



THREEPENNY

bits and pieces

We've found the stars of
the show!

DEAR BRUTUS CASTING!



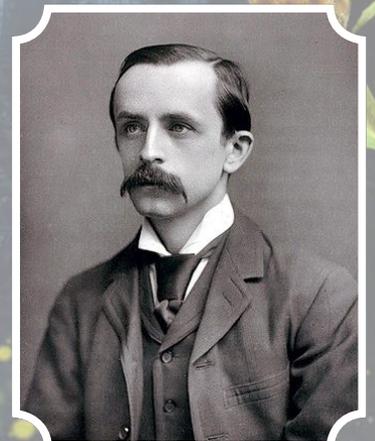
PROP MAKING AND
BEHIND-THE-SCENES
PREP

COMPANY KITTEN CATCH-UP

VENUE VEXATION

The trials and tribulations of
finding AMDRAM venues

J.M. BARRIE
BEYOND PETER PAN



EXCITING TIMES!

We're on to show number two! We have well over 300 Facebook followers and another 300 on Instagram and Twitter and we've celebrated our first birthday! I have to admit that I wasn't sure we'd get this far when we started out. I desperately hoped we wouldn't be a one-show wonder but any venture like this is always a bit hit-or-miss. One thing I did know was that if we did fail then it wouldn't be due to lack of effort. The huge amount of work so many people put into 'Elephants' was astounding and the fact that it was a critical success (if not a financial one) was purely down to blood, sweat, tears and bucketloads of determination. We made it through the other side with many, many new supporters, lots of wonderful feedback and only a few financial cuts and bruises.

We're so excited to be starting on our second venture - especially one from the pen of our national storytelling hero, J.M. Barrie. The decision-making process was tortuous (as I've talked about in my blog - threepenny-theatricals.org/3pennyblog) but I eventually settled on something completely different to 'Elephants', although still funny and emotional, in the form of 'Dear Brutus'.

I'm afraid my Newsletter-writing has taken a bit of a back seat for a while as we took stock after the show and then started searching for something new, but hopefully you've managed to keep up with us via the blog or social media. The good thing is that we now have lots of news to update you on, so I hope you enjoy our latest edition of Threepenny Bits and Pieces.

PROPPING UP THE SHOW

If you have been involved in any theatre production on stage you will know that props can cause problems - sometimes they have a mind of their own! Often your carefully thought out moves can end up on the scrap heap when you finally get an actual prop rather than an imaginary one and realise that it doesn't do what you expected it to or is much bigger or smaller than you imagined it.

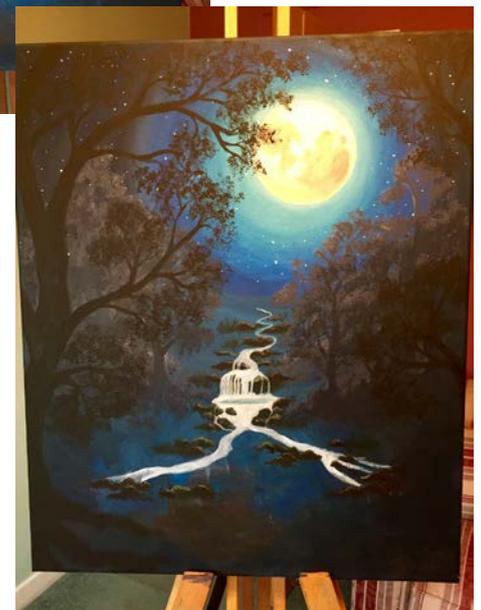
If you've ever been involved with sourcing props then you'll know it is one of the hardest jobs ever. We were lucky with 'Elephants' in that it was a modern-day piece so nothing was incredibly difficult to source - although Christmas Crocs proved a bit of a challenge. When you're performing a period piece like 'Dear Brutus' it can be much harder to find the things you need lying around the house.

In order to help both the performers and the props person, I always try to provide as many actual props at rehearsals as possible so that the cast can practice using them. If we can source things early enough then it also means our poor props person isn't running around panicking at the last minute. Personally I also believe that correct props are really important to help a performer 'feel' the character.



