



# Playbox Theatre Members' Newsletter

October 2024



## THE ADDAMS FAMILY FINISHES

*"Until next time.. back to your crypts!"* After a hugely successful run, the cast and crew waved farewell to their beloved production of 'The Addams Family' finishing on the 13th of October.

The cast of this show have loved becoming all manner of weird, wonderful (and somewhat disturbing) characters. Their enthusiasm to 'embrace the unknown' allowed them to become a close-knit team, making a spectacular show.

Thankyou to everyone involved in the production, we have loved every part of it!



## FIRST BLUE RIDER SHOW COMPLETE!

Along with 'The Addams Family', our Gap year 'Riders' completed their run of Sophie Treadwell's 'Machinal' on the 15th of October. The production displayed the talent of our senior members and their ability to create an uncomfortable atmosphere through their gruelling portrayal of an oppressive society. However, there's no rest for our 'Riders' as they have already begun rehearsals for their next project, 'The Proposal' by Chekov! (more information on that below)  
<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/events/the-proposal-variations/>

Well done Riders and keep up the good work!



## WELCOME

Hello and Welcome to our October Newsletter!

At the Dream Factory this month we have been treated to some fantastic performances, from both our Autumn musical 'The Addams Family' and the first performance from our 'Blue Rider' Gap year company 'Machinal'. But, as productions come to a close, other continue full swing rehearsals!

The cast of 'The House of Bernarda Alba' continued to get to grips with Lorca's tragedy (which opened on November 14th). 'The Riders' have also begun rehearsing for a production of Chekov's 'The Proposal'. Finally, the Christmas team continue pulling together pieces of 'Alice Through the Looking Glass'.

If you're already missing our October Holiday Projects, don't you worry because we have opened booking for our Christmas projects! Along with them, many exciting Christmassy events!

Finally we hear from member Millie Dank-Smith on her time with other members performing in New York and from Alumna Louise Heads-Mcann on her job at The National Theatre!



MERY SUTHERLAND

Guest Editor

## OCTOBER HOLIDAY PROJECTS



We had such fun in the October half term with all of our spooky Halloween Holiday Projects!

Our Harry Potter workshop was simply magical, our witches and wizards collaborated on some thrilling adventures, even with a surprise appearance from Alumnus Jon Case who played Scorpius Malfoy in the West End's Harry Potter and the Cursed Child!



Hannah's cohort of Musical monsters gave a fantastically spooky performance on Friday 1st of November, frightening a friendly audience with just how talented they are!

These were just a couple highlights from the plethora of projects we had on during the half-term! We hope you enjoyed them as much as we did!

## CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PROJECTS

We have so many wonderful Christmas Holiday Projects available this Winter, we do hope you can join us in the magical adventures in store:

### **The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe:**

Inspired by one of Playbox Theatre's most beloved stories, we are going to be looking at C.S Lewis's classic tale of magic and mystery on the 19th of December (ages 6-11) .

### **The Snow Queen:**

This holiday project will explore all elements of Hans Anderson's icy story and follow Gerda's adventure up to the cold north on the 20th of December (ages 6-11).

### **Frosty the Snowman:**

We will be getting excited for Christmas by reading festive stories, singing our favourite songs and making some frosty artwork on the 20th of December (ages 3-5)!

### **North Pole Adventure:**

Come and join us for a three hour Christmas extravaganza with tons of singing, games, storytelling and a picnic on the 21st of December (ages 3-5)

<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/holiday-projects/>



## CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON



With Christmas on the horizon, we are so excited for our Christmas lights switch on to take place on the 1st of December 3.30-5.30pm!

Join us for the annual turning on of Playbox Theatre's Christmas Lights, along with a presentation from the Alice Through the Looking Glass company, stalls, refreshments, non-alcoholic Christmas punch, festive hotdogs, and Christmas activities for all of the family to enjoy.

(There is no need to book!)



## FATHER CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Is that jingle bells we hear? Father Christmas is returning to The Dream Factory this year! On December 14th we invite you to come and visit Father Christmas and his elves in his wonderful wintery grotto from 11am-3pm!

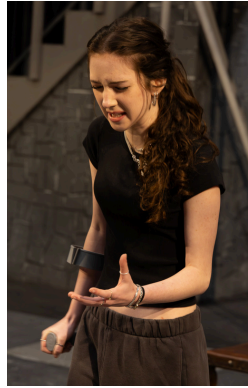
While your there, try out some of our tasty Christmas treats from Café Whirl and take a turn at our seasonal games!

All further information can be found through the link below:

<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/events/father-christmas/>



## THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA



Rehearsals for *Bernarda Alba* have been in full swing, the company have been deeply investigating their characters, many of them trying to find motive or justification to why their characters act in the way they do. Member Elysia Sully plays the role of Bernarda, matriarch and some would argue tyrant. Below, she speaks on how it has been to play Bernarda.

### ***Have you been able to sympathise with Bernardas character?***

I don't think I can say that I sympathise with her; however, during the rehearsal we questioned Bernarda's motives for her cruel behaviour, possibly she was treated poorly by her husbands or her parents. Ultimately, she is a mother who believes she is acting with her daughter's best interests at heart, protecting them from men and societal scandal. These women live in a world where they have no freedom, perhaps in a way Bernarda wants to shield them from that truth.



