

THE
gallery
PLAYERS

NW NEW
WINDSET
THEATRE

THE SHOWSTOPPING NEW
MUSICAL COMEDY!

THE GREAT BRITISH
BAKE OFF
MUSICAL



BOOK, MUSIC and LYRICS by
JAKE BRUNGER and PIPPA CLEARY

SOUVENIR
BROCHURE

BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS
JAKE BRUNGER
PIPPA CLEARY

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF MUSICAL

THE
gallery
PLAYERS

DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

WADE ABLITT

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

MATTHEW SNOW

HEAD OF PROPS

DAVE BORTHWICK

HEAD OF SET

WILL DOWE

HEAD OF COSTUME

FAITH POWLETT

PROP CONSTRUCTION

DAVE BORTHWICK

LIGHTING/SOUND DESIGN & OP

JAMES ALEKSIC
(JLA SOUND & LIGHT)

STAGE MANAGER

RACHEL DOY

NIKKI BROWN

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

WILL DOWE

SAM HARVEY

PRODUCT ASSISTANT / SOUND #2

RUBEN HOOD

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER

HEATHER LANE

DEBBIE OSBORNE

LX OPERATION

CIAN MOORE

CREW

GEORGIE BEARD

ARTWORK/PUBLICITY/PROGRAMME

WADE ABLITT

CHAPERONES

RILEY BRITCHFIELD

LINDA BACON

SAM HARVEY

MACEY LARKIN

WENDY DRIVER

JONATHAN MUDD

PHOTOGRAPHY

MIKE KWASNIAK

MAGGIE MUDD

HERBIE TAPLIN

PROJECTION DESIGN

WADE ABLITT

HEADSHOT PHOTOGRAPHY

JAMES BAKER

FOLLOW-SPOT OPERATION

SIMON HOYLE

LEWIS LAST

WELCOME!

This year, **The Gallery Players** are celebrating 40 years of presenting high quality and exciting theatre in Suffolk. I have been a fan of the company for as long as I've had any interest in theatre, so it is a huge honour to be directing this special anniversary production at the wonderful **New Walsey Theatre**.

Way, way back in 2023, I went on a lovely little jolly up to London to watch the West End production of **The Great British Bake Off Musical** (mainly off the back of directing the writing team's fabulous musical adaptation of **Adrian Mole** in 2022). 2 or 3 songs in, my companion and I turned to each other and said, "Gallery have to do this!"... And here we are!

The Great British Bake Off Musical is a title that may initially confuse a lot of people ("They made a musical out of that!?"), but I was massively taken by the stories and lives of these characters and loved how the humour and pathos of normal everyday life was blended so well. On top of that, the score is full of brilliant songs, some rocking and some heartbreaking! I knew this would not only be a fantastic show for The Gallery Players but would also be a terrific fit for The New Walsey Theatre. Gallery performed large scale musicals at The New Walsey for 15 years prior to us opening our own studio theatre, so it's lovely to be back for this big anniversary year!

I feel so lucky to have assembled a cast of people who are as warm as they are talented; wringing every drop of humour and heart out of these characters as well as singing up a storm. Mix in our unyielding Musical Director, Matt, and an incredibly dedicated team of talented designers, technicians and builders and I think we have the recipe for something very special!

This musical is the perfect heartwarming and hilarious tonic for whatever may be happening outside of this theatre, so sit back, relax and get ready to roll your eyes at some baking puns...

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF MUSICAL

BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS BY JAKE BRUNGER & PIPPA CLEARY

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF TELEVISION PROGRAMME PRODUCED BY

LOVE PRODUCTIONS - ORIGINAL THEME MUSIC BY TOM HOWE - THE

GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF LOVE

PRODUCTIONS LTD. - ORIGINALLY PRODUCED IN LONDON AT THE

NOEL COWARD THEATRE BY MARK GOUCHER PRODUCTIONS.

