light, and how poor things they are to look now too near hand, is not pleasant at all. The machines are fine, and the paintings very pretty.’

**Monday 3 April 1665:** ‘to a play at the Duke’s, ... All the pleasure of the play was, and the King and my Lady Castelmayne were there; and pretty witty Nell, at the King’s house, and the younger Marshall sat next us; which pleased me mightily.’

**26 October 1667:** ‘Nelly and Beck Marshall, falling out the other day, the latter called Nelly my Lord Buckhurst’s whore. Nell answered then, “I was but one man’s whore, though I was brought up in a bawdy-house, made to fill strong waters to the guests; but you are a whore to three or four, though a Presbyter’s praying daughter!” which I thought was very pretty.’





# PLAYHOUSE CREATURES

a play by April De Angelis



Photos- Mike Kwasniak

## **Creative team**

**Director** - Helen Clarke

**Set** - Dave Borthwick

**Props** - Dave Borthwick, Anthony Malster

**Stage Manager** - Anthony Malster

**Music Coordinator** - David Leney

**Movement** - Imogen Fraser

**Lighting and Sound Design** - James Aleksic (JLA Sound and Light)

**LX and SX Operator** - Rachel Doy

**Costumes** - Robb Gilbert, Charlotte Sampson, Angela Silburn

**Hair and Wigs** - Charlotte Sampson (Charlotte Rose Hair Specialist)

**Publicity** - Helen Clarke, Ben Maytham, Andrew Clarke

**Photography** - Mike Kwasniak, Matt Meyrick

**Poster and Programme Design** - Steve Taplin

**Stage Build** - Dave Borthwick, Helen Clarke, Andrew Clarke

# **PLAYHOUSE CREATURES**

**a play by April De Angelis**

## **Acknowledgements**

Alan Ayres, Co op Juniors Theatre Company

Eastern Angles Theatre Company

Maggie Mudd, IODS

Laura Locke, Felixstowe Radio

Steph Mackentyre, Ruby Shoes Podcast

Georgy Jamieson, Suffolk Theatre

Martine Silkstone, Suffolk on Stage

Jules Button, Suffolk Sound

Suffolk New College

Felixstowe Library

Susan Taplin

**"Playhouse creatures, they called you.  
And them was the polite ones." - Doll**





## “The playhouse! That den of defilement! That pit of pestilence!” – Mrs Farley

### A note on the incidental music

The music for this production comes from a period when the boundaries between classical and popular music seem to have been of little concern. Henry Purcell, for example, composed for both the church and the playhouse.

Purcell wrote, at least, 60 rounds or ‘catches’. *‘The Kind Country Lovers’* - our opener - is one of 1,800 ballads collected by Samuel Pepys. Both the words and tune of *‘The Lusty Young Smith’* are attributed to Thomas Durfey, however, he may have taken them from another source.

In the same tradition of artistic theft, I have stolen the tune of *The Jovial Broom Man*, rewriting the chords quite shamelessly, to suit the needs of our finale.

Some of the tunes selected by Ruth and Des, collected by John Playford back in the 1650’s, are fittingly still performed by us in our pub sessions.

**David Leney**



### Hair & Wigs

Charlotte has 10 years’ experience in the hair industry and is a specialist in colour, hair replacement systems, extensions and wigs. She has always been theatrical and trained professionally before turning to hairdressing. Being able to combine both pleasures is perfect for her, and she enjoys creating hair styles and wigs that enables the actor to bring their character to life. Charlotte has slowly built up a repertoire of hair and wig styles with The Gallery Players over the past couple of years and this one has been the most challenging one yet - creating the perfect look for each individual actress! It has been a pleasure working alongside Helen and Robb and seeing the whole picture come together with hair and costume! You can find Charlotte at Francesco Hair Salon on St Matthew’s Street where she works as a hairstylist.

**Instagram:** iamcharlotterose\_ **Facebook:** iamcharlotterose



**Gallery Players** started back in 1985. *Pat Taplin* decided, with a group of friends, that in order to get the kind of *Theatre* they wanted to see performed locally, they'd have to do it themselves.

Mounting lesser known, rarely produced plays and musicals has always been our forte and we'd like to think we've been doing it rather well for close to 40 years!

Although this direction brings many freedoms, to uncover hidden and forgotten gems of theatre that other groups wouldn't tackle, it can also be financially challenging for us, as we inevitably take more box office risks.

