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### **LTG National Conference 13 – 15 May 2022, Southport Little Theatre**

Everyone at Southport Dramatic Company looks forward to seeing you at our long-awaited real-life AGM & conference in May 2022.

A really relevant and enjoyable programme has been put together for you to learn, discuss and take-home useful information for your theatres. **Please note that our plans below are well in hand, but changes may be necessary before May.**

We hope that as many of you as possible will make it for the Friday supper and light entertainment: nothing too taxing is planned as many will have had a long journey and will just want to chill.

The overall programme for the weekend will follow a familiar path but here is a guide to the workshops that will be on offer, as well of course as the AGM and Open forum on the Saturday. It is planned that each workshop will be held twice, (other than *Sustainable Theatre*) so you will be able to attend all of them if you wish. The Saturday performance will be the *Vicar of Dibley*, giving us some much-needed laughter.

#### ***Sustainable Theatre***

We are in a world of life-threatening temperature rise, over-exploited resources, and declining biodiversity. Making our theatre buildings part of the answer and not the problem is a huge challenge but one we must meet head-on. Dave Moutrey and Peter Wright will introduce us to making our theatre buildings more sustainable, even those that are ageing and under-invested. Dave will tell us of the journey undertaken at HOME in Manchester and about the section in the Theatres Trust Green Book on theatre buildings; Peter will take us through the transformation of an old pumping station which provided water to the now, long gone, local mills with sustainability of the infrastructure in mind from the start.

*Dave Moutrey* - Dave is Director and Chief Executive of HOME and Director of Culture for Manchester City Council. Dave has worked as an arts professional for over 30 years.

*Peter Wright* - Peter is Artistic Director of Romiley Little Theatre, near Stockport. The theatre lacked a permanent home for many years and he was instrumental in securing a derelict building for its use. Over the last 10 years he has overseen its conversion into a studio theatre, designed to be as sustainable as possible on a very tight budget.

*This session will be of general interest and as many decisions on your theatre's infrastructure will need to be made in the near or medium future, techies will be particularly engaged.*

#### **Guy Unsworth – Directing and Acting**

Guy is a highly successful and respected director and Associate Director for major national celebrations and international events. Some of those include: Associate on *Spamalot*, (West End); Producer for 70th Birthday Celebrations for HRH Prince Charles (Buckingham Palace); Associate Director on The 90th Birthday celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen (Windsor Castle); Associate on *Travels With My Aunt* (Menier Chocolate Factory); Resident on *Dandy Dick* (UK Tour), Creative Associate on *Megan Mullally* and Supreme Music Program (West End); Assistant on *The Beggar's Opera* (Regent's Park), *Tick, tick...BOOM!* (Duchess, West End), *Oleanna* (Octagon).

As a director, credits include:

*Bring It On* (Southbank Centre); *My Fair Lady* (Grange Festival Opera & The Liceu, Barcelona); *Julius Caesar* (Fort Canning Park, Singapore); *Of Mice and Men* (UK Tour); *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (UK Tour); *Hand To God* (Singapore Repertory Theatre); *Moving Stories* (Haymarket, West End and Houses of Parliament); *The Food of Love* (Cadogan Hall, Royal Festival Hall); *Cool Rider* (Lyric & Duchess, West End); *The Collector, Death and the Maiden* (English Theatre Frankfurt); *Cinderella* (Manchester Opera House, Nottingham Theatre Royal); *Snow White* (Manchester Opera House); *A Night with Bonnie Langford* (London Hippodrome, Richmond Theatre); *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Cockpit); *Play-in-a-Day Series* (London Bridge Tunnels); *Metamorphosis* (British American Drama Academy); *The Bear Who Paints* (Pleasance Edinburgh); *Proof* (NSDF Finals).

*This workshop will help improve the skills of actors and directors.*

### ***Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in our Theatres***

Many of our theatres started off as a group of local enthusiastic thespians, creating a cosy, exclusive membership club. Moving through the 21st century as an organisation that welcome everyone and offers them culture they can identify with and take part in, can be a challenge for our structures and behaviours. Hear how three of our theatres have taken it head-on, with clear plans and actions successfully undertaken and implemented. Followed by a Q&A.

*Brain Stoner, Bingley Little Theatre* - Brian is a member of the LTG National Committee and a key member of Bingley, currently holding the post of Artistic Co-ordinator. Together with colleagues at Bingley, Brian has worked on a strategy plan covering three years which he will share with us.

*Anne-marie Greene, Criterion Theatre, Coventry* - Anne-marie is Artistic Director at the Criterion and has spear-headed their Diversity Action plan. Anne-marie has just acted in *The Gift* by Janice Okoh - described as 'An outrageous play about imperialism, cross-racial adoption, cultural appropriation – and tea'. She will share the planning of the play in the season, the experience and future plans.

