

sedos grapevine

december 2012

Guys & Dolls: did you know?

Guys & Dolls is one of the most-loved musicals in existence. With Sedos's production of this incredible show opening on Wednesday, we uncover some G&D facts that you may not know

- Guys & Dolls is based on The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown and Blood Pressure, short stories by Damon Runyon. The musical also borrows characters and plot elements from other Runyon stories, most notably Pick the Winner.
- The Damon Runyon Theatre radio series dramatized 52 of Runyon's short stories in weekly broadcasts running from October 1948 to September 1949. And you can listen to them here: http://youtu.be/PUWVKI_fm14.
- Guys & Dolls was originally conceived as a serious romantic musical with Frank Loesser as composer and lyricist. Producers Cy Feuer and Ernest Martin got through 10 librettists and one libretto before deciding to make it a comedy and hiring Jo Swerling to write the book.
- Guys & Dolls premiered on Broadway at the 46th Street Theatre on 24 November 1950, enjoyed a run of 1,200 performances and won five Tony awards in 1951 including best musical.

Mousetrap Theatre Projects charity night, 6 December

Why come? Mousetrap's work is incredibly important, giving children access to an art form we all hold dear and they get 50% of sales from this performance. Let's give them a Christmas present to remember.

- A film version was released in 1955 from the studios of Samuel Goldwyn Company. Gene Kelly was a favourite for the role of Sky, but it was eventually played by Marlon Brando.



- There was some controversy over the casting of Frank Sinatra as Nathan Detroit in the film. Frank Loesser felt he was too slick for the part and didn't like the way he "crooned" his songs. Loesser and Sinatra never spoke to each other again after the film was finished.
- There was an all-black cast production on Broadway in 1976.
- Famous actors who have starred in this epic show include Walter Matthau, Bob Hoskins, Julia Mackenzie, Imelda Staunton, Nathan Lane, Lulu, Ewan McGregor, Claire Sweeney, Jane Krakowski and the late Patrick Swayze.

Mindy's Cheesecake & Strudel Matinee, 8 December

Why come? FREE CHEESECAKE/STRUDEL. Well, that was easy.



Philip Doyle (Skye Masterson) and Gayle Bryans (Miss Adelaide)



Saints & Sinners gala, 8 December

Why come? One word: KARAOKE. More importantly: showtunes karaoke.

Cafe Cubana night, 14 December

Why come? Not only do you get a free drink and programme... but the choreography team will lead salsa lessons post-show and there will be a casino in the Foundry. It's going to be BRILLIANT. Do not miss out.

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

Mixology Nick's Cuba Libre

- a handful of dice. I mean ice... ICE.
- 50ml/2fl oz white rum. Or dark rum. Or both.
- 1 lime, cut into quarters
- cola, to top up
- lime wedge, to make it look good

Preparation method

1. Place the ice into a highball glass and pour over the rum.
2. Squeeze over the lime and add.
4. Top up with the cola, garnish with a lime wedge and serve.

And finally... look out for your Guys & Dolls top trumps through this Grapevine!

SOCIETY MAX (Max Wolf)



Manliness	6
Hubbaness	12
Luckiness	9
Addiction	Soft-shoe shuffles and religious fanatics
Cheesecake or strudel?	No, stolen hooch, please
Crapshooter most likely to...	pouf

Pictures by Antony Sendall

Festive frolics

Although it hasn't even started yet, our final show of the year — Guys & Dolls, for those who slept through page one — will soon be over, and then that's it for Sedos for 2012.

What's that you say? Of course that's not right! We have the fabulous Christmas party to look forward to!

This year's festive frolics take place from

7.30pm on Friday, 21 December, which will be the last day in the office before the holidays for most of us, so everyone should be in the mood to let their hair down.

Following 2011's successful ball in the theatre, we're upstairs at the Bridewell this time.

Tracie Laurinaitis, who is co-organising with Sarah Heenan, says: "Get your glitz and holiday cheer on and spruce yourselves

up with the season's spirit.

"There'll be the usual frolicking on the dance floor with Prancer and Blitzen, some open mic holiday cheer — so warm up your seasonal voices — and of course reindeer games for all. So get your sassy holiday on after Guys & Dolls and join us for some yuletide cheer!"

If you are interested in singing, please contact Tracie at tracielaaurinaitis@gmail.com.

