



**Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff**

- The Loves of Cass McGuire read-through: Monday 7 November, 7.30pm in Hancock House
- The Loves of Cass McGuire auditions: Sunday 27 November, 2.30pm in the theatre

**Remember: a read-through is not an audition!**

Other diary dates (more info on the website)

Jazz at the Apollo: Simon Spillett & his trio	Sun 30 Oct
Jazz at the Apollo: Nette Robinson & Tony Woods with the Phoenix trio	Sun 27 Nov
Red Tie production: 'Dog Sees God'	5-6 Nov
Red Tie production: 'Beautiful Thing'	10-11 Nov
<b>AGM of the Apollo Theatre Players</b>	<b>12 Nov 7.30 pm</b>
Stagecraft workshop 10.30am-4.00pm: 'It's Not Just the Words'	Sun 8 Jan 2017

# apollo

Issue no. 253

October 2016

## UK PREMIERE FOR 'THE SELKIE WIFE'

Ginnie Orrey, director of 'The Selkie Wife', is delighted that the show has at last been brought successfully not only to the Apollo stage but also to the UK for the first time—a **UK PREMIERE**, no less!

'After seeing it in a tiny theatre in the middle of the Canadian prairie some eight years ago, this play stuck in my mind and I was determined to bring it to the Island. Thanks to Maggie Cardew's agreeing to include it in the 2016-17 season I've at last been able to do that.

Despite initial casting difficulties I had a wonderful cast. I am very lucky that Josh Pointing was able to join us from the IW Shakespeare Company; the other cast members ranged from stalwarts Ian Moth and Sue Edwards to relative newcomers Esther Poucher and Maureen Sullivan, all of whom threw themselves into this unknown and unusual play.

I was also very lucky to have been able to underpin the action on stage with live music

from our two amazing musicians, Anthea Weekes (The Singer) and [Nick Cane](#) (The Musician). Live music as part of the action is something that at the Apollo we don't do very often and it added a depth to the play which made it even more special.

Our remarkable and often unsung team of set designers and builders were as usual absolutely heroic. I am always astounded and humbled by the way the team enter into the spirit of whatever unreasonable things the director wants, quietly delivering taps and sockets that work and all within a beautiful and well-constructed set. Newcomer Ed Lancaster delivered a new perspective on lighting and sound design, ably supported by Stephen Weekes in the box during the run (known as a baptism of fire!). As a rare privilege we were given permission to film the show; so if you weren't able to come and would like to see what you missed, you can!



Sue Edwards and Josh Pointing nuzzling in 'The Selkie Wife'

I was in constant contact with the author, Kelley Jo Burke, via facebook, which meant that she was able to watch as the production unfolded (and listen to our Vectis Radio interviews).

It has been a huge pleasure and a genuine privilege to direct this play, and it's been worth waiting eight years for! At the time of writing, despite the dedicated activities of the marketing team the houses aren't looking all that good, but we shouldn't beat ourselves up too much—the Apollo Theatre was always intended to bring both favourites and unknown shows to Island audiences, and while better-known shows are often runaway box-office successes we can be proud of doing something new.'

Ginnie Orrey

## 'Wyrd Sisters' is cast

Dan Burns and Eve Fradgley are very pleased to announce that following the auditions on 10 October they have been able to cast the dramatisation of Terry Pratchett's 'The Wyrd Sisters'.

The show is on from 9-17 December and the cast is as follows (three parts still to be confirmed as we go to press):

**Granny Weatherwax:** Carole Crow

**Nanny Ogg:** Eileen Connolly

**Magrat Garlick:** Carol Simpson

**Verence:** David Pratchett

**Duke (Leonal Felmet):** Simon Cardew

**Duchess (Lady Felmet):** Glenys Lloyd Williams

**Vitoller:** tbc

**Mrs Vitoller:** Julie Stonestreet

**Fool:** Mark Duffus

**Tomjon:** tbc

**Hwel:** Kathy Hoar

**Sergeant:** tbc

**Demon/Death:** Amy Burns

**Chamberlain:** Dave Talbot

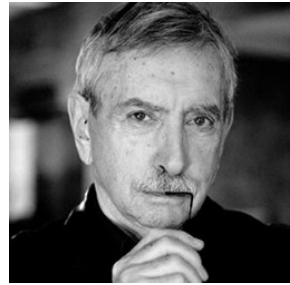
**Robbers, Players, Guests, Guards, Peasants:** Helen Clinton-Pacey, Susan Simpson, Rita Boffin

## Editorial: the view from the Editor's chair

### In praise of ... wisdom in hindsight

Many of you will be aware of the recent death of the playwright Edward Albee. Some of you may also remember the Players' production of his 1966 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, 'A Delicate Balance', in 2005. I have to declare an interest: I appeared in that production, and one of my lines has remained with me: 'That's life, baby.' It works in most situations to sum up the inevitability of Life.

