



Bartholomew Players

March 2023 Newsletter



2023 Spring play

A Bunch of Amateurs

Written by: Ian Hislop and Nick Newman

Directed by: Joe O'Connor and Pip Burns

Rehearsal Schedule

Monday and Wednesday rehearsals are in full swing.

Off book - From April 3rd

Set build - Sun 7 May (TBC)

Set dress/tech - Sat/Sun 13/14 May

Dress rehearsal- Mon 15 May

Performances - Wed 17 - Sat 20 May

Set strike- Sun 21 May

Notices

Props

The 'props' team (Keith, Judy and Valerie) would be so very grateful if you would all check the "props list" for ABoA to see if you have any of the myriad of bizarre props that we are currently trying to source.

Pre-recorded voiceovers

We have confirmed Luke Frewin will be doing the voiceover for one of the journalists. If anyone else would like to volunteer please let us know

Wardrobe

We are pleased to announce that Louise Taney has volunteered to manage wardrobe this year and she is already doing a stellar job!

Events and announcements

Pub drink (Wed 5th April)

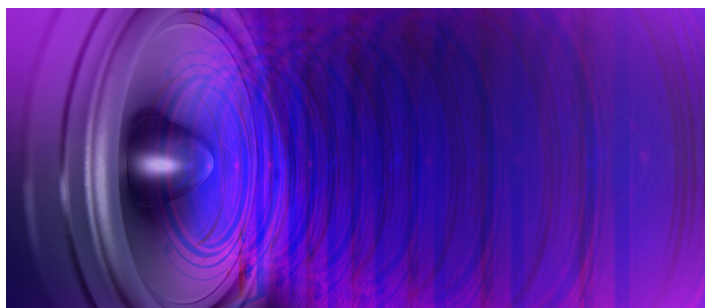
Please join us at the Red Lion in Eynsham after the rehearsal.

How-to series

In this month's newsletter, we're excited to share two essential How-To Guides with you. The first guide focuses on sound management, a topic our very own Steve Ashcroft is well-versed in. If you're eager to learn more, you'll be happy to know that Steve will be returning to the UK towards the end of April to share his expertise.

Our second guide delves into the importance of vocal warm-ups. As many of you may know, I recently experienced the consequences of not properly warming up for a demanding role in our last play, which led to vocal polyps. To prevent similar issues, we urge you to dedicate 10 minutes to warming up your voices before rehearsals and performances. Your vocal cords will thank you!

How-to: Sound Management



by Steve Ashcroft

Effective sound management is crucial for any amateur dramatic production to create an immersive experience for the audience. In this guide, we'll discuss the process of selecting and managing sounds, along with some useful tips from Steve Ashcroft, the sound manager at Bartholomew Players. By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to delivering a captivating performance with top-notch sound.

1. Identifying Required Sounds

- Begin by reading the script thoroughly to identify and list all required sound effects (SFX).
- Make sure to engage with the director for guidance on their vision, while also allowing them to trust your judgment as a sound operator.
- Prepare a list of SFX for the director to review during a run-through, allowing them to provide feedback or suggest changes.

2. Sourcing Sound Effects

- Utilize free sound libraries, such as the BBC Sound Effects Library (<https://sound-effects.bbcrewind.co.uk>).
- Conduct general internet searches for specific sounds, such as "thunderstorm SFX."
- Most SFX can be found for free with a bit of research.

3. Equipment and Tools

- We use a sound mixer desk in combination with a sound management app like Audio Cues (<https://www.audiocues.app>) for Android, which costs around £10 as a one-time payment. Similar apps are available for other platforms (iPad, Apple computer, or Windows).
- The output from the sound desk is passed to the sound system in the Village Hall which directs it to the on-stage speakers, of which we have four.

4. Organizing and Managing Sound Cues

- Import SFX files into your chosen sound management app.
- Set the app to trigger sound cues manually or automatically, depending on the desired timing.
- Follow the script closely to ensure that sound cues are triggered appropriately, even when actors deviate from their lines. As we learnt from Graham and Denise in the lighting How-To it is best to have an electronic copy of the script as well as a marked up version specifically for sound to help you know where you are.

5. Adjusting Sound Volume

- Set sound levels for right and left speaker channels in advance using the sound management app.
- Be prepared to make manual adjustments to sound volume during the performance using the sound mixer desk.

By following these steps, you'll be able to create a seamless sound experience for any production. Remember to collaborate with the director, stay organized with your sound cues, and be prepared to make adjustments as needed. With practice, you'll become a skilled sound manager capable of delivering a truly captivating performance.

How-to: Vocal Warm Up



A thorough vocal warm-up routine is essential for all actors in any type of performance whether amateur or professional. Note that warm ups are always done by professional actors before any vocal work. Proper warm-ups and articulation exercises help prevent vocal strain, improve enunciation, and allow actors to explore the full range of their voices. At the beginning of March we were lucky enough to have a vocal session with Sue Tordoff, a professional acting tutor. This guide provides a step-by-step process for vocal warm-ups, as well as jaw, lip, and tongue exercises.

These warm-ups can be conducted in any length of time, though a minimum of 10 minutes warm up before rehearsals or performances are essential to ensure your voice is well looked after!

Remember the key to voice is breath!

1. Relax Your Body

- Start by loosening up your body through gentle stretches, focusing on the neck, shoulders, and jaw.
- Shake out any tension in your arms and legs.
- Take a few deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth, to help relax your diaphragm.

