

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of the WAOS Newsletter.

In this edition we summarise the feedback from ***Crazy For You*** and look forward to ***Calendar Girls*** in April and the associated fund-raising task for Farleigh Hospice. We bring you up to date on recent awards won by WAOS and we discuss why ***Salad Days*** may be an oldie but is a goodie and one that we hope loyal members will support. We also provide some dates for your diary.

Crazy For You – Already a Fond Memory

If you weren't in ***Crazy For You*** you may be forgiven for being unaware of the difficult circumstances under which the show got off the ground. Consequently, the great artistic success it turned out to be, supported by very positive reviews and audience feedback, was an even sweeter tribute to the heroic efforts of the production team and the cast than we might have expected. To begin, the original director of the show pulled out just a few months before the show was due to enter rehearsals. This led to a frantic search for a new director, so we were hugely grateful that Aimee Hart, a member of WAOS who took the lead in ***Cinderella*** and ***Betty Blue Eyes***, jumped at the chance to make her debut as director and choreographer with WAOS. For different reasons we didn't get a committed Musical Director until quite late in the day and even then, Susannah Edom couldn't make most Tuesday rehearsals. Aimee managed quite well in the early stages by using the pre-recorded Broadway music to teach the dances and some of the ensemble numbers. However, this became frustrating as the cuts we made, owing to the complexity and duration of some of the dance numbers, obviously could not be replicated on the Broadway recording. Another major challenge was the inability to cast the lead male and female until 2-4 weeks after the initial auditions. Thankfully Matt Scott and Sophie Holmes from Springers came along and solved our problem, slotting into WAOS and making a fantastic job of Bobby Child and Polly Baker respectively.

The final challenges included the workaround needed to fill in for one of the cowboys, Alfie Back, who sadly had an accident that prevented him from being in the show. He is recovering well and was able to watch the final night, but that night did not include our MD Susannah, who had a commitment to attend her nephew's wedding. What would we have done without Phil Toms, musician and conductor extraordinaire, who stepped into the breach and conducted the dress rehearsal as well as two Saturday performances? Snatching victory from the jaws of defeat may be overstating the case but there were occasions when some of us could sense the gnashing of sharp teeth not far behind. How wonderful then that ***Crazy For You*** turned out fantastically well. Did we make money? Sadly not but we sold around 70% of the box office and estimate a loss of around £2000. In today's climate that is deemed a good result although we recognise it is not a sustainable model. Hence the rise in ticket prices for our next show.

**Preview night for WOW's High School Musical
– Thursday Dec 14, 20.30 WPH**

Get a taster of the treat to come in February half term week. Members and Friends welcome.
Glass of wine and nibbles included.

The Flames of Injustice – The Movie

If you took part in ***The Flames of Injustice***, our celebration of 100 years since the start of WAOS, you will recall that Paul Desmond and his camera crew filmed the dress rehearsal using three cameras and took the sound output from Paul Galley's sound equipment. Some of you ordered a copy of this film on a USB stick and may have watched it already. If you did not see **The Flames of Injustice**, or you would like to see it again, WAOS is arranging a **Movie Premiere on Sunday, Feb 4, 2024 in Witham Public Hall, starting at 14.00**. This will be on the big screen that we used for Young Frankenstein (courtesy of Trevor Drury), with appropriate sound quality also.

We are hoping to include an afternoon tea or some form of refreshment so watch this space. This will be a ticketed event and there may be a small charge to cover the cost of food for those who would like to participate. Please feel free to invite family and friends if they would like to watch. More information to follow when we have arranged the refreshment but the date is now booked.

Calendar Girls as a Fund-raiser for Farleigh Hospice.



In preparation for our Spring production in 2024 - ***Calendar Girls the Musical***- we decided to try and raise as much money as possible for a local charity by replicating the musical's storyline and good work done by the original ladies of the Yorkshire WI, that is making a calendar.

A Fundraising Team was put together which decided to raise much needed funds for Farleigh Hospice as our chosen charity. The planning for a WAOS calendar, in the spirit of the original 'Calendar Girls' calendar, was agreed and we were surprised and delighted as to how many ladies wanted to disrobe and be included. Things only got better when a selection of the gents also asked if they could pose too.