Full details will be available soon and tickets will be on sale at sedos.co.uk, so make sure you don't miss out — the Christmas party is always a fantastic way to say goodbye to another year in Sedos.

From Gayle Bryans' desk at Mousetrap Theatre Projects

I am trying not to fall asleep over my keyboard as I write this, after last night's fabulous 60th anniversary performance of The Mousetrap. You might have read in the press about this special performance with a stellar cast including Patrick Stewart, Hugh Bonneville, Julie Walters, Tamsin Greig and Miranda Hart, followed by a party at Theatreland's renowned members' club, The Garrick.

Big thanks to the Sedos members who forked out on the tickets and auction prizes, helping us raise just shy of £200,000 for Mousetrap Theatre Projects!

We've had a bit of a Mousetrap-themed period,



with our mystery-writing project, Mystery Solved, coming to its climax last week. We took over 400 pupils from 12 London primary schools to see The Mousetrap earlier in the term. They then wrote their own short mystery play or story

inspired by seeing the show. We selected a winning writer and a runner-up from each school, who were presented with a set of books by the well-known children's author and playwright David Wood at the St Martin's Theatre last week.

The final treat was for the winning writers and their classmates to see the best three stories given a staged reading by cast members of The Mousetrap. They were thrilled to see their words performed by the actors they had watched on stage only weeks earlier!

Teachers told us that lots of the children

who usually struggle with literacy were really inspired by this genre. One child, with writing problems so severe that much of her story was scribed by her teacher, demonstrated incredible imagination and was one of the three stories performed. Another child with special education needs and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, who usually hates writing, wrote one of the winning stories. One teacher told us her pupils were "devastated when we finally had to move onto a new literacy topic".

At the time of writing, I don't know if Mousetrap will be Sedos' charity of the year for 2013, but either way, the financial contribution and your support, interest and enthusiasm about the work of our charity has been fantastic. Thank you!



JOY BOY JOEY (Anthony Hagan)



Manliness	4
Hubbaness	7
Luckiness	5
Addiction	Sharp threads
Cheesecake or strudel?	No carbs
Crapshooter most likely to...	Fix up, look smart

News in brief

• We want to re-unite the cast of our 1994 production of Guys & Dolls at this year's show, so if anyone is in touch with any of them, contact Chris Warner (ckjwarner@gmail.com). As an aside, anyone recognise this fresh-faced young man?



• Sedos members have been showing their talents recently in other societies' shows, including Centre Stage's How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying, Tower's On Religion and Endgame and KDC's The Priory. Plus see our members in Tower's The Mystery of Edwin Drood (18-22 December).

From the committee

• **2013 season:** there are still two question marks over the 2013 Sedos season. Despite chasing, we have still have not had a decision from the American agents over the one-week musical in the Summer Festival. If we don't hear soon, we'll sadly have to go to plan B. The mini-pitch process for the October 2013 play slot closed just before the Grapevine went to press, so we hope to be able to make announcements soon.

• **Workshops:** sadly we didn't meet the minimum numbers required to run the planned weekend acting workshop, so had

to cancel the event. Matt Hudson and Jacqui Adams are currently working on a diary of events for 2013 so please email workshop@sedos.co.uk and let them know the things you think we should and shouldn't be doing! For example, are paid acting workshops of interest?

• **House/Garden:** around 1,000 people came to see our production of Alan Ayckbourn's two linked plays performed simultaneously in two theatres — in this case the Bridewell Theatre and the Bridewell Hall. Huge congratulations to everyone involved. It was a huge team effort and showed Sedos off at its very best — taking a risk and producing technically challenging theatre that few professional (let alone amateur) companies could pull off, something we've done with aplomb.

see Mousetrap Theatre Projects manning the splat-the-rat stall at the garden fête with members of their youth forum.

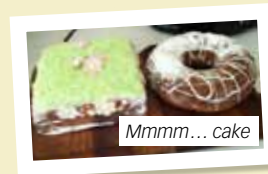
Alongside proceeds from the silent cake auction, we raised £125 for Mousetrap. Plus, it was great to have them joining in with the House/Garden spirit — on the charity night they had two people doing the speeches (one in House, one in Garden) and had timed and rehearsed them so they took exactly the same time.

• **Sedos charity of the year 2013:** we've had three pitches in for the 2013 Sedos charity of the year and hope to make an announcement by the end of the year.