### ***Why do you think this production is relevant to us today? What is its importance?***

The play explores themes of oppression, power and gender dynamics, all of which are still at the forefront of issues within our society today. Bernarda's authoritarian control over her daughters highlights the consequences of the patriarchal society and how Bernarda felt the need to gain control wherever she could. This production of *Bernarda Alba* reflects unfortunately timeless themes.

### ***How difficult is it to play a cold character, do you prefer playing good or evil?***

I have absolutely loved playing the character of Bernarda. It has been so much fun and so rewarding to unpick her character, which at first I thought was simply evil. I think in many ways 'evil' characters have so much more psychological depth to them which makes them so interesting to portray and they are so far removed from my own personality. Pretty much every time I would wipe Phoebe's (Angustias) face I would ask her backstage "Did I hurt you?". It has definitely been a challenge, and quite possibly the most challenging character I have played yet, but also the most rewarding as it has allowed me to hopefully deliver a performance that is both compelling and explores Bernarda's conflicted personality.



Thankyou so much Elysia!



The House of Bernarda Alba ran from the 14th-16th of November.

## Alice REHEARSAL WEEK

During the half term, the cast and crew of 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' have been working hard to finish blocking what promises to be a fantastic Christmas show!

Behind the scenes, paint has been flying at The Dream Factory as we've been making many fantastical props. Some of which were the name tags for Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee and even a huge Christmas pudding! Not to mention, set designer Chris Johns has produced some stunning puppets

We spoke to Member Jennie Beattie about rehearsals (as she will be playing the role of Grandma, among many other wacky characters) as well as the making of the props and behind the scenes of this Christmas!

### ***Tell us more about the fabulous props you've been making!***

I have been making a variety of things ! My favourite so far are some jousting poles for the red and white knight but I've made various weird masks , plum cakes , colourful signs and there's more to come!

### ***How do the props reflect the energy of the show?***

I feel the variety of the props reflects the variety of the show. There's insane , whacky scenes placed in conjunction with poignant , emotional moments that somehow perfectly complement each other . There's never a dull moment and it's a pleasure to be part of it.

### ***What has been your favourite part of rehearsals so far?***

My favourite part of rehearsals so far has been the devising . It's an incredibly physical show so it was so exciting to work as an ensemble: compiling ideas and working together with Director Emily Quash to create so many movement sequences that not only look fantastic but are loads of fun to be part of !

### ***What can we expect from this Christmas?***

This Christmas the audience should expect to be taken on a journey like no other . They'll be meeting so many eccentric characters in odd settings , but also seeing some truly beautiful scenes that perfectly capture the essence of family and Christmas .

Thankyou so much for speaking to us Jennie! We cannot wait for this Christmas! Follow the link below for more information:  
<https://www.playboxtheatre.com/events/alice-through-the-looking-glass/>



## MEMBER NEWS - *Trip to New York with SGGs*

Millie with 'Milky-White' from Broadway's 'Into the Woods'



This month, several of our members travelled to New York with Shottery Girls' Grammar for a Jazz band and Music tour! One of our Musical Theatre members, Millie Dank-Smith shared with us what they got up to throughout their exciting week!

"The whole trip from the 22nd-27th of October was incredible, my favourite part of the trip was being able to share so many once in a life time experiences with all my closest friends! From the Broadway workshops to learning about the city's history, we were in awe. Whilst we were there, we got to see Hamilton (which we have previously performed numbers from in Musical Theatre at Playbox). It was a dream come true for so many of us and the feeling of sitting in the theatre getting to watch it live was unbelievable. We also spent an evening in the Jazz Club 'Birdland', where we were inspired by the musicians. We were given the opportunity to perform three times over our trip. The first was at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine with the Chamber Choir, the second was the Jazz Band performance at a jazz club called Swing '46 and the last of our trip was at the top of the One World Observatory!"

Thankyou so much for sharing with us Millie! We are so glad you all had a wonderful time!



## ALUMNI NEWS - *Louisa Heads McCann*

This month, we spoke to Alumna Louisa Heads McCann about her role in Marketing at the National Theatre!

"Hello! My name is Louisa and I work as a Marketing Manager at the National Theatre, and I'm also a Playbox alumna! I started my job at the NT in July but have worked in theatre marketing for the last six years. I may be biased but I think I have one of the most fun offstage jobs in the theatre industry: I get to meet with lots of directors and writers to talk to them about their shows and then think about how I might get audiences to come and watch them. I write blurbs for shows that go on the NT's website, organise photoshoots to create show posters, attend press nights and so much more. No two days are the same!"



Louisa in Playbox's production of *The Bloody Chamber* 2010

I started doing circus skills classes at the Dream Factory when I was eight (probably because my mum wanted me to stop climbing things at home) and was a member right up until I went to university, taking part in several different classes and productions. I absolutely loved the feeling of being in an ensemble, working with likeminded people to create something we could all be proud of - and I still have that feeling now with my job! I knew acting professionally wasn't my calling, but Playbox made me interested in the theatre industry more generally and discover that there are hundreds of people involved in making theatre that never go on stage - but shows wouldn't happen without them. To this day some of my best friends are from Playbox and we all support each others' work, whether that's in theatre or not."

Thankyou so much for speaking with us Louisa! It is, as always, a joy to hear from our incredible Alumni!

**Thanks so much for reading. See you next time for our November Edition!**



**PLAYBOX THEATRE**