

Oxfordshire Drama Network

Newsletter



DECEMBER 2019

EDITOR'S BULLETIN

Now that summer is behind us (oh yes it is!), the Panto season is upon us. Many pantos are taking place, see our "What's On" diary. So hopefully many of them will enter our new Panto/Winter Festival (see page 3).



We have a few reviews written in this month's issue. Panto/Winter Festival reviews will be held until the April issue upon completion of the Festival.

After Christmas groups will be searching for One-Act Play scripts to enter in the various summer Drama Festivals. Don't forget we have a list of publishers on our website (Publishers page), many of which allow you to download or read online the full scripts. This can save drama groups a lot of time and money waiting for printed scripts, only to find them unsuitable. Most publishers do at least list the male/female cast numbers as well as the genre and a brief description.

We also have a library of script to borrow. A list of the plays we have can be downloaded from the ODN Library page.

ODN would like to wish you all a great winter season, a merry Christmas to you all, and a successful new decade to all our drama groups.

Mike Davies

The deadline for the February issue is 20 Jan 2020
Contributions to info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|------|----------------------------|
| Page | |
| 2 | Pantomime Festival update. |
| 2 | Banbury Drama Festival |
| 2-4 | Reviews |
| 4 | Casting news |
| 4-8 | Forthcoming Events |
| 8 | Benefits of joining ODN |

Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/1324585987569767

WHAT'S ON DIARY (details inside)

DECEMBER

- 4-7 St Peter's Players
Snow White and the Magnificent Seven Dwarfs
- 6-15 *Thame Players*
Dick Whittington
- 8,15 Jigsaw Stage Productions
Cinderella

JANUARY

- 10-12 *Abingdon Drama Club*
16-18 **"Snow White"**
- 17 to Sinodun Players
1 Feb **Robin Hood and Babes in the Wood**
- 17 Opera Unmasked and Kennet Opera
Amahl and the Night Visitors
- 20-25 *Oxford Operatic Society*
Crazy For You
- 24,25 Didcot Phoenix Drama Group
1 Feb **Dracula – The Pantomime**
- 24 to *Kennington ADS*
1 Feb **Cinderella**
- 29 to Witney Dramatic Society
1 Feb **The Wonderful Wizard of Oz The Pantomime**
- 30 to *Hanney Drama Group*
1 Feb **The Good The Bad And The Ugly Sisters**

FEBRUARY

- 7-8 The Stonesfield Players
Mother Goose
- 20-22 The Launton Village Players
"The Snow Queen".

APRIL

- 1-4 *The Henley Players*
Saturday Sunday Monday
- 2-7 Jigsaw Stage Productions
23-25 **"The Sound of Music"**
- 15-18 *AmEgos Theatre*
CHICAGO The Musical

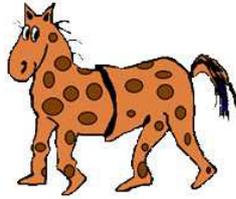
JUNE

- 1-6 **ODN Drama Festival - Abingdon**

PANTO/WINTER FESTIVAL



Our 2019-2020 Winter Festival is now underway, it's not too late to



enter your Pantomime or Seasonal Production, the entry form is now available to download (see front page article or the Downloads Page on the ODN website).

AWARDS

The following awards will be presented at the ODN Annual General Meeting.

- The All-Round Production (the Deidre Jones Chalice.
- Rising Star Award for Under 18's
- Musical Award – this can include:- incidental music, song, live performance.
- Best Costume
- Chorus Award
- Best Baddie
- Best Cameo
- Best Front of House experience
- Best Tech – this can include:- special effects, lighting, sound
- Magic Moment
- Best Comedy Performance
- Best Dame

BANBURY CROSS PLAYERS One Act Drama Festival

Wed 15th to Sat 18th July 2020
at The Mill Arts Centre Banbury

A one-off Festival to celebrate Banbury Cross Players reaching 75 years young.