• **Half Moon Young People's Theatre:** it was great to see so many Sedos members at the Half Moon reopening events. Over the five years Sedos supported Half Moon we raised £18,000 and as such contributed substantially to the refurbishment programme.

• **Ocean House:** nothing new to report, though we are expecting that will be asked to vacate very early in 2013. As a result, we are no longer taking bookings from other groups after the end of this year. The committee is still looking at other potential spaces and we'll let you know more when things are agreed. We will need your help when we move, so please be prepared to muck in.

• **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?



• **Garden fête:** despite the weather the House/Garden fête weekend was a great success and we loved using St Bride's Passage as an extra space to run stalls, play games and serve warming soup and hot dogs. We're looking at using the space in some capacity for the Summer Festival, so watch this space.

• **Sedos charity of the year:** it was great to

JOEY BILTMORE (Alex Magliaro)



Manliness	10
Hubbaness	7
Luckiness	7
Addiction	Diesel fumes
Cheesecake or strudel?	Whichever the rats prefer
Crapshooter most likely to...	Shoot rats

Dates for the diary

5-15 December

Guys & Dolls performances

21 December

Christmas party

11-12 January

Godspell auditions

Contacts

In charge of the Grapevine

Pippa Roome

Design

Pippa Roome and Stephen Beeny, with thanks to Nicole Rush

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Sedos website

sedos.co.uk

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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

Contact the committee at:

admin@sedos.co.uk

'True to the spirit of the book'

The Grapevine meets Andy Marchant, director of Sedos's first show of 2013, a stage adaptation of Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast



Andy Marchant
promises not to be this
angry in rehearsals...

Why the hell are we staging Gormenghast?

Gormenghast is an amazing book. A real unsung hero of beautifully written prose. I'd never heard of it until the TV adaptation, which made me curious enough to read it. And it was so much better than I could have hoped. It's a world trapped in paper and ink. John Constable's adaptation is shorter than it could be. It's more focused than it could be. But it is true to the spirit of the book and I intend to direct it with that same mindset.

Why is it relevant in the 21st century?

Tradition and ritual, especially in Britain, have a very dominating presence. But we are also an ever-changing country in an ever-changing world. This is a country where disenfranchised youths will riot for no reason but to riot, as an ancient and regal family hold a wedding seen worldwide. But that is the nature of the narrative. It's the old and familiar stories, but what feels like prose in revolt. However, the purpose of the production isn't to lecture or run a commentary.

Favourite part of the Gormenghast Castle?

I'd settle in the calm of the Hall of Bright Carvings with Rodcott. I love the idea that strange, ancient shapes and sculptures and colours can be so treasured and so appreciated and so undiscovered until you know to look.

If you could meet one person/thing from Gormenghast who would it be?

Any of them. And none of them. They are all so beautiful and mad and utterly, utterly hideous. I suppose it would be easier to answer, "Who from Gormenghast would I like to meet LEAST?" Swelter. Definitely Swelter.

Favourite character from the play?

From the reading and the workshop, Cara and Clarice, two small roles that really stand out as fun, and creepy. Whoever they (be they boys or girls) are that inhabit the roles, they will have a great time bringing out the crazy.

How is it working on such a condensed version of an epic?

Intimidating. Terrifying. Wonderful. (A condensed version of an epic answer).

Who is your theatrical hero?

The standards of Shakespeare, Berkoff, Stoppard... All the big names jump and prance around your eyes at a question like that. That said, Donald Sinden I've seen on stage twice, and he has an AWESOME voice.

If you could play any part in any play what would it be and why?

I tend to direct plays I want to be in, which is



annoying. One I'd really love to have a bash at though is either Karturian in the Pillowman, or Ricky Roma in Glengarry Glen Ross.

In the show there is a Master of Rituals — name one odd ritual you do?

I strongly and aggressively strive to avoid any ritual I can...

Maybe that is my ritual... Dammit!

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

Upstairs, Downstairs

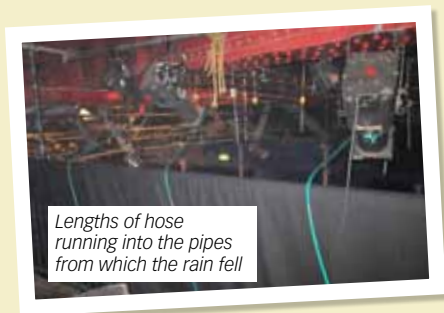


Our autumn project was staging the linked Alan Ayckbourn plays *House* and *Garden* in the Bridewell Theatre and the Bridewell Hall, with Matt Gould taking on his biggest directing challenge to date and the cast and backstage team getting behind him to pull off a remarkable thespian feat. Enjoy the pictures and then scroll to the next page to find out how they did it.

