

LOCKDOWN UPDATE no.7

Michael Green's 50-year-old am-dram classic now available to download

...of coarse!



by Nick Smurthwaite

The funniest book ever written about am-dram, *The Art of Coarse Acting*, first published in 1964, has just been released as a downloadable podcast. Its narrator is none other than the author himself, Michael Green, who recorded it shortly before he died in 2018 at the age of 91.

The success of Green's book led to a whole spate of bespoke *Coarse Acting* plays, mostly premiered at Questors Theatre, Ealing, where he was an active member for more than sixty years.

So successful were the *Coarse Acting Championships* at Questors that Green put together a "best of" compilation and took it up to the Edinburgh Fringe where the two-week run sold out on the first night. The comedy actor and producer Brian Rix brought one of Green's Edinburgh into the West End for three months. Rix really liked the show, but the actors were all amateurs who had other jobs they needed to get back to.

Green himself started fooling around in the theatre at the age of 14 when he appeared in *Goodbye Mr Chips* at the Leicester Rep. He later described it as "*my first coarse acting experience.... I went to open a door that was painted on to the scenery.*"

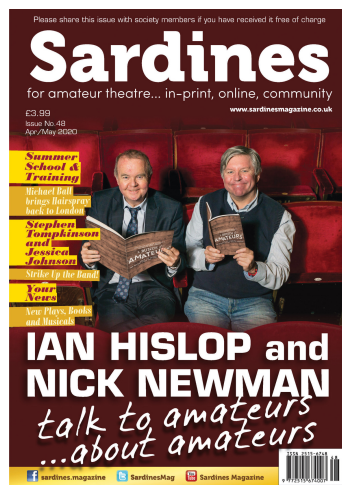
Later he moved to London and joined The Questors, where he played a wide range of parts, with varying degrees of incompetence.

So who or what is a coarse actor?

Green's catch-all definition was "one who can remember the lines but not the order in which they come," though his wonderfully entertaining book contains any number of defining traits, from "bringing down the scenery by forcing a door that won't open" to "nabbing the early exit parts in order to spend more time in the pub."

One of the surprise West End hits of 2014, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, which ran for six years and sparked a whole series of similar accident-prone comedies, was clearly inspired by *The Art of Coarse Acting*. A leading member of the company, Henry Lewis, started out with The Questors Youth Theatre and went to Green for advice when he was setting up his production company.

***The Art of Coarse Acting* 50th anniversary edition is available from Samuel French Ltd. and the podcast is available to download from Audible**



Receive our current issue FREE or on its own for just £1

FREE with a new subscription [HERE!](#)

(Use code: isolationoffer)

Enjoy an extra free issue by extending an existing 1 or 2-year subscription

[HERE!](#)

(Use code: isolationextension)

Try the current issue on its own without a subscription for just £1 [HERE!](#)

(Use code: £1sardines)

All offers are inclusive of postage & packing.

All cards securely accepted including PayPal accounts.

NOTE: Subscriptions are NOT affected by the unavoidable break in production.

Even though Sardines will not be publishing throughout Jun/Jul, our next issue (no.49) will simply be delayed until 1st August (fingers crossed) rather than cancelled.

Meanwhile, please keep sending us news of how your society is staying connected and keeping positive [HERE](#)



When Will Theatre Re-open?

This week, the Government is attempting to ease the current lockdown rules. However, while football is being prioritised to re-open (albeit behind closed doors), the arts industries and theatre have gone virtually unmentioned...

It's a worrying aspect, particularly as, in 2018, the professional theatre industry sold tickets to the value of £1.28bn, from a total of 62,945 performances (the latest figures available - provided by UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre). Amateur theatre societies, companies and charities are bound to re-open at a similar time to their professional counterparts - and both sectors will be reliant on public/social confidence.



With 8,570 members, the well-supported public Facebook page [The Great British Amateur Theatre Hub](#) often debates relevant topics, and this dilemma in particular drew over 60 comments this week when Lee Baxendale from Ilfracombe asked: "***So now we have a little more (mixed) information, what are peoples thoughts on when amdram can / will get up and running again?***"

Here's just a small selection of replies:

Ben Thompson: Not a clue. Personally I think Cameron Mackintosh isn't far off with 2021. Realistically of rehearsals resume Sept/Oct it'll be a few months before shows are ready to go on, and then it's how do we manage social distancing? I don't think it will be back 'properly' until we no longer have to social distance.

Tara Hutchings: We are starting this week. With virtual zoom auditions and then rehearsals. Gives us something to keep our mind off things. We are planning to have script and songs learnt by the time we are ready to have actual rehearsals (we guess around September) then it will just be dances and setting and we will be ready to perform in December. Fingers crossed! If we need to push dates back again we will of course. But for now the virtual rehearsal idea is really popular with our members as they miss it!

Sandie Gasson: Can't see any am dram happening until the end of social distancing as it wouldn't be easy to keep to the rules so my guess will be end of Sept maybe to start meeting / rehearsing and productions not being performed until 2021.

Jane Hilliard: I don't think it will be until next year sadly, I'm sincerely hoping I'm wrong as we have a production planned for November, rehearsals starting in September but I think social distancing would be so difficult in small theatres etc. Plus, a lot of our amdram audiences are of an age when they would be cautious of venturing out.

