

sedos grapevine

october 2012

Not much room for error

Director Matt Gould explains the challenges of putting on House/Garden, which Sedos stages next week at the Bridewell Theatre — and the Bridewell Hall

Before you can perform House and Garden, you need two theatres. And they need to be close enough that the cast can get between them during the show. We were lucky enough to find the Bridewell Hall. Which at least is in the same building at the Bridewell Theatre...

As I'm sure you will know by now, Alan Ayckbourn's duet of plays are performed simultaneously in two auditoria with a single cast moving between the two plays! So, as a member of cast leaves one play they then have to leg it up (or down) three flights of stairs between the Theatre and the Hall — desperately trying not to get out of breath — before serenely entering in the other drama! And also without leaving other members of cast desperately trying to fill waiting for an actor to arrive...

At the time of writing we've rehearsed various parts of the two plays at either ends of the first floor rehearsal room at

Ocean House. As I write in late September, we're going to run them simultaneously on two floors (with Guys & Dolls rehearsing on the floor in between — the jam in the middle, I guess...) for the first time tonight.

If everything goes to plan, there's a minimum of about a minute between a cast member leaving one play and entering the other... We reckon that it's about 45 seconds to get from the Bridewell Theatre to the Bridewell Hall — so not much room for error.

The cast have a huge challenge — not only are they running between two theatres, but working in two completely different spaces. We are playing House in the round — which will create a wonderfully intimate relationship between the audience and the actors — while in the Garden, we've got the wonderful open space of the huge Bridewell stage. Appropriate, because while everything is buttoned up in the

house, in the garden, everyone is free!

Early in the process I set the cast some "homework" of working out where they are at any point during a performance — which show are they in when and when they leave the stage, where do they go next (see examples below). Each character's journey is different so the actors really are on their own and have had to work out their own scripts as they transfer between the two plays — so if someone really loses it, we could be in for a very interesting evening — a great challenge for the backstage team!

It's been a wonderful journey, I just keep my fingers crossed that the cast will remember where they need to be and when they go off, where they appear next. And I hope that no one trips up when running up the stairs...

This really is going to be edge of the seat stuff!

Joanna, played by Anne-Marie Chronnell

- 8am - Head to house / hide in bushes
- Found by Teddy / Get dumped / Run home
- Head back to house bump into Trish / confess
- Rehearse how to tell Giles
- Get caught and fall in fountain / bump head
- Tell Giles
- Head to House for lunch / discover discover Giles is Harold
- Meet French bird

Trish, played by Melanie Johnson

- 8.30 In the sitting room offering tea to Jake and Sally
- 8.35 Returns to the kitchen to get gardening gloves
- 8.40 Exits sitting room for the Garden to get flowers collecting secateurs en route
- 8.45 Picking roses in the Garden
- 9.00 Warns Warn that she has taken some roses for the house
- 9.05 Encounters Joanna in the garden
- 9.15 Returns to the House
- 9.18 Enters House and starts arranging flowers

Jake, played by Myles Dobson

- 2:00pm GARDEN
- Enters from the House, has conversation with Joanna
- Has short conversation with Lindy
- Exits to the House
- HOUSE
- Enters from the Garden
- Has conversation with Sally and Gavin
- Exits to the Garden
- GARDEN
- Enters from the House
- Has conversation with Giles

House plays in the Bridewell Hall and Garden in the Bridewell Theatre, 24 October-3 November. Tickets on sale at sedos.co.uk, with discounts if you book both shows.

Kicking on into 2013

After five meetings over the course of six weeks, the committee revealed the 2013 season to members at the EGM on 26 September. There were 32 pitches — nine musicals and 23 plays — but Matt Gould, standing in for chairman Chris de Pury, said that rights had been an issue “more than ever this year”.

The Bridewell season kicks off with Andy Marchant directing *Gormenghast* (26 February-2 March), by Mervyn Peake (stage adaptation by John Constable). Described as a “political fantasy”, the show follows events in a castle where ritual and tradition rule, but the younger generation are kicking out against the old ways. Matt Hudson is the producer.

Physical theatre, puppetry and singing will all feature and auditions are on 20 and 22 November (recalls 24 November) — the audition notice is on sedos.co.uk now.

Our spring musical will be Steven Schwartz's *Godspell* (3-13 April), directed by Bob Stanex, co-directed and produced by Dawn Harrison-Wallace and choreographed by Kim Barker. The production will be set on the steps of St Paul's during the Occupy London protests and the get-in is over Easter weekend, making this a particularly apt show for this time.