At the time the County



Press, that august organ and informed indicator of artistic excellence, dismissed the play as a 'bizarre study of a family's problems'. Show me a classic play that isn't!

Lear? Macbeth? Long Day's Journey into Night? I could go on ...

Seen by many as the successor to Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams, Albee did not write 'easy' plays, which have been described as focusing on 'the unpleasant underside of the American Dream' and 'the mutually assured destruction that cements intimate relationships'. They're great for actors, though!



### News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



The refurbishment of the front of the theatre and Hancock House is virtually complete, with the scaffolding removed in time for the opening of *The Selkie Wife*; just a few minor snags remain to be cleared. The windows have all been repaired and rotten wood removed and replaced with new. The windows on the first floor now open and close safely to allow ventilation to the wardrobe area. The 'half-moon' window on the top floor had to be removed and rebuilt due to the degree of rot, which is very sad as it was only installed less than 20 years ago; however, the new window also opens to help ventilate the soft furnishings area. A lot of work has been carried out on the brickwork and the decorative frieze. A significant amount of brickwork had to be removed in an attempt to eradicate the Buddleia plant which has been resisting attempts to remove for as long as anyone can remember.

The bottom half of the left hand pillar supporting the portico has been replaced as it was badly rotted. The right hand pillar was in much better state and only



needed a few coats of paint. Now that we have had a thorough makeover of the front we plan to touch up the paintwork every few years.

We had long thought that the damp problems in the entrance to Hancock House were due to the downpipe of the house next door being cracked—we even approached our neighbour suggesting he might like to contribute to the repair—but as it turned out the fault was in our guttering which had a huge hole in it which has now been repaired.



In other news—we now have all the permissions to open up the new side emergency exit and we are in the process of getting quotes. The work to join the Theatre to Hancock House at first floor level is just awaiting final planning approval. One side-effect of this work being completed is that it is hoped that the floods in the side passage will become a thing of the past, as it will be much easier to gain access to the gutter which runs the length of the main theatre building. In the meantime Roger Simpson took advantage of the scaffolding being present to try and clear the front section



of the gutter. He also managed to clear the rear section by climbing in the roof of the scene dock re with a bucket and a set of drain rods! Hopefully the side passage will now stay dry for the foreseeable future.

## Notes from the Committee meeting of 24 October 2016

### ELECTIONS

Obviously the big news from your Committee this month is the forthcoming elections to the Players' Committee.

There are two groups of candidates: those standing for a post for which there is more than one nomination, and those who are standing unopposed. Both groups, along with their 'manifestos', can be found below and on page 4.

### HOW TO VOTE

Most importantly, no votes will be cast at the AGM. If you receive Apollonius by post (or you have requested a postal vote) you will find enclosed a postal ballot paper. This must be returned to Dan Burns c/o the Apollo by noon on Saturday 12 November. Any ballots received after this will not be counted. If you receive Apollonius by email you will be sent an email containing a link to the online voting system and the details you need to log on, along with full details of how to cast your vote (though the committee found it straightfor-

ward while we were testing the system). If you have any problems, please contact me: 07401 306 577 or dan@masexodus.co.uk. The deadline for ALL voting is noon on Saturday 12 November. The votes will be counted at the theatre at 12.30 (any member wishing to witness the count is welcome to attend) and the results will be announced at the AGM. There is no opportunity to vote at the AGM. This means that the AGM will be shorter, but we hope that as many members as possible will attend—all current officers will be giving their annual reports, and the accounts will be presented to the membership. It will be followed by a social event where the bar will be open.

If you have anything you wish to be considered for 'any other business' on the agenda, please let me have it as soon as possible—we will not be accepting AoB items brought up at the meeting itself.