Tony Deeming: Dependent on a LOT of factors including how many people still follow guidelines and don't cause a huge peak of new cases, and how nervous your people are about being close to others and also how the venue is going to cope. If there's still a 2m spacing issue that'll mean the venues won't be able to (and the perf companies) cover their costs...

Jonathan Manley: Being involved with a theatre with both membership and patrons largely over 70, I struggle to see any publicly accessible theatre performances able to perform this year. I would love to think some minor miracle occurred whereby we could open earlier but I seriously doubt it. Social distancing means rehearsals can't take place in a group environment which I consider essential for the production. It's all a bit rubbish really.

Davron Hicks: All depends when the theatres decide to open. I'm guessing they won't be on the priority list. No point rehearsing a production if the theatres are going to be closed.

Pete Smith: Whilst some people might say my voice would sound better behind a mask, I generally can't see it working. 30 to 40 people dancing and singing in an enclosed space doesn't sound feasible. And then facing the risk that people don't want to buy tickets. Regretfully I think it is best to plan for next year, when hopefully there is a vaccine.

Stacey Warner: It's all speculation really, but I'd have thought early 2021 is best case scenario. Worst case is they don't open until after there's a vaccine, but I actually feel a little sick thinking about that. It's also worth considering that they're already concerned about the double whammy of winter flu and Coronavirus this winter, I wouldn't be surprised if there are renewed restrictions around that time. If it helps, I set up a virtual play reading group to get by at this time and it's fairly easy to do if you have a group who wants to virtually get together. Obviously it's not the same but it's something.

Frances Brindle: Before you even consider the audience you have to consider the cast. You can't socially distance on stage, in a small changing room or in a backstage corridor. You can't touch props without other people all touching them - if one person brings it on and another takes it off you can't sanitise it whilst on stage. Our wardrobe dept and a lot of volunteers are 70 or over and with health issues so we won't have them because even if they're allowed out they'll probably be very cautious, the list goes on. I don't see anything happening until the new year at least as much as it breaks my heart.

Melody Lewis: Can I just please ask those who say 2021 or end of this year - what would change by then? Genuinely interested as can't see social distancing or shielding the vulnerable ending until we have a vaccine unfortunately.

If you think you know when a vaccine might be available, or, if you have another point of your own to make, please either visit [The Great British Amateur Theatre Hub](#) or [email us here](#)

Call for Evidence:

Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) sectors

From the Theatres Trust - DCMS Committee is seeking written evidence for its inquiry into the impact of the coronavirus.



Theatres Trust will be making a submission, but it is vital that the committee receives evidence from all parts of the theatre sector and it is particularly helpful for there to be a high volume of responses. So Theatres Trust urges you to make a submission on behalf of your organisation.

The inquiry will consider the following areas, which you should address in your submission as appropriate.

1. What has been the immediate impact of COVID-19 on the sector?
2. How effectively has the support provided by DCMS, other Government departments and arms-length bodies addressed the sector's needs?
3. What will the likely long-term impacts of COVID-19 be on the sector, and what support is needed to deal with those?
4. What lessons can be learnt from how DCMS, arms-length bodies and the sector have dealt with COVID-19?
5. How might the sector evolve after COVID-19, and how can DCMS support such innovation to deal with future challenges?

The deadline has now been extended to Friday 19 June

Please make your submissions directly to the DCMS committee [HERE](#). If you are happy to share your submission with Theatres Trust in confidence, please send a copy to advice@theatrestrust.org.uk

Performance Buildings in a Post-Pandemic World

Charcoalblue, established in the heart of the UK theatre industry in 2004, has carved out a reputation as the world's leading integrated Theatre, Acoustic and Digital Consultancy service.

What awaits us when artists and audiences return?

It's true that Broadway didn't close during the so-called 'Spanish' flu, but public entertainment venues were indeed closed in London and almost every other city in the US. While the performing arts industry is currently reeling from the blanket closure of venues, we can find useful guidance in the precedent of that earlier pandemic.

Following the re-opening of theatres, there was increased scrutiny of the health-worthiness of places for entertainment. Public health was on the mind of the theatre-going public and theatres began to boast about ventilation in advertisements.

The closure of venues in 1918 was not a death knell for the arts. The decade after the 1918 flu, fuelled by the post-war boom, saw the rapid development of theatre venues and a sustained period of well-funded creative development.

As audiences and artists return, venues will need to make a number of quick shifts. Audiences will need to be assured that attending events is safe. The conditions for artists, likewise, may need to be modified according to new best practice. Short-term impacts on certain performance types may also be experienced. We have every confidence that post COVID-19 performance practice will look largely the same as before.



Spare a Thought for...

by Peter Harrison

I do think it would be rather nice at this difficult time if we could spare a thought for a group suffering great hardship from the current restrictions on movement. I refer to the housebreaking community.



Statistics show that most burglaries happen in the daytime. When we think of a burglar we might typically imagine someone sneaking around in the dark of night unnoticed but in actual fact most burglaries take place between 10am and 3pm.

And with so many families now at home during those hours as a result of the coronavirus pandemic the burgling profession are having a hard time of it. It's been reported that many burglars are so strapped for cash they are having to dip into their savings, going on Ebay to sell off stolen property they had been reserving for their retirement.

In other cases burglars have apparently had to resort to burgling each other. There are stories of burglars leaving home to carry out a robbery being confronted in their own driveways by other burglars about to burgle them. Not unsurprisingly this has caused some ill-feeling. And words have been exchanged.