It will be adjudicated by GoDA adjudicator, Mike Kaiser and there is a £1000 prize to be split between the winning company and a charity of their choice.

See www.banburycrossplayers.org.uk for more info.

Tickets £10 per night or £27 for all 4 nights (includes £2 booking fee) will be available from April from The Mill Arts Centre (01295 279002) or online: www.themillartscentre.co.uk

REVIEWS

SINODUN PLAYERS Blood Wedding

by Fredrico Lorca 16th – 19th October 2019

This inspired production of Lorca's Blood Wedding was a treat to behold. Under Kirsty Van Den Bulk's creative direction, the characters in this complex and

passionate story of deception, betrayal and revenge were revealed.

The plot revolves around a rich landowner on the eve of his wedding to a young bride. She is still in love with her former suitor, who feels the same way about her, although he has already married his lover's cousin. The bridegroom's mother is not impressed with the bride's previous relationship, as he comes from a family who had stabbed to death, male members of her own family, leaving her with an obsessive aversion to knives (very topical!). This all adds to the confusion. On her wedding night the bride runs off with her former suitor, which ends with yet more tragedy. It was difficult distinguishing who was who and their relationship to each other, as characters were not often identified by name. This is a fault of the play, not the production.



Some of the cast were a little diffident at the start, but soon settled into their roles as the play progressed. The strength of performance, particularly with the female members of the cast was remarkable, as they drew you into the plot of this classic Spanish tragedy. Although written in 1933, it reflects life and attitudes at the time and how the matriarchal dominance of the family unit prevailed. There were some excellent performances, which left you on the edge of your seat, their strength and positivity shone through to the end. The production was complemented by the simple ingenious set, which transformed into the various locations with ease. The very effective lighting enhanced the set and gave brilliant atmosphere. The typical haunting Spanish flamenco music was well chosen for the dancing, some of which was cleverly performed silently. The director was imaginative in her use of the auditorium extending the stage for entrances and exits.

Overall, a stunning production, worthy of the professional stage.

Nigel James

THE COMPTON PLAYERS Bothered and Bewildered by Gail Young

A rainy evening in November, I found myself watching The Compton Players perform a very interesting play, which made my partner and I forget our own lives and the Christmas rush. We watched the very moving

performance concerning the chronicles of two sisters coping with the onset of their mother's Alzheimer's played very realistically by Liz Saxton as Irene.

The play was based on the authors own personal experiences and those of her closest friends. It was indeed a thought-provoking story with a percentage of the funds raised being donated to The Alzheimer's Society. The play takes us from 2001 – 1960-1940 and physically moves us from Irene's bungalow, the consultant's surgery and Louise's home.



We witnessed the conversation held on stage with the two sisters telling their story very amusingly at times of the trials and tribulations of their Mothers condition to a very realistic doctor. It highlighted to us all just how difficult it is at times to get real help for one's family with this illness.

I enjoyed the symbiosis between the sisters who were often at their wits end coping with their Mother. Beth, (Brenda Prior) seemed the stronger older sister who knew in the long-term that putting their Mother in a home would be the only solution as the condition worsened. But I liked Louise (Mary Warrington) the unmarried sister as she performed the softer role and we felt her pain as she tried to cope with her Mothers anger and obsession with a teddy bear.

My partner loved the Barbara Cartland flamboyant character played by (Ann Griffiths) Especially when she was advising the Mother to use Rose Water on her face it was so old fashioned and funny. We loved the bright pink costumes of Barbara Cartland and the timing of the three-way conversations were perfect. The young Irene played by Naomi Read was touching as she also played the grandchild looks after her Grandma for the evening to give Louise a night out.

We were amazed how she maintained a full conversation with her Grandmother whilst painting both her finger and toe nails with pink nail-varnish! I spoke to her later and discovered that scene took a lot of practice to get the manicure done whilst acting. It was touching and funny at times, not so full of gloom. Definitely thought provoking.