### COTTON BAGS

Now that plastic bags are no longer acceptable, we felt it was time the Apollo joined

the Cotton Bag Brigade, so we have our own cotton bags for sale. An absolute steal at £2.50 and a good long-term marketing strategy as well! Ask any member of the Committee to get yours, or email me on info@apollo-theatre.org.uk; they'll also be available at the theatre.



### STAGECRAFT WORKSHOP WITH MICHAEL ARNELL:

**'It's not just the words'.  
Sunday 8 January 2017,  
10.30am-4.00pm**

This workshop is for any member, new or long-standing, with an interest in developing their acting skills. Even experienced actors agree that you can always learn something new and improve. Believe me, nobody knows it all! We shall be practising how to make our movement match the text. Wear sensible shoes and comfortable clothes. Bring a packed lunch. Free tea & coffee.

**PLEASE NOTE:** the committee members' annual reports will be sent out before the AGM, by email to those online and in a separate mailing to those receiving postal votes. This gives you, the membership, the opportunity to read them in advance of the meeting and to ask questions at the meeting if you wish. The Players' accounts for 2015-16 will also be sent out.

## MEMBERS STANDING FOR ELECTION TO THE PLAYERS' COMMITTEE

More than one candidate has been nominated for each of the following two posts and they will therefore appear on the ballot paper.



### Membership Secretary: two nominations received

#### Drew Adcock

Through my years of experience and time at the theatre I believe it is time for me to take a larger role in the theatre. I have dipped my toe into the realm of organising events for the members and would like to expand on this further.



#### Louis Lawrence

I have been an active member of the theatre for the past four years, I am competent with the computer and have the capacity and knowledge to be membership secretary.

## House Manager: two nominations received



### **Kay Green**

Hi my name is Kay. I have been a member of the Apollo over two centuries! And since retiring and moving to the island full-time have had more opportunity to be involved with the theatre. I am standing for the post of house manager at the forthcoming AGM and as I have no aspirations to appear on stage either here or at any other island venue I am able to focus totally on the role of house manager at the Apollo. I would like to see more continuity in the front of house rolls i.e. front of house manager, box office and ushers, which would give the public a brand identity. I appreciate the prime function of the Apollo is to produce quality productions but if the customer experience on entering the theatre, is expedited in a professional and efficient manner then the anticipation of pleasure of the performance is accentuated. Each production involves a considerable amount of time and effort by the participants and that should be reflected in the front of house volunteers. It would be nice for our patrons to enjoy the same welcome and level of service from whomsoever the front of house staff are on any given night.



### **Paul Stevens**

I would like to complete the job I started in setting up the box office. I also find I am settling into the job and can move the theatre forward with the continued help of the members.

**The following candidates have been nominated unopposed and will therefore take up (or resume) the following posts at this year's AGM. They will not appear on the ballot paper.**



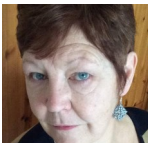
### **Theatre Director—Amy Burns**

I have enjoyed the time that I have given so far to the role of theatre director and I have enjoyed helping and watching the theatre grow. The theatre has given me so much over the years and this is a way of me giving something back. I get a great buzz out of seeing things happen at our lovely building, be it a rehearsal, performance, meeting, coffee mornings, set building, costume making or exams. It is an honour to allow the theatre to be shared by the community and I hope that I can continue to help the Apollo grow and that I will have your continued support in keeping the Apollo alive and exciting.



### **Business Manager—Ginnie Orrey**

I have been business manager for four years, in partnership with our fantastic treasurer Alan Rodway. In the early days we made a great many changes to help the players work in a more business-like way: things like expenses claim forms, online banking, proper annual accounting and an accounting year which is in line with the season, working more closely with the bar, working to get better value from things like printing and script ordering and generally supporting the Players in what is a reasonably-sized small business. It's a satisfying job and I enjoy it, and I would be happy to continue doing it if I am elected.



### **Marketing Manager—Maureen Sullivan**

I have worked alongside Kate in the publicity team undertaking the social media side of things. As Kate has said she now wishes to step down I feel I am well placed to take on the role she has fulfilled for the past two years.



### **Players' Secretary—Michael Whitehead**

I would like to continue the duties as I have been doing for the last 2 years, which include managing and supervising the activities of the Management Committee of the Apollo Players with Committee duties, Duties in relation to AGM, help with events management, Correspondence and keyholder.