THIS AMATEUR PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH

MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL - ALL AUTHORISED PERFORMANCE

MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI - WWW.MTISHOWS.CO.UK

WADE ABLITT
DIRECTOR





CAST

JIM

JOSH DAY

BABS

JAN SIMMONS

HASSAN

ELLIOTT MCMILLAN

RUSSELL

STEVE TAPLIN

FRANCESCA

AIMEÉ SALMON

PAM LEE

STEPH BROWN

KIM

EVIE WHITE

DEZZA

JAMES BAKER

IZZY

HARRIET BACON

BEN

PAUL STONE

GEMMA

CLARE DUNGEY

PHIL HOLLINGHURST

DUNCAN BROATCH

LILY

AURÉLIE EDWARDS & ANNIE ROLLS

(THURS/SAT EVE)

(WEDS/FRI/SAT MAT)



TV CREW / ENSEMBLE

ALEX CROFT, LUCY O'BRIEN, SYMONE PEMBERTON,

CONNOR READ, JANIE ROBINSON, ADRIAN RUSSELL

ALEX WATT, COURTNEY YULE

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

ENSEMBLE

THE BAKE OFF TENT

FULL COMPANY

THE ARRIVAL OF THE JUDGES

PAM, PHIL, JIM, KIM

OBVIOUSLY

IZZY, COMPANY

SOMEWHERE IN THE DOUGH

GEMMA

SLAP IT LIKE THAT

PHIL, COMPANY

BRING ON THE SCONE

JIM, KIM, PAM, PHIL, ENSEMBLE

GROW

FRANCESCA, COMPANY

THE HANDSHAKE SONG

BAKERS

MY DAD

LILY, BEN

ALL THE WAY

FULL COMPANY



MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT TWO

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

PAM, ENSEMBLE

THE PERFECT PETIT FOURS

GEMMA, BEN

DON'T SEND ME HOME

FULL COMPANY

I'D NEVER BE ME WITHOUT YOU

PHIL, PAM

THE SEMI FINAL

FULL COMPANY

BABS' LAMENT

BABS

RISE

GEMMA

FINALE

FULL COMPANY



BAND

MATTHEW SNOW
KEYS I/CONDUCTOR

MATTHEW RHODES
KEYS II

JAMES HARMAN
DRUMS/PERCUSSION

OLLY WOOD
GUITARS

ALEX GOLDEN
BASS

HANNAH WAINWRIGHT
REEDS

WADE ABLITT
DIRECTOR/
CHOREOGRAPHER



MATTHEW SNOW
MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Wade is a multi-award-winning director, choreographer performer and musician from Suffolk who has been heavily involved with the local community theatre scene for nearly 20 years, notably as one of the former Artist Directors of Mad Hatter Productions and now for The Gallery Players.

Director/Choreographer credits include: *Parade*, *Xanadu*, *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13½*, *Gutenberg! The Musical*, *Celebrating Sondheim Vol. 1 & 2*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *A New Brain*, Choreography for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (The Gallery Players) Choreography for *The Wedding Singer* (Wide Eye Productions) *A Man of No Importance* (Headgate Theatre Productions) *Little Shop of Horrors*, Direction for *Kinky Boots* (The Spa Pavilion) *Big Fish*, *Our House*, *Mad Hatter at the Movies*, *Betty Blue Eyes*, *Urinetown*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Choreography for *Assassins* (Mad Hatter Productions) *Seussical*, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

Upcoming: *Guys and Dolls* (Colchester Operatic Society) *Hadestown* (The Gallery Players)

Musical Director credits include: *Dick Whittington* (The Company of Four) *Cinderella*, *Kinky Boots*, *Rock of Ages* (The Spa Pavilion) *The History Boys*, *Blood Brothers* (Mad Hatter Productions)

Composer credits include: *3 Cheers for Maisy!* (2018 Edinburgh Fringe & Thorington Theatre), *The Snow Queen* (Snape Maltings Concert Hall), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Thorington Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (DanceEast & London Southbank University) and several original musicals at various stages of development. His original musical comedy *Tunswick!* received its world premiere at The Headgate in 2019 and is currently being rewritten and developed.

Matt is a Musical Director, Pianist, and Educator who has been heavily involved in the Suffolk theatre scene since 2019. Whilst studying at the University of East Anglia, he played Keys II for the world premiere production of *Berlin Girl* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and became indoctrinated in community theatre immediately. Since then, he has been a rehearsal pianist and pit musician for many local companies such as Eastern Edge Theatre Company, IODS Theatre Company, The Company of Four, Riverside Musical Theatre, and The Gallery Players.