The twist was good when we discovered that Irene had given birth to a child. She was forced through circumstance to give the boy up for adoption as she was such a young girl herself. We were informed of how she had covered this up all her life to her husband because of the so-called shame. When the son James turned up after finding his long-lost Mother that was a very touching scene. And the fact that he continued to write to her and call her Mother was very moving. The daughters discovered this letter when going through

their Mothers belonging once she was placed in a home and we too experienced their shock and surprise as a clever switch of lighting moved us over to the son reading the letter in person,

Good use of the stage by placing the Consultants table on a platform and making all the back of the set black worked a treat as we were not distracted from the story I felt. In the break I found myself chatting to a member of the audience who had just been through all the symptoms of Alzheimer's with her Father and she said it was very realistic, touching and funny.

We watched as the characters emerged to entertain us in style, admittedly the style of humour was indeed sad, touching but brave. But all in all we both felt it was a good performance.

Eric Saxton the Director and designer did a dam good job of creating a thought-provoking realistic setting and a well-directed play. Roll on the next one I say.

Sue Hadley

BARTHOLOMEW PLAYERS ABIGAIL'S PARTY

by Mike Leigh 27th – 30th November 2019

The excellent set immediately transported you back to the 1970s, as did the costumes. Set in the living room of Beverly and Laurence' house in suburbia, it deals with the relationship between Beverly Moss and her husband Laurence with their neighbours, Angela Cooper and her husband Tony (Ianto Wain). What should have been a convivial party ends up tragically with Laurence having a heart attack. Laurence was played frenetically by Nick Smith, as the over-worked, stressed estate agent husband trying to offset the excesses of Beverly.



We encounter Beverly, being the over-bearing hostess, superbly played by Claire Crowther who improved in her performance, as the play progressed and the drinks flowed, the more acerbic she became towards Angela, her less-worldly near neighbour. Angela, gauche in the extreme, was brilliantly played by Elaine Leggett, who had great comedic timing. They were joined by Susan Lawson, (Mary Fisher) next door neighbour who was very reserved in contrast to the other two females. She withstood the interrogation by Beverly very well until the excess of gin overcame her, causing her to throw-up in the

bathroom. Beverly seemed intent on topping-up everyone's glass with great regularity. After intense questioning, Sue's marital situation was soon laid bare, as the noise from next door became increasingly loud. This was from a party being thrown by her daughter Abigail, from which Sue had been banished.

Laurence and Tony were dispatched to see if everything was all right at the party, only for Tony to linger a little longer than necessary, being evasive on his return about what was happening. Beverly insists on everyone dancing and takes the opportunity to flirt excessively with Tony, who, I felt, could have responded a little more to Beverly's advances and gyrations. Angela's dancing efforts were delightfully appalling, whereas, Sue's dance with Laurence was completely formal and detached. The final heart attack scene was well-played by the whole cast.

The play, although only having a cast of five, was excellently directed by Gareth Hammond who added in some very nice touches. The use of the stage was well thought out to give maximum effect. The music was appropriate (as befitting the original production).

Congratulations to all for an enjoyable production.

Nigel James

Please e-mail blewburyplayers@gmail.com to book an audition or call Sheila on 01235 850537 for more information.

Please do still contact us if you are interested but not available to audition on those dates.

We are looking for a cast aged from 16 upwards.

Performance dates will be 15th-18th July 2019 at Blewbury's Orchard Dene Garden Theatre

Rehearsals will take place over weekends in June and July and possibly two individual weekend days before then.

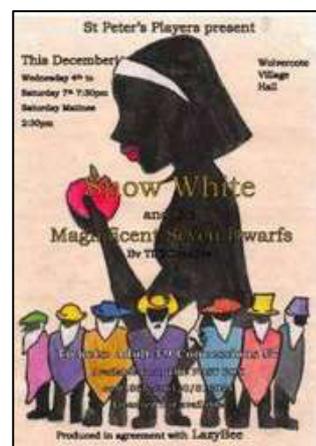
For more details about Blewbury Players and photographs of previous productions visit

www.blewburyplayers.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ST PETER'S PLAYERS

Snow White and the Magnificent Seven Dwarfs.