The more immersed they become in the period they are performing in or the character they are portraying then the better the performance. Even if it might not be that obvious to the audience that the character is taking his matches from an Edwardian

unforgiving). Acrylic seemed the best option as I don't have enough patience for oils. A couple of years ago I was given some vouchers for a craft shop and went out and bought an easel, paints, brushes and everything I would need to get started. As usually happens with all my other hobbies, the theatre took over and I never really got round to using them. They have since languished in a cupboard. 'Dear Brutus' has provided the perfect opportunity to dig them out! Not only do we require an easel and artists equipment as props, but we also require a painted canvas for one of the cast to 'paint' on stage! I promptly took on the challenge. It was a bit of a baptism of fire I must admit, having never done it before, and I decided to start early in case I needed several attempts, but I'm actually reasonably pleased with the first effort. You can see what you think yourself in the pictures charting my progress ...In case there's any doubt, it's meant to be the moon shining through a forest!



vesta case for example, it is something that makes him feel the part and the audience benefits from an enhanced performance.

The huge props collection job has already started for 'Dear Brutus' and I am finding myself hugely relieved that I, and all of my family, like antiques! Turn of the century candlesticks, clocks, books, gramophones, furniture. I will be raiding all of our houses to create my perfect set and provide authentic props to the cast. For everything else - there's begging and borrowing and eBay!

Props for 'Dear Brutus' have also allowed me to dabble in my love of art and finally make a start on acrylic painting. I've always enjoyed drawing and have painted in watercolours a bit but always fancied moving on to bigger canvasses and a medium that allowed me to make mistakes (watercolour is very

See the next page for the final 2 pictures...



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It may not be perfect and I'm pretty sure I'd never make a living as an artist, but then the character who paints it isn't actually meant to be that good anyway. It was actually not meant to be finished, but once I got started I couldn't stop, so I think we'll just have to assume that the character is adding the finishing touches in the show.



KITTEN CORNER

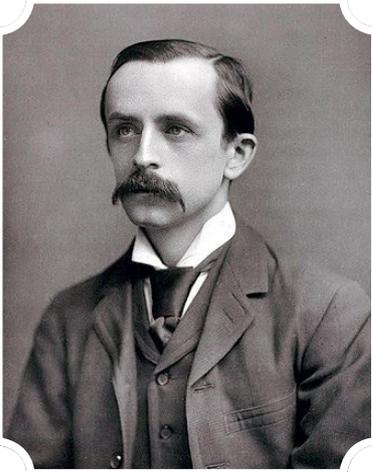
Some of you may remember the two furry stars of 'Elephants' who made their stage debut in the small (but perfectly formed) cameo role of Mr Biscuits. We just thought we'd let you know how they're getting on now.

Frank (on the left with the white socks) and Myrrh have certainly grown since their stage appearance. They can now be found playing in the wilds of Auchincloch and wreaking havoc amongst the local mice and vole population, returning to their comfortable country residence for food, naps and cuddles - and to escape from the rain. Frank has most definitely grown into the handsome man of the family and is quite a bit bigger and heavier than his sister. Myrrh is very petite and pretty but can keep up with Frank in the appetite stakes and in the number of 'presents' she brings us.

Both have beautiful markings and beautiful temperaments and we look forward to sharing our lives with them for many years to come.



J. M. BARRIE - BEYOND PETER PAN



J.M. Barrie was born in Kirriemuir and was a storyteller from a very early age. As a child he would make up plays and perform them with his friends in the old wash-house behind his home. The son of a weaver and born into a hard working family, he got his love of storytelling from his mother and,

as she was frequently ill, he would delight in sitting on her bed and entertaining her with his fantasies of pirates and fairies and faraway lands.

Of course today Barrie is known best for his most famous work - Peter Pan and it is a truly magical tale that entrances both children and adults alike. However, Barrie was a prolific writer and there



Ross outside Barrie's birthplace and childhood home in Kirriemuir



Statue of Peter Pan in Kirriemuir town centre

are many more fabulous works languishing in the shadow of the boy who wouldn't grow up.