The Summer Festival returns for 2013, starting with Matt Hudson directing Lucy Prebble's *Enron* (9-13 July, produced by Mia Bennett and Clare Harding, assistant directed by Tracie Laurinaitis and musical directed by Sarah Peachey). Matt says this

modern play about the infamous financial scandal requires 15 performers to create a “hyper-realistic world”.

Jacqui Adams is in the directing seat in the Festival's second week with Neil LaBute's *Autobahn* (16-20 July), a short play cycle consisting of seven two-handers, each taking place in the front seats of a car. She promises it's “funny as hell, dark as f**k”.

The Festival musical (23-27 July) is still to be confirmed, pending a rights decision.

Maria Waters (director) and Ryan Macaulay (musical director and producer) join forces again for our one-week autumn musical (1-5 October): *Love Story*, by Stephen Clark and Howard Goodall. They plan this will be a beautiful, simple show, hopefully with acoustic sound.

The autumn play (29 October-2 November) is another on the to be confirmed list.

Our pre-Christmas show will be *Hot Mikado* (27 November-7 December), by David H Bell and Rob Bowman, based on WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's *The Mikado*.

Angus Jacobs directs, as well as working as choreographer alongside Vaughan Watts, with Vaughan's husband Ed Curry as musical director. Sarah Noll is the producer. The team say the show is “sexed up Gilbert and Sullivan, which will put the ‘cool’ into hot!”

Our successful 6plays7days workshop will be repeated next year and there are also plans for other workshop productions — more details in due course.

Tipis and bunting as members wed

Sedos members Laura Capaldi and Ricky Damiani got married on 23 June in Cornish Tipis, near Port Isaac.

“We decided that we wanted a wedding that was like a music festival, which is how we came across Cornish Tipis in the first place as we wanted somewhere that could accommodate all our guests as campers!” explained Laura. “In the end I think about 70% of our guests stayed in tipis on site and the rest stayed in cottages or B&Bs nearby.”

The ceremony took place in a licenced pavillion in a glade in the woods by a stream and involved a hand-fasting ceremony. Numerous Sedos members were involved — Becky Smith was a bridesmaid, Chloë Faine designed the wedding, making the “enormous site look so beautiful” and sang *At Last* as the first song.

Chloë and David Griffiths also organised a flash mob which all the couple's Sedos friends performed during the signing of the register. Karen Lister, Debs Lean and Charlotte Price made 1.2km of bunting and everyone helped decorate the site.

“It literally was the best day of my life and made a million times better by all the help I had from such an enthusiastic and creative bunch of people — they are all awesome,” said Laura.

Pictures by Kim Appleby and Mike Kelly



Laura and Ricky's ceremony in a glade in the woods



Debs Lean, Chris Warner, David Griffiths, Pip Deppeler and James Franey



Just married: Ricky and Laura



Sedos members celebrate with the newly weds

Debs Lean joins new theatre

Sedos committee member Debs Lean has recently joined the management team at St James Theatre near Victoria, the first newly built theatre complex in central London for 30 years.

"I have always said that what I love about Sedos is that it is run by a membership that is young enough to still have new ideas, but old enough to make them happen and this is very much how I feel about my new job," said Debs, raving about the theatre's warm welcome, wine list, brasserie and late bar. "But what I have found most interesting about the theatre is that it has been built on the very site of the old Westminster Theatre, where Sedos performed."

Fellow Sedos committee member Will Harrison-Wallace joined Sedos for The Pirates of Penzance at the Westminster Theatre in 1989 when in his early teens. Directed by June King, the matriarch of Sedos, the cast included Deryck High, Stephen Milligan, Jeremy Lewis (former chairman and president), Michelle Loader, Helen Dudley, Simon Gaffer Ibbitson and Tracey Connors.

"On the last night a choreographer involved in a production of Cabaret came backstage,

desperately trying to recruit men," says Will. "Two of us from the male chorus signed up and it was in that production that I met Dawn Wilcock, who was playing Sally Bowles — she later changed her name to Harrison-Wallace!"

Another Sedos regular, Becs Weymouth, is also working with St James Theatre through her job at Dewynters. She says: "As Debs said, it feels so special to have such a new theatre in the centre of town. Victoria has changed so much recently and it feels right to have a different cultural offering along with all the shops and restaurants."