2. Warm Up Your Facial Muscles

- Massage your facial muscles gently, paying attention to the cheeks, jaw, and around the mouth.
- Yawn deeply and slowly to open up your throat and relax your jaw muscles.
- Practise exaggerated facial expressions, such as smiling and frowning, to engage your facial muscles.

3. Jaw Exercises

- Begin by relaxing the jaw and massaging the hinge gently to warm it up.
- Imagine chewing a toffee that grows larger and larger, focusing on engaging the jaw and the entire face.
- Drop your head and shake it, completely relaxing the jaw.

4. Lip exercises

- Press your lips firmly together, applying equal pressure along both lips without using your teeth. Hold for 30 seconds, then release with a horse buzz.
- Create a wide smile, then gradually fade the smile and push your lips forward into a tight pout. Alternate between the smile and pout for around ten repetitions, then release with a horse buzz.
- Tightly purse your lips, leaving a small hole the size of a cocktail straw at the front. Hold for 30 seconds, then release with a horse buzz.

5. Tongue Exercises

- Perform the "clean teeth" exercise, moving your tongue around the outside of your teeth while exploring the entire mouth and stretching the tongue muscles.
- With a two-finger drop, press the tip of your tongue on the alveolar ridge, just behind your upper front teeth. Press the top and bottom sides of the tip, creating your own rhythm.
- For the back of the tongue, maintain a two-finger drop and place the tip of your tongue firmly behind your bottom front teeth. Allow the body of the tongue to hump out, keeping the jaw dropped and still.

6. Vocal Exercises

- Start with simple vocal sirens, sliding from the lowest to the highest note in your range, and back down again.
- Progress to singing scales or arpeggios, focusing on maintaining proper breath support and pitch.
- Explore different vowel sounds, such as "ah," "ee," "ih," "oh," and "oo," while moving through your vocal range.

7. Humming and Lip Trills

- Begin with gentle humming, moving up and down through your vocal range.
- Gradually increase the volume of your humming while maintaining a relaxed jaw and throat.
- Practise lip trills by blowing air through your lips, creating a "brrr" sound. Move up and down your vocal range while maintaining the lip trill.

8. Articulation Exercises

- Repeat tongue twisters, like "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers," to improve diction and articulation.
- Try other consonant-focused exercises like "DOO DOH DAW DAH DAY DIE DEE". A full list of consonant agility exercises are included at the back of this guide.
- Practise these exercises at varying speeds, starting slowly and gradually increasing the pace.

9. Breathing Exercises

- Practise diaphragmatic breathing by placing one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Inhale deeply, allowing your abdomen to expand while keeping your chest still.
- Try the "straw breathing" technique by inhaling through a straw and exhaling without it, focusing on maintaining a slow and steady breath.
- Perform the "hissing" exercise by taking a deep breath and releasing the air slowly while making a hissing sound. Try to prolong the hiss for as long as possible.

By following this comprehensive guide, members of the Bartholomew Players will be better prepared for rehearsals and performances. Consistent practice of these warm-up exercises will lead to improved vocal health, enhanced enunciation, and greater control over your voice. Remember to stay relaxed and focused during your warm-ups to ensure optimal results. Break a leg!

EXERCISES FOR CONSONANT AGILITY

Tongue consonants with vowels

- DOO DOH DAW DAH DAY DIE DEE
- TOO TOH TAW TAH TAY TIE TEE
- NOO NOH NAW NAH NAY NIE NEE

Lip consonants with vowels

- POO POH PAW PAH PAY PIE PEE
- BOO BOH BAW BAH BAY BIE BEE
- MOO MOH MAW MAH MAY MIE MEE

Back of the tongue

- KOO KOH KAW KAH KAY KIE KEE
- GOO GOH GAW GAH GAY GIE GEE

Continuant consonants.

- FOO FOH FAW FAH FAY FIE FEE
- VOO VOH VAW VAH VAY VIE VEE
- SOO SOH SAW SAH SAY SIE SEE
- ZOO ZOH ZAW ZAH ZAY ZIE ZEE

THOO (thin breathed)

- THOH THAW THAH THAY THIE THEE

THOO (voiced)

- THOH THAW THAH THAY THIE THEE

Additional agility

- OOT OHT AWT AHT AYT IET EET
- OOD OHD AWD AHD AYD IED EED
- OON OHN AWN AHN AYN IEN EEN
- OOP OHP AWP AHP AYP IEP EEP
- OOB OHB AWB AHB AYB IEB EEB
- OOM OHM AWM AHM AYM IEM EEM
- OOK OHK AWK AHK AYK IEK EEK
- OOG OHG AWG AHG AYG IEG EEG
- OOG E OHGE AWGE AHGE AYGE IEGE EEGE
- OOF OHF AWF AHF AYF IEF EEF
- OOV OHV AWV AHV AYV IEV EEV
- OOS OHS AWS AHS AYS IES EES
- OOOZ OHZ AWZ AHZ AYZ IEZ EEZ
- OOL OHL AWL AHL AYL IEL EEL
- OODGE OHDGE AWDGE AHDGE AYDGE IEDGE EEDGE
- OOOCH OHCH AWCH AHCH AYCH IECH EECH
- OOSH OOSHAWSH AHSH AYSH IESH EESH
- OOTH OOTH AWTH AHTH AYTH IETH EETH
(thin breath)
- OOTH OOTH AWTH AHTH AYTH IETH EETH
(voiced)