

July 2020



Spotlight

Editor: Liz Pearce Contact me by emailing: secretary@stageonetheatre.com

If you have any articles you would like included in the next Spotlight, please ensure you get them to me before the 25th of the month.

‘All The World’s A Stage’

We have all seen our share of drama in the past weeks. Unfortunately none of it has taken place in Paphos’ own Stage One Theatre in Emba Village.



To quote another famous line ‘**From the ashes of disaster grow the roses of success**’. The only regular company for live drama in Paphos has the chance to regroup, rethink and of course re-open so that actors and crews can once again bring live drama to appreciative audiences.

The group also has the chance to make changes, to bring the kind of theatrical experiences that lovers of live drama enjoy. With only four productions a year it isn’t always possible to cater to every taste. So this is now the chance for you to let the Stage One Committee know what you would like to see live on stage once the go-ahead is given to start again.

First a reassurance; when the permission is given it may come with certain caveats. Audiences will be assured that all instructions for their safety will be met.

Now comes the appeal: Stage One wants your input into what kind of plays you would like to see. Comedy, thriller, farce, musical, classic, all can be considered. If you have seen a play that could be presented at Stage One include the title. Don’t hold back because we are amateurs. We have a great deal of talent in our directors, actors, back stage crews, set designers and builders.

Stage One will continue and with your help and support provide great live entertainment to young and old. Unlike tribute artists we are the real deal.

Send your favourite choices and ideas to: treasurer@stageonetheatre.com

More Info: Caroline 26911641

SUPPORT LIVE THEATRE

www.stageonetheatre.com

Midsummer Play Nightmare To Stage

Shakespeare at Kourion presents

A Midsummer Night's Dream



Ancient Kourion Amphitheatre

Thurs 23rd, Fri 24th, Sat 25th July at 8pm

Adults - €20.....Under 12 - €5
(Online sales ONLY - 24hrs prior)

www.SoldOutTicketbox.com

Government restrictions apply, visit-

www.shakespeareatcurium.com

CyprusMail 75
Supporting Cyprus Charities

This is the play which inspired director John McTiernan to set 1988 blockbuster *Die Hard* over the course of one night; informed Henry Purcell's celebrated opera *The Fairy Queen*; and was slated by renowned diarist Samuel Pepys, who – though he professed to enjoy the dancing and the women – suggested it was 'the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw'. How wrong he was!

A Midsummer Night's Dream has gone on to be one of the Bard's best-loved plays, a mesmerising comedy in which characters' hopes, dreams and plans fall apart – only to be salvaged at the last moment. Much like, it transpires, this year's production of the play by the Performance Arts for Cyprus Charities, who have had to contend with their own host of challenges in staging the annual Shakespeare at Curium.

Consistently held at the end of June, this year's SAC has had to be pushed back beyond a whole month to allow for the lifting of as many restrictions as possible, according to Publicity Officer Sian Fryett. "Due to the lockdown, we initially took a decision to postpone the performances. We needed to ensure the lockdown was over, and that people were comfortable with coming to the play."

Health Minister Constantinos Ioannou has recently resolved many concerns, and announced the reopening of open-air cinemas and theatres: "We all need to realise that if we keep the self-protection measures such as a two-metre distance and the other measures we have announced, there is no reason for concern," the minister said.

But social distancing brings its own set of challenges for the informal, open-air seating at Curium: reduced audience numbers are also on the cards, according to Transport Minister Yiannis Karousos. Visiting the site recently, the minister suggested that "Ancient Curium has a capacity of around 1,700 people, so we can think of reopening to events scheduled on site, maybe with 500 or 600 people." Which means that while *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be going ahead – albeit a month late – the proverbial 'book early to avoid disappointment' is now the rule rather than a recommendation!

Taking place on July 23, 24 and 25, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will now certainly be playing to smaller numbers than usual. "We're aware that we'll be playing to a smaller capacity than usual," says Sian. "But we're just glad to be going ahead. In 2018 we had to abandon our annual performance for the first time in over half a century when we couldn't make up a cast – and that was also going to be *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! So when we initially heard about the lockdown, cast and crew were all very disappointed....." The frustrations, however, didn't put a stop to rehearsals. "Throughout the lockdown we held rehearsals on Zoom in the hope that we'd be able to go ahead," Sian reveals. "Fortunately, the play lends itself perfectly to small groups working together – the lovers, the mechanicals, the fairies – and we were able to rehearse online two or three times a week. It gave everyone a really good chance to learn their lines!" she laughs, "and allowed for a good bit of character work as well."