The concept was agreed with different aspects of the theatre represented and our wonderful photographer Charlotte, from Little Smilers, worked with our team and models to create something which not only represents WAOS but offers a classy and elegant finished product.

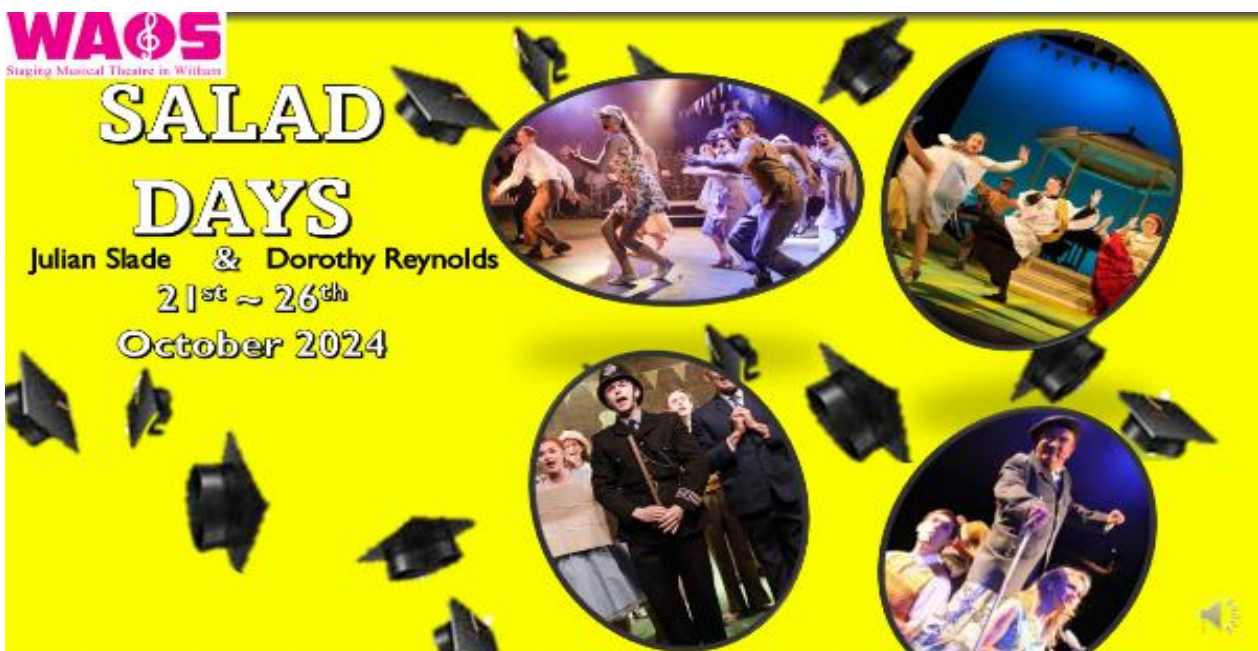
Each month has kindly been sponsored by a business and we will be selling the calendars not only at our shows, but at various Christmas markets and through selected retail outlets with a minimum donation of £8 each.

We are also intending to run a quiz night, organise a Sunflower Ball in May which will also feature a silent auction and a selection of other fund-raising ideas. We hope through all these activities to raise a significant amount, something we are all incredibly proud of.

If you want to make a donation or find out about the rest of our activities please contact nikkimundell-poole@waos.org or heatherdavis@waos.org for more information.

NEWSFLASH. The calendar has already raised over £4000, between sponsorship and calendar sales, with the sales booth at Witham Public Hall selling over 100 calendars during ***Crazy for You***. Huge thanks to the volunteers selling the calendars and of course to those who took part in the photo shoot. By common consent the photography is excellent and the design themes very clever indeed.

Salad Days – What’s it all about?



Set in London in the 1950s, *Salad Days* follows the story of Jane Raeburn and Timothy Dawes who meet at university. After they graduate, they come across the problem that all young people have: what to do next?

They meet in a park, soon after their graduation, to try plan their lives. In an instant they agree to get married but do so in secret. Timothy is middle class and slightly innocent to the world around him. His parents have urged him to ask his various influential uncles (All five of them ... well, four and the one we don't mention) for jobs in their lines of employment.

