

sedos grapevine

february 2013

'I have to pretend to be on fire'

Sedos starts its 2013 season tomorrow — yes, it's the opening night for Gormenghast, a weird and wonderful play based on a trilogy of novels. The Grapevine finds out more

Gormenghast is a tapestry of oddness, bizarre characters and situations that build a story about social change. A new generation search for a new truth as they battle stuffy bureaucracy and the heritage of an ageing castle of ritual.

We ask some of the staff of the castle about the life of Gormenghast...



Gormenghast is on 26 February-
2 March at the Bridewell Theatre.
Tickets on sale at sedos.co.uk



Sarah Heenan is playing Barquentine.

Who is Barquentine?

Barquentine, foul master of ritual, is a hunchback dwarf with one withered leg and a deep, unbending love of The Law. I have good

posture, two very fine legs, I'm an unruly pixie of a person and the last time I looked I was a girl so — it's been a stretch.

Barquentine is one hell of a force! How's it playing him?

I used to write service quality training manuals for a major restaurant chain — it's exactly the same as that. With less shouting.

You have a brilliant death sequence — how's that?

I love stage combat! There should be more chances for women to fight in plays. I have to pretend to be on fire; for that I'm drawing on the time my Dad had an incident with some flaming sambucca.

What's Barquentine's favourite kind of day?

A day with NO CHANGE. (I don't think he'd like my day job).



Ben Smith is playing Flay, the retainer of the castle.

What's Flay's favourite kind of day?

It's spent faithfully with his master Lord Sepulchra in the library... with maybe some a-gaping and

a-listening on the sly (as long as he's not sent a-wandering down into the stinking bowels of the castle, where he might meet his nemesis).

How is the Countess as a boss?

On account of the curious incident of the cat as a cricket ball, I probably won't ever get the references for a transfer to Downton. However, my place is at her side and, as her "rock", I'm a number one supporter of this fine woman: after all, she understands the evil and the glory.

Favourite moment in the play?

Hard to choose. Anything feline or owlsh. The death owl appearances are horrifying while the dash of cats is purrrfect. That said the Thing's awakening is awesome.

How have rehearsals been?

A hoot. The play and story are unique so it's been a great chance to do some ensemble work and physical stuff. It's been a pleasure to enjoy the company of, and learn from, the whole team.



Sara Rajeswaran is in the chorus playing a variety of parts.

How many parts/characters do you play during the show?

Around seven. General gormenghastian, Scrubbbber, Wall, Cat, Bully, Owl, Keeper of the Cats. Probably more.

Why is Keeper of the Cats such a pivotal role in the castle?

As far as her Ladyship is concerned, cats are the most important beings in the castle, which makes the keeper of the cats the most important job. You have to train for years to become the Keeper of the Cats — my parents put me into an apprenticeship when I was three and I had to literally fight off six other girls to get the job in the end.

Is the Countess a good boss?

I think so. Nothing is ever too big when it comes to cat welfare.

Who is your favourite cat?

Spot was born with black back paws, which is odd as all the cats are white. I thought the Countess might drown him so I've been painting his paws every morning. He seems ever so grateful and never licks the paint off. He's definitely my favourite.

Pictures by Michael Smith

Sedos to support Angel Shed



Rehearsals for Angel Shed's latest production

Sedos's charity of the year for 2013 is Angel Shed, an organisation which works with children aged seven to 16 from a range of backgrounds, with different needs and requirements, to create exciting, interesting and thought-provoking theatre.

All children are welcome at Angel Shed, regardless of their needs, and for many it is their first experience of the performing arts outside school. Many would struggle to access drama and performance in a mainstream setting due to additional needs or financial difficulties.

The charity's artistic team put together three shows a year — one a term — which are workshopped with the young people, enabling them to add their creative input to the process and create the kind of show they love to be involved in.

However, Angel Shed isn't just about the show at the end of term, but the process of weekly workshops building confidence and communication skills between children and young people. The varied mix of participants also means the sessions are a chance for children from very different walks of life to

meet and learn to accept and enjoy their differences, building stronger and more harmonious communities.

Angel Shed's next show is in March and is based around a theme of social media.

Sedos member Hazel East, who appeared in Sink the Belgrano! last year, is a trustee for Angel Shed and nominated it to be Sedos's charity of the year for 2013.

"As a tiny charity, we are constantly looking to diversify our funding sources and the money raised by Sedos will go towards hands-on artistic time with the young people, ensuring that we can continue to run our termly workshops and provide even more exciting shows in 2014," said Hazel.

"The partnership with such a well-established group is also fantastic as it means that more people will hear about our work and hopefully feel inspired to find out more or come along to a show — all shows are open to the public and we'd love to see Sedos members in the audience!