The 312-seat main house's first show is Sandi Toksvig's *Bully Boy*, a two-hander starring Anthony Andrews — which your Grapevine editor is happy to highly recommend (runs until 27 October), while the 100-seat studio has a great line-up of comedy in the offing.

"I really hope you will all come to see a show here or at least join me for a drink under our gorgeous marble staircase," concludes Debs. "Our barman does some fantastic and unique cocktails — the Bakewell Tart cocktail is a favourite."

Visit www.stjamestheatre.co.uk.

Summer Festival special events



Matt Prince compères the open mic night



The Grease sing-a-long was a fitting finale to Sedos's first Summer Festival



DJ Deppeler spins his wheels of steel at the silent disco

Pictures by Pippa Roome, Michael Smith and Fran Rafferty

News in brief

- We are currently looking for nominations for our 2013 charity of the year. Email charity@sedos.co.uk by 2 November with your suggestions. The committee want to know why the charity is a good fit with Sedos's charitable remit of promoting the arts and ensuring they are accessible to all, how the charity would spend the money Sedos gives (around £3,500 a year) and how it could work with Sedos to raise awareness of the society or promote shows.
- Debs Lean would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has made a donation to the costume store. "Every now and then I come across something that has been generously donated that is a real gem and the costume store is fast expanding into a very valuable collection that will be of enormous help to many productions in the future," she says. "If you ever wish to make a donation, just let me know so I know what to look out for either via phone, facebook or email deborah_lean@hotmail.com. Thank you!"
- Penny Cliff of The Tell Theatre Company (thetelltheatre.com) is running a Sedos acting workshop (17-18 November), exploring Wedekind's play *Spring Awakening*. It is recommended actors attend both days (£35 members, £45 non members), but it is possible to just do one (£20/£25). Book online (sedos.co.uk — box office page, carefully following instructions on which day(s) you are attending). More info: sedos.co.uk/members/index.htm or email sedosworkshops@outlook.com.



St James Theatre is near Victoria station



The main house seats 312

From Gayle Bryans' desk at Mousetrap Theatre Projects

While the summertime is often a quieter period for many businesses, not so for Mousetrap Theatre Projects! The summer holidays saw one of our biggest programmes swing into action — Family First Nights. While you were all off to the Olympics, we were busy giving 619 families on low-incomes or which have children with disabilities and special needs the chance to see a top West End show together.

To regular theatre-goers this might not sound a particularly big deal, but imagine how much it means to families who cannot afford to go to the theatre, who are nervous that it is something for the well-to-do and "not for us", or have a disabled child which makes family outings difficult.

Here are some of the comments from parents who wrote to us:

"We all had a really amazing time. It was the first time that the children had seen a theatre show. This really would not be possible without the help of your organisation. I would truly like to thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"The evening was one of the happiest family evenings we have had together with our disabled son."

"One Man, Two Guvnors was wonderful... Our autistic son was almost helpless with laughter — a sight rarely seen — and it was



all very good for us as a family. Thank you!"

We'd like to say a big thank you to Sedos member James Newall, who ran The Great North Run for us in September.

James first thought about running for Mousetrap after hearing about our work through us being Sedos charity of the year. He felt even more inspired to run for us after coming to our relaxed performance of Shrek the Musical for children with special needs and seeing the children's "amazement, laughter, glee, surprise — matched only by the delight and gratitude of the parents and carers who were with them," as he put it.

This is the first time anyone has run a marathon for us (well, half marathon, but who's counting, it's still a very long way!) and thank you to everyone who sponsored him, donating a fantastic total of £958.75.

From the committee

- **Ocean House:** nothing new to report at the moment, though we know that it is likely that we will be asked to vacate in the near future. The committee is still looking at other potential spaces and we'll let you know more when things are agreed. However, plans have been made for a quick exit from OH and work has already taken place to prepare our costumes and props — thanks to Debs Lean, Mia Bennett and Val Monot. We will need your help when we move, so please be prepared to muck in!
- **Membership:** a big thank you to Kaytie Lee who's been our membership guru for the past year. She's done a wonderful job of making sense of it all and we very much appreciate the time and effort she has put in.
- **Sedos charity of the year:** so far this year we've given £2,140 to our charity of the year, Mousetrap Theatre Projects. With three charity performances left we hope to get this figure nicely over the £3,000 mark.
- **Summer Festival:** a big thank you to EVERYONE involved in the inaugural Sedos Summer Festival. 1,073 people came to see the productions with more involved in the one-off special events. It was a huge project and we learnt an awful lot. What's more, we're excited enough to give it another go so we'll need your help and support all over again next year.
- **As You Like It:** around 350 people saw our critically acclaimed Sedos on tour production of As You Like It which was performed at the Winterflood Theatre, the Edinburgh Festival and the London Stock Exchange.
- **Mirror, mirror on the wall:** we're in the process of purchasing a fourth mirror for

Sedance and dance rehearsals. No hiding at the back now!

