

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of the WAOS Newsletter.

In this edition we look forward to our next show *Crazy for You*, the difficulties of planning ahead because of rightsholders' restrictions, and a comment on the future of WAOS and the plan to hold some fun workshops to get Members' and Friends' ideas on what we could do better.

Plus the usual reminders on dates and WAOS committee details.

Crazy for You is our next big adventure

Having completed a spectacular run at the Chichester Festival in August/September 2022, *Crazy for You* opens at the Gillian Lynne Theatre in London from 24 June 2023 - 20 January 2024. Astonishingly WAOS has succeeded in getting the rights for this show in October 2023. It is rare that we get to compete with the West End! Of course, we don't have quite the budget they have but we do have the same story and songs as far as we know. If you don't know the show you can get an idea from the youtube clips that were used to advertise the Chichester show <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9lKJDKrzKdns&t=9s>.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7qVZgtgUso>

It is full of songs you didn't know came from this show including *Someone to Watch Over Me*, *I Got Rhythm* and *They Can't Take That Away from Me*. Aimee Louise Hart is Artistic Director and Susannah Edom our MD. There's lots of dancing for those who can and plenty of cheats for those who can't. Come along to the Open Evening and find out what it's all about. See the Dates for your diary box below.

Rights holders make it difficult to plan ahead.

Increasingly amateur musical theatre groups, like WAOS, are finding it difficult to plan much further than 18 months ahead. This is because the rightsholders now won't release their shows more than 18 months ahead of their proposed production date. Given that we spend 6 months rehearsing each show we only ever have a pipeline of three shows - the one we're rehearsing and the two after that. You might think that isn't such a problem since it's the same for everyone but not even knowing you can have the rights to a show until 12 months before rehearsals begin *is* a problem.

Directors and musical directors naturally want to know what they are being asked to direct and to conduct. Our usual process of asking directors to "pitch" their vision of the show, to ensure they do actually have a vision and also understand all the limitations of our stage and our budget constraints, becomes almost impossible to pursue under these circumstances. Directors and MDs are not in such abundance that we can pick and choose that easily. We are likely to have to ask directors to commit to a range of shows in the hope we can get the rights for one of them. Will they do that? We can only hope so.

The Flames of Injustice - A Future beyond Witham!

With encouragement from NODA representatives (5 of whom came to see our show) we are exploring the possibility of encouraging other amateur groups to perform *The Flames of Injustice*.

The Swing Riots involved hundreds of towns and villages all along the south-east and south coast in the summer and autumn of 1830. Given that around 200 men were sentenced to hang for participating in the riots (mercifully only 19 were hanged, the rest were transported to Australia like Edmund Potto) there must be some other "James Cookes" who have lived on in local history and for whom our musical would be a worthwhile commemoration, as well as a great community theatre project. To that end Paul Goddard is creating a dedicated website with all the details a society might need to decide whether our show is something they would like to do. If you have any useful contacts in this regards do let us know. By the way, *The Flames of Injustice* made a surplus of around £1500. What a result!

A Sustainable Future for WAOS

The bedrock of any society is the loyalty and commitment of its members and friends. Having a strong financial base also helps and WAOS is lucky to have both cash in the bank and a great camaraderie amongst its members. Having survived, even thrived, for 100 years is obviously a great start but now is not the time to be complacent. In order to ensure WAOS remains a friendly and welcoming society, while retaining its reputation for quality productions with its audience, the committee is looking to organise a series of “workshops” or “discussions” in which members can share their thoughts and ideas about what we could do even better. I’m sure we will find a way to make these both hugely entertaining for all participants but also to generate some great new ideas to make being a member even more enjoyable. Watch this space and please sign up!

A Healthy Balance Sheet

WAOS is fortunate to have a healthy balance sheet at the end of 2022. Despite a reduction in the balance sheet total of approx. £5700 in the year we still have a balance sheet total of £81,211, the vast majority of which is represented by cash at bank and a £10,000 principal investment in the CCLA Charity Fund. The latter is a hedge against inflation which has eroded the real value of cash by 25% or more in the last 10 years. As at April 14, 2023 that £10,000 investment was worth ca £11,170 (but the value changes daily and recently there has been significant volatility.)

Why did the balance sheet shrink by £5700?

Mostly because of losses on Betty Blue Eyes (£4400) and Guys and Dolls (£2700) only partially offset by a surplus on Flames (£1500) and the WOW Summer School (£1150). Of course, only some of the losses on BBE and G&D are reflected in 2022, many of the costs being captured in the previous year(s) since rehearsals for both shows began in 2021. It is interesting to note that in 2022 we already paid around £5000 for Young Frankenstein, Crazy for You, Calendar Girls and High School Musical. The higher upfront prepayment to secure rights to a show is a growing trend.

So why are membership fees and production fees going up?

However much we thank our lucky stars for having a solid financial position we must also recognize that our production costs are going up more rapidly than inflation. Royalties now can often be £4000+ flat fee irrespective of how many tickets we sell while our expectations for high quality sound, from stage and band, has pushed up equipment hire and orchestra costs to £6000 or more. A show with a 6 piece band is a godsend to us and is becoming a real consideration in our show choices. Of course we are hiking our ticket prices but we have to balance audience expectations with our own financial budgeting. With respect to our administrative costs (General Fund), they too are rising and our membership fees and donations no longer automatically cover those. Gift aiding our membership fees is a big help and we will be submitting three years' worth of claims quite soon. If you pay tax and haven't signed a Gift Aid form please ask Anita for a form and return it asap.

WAOS Committee

President	Stewart Adkins
Chairman	Trevor Drury
Treasurer	Anita Goad
Secretary	Matt Waldie
Business Manager	Trevor Drury
Production Manager	Paul Goddard
Social Secretary	Emma Loring
Membership Secretary	Liz Chapman
Stage Manager	Ben Sawyer
Committee Member and Justine Ephgrave	Annette Maguire

General Enquires – secretary@WAOS.org
WAOS Web site - WWW.WAOS.ORG

Dates for your Diary

AGM and showing of Making the Flames
- May 3, 19.30 WPH
Crazy for You - Open Evening
- May 17, 19.30 WPH
Crazy for You - Pre-audition dates
- May 23 and 30 SL
- May 24 WPH
Crazy for You - Audition dates
- May 31, WPH, early auditions
- - June 4, WPH, main auditions
Crazy For You - Show week
- Oct 23-28, 2023

For information about our shows, go to
<http://www.waos.org/news/forthcoming-shows/>