Pictures by Michael Smith

House/Garden uncovered

House/Garden threw up huge technical challenges to the team, with the necessity for it to rain — yes, with real water — and the excitement of two plays running simultaneously. The Grapevine goes backstage to find out how it all worked



Lengths of hose running into the pipes from which the rain fell

Making it rain, by Brian Tucker, Garden co-set designer

Rain is simple, water comes out of pipes somewhere near the top of the theatre and falls, like rain does.

It's what happens to it after that which is tricky. The Bridewell's former life as a swimming pool is no help — if the sub-stage woodwork gets wet it begins to rot and eventually there would be no stage. So the water had to be collected and channelled somewhere for disposal.

We considered raking and draining the stage, but this was discounted due to the cost and the time-constraints imposed by a one-day get-in.

The fact that we were laying grass on the stage became our saving grace. Could we let the water collect in the thickness of the grass? A couple of back of napkin calculations determined that 250litres of water would cover the stage to a depth of just 2.5millimeters, well within the inch depth of the collecting tray.

The collection tray itself was a large sheet of damp proof membrane from a builders' merchant. Two wide strips were joined using industrial grade double-sided tape in order to form the 8x10m sheet necessary to cover the Bridewell floor. Strips of wood under the membrane formed a ridge round the outside.

With collection organised, it was time to consider the mechanism that makes the rain. The idea was to use lengths of black plastic pipe with holes, but what size and shape of holes? Some experimentation was needed so a length of pipe was duly purchased and drilled with 1mm, 1.5mm and 3mm linear slots and a pair of 1mm holes with a covering penny washer. Hooked up to mains water pressure, the 1mm and 1.5mm holes produced jets 5m high, while the 3mm hole gave a fan of water 1m wide, while the penny washer arrangement produced a spray by nature of the jets deflecting off the washer.

Each section of pipe had four penny washer arrangements, with three sections of pipe to a bar, four bars down the depth of the stage. These were fed from a four-way manifold, which was supplied by a water pump submerged in a water butt on the Bridewell balcony.



The water butt on the balcony which fed the rain

However, it was only once in the venue that the system could be properly tested. Frustratingly the effect wasn't quite as I'd intended because the pump didn't produce enough pressure to get the jets properly deflecting off the penny washers. The result was linear streams dripping from the pipe rather than the spray that I'd hoped for. More pumps, and consequently more water, would have rectified this, but time and budget precluded that option and the show crew would have thanked me even less if they'd had twice the water to clean up.

"Have you considered Legionnaires' Disease?" are not the words you want to hear three days from setting up a show, but one has duly to go through the motions of understanding whether Legionnaires' Disease could be a risk. Thankfully we would have to draw the water fresh from the tap nightly, meaning that it would never be standing long enough at the temperatures to allow the Legionnaire bacteria to thrive...

The rain during show week, by Pippa Roome, Garden stage manager

As Brian says, the main problem with rain indoors is the aftermath. The original idea was that each night the grass would be raised on a bar hung from the roof, so it could drip into the tray he has already described.

In the theatre, it was clear this was impractical — even dry, the grass was very heavy and the proposed hanging location was over the upstage plants, which, with a big set-up pre-show, we were keen not to strike every night.

After a couple of days of experimentation, we hit on our drainage method. We cut the grass strips at the plant line — avoiding making breaks where they would be obvious from the audience. The four loose, wet front sections were then rolled up and drained overnight standing up in big plastic buckets.

The water in the tray then had to be removed, using vacuums, mops and towels, before the tray could be rolled back behind the curtain which marks the area used daily for Lunchbox.

Pre-show we had to re-set the tray, vacuum the water out of the drainage buckets, then lift the grass strips out and unroll them in position.

The water butt which fed the rain had to be re-filled before each show, plus the fountain was emptied and re-filled daily by bucket because it was too heavy to move when full.

With all this to do, wet props and costumes, and the fact we had to clear and re-set the Bridewell Hall for "House" three times during the run when the hall had other bookings, this was a very manpower-heavy show — thanks to the crew and everyone who helped with the pre- or post-show shifts.