- **Projector:** we've also purchased a rather whizzy projector and wide-angle lens, which will allow us to do all sorts of exciting things. Anyone who came to Baby or the Grease sing-a-long will have seen it in action!
- **NODA:** we had a great time hosting the president of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA), Fred Piggford, during the Festival and he sent a charming thank you letter telling us how professional we all were and that he was delighted that we were "thriving" and "doing so well in keeping amateur theatre alive in London".
- **More NODA:** a district meeting was held a few weeks ago for London groups to network and exchange ideas of how we might work together. Not sure if anything will come out of this, but it was nice to say hello!
- **Even more NODA:** A Little Night Music was nominated for the Joe Putnam Award for best musical. Hurrah! Sadly, we didn't win. Boo.
- **Stagetext:** we are still looking into working with Stagetext, a charity delivering captioned performances and promoting the use of captioning in cultural venues. However, rather than pushing ahead with this as a solo partner, we are now waiting for funding.
- **Missing sofa:** a rather nice black leather sofa has gone missing from the ground floor of OH. Does anyone know where it is?
- **Pub chat:** we didn't get 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?

'Words cannot describe the buzz'

Sedos members did the society proud on the London 2012 stage this summer

After lots of hard work at rehearsals, the Sedos members who took part in the opening and closing ceremonies for London 2012 reported that it was a fantastic experience.

Tracie Laurinaitis — recently assistant director on *Sink the Belgrano!* — was in a 300-person strong dance group called 98-Whirl at the Paralympic opening ceremony (29 August).

"As a Whirler, I was a 'wave' — we came on to create a stormy sea as Miranda in *The Tempest* was travelling to new adventures," she explained. "We then created a sea around the boat as well as a crescent moon."

Tracie shared the experience with fellow Sedos member and best friend Sarah Peachey — Chloe in *Arcadia* last year — who was in the prologue section.

"Catching up backstage was always full of excitement as we didn't know much at all about the ceremony as a whole before the night," said Tracie. "It was truly magical to share that and we all came together afterwards to watch it until the wee hours of the morning."

"I literally gasped for air as I came onto the main stage in the stadium. I couldn't believe the intensity and scale of what I was doing."

"There was a moment where we were able to lie down on the field as music played, and it was unforgettable as I could look up at the stars, hear the cacophony of the spectators as well as the inspirational Para athletes, and know that I was part of something big."

Sedos members who performed in the Olympic opening ceremony (27 July) included Alexis Rose, Adam Moulder, David Meany, Karen Braganza, Karen Lister, Mark Londesborough, Alex Baker and Grapevine designer Nicole Rush.

David commented: "Rehearsals began in mid-April and we had the pleasure of working with top British and international choreographers and directors."

"There were many highs — sharing an unbelievable experience with likeminded volunteers, meeting Danny Boyle, feeling like a rock star as we ran out into the Olympic Stadium — and of course a few lows, mainly those 9am Sunday morning rehearsals in torrential rain at a car park in Dagenham... but it was all worth it."

"The week of the opening was incredible, words cannot describe the buzz of running out onto a stadium with 80,000 people. It definitely lived up to all the hype the organisers said it would be during the audition process."

Natalie Pereech, who was in Sedos' 6plays7days workshop in March, drummed in the industrial revolution part of the opening, and marshalled for both this and the closing ceremony (12 August) — "I was one of the blue bowler hats with the lightbulb!" she said.

Members who performed in the closing ceremony included Emma Butler, Ed Curry, Vaughan Watts, Tom Leonard, Lewis Simington, Alex Marsh, Victoria Davis and Geoff Chang, who danced with multi-Brit Award winner Annie Lennox.

Sedos "friend" member John Kyle was involved in the Games in a different way, being one of the sports presentation team for the equestrian events at Greenwich.