*Landé Belo, The Tower Theatre, Islington* - The new Artistic Directorate of a team of three at The Tower, Islington worked together in 2020 with director Landé Belo to create a strong cultural diversity policy, now truly embedded in the appointment of playwrights, directors and cast as well as productions teams. Landé, senior counsel and employment lawyer, and director of recent success, *Mules*, will talk us through her ambition to drive positive change in the theatre community and how The Tower's contribution to Black History Month in 2021 came about. ***Please note: Landé will speak at the Saturday session only.***

*Andrew Sharpe, Criterion Theatre, Coventry LTG Rep and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working party member* - Andrew is an ex-Lawyer. He is also a playwright and his plays have had Fringe runs at the Old Joint Stock, Birmingham (*Songs from a Ledge* 2014); Maltings, St Albans; Pumphouse, Watford (*Three Sharpe Shorts* 2019); and in London, Theatre N16 (*Goodnight Polly Jones* 2015); Chapel Playhouse (*My Name is Cathy* produced by KatAlyst 2019). Recently his full-length play *Spiral Path* was produced by KatAlyst/Mad Stallion at St Albans Maltings and transferred to the White Bear in London. He became aware of systemic and subconscious bias within Fringe theatre several years ago, and will talk about his response, developing his practice to identify barriers unseen from a position of privilege, notably with the plays *Barricades* and *The House at the End of Empire*. Please note: Andrew will speak at the Sunday session.

*This session features case studies of approaches to greater diversity, and will be of general interest, particularly for those involved in governance and programming.*

## **Life After Covid**

Your National Committee endeavoured to steer you through the vicissitudes of covid legislation and we learned how you faced the challenges by means of your Year Book entries and in more depth in our February 2022 survey. In this session we'll examine the evidence in more detail and discover what lessons can be learned from your experiences. We'll ask you to contribute to hints and tips for the future so that we are all more prepared for similar business interruption, should it happen. We'll also put into the mix the findings of the Centre for Cultural Value's research project exploring the impact of covid on the UK cultural sector. The session will be led by Professor Helen Nicholson of Royal Holloway, London University. Along with colleagues from Manchester University, Helen is engaged in research into the role of amateur theatres in towns and has comprehensive knowledge of some of our theatres and an overview of our whole movement.

*This session is of general interest, and those of you involved in the governance and artistic direction of your theatres particularly.*

### **Writing for Television with Steve Thompson**

Those of you who enjoyed Steve's talk at Southport in 2012 are in for another delight. Having had great success as a stage playwright, Steve is now an established TV writer and had great success over Christmas 2021 with the atmospheric, dark drama *Vienna Blood*. Steve will share his transition from stage to screen and how television writing differs in important ways, and there'll be hints and tips on getting into scriptwriting. Steve's debut professionally performed play *Damages* opened at the Bush Theatre in 2004 and won the Whitworth Award in 2005. In 2006, *Whipping It Up* premiered at the Bush before transferring to the New Ambassadors in the West End and was later nominated for Best New play in the Olivier Awards 2007. *Roaring Trade* premiered at the Soho Theatre in 2009 and *No Naughty Bits* at Hampstead Theatre in 2001. Moving into TV, credits include *Sherlock*, *Silk* and *Doctor Who*. Timed perfectly at the peak of the TV year, *Vienna Blood* served to bring Steve to the forefront of public awareness of him as a scriptwriter.

*Steve is an engaging speaker, and his talk will be enjoyable for all, and of particular interest to budding writers.*

### **Youth Theatre Workshop led by Paul Wilkinson**

Paul Wilkinson – a Southport Youth Theatre leader - will facilitate a fun and informal drama workshop session for adults and young people. The session will be a practical workshop based around improvisation and immersive theatre, and we hope it will be an opportunity to share ideas on games and exercises which may help to get the best out of your actors during a rehearsal.

Paul has been performing and directing with a variety of community groups and professional organisations for over 40 years. He has toured extensively with a number of theatre companies, performing throughout the UK, Germany and Scandinavia. In 2004 Paul was a founding member of Table Nine Productions based in Berkshire, and he was director and co-founder of Inner Sense, an Arts & Disability organisation providing multi-sensory theatre workshops for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

*SDC are at the forefront of Youth Theatre activity and sharing their expertise will be particularly useful for those of you who have youth groups, as well as actors and directors.*

### **Guest Speaker - Tim Firth**

We are delighted that we can be joined on Sunday morning by Tim Firth. Tim has had a distinguished career as a playwright and dramatist for TV and film. His ability to combine serious human issues with pathos, humour and understanding are legend and have won him numerous

awards. In our world, his plays have made him one of our most popular choices, including *The Flint Street Nativity*, *Calendar Girls*, *Neville's Island*. Other plays and musicals include *The Safari Party*, *Sign of the Times*, *Our House*, *This is My Family*, *The Band*. Films include *The Wedding Video*, *Kinky Boots*, *Calendar Girls* and *Blackball*. TV work includes *Trapped*, *Cruise of the Gods*, *Border Café*, *The Flint Street Nativity*, *Neville's Island*, *Once Upon a Time in the North*, *All Quiet on the Preston Front*.

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*We promise you a warm welcome. Our Chairman, Jo Matthews has not been able to enjoy a 'normal,' happy, worthwhile conference and I know she has plans to see/ chat to everyone, together with our Secretary, Caroline and the National Committee. I, too, together with my friends on the Steering Group for the Conference and members, are preparing our theatre for your visit. Thank you, Margaret (Mann.)*