Jane, an upper class, clever young woman, knows she should marry but just not to a gentleman (man of independent means). She wants to work and be useful in society, so she marries Tim without a second thought. Her mother is loud, bossy, and overbearing and wants nothing more than to watch her daughter marry a very rich handsome gent.

After they marry, a passing tramp offers them £7 a week to look after his mobile piano (named Minnie) for a month and, upon accepting, they discover that when the piano plays it gives everyone within earshot an irresistible desire to dance. Hilarity ensues.

After playing the instrument in the park it starts to get unwanted attention from the press and the police. But Minnie goes missing, and the only way they can find it is if Tim's Uncle Zed flies over London in his flying saucer to help retrieve it. When it is found the tramp reveals that he is Tim's uncle, "the one we don't mention". Tim and Jane hand back the piano and plan their lives together.

This show is not cast in the conventional way, except for Jane, Tim, Tramp and Troppo. Everyone on-stage has more than one named part; for example, if you were to audition for the saucy singer Asphynxia and be successful you would also play the roles of a don, hairdresser, Rowena, and a shop girl. All of these roles have dialogue and solo lines in songs. If you were to audition for Sir Clamsby Williams then you would also take the roles of the Headmaster, Tim's Father, and Augustine Williams, all of whom have solos and dialogue.

There are 11 Female acting roles, 8 Male acting roles and 2 Non-Gender Specific Roles. It's an amazing show, lots of laughter, innuendos, and comedy timing. It's 1950s so big hair, vintage dresses, tuxedos and diamonds. It's not dance heavy but there are moments for dancers to shine if they should wish to, for example in the Charleston. The show has strong character work from Troppo, Fosdyke, PC Boot and Rowena and is fun for all ages. It has an array of catchy songs which can be found here:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/2xVjMjnAhfP14afe561Jk1?si=sO38nZOMRCuN5symXJCqGw&context=spotify%3Aalbum%3A2xVjMjnAhfP14afe561Jk1>

Interested? Come along and join the fun for Salad Days, which begins in May 2024 and will be performed at WPH 21st – 26th October 2024. We recognise that the show is not well-known to many members, but we encourage you to keep an open mind, come along to the show workshops and learn why it is such a fun show to do.

Our Awards

Please see below all the awards WAOS has won from NODA (National Operatic & Dramatic Association), NETG (North Essex Theatre Guild) and any other awards given



NETG AWARDS 2023

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

Winner of the Dave Ross Adjudicators Award
For the hilarious 'Roll in the Hay' sequence staged by Nikki Mundell-Poole and performed by Amy Pryce and Kris Tyler



NETG AWARDS 2023

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

JOINT- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
Corrina Groombridge
As a hilariously comic & show stopping operatic, Elizabeth Benning



NETG AWARDS 2023

FLAMES OF INJUSTICE

Winner of the Millennium Writers' Award for Best Original Script
with a tuneful and moving score by Franky Garland and true story told with depth and compassion by Sarah Osbourne

Season's Greetings from the Chairman

With what seems like an ever-increasing speed (perhaps it's just my age) the festive season is upon us again. At this time last year, we were basking in the glory of the success of *The Flames of Injustice*, which continues to bring firsts to the society. Never before could we have won the **NETG Millenium Writers Award**. The society continues to break new ground due to our members, friends and willing volunteers, not to mention our committee, which works arduously to take care of the administration and our financial health. On behalf of the society, I wish you all a restful, enjoyable and Merry Christmas and New Year.

WAOS Committee

President	Stewart Adkins
Chairman	Trevor Drury
Treasurer	Anita Goold
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	Annette Maguire Heather Davis

General Enquires – secretary@WAOS.org
WAOS Web site - www.waos.org

Dates for your diary

Shows

Calendar Girls	April 22 -27, 2024
Salad Days	October 21-26, 2024
High School Musical	Feb 19-24, 2024
The Flames of Injustice Movie Premiere	
Watch this space for more info.	
Save the date	Feb 4, 2pm WPH
The Quiz for Farleigh	Jan 20, 2024
Sunflower Ball	May 24, 2024

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

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the WAOS Committee.