### **Members' representatives (2 posts)**



#### **Helen Reading**

I have been a member for twenty years and am interested in ordinary members of the players taking an active role in moving the Theatre forward, encouraging young people to join and take part.

#### **Steve Reading**

As a member for almost twenty years, I thought it was time I did my bit. I feel I'm ideally placed for the role because quite often being stood by the bar people talk. I think it is important that the voice of membership is represented.



### **Arts Manager 2017/2018—Cynara Crump**

I have been a member of the Theatre since 1973. during which time I have undertaken a range of roles both on and off stage. I do not present an already selected season, believing, like Maggie, that I would like other members to come forward with plays which they would like to see on our stage, preferably with a built in director, although there are certainly one or two which I would want to include such as 'Cold Comfort Farm' which was unavailable last time I wanted to include it, and perhaps a Shakespeare or a Shaw since I agree wholeheartedly with John Hancocks' own belief that this theatre should do plays that are not necessarily performed elsewhere on the Island. My Criteria for putting a season together must take note of variety of period, of style, of number of cast, and of male and female roles.

## 'THE LOVES OF CASS MCGUIRE' - CASTING CALL

A message from Maureen Sullivan:

I am delighted to be directing 'The Loves of Cass McGuire' by Brian Friel which will be staged on March 24-25 and March 28-April 1 2017.

I would love to welcome as many of you as possible to the read-through at Hancock House at 7.30pm on November 7 - remember, you don't have to intend to audition to come along, and you don't have to read - this is just to get to know the play.

Auditions will be held at the theatre, 2.30pm on Sunday November 27 and again, I'd love to see lots of you there.

The cast, with playing ages, is as follows:

**Cass McGuire**, late 60s/early 70s - brash, eccentric Irish - just home after 50 years in the USA.

**Harry McGuire**, Cass's brother, about 10 years younger than her - respectable middle-class family man.

**Alice McGuire**, 45-55 - Harry's wife.

**Dom McGuire**, late teens - Harry and Alice's youngest son.

**Mother**, 80s - Cass and Harry's wheelchair-bound mother.

**Pat Quinn**, 60+ - male resident of Eden House.

**Mr Ingram**, 60+ - male resident of Eden House.

**Trilbe Costello**, 60+ - female resident of Eden House.

**Mrs Butcher**, 60+ - female resident of Eden House.

**Tessa**, 20-30 - maid in Eden House.

The play is set in contemporary Ireland (but don't worry about Irish accents for the moment - I'm open to moving the setting to England if necessary). Cass returns home to her family after 50 years in America, apparently doing well there. Reality is somewhat different, and years of waiting tables in a greasy spoon just off skid row have left her coarse, hard drinking and

loud. Finding her an embarrassment to their settled family life, Harry puts his sister into a 'Retirement Home', the ironically named Eden House, where Cass soon discovers the other residents have their own ways of coping with the rejection of their loved ones.

Initially scornful of her fellow residents, Cass gradually discovers that escape from reality can be achieved without the help of alcohol and cigarettes.

There are some hilarious scenes in the play, and some very poignant moments: this is a play that will make audiences laugh, perhaps cry, and certainly think. I love it and hope you will too!

Come along to the read-through and auditions to find out more, and if you would like to read the play or have any questions in the meantime please do give me a call on 07747 738338 or email [msullivan58@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:msullivan58@hotmail.co.uk)

*Maureen Sullivan*

'A play that will make audiences laugh, perhaps cry, and certainly think.'

## The Ladykillers: successful auditions, and a call for props

Di Evans is very pleased to announce that she has cast The Ladykillers. Lots of people turned up to the auditions and she's been able to put together an excellent cast.

Di will also be needing a couple of relatively rare objects for her play, so if anyone can help could they please contact her?

The items are a cello in a case (or just a cello case); a 1930s-40s hall-stand and a tea-trolley.