Musical Director credits include: *Fun Home*, *Parade* (Best Musical - NODA Awards), *Xanadu*, *Celebrating Sondheim Vol. 2* (The Gallery Players) *The Wedding Singer* (Wide Eye Productions)

SPECIAL THANKS

THE NEW WOLSEY THEATRE, THE GALLERY STUDIO THEATRE, BURLINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH, EMMAUS SUFFOLK, SUSAN TAPLIN, NORMAN RUTTERFORD, OUR FOH VOLUNTEERS, DAVID JONES, CALI THE DOG, THE GREENHOUSE CAFÉ, FADOS HOUSE, CHLOE RIVERS (SUFFOLK SOUND), LAURA LOCKE (FELIXSTOWE RADIO), THE DEBEN PLAYERS, RUPERT SHARP (MTI EUROPE), HERO SITE SOLUTIONS

THE INGREDIENTS...

For this week's challenge... we are asking you to build the set, costumes and create bakes for a whole series worth of Great British Bake Off episodes... On your marks, get set...

Our dedicated team of highly skilled designers and builders have been hard at work for months creating all the mouth-watering bakes you'll see on stage. From Petit Fours to Amygdalopita... nothing was too much work for these fake-bakers!

Our Head of Set, Will Dowe, has built all the bakers' benches from scratch, as well as dressers, sinks and tent-poles! For custom builds, he can be found on dowie.uk

It's been a huge team effort, and we can't thank the team enough for all their hard work. To everyone who built, 3D-printed, sewed or picked up a paint brush... THANK YOU!

8 BENCHES

12 PIES

32 MIXING BOWLS

42 CAKE TOWERS

36 PETIT
FOURS

6 3D-PRINTED
EGGS!

AND MUCH,
MUCH MORE...

AND A HUGE THANK YOU TO *EMMAUS SUFFOLK*
AND *HERO SITE SOLUTIONS* FOR THEIR
INVALUABLE SUPPORT OF THIS PRODUCTION



emmaus
Suffolk



IN REHEARSALS





**PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MIKE KWASNIAK**

CAST



HARRIET BACON – IZZY

Harriet trained in Professional Musical Theatre at Performers College and has spent the last 10 years performing in various professional pantomimes, tours and shows before settling back in sunny Suffolk. Harriet is very excited to be back performing at the New Wolsley for the first time in over 10 years, and hopes you enjoy the dough... She means, "show"!



ELLIOTT McMILLAN – HASSAN

Elliott is back with the Gallery Players for the 2nd time having recently played Jim Conley in the award-winning production of *Parade*. This was one of the best experiences of Elliott's career so far, so he's thrilled to return to work with such an incredible director in Wade and Musical Director in Matt, who have both been a pivotal part of Elliott's musical theatre career! *Bake Off* is full of fun and laughs and a wonderful score with a cast that brings the story to life brilliantly.



JAMES BAKER – DEZZA

James has been performing ever since he was young. He has been a part of many local theatre groups, such as The New Wolsley Young Company and PQA Ipswich. James went on to study Film Production at UCA and now works in the film industry as an Assistant Director. However, he is grateful to be back at the New Wolsley and the opportunity to perform here again. Some of his past performing credits include *The Wedding Singer* (Wide Eye Productions), *The Lazy Ace* West End Show (PQA Ipswich), and even was a part of the young cast of *It's a Wonderful Life* performed at the New Wolsley back in 2009. And yes, ironically his surname really is "Baker"!



LUCY O'BRIEN

Lucy most recently played Mary Phagan in *Parade* with The Gallery Players and appeared in *The Wedding Singer* with Wide Eye Productions. This is her second show with the Gallery Players, and she is so excited to be involved with the company having watched lots of their shows over the years. She has loved being part of this delightful show and incredible cast and hopes you all enjoy it as much as we do!



DUNCAN BROATCH – PHIL

Duncan is delighted to be back on The NWT stage with Gallery Players, following on from *The Bridges of Madison County* last year at the Gallery Studio Theatre. Previous roles include *Tevye Fiddler on the Roof*, Thomas Andrews *Titanic the Musical*, *Jesus/Caliph/Judas Jesus Christ Superstar* (IODS and Independent Productions) *Giorgio Passion*, *Dominique The Baker's Wife*, *Snoopy You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* and Marco the Magnificent *Carnival* (Gallery Player). But until now, Duncan has never had to work so hard on his bread, pastries and pies. The consumption of, that is! I mean, you've got to know what you're talking about to be a judge!



