



Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff

- Stagecraft workshop: Sunday 8 January, 10.30am-4.00pm
- 'Forget-me-Knot' read-through: Monday 9 January, 7.30
- Directors' meeting: 17 January, 7.30pm in the bar

Remember: a read-through is not an audition!

[Other diary dates \(more info on the website\)](#)

COFFEE MORNINGS

Our popular fortnightly Saturday morning social meetings will begin again on Saturday, 7 January 2017 at 10.00a.m. Everyone, including non-members, is very welcome.

apollonius

Issue no. 254

December 2016

Wyrd Sisters—from the Director(s)

Co-directing 'Wyrd Sisters' has been a rewarding experience. With a slightly later audition date than usual for the Christmas slot Eve Fradgley and I, together with the cast (and Wardrobe!) had our work cut out for us. I'm pleased to say that everybody involved pulled together and by opening night, we had a show! The audience on the opening night enjoyed themselves (although depressingly small in number) and the cast were on top form.

We have had a mix of familiar Apollo faces, a few relative newcomers as well as people who have never been in an Apollo production. I was pleased to see old hands among the cast making newcomers feel welcome in true Apollo spirit. I must say there is a true team atmosphere backstage, with an incredibly supportive cast.

Off stage, we welcome Fizz, who has jumped in at the deep end as part of the

stage management team – there's nothing quite like a baptism of fire! Hopefully we will see her backstage again, together with our new members back on-stage.

Peggy and her dedicated team of ladies have, as ever, produced a fantastic set of costumes. My thanks go to them for their endless hard work – as well as making the cast look fabulous, many of the team also make appearances onstage throughout the performance. Peggy has been a joy to work with and made our job much easier – if you ever direct and don't have a definite idea of how you see the costumes she will guide you through a series of ideas and suggestions. Somehow, she has a knack of knowing exactly what you want and need (even if you don't know it yourself!).

The set, while simple, works incredibly well for the needs that we had. Thanks go to Phil Cardew for the



Mark Duffus and Susan Simpson in Wyrd Sisters

design; Simon for the painting and our band of builders for constructing it. The set itself was lit by Dan Janvrin (a name some of you may remember from the past!).

Finally – my single condition when I offered to direct was that I had someone else alongside me who had directed before. Eve kindly offered to co-direct with me and I'd like to say a big 'thank you' to her for making my first proper directing stint much easier.

Dan Burns, co-director

'Wyrd Sisters' runs from 9-17 December 2016

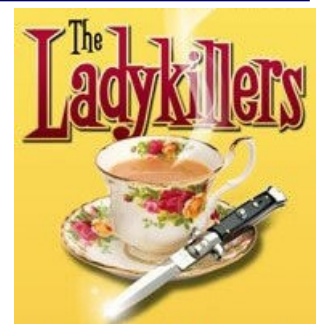
The Ladykillers

The Ladykillers is well into rehearsal and ... so far, so good. I have a talented, hard working cast who are full of ideas and suggestions that I shall be happy to claim as my own should anyone ask! However, there is one refrain that punctuates our rehearsals: 'Well, we will sort that out when we have a set.'

That will be after Christ-

mas. I know that Mr Jennings and his crew are poised ready to get the set up as quickly as possible. Then we will be able to get to grips with all the physical stuff: falling off roofs ... fights on stairs ... etc ... what larks!

Following my pleas for a playable cello, I'm pleased to report that we now have what we need.



My best wishes to everyone for Christmas and 2017.

Di Evans, Director

Editorial: the view from the Editor's chair

It can be very comforting to hear a truly great actor expressing similar concerns and experiences as those of us who move in shall we say less exalted spheres.

Two articles about Mark Rylance appeared in the Guardian this week. In the first he spoke of his role as Olivia in Twelfth Night and made a couple of comments with which I think we can all identify. He describes a good theatre as 'like a great ship' with backstage like 'life below decks', and the experience of playing to a

full house as 'like sailing a fast ship on a sunny, windy day.' Isn't that great?

In the second article he spoke of an actor's job as being a 'storyteller', and of course that's how we all see ourselves—our job is simply to tell the story, but to do so we have to learn what Rylance calls 'a true sense of presence, being in the moment'. He too, though, started at the bottom—when he describes telling stories as not only acting in them but also 'taking out the rubbish at the end of the

night' he really gets to the heart of what being part of an ensemble like the Apollo Players is about. We are hugely fortunate to have our own beautiful space and a company of actors to tell the stories, but we mustn't ever forget the people who take out the rubbish—or indeed forget to take it out ourselves.

