



Forthcoming read-throughs, auditions & other production stuff

- 'Breaking the Code': read-through 28 October, 7.30pm in the bar
- 'Breaking the Code': auditions 14 November, 2.30pm in the auditorium
- 'Doubt': read-through 16 December at 7.30pm (location tba)
- 'Doubt': auditions 2 January, 2.30pm in the auditorium

Remember: a read-through is not an audition!

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT ISSUE:

Wednesday

Other diary dates (more info on the website)

Coffee mornings	Every Saturday, 10.00-12.00
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apollo

The in-house magazine of the Apollo Theatre Players, Newport, Isle of Wight

Issue no. 286

September 2021

'Ladies in Lavender' gets the season off to a flying start!

I would like to extend a great big 'thank you' to everyone involved in the staging of 'Ladies in Lavender' for rallying round to make the show a success. I've had a fairly intensive involvement with the play, as I had to cover for the director, Gwen Stevens, when she was in isolation, on holiday or had prior commitments—hence my writing this article. My thanks particularly to Gwen, who bravely undertook to direct the show at incredibly short notice, and to the cast, who worked day and night to master lines and create their wonderful characters. Michael Arnell's beautiful poster will rank



Paul Stevens and Abbi Leverton in 'Ladies in Lavender'

highly among the souvenirs of the show. The backstage crew amazed the cast with the rapid construction of a complex working set, with Paul Jennings patiently adjusting walls and rooms in a major house makeover! Pilchards popped out of star-gazy pies as props worked assiduously in the back-ground to keep all the balls in the air. Floaty, dreamy costumes descended from Wardrobe, giving a beautiful touch to a lovely nostalgic show. Mike Whitehead assiduously worked his magic on the sound effects creating a wonderful atmosphere, and a true star was born in the lighting box in the shape of Susan Simpson, who with a flick of a few switches lit the show with apparent ease—there were about 70 cues in total.

The grit and determination that went into the first production of this season is a true mark of the Apollo, and



Carole Crow & Cheryl Barrett in 'Ladies in Lavender'

here's hoping we go from strength to strength as the season progresses. The challenges faced with Covid have not disappeared and flexibility and adaptability will continue to be essential.

'A London Affair' had already put us on the starting blocks with the well-received Mortimer plays. It was great to have such an enthusiastic response from the membership; the involvement of so many high-calibre actors was a delight and we have broadened our base of potential new Directors. Most importantly, it helped us to dip our toes in the water again, inspiring our audiences with confidence.

Evelyn Hicks, Arts Director

'God of Carnage': the second show of the season

'Carnage' evokes different thoughts for different people. It's a synonym for massacre, a Swedish death metal band and one of Spiderman's adversaries. It is probably the complete opposite of calm. The play is about two sets of parents who are meeting to discuss the behaviour of their 11-year-old sons. One has injured the other and broken two of his teeth. The

cordial way in which the discussion progresses soon gives way to a more argumentative atmosphere as the couples spar first with each other and then male v female. Winner of the 2009 Tony Award for Best Play, Reza's dark comedy provides an excellent example of character development as the multiple layers of each character are gradually ex-

posed. Originally written in French and translated by Christopher Hampton, the scene is set in a Paris apartment. With a cast of Helen Reading and Joel Leverton, Amy Burns and Jason Harris the play deals with childlike themes but sometimes with adult language thrown in. This is definitely a play of our time and one which is well worth a watch.

Steve Reading, Director

Editorial: the view from the Editor's chair

O joy o bliss—at last, at long last a visit to the West End to see 'The Mirror and the Light', the dramatisation of the final part of Hilary Mantel's tale of the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell. The production itself brilliant, the performances wonderful (Ben Miles as Cromwell! O be still my beating heart!!) but most of all an almost visceral joy at being back in a professional theatre. I really hadn't appreciated just how much I'd missed it, nor how much the whole experience goes straight to the heart of those, like us, for whom theatre is what makes the world turn.

Mind you, as a columnist in this week's 'Observer' noted à propos a visit to the Royal Opera House (my dear!!), the fear and the nervousness at the unmasked crush have not gone away. The systems at the Gielgud, where I saw TM&TL, were

exceptionally efficient—Covid passes requested, queues marshalled through different doors, drinks booked in advance via an app etc—but I can't deny that there was a tension in the air still, reminding us that things aren't quite back to normal yet.