He commentated live over the on-site public address system to 55,000 people attending on cross-country day and provided in-ear expert commentary for spectator headsets on the other days of the Olympics and Paralympics.

"I have commentated at world and continental championships but the Olympics is something very different — it was an unforgettable experience," said John.

And of course, numerous Sedos members attended different Games events as spectators and shared in a very special summer for London.





Baby came too

New mothers are relatively rare in amateur theatre. Being in a show — with the demands of evening rehearsals and the intensive show period — isn't necessarily compatible with having a small baby.

But Anne-Marie Chronnell hasn't let this hold her back. The actress — who will be familiar to Sedos members in parts such as Hannah in *Arcadia*, as well as in the director's chair (*The Libertine*, *Festen*) — gave birth to her daughter Maia on 19 February this year and now takes on the role of Joanna in our upcoming production of *House/Garden*.

"I hadn't planned to return so soon, but I started getting 'itchy' to be back on stage probably around two or three months in," says Anne-Marie.

"*House/Garden* slotted in fabulously, knowing that by the time the show went up Maia would be in a routine and therefore easier for someone other than me to get to sleep. Then I crossed my fingers and auditioned."

Anne-Marie says auditioning gave her "the same jitters" as before she had Maia — "just this time with the mummy-weight!"

Before taking the plunge, she made sure husband Nick — also a familiar face in Sedos both on stage and behind a camera — was comfortable being in sole charge of Maia during two weeks of evening performances.

"Thankfully I've got a very generous husband," she says, explaining how they work childcare

around rehearsals and Nick's work as a senior audio visual specialist. "When Nick is on early shift he's already home when I leave for rehearsal and when he's on lates Matt [Gould, director] has been super-understanding about me bringing in Maia and Nick picks her up mid-rehearsal.

"The cast have been SO splendid with her, even playing with her while I'm doing my scenes. Maia seems to love all the attention and has very good rehearsal etiquette — for the most part! She has taken to talking during other people's scenes and while I've tried to explain that it's not good form she is clearly a girl with an opinion — being mine and Nick's daughter, I'm somehow not surprised at that!"

Of course, the unexpected can turn up and when Nick put his back out one week so he couldn't lift Maia, Anne-Marie had to find others to help.

"The troops generously rallied — that support network is key," she says.

During show week, Nick will be on earlies and "we'll cross any emergencies as we face them," says Anne-Marie.

"He'll come and see the shows on the weekend matinees and we'll have someone take care of her around Ludgate Circus or maybe down in the bar with Mikey — she can't be a Sedos baby without spending time in the Bridewell bar!"

And has being a parent made any difference to Anne-Marie as an actress?

"There's no 'new' information really, but I've found myself more sentimental and emotional — probably those hormones still lurking," she smiles. "Joanna's a tad, erm, eccentric so it helps with giving her her mood swings."

Anne-Marie says she would advise any other new mothers returning to acting to jump right in.

"I feel the fatigue sometimes — having a full on day with Maia and then coming to rehearsal can be hard, but it's so worth it," she says. "The logistics are more challenging now. But it's the easiest way to feel like you're still 'you' — it's like 'the old days'. While I utterly and insanely adore my daughter, the adjustment to the new role of 'mum' and "caretaker" can be very overwhelming.

"So the chance to be my old self again is invaluable and I come home refreshed and energized, with an imaginary tail wagging in excitement to see her again. Having 'you' time means that you come back to the 'new you' with more energy, more sense of self."

Overall, Anne-Marie says she is "hugely" enjoying being in *House/Garden*.

"The one thing that hasn't changed a bit is my love of rehearsals and exploration, finding your character's nuances — and finding the reality in the ludicrousness of their actions," she concludes.

See Anne-Marie play Joanna in *House/Garden*, 24 October-3 November. Tickets on sale at sedos.co.uk.

Almost exactly eight months after having her first child, long-standing Sedos member Anne-Marie Chronnell (née Leigh) will play Joanna in *House/Garden*. She talks to the Grapevine

Blown away by the talent

With Sedos' December musical Guys & Dolls fast approaching, the Grapevine grabbed a few minutes with Friday, the show mascot

Friday, how do you feel about being a show mascot for Guys & Dolls?

<sigh> People are so hung up on labels. I am so much more than a show mascot — I am really at the heart of the G&D team. I was there throughout the audition process, for example...

Yeah that sounded epic...