Mind you, it was Sir Ralph Richardson who described acting as 'merely the art of keeping a large group of people from coughing'. Take your pick!

Latest news from the Apollo Theatre Trust



Now that the work on the front of the theatre is complete, the Trust is turning its collective mind to the next tasks around our various buildings:

- quotes to open up the new emergency exit on stage right of the auditorium were requested from five builders in the middle of November. So far we have been contacted by just one to inspect the site and heard nothing from the rest;
- the next major piece of work will be the joining of the theatre to 124 at first floor level to provide improved emergency egress from the balcony and more space in the bar, which we hope to complete during 2017;
- the flat roof of the dressing room is in need of repair and we have to decide whether to simply have the fab-

ric of the roof replaced or to go up a floor over the dressing room—albeit into a pitched roof—to provide additional storage. Roger has prepared plans for this and had discussions with the planning department.

A slightly smaller job which has yet to be discussed by the Trust but which I feel needs addressing is the provision of hot water in the ladies' toilet. This has been outstanding for 45 years and I'm surprised that it's not been sorted out by now!

We are struggling to find an electrical contractor to take on the long list of jobs identified by Roger and Dan, including heating at the Unit and the replacement of most of the extractor fans at the theatre, as the current ones are not really fit for purpose.

As a charity we enjoy an 80% reduction on our

rates bill for the theatre, 124 and the Unit, which together total £6,500 per year. Every year we have to apply for discretionary relief in relation to the other 20% - some £1,300—and so far we have always been successful. We are judged largely on the services we supply to the community including making the theatre available to schools, clubs and other organisations. Another key aspect is our inclusivity policy, whereby we welcome and encourage members from all backgrounds regardless of experience and ability. We have just been invited to submit our application for 2017. It is just a little worrying that we have also been asked to reapply for the 80% relief and can only hope that there isn't some change of policy behind this.

*Paul Jennings, Chair,
Apollo Theatre Trust*

NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED AT THE AGM ON 12 NOVEMBER

As you will all know, a new Committee was elected at the AGM (listed below). It was great to see the increased turnout—more than double those who voted at the last AGM, most of whom voted online.

While five posts have new incumbents, only two posts, House Manager and Membership Secretary, were contested. The successful candidates were:

House Manager: Paul Stevens; **Membership Secretary:** Drew Adcock

Here are messages from new postholders:

From a new Members' Rep, Steve Reading: 'I joined the Apollo almost 20 years ago on the instruction of my wife. I have never looked back (not even in anger!). I had no previous experience of acting, producing, directing or working behind a bar and the Apollo has given me the opportunity to do all of these plus much, much more. The theatre has helped enrich my life, taught me things I never knew, skills I never knew I missed and I have tried, in some little part, to pass these on. Being your Members' Rep for the next year

is going to be far from ordinary, so please ask me about things at the theatre that trouble you, or things that excite you and I will pass these on with vim and vigour. In return for taking up your cause I shall expect you to do a turn on the bar (joke). I can be contacted on steveread104@bt-internet.co.uk or you'll find me behind the bar most weekdays during a run. Please talk to me and help us all make this thriving theatre even better.'

From the other new Members' Rep, Helen Reading: 'My job is to represent any members of the Apollo, to give them a voice at committee meetings. This means you need to let me know if you have any concerns, ideas or views on how the Apollo is run. I promise to take your comments to meetings, whether I agree with them or not, and ensure that they are taken seriously and discussed. I can be contacted by email: redtietheatre@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07712050920.'

From the new Marketing Manager, Maureen Sullivan: 'Taking over this role from Kate Fysh is more evolution than revolution, as I have been working with her for a while now and intend

to keep on doing the good stuff she has done. I do however want to concentrate on the following:

- improving communication between director and marketing team, so I apologise in advance to directors for the emails etc you will receive making sure we all know what needs to be done and when by;

- continuing to widen our audience base. Audience numbers have increased wonderfully over the last year and I want to continue this trend, so I will be looking at every possible outlet to get our name and the quality of our productions out there!

- developing relationships with other Island theatres – a theatregoer is a theatregoer, so someone who goes to Shanklin or Medina may well come to us a few weeks later; I would like to see us publicising each others' productions.