Rolling up the grass after a show



Mopping up the water in the tray



Folding back the tray

Pictures by Pippa Roome and Mike Hall

Building the two show process in rehearsal, by Matt Gould, director

When I pitched House and Garden, I started by doing a lot of research into how playwright Ayckbourn had tackled the show himself. Of course like any other play, it is really a series of scenes that need to be directed and blocked. OK, so there were four-and-a-half hours of action, but block as usual.

Nevertheless, we needed to prove that it could work, so we rapidly did a basic blocking of act one scene one of both plays and then ran them simultaneously at both ends of the first floor of Ocean House. Apart from one “very tight” corner, it worked. Thank goodness!

Trying to get each scene to end simultaneously with the other play was the most challenging bit — but Ayckbourn was strongly of the view that the audience would put up with longer than usual scene changes knowing that something else was going on in the other theatre!

But there’s one horrible googly — Teddy has the last line of act two scene one of House, drenched, covered with muck and with no trousers on — and then he’s given the first line of the next scene (apparently two hours later), having changed, showered etc etc. Now that’s just unkind.

The bows were the most fun. It was solved when we nicked a trick from the National Theatre of having speeches in the

middle to allow the cast to catch up — but it still took a lot of practising to allow everything to finish together...

But it did — just!

Two stages, one cast, by Peter Myers, who played Giles Mace

I think it’s fair to say none of us had acted in such an ambitious show before; four hours of script (though split into two) is a lot to negotiate. It was tricky enough when we started running swathes of the play over two floors of Ocean House, and was only intensified when we moved into the Bridewell(s).

This is how it tended to work for me in Act 1 at least. I’d exit the verdant Bridewell Theatre Garden stage-left, appearing to the passerby much like a fellow at leisure; curtain crossed, I’d side-shoe swiftly into the dressing room (it wasn’t until the after-play party that I discovered I was filmed doing this by a sassy cast member), power through two sets of doors, clear the twisty-turny staircase several steps at a time, clarify to myself where in House I was expected to appear, before veering down the corridor to the Bridewell Hall.

Oftentimes there wasn’t even a moment to seek repose; the cues were too pinchingly tight (especially when Giles is expected to shriek “Teddy” at almost the same point in both

plays; we were going to record one but never got round to it).

Entering House I had to trust that the adrenalin of appearing on an intimate, in-the-round set would put pay to any obvious out-of-breath gasps. The trick here also was not to bewilder this new snug audience with the proscenium-arch-traversing bellows that I’d been entertaining the assembled downstairs crowd with seconds before.

Reverse, then repeat several more times.

The crew roles, by Pippa Roome, Garden stage manager

The backstage crew ran stopwatches in rehearsals from two weeks before get-in and marked in our script what point we had reached every few minutes, plus actors’ leaving and arriving times. This let us learn how the shows varied and find “pinch points” when cast members could potentially “miss” an entrance.

During the show weeks, with the crew and operators all on “cans”, Stephen Beeny was “on the book” and cued the simultaneous scene starts in both theatres. Meanwhile, House stage manager Clare Harding and I developed a language all of our own:

Pippa: “I’m about a minute faster than last night.”

Clare: “Yes, I think you’re about half a page ahead of us, but that won’t cause us any

problems” or “Yes — tell so and so to run!”

Gradually we became more confident at informing actors how the shows were running and even asking them to slow down or speed up particular scenes.

There were two regular pinch points, the first being Peter’s shout of “Teddy” in House. On the first night I became anxious enough to send Steve King — our tame techie troubleshooter — to House, thinking he would make a better stand-in than Clare!

The other was the arrival of Fran (Charlotte Price) and Lucille (Lucy Allenby) in House at the end of the first act. Sometimes they would still be on stage in Garden as House reached their cue — the solution was sending Joanna (Anne-Marie Chronnell) on stage in House for an improvised “filler” scene.

One final complication was the fact Stephen, Clare and I all spent much of act two scene one being temporary cast members, so assistant stage manager Laura Graham-Matheson became the boss backstage for that time.

The most difficult part was bringing the two shows down simultaneously. Stephen managed this dexterously, with the help of the “long dog” final sound effect in Garden (consistently the shorter show in this final scene), while the whisper of “slow bows” echoed through in the wings as we waited with bated breath for actors to arrive for the curtain call.