The cast is as follows:

**Constable Macdonald:** Nick Turvey

**Mrs Louisa Wilberforce:** Marylyn Ford

**Professor Marcus:** Michael Arnell

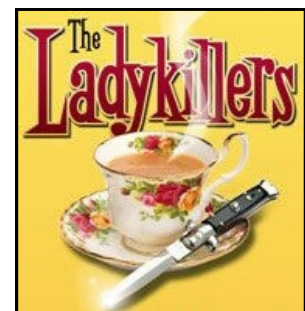
**Major Courtney:** Ian Moth

**Harry Robinson:** Pete Harris

**One-Round:** Paul Gwinnett

**Louis Harvey:** Dave Newton

**Mrs Jane Tromleyton:** Chris Turvey



'The Ladykillers':  
3-11 February 2017

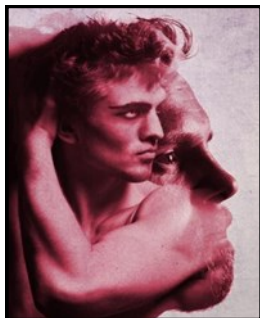


## Huge treat for theatricals at the Literary Festival!

The Isle of Wight Literary Festival at Northwood House in Cowes is now in its fifth year and going from strength to strength, with speakers as varied and prestigious as Michael Portillo, Alan Johnson and AN Wilson, to name only three of the more than 70 events. However, for the theatrically-minded, the highlights had to be Michael Pennington on playing Lear, John Crace and John Sutherland on their 'updated' (and hilarious) versions of four Shakespeare plays, and Michael Billington, renowned theatre critic, promoting his recent book, 'The 101 Greatest Plays', in conversation with Samuel Hodges, director of the Nuffield Theatre in Southampton. Michael Billington's event was absolutely excellent. His thesis was that great plays 'transcend their category'—in other words, they're always about more than they appear to be about—and riffed on three particular subjects. First, he discussed the interesting premise that theatre tends to thrive at times of

national/social crisis and that the best of British theatre is up-to-date and topical, with two of his 101 being Jez Butterworth's 'Jerusalem' and Mike Bartlett's 'King Charles III' (he also included 'The Real Thing', with which, having been lucky enough to be cast in it a couple of years ago, I couldn't agree more). His second theme was the way that in Britain we are moving away from 'writer-centric' plays towards 'director's theatre', with each 'reimagining' of a classic text being greeted with increasing adulation. However, in his view this can go too far—it's OK if it brings out something new in the text, but the director's job is fundamentally to realise the play. It is a fact that the playwright's work endures, while the director's can only be ephemeral (he quoted Mike Nichol's possibly apocryphal remark that 'the job of the director is to turn up!'). He also discussed the work of the critic, whose criticism must, in his view, put the play in context. It is the review-

er's responsibility to do this and to be 'unripen-tant' if their work cuts against the popular view; after all, as GBS famously said of some popular/populist publication in the 1930s, '40 million readers can't be right'. Michael also took the opportunity to say that he 'would never ever leave a play early'. The highlight for me of the event was at the book signing afterwards. While Michael was signing my copy I mentioned 'Dedication' (see article below); I had emailed him to say how wonderful it was and recommending he see it, and as a result he did in fact go and agreed with me. He then asked whether it was I who had brought over a new play by a Canadian author and was directing it! Well!! Imagine my excitement! I did ask whether there was any chance of his coming to see it, but I think that was a step too far ... Anyway, a brilliant event which I feel privileged to have attended.  
*Ginnie Orrey*



## 'Dedication': a remarkable play at the Southampton Nuffield

It's not often that we on the Island get the chance to see a UK premiere of a play by a renowned author with a professional cast—but at the Southampton Nuffield theatre in late September I was fortunate enough to do exactly that.

Nick Dear is the author of, among other things, the version of Frankenstein starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller that was streamed live from the National Theatre a year

or two ago. His latest play, 'Dedication', focuses on the relationship—if such there was; the play offers various alternatives—between Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton. Played on a tiny stage in the round, this two-hander can only be described as a remarkable achievement. The two actors, Tom McKay and Tom Rhys Harries, sustained the action throughout the one and a half hours of the play (no interval)

with astonishing control—dancing and fighting and making love on a tiny raised section within the gleaming black bare stage. Their control as they stepped on and off the revolve was a joy to behold (speaking as one who has almost fallen flat doing just that!). Sadly the show closed before this issue went to print, but if you get a chance to see it somewhere do go—you will, I think, be impressed.  
*Ginnie Orrey*

## From Michael Arnell, acting Membership Secretary (296388)

### NEW MEMBERS

I look forward to meeting all new members at the AGM at 7.00pm on Saturday 12 November 2016. At that time I will be able to issue you with your membership number, which you use to access the Members' page on our website. However, don't worry if you can't make the meeting, I will post your card with your number.