One report I have seen reveals that a young apprentice burglar who had not been following the news tried out his developing skills by entering an expensive property through the French windows, only to find the owner, a former professional wrestler, enjoying a late lunch with his family. Although quite busy dealing with coronavirus patients doctors in the local A&E department used a local anaesthetic to release the intruder's left leg which had somehow become wrapped around his throat.

The hardship has not been confined to the burglars themselves. The fences who help them to dispose of stolen property are complaining that they keep seeing the same old stuff as burglars continue to recycle property stolen from each other. And that it is impossible to dispose of. And now the whole future of burglary as a profession would appear to be in doubt. As an executive member of the Housebreakers' Federation put it to me, speaking anonymously, "...many youngsters who were planning to follow in their fathers' footsteps by making a dishonest living out of burglary are now talking about going straight. And unless people soon start going out to work and leaving their homes unattended during the day a proud tradition of British private enterprise and self-reliance could finally come to an end."

Hard Times

by Jacquee Storozynski-Toll

Well, it looks as though this lockdown is going to remain in place for some time yet and theatres are going to remain closed. It is remarkable the way that people have started using video software to still perform.



The theatre community have been undertaking play reading, help with auditions and even dance classes. A local actress along with others has cast and performed Shakespeare plays via Zoom or House Party, all with virtual reality. Even some of our local amateur productions are now being transmitted via YouTube. It is limiting though as when there is copyright involved the shows can't be transmitted. Southend's Lindisfarne group is very lucky as they have as their Patron, Ray Cooney, and he has generously allowed *Run for Your Wife* and *Caught in the Net* be transmitted for a limited time. This allows people who missed the production first time round to have a chance to see them. However, we have to rely on those out of copyright such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* to be uploaded. I would love to see the production of *The Accrington Pals* that I directed, but as the playwright Peter Whelan only died a year or so ago it is still in copyright. Additionally, I have enjoyed the NT Live productions in particular *Twelfth Night* with Tamsin Greig, who was brilliant as Malvolio. I missed it on stage. Although, I was looking forward to their production of *Frankenstein*, I am afraid the sight of a man in a nappy rolling around the stage for forty minutes was a real turn off, figuratively and literally. Does that make me a Philistine? The downloads from the *Shows Must go On*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and the brilliant Andrew Lloyd Webber 50th birthday celebration with Michael Ball and Elaine Paige singing songs from the

musicals was particularly enjoyable.

Another pleasant surprise has been the Globe Theatre transmissions. I tuned into *The Two Noble Kinsmen* a play written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher. It was a new one on me and I loved it. There was a remarkable performance by Francesca Mills, a restricted growth actress who dominated the stage singing and dancing in mad fashion as the jailer's daughter. There was a bit of everything thrown in, Morris Dancing, wrestling, spear fighting and a wonderful ensemble of dancing with staves at the final curtain. It must have been exhilarating for the actors taking part. Meanwhile we're in limbo. Our production of *Don't Dress for Dinner* has been re-booked for September when we hope the theatre is reopened. However, we're still uncertain whether we have a cast as the lead actress had a holiday booked then but still doesn't know if it is on. Our original September production has been postponed until spring so all the auditions were cancelled and people are chomping at the bit to put forward productions for 2020 but have been told to hold fire.

Meanwhile, the local theatres are begging punters who are waiting for ticket refunds on cancelled productions not to take the cash, but to re-book or take vouchers as they need the money. Not good times.

Theatre Superstitions

by Martin Ward

(From the latest newsletter [*Apollonius*] of The Apollo Players, Isle of Wight)

In these days of lockdown and social distancing, we may have found that we have plenty of time to muse on different subjects. Theatre superstitions was one such topic and so I did a little research to find out what was behind some of these traditional myths and legends.

WHISTLING BACKSTAGE

In days of yore when mechanised sets had not even been imagined, ropes were used to operate rigging and these were often manipulated by sailors as these were people who 'knew the ropes.' On board a ship, instructions were habitually given by distinct whistles, so to avoid confusion only the backstage crew were allowed to whistle. Anyone else doing so was likely to cause confusion.

BREAK A LEG

There are several theories about this one. The one that seems to be favourite is the fact that the performance area of the stage is marked by a line called the leg line, signifying where the legs are situated. Anyone crossing (or breaking) this line is therefore entering the stage area and this would be reserved for those performing on stage.

MIRRORS

Of course, there are many plays that have sets that include a mirror. Traditionally, however, mirrors are considered bad luck. This is because they reflect stage lighting and can disrupt the look of the show.

THE GHOST LIGHT

A single light on a pole is left on stage after the show has ended and is the only source of light in the theatre after everyone has gone home. Like break a leg, there are several theories about why this is done. However, in reference to its name, some believe that the light is there to appease ghostly inhabitants who used to perform at the theatre and who can therefore continue to perform once they have the theatre to themselves.

COSTUME COLOUR

There is a superstition that green or blue costumes are unlucky. Whilst this may seem bizarre there is a history of this. Quicklime was used in the first spotlights, hence the term 'limelight', and gave off a greenish glow. Therefore if an actor wore green on stage they may not easily be visible. Blue dye was considered to be the most expensive to use and so the rumour that blue was unlucky quickly spread among actors.

Keep smiling and stay safe.



Round-Up...



On the outskirts of Kent and South East London, the leafy suburb of Bromley has seen members of BLT rallying around, including...