The classic tale of Snow White but with a wonderful western twist. Get ready for showdowns, hoedowns and horsing around.

Plus a licensed bar!

When: Wed 4th – Sat 7th December

Times: 7:30PM (with a Saturday matinee at 2.30PM)

Where: Wolvercote Village Hall

Tickets: £9 (£7 Conc.) 01865 556120/516054 or from "The Post Box", Lower Wolvercote

Website: www.stpetersplayers.co.uk

CASTING

AMEGOS THEATRE AUDITIONS for CHICAGO

THEY HAD IT COMING!

The award-winning musical.

If you fancy being a Billy Flynn, Roxie Hart, Amos, Velma or any featured or supporting role, we are holding open auditions on Sunday 8th December (time & place to be advised).



Performance Dates 15th - 18th April at King Alfred's Academy Theatre, Wantage.

Email us to register to take part

AmEgos.Theatre@gmail.com

BLEWBURY PLAYERS AUDITIONS for Romeo and Juliet.

Blewbury Players are delighted to welcome back professional director Christopher Staines, who has previously directed our very popular productions of Cider With Rosie and A Servant to Two Masters in Blewbury's Orchard Dene Garden Theatre.

AUDITIONS will be held at Blewbury School on the weekend of 1st-2nd February.

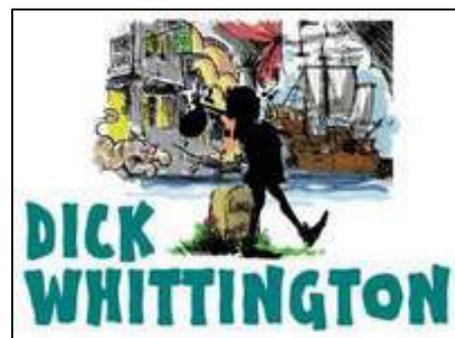
THAME PLAYERS

Dick Whittington

by Tony Long

Dick Whittington is one of the best-known and best-loved family pantomimes,

based on the traditional story of Dick coming to London, hoping to make his fortune.



Falsely accused of theft, he starts the journey back to Gloucestershire, when he hears the ringing of Bow Bells. They seem to him to say, 'Turn again Whittington, three times Lord Mayor of London'. So

Dick returns to London where, after various adventures, he finally becomes wealthy, is made Lord Mayor of London, marries his sweetheart and lives happily ever after.

When: 6th -15th Dec Wed-Sun 7.30pm
also 2pm Sat & Sun

Where: The Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame,
OX9 2DP

Tickets: £10 (conc £9) from Thame Town Hall
Information Centre, or on 01844 212833, or from

www.thameplayers.co.uk

JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Cinderella

A Traditional Family
Pantomime
by Rex Walford & Iris
Lloyd

"Cinderella" is a typical rags to riches story, with all the usual elements along the way - Wicked Stepmother, Ugly sisters, a handsome prince, a beautiful maiden with a Fairy Godmother, plus a comic duo. Suitable for all ages

The **VENUES** are:-

Sun 8 Dec, 3pm & 7pm - East Challow Village Hall

Tickets from Mill Street Hair, Wantage

Sun 15 Dec, 3pm & 7pm - Old Mill Hall, Grove

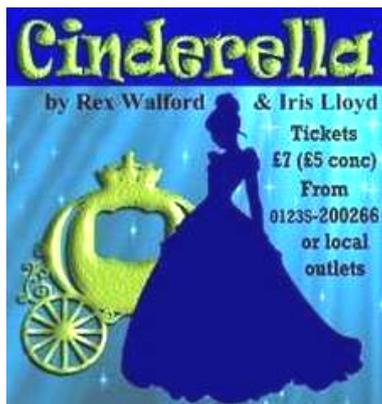
Tickets from Brett's Chemist, Grove

Tickets: £7 and £5 (Concessions)

From 01235-200266

Or from local sales outlets above

www.JigsawStageProductions.co.uk



ABINGDON DRAMA CLUB "Snow White"

by club member
Richard Wilson.