There were a lot of stunning people. I think the list was well over 120. I found it gruelling being a part of the process, but also was just blown away by how much talent Sedos is home to. Also I liked that we had a lot of croissants.

So the show is cast, where do you take it from here?

I'm waiting to see how the jobs divide themselves up. I've been an encouraging face at bütcamp (G&D's twice weekly dance workouts); and I've offered my suggestions for the set and costume design; but you know it can be hard to make your voice heard on such a big creative team.

Two directors! How is that working out?

They spend most of their time fighting over me — it's exhausting.

Wow — awkward — is the rest of the



Friday was an integral part of the audition process, responsible for guarding the team's milk and cigarettes



Under pressure to keep up with the beautiful people, Friday is on a protein only diet and has been re-styled with a comb-over and Hoxton fin)

team picking up the slack?

Well, you know... They're doing their best, but the musical director seems more interested in plying the cast with strudel and schnapps than anything else.

Crumbs... What about the choreographer? He's good, right?

The man knows his sit-ups... I'm a little bit in love with him.

Fair enough... so overall?

Overall... well the cast are REALLY pretty... and with a little one-to-one Friday Time, they're going to be amazing. The show is a blast, the script is brilliant, the music is legendary... Woof, frankly!

Guys & Dolls is on 5-15 December at the Bridewell Theatre. Tickets on sale at sedos.co.uk.



Dates for the diary

24 October-3 November

House/Garden performances

17-18 November

Acting weekend workshop

20/22 November & 24 November

Gormenghast auditions and recalls

5-15 December

Guys & Dolls performances

21 December

Christmas party — big thanks to Tracie Laurinaitis and Sarah Heenan (recently Maggot Scratcher in Sink the Belgrano!) for volunteering to organise the party.

Contacts

In charge of the Grapevine

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She makes it look beautiful

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sedos.co.uk

Find us at

facebook.com/sedostheatre

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Sedos committee

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

Pushing the Festival off the starting blocks

The opening show of the Summer Festival was Push Up, Roland Schimmelpfenig's play about power and sexual politics in the office. Directed by Chris de Pury and Matt Harrison, it featured a cast of eight battling it out to reach the executive floor in an engaging one-act drama.





The middle week of the Summer Festival came under the control of long-standing directorial team Roger Harwood and Dawn Harrison-Wallace, who were backed up by their regular choreographer Jane Saunders. In a departure from their established group, a different David — Winters — wore the musical director hat this time.

Following three couples who all discover they are expecting a baby, Maltby & Shire's *Baby* stars six actors, who were ably supported by a small ensemble, who played numerous characters and acted as stage crew to make the simple elements of this minimalist production work.

Amateur Stage reviewed the show and said: "Sedos... produced

a production that not only had incredible production standards, but left me wondering why this gem of a show has been languishing for so long...

"Musically, the show was kept bouncing along under the baton of David Winters, whose five-piece band were superb..."

"Major kudos must go to Sedos for nurturing and producing what can only be called a stunning production. I just wish it were running for another week so I could go at least a few more times.

"Baby left me with a lump in my throat. It exceeded my every expectation and left me wanting more.

"Exceptional!!"

Baby baby baby...



Double the fun

The Summer Festival concluded with a well-received double bill.

Before the interval, audiences saw Bernard Shaw's four-actor play *The Man of Destiny* — a snapshot of the young Napoleon engaged in a battle of wits with a

nameless beauty — directed by Jacqui Adams.

Afterwards, they were treated to Steven Berkoff's Falklands' satire *Sink The Belgrano!*, with the talented cast under the directorial baton of Matt Hudson.



The critics Like It

As You Like It, directed by Zoë Thomas-Webb, previewed at the Winterflood Theatre, where Suite101.com described it as “innovative and unusual”, saying: “The production has been designed and executed in a truly professional manner demonstrating there is no shortage of highly talented players active in amateur theatre.”

The show then headed up to Edinburgh, where it garnered the coveted five stars from Broadway Baby: “Told by those who evidently have a deep set understanding and respect for the text, the story is excellently executed so that not a line is out of place or superfluous to their storytelling cause.

“The overall design was incredibly

creative and brilliantly executed...

“There are no weak performances from any member of the cast, each an integral link in a strong company...

“Sedos is so close to being professional it hurts. Outstandingly polished performances, brilliant direction and joy in creating theatrical masterpieces makes these young actors ones to watch.”