Grand online Theatre Quiz

BLT's monologue 'One Show'

Online theatre workshops

'Bard's Birthday' celebration (with a thumbs up from the RSC)... 24 actors delivering a line or two from the famous *Henry V* speech - "[Once more unto the breach dear friends..](#)"

Youth Theatre Friday meetings online

[BLT Website HERE](#)

SATURDAY 16 MAY

Music Hall & Variety Day 2020

#musichallvarietyday

Organised by the British Music Hall Society
www.britishmusichallsociety.com

Launch of Annual Music Hall and Variety Day in tribute to Roy Hudd

The British Music Hall Society is calling on the world of theatre entertainment to pay tribute to Roy Hudd on Saturday, 16 May. Hudd was President of the Society for 28 years until his death last month, and Saturday marks his birthday.

Music Hall and Variety theatre fans are being invited to celebrate the day by sharing personal artifacts, collections and memories of the genre using the hashtag #musichallvarietyday



Roy Hudd as Max Miller (2015) Day by the Sea. Photo: John McKenzie / British Music Hall Society

Chairman Adam Borzone said: "This year, more than ever, it is important to pay tribute to those we have lost. Roy Hudd brought joy to many during his lifetime. He was one of Music Hall's most passionate and talented champions. It is fitting that the community he did so much for comes together and celebrates by sharing memories of this era.

"We wish to make this an annual event and hope in the future Music Hall and Variety Day will be marked with further events including talks, shows and exhibitions. This initiative presents an opportunity for performers, theatre historians, theatre collections and collectors to unite and engage with us in providing some entertainment and joy."

Roy's widow, Debbie, said: "I am delighted that the British Music Hall Society is paying tribute to Roy in this way. Roy loved Music Hall and Variety. He was honoured to be the President of the Society and was thrilled and delighted with the continuing work it does."

Music Hall was one of the most popular forms of affordable British theatrical entertainment. It was popular from the early Victorian era, which faded away after 1918 and was re-branded as 'Variety'. The influences of this era of popular entertainment are still present today, such as Saturday evening talent contests, stand-up and sketch comedy.

To find out more about Music Hall and Variety Day please visit:

www.britishmusichallsociety.com or search Facebook & Twitter



NEW MUSICAL... proceed with caution!

Bring to life a new musical and stage it in your own home!

Cautionary Tale, an exciting new British musical, was deep in development when the Covid-19 pandemic struck and the workshop performances had to be cancelled. Now, the writers don't want its incredible journey to come to an end so are giving people the opportunity to stage it in their own homes and share their recordings online.

For five weeks, they will release sheet music and backing tracks, Tik Tok choreography, character sketches and script extracts. In week six, the best of these recordings will be used to create a live Zoom version.

Record the weekly section by yourself or with your friends and family, share it online using #CautionaryTaleMusical and help make this a reality.

This new musical about growing up and growing glum with book and lyrics by **Rebecca Atkinson-Lord** (Founder of Arch468; Director of Theatre at Ovalhouse, 2010 - 2016), music by **Rebecca Applin** (Cameron Mackintosh Resident Composer Award holder at the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, and Mercury Theatre, Colchester), and choreography and additional material by **Mark Iles** (The Brook Under Siege for Medway Council and as performer: *Elf the Musical*, *Dominion*; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Theatre Royal Drury Lane) could be a story about many different things.

Cautionary Tale could be a West-End style musical about learning to live authentically. It could be a modern parable about liberal values triumphing over authoritarianism. It could be a mash up of Roald Dahl, Tim Burton and Hilaire Belloc about overcoming grief set in the landscape of a painting by LS Lowry. At its heart it's a story about finding hope when all seems lost.

To enable people to learn the music, the weekly package, themed around one of the 'Gloaming' families, will include sheet music, a backing track, the lyric sheet and a note-bashing track. This will be accompanied by Tik Tok choreography, character sketches, a

script extract and character summaries.

Also available on the website will be a model box tour and the plot synopsis.

Download all the excitement from CautionaryTaleMusical.com



Chickenshed's Foundation Degree students & tutors make quarantine video

Students (and three tutors) from Chickenshed Theatre's Foundation Degree have made a quarantine Tik-Tok style video that can be seen on Instagram.

Chickenshed's courses are now carrying on virtually - and our tutors are being incredibly creative in their delivery. "We are committed to supporting our students so that they can gain their BTEC, Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Degrees. Many of the students applying to come onto our courses have not been through mainstream education - in fact roughly 66% of them wouldn't be accepted onto courses at any other college or University - and yet our pass rate for our BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma, rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED, has a 98% pass rate, while 70% of our Foundation or BA graduates achieve at least a 2:1," Sardines was told by the theatre's Susan Jamson.

Click to [WATCH](#)

Exmouth Musical Theatre Company

Devon society enters Movement for Good awards 2020

Exmouth Musical Theatre Company has been entered into the 'Movement for Good' Awards which, with a few clicks, gives the amateur group the chance of being awarded £1,000!

With the ongoing closure of entertainment venues and loss of income from its postponed productions during the pandemic **EMCo** needs fundraising more so now than ever before. The theatre group needs as many nominations for this award as possible in order to win. It takes less than a minute to do and won't cost you a penny.