SYMONE PEMBERTON

Symone has been performing for over 25 years, starting in youth theatre and appearing in many local productions through her time with the Co op Juniors. She trained at the London College of Music and is happy to be back with The Gallery Players after performing in *Parade* last year. She's especially pleased to be back at the Wolsley Theatre with such a fun show and great cast, and hopes everyone has as much fun watching it as they have bringing it to life



STEPH BROWN – PAM

No stranger to Suffolk theatregoers, Steph has been treading the boards for many years, both with The Gallery Players and IODS Theatre Company. Favourite roles include Eva Peron *Evita* and Norma Desmond *Sunset Boulevard*. A huge Stephen Sondheim fan, Steph has enjoyed performing roles in many of his musicals, including *Mary Henry We Roll Along*, *Sally Follies*, *Mrs Lovett Sweeney Todd* and was proud to be part of Gallery's two *Celebrating Sondheim* concerts. More recently with IODS, Steph has appeared as Alice *The Addams Family* and Golde *Fiddler On The Roof*. She is "so delighted" to be a part of *Bake Off*, and to be back at the Wolsley in Gallery's 40th year is the icing on the cake!



CONNOR READ

This is Connor's first Gallery Players production, but he is no stranger to the stage! Last year, he appeared in Wide Eye Productions' *The Wedding Singer* at The Gallery Studio Theatre. On top of this, Connor has appeared in multiple productions of *Sounds Like Christmas* with IODS Theatre Company as well as countless *Gang Shows*!



ALEX CROFT

This is Alex's third Gallery Players production, having previously playing Nigel in *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13½* and Urania in *Xanadu*. He also recently performed in *The Wedding Singer* with Wide Eye Productions at The Gallery Studio Theatre.

Alex has just completed 2 years of training in Musical Theatre at Emil Dale Academy and is about to pursue a further 3-year course at the Wilkes Academy.



JOSH DAY - JIM

Josh trained in Musical Theatre at Performers College in Essex, where he played Robbie Hart in his 3rd year production of *The Wedding Singer*. Josh made his professional stage debut opposite Adjoa Andoh in *Richard III* at the Rose Theatre, Kingston (WhatsOnStage award nominee) and graduated with a MA (Hons) Screen Acting degree from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. On screen, Josh can be seen in *Truelove* on Channel 4 and *Renegade Nell* on Disney+.



CLARE DUNGEY - GEMMA

Clare first trod the Walsey Theatre boards at the tender age of eight, when she was cast in their professional production of *Ham Anderson*. Favourite roles to date include Debi *Ordinary Days*, The Baker's Wife *Into The Woods*, Millie *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Guinevere *Camelot*, Julie Jordan *Carousel*, Pat *Kinky Boots* and Sally *Me and My Girl*. In 2019, she appeared as Jessica in the premiere of director Wade's original musical, *Tunnick!* Clare is thrilled to be playing the part of Gemma for you tonight in her favourite theatre and would like to thank her family and friends for their encouragement and support.



AURÉLIE EDWARDS - LILY

Aurélie belongs to Co-op Juniors Theatre Company and has performed in numerous musical shows with them - including playing Oliver Twist in *Oliver Jr!* She also has two professional acting credits; with English Touring Theatre in their production of *Macbeth*, and a leading role a short film made by Bristol University film students - both brilliant fun and unique learning experiences. She is really excited to be joining The Gallery Players for GBBO!



JANIE ROBINSON

Janie has been involved with local theatre and performing for many years, both on and off the stage. Recently, she has been with Suffolk Singers, singing choral works and foreign pieces which is a challenge, but nothing beats Musical theatre! She loves being at the Walsey and has been lucky to have played some great roles here including Miss Dorothy *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and Violet *9 to 5 The Musical*. Thanks for the post-rehearsal wine and to family and friends for coming to the Bake Off!