In the same issue of the 'Observer' an interesting article about the drama schools—by which I mean the Big Three, basically, LAMDA, RADA and Central, though of course there are plenty of others without shall we say quite the same cachet (not that that has any bearing on the quality of their alumnae: several of my contemporaries at Birmingham have gone on to make quite respectable names for themselves, including Phyllida Lloyd and Mark Thompson). Anyway, as the echo of the 'thud' of dropped names dies away, the article—illustrated with a

photograph of an impossibly young and callow Benedict Cumberbatch—focused, inter alia, on the difficulty of training young actors in a world in which the traditional Stanislavskian 'craft' has to give way to 'work-shopping' and such. Yes, we used to do plenty of improvisation to find a character, and yes, diversity and equality of experience were just as essential as they are today, and yes, GBS's views on eugenics are as distasteful as they always were, but we mustn't lose sight of what 'training' actually means for an actor. Stagecraft—enunciation, projection, movement—are as fundamental as they ever were—and it's only necessary to go to the West End or the National to hear actors using just those skills. They don't come naturally to most, and all of us can benefit from training in them.

News from the Apollo Theatre Trust



Dear members, you will shortly receive a Calling Notice for an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Apollo Players, at which the proposal to merge the Apollo Players with the Apollo Theatre Trust to form a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), will be presented to the Membership. We very much hope that as many members as possible will be able to attend and to vote on the proposals, which constitute the biggest

change to the Apollo since its inception fifty years ago. You have recently, I hope, been able to read about the merger in Apollonius. The EGM is called to consider two proposals :

- the merger of the two organisations; and
- the new structure, which will enable the theatre to be run more effectively by improving decision-making and providing better strategic direction.

You will be able to vote on the proposals electronically in the usual way, but we hope you will nevertheless be able to come along in person and ask any questions you may have.

In the meantime, do please take the opportunity to make sure you're aware of the issues and check out the documents in the members' area of the theatre website: <https://www.apollo-theatre.org.uk/membership/members-area/>

JOHN HANNAM

I'm sure you will all have heard of the recent death of John Hannam at the age of 80. His fame in later years came mainly from interviewing major stars of stage and screen including Dame Judi Dench, Brian Blessed, Bruce Forsyth and Roger Allam on radio and in print; though perhaps 'interviewing' is rather too robust a term for his gentle style of chat.



More of us, though, will remember him—whether fondly or otherwise—as the eminence grise behind the Isle of Wight Amateur Theatre Awards, aka the 'Island Oscars', which ran for many years. Great to see that the article in the CP about John was illustrated, inter alia, by a photograph showing John (in a slightly unfortunate jacket) giving an award to our own Steve Reading.

News from your Committee

Notes from the Committee meeting 23 August 2021

THEATRE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to welcome you all to the beginning of the 49th season of the Apollo Theatre Players. The past 18 months have been a very trying time, globally, nationally and also close to home here at the Apollo. This will be the last season of the current Committee, so let's make it a season to remember!

And a big piece of news: starting with the first four shows of 2022, we will be following up on regular requests from our audiences and making one performance per show a **matinee**. It will take place on the first Saturday of the run and doors will open at 1.30pm for curtain up at 2.30. This will be a pilot scheme, so we shall be reviewing its success at the end of the season.

ARTS MANAGER

I am delighted and relieved that 'A London Affair' took place without anybody having to isolate—a minor miracle! I had anticipated that what was on offer would constitute a good evening's entertainment, but by the end of the week performances exceeded expectations.

'Ladies in Lavender' is over by the time you read this, but it was a great achievement by all concerned. Actors put tremendous effort into getting to grips with the text at speed and developed their individual characters with ease and facility, so the hallmarks of a good production were

evident from an early stage.

This show showcased the technical side of the Apollo. The speed of set building was phenomenal with all hands on deck, and the first rehearsal on stage took place on 12 August. The sound effects were crucial to establish the right ambience, and thanks to Mike Whitehead this was achieved; the mimed violin playing was synchronized with sound to remarkable effect.

The reading for God of Carnage took place on 10 August and the show is now well into rehearsal. The author, Yasmina Reza, is recognised as an analyst of social hypocrisy; she says of her plays that they are about people who are well brought up but lose control of themselves. The running time for the show is 90 minutes and there will be no interval, as the play might lose dramatic impact.

The youth theatre are now back in action. For the Christmas show the theme will be circus, with elements of the Snow Queen. The staging will be simple, with a suggestion of scenery and some projection work; the support of additional adults would be appreciated as some physical work is envisaged.