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

This important Committee post will be elected at the AGM. Under the umbrella of a Membership Secretary's responsibilities is appointing a Social Secretary. The person will be tasked with organising fairly regular "social" activities. So ...

### SOCIAL SECRETARY

Although the Apollo Players primarily focus their energies toward the production of plays, it is obviously true that opportunities to meet socially, without the need to "work" at a specific task, must improve relationships and a sense of belonging. If you think you have the time and energy to organise the occasional social event, (for example, quizzes, karaoke, 'Party Pieces' shows, American Suppers, etc. etc.—the world's your oyster), contact the new Membership Secretary. You will have lots of support.

### MEMBERS' PERKS

A reminder that if you undertake any duty for a particular production, (day or evening box-office, coffee or bar staff, wardrobe, backstage, set building, etc.), you are welcome to attend the final dress-rehearsal of that play. Of course, because rehearsal schedules are organised by the play's director for the convenience and availability of the cast and crew, you will have to find out the actual date as these are never fixed.

### FORECOURT DEATHS!

Sadly, despite frequent reminders, members have been unable to fill the bucket from the tap outside the stage-door and water the two little trees in the forecourt pots. They are now both dead! I am therefore removing the pots. Perhaps you have two unwanted weather-proof artificial plants that we could "plant" in them to give our forecourt that little finishing touch. Please contact me.

### **Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead by Bert V. Royal**

**5 & 6 November, 7.30pm**

When CB's dog dies from rabies, CB begins to question the existence of an afterlife.

Built on the foundation of the *Peanuts* cartoons, with the child characters having reached an age where life presents those typical teenage problems, friendships are

tested in this dark comedy. Cast from the RedTIE youth theatre and directed by Jack Tutt. All tickets £5.

### **Beautiful Thing by Jonathan Harvey**

**10 & 11 November, 7.30pm**

Jamie, a teen who is infatuated with his classmate, Ste, has to deal with his single mother Sandra, who

is preoccupied with ambitious plans to run her own pub and with an ever-changing string of lovers, the latest of whom is Tony, a neo-hippie. Sandra finds herself at odds with Leah, a sassy and rude neighbour who has been expelled from school, does several drugs and constantly sings along to her mother's Cass Elliot records. An iconic play which was made into a film. Tickets £8/£5.

**2 RedTIE productions coming up at the Apollo**

## How to get into the members' area of the website: a standing item

I am often asked how to access the members' area of the website, so from here on in, the instructions will be in this place on this page of each issue of 'Apollonius' so you know where to go to check.

1. Go on to the website and hover over 'membership' and the 'members' area' tab should drop down;
2. click on that and you'll get the message 'We're sorry, the content you are trying

to reach is restricted to members only';

3. click on 'member login' and you'll get the drop-down box containing the two areas 'username' and 'password';
4. in the top area enter your 'username', which is 'firstname.secondname' (remember the dot between the words), and in the bottom box enter your 'password', which is your membership num-

- ber. Your membership card has your number on it, but if you can't find it check with the Membership Secretary or me;
5. once you've done that, you should get straight into the members' area. If not, there's a problem and you need to let me know, but try these steps first.

Ginnie Orrey, webmistress





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Apollo Theatre  
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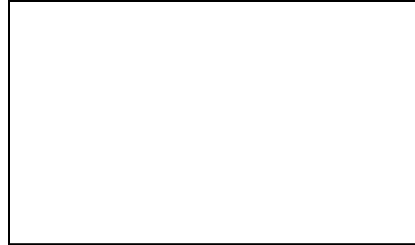
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theatre.org.uk

To book tickets or find  
out more about our  
productions, go to:

[www.apollo-theatre.org.uk](http://www.apollo-theatre.org.uk)

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expresses her  
opinions.  
Contributed copy  
must be signed.

Bringing good theatre to the Isle of Wight for more than 40 years



## The Apollo Players' next production



Friday 9-  
Saturday 10  
December  
&  
Tuesday 13-  
Saturday 17  
December 2016  
at 7.30pm

Terry Pratchett takes Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and then turns it up 'till the knob comes off. It's all there - a wicked duke and duchess, the ghost of the murdered king, dim soldiers, strolling players, a land in peril. And who stands between the Kingdom and destruction? Three witches ...