ANNIE ROLLS - LILY

Annie is making her debut performance for the Gallery Players and is loving every minute of it! At the start of her musical theatre journey, Annie has played the lead role in two productions of *Annie* with both Limelight Performers and Theatre Train and with the latter appeared in a national musical production at the Royal Albert Hall. Annie can't wait to perform in this exciting production with a cast she is totally in awe of.



ADRIAN RUSSELL

This is Adrian's 11th show with The Gallery Players, having first appeared with them as an almost naked sailor and the Statue of Liberty in *Cabaret* in 1993. He has been treading the boards in Suffolk for 36 years and has also appeared in productions for IODS, Co-op Juniors and BATS. His favourite parts to date include Riff in *West Side Story* (IODS), Flash in *Flash Gordon The Musical* (BATS), Ethan in *The Full Monty* (IODS) and Doctor Jafar Berenstein in *A New Brain* (Gallery Players). Adrian is excited to be back at the Walsey having last appeared there in *Sweeney Todd* (IODS) in 2022.



AIMEÉ SALMON - FRANCESCA

Aimée is thrilled to be returning to the stage with The Gallery Players after previously playing Marcy Park in *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Young Miss Shepherd in *The Lady in the Van*, Rhoda in *A New Brain*, Helena Landless in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* & A soloist in *Celebrating Sondheim*. She would like to thank her partner Josh for holding down the fort at home with their 16-month-old daughter Aurelia whilst she's in the Bake Off Tent!



JAN SIMMONS - BABS

Jan is excited to be back at the Walsey having last set foot on the Walsey stage in 2009. She has performed in many musicals, plays and cabaret over the years and loves to sing. Favourite shows include *Songs For A New World*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Into The Woods*. She hopes you all enjoy the show.



PAUL STONE - BEN

Paul is Director of Drama at Ipswich High School. As a performer, he has enjoyed lead roles in a wide variety of shows including *West Side Story*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Chess*, *Into the Woods*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Crazy for You*, *Lucky Stiff*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *The Producers*, *Carousel* and *Parade*. A veteran Gallery Player, Paul also performs with Black and White Productions and Spark Theatrical Entertainment. Paul is also a senior examiner for A Level Theatre and Drama and spends a couple of weeks each year working as a ski trip rep.



STEVE TAPLIN - RUSSELL

Steve has grown old(er) disgracefully on stage since the late 1980s! Acting highlights include John *The Hired Man*, Billy *Billy*, Paul *A Chorus Line*, Anthony *Sweeney Todd*, Molina *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*, Charlie *Merley We Roll Along*, Galileo *Galileo*, Arturo *Li The Resistible Rise of Arturo Li* and Cuthbert the Crab *The Little Mermaid!*

Directing credits (of which he's equally proud) include, *Assassins*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Passion*, *Sunday in The Park with George*, *Piaf* and *The Bridges of Madison County*.

Suffolk born and bred, Steve really hopes Russell's soufflé rises #TheQueenofTarts!



ALEX WATT

Alex performed first in *Oliver* at the age of 10 and spent the next 18 years performing in local theatre productions in and around Dundee in Scotland. In 2012, Alex completed a Master's Degree in Musical Theatre Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. His favourite parts to date have been Batboy in *Batboy the Musical*, Captain Tempest in *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, Curly McLain in *Oklahoma!* and Jesus in *Jesus Christ Superstar* alongside his brother who is a regular in local theatre productions. He is excited to be part of what promises to be an excellent production and to getting back on stage.



EVIE WHITE - KIM

Evie is no stranger to the Gallery Players, appearing in multiple productions in roles such as Anna in *Spring Awakening*, Adela in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, Edwin Drood in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dot in *Sunday in the Park with George*, Marlene Dietrich in *Piaf*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and most recently, *Parade*. Other favourite roles include Tzeitel in *Fiddler on the Roof* (IODS) and Blanche in *Bonnie & Clyde* (Eastern Edge)



COURTNEY YULE

Courtney has been performing for nearly 20 years. She has had the pleasure of playing roles such as Jerusha in *Daddy Long Legs* (Gallery Players) Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* and the title role in *Alice in Wonderland* (Co-Op Juniors) Outside of Suffolk she has performed at the O2, Royal Albert Hall and Disneyland Paris! When she's not on stage, she's working in Radio/TV and after her experience working on *Dragons' Den*, she cannot wait to bring her TV Crew role to the stage!