To help EMCo win this award, you need to do the following:

1. Click **HERE** before Sunday, 24th May 2020.
2. Click 'nominate now' and enter EMCo's details (the charity number is 1126328 - Charity Type Heritage Arts) and press 'submit'.
3. Share with family, friends and work colleagues and ask them to enter and nominate EMCo too! The more nominations the society gets the greater the chance of winning the money!



Leading thespians lend their support to students producing lockdown play

A school in Stratford-upon-Avon has been supported by some of British theatre's most distinguished and highly regarded members, ensuring student creativity is not stifled by isolation measures. Stratford Girls' Grammar School, based in Shotton, is a fully selective girls' academy state school and Sixth Form, consistently ranked as one of the top 30 state schools in the country.

Year 12 students at Stratford Girls' Grammar School have been devising a new play all about the experience of living through this unique moment in time. The intention is for the students to perform their piece of theatre once they can return to school.

The initiative has been supported by Dominic Cooke and Alexi Kaye Campbell. Both took the time to film and send messages of support to the students, as well as sharing their experiences of lockdown and giving helpful tips on how to devise a piece of theatre and write engaging characters.

This was followed by a video from Jacqui O'Hanlon, Director of Education at the RSC. Jacqui shared some of her vast experience of what makes an exciting piece of performance art with the students.

Stratford Girls' Grammar School [WEBSITE](#)

Bucking the Trend

THE SCHOOL is offering video auditions during lockdown but, unlike many other drama schools, will not be taking their training online in the Autumn.

Students currently being auditioned for the 2-year acting training are due to begin the course in October; however, if social distancing measures still in place mean that it is not possible for the training to be delivered face to face, then the start of the course will be pushed back until such time as it can run without interruption or compromise.

The 2-year acting training includes various aspects of movement work and scene work in pairs or larger groups that simply cannot be effectively experienced from a distance.



The public season of plays in the final two terms is also a vital part of the training, with the experience of performing in front of a live audience helping to prepare fledgeling actors for the theatre work that is likely to form the backbone of their early careers.

The School aims to be accessible to as many people as possible and the structuring of classes around evenings and weekends is designed to help those from lower income backgrounds by allowing them to continue working to support themselves through their training. Staff are concerned that a move to online teaching would rely on all students having access to up-to-date computer equipment and decent WiFi and that this could put some students from poorer backgrounds at a disadvantage.

There is also concern that some neurodiverse students, such as those on the autism spectrum, may struggle to engage with remote learning via group video conferencing.

The School's Director, Trudi Rees, has therefore pledged to begin the new term only when it is deemed possible to conduct the training in person and, as far as possible, without compromising on content or delivery. Those currently holding an offer of a place have been contacted regarding the plans and new applicants are also being made aware when they audition.

The School WEBSITE



...and THE PROFESSIONALS

Time to Let It Go!

The Broadway stage adaptation of Disney's *Frozen* - the third highest grossing animated movie of all-time (*Frozen 2* is the highest!) - has played its final performance and will not be re-opening post-Covid-19.



Ciara Renee as Elsa in Frozen. Photo: Mary Ellen Matthews.

In a move which will surprise many fans of the show after just 26 previews and 825 performances,

the production will have effectively played its last performance on 11 March.

Based on the 2013 Oscar-winning animated film, the stage adaptation opened on 22 March, 2018 with Caissie Levy and Patti Murin playing Elsa and Anna. This February Ciara Renée and McKenzie Kurtz took over the roles but have only played a handful of performances before disaster struck.

Meow! Watch this weekend



Tune in tonight at 7pm on [The Shows Must Go On](#) YouTube channel to watch *CATS*; the final musical of the series. To mark the occasion, Andrew Lloyd Webber will be doing a live commentary during the premiere, sharing facts and stories about the show. The film will be available to watch for 24 hours in the UK and 48 hours in all other countries.

Self-isolation rehearsal images for The Understudy

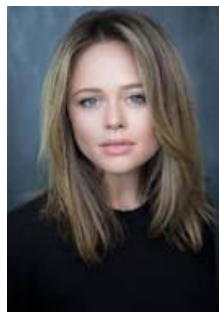
***The Understudy* – will be broadcast in two parts: first on 20th May and on the 27th May!**

Its stellar line-up of actors, who have all recorded their lines completely in isolation, includes **Stephen Fry, Mina Anwar, Layton Williams, Emily Atack, Russell Tovey, Sheila Atim MBE, Sarah Hadland** and many more. Proceeds of this project with Theatre Development Trust (SOLT and UK Theatre), Acting for Others and Equity Charitable Trust to raise funds for the theatre industry.



Based on the best-selling novel by David Nicholls, *The Understudy* tells the story of an underdog – a failed husband, a failing father, a failing actor, and the impossible choice he's going to have to make between stealing the show and stealing another man's wife.

Visit [HERE](#) for more information



WICKED VIDEO

23 West End actresses who have played Elphaba or Glinda in the multi-award-winning smash-hit musical *WICKED* have reunited to perform a stunning rendition of the show's *For Good* to support the Make a Difference Trust Covid 19 Emergency Appeal Fund to support those in the theatre community suffering hardship because of the coronavirus crisis.