If any member has ideas for marketing or would like to help in any way—I can always find someone a job to do!—please do contact me: msullivan58@hotmail.co.uk or 07747738338. Thanks in advance!

From the new Arts Manager, Cynara Crump: Most important thing first:

the Directors' meeting will be held on **Tuesday 17 January at 7.30pm in the bar.** Please come along if you would like to direct or assist the director in any play, or want to put forward a play for inclusion in the season. This will give me time to make final decisions before the February Committee meeting when the Committee will agree the season. Please contact me beforehand (527606 or cynara.crump@virgin.net) if you would like me to read a script.

I said at the AGM that my starting point for selecting a season was 'Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue', tempered obviously by period, complexity of set and costume, number and gender of cast; popularity of course, and I would prefer a greater number of comedies. I have a long list collected over the years of plays that I would like to see on our stage but I am hoping for suggestions, although there are a few that I really want to include in this season: a Shakespeare, for example ('King Lear' has been suggested to me or 'Much Ado About Nothing'), and I want to include 'Cold Comfort Farm'. We should also give our Youth Theatre the chance to show everyone what they can do.

Theatre Director & Chair of management committee (elected 3-yearly): Amy Burns (2016-19) amy@masexodus.co.uk

Arts Manager (elected annually in Nov for season beginning following Sept)	Cynara Crump (2016-18) cynara.crump@virgin.net	Technical Manager (elected biannually)	Dan Burns (2015-17) dan@masexodus.co.uk
Business Manager (elected biannually)	Ginnie Orrey (2016-18) gginnie@googlemail.com or info@apollo-theatre.org.uk	2 Members' Representatives (elected annually) (2015-16)	Helen Reading redtietheatre@hotmail.co.uk ; Steve Reading steveread104@btinternet.com
Marketing Manager (elected biannually)	Maureen Sullivan (2016-18) msullivan58@me.com	Bar Manager (co-opted)	Paul Stevens postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk
Players' Secretary (elected biannually)	Mike Whitehead (2016-18) michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com	Wardrobe Manager (co-opted)	Peggy Harcourt peggy.harcourt@creekside.plus.com
Membership Secretary (elected biannually)	Drew Adcock (2016-18) apollo-theatremembership@outlook.com	Apollo Trust secretary (co-opted)	Cynara Crump cynara.crump@virgin.net
House Manager (elected biannually)	Paul Stevens (2016-18) postmaster@sleeptite.force9.co.uk	Apollo Trust Buildings Manager (co-opted)	Roger Simpson roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk

Good news from the Treasurer



Members who attended the Apollo Players' AGM on 12 November were able to hear our Treasurer, Alan Rodway, summarise the financial position of the Players. Copies of the accounts for 2015-16 were circulated before the meeting, but members who don't do email or couldn't attend the meeting—or simply, like me, find accounts difficult to get their heads round—won't have seen them or perhaps grasped the implications, so here is what Alan told the meeting.

'First of all may I say that congratulations are in order to all those who have con-

tributed in any way to this year's splendid financial outcome.

All sources of income have shown improved results when compared with 2015 - ticket sales have gone up by 25% and profits on productions by a staggering 50%! Increased ticket sales have resulted in bar takings rising by 25% and enhanced income from ice cream, coffee and programme sales. Although there has been a slight drop in membership subscriptions, income from theatre hire has gone up by 15% and the number of organisations wishing to use our facilities increases

year by year.

Alongside the increase in income, theatre expenses and printing costs have gone down and production costs and administration expenses have remained static. The combination of all these factors has resulted in a rise in our annual surplus from just over £11k to almost £28k, an increase of more than 150%!

In my view, this result appears to show that, given the right mixture of shows to attract the public, there is no reason why the Players cannot continue to be the most important venue on the Island for dramatic entertainment.'

FROM

THE

YOUTH

THEATRE

One of the Youth Theatre Co-ordinators, Gwen Stevens, took the opportunity at the AGM to send this message to current and future directors:

'Please remember we have lots of talented young people in our theatre. If you have small parts you cannot cast, for example a maid or a guard or perhaps a sixteen-year old girl, the young people who pay to be members of this theatre would love to be invited to join whatever you are doing.

They can learn so much each Saturday morning by doing their workshops, but

they will learn so much more by working alongside experienced people in the theatre and being in plays alongside adults. I will take care of any chaperoning issues, so don't be put off—you won't have to do any extra work! They are the future of the theatre and we want to keep them by making them feel part of it. For more information, contact me on 525655.'