HOUSE MANAGER

At last we were able to reopen after many months of closure due to Covid. The first production was a visiting company and they were made to feel very welcome bringing some useful new

patrons. It was a good opportunity to test out our Covid measures, which mostly worked OK, including table service in the bar. However, there were a couple of embarrassing issues which wouldn't have put the Apollo in a good light. Firstly, the uptake of volunteers was hugely disappointing; at one point we were going to run with no box office. The other issue was that the rear row of seats was out of order. Luckily our visitors didn't have a sell-out!

Our cleaners did an excellent job of making the theatre spick and span after such a long time. The bar floor was also scrubbed and cleaned by a few member volunteers.

On to our own production: 'A London Affair' was seen by 380 people, meaning we ran at 43% capacity, perhaps not a bad start. The rotas were not entirely filled and I'm eternally grateful to the few who stepped forward at the last minute to train on the box office. Many of these were actually in the play!! The response from the membership for key roles like FoH and Box Office was woeful. I ran another training session for Box Office in the lead-up to 'Ladies in Lavender', so let's hope that a few more volunteers will step forward for the next productions. How we overcome this problem is a mystery.

We had a booking from Graham Pountney's company to bring 'Journey's End' to the Apollo at the end of November, but sadly they had to cancel so there will be no more external hires this side of Christmas.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Theatre Director & Chair of management committee (elected 3-yearly): **Amy Burns** (2019-22) amy@masexodus.co.uk

Arts Manager (elected annually in Nov for season beginning following Sept)	Evelyn Hicks (2020-22) nevelyn.hicks@gmail.com	2 Members' Representatives (elected annually)	Kate Fysh (2019-20) katefysh@gmail.com
Business Manager (elected biannually)	Ginnie Orrey (2020-22) gginnie@googlemail.com or info@apollo-theatre.org.uk	House Manager (elected biannually)	Steve Reading (2019-21) steverreading104@btinternet.com
Marketing Manager (elected biannually)	Maureen Sullivan (2020-22) msullivan58@me.com	Technical Manager (elected biannually)	Dan Burns (2019-21) dan@masexodus.co.uk
Players' Secretary (elected biannually)	Mike Whitehead (2020-22) michaelwhitehead@yahoo.com	LTG rep	Cynara Crump cynaracrump@gmail.com
Membership Secretary (elected biannually)	Carole Crow (2019-21) carolecrow9@gmail.com	Apollo Trust Buildings Manager (co-opted)	Roger Simpson roger.dodger45@yahoo.co.uk

Casting call: 'Breaking the Code'

In September 1939, Alan Mathison Turing began an association with the Government Communication and Cypher School, situated at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire, that was to have a profound effect on the allied effort to break German codes during the second world war.

The Enigma machine, used extensively by German military to send secret communications, represented the ultimate challenge for those who worked at Bletchley Park. Breaking the codes that were sent by this machine was a vital component of the British government's response to the German war effort. It has been estimated that the success of the

code-breakers shortened the war by two years.

Hugh Whitmore's play focuses on two aspects of Alan Turing's life: as the leading force behind the team that cracked open these codes, and as a man whose sexual orientation placed him under the scrutiny of the British establishment. Despite Turing's monumental achievements in creating the means by which countless lives were saved, he was forced to undergo a course of treatment that caused hormonal changes to take place in his body. His choice was the treatment or imprisonment.

Alan Turing died at the age of forty-one. His legacy is all around us; he is regard-

ed as the creator of the modern computer, a universal device whose numbers have grown to over two billion worldwide.

A reading of Breaking the Code will take place on Thursday, 28 October at 7.30pm in the bar at the Theatre, and auditions are scheduled for Sunday 14 November at 2.30pm in the auditorium.

Performance dates are Friday 4 February to Saturday 12 February, 2022, excluding the 6th and 7th. All performances will commence at 7.30pm except for Saturday 5 February which will be a matinee commencing at 2.30pm.

Martin Ward, Director

'Through the

Wardrobe':

news from

the costume

department

by

Peggy

Harcourt

Suddenly in March last year, with 'When We Are Married' in rehearsal and costumes almost ready for opening night—we were locked down. Now we're back, and with 'Ladies in Lavender' we had a lovely play to start the season—late 1930s costumes to research and source from our stock or make new for our cast of five ladies and two men.

