

Curtain Up

What's happening
at Halifax Playhouse

Get Ready!

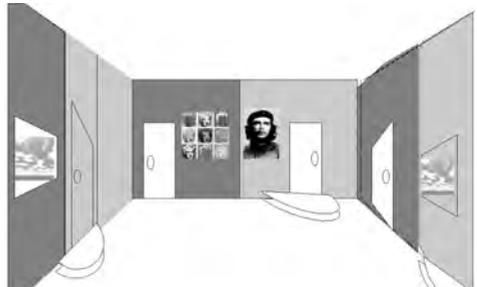
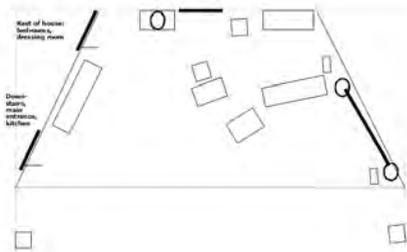
Get Set!

Perform!

Get Ready! Get Set! Perform!



or how the stage gets from this to this



The creation of a set for a Thespians production involves a great deal of co-operation and co-ordination. It usually begins in the mind of the play director with a concept which is often communicated through a stage plan and in some cases a “3D” visual.



Discussions then begin with those who will build the set, looking at the feasibility of the concept and the means of construction before basic work begins such as constructing rostra and beginning to locate the materials necessary for the build.



Over a period work develops and materials are gathered. Specific features begin to emerge such as walls and doorways. Flats—essentially the walls of the set are erected.



Now more detailed features are put in place, and furniture begins to appear. In the meantime other elements of the set have to be prepared so that someone when actors get their first look at the burgeoning set, the lighting is being set atop A-frame ladders



Now the set has to be “dressed” as the properties department provides suitable touches of decoration such as pictures, table clothes, vases and telephones.—plus in some cases speciality items like a whole skeleton! The bigger furniture can now be included and finishing touches are made with curtains and plans to complete the big picture. The cast can now have full dress rehearsals on a set which will be the first thing audiences see when the curtain goes up.

Stories behind forthcoming Thespians' shows

Early TV sitcom *Steptoe and Son* (March 14-18) ran from 1962 to 1974, following the misfortunes of rag and bone men, Albert and son Harold, in their rundown home in Oil Drum Lane. Writers Ray Galton and Alan Simpson



(pictured) penned 57 episodes, plus two feature films. It later spawned US, Swedish and Dutch versions. The three episodes chosen for our production are:

Men of Letters: The vicar calls, asking for an article on rag and bone men for the church magazine's centenary edition. Harold pens the piece and Albert delivers a crossword which causes havoc.

The Desperate Hours: On a cold winter's day the Steptoes are visited by two escaped convicts, elderly Frank and the younger Johnny. Lifestyle complaints fly and curious alliances are formed which test the relationship once more.

Séance in a wet rag and bone yard: Harold is sceptical when local medium Madame Fontana comes to the house to give a séance, along with Dorothy, a widow Albert hopes to marry. Through Madame Fontana the old couple discover that their late spouses want them to marry. Difficult to work out who's scamming whom.



Home, I'm Darling (April 11 to 15) by Laura Wade, was premiered at Theatr Clwyd in 2018, was performed at the National Theatre and in the West End – winning three major awards. Wade, who grew up

in Yorkshire, is a prolific playwright recently engaged by Disney to prepare content for its new TV channel.

A high-achieving professional, who recently lost her job, decides to make a point about her status in life by taking her home back to the 1950s. Nostalgia abounds among audiences who remember owning the gadgets and furnishings on stage – or seeing them at their grandparents' homes.



Anthony Horowitz's play *Mindgame* (May 16-20) has as many twists and turns as a road through the Dales. Not content with this complexity, the author has recently written a novel (*The Twist of a Knife*) with a storyline based on a performance of this play!

Mindgame premiered at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester on 2 September 1999, before transferring to the Vaudeville Theatre in London's West End in 2000. On 9 November 2008, the play premiered Off Broadway directed by notorious British filmmaker Ken Russell, in his New York City directorial debut. Another run of performances took place at the Ambassador's Theatre in London in 2018, following a UK tour.

Set in an experimental mental illness hospital it is rather less a Who's Who, than a Whose Who?? It has been described as a slow-climbing roller-coaster, which once at the top swoops with abandon.

Mort (June 6 – 10), adapted by Stephen Briggs from a fantasy novel by Terry Pratchett, is the third of his stories presented on the Playhouse Stage. Published in 1987, it is the fourth of many Discworld novels and the first to focus on the character Death, who only appeared as a cameo in previous books.