The witches in question are: **Gina Beck, Helen Dallimore, Louise Dearman, Kerry Ellis, Sophie Evans, Alice Fearn, Ashleigh Gray, Emma Hatton, Jacqueline Hughes, Alexia Khadime, Suzie Mathers, Natalie McQueen, Rosa O'Reilly, Michelle Pentecost, Laura Pick, Dianne Pilkington, Amy Ross, Savannah Stevenson, Emily Tierney, Rachel Tucker, Willemijn Verkaik, Lisa-Anne Wood and Helen Woolf** - [click on the image to watch the video.](#)

Should you choose to donate, the theatre community would be truly grateful:

Text **"SUPPORT"** to 70111 to donate £5 (UK ONLY)

Or Donate any amount at www.madtrust.org.uk/covid

Guildford Live Returns

Guildford Fringe Theatre Company presents the return of Guildford LIVE in partnership with Guildford Borough Council - streamed live via www.Facebook.com/GuildfordFringe on Thursday, 28 May



Line up includes: **Shane Richie**, **Jeremy Vine**, **Debbie McGee**, **Alex Ferns**, **Mark Watson** (award-winning magician, juggler and stunt artist), **The Bluebirds** (vintage vocal group), **Charley Farley Sunday Four** and **The Rock Choir**.

After the huge success of Guildford Fringe Theatre Company's elaborate online festival, Guildford LIVE, they are doing it all again on Thursday, 28 May at 6:30pm via

www.Facebook.com/GuildfordFringe

Guildford LIVE #1 was streamed live at the end of April to thank the key workers of Guildford. It has now been viewed by 9,700 people and has raised almost £3,000 for two local charities, The Royal Surrey County Hospital Charity and The Wysch Foundation. It was clear from the response that the public wanted another one and Guildford Fringe have been happy to oblige.

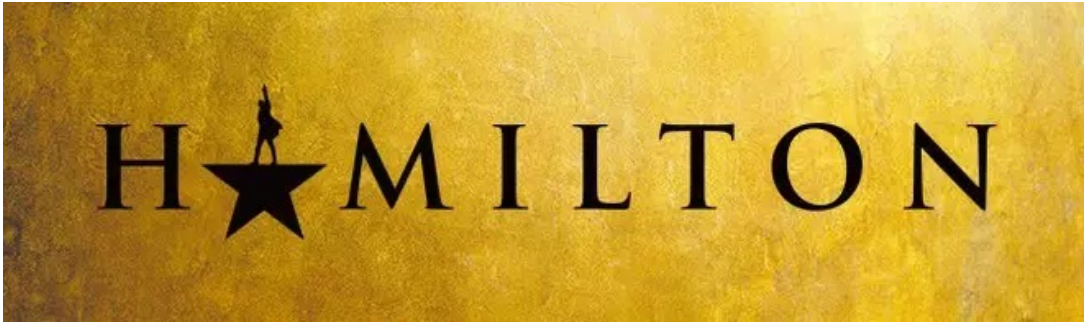
If you would like to be reminded about the show, you can join the Facebook events page **HERE**. You can also invite friends and family to this Facebook event page.

For full details please visit www.GuildfordFringe.com

Hamilton Comes to Disney

The Hamilton film is coming to Disney+ on July 3. The show was filmed live on Broadway with the original cast at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in 2016.

The original Broadway cast appearing in the film include Tony Award® winners Lin-Manuel Miranda as Alexander Hamilton; Daveed Diggs as Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson; Renée Elise Goldsberry as Angelica Schuyler; Leslie Odom, Jr. as Aaron Burr; Tony Award® nominees Christopher Jackson as George Washington; Jonathan Groff as King George; Phillipa Soo as Eliza Hamilton; and Jasmine Cephas Jones as Peggy Schuyler/Maria Reynolds; Okieriete Onaodowan as Hercules Mulligan/James Madison; and Anthony Ramos as John Laurens/Philip Hamilton.



The film is described as a "leap forward in the art of 'live capture'" which transports its audience into the world of the Broadway show in a uniquely intimate way. Combining the best elements of live theater, film, and streaming, the result is a cinematic stage performance that is a wholly new way to experience *Hamilton*.

Disney+

National Desire

The National Theatre has announced further productions that will be streamed live on YouTube every Thursday at 7pm via the National Theatre's YouTube channel as part of National Theatre at Home

The new initiative is to bring content to the public in their homes during the Coronavirus outbreak. The new titles announced include productions from partner theatres which were previously broadcast to cinemas by National Theatre Live.



A Streetcar Named Desire. Blanche DuBois (Gillian Anderson). Photo: Johan Persson

The 2014 NT Live broadcast of the Young Vic and Joshua Andrews co-production of the Tennessee Williams timeless masterpiece ***A Streetcar Named Desire*** will be streamed on the 21 May. As Blanche's fragile world crumbles, she turns to her sister Stella for solace – but her downward spiral brings her face to face with the brutal, unforgiving Stanley Kowalski. The cast includes **Gillian Anderson** as Blanche, **Ben Foster** as Stanley and **Vanessa Kirby** as Stella. The production, directed by Benedict Andrews, remains the fastest-selling production in Young Vic history.

The National Theatre production of ***This House*** by James Graham (Quiz, West End and ITV) will be streamed on 28 May. Filmed live in 2013, *This House* is a timely, moving and funny insight into the workings of British politics. It's 1974, and Britain has a hung Parliament. The corridors of Westminster ring with the sound of infighting and backstabbing as the political parties battle to change the future of the nation. Jeremy Herrin directs a cast including Phil Daniels, Reece Dinsdale, Charles Edwards and Vincent Franklin.