On our recent visit to Barrie's childhood home in Kirriemuir it was a bit disappointing to find displays dedicated to Peter Pan and yet barely a mention of his other works. The lovely steward from the National Trust was in agreement with us that those works deserve more attention and is in the process of requesting that the Trust provide more references to the neglected material - even if it is just a case of having the books on sale in the shop.

Of Barrie's other works there are a few that still make it to the stage on a reasonably regular basis. 'The Admirable Crichton' for example and 'Quality Street' - which has a rather fine production running at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre this season. 'Dear Brutus' is perhaps not seen as frequently as the other two but it is no less entertaining and we are delighted to be bringing it back where it belongs - in the spotlight!



THE STARS OF THE SHOW!

We're delighted to say we've found a fantastic cast for 'Dear Brutus' and we'll introduce them to you here with a brief description of their character - without giving too much away of course! We were really pleased with the number of people who wanted to audition for us and be part of this great production and we're only sorry that there weren't enough parts to get everyone involved.



Adam Greene is playing the part of John Purdie. Mr Purdie is a barrister who is young and idealistic. A deeply passionate nature makes it difficult to find that one person who truly understands him.



Andrea Linhova is playing the part of Mabel Purdie, John Purdie's wife. Mabel is basically a gentle, sad soul but can find a fiery streak when she is pushed too far.



Mia Oudeh is playing the part of Joanna Trout. She is in love with the noble, self-sacrificing John Purdie and feels that they are soul mates - if only they had met sooner. She is easily persuaded.



Simon Boothroyd is playing the part of Will Dearth, an artist and drunkard. He feels he has wasted his life and his wife despises him. If only he could have had children, things might have been different.



Fiona Main is playing the part of Alice Dearth, wife of Will. She was once his artist's model and her wild and free spirit will not be tamed. She speaks her mind and does not suffer fools gladly.



Rebekah Lansley is playing the part of Margaret. Margaret is young, wild and tomboyish with a wonderfully caring nature. She just 'might-have-been' the perfect daughter for Will Dearth.



Elsbeth Whyte is playing the part of Lady Caroline Laney, a rather aloof, drawing woman who does not like to mix with the lower classes. Her finishing school manners mean her speech is quite distinctive.



David Grimes is playing the part of Matey, a bruising butler of dubious character who believes he could have been a completely different person were it not for one wrong decision in his youth.



Dorothy Johnstone is playing the part of Mrs Coade, a loveable, motherly figure, as devoted to her husband as he is to her. She is not averse to a bit of excitement in her life but knows where to draw the line.



Chris Cotter is playing the part of Mr Coade, a happy, lazy old man who would like to have some drive and ambition if he could just find some somewhere. He has been writing a book...for many many years.



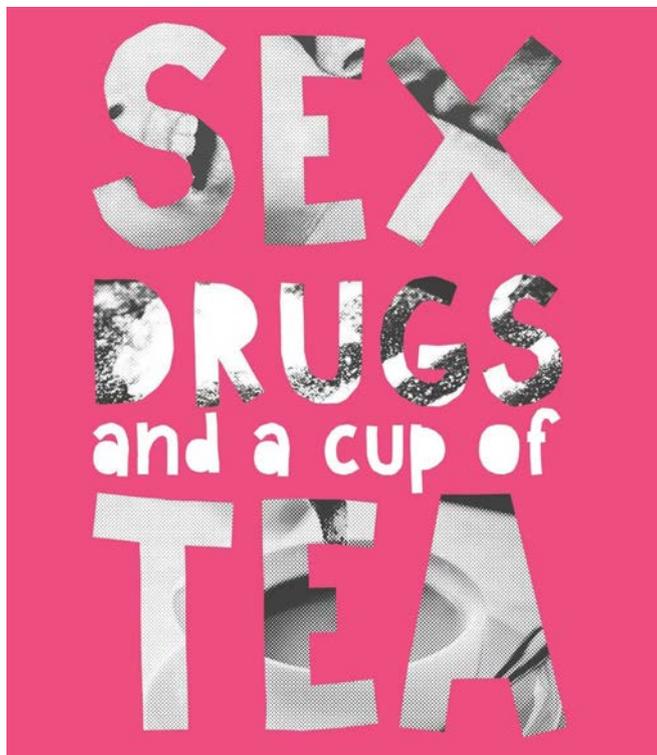
Geoff Lee is playing the part of Lob, the Puck-like host of our little bunch of misfits. His child-like mischievousness makes him endearing, but there is probably a reason his house is called 'Sinister Warren'.