As measures have slowly lifted, the cast have been meeting in person: working in groups of 10 or less as per the government instructions. And now, with performances just a month away, this cultural institution will open at the end of July to, if not a packed house, then certainly a highly appreciative audience! "A Midsummer Night's Dream is an exploration of dreams and reality," says director Polina Isakharova, who has been working with the cast throughout the measures to ensure a performance as perfectly polished as one would expect. "As in our daily life everyone we meet is living in their own story and each event has multiple perspectives; all characters live within the rigid expectations of their society and the world of their dreams which reveal to them their deepest desires and fears..."

Star-crossed lovers, magical moments and hilarious happenings: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* promises the ultimate diversion for audiences too long confined. Revel in ancient Athenian mishaps and arboreal confusions as our four paramours (Hermia, Helena, Lysander and Demetrius) and six rude mechanicals (Quince the carpenter, Snug the joiner, Bottom the weaver, Flute the bellows-mender, Snout the tinker, and Starveling the tailor) tangle with the King and Queen of the fairies. It's exactly the sort of escapist entertainment we need!

STEPHEN POSTGATE
Fine Art M.A.

Stephen has been painting in Cyprus since 2011 when he arrived on a grant from Chateaufort College for a short residence at the Cyprus College of Art in Lempa. He returned, finding himself, over subsequent years to paint and improve at the Cornaro Institute in Larnaca and then in a studio in the Kamarea Paphos.

Stephen has exhibited in Prague, France, London and Cyprus.

He has recently drawn on his performance comedy experience to play the lead role in Billy Liar at the Embos Stage One theatre last March shortly before the lockdown.

It is during this current period of restriction he made the sculptures you will see on display.

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THE HEAT OF CYPRUS STONE RADIATES INTO YOUR EYES AND HANDS.

IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYELIDS YOU CAN STILL SEE THE WARMTH OF THE SUN FLOOD THROUGH YOUR SKIN.

IF YOU OPEN THEM SLIGHTLY THERE IS A BRIGHT CHALKY ROAD THAT LEADS TO AN ELEGANT MONASTERY ENCASED IN THICK GREEN TREES.



THE DENSE, SLOWLY FADING, SUNSET SOAKS ORANGE RAYS UP THE RAVINE WITH A GREY STORM OF DARKNESS BROODING BEHIND THE MONASTERY. TWITCHING RABBITS GAZE OUT OF ROCKS AND UNDERGROWTH DOWN TO THE OLD CARPENTERS WORKSHOP, NOW THE MAKERS SPACE, REMEMBERING THEIR FRIENDS THE TINY ELEPHANTS AND WONDERING WHAT THEY WOULD BE THINKING OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS ACTIVITIES BELOW.



OPENING EVENING
Saturday 18th July 7.30pm
Duration 19th to 24th July
TIMES:
Open every day 10am-1pm 4pm-7pm
ADDRESS:
The Gallery at The Makos Space
Aptis Neophytou Avenue, Tala - Paphos
20m to station: Aptis Neophytou Monastery



ATLANTICUS MERCURIA

Support our very own Billy Liar [Stephen Postgate](#) at the exhibition in Tala

How a Playwright Coined a Famous Phrase

If anyone has ever stolen your thunder, you might be consoled by the surprisingly literal story behind this idiom.

It's very rare for etymologists to pinpoint the very first use of a word or phrase. In this case, however, several contemporary sources recount the events that led to the very idea of stealing someone's thunder – that is, winning praise for oneself by pre-empting someone else (and we've all been there).

The story involves an 18th century individual named John Dennis, an actor-manager and playwright of little renown. On February 5th 1709, a production of Dennis's play *Appius and Virginia* opened at London's Drury Lane Theatre. The venue was badly in need of a success following the loss of six weeks of performances to royal mourning when Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, had died.

Unfortunately, Dennis's play was not to be one of them. It was judged to be ponderous in the extreme and downright boring, and survived only four nights before it was unceremoniously closed. Even the inclusion of a theatrical first failed to save the play. Dennis had invented a contraption that mimicked the sound of thunder more closely than any other traditional devices. No records exist of quite how it worked, but he may well have used a sheet of tin, or a machine that rolled a drum over wooden troughs. Whatever it entailed, it was clearly successful enough to be pinched by the company who were succeeding Dennis's ill-fated play with a production of *Macbeth*.