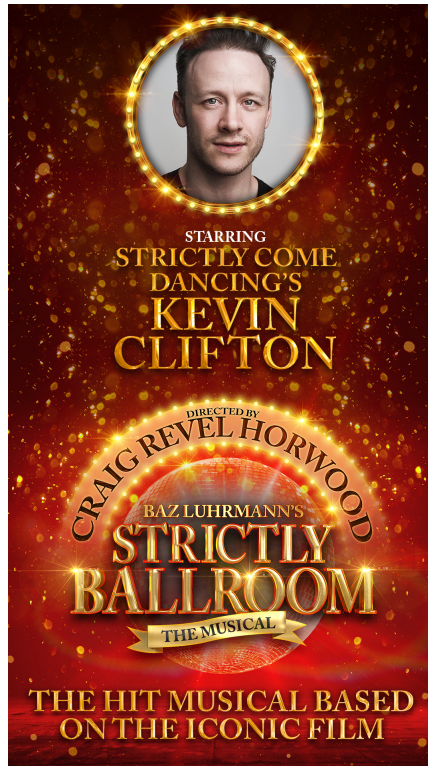
The Donmar Warehouse production of ***Coriolanus*** staged by former Artistic Director, Josie Rourke, will be streamed on the 4 June. When an old adversary threatens Rome, the city calls once more on her hero and defender: Coriolanus. But he has enemies at home too. In one of the Donmar's most popular ever productions, Tom Hiddleston plays the title role in Shakespeare's searing tragedy of political manipulation and revenge. Cast also includes Alfred Enoch, Deborah Findlay and Mark Gatiss.

All productions will be free and [screened live](#) at 7.00pm and will then be available on demand for seven days.

The next **National Theatre at Home Quiz** will be available from 7pm on Monday, 25 May, introduced by **James Graham**, and featuring **Imelda Staunton, Jim Carter, Lucian Msamati, Meera Syal, Simon Callow, Tamsin Greig,** and **Jessie Buckley** posing the questions on topics including Science and Nature, Literature and Theatre. The Quiz is available via the NT's [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Strictly Re-scheduled

Due to the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 UK tour of Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom The Musical*, starring Kevin Clifton and directed by Craig Revel Horwood, has been rescheduled and will now begin in Autumn 2021.



To ensure everyone's safety in these uncertain times, the producers of the show had to take the difficult decision to reschedule the original tour dates. But the good news is that all of the shows in the touring schedule have been rearranged and tickets for each performance will be exchanged automatically, so fans will not miss out on this musical extravaganza.

Details of how to exchange tickets will follow in the coming weeks.

Kevin Clifton said: "I'm really delighted that the *Strictly Ballroom* tour has been rescheduled. As I've mentioned before, it's my all-time favourite film and Scott Hastings is my dream role, so I can't wait to bring this musical to theatres across the UK next year. In the meantime, please stay safe and keep well everyone."

Craig Revel Horwood added: "I'm thrilled that our new production of *Strictly Ballroom The Musical* has been rescheduled for 2021/2022. The tour may be a year later, but you can still expect those same sexy dance moves, scintillating costumes and a simply FAB-U-LOUS show for all to enjoy, starring the one and only Kevin Clifton!"



Strictly Ballroom The Musical tells the beguiling story of Scott Hastings, a talented, arrogant and rebellious young ballroom dancer. When Scott's radical dance moves see him fall out of favour with the Australian Federation, he finds himself dancing with Fran, a beginner with no moves at all. Inspired by one another, this unlikely pair gather the courage to defy both convention and their families – and discover that, to be winners, the steps don't need to be strictly ballroom. Featuring a show-stopping book by Baz Luhrmann & Craig Pearce, and bringing together a sublime cast of over 20 world class performers, *Strictly Ballroom* brings to life iconic songs, including *Love is in the Air*, *Perhaps Perhaps Perhaps* and *Time After Time* with dynamic and joyous verve. This tour will also feature some amazing new songs by internationally acclaimed artists including Sia, David Foster and Eddie Perfect. The show's scintillating singing, dazzling dancing and eye-popping costumes will combine together to bring audiences a story of heart, comedy and drama, and promises to be an unforgettable night under the glitter ball.

Website: strictlyballroomtour.co.uk

Instagram: [@strictlyballroomtouruk](https://www.instagram.com/strictlyballroomtouruk)

Facebook: [@strictlyballroomtouruk](https://www.facebook.com/strictlyballroomtouruk)

Twitter: [@sbtourUK](https://twitter.com/sbtourUK)

Live Forever!

30th anniversary production of *Fame the Musical* is now streaming on Broadway HD

Following a smash hit 50-venue tour, including London's West End, the critically acclaimed show features an outstanding cast of dancers, singers, musicians and rappers. This definitive production of the much-loved musical was declared the best production of *Fame* ever by creator David De Silva.



Based on the 1980 phenomenal pop culture film, *Fame The Musical* is the international smash-hit sensation following the lives of students at New York's High School For The Performing Arts as they navigate their way through the highs and lows, the romances and the heartbreaks and the ultimate elation of life. This bittersweet but uplifting triumph of a show explores the issues that confront many young people today: prejudice, identity, pride, literacy, sexuality, substance abuse and perseverance.