ON THE FRINGES

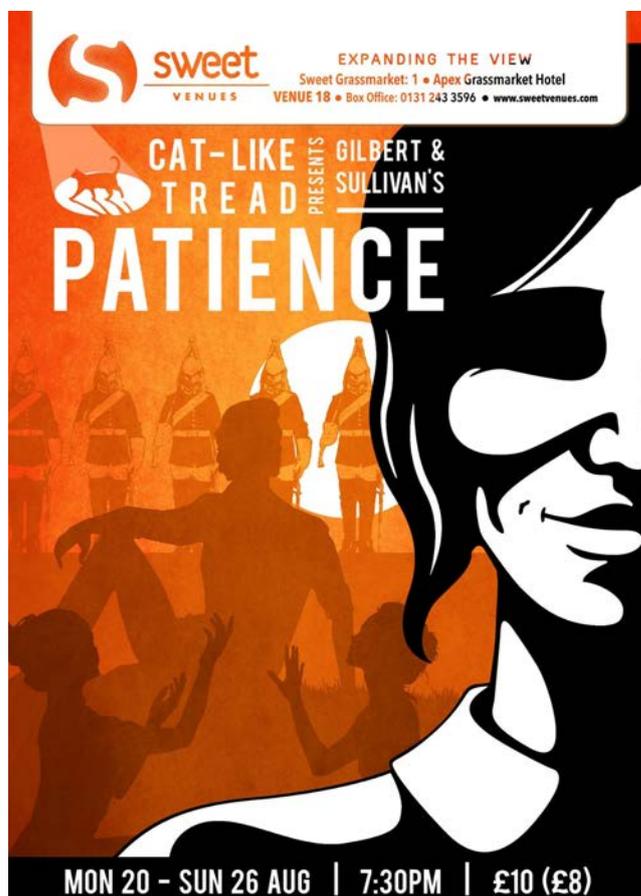
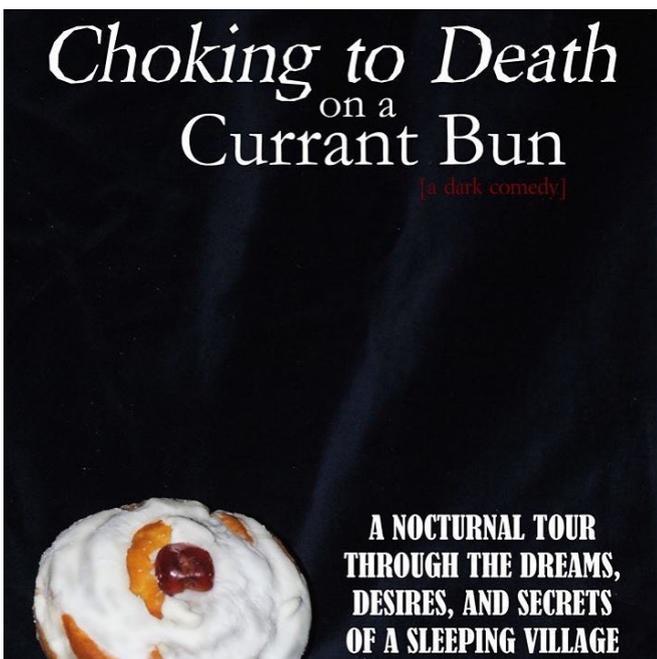
Some of our talented cast are undertaking Edinburgh Fringe ventures this year and we hope that you'll be able to get along to support them. Adam Green will be performing in Pandorum Theatre Company's production of 'Sex, Drugs and a Cup of Tea' from 2nd - 26th August at 8.40pm at Sweet Novotel.