Based on the original story we all know and love, the Evil Queen is enraged when her Magic Mirror

informs her that she is not "the fairest of them all". Snow White is forced to flee from the Queen and her henchmen, Bodge & Splodge, but finds help and support from life-long friend Buttons, his mum Dame Bunting, a handsome Prince and seven "dwarves".

Exciting, uplifting and funny, find out who really is Snow White's true love.



ODN website: www.OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

When: January 2020 -

Fri 10th, Sat 11th, & Thu 16th to Sat 18th @ 7.30pm

Sat 11th, Sun 12th, Sat 18th @ 2.30pm

Where: Unicorn Theatre, Checker Walk, Abingdon.

Tickets: from November at the usual places.

www.abingdon-drama-club.com for more details.

SINODUN PLAYERS Robin Hood and Babes in the Wood

A rollicking good tale of derring-do in the Forest of Sherwood. A much loved English legend, combined with traditional pantomime fun, as Robin and his trusted band of Merry Men try to outfox the baddy we love to hate!



Can Robin thwart the plans of the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham? Of course he can.

But you'll have to come along to see how Maid Marian and the Babes are saved.

When: January 17th to February 1st

Tuesday to Friday at 7:30pm;

Saturday matinees at 2:00pm,

Saturday evenings at 6:30pm

Where: Corn Exchange, Wallingford

Tickets: on sale in December from Corn Exchange
box office 01491 825000

Or online at www.cornexchange.org.uk

OPERA UNMASKED AND KENNET OPERA Amahl and the Night Visitors

Live Opera at
the Beacon.

Beautiful Festive
story with young,
poor crippled boy
and a magical visit
by three Kings.

A joint production
by Opera Unmasked and Kennet Opera.

Great for adults and children.

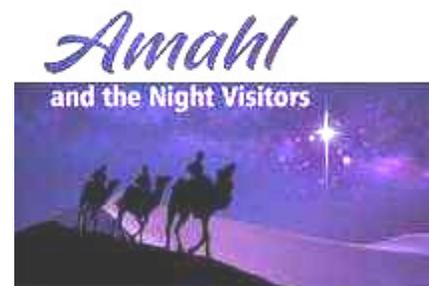
When: Friday 17 January 7.30pm

Where: The Beacon, Portway, Wantage OX12 9BX

Tickets: £12 adults, 16 and under £8

From the www.beaconwantage.com or 01235
763456

Other performances in Newbury to be announced shortly.



OXFORD OPERATIC SOCIETY

Crazy For You

The New Gershwin Musical!

In a world of showgirls and cowboys, Gershwin's musical comedy is the classic tale of a city boy and a country girl who fall in love and try to save a theatre... the old-fashioned way!



Stage-struck banker Bobby Child desperately longs for a career in show-business. Whilst working out-of-town Bobby falls for postmistress Polly Baker whose father owns the crumbling Gaiety Theatre. Bobby decides to save the theatre and win Polly's heart, but will his plan be a success?

Award-winning OXOPS return to the Oxford Playhouse with this feel-good show, featuring the hits Someone to Watch over Me, Slap That Bass and I've Got Rhythm.

When: 20th – 25th Jan 7:30pm (+ 2:30pm Sat Mat)

Where: Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2LW

Tickets: £10-£24 from www.oxfordplayhouse.com or tel: 01865 305305

DIDCOT PHOENIX DRAMA GROUP

Dracula – The Pantomime

by Limelight Scripts

Count Dracula has arrived in England in search of the key to his hoard of stolen treasure. Assuming the guise of property tycoon Major Artery, he crosses paths with Duffy the Vampire-slayer, whose mother, Dame Plasma, rents a house from him.

