

# Warwick School Drama 2010-11



## GUYS & DOLLS

The Michaelmas term will be long remembered for the fantastic production of *Guys and Dolls*, produced during the latter part of November. Following a demanding schedule of rehearsals the cast of 35 students from Warwick and King's High, supported by musicians and crew from both Schools, delivered a first-class week of performances to a packed Bridge House Theatre. Whilst many were new to musical theatre the production was hugely enjoyable and produced some outstanding performances – not least from **Edward Skudra** (Nathan Detroit), **David Pegna** (Sky Masterson), **Charlie Hamblett** (Nicely-Nicely Johnson) and **Ralph Davis** (Benny Southstreet). It once again demonstrated the exceptional standard of performance at Warwick School.

## Foundations Youth Theatre

New Drama teacher Jane Gurnett and RSC and TV actor **Patrick Robinson** re-launched our Saturday workshop group as the FOUNDATIONS YOUTH THEATRE. They produced a dynamic and unusual interpretation of *Julius Caesar* performing three times on **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March**. The production was in promenade (meaning the audience moved to different spaces for various scenes – mainly at gunpoint thanks to the company of what felt like mafia hit-men). The company are now working on a show for a **Canadian Tour** in 2012 – an adaptation of *Alice through the Looking Glass*.



## Film in 5 with Warwick Words

As part of this year's Warwick Words Festival, Drama students in the M5 worked with a film screenplay writer and a film maker to plan, write and shoot their own film. '**Captured in Time**', a Ghost story, which was shown as part of the Festival. The creative team consisted of Joshua Heathcote, Jack Dean, Jack Foden, Rowan Walker Gibbons, Saul Asghar and Michael Ballard.

## Boys making professional debuts at The National Theatre, RSC and in the West End



**Hamish Riddle** (L - Second from left), who left in 2010 with an A in Drama and Theatre Studies, is taking a gap year. As a member of the National Youth Theatre he was invited to audition for 'Prince of Denmark' a new play presented at the National Theatre in October. He was cast in an ensemble role in the production which was performed in the Cottesloe Theatre.



**Charlie Hamblett** (U6) (R- third from left) was cast in the first event at the new **Royal Shakespeare Theatre** directed by **Greg Doran** for an invited audience of RSC

staff and Alumni. He performed in a specially adapted version of 'Seven Ages of Man' as 'The Lover'. It was a tremendous achievement to be given the opportunity of being one of the very first performers in what is an amazing new theatre space. Following this Charlie made his adult professional debut in **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead** at the Chichester Festival Theatre and now in the West End. Sir Trevor Nunn has cast him again as **Ariel** in his forthcoming production of **The Tempest** alongside **Ralph Fiennes**.



## Theatre Visits

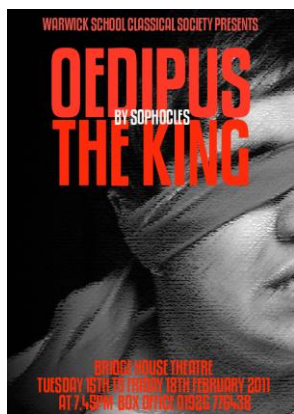
This year there have been opportunities for students to enjoy professional theatre visits including *The Woman in Black* (Fortune Theatre London), *Monteverdi's Flying Circus* (Bridge House Theatre), *Midwinter Dream* (BHT), *Comedy Chekhov* (BHT), *War Horse* (West End), *Les Miserables- 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert* (O2 Arena), *The Colour of Nonsense* (Forkbeard Fantasy at mac Birmingham), *Black Watch* (National Theatre of Scotland at Warwick Arts Centre), *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Chichester).

## Workshops and Masterclasses



We welcomed Hollywood actor **Alfred Molina** to School to run a Masterclass with Foundations Youth Theatre. He spoke about his career and assisted many boys as they worked through monologues and audition material. TV and West End actor **Patrick Robinson** worked alongside Miss Gurnett throughout the year with Foundation Youth Theatre. The U5 Drama group went to mac Birmingham to

enjoy a workshop with film theatre wizards **Forkbeard Fantasy**. In November the principal cast members of *Guys and Dolls* were given an insight into West End performance by actor **Norman Bowman**. More recently puppeteer **Nigel Plaskitt** brought his wonderful collection of puppets for the students to learn how to use, notably the collection included the PG tips Monkey. **Motionhouse** Dance theatre company developed physical movement skills with the Foundations Youth Theatre.



## Productions

From Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February Mr Stephenson's production of **Oedipus the King** was both powerful and memorable. **Maanuv Thiara's** Oedipus was full of presence, a visceral and potent performance in this demanding role. Aply supported by **Henry Roberts** as Creon and **Will Radburn-Todd** and **Peter Borsada**, this small company which included boys in the Lower fourth in the role of the chorus, provided a classically styled but very engaging working of the text.

**The Glass Menagerie** ran in the Drama Studio from 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> March was directed by **Patrick Forrester** (U6) with original music by **Tom Ashworth** (U6) This powerful domestic drama set in the deep south of USA enjoyed three sell-out intimate performances. As with Oedipus this production offered a fantastic opportunity for some of our most gifted students to explore a classic play. Patrick performed as the gentleman caller in the final act and **Ralph Davis** was assured and confident as

the unsettled protagonist Tom, who narrates the story of his mother and disabled sister. It was a moving and mesmeric piece of theatre that really maximized the potential of our studio space.

Examiners were once again very impressed with the standard of work at AS and GCSE Level, and recent assessed productions enjoyed good audiences. At AS 2 productions and at GCSE four productions were staged: **Great Expectations** and **The Government Inspector** for AS; at GCSE '**Neville's Island**' provided a welcome comic return to the outdoor performance space we call 'the Mound'. In '**Pkhentz**' an energetic and physical piece saw an alien struggle to adapt to life in post-war Russia. '**Can't Stand Still**' performed in the BHT with audience and action on the stage, explored a family in turmoil with the background of the 1980s Miners strike. '**Thirst**' was a powerful piece in which an army captain was haunted by the ghost of a soldier from a failed mission.



For the Summer's final major production, **The Insect Play**, The Guy Nelson Hall was transformed by Jessica Stevens (Theatre Intern) into a surreal wasteland inhabited by beetles, butterflies, crickets and ants performed by more than 50 members of the Lower Fourth to Middle Fifth. They performed as an ensemble with incredible discipline and control and brought this engaging morality play to life.



**Gus Gillespie** was outstanding as the down-and-out making sense of the World around him: meeting the playful and lovesick butterflies whose lives consisted of no more than flirting and posing before being eaten by birds; the hard-working beetles and home-maker crickets desperate to save capital or give their future children a home; and the powerful obedient army of ants hopelessly seeking to gain a small patch of land between the pine tree and the two blades of grass. Human life and experience was represented in all its harsh glory and as the tramp finally discovered a better way to live he collapsed and died, like so many of the insects he had met through the play, and when the children placed flowers where he lay on their way to school, the life cycle was complete.