In 2021 we took another 'leap', moving into our very own premises, **The Gallery Studio Theatre**. A dream for a decade had been realised.

The opportunities the **Studio** gives us are immense, no rushed get-ins a couple of days before opening night, the ability to rehearse and build a show in the same space it will be performed in - all huge positives.

The 'flip' side, of course, is paying a 'commercial' rent and all the associated costs that go with running and maintaining the building.

Since 2019 **Gallery Players** has been a *Charity* and every penny we make goes back into the shows and the upkeep and improvement of **The Studio**.

**So, we're asking for a little help from you, our dear friends and supporters.**

**We don't just want to 'get by with a little help .....** as the *Beatles* sang, **we want to Thrive and Flourish!**

We were hoping you'd consider making a manageable monthly donation?

Perhaps **£2.50, £5 or £10**, nothing silly (unless you wanted to!) which over a year would build to be incredibly useful to us and most welcome. Furthermore, if you are a tax payer this amount could grow 25% at no cost to you through *Gift Aid*.

More details of the scheme and other ways to help, such as 'one off' donations, are on our website ([www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk)), scan the QR code below or pick up a leaflet in the Studio foyer .

*Our current friends are:-*

**Hattie Bennett, Di Borthwick, Sarah Caddick, Lisa Cheadle, Dial Lane Books, Chris Dunnett, Tony Flack, Stuart Hume, Teresa & Paul Jennings, Sammi Morgans, David Sutton and Brian Theodore Ralph**

*What a lovely bunch you are!*

*Thank-you all for supporting our shows and perhaps you to will consider becoming a 'Gallery Friend' too?*

**THE**  
*gallery*  
friends scheme



**getting by with a little help from our friends ...**

**[www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk) for more info.**

Gallery Players (CIO). Charity number:- 1186641

1985 Cowardy Custard, 1986 Happy as a Sandbag, 1987 Sail Away, 1988 Something's Afoot, 1989 Company, 1990 The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 1991 The Hired Man, 1992 Snoopy - The Musical, A Little Night Music, 1993 Stepping Out, Cabaret, 1994 Assassins, The Ghost Train, Into the Woods, Hobson's Choice, 1995 Man of La Mancha, Steel Magnolias, City of Angels, Scent of Flowers, 1996 Little Shop of Horrors, The Most Happy Fella, Blue Remembered Hills, 1997 Dancing at Lughnasa, Pacific Overtures, Chicago, Hard Times, 1998 The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Sweeney Todd (The Demon Barber of Fleet Street), Shadowlands, Something's Afoot, 1999 Carnival, Trip to Bountiful, The Boys From Syracuse, Tons of Money, 2000 On Golden Pond, The Bakers Wife, Kiss of the Spider Woman, A Slice of Saturday Night, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, 2001 Mrs Warren's Profession, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, Billy, Breezblock Park, 2002 The Memory of Water, Flora The Red Menace, A Slice of Saturday Night, Radio Times, 2003 Kiss Me Like You Mean It, Days of Hope, Honk!, And A Nightingale Sang, 2004 Bouncers, Merrily We Roll Along, Talking Heads, You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, 2005 Kindertransport, She Loves Me, A Night At The Dogs, 2006 Amy's View, Passion, With Love, Colder Than Here, 2007 This Happy Breed, Grand Hotel, You Want Chilli Sauce With That & Marry Me A Little, The Sunshine Boys, 2008 Oh Kay!, Spend Spend Spend, To Kill A Mockingbird, 2009 The Long Road, Follies, Flare Path, 2010 Ordinary Days, Rent, Spring & Port Wine, 2011 My Mother Said I Never Should, Our House, Heroes, 2012 Putting it Together, Love Story, Be My Baby, 2013 A Man of No Importance, Into the Woods, The Importance of Being Earnest, 2014 Oh What a Lovely War!, Galileo, The History Boys, 2015 A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, Hairspray, A Streetcar Named Desire, 2016 Jumpers For Goalposts, The House Of Bernarda Alba, Spring Awakening, Ushers, 2017 Urinetown, Far From The Madding Crowd, 2018 Wolf Hall, Grow Up Grandad, Lucky Stiff, 2019 The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, The Lady In The Van, A New Brain, 2020 Gallery @ 35 (an online celebration), 2021 The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Macbeth, Bully Boy/Mortuary Sisters (a double bill), 2022 Celebrating Sondheim, Gutenberg - The Musical, Di & Viv & Rose, Come Back to the Five & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13 3/4 - The Musical, Sunday in the Park with George, 2023 Daddy Long Legs, The Kitchen Sink, Xanadu, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Piaf, 2024 Playhouse Creatures