In 2004, Pratchett said that *Mort* was the first Discworld novel with which he was "pleased", stating that in previous books, the plot had existed to support the jokes, but that in *Mort*, the plot was integral.

The title is the name of its main character, and is also a play on words: in French and Catalan, mort means "death". The French language edition is titled *Mortimer*, and the Catalan language edition is called *Morth*.

Death decides to take some time off from collecting souls, and finds a naïve mortal to take his place.

The Meaning of Membership

Halifax Thespians value the contribution that members make to the organisation; your £15 annual subscription and the other ways you help are essential to the continued activity at Halifax Playhouse.

In return we offer you the opportunity to be patrons of the Arts, ensuring the continued presence of an organisation bringing the widest range of theatrical and musical entertainment to the local community and operating the only truly traditional theatre in the area.

Halifax Thespians own the Playhouse and volunteers operate almost all its functions. The group has been entertaining theatregoers in Halifax for more than 90 years (close to 60 of them in the present location) and has existed all this time as a membership charity.

We perform up to eight regular productions a year both on the main stage with its auditorium for 240 people and in the Bar Studio where more intimate shows play to 50.

Members take part in these productions, not only on stage but with technical matters and hospitality, which includes a Front of House Manager who ensure everyone is safe, plus bar, sweets and coffee staff. They also facilitate performances by other local organisations and national touring companies bringing tribute acts, theatrical performances and other entertainment to the Playhouse stage.

Members learn theatrical arts, both on and off stage – and an increasing number of events give opportunities for social activity with like-minded people.

It's the time of year when memberships are renewed and once again we are maintaining the subscriptions at £15.

As well as being part of a significant local group, member benefits include discounted prices for Thespians' shows and participation in a further range of activities, including voting rights at AGMs..

Volunteering for hospitality activities make another great contribution and can involve as little as a couple of hours a month, or more if wished.

It is important, however, that if you tick an area of activity at the theatre that you respond to contacts about joining rotas, so that the load can be spread.

We do hope you will continue to be valued patrons of the Arts – and would urge you to encourage family and friends to be part of this important local organisation.

And some other activities

Members are being offered a free evening's entertainment as the Management Team provides a "Thankyou" for their continued support.

On Friday 21st April 2023, at 7.30pm there will a revue featuring home grown talent in a range of presentations including music, drama, sketches and comedy.

There are still opportunities for individuals and small groups to join the bill for this event.

Secretary Jeanette Kendall (07495 799055) is keen to hear from you. She says: "If you want to tread those boards, please let me know as soon as possible. I will need the format of the piece (if it's a scene, sketch or song), the name(s) of everyone in the piece, the title of the piece and how long it runs for.

"If you still want to perform but don't have an idea of what to do, still please let me know as we have scenes and sketches available with a great choice of characters to play. This is going to be a fantastic evening of entertainment."

Plans are afoot to restart our Play readings where members come along and read through scriptstogether. We are also looking at presenting radio plays at Social Evenings. Watch our for details

A blue poster for Halifax Playhouse Open Mic. It features a microphone on a stand with a guitar hanging from it. The text is white and yellow. The date is Sun Feb 26 at 2:00pm, with doors and bar open from 1:45. The tagline is 'Sing, Play, Read, or just chill...' and it says 'All Welcome' at Halifax Playhouse, King Cross St. HX1 2SH.

Halifax Playhouse
Open Mic

Sun Feb 26
at 2:00pm
(doors and bar
open from 1:45)

Sing, Play, Read,
or just chill...

All Welcome
Halifax Playhouse
King Cross St. HX1 2SH

Tribute Bands at the Playhouse

Feb 26	An Evening with Celine Deon
Mar 24	Your Song - The Songs of Elton John
Apl 2	An Evening with Dolly Parton
Apl 22	Rio Gold (Spandau Ballet/ Duran Duran)
Jun 17	Don't Stop Queen Now
Jun 18	Simply Tina (Tina Turner)
Sep 16	Bon Joe-V
Sep 23	Pinked Floyd
Sep 30	Two Pianos (Rock and Roll)

Local theatre groups at the Playhouse

Feb 15 – 18	Madagascar (HLOS Juniors)
Mar 28 – Apl 1	Carousel (All Souls' AOS)
June 24 – 25	Curtain Up (HLOS and Woodhouse MTC concert)

Other visiting entertainment

Feb 23	The Unravelling Fantasia of Miss H (Opera by Stitched Up Theatre)
Feb 24	Cinderella and her Naughty Buttons (Adult Panto)
March 25	Paris Bubbles Magic and Circus)
Apl 5	Forbidden Nights (sexy circus)
Apl 17	An Evening of Mediumship (Grant Harris)

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