Finally, Three Weeks gave its verdict — another thumbs up: “Sedos’ version of this classic play is silly, sweet, and very witty.”

The show had a final gala night down south when Sedos returned to its roots with a performance at the London Stock Exchange.



A glass of wine with... Sedos member Craig Topp

What was your first Sedos show?

I was the sound op for City of Angels in 2006. I was slightly terrified, and remain so to this day...

Are you involved in a Sedos show now?

I'm producing Guys & Dolls, which I am very excited about. I also regularly perform the role of "The Bad Guy" in budget negotiations/Sedos committee meetings!

What do you do in real life?

I work in leveraged finance for Lloyds.

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

Undoubtedly kicking a plug under the desk I was sitting at during the gala night show of The Last Five Years, which I was producing. The plug came out of its socket, turning off the lighting and sound desks, mid-show. It was a bit of a disaster, to say the least...

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

Well, I'm constantly annoyed by the fact Concorde was scrapped before I got to fly in it. So I would steal one from one of the many museums they're parked at these days and fly it over to New York, and then on to a luxury island where I could do some scuba diving. All while drinking excellent fizz and whisky and eating my bodyweight in steak...

It's our round what are you having?

Whisky. Definitely not whiskey, as I'm not a heathen. Smoky and peaty, from the islands. Lagavullin, Ardbeg, that sort of thing. I could go on. And on.



One food you couldn't live without?

Steak and chips. Every. Single. Time.

Name the first show you ever saw and the most recent — were they any good?

When I lived in Singapore I was taken to a production of Little Shop of Horrors, and absolutely loved the plant that ate everyone. I was about five, and between that and Disney films I don't think I ever had a chance of escaping from the clutches of musical theatre!

I saw London Road at the National recently. It's a verbatim musical, based on interviews with residents of a single Ipswich street where five prostitutes were murdered in 2006. All very different to the standard musical, in both subject matter and structure! The show was totally unlike anything I'd seen before, but very well done, and with an extremely strong cast. 4*.

Ever won anything in a competition?

A variety of sporting medals and trophies — I used to swim to a pretty high standard. Two tickets to T in the Park (a music festival) which I had to sell on as my mum decided I was too young to go. She was probably right...

A good production begins with...?

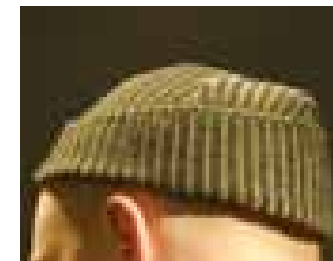
The right team.

And ends with?

Wine!

Name that show

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



In the wings with...

Sedos member Peter Myers

The Dramatic Personality

Drama people flounce or sashay about, never just walk; they announce,

bellow or at least state, they don't "chat"; their eyes do not rest peaceably on something; nay, they stare intently at the middle distance, sparkling, evocatively conveying a giddy build-up of complex, simmering and epiphany-realising emotions. One is, whether one likes it or not, immersed in a permanent state of fizzy exuberance.

We don't "hang out", us thespians; we mingle, coalesce, whisper conspiratorially, oft pause pregnantly, guffaw and await response with bated breath. We cry easily, and sometimes those tears turn into laughter, and back to tears again as we wonder why a blackout isn't forthcoming. We don't gesture, we react demonstrably, wondering how an observer would perceive said movement.

This is the definition at least to non-drama people. Like my partner, for whom being

"dramatic" is a pejorative term signifying not just inappropriate levels of raised emotion, but a certain insincerity, using actions and clever words to cloud meaningful engagement. An actor, to her, is inescapably a satirist, a neurotic, a nihilist, a dreamer who can never be earnest — or Ernest — or able to take the world seriously.

Yes, serial acting reengineers our personality some, injecting the tinsiest tinge of schizophrenia — frequent bouts of bemused seconds as we remember who we're meant to be today, before acting accordingly.

But we are all of us actors upon this world-sized stage, performing our finely nuanced gender-, cultural-, professional- and class-roles with gusto; our accent, bearing and humour levels chameleon-like depending on who we're with. It takes an actor to know this, and it's cheaper than counselling.

Peter Myers plays — hence is, sort of — the emasculated Giles in Alan Ayckbourn's House/Garden (24 October-3 November). In real life, he is an editor at Reuters.

Name that show answer: Sweeney Todd, 2007. Read more about the show at sedos.co.uk/archive/2007.htm.