"We're also looking forward to encouraging some of our older members to come along to see some Sedos shows over the year and help them to broaden their ideas about theatre and performance."

Visit www.angelshedtheatre.org.uk.



From the committee

• **Ocean House:** we've finally said goodbye to Ocean House — see page four for more on our new spaces.

• **2013 Season:** we are pleased to announce that the 2013 Sedos Season is now complete — see page three for the full story.

• **Season Flyer:** which brings me to the news that our season flyer has now been printed and is already winging its merry way to venues across the capital. Thanks to Pippa Roome for taking this on. If

you know a good place that you think should have them, then please let us know. The postcards are available at the Bridewell and our new home at City Library among other places. Do take a few and give them to friends and family — they

make rather useful bookmarks while also reminding people constantly of the dates of our shows and how to book!

• **Guys & Dolls:** 1,266 people came to see our production of the classic Broadway musical. Huge congratulations to everyone involved — see pictures and review extracts on page five.

• **AGM:** the date for the AGM is still need to be confirmed, but it's looking likely it'll be Wednesday 24 April — so make a note in your diary.

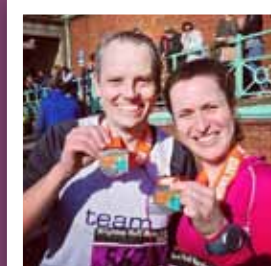
• **Workshops:** we're planning on holding a consultation/show doctor session with the marketing sub-committee, season producers and an industry professional. This will look at how we can use our upcoming season as a case study for enhancing what we're already doing on the marketing side, as well as coming up with new strategies that will directly affect our shows. Exciting stuff.

• **Pub chat:** we still haven't got any emails to our new pubchat@sedos.co.uk email address, so we presume you're all happy! Feel free to send us your questions and we'll pick the most interesting ones and answer them in the Grapevine. So, what do you want to know?



Guys & Dolls

Picture by Antony Sendall



Sedos members Pip Deppeler and Emma Butler recently completed the Brighton half marathon — well done to you both!

Final 2013 shows announced

The "TBCs" in this year's season have now been confirmed.

The Summer Festival musical (23-27 July) will be the Ahrens and Flaherty musical *A Man of No Importance*, based on the film of the same name. Following three very successful outings directing plays, Matt Gould takes his first turn in the director's chair for a musical. Inga Davis-Rutter, an experienced professional musician who played keyboard on Sedos's 2011 production of *Kiss of the Spider Woman: the Musical*, makes her Sedos musical

director debut. Pippa Roome is the producer and Sarah Evans (Pearl in *House/Garden*) is the choreographer.

Matt said: "This is a truly charming piece that deserves a wider audience. Its credentials (by the writers of *Ragtime*) are impeccable and, although based on a film, it has been properly 'theatricalised' — with the opportunity to gently poke fun at amateur theatre — but also to celebrate why we all try and do it! We all believe that theatre can transcend bigotry. This show deals with homosexuality and society's fear of it, but shows that friendship and love always win out in the end. Oh, and there are some damn good songs as well!"

It's full speed ahead for the team as the workshop and auditions are approaching fast.

The autumn play (29 October-2 November) is Shakespeare's *Macbeth* — we are promised a bold, bloody and resolute take on the best-known of the tragedies by director Chloë Faine. Chloë is another director who needs no introduction. Most recently she co-directed *Guys & Dolls* and she has been involved in numerous Sedos shows in pretty much every role you care to name, onstage and off.

"*Macbeth* is one of the best plays ever written — one of Shakespeare's most thrilling stories, it is darkly funny and tragic, sexy and poignant. In recent years, Sedos has attracted some phenomenal acting talent and I can't wait to see what they/we can come up with. Hopefully it should also have some REALLY good fights in it," said Chloë.

Could you design the Grapevine?

We are very sad the time has come to say goodbye to Nicole Rush, who has designed the Grapevine for two years. Nicole, who is also a choreographer with Putney-based group Cygnets, is returning to her native New Zealand later this year. She has done a fantastic job in making the Grapevine into a fun but professional newsletter — just the right fit for Sedos.

We are now looking for a new designer so we can keep bringing this treat to your inboxes five times a year. If you think you can help, please email Pippa Roome on grapevine@sedos.co.uk.

sedos grapevine

News in brief

- Don't forget that audition notices for all our Summer Festival shows (*Enron*, *Autobahn* and *A Man of No Importance*) are now online — visit sedos.co.uk and check out the dates (right).

Around 45 performers will be needed for the Festival so there are plenty of opportunities. There are also production team and backstage roles still to fill, so contact Festival producer Dawn Harrison-Wallace (dawn@harrison-wallace.com) if you would like to get involved.