Dracula escapes back to Transylvania, but is pursued by Duffy and Inspector Ventricle and his sidekick, PC Platelet. Who in turn is followed by Dame Plasma, her friend Rema and Dr Paul Bearer.

A terrific gothic-style panto, which contains all the elements needed to keep the audience spellbound.

So come and join us in Didcot or Harwell for a bit of suspense, mock horror and heaps of tongue-in-cheek humour all wrapped up in traditional panto style!



VENUES:

Didcot Civic Hall:

- Friday 24th Jan 7.30pm
- Saturday 25th Jan 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Harwell Village Hall

- Saturday 1st Feb 3.30pm

Tickets - £10/£6

Family ticket (4 tickets – 2 adults max) - £26

10% Discount available for groups of 10 or more

See www.didcotphoenixdrama.co.uk for online booking or Tel 07813 831040 to reserve

KENNINGTON ADS

Cinderella

by Alan P Frayn

We're really looking forward to bringing this well-known tale to the stage for the fourth time in our 40 years!

Tickets are on sale and are selling well, so it would be a good idea to get your tickets sooner rather than later to avoid disappointment.

When: Friday 24th January 7.30pm ~ all tickets £8

Saturday 25th 2pm and 7.30pm

Sunday 26th 12pm and 5pm

Thursday 30th 7.30pm

Friday 31st 7.30pm

Saturday 1st February 2pm and 7.30pm

Where: Kennington Village Centre:

Tickets: £8 for Fri 24th, then £10 adults, £8 conc, £30 for a family of four (under 5s go free on laps).

Box Office on 01865 739025

or email boxoffice@kenningtonads.co.uk

Payment in cash, by cheque or BACS.

Facebook: @KenningtonADS for latest news

WITNEY DRAMATIC SOCIETY

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

The Pantomime

Adapted from the original book by L.Frank Baum

When: Wed 29th January to Sat 1st February 2020

Wedn, Thu & Fri at 7.30pm

Saturday 2pm Matinee and 6pm Evening

Where: Witney High St Methodist Church

Tickets: are £10, (£8 Concessions)

from: Rapture Music Store, Woolgate Centre, Witney



Or, Phone Margaret Hamm on 01993 704032
Or, on the door subject to availability
For Further information visit our website
www.witneydrama.co.uk

HANNEY DRAMA GROUP The Good The Bad and The Ugly Sisters

a Pantomime

A rootin' tootin' foot stampin' Wild West adventure.

When: Thur 30th Jan - Sat 1st Feb at 7.30pm
PLUS Matinee Sat 1st Feb at 2.00pm

Where: Hanney Village Hall, Brookside, East Hanney, Wantage, OX12 0JL

Tickets: £9 eves and £7 matinees

From Karon Gray 01235868780

karongray99@yahoo.com

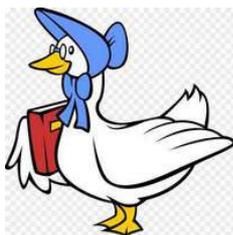
Or Hanney Community Shop

THE STONESFIELD PLAYERS

Mother Goose

by Norman Robbins'

Following on from their successful production of Snow White in 2017, the Stonesfield Players are back in panto mode with The Wonderful Story of Mother Goose by Norman Robbins.



With creepy Clarence and his clueless sidekicks Sage and Onions out to get her, can Mother Goose avoid eviction? Will Priscilla's golden eggs save the day? How will Mother Goose cope with her new found wealth? Will goodness triumph?

We hope to answer these and many other questions on February 7th and 8th in Stonesfield Village Hall.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Where: Stonesfield Village Hall, OX29 8HA

When: Friday 7th February, 7.30pm

Saturday 8th February, 2.00pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £10 (£8 for 16s and under)

Box office: - andrew.tacon@outlook.com

THE LAUNTON VILLAGE PLAYERS

"The Snow Queen"

Our 34th Pantomime is a traditional family pantomime based on the classic story by Hans Christian Anderson.