With a late decision to open the theatre and late auditions to cast, we had less time to find suitable fabrics for the era, in particular for our two leading ladies. From the large stock on the shelves (donated) and a trip to Southampton we had fabrics ready to cut out and sew eight new costumes from scratch!

Our men were easier, with simple alterations to waistcoat sizes, sleeve lengths (down) and trouser legs (up). The work was divided



between the five in the team, and we welcomed a new member, Di Crawford, who has proved a whizz with hand finishing.

Wigs were delivered, and with a push, right up to me finishing 'Ursula's' final dress at 3.00 on the afternoon of opening night, we were ready to go!

Dressing the cast each night and helping them with quick changes in the wings—as always demanding and pressured but great fun and satisfying. We had a great cast to work with, and it

was so good to hear from backstage the audience enjoying being back in our theatre.

And some good news: at last we have two volunteers to sort and catalogue the soft furnishings, a job that's been waiting to be done for years! Sheila Colenutt from props and another new member, Doreen, are tackling the frankly messy heap it has evolved into upstairs without anyone being responsible for it. They join our work nights on Tuesdays and hopefully they will get to the bottom of it—literally and figuratively!

So—a welcome return to all our volunteers in costume and props (with whom, of course, we work closely), and we are all looking forward to our theatre continuing to be 'open for business'.

Stay safe, everyone.

Peggy

An early casting call for 'Doubt'

'Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty.' Sooner than I know, I'll be holding auditions for 'Doubt: A Parable', so I invite all members to a reading of it on

16 December at 7.30. I'm looking for four actors who can get on with making a great performance while I put my feet up, so if this sounds like you please also come along to the

audition on 2 January at 2.30.

Susan Simpson, Director

From your Membership Secretary: members in the wars!



You will all know our talented member Fiona Gwinnett, and I'm sure were as shocked as I was to learn that she has recently under-

gone a major operation for bowel cancer. Thankfully she is now home, but she will have to undergo further treatment. It's not something I usually talk about in Apollonius but Fiona's very keen that we should all be aware of this silent disease and the necessity to complete the bowel cancer screening kit (aka Poohsticks!) when it drops through your letterbox. Fiona very nearly didn't bother, having had no symptoms whatsoever, but

thankfully something sub-consciously prompted her to do so. If you have any concerns, especially if you are passing blood, you can request an NHS kit even if you are under 60 or over 74 by calling 0800 707 60 60. We all wish Fiona a very speedy recovery and can't wait for her return to the Apollo stage.

Meanwhile she is very appreciative of the flowers from us all and sends a big 'Thank You'.

Another of our members had a very unfortunate accident during the run of 'Ladies In Lavender'. Having been beavering away behind the bar all evening, Maggie Cardew stepped out onto the forecourt and her leg gave way beneath her, causing her to damage several ribs as she fell. Why should her leg give way? I hear you ask. Well, possibly three or maybe four years ago Maggie had both hips replaced, and I understand the fixing into the top of the femur caused the bone to break without any warning. One very big OUCH. As I said, this is only my understanding of what happened, but I do

know a lot of pain was involved! Once in hospital she unfortunately contracted pneumonia, so surgery had to be postponed, and then there was a blood clot which meant her being transferred to Portsmouth for treatment. I am happy to report she is now back on the Island and surgery has been performed. Hopefully Maggie will soon be home with her family and on the road to recovery; I know we all send our best wishes for a speedy one.

A general message is that while emails and texts are much appreciated, she's



not really in a position to answer them. Her eyes are not strong enough to manage without some help and the lighting in the ward is not good enough. So please don't feel that lack of a reply is anything other than that.

We have two new members since my last update—Lesley (Lel) Pinn and Kurt Zauner, who are very happy to get involved with Apollo life; a very big welcome to you both!

The proposed new structure of our organisation is taking up a lot of our thoughts at the moment but I am always listening to ideas to bring members together on a regular basis. There has been a request for some **daytime activities** and consideration is being given to creating a regular twice-monthly afternoon slot. The second and fourth Wednesday of each month has been proposed. The content of the sessions could include play reading as an activity in itself, or for an in-house performance, themed readings of prose, poetry and the exploration of the works of our very own many talented writers. If this is of interest to you it would be useful to have feedback, plus any other suggestions. Ideas can then be passed on to the committee for consideration.

Don't forget the bar is open every Saturday morning between 10-12 for coffee and refreshments (cake has been abandoned in favour of hygienically wrapped biscuits!). Your presence—and even your help—will be very welcome!