Gwen is also delighted to be able to share with members a photo of the youth theatre giving a cheque to Sarah, a representative of Save the Children, the charity for



whom they raised £216 with their show last spring.

Sarah told the group, 'There will be lots of children who don't have the things you do, like a nice home, food and people to look after you, and who are going to be helped with this money. I thank you so much.'



Like herding mice? News from Peggy Harcourt, Wardrobe Manager, on the 2015-16 season

Another year gone by, my 15th with the Apollo costume department, and another seven shows with over 55 actors dressed in 2015-16. Some had several costumes in one play, plus extras for backstage crew appearing on stage for a crowd scene (and no script to learn!).

For us this past financial year has been varied, ranging from nil for 'Kitchen Sink', with all costumes picked from stock or supplied by the cast, through 'Birthday Party' (£28.27) to 'Allo 'Allo!', the most expensive of the season for which we had to hire authentic German officers' uniforms, pushing costs up to £381.00.

A period piece can be more challenging but with our vast stock of costumes made by the team and catalogued we can usually find most things. We had a challenge with 'Witches' when the witches had to have bald heads when they took wigs off, and we made 20 mice for the magic scene. It was a big cast but our cost for that play was still only £79.44.

Our overall spend for the year was £584.86; however, thanks to Liz Santer's sterling efforts hiring out our costumes to other groups, which brought in £384.00, our total spend for 2015-16 was £200.8: a brilliant result for seven

plays.

This year our team has changed: Mia Harris, who has worked with costumes since she was 15, has gone to Bournemouth Arts University; Pam Crowson joined us more recently and is settling in with some sewing and dressing during a run; and Jill Bradley is another new member, who has been involved with Am Dram on the mainland and is working backstage for the first time on 'Wyrld Sisters'. I welcome them to our team with Liz Santer, Mary Cody and Carol King and look forward to designing some interesting costumes next year.

STAGECRAFT WORKSHOP: Sunday 8 January 10.30-4.00

As mentioned in previous issues, Michael Arnell will be running a stagecraft workshop in the theatre on Sunday 8 January. The workshop is for any member, new or long-standing, with an interest in developing their acting skills. As Michael says, '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 and bring a packed lunch. There will be free tea and coffee.

Contact Michael to register your intention to attend or for more details: he can be contacted on 296388.

Michael is hoping for a good turnout, as he won't repeat the exercise if insufficient people come along. This is a great opportunity to learn more about our craft—so use it or lose it!



Did you miss 'The Selkie Wife'?

We were lucky enough to have around 40% houses on average for 'The Selkie Wife', which given that it is completely unknown in this country was a fabulous outcome. However, some of you may not have been able to come, or not wanted to invest £8.50 in something you couldn't be sure you'd enjoy, or even came to see it and would like to see it again, so here's your oppor-

tunity!

Unusually, we were able to record the show because the author gave us specific permission, and a film of the whole production is now available online. All you have to do is go to the 'Selkie Wife' page on the Apollo website and click on the link, and you'll come to a Google screen with three files on it: click on the left-

hand one (called 'Selkie Wife: small mp4') and you will be taken to the film.

I hope you enjoy it—do please let me know.

Ginnie Orrey, Director

If you're not online and would like to see the film, please contact me and I will lend you a DVD, as I had a small number made.



Behind the Scenes: by one of the set-building crew

Having taken the last set down, the team look forward to building the next one. Sometimes we seem to waste time because no-one has been told what the new set will look like. Eventually we have a plan and can sort out the size and positions for the flats and start fixing.

During the second week of set-building we make adjustments to doors and windows with backing flats (so you don't see through the set!). Most of the set is made from recycled materials from previous sets. Eventually these pieces become too small and we resort to buying fresh supplies. It really does help if the director can tell us—

before we make it!—if a bench is just for show or has to stand the weight of 10 people jumping on it together. Then there are the requests for kitchen sinks that have running water and drains in the middle of the stage. Ovens, hobs and fridges with opening door are magically created. We are quite skilled at hanging 25kg wall units on pieces of canvas without them falling off. It is all done with lots of light-hearted banter.

Having finished the build, the next stage is set painting. The painters like to know the period the play is set in, so that colours and decor are correct. It may surprise some people to

know that we only use red, blue, yellow, black & white paint. The thousands of colours you see are all mixed by eye.