Come and join us and see if Gerda can rescue her best friend Kai from the wicked Snow Queen.

With an original script packed with comedy, magic, audience participation and live music, this family friendly show is suitable for all ages, from 0 to 100!

All profits are given to local and national good causes.

When:

Thursday 20th February at 10am and 2:30pm

Friday 21st February at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Saturday 22nd February at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

Where: Cooper School Performance Hall (Churchill Rd, Bicester OX26 4RS).

Tickets: Thursday £10 Adult (£5 Child)

Friday and Saturday £12 Adult (£6 Child)

Tickets available after 2nd January from -
The Bull Inn (Launton) and Coles Books (Bicester).

THE HENLEY PLAYERS Saturday Sunday Monday

by Eduardo de Filippo

Marital misunderstandings, a lover's quarrel, and generational conflict escalate as passions flare

during the traditional Sunday dinner with family and friends. Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall adapt Eduardo de Filippo's sparkling contemporary Italian commedia dell'arte, which

looks at the trial and tribulations of a well-off family in Naples in 1959.

When: Wed 1st - Sat 4th April at 7.30 pm

PLUS matinee Sat 4th April at 2,30 p.m.

Where: The Kenton Theatre, New Street, Henley on Thames, RG9 2BP

Tickets: from the Kenton Theatre Box Office
01491 575698 or online at www.kentontheatre.co.uk

JIGSAW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

"The Sound of Music"

by Rodgers and Hammerstein.



The story of Maria and the Von Trapp family will delight you with it's award winning score, including, 'My Favourite Things',

'Do-Re-Mi', 'Climb Every Mountain', and 'Edelweiss'. It tells the true tale of the world-famous singing family, from their romantic beginnings and search for happiness to their thrilling escape to freedom as Austria becomes part of the Third Reich at the start of WW11.

VENUES:

The Beacon, Wantage, Thur 2nd to Sat 7th April

Tickets £15 (£13 conc) from The Beacon:-

www.beaconwantage.co.uk or tel 01235 763456

AND

Cornerstone Didcot, Thur 23rd to Sat 25th April

Tickets £15 (£13 conc) from Cornerstone:-

www.cornerstone-arts.org or Tel 01235 515144

AMEGOS THEATRE

CHICAGO The Musical

The award winning, scintillating Kander and Ebb musical, CHICAGO,



will be the spring production from AmEgos Theatre.

When: Wed 15th - Sat 18th April

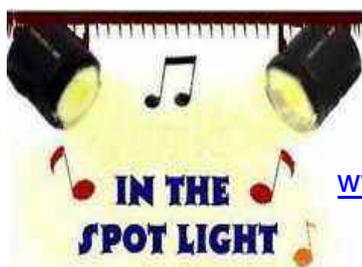
Where: King Alfred's Academy Theatre, Wantage

Tickets: see www.amegostheatre.com

***The benefits of joining
Oxfordshire Drama Network***



Don't forget...We offer you a readership covering Oxfordshire and surrounding area six times a year. A massive audience of readers who are like-minded individuals



Are you a new Drama or Musical Group?

Then why not get in touch

For just £20 you can join us

Email: info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

www.Facebook.com/groups/1324585987569767



Not just a network

HERE'S WHAT WE OFFER:

- **Auditions:** Newsletter notifies all our members of auditions locally
- **Reviews:** We do reviews of your play or musical if requested/send your own review (500 words max)
- **Letters:** We will be carrying a letters section for Views & Comments so send your letters to us. (200 words max)
- **Props:** Do you need a particular prop/scenery? Get in touch with us we may be able to help you.
- **Events** We inform readers of events - plus we are planning on our own events soon
- **Add your Events** to ODN website and Facebook pages
- **News & Reviews** should be sent to the editor at info@OxfordshireDramaNetwork.org