A couple of years ago we ran a feature in the Grapevine about audition tips — want to check them out again? Go to <http://www.sedos.co.uk/audition/AuditionTips.htm> to read the suggestions. Good luck!

- As we greet a new charity of the year (see page two), we say goodbye to our 2012 charity,

Mousetrap Theatre Projects. In total, we donated £5,340 Mousetrap, of which

£3,660 was raised by donating 50% of proceeds from one performance of every show last year. The rest came from various match funds, including Sedos member James Newall running a marathon, Pete Bryans making part of the donation via The Big Give Christmas Challenge, an online quiz night and a donation from an audience member who had been to a charity night!

If anyone would like to keep in touch with Mousetrap, email Gayle Bryans on gayle@mousetrap.org.uk and she will put you on the mailing list for The Big Cheese, the charity's quarterly e-newsletter.



Dates for the diary

26 February-2 March

Gormenghast performances

13 March/1 April/6 & 7 April

A Man of No Importance workshop/auditions/recalls

14 March/19, 20 & 21 March/23 March

Enron workshop/auditions/recalls

25 March/15, 16, & 17 April/21 April

Autobahn workshop/auditions/recalls

3-13 April

GODSPELL performances

24 April

AGM

Contacts

Grapevine editorial

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Sedos website

sedos.co.uk

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[youtube.com/sedosvideo](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Sedos committee

Chris de Pury (chairman), Matt Gould (secretary), Craig Topp (treasurer), Jacqui Adams, Stephen Beeny, Dawn and Will Harrison-Wallace, Matt Hudson, Deborah Lean, Matt Prince. admin@sedos.co.uk

Goodbye Ocean House...

An era came to an end on 2 February when we finally moved out of Ocean House, our rehearsal and storage "home" of three years. It's fair to say plenty of members can count into the hundreds the hours they've spent there — rehearsing, auditioning, sewing, making props. The list is endless...

The size of Ocean House also means we've been able to provide cheap rehearsal space for lots of other amateur groups and professional fringe companies.



... hello City Library!

Two massive clear-up days were held — one to pack everything and one to move it all to our new base, an ex-library in the heart of the City.

City Library (1 Brewer Hall Garden, London EC2V 5BX) will be used for storage, meetings and play rehearsals. It's a superb venue and we're lucky to call it home.

There's still some sorting out to do, but we've already ordered Sedos posters from 2007 onwards to be printed and are planning on framing them and putting them up on the entrance stairs. It's going to look fantastic.

We also have a new temporary rehearsal space for musicals above Cannon Street station, which is a marvellous venue overlooking the rooftops of London with spectacular views to St Paul's Cathedral.

TV shows *Hunted* and *Silent Witness* have been filmed here, so we're very lucky to be

able to use it. The cast of *GODSPELL* are currently enjoying the facilities.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the pack up and move — we lost count of vanloads, but it was definitely well into double figures, which is, by anyone's standards, A LOT OF STUFF.



I'm giving up...

With rehearsals for our production of *GODSPELL* lasting throughout Lent, the cast and production team are inspiring and supporting each other with what to give up or take up!

"Giving up chocolate for Lent, not original but it does make the Easter egg feast at the end all the more fun!"

Franny Rafferty, Community

"I will give up snug trousers."

Joe Penny, Jesus

"I'm going to take up wearing snug trousers!"

Bob Stanex, Director

"I will be giving up my weekends and outside social life. (On the other hand, I won't be giving up snug trousers. Everyone needs at least one vice)."

Anthony Hagan, Community

"I'm going to give up trousers altogether." (ALREADY FAILED)

Eddie Mann, Community

"I'm going to give up pressing 'Snooze' on my alarm. I have no idea how long I'll last..."

Jess Nesling, Community

"I'm going to take up turning my frown upside down. Particularly in rush hour. And behind slow walkers..."

Mimi Kroll, City

"I'm GIVING UP Twitter which hopefully is code for TAKING UP getting a life..."

Hanna Osmolska, Producer

"Not very exciting but I've given up sweets. Someone idiot (me) decided it would be a good idea to have a sweet jar at work but didn't anticipate that people would constantly refill it or that I would lack any self control to resist eating them. So far so good, I haven't touched a Haribo in a week!"

Kim Barker, Choreographer

"I reckon I may try and give up pastries — an epic challenge has begun..."

Jessie Walters, City

"I've given up mountaineering."

