

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY THEATRE SYNDICATE, 2005 – 2006

2005/6 was a year of change and achievement at the ADC Theatre. The previous year's record-breaking admission figures were once again broken, with over 42,000 audience members enjoying the newly redeveloped facilities and fully-functioning box office system.

Programme Review

A total of 319 performances were made across the year, with the programme featuring the usual range of drama, dance, comedy and musicals, presented by both student companies and local amateur drama groups.

The Autumn season opened with a unique project - a week with three productions performing each evening rather than the usual two: the Edinburgh successes **Macbeth: The Hour** and **The Threepenny Opera**, as well as the Footlights' Tour Show **under the blue, blue moon**. The rest of October saw a month packed with strong drama including a Tennessee Williams double bill of **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** and **Suddenly Last Summer**.

The start of November saw a very special event at the Theatre – a celebration of 150 years of the Amateur Dramatic Club, heralded by a flagship production of Chekhov's **Wild Honey** adapted by alumnus Michael Frayn. It was followed each evening by **Celebration**, a mixed revue of scenes and sketches presented by current and former members of the Club.

Hair proved a bold and innovative choice for the term's musical, and comic relief was provided in the annual Footlights/ADC pantomime **Spartacus**.

An inventive production of **The Taming of the Shrew** was presented by the European Theatre Group at the start of the Spring season, following their acclaimed tour. This was followed by the contemporary dance show **Touch** and a series of modern classics including **Marat/Sade**, **Oleanna** and **Bash**. The Chinese Cultural Society presented **The Dark Tales** in its original Mandarin with subtitles, whilst new writing was well represented with the intriguing **Ismene** by student Stacey Gregg as well as the annual Footlights Harry Porter Prize winner **The Barbershop** by Henry Eliot.

South Pacific, the Lent Term Musical, brought summer early to the ADC, and the season ended with productions of **Humble Boy** and **The Deep Blue Sea** by local amateur groups Bawds and Combined Actors.

The literary festival **cambridgewordfest** enjoyed its second annual run at the Theatre at the start of the Summer season, including talks from Carol Ann Duffy, Richard E Grant, Kate Adie and Sandi Toksvig.

Comedy was well represented, with the Footlights Tour Show **Niceties** enjoying two weeks of packed-out previews. The Theatre also hosted the long-running 'town & gown' show for the first time in July; **Fuente Ovejuna** saw students and townsfolk come together for a stunning production directed by Stephen Siddall. The season ended with **Fringe Feedback**, a chance to view some of Cambridge's Edinburgh shows in their preparatory stages and to meet the casts and creators after the show to give feedback.

Financial Performance

Income from Theatre Hire was a record £85,177, significantly higher than in previous years and a reflection of the record number of admissions. The ADC Bar remains a popular venue for theatregoers and students alike; its popularity was obvious in the bar surplus which rose in proportion to ticket sales once again. Income from scenic hire was slightly down on the previous year, though profits from the sale of theatre sundries had increased.

Ongoing Projects & Redevelopment

The main capital expenditure project of the year was the installation of a new sound system in the auditorium, enabling sound designers and technicians to use the latest equipment whilst improving the technical quality of productions with high audio demands, such as musicals and pantomimes.

'Camp ADC' continues to be a successful and enjoyable annual project, with volunteer technicians spending a week in the Theatre at the start of the summer vacation working on the installation of new equipment and testing/maintenance of existing items.

The recently completed phase of the redevelopment continues to serve the Theatre and its patrons well, with continued positive feedback from audience members and users. Many former staff and users of the Theatre have returned to have a look at the changes. Students and other backstage users of the Theatre await the next phase reliant on sufficient funds being raised – eagerly. The Theatre's Box Office continues to provide a simple and reliable booking system at a lower day-to-day running cost than the agency system used prior to its installation.

Staffing

The Manager and Licensee for 2005/06 was **Michael Nabarro**, serving a third year at the Theatre. His work was noted as having made an exceptional contribution to the Theatre's success during his time as Manager. The Housekeepers were **Lucy Gibson** and **Christina Elliot, who** both settled well into the jobs. Lucy spent a great deal of time ensuring repairs were carried out quickly and efficiently and continuing to develop the theatre's hire business, whilst Christina continued to manage the bar and box office whilst conducting the Theatre's first in-depth audience survey for many years. She also continued to advance the Theatre's archival project, as part of which two full-time archiving assistants were employed for a period during the Summer.

The Theatre also employed four casual Duty Managers (**Robert Loxley, Frances Allsop, Andrew Morley-Smith** and **Anna Hobbs**) to help the full time staff cope with the workload of the long seasons whilst keeping working hours within reasonable limits.

Daniel Morgenstern has continued to design the theatre brochure.

Christopher Adams takes over as Manager and Licensee from September 2006. **Peter Tovey** and **Daisy Black** have been appointed as Housekeepers for 2006/7