GET INVOLVED!

We are always on the lookout for new faces to join in with our exciting projects at *The Gallery Studio Theatre*. From building sets to decorating the foyer, from front of house to backstage crew, from playing in the band to performing on stage!

For more info and to register your interest, chat to a friendly member of our FOH team or visit the Gallery Studio Theatre website.



JAKE BRUNGER & PIPPA CLEARY BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS

Jake Brunger (*book and lyric*) and Pippa Cleary (*music and lyric*) met at Bristol University, where they were studying Drama and Music respectively. They have been described by *The Stage* newspaper as "one of the most exciting musical theatre writing teams working in the UK today".

Their new stage musical adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *TREASURE ISLAND* will run at Bristol Old Vic from 4th December 2025 – Sat 10 January 2026, directed by Paul Foster.

Jake and Pippa's stage adaptation of the much-loved Channel 4 series *THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF* played a limited 12-week season at the Noël Coward Theatre in the West End, directed by Rachel Kavanaugh and produced by Mark Gaucher and Love Productions. The show premiered at the Everyman Cheltenham in July 2022. Their stage musical adaptation of Sue Townsend's *THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE AGED 13½* ran at the Ambassadors Theatre in the West End in 2019 following critically acclaimed runs at the Menier Chocolate Factory and Leicester Curve. The show was directed by Luke Sheppard and nominated for the 2018 Evening Standard Award for Best Musical. An actor-musician revival opened at the Queen's Theatre Hornchurch in April 2022.

Their musicals include: *JET SET GO!* (*Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Theatre 503, Jermyn Street Theatre & Turbine Theatre MT Fest 2020*), *THE GREAT BRITISH SOAP OPERA* (*Edinburgh Fringe Festival & Jermyn Street Theatre*), *RED RIDING HOOD* (*Singapore Repertory Theatre and multiple international production*), *PRODIGY* (*National Youth Music Theatre at The Other Palace*), *TREASURE ISLAND* (*Singapore Repertory Theatre*) and *CHICKEN LITTLE* (*The Other Palace/Singapore Repertory Theatre*). They also wrote the music and lyrics for *THE SNOW GORILLA* (*Rose Theatre, Kingston*). Jake and Pippa wrote the song 'Part Of Their Gang' for *FRIENDS: THE MUSICAL PARODY* in New York and Las Vegas, which will tour the UK in 2025/6.

In 2018 they headlined their first sell-out concert at Live at Zedel, with a cast including *It's a Sin* actor Callum Scott Howells. They were chosen for the 2013 Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriters Project in Chicago and are Associate Artists of Leicester Curve. They recently spent a year on attachment to the National Theatre Studio working on an original new musical called *MY LIFE WITHOUT YOU*, which workhopped in London produced by Tim Johanson & Mark Cartwright with a cast including Caroline Quentin, Anita Dobson, Claire Moore and Robert Hands.

The Gallery Studio Theatre has been the home of The Gallery Players since September 2021. In those 4 short years, we have staged 23 of our own in-house productions, as well as hosting many other companies, performances and rehearsals.

The Gallery Players stage 5 in-house productions a year, ranging from small-cast dramas and comedies to large-cast musicals. The Gallery Players' ethos has always been to stage interesting and lesser-known works to a high standard and to introduce audiences to something new. Our recent production of the mega-musical *Parade* won the 2025 NODA Award for Best Musical, proving that there is an audience and interest for exciting niche works.

For more info on The Gallery Studio Theatre, please visit www.gallerystudiotheatre.co.uk

THE GALLERY STUDIO THEATRE



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FROM CUSTARD TO CAKES: 40 YEARS OF GALLERY

BY HELEN CLARKE

In 1972, Pat Taplin went to the Mermaid Theatre in London to see a new musical, *Coward Custard*, and loved it! Pat had been directing and performing in Felixstowe and Ipswich for many years. At a time when local amateur theatre was dominated by shows comprising principles and chorus – like Rodgers and Hammerstein – she had already dipped into the more adventurous approach offered by musicals like *Lock Up Your Daughters* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. For *Coward Custard* she would need a group of talented performers who could turn their hand to songs both comic and serious, and scenes from plays. And no chorus...