Yes all those different wallpaper patterns are hand painted (see pic from 'Selkie Wife', right—no-one could believe it wasn't printed wallpaper!). It can be quite satisfying to turn a sheet of wood or canvas into a brick wall or marble slab. It normally takes about 35 hours to paint a set. Try standing back to check whether the detail is correct when you are 10ft up on a ladder! Umm. It's all in a day's work ...

Paul Hewson, set builder & painter



Ever wondered how the set-builders and -painters create their wonderful effects?

Paul Hewson, one of the team, lets us into their secrets



Mary in 'Hay Fever'
in 1983

MARY LEWIS

Members with longer memories may remember Mary Lewis—formerly Klenczon—who sadly died on 21 November after being diagnosed with leukaemia in August. She appeared for the Players in plays such as 'The Merry Wives of Windsor', 'Hay Fever', 'The Provok'd Wife' and 'Medea'.

Mary married Michael Lewis and in a long and happy marriage had four children. After her funeral service on 6 December, a wonderful wake was held in the Apollo Bar when her friends and family shared happy memories of a lovely lady.

Her friend of many years,

Jill Farrell, has sent a tribute to Mary.

'Mary and I crossed paths many years before Alex and I moved to the Isle of Wight. As young 'girls about town' we both frequented the Devere club in South Kensington and other venues, in what was then the swinging sixties.

We were fortunate to meet again over twenty years ago in a production of Medea at the Apollo. Not our finest hour: we were members of the chorus, unsuitably dressed according to Michael Arnell, who described us as 'looking like a couple of Tetley teabags'.

I found Mary so easy to talk to and such fun to be with that inevitably we became firm friends. I looked forward to our Friday coffees and conversations which ranged from the bizarre, to the blissfully irreverent.

Mary loved life, and people were attracted to her warmth and vitality. She struck up conversations in the most natural way, in a queue, to people at adjoining tables, with all and sundry.

Truly a unique and lovely person. Mary will be missed by all who knew her, not least me.'

A review of 'No Man's Land' - from one who was there!

'The sheer beauty of this play should not be missed'

There is always an air of excitement when you shake the dust of the Island off your feet and travel afar to see a production that you have been eagerly awaiting for weeks. The anticipation is particularly palpable when you are going to see a play that you have been involved in; in this case 'No Man's Land' by Harold Pinter, with knights of the realm Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart in the lead roles. How could you not be excited?

The Apollo produced this play in 2003 so I was curious how different this interpretation would be. As with most professional productions, the set was superb and enabled the actors to move with ease into their roles. McKellen (Spooner) has a stage presence that just makes you feel proud to be in the same theatre as he and whilst Stewart was excellent in the role of Hirst, you always felt he was about to exclaim 'Beam me

up'. But joking aside, the two bounced off each other and it was a marvel to watch. Their performance was enhanced by Briggs (Owen Teale) and Foster (Damien Maloney), two rather sinister characters.

A full two-hour play that whizzed by, had us captivated, thrilled, enthralled and just full of wonder at watching these actors bring to life one of Pinter's best plays. There was not a weak link in the production, the Wyndhams bar prices were very reasonable (cheaper than the pub next door) which is always a bonus and the house was full.

As we left, the Stage Door manager was announcing that 'Patrick Stewart will not be coming out this evening'. A fleeting thought was soon despatched to the back of my mind – Ian McKellen came out years ago!! Then there he was, right in front of us Sir Ian McKellen, signing memorabilia and pro-

grammes. Helen just walked up to him, shook his hand, said how much she had enjoyed his portrayal of Spooner and left. I just forgot to ask him to sign my programme – starstruck I suppose. However, I did manage a conversation with Owen Teale whose role I played all those years ago. We conversed about it as he moved along the line signing other programmes. Was I thrilled? Just a bit.

Pinter may not be for everyone but the sheer beauty of this play should not be missed. It is being screened as part of NT Live at Cineworld on Thursday 15th December with an encore on Sunday 15th January (see page 7): don't miss this opportunity to see a great play performed by exceptional actors.