David Griffiths, Musical Director



GODSPELL is on 3-13 April at the Bridewell Theatre. Tickets on sale soon at sedos.co.uk

Luck be a lady tonight

Our final show of 2012 was *Guys & Dolls*, with Chloë Faine and Rebecca Smith co-directing, David Griffiths as musical director and Tom Leonard as choreographer. The show certainly met with praise from the reviewers — here's what they said:

"In the grand scheme of amateur, fringe and professional musicals, this cast perform to the absolute max with passion and humour throughout. Moreover, everyone looks like they're having a great time doing it. London audiences should take notice of Sedos, as its creatives are clearly more than capable of giving their professional neighbours a run for their money." *thepublicreviews.com*

"The bar for performance level has been set so high by countless previous productions that every new interpretation of the piece has a daunting task to match expectations and standards. Sedos... rose to the challenge with a confident, sure footed, vibrant and stylish performance, and emerged with full honours." *Sardines*

"...an inventive, energetic, comedic and enjoyable musical because of the love of the material and attention to detail. The small space is home to a big ensemble of talent, expertly choreographed by Thomas Leonard in such a way that regularly leaves the audience breathless... This is a high-quality production of a favourite musical..." *Remote Goat*



Celebrating Christmas

Remember this? Many thanks to Tracie Laurinaitis and Sarah Heenan, who organised our Christmas party back in December in the Bridewell Hall. Sarah even went above and beyond the call of duty by dressing up as Mrs Christmas — or was she Mother Christmas?



Name that show

In each Grapevine issue we bring you a small part of a poster or photo from an old Sedos show. Your task? To name the show. Answer at the bottom of the page.



In the wings with... Sedos member Sarah Heenan

Warm-ups, someone's got to say it, what the hell?

Don't get me wrong, I've done the training, when you dance or do something physical, I love a good limber as much as the next person in Danskin leggings (and I can get my feet behind my ears so it's always fun to throw that into the mix).

If you sing, a cold voice is like starting an old banger on a cold morning, so you're more than allowed to rev your engines.

But acting? Oh dear me no. Why not break this moment of focus and possible abject terror to stand in a circle with everyone and count to 21? Oh dear, must we?

Problem is, you look like such a diva for saying, "No." Then yelling, "I AM NOT A DIVA!" is probably the first thing to make people roll their eyes at each other and go, 'Yuh huh, diva!'

For me it's about the time getting dressed and putting on your slap, that's my warm-up.

I didn't spot Mark Rylance grabbing Stephen Fry for a game of Eastenders Zip Zap Boing as they dressed for Twelfth Night.

I pop in my earphones with show-appropriate tunes, put on the clothes, stare at my face and become whoever it is I am supposed to be that night. Which probably sounds more pretentious than singing songs about frogs, volcanoes or playing games we used to play in the sodding Brownies. But I've had no complaints so far.

Sarah is artistic director of Asterion Theatre, which takes War of the Waleses to Edinburgh and Camden Fringes this summer.

www.warofthewaleses.com

She is currently playing Barquentine in Gormenghast (26 February-2 March at the Bridewell Theatre).



A glass of wine with... Sedos member Bob Stanex

When did you join Sedos and what was your first show?

I joined in August 2011 to play Henrik in A Little Night Music.

Are you involved in a Sedos show at the moment?

I'm currently directing GODSPELL, set on the steps of St. Paul's during the Occupy London demonstrations. On at the Bridewell from 3-13 April.

What do you do in real life?

I work for London charity City Gateway as a youth worker and tutor. Have you seen the Evening Standard apprenticeship campaign? That's us!

What's the worst thing that's happened to you backstage/on stage?

I had to leap across stage mid-song during Anything Goes to stop a runaway bed rolling into the orchestra pit and killing the trombonist... I tend to damage set pieces quite a lot... and fall off things... and have things fall on me — I shouldn't really be allowed on stage!

If you had 24 hours before the world combusted, what would you do?

Scream and then clean the house — you can't die living in a dirty house!

It's our round, what are you having?

I'm so indecisive — just get me whatever you're having — unless it's pink or slimline... or non-alcoholic... I'll have a Guinness!

One food you couldn't live without?

I'm Irish — you can't have a meal without

potatoes — they go with everything!

Name the first and last show you ever saw and were they any good?

First show I think was Joseph — I don't care what people say — it's cheesy wonderful cheesiness in all its glory!

Last show I saw was Singin' in the Rain — it's good, but it's not the original. It's been my favourite film since I was three so it would be hard to live up to.

Have you ever won anything in a competition?

I won a houseful of dogs when I was seven... it's less exciting than it sounds! (Editor's note: I was going to make Bob explain this, but I just couldn't face it. If anyone finds out what on earth he means, do let me know...)

Finish the sentence: a good production begins with...?

An overture so loud it makes you jump and wee yourself a little bit... then you spend the rest of the overture trying to suppress a giggling fit because you jumped and weed yourself!

And ends with?

... a 12-minute megamix!



Pictures by Michael Smith

Name that show answer: Romeo and Juliet, 8-12 March 2011. Read more about the show by visiting sedos.co.uk/2011/romeoandjuliet.htm.