The cast recording includes **Keith Jack** with **Mica Paris** and **Jorgie Porter**, **Molly McGuire**, **Albey Brookes**, **Jamal Crawford**, **Stephanie Rojas**, **Hayley Johnston**, **Simon Anthony**, **Alexander Zane**, **Louisa Beadel**, **Katie Warsop**, **Spencer Lee Osborne**, **Duncan Smith**, **Morgan Jackson**, **Ryan Kayode**, **Tom Mussell**, **Jay Le Marrec**, **Lauren Crooks**, **Daisy Edwards**, **Courtney George** and **Serina Mathew**.

Fame The Musical can be viewed on Broadway HD [HERE](#)

Waiting to See the Doctor

Robert Icke's (*The Wild Duck*, *Hamlet*, *Mary Stuart*, *Oresteia*, 1984) highly acclaimed Almeida Theatre production, *The Doctor*, starring Juliet Stevenson, will now be postponed until 2021.



Juliet Stevenson and Joy Richardson. Photo: Manuel Harlan

The Doctor, by Robert Icke, very freely adapted from Professor Bernhardt by Arthur Schnitzler, has been critically lauded since its opening at the Almeida in August 2019. Robert Icke won the Best Director award for the production, at the 65th Evening Standard Theatre Awards in November 2019 (with Juliet also nominated for Best Actress), while Juliet jointly won the Best Actress award, at this year's Critics' Circle Theatre Awards for her portrayal of Dr Ruth Wolff.

Juliet Stevenson said, "Very occasionally in a career, maybe once a decade if you're lucky, you get the chance to perform in a play that speaks so powerfully to its time that it captures everyone's hearts and minds. *The Doctor* did that last year at the Almeida, and was set to do it again in the West End when Covid-19 brought it crashing to a halt – along with almost everything else."

This is the third West End transfer for Robert Icke and Juliet Stevenson in as many years, following the critical and commercial smash-hit productions of *Mary Stuart* and *Hamlet*.

REPEAT ATTENDERS

Australian independent filmmaker, Mark Dooley, has announced the worldwide Video on Demand (VOD) release of *REPEAT ATTENDERS* – a feature-length documentary film that takes us inside the fascinating and unexplored world of musical theatre superfans.



REPEAT ATTENDERS will be available from Saturday, 16th May 2020 via [Vimeo On Demand](#), and will later be released on [iTunes](#), [Amazon](#) and all other **VOD** platforms.

Filmed on Broadway, London's West End, Bochum Germany and Australia's Melbourne and Brisbane over a six-year period, *REPEAT ATTENDERS* introduces us to some of the world's biggest, most extreme superfans of shows such as *CATS*, *RENT*, *LES MISÉRABLES* and *STARLIGHT EXPRESS*.

The film shines a spotlight on Broadway superfans and this growing global phenomenon of 'repeat attending', as it examines just how far the most extreme superfans will go in pursuit of their passion – some with devastating consequences.

See the film [HERE](#)

Creative Learning in the Park

Park Theatre's celebrated Creative Learning Programme has moved online, with adult classes in acting technique, a script-based acting course and devising available, as well as drama and performance skills classes for children and young people aged between 4 – 18.





Lead by professional actor and creative learning facilitator **Amy Allen** and professional director and experienced creative learning facilitator **Natasha Kathi Chandra**, the courses will be held weekly via the Zoom video conferencing platform and will be available to book [HERE](#), with both individual drop-in sessions and full courses available to purchase.

AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL MORPURGO

The Barn Theatre in Cirencester will stream an exclusive question and answer session with internationally best-selling author Michael Morpurgo on Saturday, 16 May at 7:30pm.



Michael Morpurgo, Iwan Lewis and Vicki Berwick

The event, which will be hosted by Barn Theatre Artistic Director Iwan Lewis, will see Morpurgo discuss his ongoing relationship with the theatre which began with their 2019 production of Daniel Buckroyd's stage adaptation of Morpurgo's *The Butterfly Lion*, as well as answer questions submitted by the general public and special guests.

The Barn Theatre (registered charity no. 1174253), which is facing a loss of **£250,000** and possible permanent closure, have launched their SAVE OUR BARN campaign, via its [website](#) and social media platforms, to ensure the Barn Theatre's survival.

Watch the Q&A [HERE](#)

THE MONOLOGUE LIBRARY

Hampstead Theatre's Associate Company, The Mono Box, has announced the launch of *The Monologue Library*, audio recordings of renowned artists

performing their favourite theatrical speeches.



Available on themonobox.co.uk the Library features over 100 speeches by artists such as **Sir Derek Jacobi**, **Denise Gough**, **Sheila Atim**, **Gina McKee**, **Prasanna Puwanarajah** and **Sir Simon Russell Beale**. Speech Share Live monologues hosted by Hampstead Theatre will also be available on the Hampstead Theatre website. **The Monologue Library** has been created during COVID-19 as a free, creative resource for theatre lovers and artists alike and is available from today.

Over 100 recordings will feature in **The Monologue Library** on The Mono Box's website, leading with a poem read by Riz Ahmed honouring the mood of the time, Sarah Niles's tribute to frontline workers using the words of Winsome Pinnock, a speech from Thalissa Teixeira from a production which was forced to close when COVID-19 hit, a roar from Clare Perkins to inspire us, and classical greats from Josh O'Connor and Sope Dirisu to remind us of how this is all just history repeating.

Access full library via themonobox.co.uk | Access a selection via hampsteadtheatre.com



[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by **Mad Mimi**®
A GoDaddy® company