So, when she retired in 1985, she took a gamble and set up her own theatre group, specifically to perform *Coward Custard*. That theatre group didn't even have a name, and initially it was uncertain whether there would even be any future shows. However, the critical reception for *Coward Custard* was extremely positive. The little theatre group acquired a name, **the Gallery Players**, and Pat settled in to directing one show a year at the Spa Pavilion, Felixstowe.

Early milestones included the group's first Sondheim show, *Company*, in 1989, and *The Hired Man* in 1991, a show I think most of us involved realised was a landmark production for the group. Local theatre critic Carol Corver's glowing review helped us gain wider recognition, as well as healthy audiences. We felt a new confidence and sense of purpose.

Those early shows are remembered incredibly fondly by the relatively small group of performers, creatives and technicians involved. Pat never auditioned. She invited – and what a privilege it felt to get one of those invitations. Everyone put in time to paint scenery, make props, take a turn backstage and sell programmes and cups of coffee. We felt like pioneers – at that time hardly any other amateur groups were interested in staging Sondheim, Kander and Ebb or Howard Goodall.

The milestones continued. In 1992, *Snoopy – The Musical* was our first production at the Sir John Mills Theatre at The Eastern Angles Centre in Ipswich. The year after that we put on our first play, *Stepping Out*. By now Gallery productions numbered 3 if not 4 a year, with Pat at the helm of all of them. The group was inevitably starting to expand. New performers, new directors, new ideas. Regional premieres, area premieres, even world premieres. All in service of our motto: **making theatre exciting.**

We are proud that several of those who performed in Gallery shows at a young age went on to have successful careers in the theatre industry, from founding members like Gary Avis (*Royal Ballet*) to recent members like Sam Brown (*West End*).

As the 21st century dawned more significant moments followed, including our final production at the Spa Pavilion in 2002, *A Slice of Saturday Night*. The next year, 2003, *Days of Hope* became Gallery's first production at the New Wolsey Theatre. This was followed by many more, one a year, enabling the group to benefit from the technical facilities, flexible stage space and general support offered by the New Wolsey.

Follies, in 2009, saw Pat's final appearance on stage, but she carried on directing until 2012's production of Sondheim's *Putting It Together*. This proved to be Pat's final production. When her health started to fail, the question arose of how best to continue the Gallery Players and honour her legacy. Eventually it was decided to set up a Steering Group comprised of longtime members Steve Taplin, Steve Wooldridge, Helen Clarke and Dave Borthwick. Wade Ablitt and Will Dowe joined this group in 2019, in the same year the group became a charity.

As the years roll by Gallery continues to break new ground. One of the most exciting developments has been the move to the former Wolsey Studio in St George's Street. In May 2021, the Steering Group picked up the keys to the group's new home and in September of that year *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was the first production to be staged at the newly named Gallery Studio Theatre.

Since then, we have staged a staggering 23 in-house productions, plays and musicals. We continue to mount lesser-known theatre pieces, hidden and forgotten gems. It's a policy that carries financial risks, but great creative rewards.

Audiences continue to grow, and we are gradually upgrading the facilities at the Studio with new seating, lighting box and a revamped foyer area planned. Pat's Bar in the foyer provides a nod to the legacy of our founder, who would undoubtedly be thrilled at our new premises.

The future looks bright – and who knows what the next 40 years will bring?



PAST SHOWS

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 Spiderwoman, 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 2021 The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Macbeth, Mortuary Sisters/Bully Boy 2022 Celebrating Sondheim, Gutenberg – The Musical!, Di and Viv and Rose, Come Back to the Five & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13½, Sunday in the Park with George 2023 Daddy Long Legs, The Kitchen Sink, Xanadu, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Piaf 2024 Celebrating Sondheim Vol. 2, Playhouse Creatures, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Lovesong, The Bridges of Madison County, Parade 2025 Fun Home, God of Carnage

WONDER BOY

BY ROSS WILLIS
DIRECTED BY STEVE WOOLDRIDGE

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

BOOK BY HUGH WHEELER
MUSIC & LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM
DIRECTED BY HELEN CLARKE

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