Now that theatrical life is back to something resembling normal, it's probably worth taking this opportunity to remind everyone of the planned season for 2021-22. We are one play down and one in rehearsal, so looking good so far! The rest of the season looks like this (though do remember that at the moment anything could happen to change it!):

production/author	director	production dates
'Ladies in Lavender' (Shaun McKenna)	Gwen Stevens	17-25 September 2021
'God of Carnage' (Yasmina Reza)	Steve Reading	5-13 November 2021
The Devils' Mirror' [Youth Group production]	Mish Whitmore	17-19 December 2021
'Breaking the Code' (Hugh Whitmore)	Martin Ward	4-12 February 2022
'Dangerous Obsession' (NJ Crisp)	Glenys Lloyd Williams	1-9 April 2022
'Doubt' (Patrick Shanley)	Susan Simpson	20-28 May 2022
'Memory of Water' (Shelagh Stephenson)	Maggie Cardew	15-23 July 2022

Access details to the members' area of the 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 a drop-down box will appear containing the two areas 'username' and 'password';
- In the top area enter your 'username', which is first-name.secondname' (remember the dot between the words), and in the bottom box enter your password, which is your membership number.

Once you've done this you should get straight into the members' area. If not, there's a problem and you need to let Ginnie Orrey (webmistress) know, but try these steps first.



Your letters

So glad that the Apollo is up and running again, I have many fond memories. A long time ago I was one of the serfs who helped with the sets and stuff that I was totally inept at, but was forgiven at the pub later if I got the beer in.

But what I want to share is my memory of a magical evening when myself and nine good friends went to see *The Tempest*. I organised a Prosecco and buffet pre-show meeting at the Union, cabs organised, a quick snifter in the theatre bar, and blimey the play was so well performed and staged. Oh, we all enjoyed the whole night. More please!

Hic

Julian S Badenoch

[While this isn't technically a letter to 'Apollonius', I felt that the link to us was strong enough to justify its inclusion. It is from Jo Mathews, an Apollo member and also Chair of the LTG,

and she has been kind enough to make mention of us in her 'Chairman's Letter' in this issue of the LTG magazine. We are much honoured! Ed]



What a joy it's been to visit our theatres as they slowly re-open after being preserved in aspic by their caring and conscientious members. I've been to shows at both 'my own' theatres, the Apollo in Newport, Isle of Wight and The Questors in Ealing, and along with your Newsletter Editor to the Corn Exchange in Wallingford, the Abbey in St Albans and The Tower in Islington. We were warmly welcomed at each theatre and were

incredibly impressed with all the efforts being made to reassure members and audiences alike that they are 'Seeing it Safely' as the UK Theatre/SOLT kitemark says. Indeed, looking at the future, it's a thought that having that or a similar badge demonstrating that a certain standard of anti-virus measures is in place will become the norm.

**Come on
back—
your
theatre
needs you!**

by

**Maureen
Sullivan**

You may have read an article I recently wrote for the Island Echo: <https://www.islandecho.co.uk/getting-back-to-normal-island-theatres-need-your-support/> in which I noted the reluctance of many people to brave a return to local theatres, whether as an audience member or part of a theatre group. The Apollo Players is not alone in missing seeing many of our members at the moment, at coffee mornings and our plays.

If you are one of those who are unsure about whether to come along to see a show, to help out front of house or to audition for a role, please know

that all of us are feeling, or have felt, the same way, and the committee have put in place as many arrangements as we can to help everyone feel safe around the building: screens in the box office and bar; sanitiser stations; encouragement for patrons to wear masks moving around the theatre and so on.

I was similarly reluctant to get back to theatre activities after months of being at home, but as soon as I did I remembered the thrill of contributing to the success of a show, whether onstage, backstage or enjoying the camaraderie front of house, making

coffee, selling tickets or welcoming our audiences—all part of the buzz of live theatre!

If you are teetering on the edge of making that step, come on in and let us help you rediscover your love of our amazing theatre. If there is something we can reasonably do to help you feel happier about coming in, please let us know. And if you would like to chat to a committee member about coming back—or just chat!—again, drop us a message: a letter, phone call, email or whatever. We have almost 200 members and would love to see every one of them in and around the theatre again.

Well, I must say, this 'occasional' series has turned out to be rather longer than anticipated. Admittedly I've had no feedback either way about my musings on novels I've come across which are set in the theatre, but looking at it positively, it could mean that you're all speechless with enthusiasm about the books I've mentioned. It could also, I suppose, mean that you're all thinking 'if I don't say anything perhaps she'll give up and go away.' But being an optimistic soul I will assume the former and share with you another batch of novels I've enjoyed enough to want to recommend them to you.