**Future Productions:-** Our 2024 season continues with **A Midsummer Night's Dream** in June, **Lovesong** in July, **The Bridges of Madison County** in September, and **Parade** in November. For more info. [www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk)

***Gallery Players are a Charity and operate out of the Gallery Studio Theatre. We are guided by a small 'Steering Group' of theatre 'lovies' and aided by a melee of invaluable volunteers!***

***We don't receive any grants or subsidies for our day to day running and rely solely on tickets sales and kind donations to keep doing what we do, and to maintain and improve our wonderful studio theatre.***

***To find out more about us, how you might be able to help and the 'Are You Sitting Comfortably?' campaign for improved auditorium seating, please scan the QR code or visit our website.***

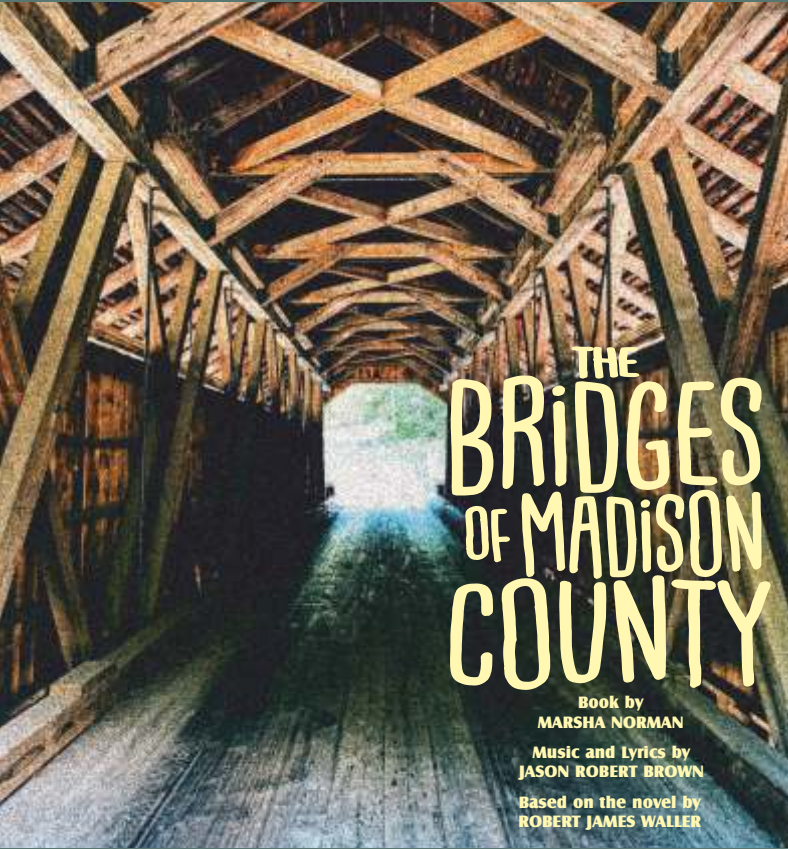
***[www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk)***



**TONY**  
AWARDS  
Best Score  
2014

The roads we travel, the doors we open  
and the bridges we dare to cross .....

THE **gallery**  
PLAYERS  
present



# THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

Book by  
MARSHA NORMAN

Music and Lyrics by  
JASON ROBERT BROWN

Based on the novel by  
ROBERT JAMES WALLER



September 30th to October 5th  
tickets & info - [galleryplayers.co.uk](http://galleryplayers.co.uk)

This production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International

THE **gallery**  
STUDIO  
THEATRE  
IPSWICH

The Gallery Players present

# PARADE

Music & Lyrics Jason Robert Brown  
Book Alfred Uhry  
Co-Conceived Harold Prince

**THE GALLERY STUDIO THEATRE**

15 - 23 November [www.gallerystudiotheatre.co.uk](http://www.gallerystudiotheatre.co.uk) Tickets from £12  
The Gallery Studio Theatre, St. George's St, Ipswich, IP1 3NF