The crew: Pippa, Clare, Laura, Steve, Stephen

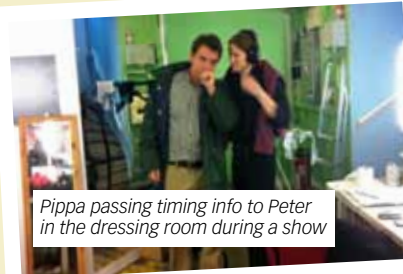


Garden sound operator Karen Moss and Stephen in rehearsal

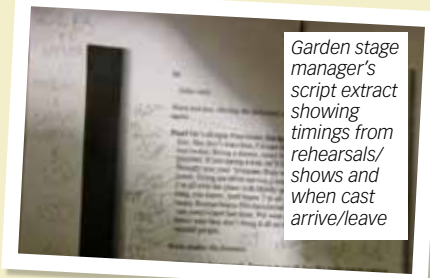


Note the stopwatches!

Pippa passing timing info to Peter in the dressing room during a show



Garden stage manager's script extract showing timings from rehearsals/shows and when cast arrive/leave



Pictures by Pippa Roome and Sarah Evans

A glass of wine with... Sedos committee member Matt Hudson

What was your first Sedos show?

Laramie Project (weekend workshop) was my first dabble into Sedos, and my first Bridewell show was Hair.

Are you involved in a Sedos show at the moment?

Yes I am producing Gormenghast in February/March and will be directing Enron in July.

What do you do in real life?

I am a project manager for a learning and development training business who use theatre and psychological insight to create behavioural change.

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

In a production of Measure for Measure for KDC the set fell down three times in act five. I was dressed as a friar, brown habit and all! It was ridiculous. Tracie Laurinaitis and I stood there not really knowing what to do!

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

Go to the theatre, kiss someone I've always wanted too, and go sit in a London Park with friends, drink a lot and wait for the end of the world!

It's our round what are you having?

Long Island iced tea.



What is one food you couldn't live without?

Eggs.

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

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat when I was about eight. I hated it then and still do!

Most recent is Loot by Tower, which was very good.

Have you ever won anything in a competition?

I won tickets to see the Power Rangers movie when I was maybe 10... best day of my life!

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

Team! Although my latest production began with: "How do we do cats?"

And ends with?

TEAM... hugging and drinking!

In the wings with... Sedos member Tom Leonard

I've recently embarked on one of the most ambitious and time-consuming projects of my life: choreographing Guys & Dolls.

Having taught Sedance for a while (PLUG: Mondays, 7-9pm, £5, Ocean House), I had been flexing my choreographic muscle and thought I was up to the challenge. However, nothing could have prepared me for the mammoth task ahead. Naively I postulated I could have the whole thing done and dusted before auditions. Inevitably, I was not even close.

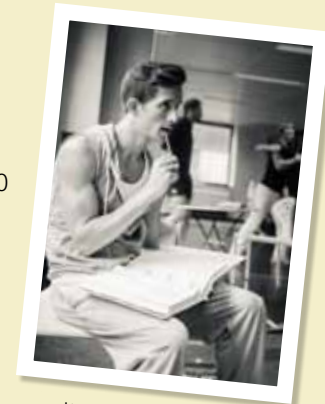
Should you ever find yourself in a similar situation, my top tips for speed choreography whilst maintaining sanity are thus:

- Engage Kimberly Barker as your assistant choreographer as soon as possible.
- When holidaying with friends, provide your travel companions with motivations such as "jaded performer in titty bar with piles" and request they strike a pose for choreographic inspiration.
- Take joke choreography devised by friends being "hilarious" and pass it off as legitimate.
- If you haven't actually choreographed a section you're supposed to be teaching, pretend you never intended to get that far in that rehearsal. If you need to fill yet more rehearsal time, arbitrarily change counts and arm lines to initiate controversy and lengthy discussion. NEVER get your left and right the correct way around.
- Use phrases like "We'll workshop it."
- Ruthlessly cut the music. No one is going to miss Luck be a Lady.

• To overcome a creative block, revisit choreography 10 minutes before you have to teach it — the time pressure will provide guaranteed, although possibly dubious, results.

Happy choreographing!

By day Tom is a patent attorney.



Picture by Nick Fyson

CHEESECAKE BLAKE (Angus Jacobs)



Manliness	7
Hubbaness	8
Luckiness	4
Addiction	Dairy-based puddings
Cheesecake or strudel?	Need you ask?
Crapshooter most likely to...	Pull something stretchy