First up, a couple of books by Anthony Quinn. If you haven't discovered him I can't recommend his writing too strongly: his novels are always set in an historical period and the writing is so good that they always feel absolutely authentic. I'm including three in this series: '**Curtain Call**' and its two sequels, '**Freya**' and '**Eureka**'.

In '**Curtain Call**', set just before the second World War, Nina, a West End actress, faces a dilemma: she shouldn't have been at the hotel in the first place, and certainly not with a married man. But once it becomes apparent that she has seen the face of the man the newspapers have dubbed 'the Tie-Pin Killer' she realises that unless she acts quickly, more women will die...

From the glittering murk of Soho's underworld, to the grease paint and ghostlights of theatreland, *Curtain Call* is a poignant and gripping story about love and death in a society dancing towards the abyss.

The two subsequent novels take us to the seedy world

of film-makers in London in the 1960s. The books are loosely linked but also stand alone, and together form a hugely enjoyable trilogy. In a way, though, the plots of Quinn's novels aren't really the point—for me, anyway. The books are always absolutely meticulously plotted, but his brilliance lies in capturing the ambience of an age: from the grimness of pre- and post-war Britain to the feel of walking through London in the immediate aftermath of the Great Fire (if you're interested, that's '**The Ashes of London**' and it's fantastic).

Next up—William Boyd's 2020 novel '**Trio**'. The trio of the title are a once-successful novelist who has writer's block and a secret alcohol problem, a film producer who is covertly gay and a film star who is quietly on all kinds of pills while having a clandestine affair with her co-star. The year is 1968. The three stories are intertwined to create a story about the absurd business of film-making, the desperate business of writing a novel and the ludicrous business of acting, and being William Boyd it's quite brilliant and pulls you in and doesn't let you go.

One more that I can't recommend too highly: Graham Swift's novel '**Here We Are**', which centres on Evie White, who fifty years before was an assistant to magician Ronnie Deane, known on stage as the Great Pablo. She was also engaged to him; Jack was the compere who introduced Pablo and Evie to the crowd on Brighton Pier each evening, before running round to the back of the audience to watch the show. This is really Ronnie's story; it follows his evacuation during the blitz from east London to an old house where he was taught magic; his alienation

when he returns home and finds that it's home no longer; his national service and path into performing with Evie and Jack. At the novel's climax, there's a description of Ronnie's act which is as enthralling as anything you'll read this year.

I have to finish up with what was for me the most powerful book I've read in years—I'm tempted to say 'ever' but that would be trying to compare chalk with cheese—'**Station Eleven**', by Emily St John Mandel. To begin with, it was written in 2014 and is set in the aftermath of a devastating flu-like virus which devastates the world and kills the vast majority of the population (2014, remember ...). This alone, along with the quality of the writing as it weaves characters in and out of the story almost in the style of Anthony Powell's '**Dance to the Music of Time**', make it a brilliant book; but then the protagonist, Kirsten, finds herself surviving 'the collapse' by joining a troupe, The Traveling Symphony, as they journey through the now wild countryside of Canada. The novel miraculously catches the sense of terror and unspoken panic that gripped our world post-2019, and captures elegiacally the way the world twenty years on has changed beyond imagining—one chapter begins 'Twenty years after the end of air travel ...'. And it captures the way the new world still longs for music and plays—as well as hilariously the way theatricals always have and always will bicker about stuff ('Dieter did harbour considerable resentment towards the second horn because of something she'd once said about his acting'). A wonderful book. Read it, if you read nothing else I've recommended.

**In no. 4 of
the
occasional
series,
Ginnie Orrey
shares some
more novels
set in the
theatre**



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



The Apollo Players' next production



'God of Carnage'

by

Yasmina Reza

5-13 November 2021

Michel and his wife Veronique are hosting an uncomfortable little tea party for another couple, Alain and Annette. The connection between the two couples is the assault by the visitors' 11-year-old son Ferdinand on the hosts' slightly younger son Bruno. The initial exchanges between the couples are predictably strained, as each fights to protect the reputation of their own son, while diplomatically seeking peace, like politicians at the end of a lengthy war. Audiences can expect a certain amount of adult language; as the author herself said, "My plays are about people who are well brought up but lose control of themselves."