Steve Reading

The 100 Club is a fund-raising scheme which, as its name suggests, was originally formulated to hold 100 members. Each pays in £5 per month, and there is a monthly prize draw for £50 rising to £250 in February and £500 at the end of August, with the annual surplus being paid to the Trust. It began some years ago when The Apollo Trust was trying to raise funds for a Lottery bid to enable us to do in one fell swoop works which would modernise the building and make best use of the space. However, the Lottery changed the goalsposts and our bid came to nothing. Since then we have made a lot of progress in getting through

most of what had been planned with the help of the Apollo Players' contributions and those from the 100 Club, together with some much appreciated donations.

For those who don't know, The Apollo Trust (Isle of Wight) Limited, to give its formal name, is a charitable organisation which owns the buildings and equipment of the Theatre. The Theatre itself is a Grade 2* Heritage building which is a considerable responsibility. Because of its charitable status the Trust is able to claim relief on tax and rates, but costs of upkeep rise all the time and so we are tremendously grateful to members of the public and our own

members who support the 100 Club.

The winners of the monthly draws for this year are:

January: Mr Goodman;
February: Mr P Boffin;
March: Mrs McNeal; April: Mr Snellgrove; May: Mrs S Edwards; June: Mrs R Richards; July: Mr D Barnard; August: Mr Snellgrove; September: Mr P Gustar; October: Mr M Whitehead.

We always need new members of the Club as we don't hit the magic 100, so if you would like to join there are usually forms in the theatre foyer; fill one in and take it to your bank, dropping a note to the Box Office so that your name can be added to our list.

Cynara Crump, Trust Secretary

Join the
'100
Club'
and win!

More great live screenings

There are screenings of so many fabulous shows at Cineworld at the moment—not to mention at Ventnor Film Soc and other venues—that I thought it was worth reintroducing the listings I put in earlier issues of *Apollonius*. So over the next couple of months lovers of theatre, opera and ballet can enjoy:

THEATRE

15 December: NT Live 'No

Man's Land' (Patrick Stewart & Ian McKellen)

11 January 2017: RSC Live 'The Tempest' (Simon Russell Beale)

2 February: NT Live 'Amadeus' (Lucian Msamati)

16 February: NT Live 'Saint Joan' (Gemma Arterton)

OPERA

7 January 2017: Met Opera 'Nabucco' (Placido Domingo)

21 January: Met Opera,

Gounod's 'Romeo et Juliette'

31 January: ROH 'Il Trovatore'

BALLET

22 January 2017: Bolshoi Ballet, 'Sleeping Beauty'

5 February: Bolshoi Ballet, 'Swan Lake'

8 February: Royal Ballet, 'Wolf Works'

28 February: Royal Ballet, 'Sleeping Beauty'

LIVE
SCREENINGS



FROM
CINEWORLD

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

Instructions for accessing the members' area of the Apollo Theatre website.

- Go on to the website and hover over 'membership' and the 'members' area' tab should drop down;
- click on that and you'll get the message 'We're sorry, the content you are trying to reach is restricted to members only';
- click on 'member login'

and you'll get the drop-down box containing the two areas 'username' and 'password';

- 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 number. Your membership card has your number on

it, but if you can't find it check with the Membership Secretary or me;

- 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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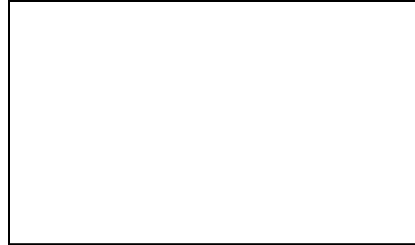
Phone:
(01983) 527267
email:
info@apollo-
theatre.org.uk

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

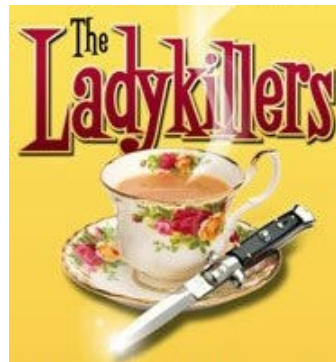
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Bringing good theatre to the Isle of Wight for more than 40 years



The Apollo Players' next production



**SHOW DATES:
3-4 & 7-11
FEBRUARY
2017**

In this classic black comedy, the redoubtable elderly widow Mrs. Wilberforce rents out rooms in her house to the dapper Professor Marcus and his cohort of thieves. Posing as a string quintet, they pull off a bank robbery, but slip up in front of the old lady as they try to escape. Agreed that they need to murder her, the bumbling crooks prove no match for Mrs Wilberforce. Sit back and enjoy this near flawless script and the familiar but somehow still sinister jokes.