directed by David Grimes at the Royal Scots Club 6th - 11th August at 8.45pm. Last but by no means least, Chris Cotter is performing in Cat-Like Tread's



Next Andrea Linhova is performing in Mr Brown Presents 'Choking to Death on a Currant Bun', 3rd - 25th August at The Space, North Bridge, 3.30pm. Then Fiona Main is performing in The Grads production of 'Much Ado About Nothing',

'Patience' from 20th - 26th August, 7.30pm at the Sweet Grassmarket 1 - Apex Grassmarket Hotel



VENUE VEXATION

Venues! Venues for rehearsing, venues for set-building, venues for prop and costume storage, venues for performing! Venue hire is one of the biggest drains on a company's finances. Finding them is a herculean task and finding any that are affordable as a cash-strapped amateur theatre company is nigh-on impossible. This may be mainly an Edinburgh problem or perhaps a city problem but the sheer volume of theatre companies and other hobby clubs, exercise clubs, kids clubs etc. means that trying to find a venue that is big enough for your needs on the night you want to rehearse and for the price you want to pay is like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack and on top of that the cost of performance venues is also soaring.

When we rehearsed for 'Elephants' we did so in far-from-ideal conditions. Much as we were grateful to eventually find a space at Out-of-the Blue, the fact that they were incredibly busy meant we had to change rooms after 30 minutes. This was not a great way to have to run a rehearsal and made our final full-show runthroughs somewhat more difficult than we would have liked. We thought we had found a solution this year when we booked a classroom at a local school but then discovered a couple of months ago that they had changed management of the external hires and decided that on top of the hourly rate, if you wanted to go on after 9pm there would be an extra £25 charge per night!

We have now thankfully found a new rehearsal venue at a very reasonable rate but only after emailing every church hall and recreation centre we could find listed.

Another challenge is finding somewhere to build a set if you need to make something custom for your show. Again, with 'Elephants' we had the advantage of a relative's house with high ceilings and we could get away with 8ft flats because of the small size of the venue. The Church Hill is going to be a different issue altogether and we feel that because of the added space we want to re-use part of our set but will have to increase the height of the flats. This means we won't actually be able to stand them up indoors. The few set-building spaces that were held by amateur companies in Edinburgh have now either been given up or condemned. More and more companies are hiring sets but this all adds

hugely to the budget and unless you are doing one of the big name musicals then it's unlikely you're going to find exactly what you're looking for.

It seems that amateur theatre companies are constantly being put under increased financial pressure and making a profit on a show seems to be more the exception than the rule. We see the same shows being performed again and again, the 'moneyspinners' that companies are forced to produce just to keep afloat while some of the wonderful lesser-known works are ignored. Amateur companies also have to keep putting up their ticket prices so that they can cover increased performance venue costs, rights costs, costume and set hire and rehearsal venue costs and finding the balance of the right ticket price to help cover your costs but not put off your audience is like tightrope-walking without a net.

I understand that all of these businesses have to make a profit too but as the amateurs with the smallest bank balances we are the first to feel the pain.

I know it has been discussed before and never really gone anywhere, perhaps with good reason, but is it time to rethink the 'Edinburgh Amateur Co-operative' idea where companies invest together in buying or renting a building for set-building, costume storage and prop storage and perhaps rehearsal space? It is maybe at least worth a discussion and even if it only serves to get amateur theatre companies talking about these issues and perhaps helping each other where they can, then it will surely have achieved something.

JUST THE TICKET

Finally for this issue, we are excited to let you know that tickets for 'Dear Brutus' are **ON SALE** and available through cast members and online at eventbrite.co.uk. We'd encourage you to buy through the cast if you can as there is a fee associated with buying online but however you do it, please do it and don't miss out on this magical show!



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