Perhaps out of solidarity, Dennis himself went along to the opening night, only to be outraged by an all-too-familiar sound booming from the stage. He is said to have stood up in indignation and shouted, "Damn them! They will not let my play run... but they steal my thunder!" If only Dennis knew that, while his play may have been lacklustre, one of his inventions – a linguistic one – was to prove as enduring as the words of any of his rivals, including the writer of *Macbeth* – one William Shakespeare.



THEATRE IS ABOUT ‘WE’, NOT ‘ME’ by Gary Jerry, *Freelance Director*

I want you to think about the best comment someone has ever given to you following a performance. I remember the first time I completed a performance of *Spring Awakening* in January 2011, and being mesmerised by one thing. The fact you could hear a pin drop across the theatre as the lights went down, and the occasional sob or sniff trying to be held back. I was sitting in the bar later that night, trying to work out what had actually just happened. Two and half hours had passed, yet I couldn't remember anything but that single moment of silence. For all I know, I could've completely changed the script, danced around with a lion mask on, or corpsed at every line. Absolutely no recollection of how it went or what we did. The one thing I did feel was physically and mentally drained - like a ton of bricks had been pressed down on me, and then I'd been released and freed from it all. I looked at my fellow cast members, we sat in silence - nothing needed to be said. Then I looked at some audience members also in the bar - they looked just as shellshocked as us. We - and by that, I mean the audience and the cast/orchestra, had shared in something special. Something unique. And the reason why I know it was unique is because I have no idea what I would have to do to replicate it!

Being in a theatre should feel like being in one big bubble. A bubble with no walls - just one big sphere being shared by all those inside it - a connection between audience and performer. A chance to escape from all of the troubles and issues of the world outside the bubble. It's safe and protecting from societies issues. You are allowed to laugh, you are allowed to cry, you are allowed to be angry against injustice and know that you will receive no kind of criticism from anyone else. It's part of the reason why I think I despise the notion of allowing any phones into a theatre - taking pictures of these unique moments and posting them 'outside of the bubble' makes them lose their spark. And if someone else sees another patron taking a picture that instantly also takes them out of the bubble too. Theatre is magical because it is live - taking a picture or a video simply cannot in any shape or form replicate the beauty of seeing right before your eyes and being able to breathe it in and live it. Immerse yourself and embrace it - fully letting go can be scary, but it is incredibly rewarding.

As actors, we need to remember to be in the 'present' - we can learn from our characters' past, but never pre-empt their future as no one truly knows what your future holds. An audience longs to see a truthful performance - they can spot liars a mile off, and it seems many audiences will disconnect if they suspect that an actor isn't being truthful.

Truthfulness is often a challenge in a musical due to the fact we have an added medium of music. But then that should beg the question, why do we sing in a musical? We sing because words are no longer enough to describe the extremities of the true emotion we are feeling. If we just felt a rather bland version of that feeling (ie slightly happy or slightly sad), words would suffice. Adding a melody is a way of pushing forward beyond the constraints of lexicon and colouring the voice with more emotion to truly show how strongly we feel about something. That's why we must 'play' and 'explore' to find our closest possible version of a truthful performance in the safety of our bubble. (See, it all connects!)

We are all striving to be the best actors and creatives we can be, and this can only be achieved with trust and the knowledge that no-one is judging their first or second attempts of making magic happen. In fact, judgement should go out the door within art. One person's opinion on how to rate a piece of art, be it through a stars system, or through their own personal thoughts doesn't mean your art should be based on that. I'm tired of shows being judged on how many awards they have, what a reviewer (who can be biased either way) says or how many Twitter followers the show's official account has. Every piece of art, every night of a show, every single moment in a musical/play/piece of art should be **UNIQUE**. So how can each unique moment be judged as a reflection of what a production will be like the next evening or the following month? Don't rate art. Just enjoy what it brings to you as an individual, and see how it can affect the "we" around you. It continues to bring me a lot of joy, and does my soul a world of good on a daily basis.

Going back to thinking about my favourite comment - that *Spring Awakening* opening night in West London. One woman came up to me as I headed home and said to me "You don't know me, but I want you to know one thing - I will hug my children extra tight tonight, and I will be a lot more open to whoever they want to be". That comment has lived with me every day since - our production, our experience made that happen. I long to make more theatre that can create such a feeling in both creative and audience member.