

Where are they Now September 2012

Anyone who saw **THE WIZARD OF OZ** at The Johnson Hall, Yeovil, or The Theatre Royal, Bath, in the summer of 1997 could look back now and realise what a good deal they got for their £12.00 ticket because the cast and artistic team are alive and kicking big time with director **JO DAVIES** and choreographer **KAY SHEPHERD** winning high praise for their production of **CAROUSEL** for **ENO** North at the Barbican, in which **GILLENE HERBERT** (Tree in OZ, later The Baker's Wife in Into The Woods) is playing Janie Jordan, the leading lady. The production transfers to Paris next month. **GAVIN SPOKES** (The Tin Man in Oz, later in The Beggar's Opera) is currently playing Nicely Nicely Johnson in **RUSSELL LABEY'S** production of Guys and Dolls at the Cadogan Hall; **JAMIE BELL** (Munchkin in Oz, later in Tin Pan Ali, Bugsy Malone and The Ragged Child) has a new film, **MAN ON A LEDGE**, about to be released, as has fellow Munchkin, **MARC PICKERING** (later in Tin Pan Ali and Bugsy Malone) who is in the new film version of **LES MISERABLES**. Yet another Munchkin, **DREW McONIE**, has just choreographed 13 for the NYMT! **ADEBAYO BOLAJI** (Crow in Oz, later in Bugsy Malone, Aurelius) is in **GHOSTS** and **AMY NUTTALL** (Glinda in Oz, later in Aurelius), having just finished in **NOISES OFF** at The Old Vic, is now to be seen in the new **DOWNTON ABBEY**. **SEAN PARKINS** (Uncle Henry in Oz, later in Bugsy Malone) is at the Apollo Victoria in **WICKED** (alongside **GINA BECK** who is playing Glinda) and Wizard of Oz designer **ES DEVLIN** designed the forthcoming **BATMAN LIVE** as well as the **OLYMPIC GAMES CLOSING CEREMONY!** Not a bad twelve quid's worth!!

How good to see **ZOE BIRKETT** (creation 1999) on a West-End stage in **THRILLER** and **NEIL McDERMOTT** (Aurelius, 1996, THE Kissing-Dance, 1998) in **SHREK** in which he took over Lord Farquaad from **NIGEL HARMAN** (October's Children\*, 1991) \* recently resurrected as **NATASHA** which was a great success at this year's International Youth Arts Festival in Kingston. Also in October's Children in 1990 was **TOM CHAMBERS** (later Pellinore in Pendragon and Not Quite Bedtime) who is leading the West-End company in Top Hat at The Aldwych. **ADAM PEARCE** (the next Pellinore in Pendragon, 2000; Oklahoma, 2002) was, until it closed last Saturday, the first voice you'd hear each night at the Adelphi, commanding the audience to '*Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd!*' **NICKY SEARLE** (Drake, 1984) is still strutting his stuff in **MATILDA**, choreographed by **PETER DARLING** (Salomon Pavey, 1977) who is soon to choreograph the new production of **CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY** at The London Palladium. Reigning equally supreme in the choreography stakes at the moment is **ANDREW WRIGHT** (Joseph, 1989, Billy, 1990 and Oliver!, 1991) whose current work on both **SINGIN' IN THE RAIN** and **WONDERFUL TOWN** with **TIFFANY GRAVES** (Poppy, 1993; Annie, 1995) and **CONNIE FISHER**, (Pendragon 1999) sees him in great demand.

It's quite a leap from Tallulah in Bugsy Malone (Queen's Theatre, 1997) to the title role in **HEDDA GABLER** at The Old Vic for **SHERIDAN SMITH** this year. As if that and **MRS BIGGS** isn't enough, she then continues in Michael Grandage's new production of **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** in a season at The Noel Coward Theatre starting in December, which also includes **JUDE LAW**, (Bodywork, 1987; The Ragged Child, 1988; Les Petits Rats, 1988; Joseph, 1989; Caucasian Chalk Circle; 1989, Captain Stirrick; 1990) playing the King in Shakespeare's **HENRY V**. Jude's new films, 360 and **ANNA KARENINA** are fresh to the screen. Also in the film world, **BEN BARNES** (Salomon Pavey, 1998; The Ragged Child, 1999; The Dreaming, 2002) has just finished shooting Seventh Son in Vancouver, starring alongside Jeff Bridges. On TV recently was a remarkable performance in the BBC's Accused series by **STEPHEN GRAHAM** (Captain Stirrick, 1990; The Ragged Child, 1992) is winning huge respect as a most versatile actor. CBBC viewers will no doubt recognise the voice of **TOBY DAVIES** (The Dreaming, 2012) who has just started recording 26 episodes no less of **CHUGGINGTON** for the BBC. Another new kid on the TV block whose satire **THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TELEVISED** was a huge hit on BBC3 last week, is **JOLYON RUBINSTEIN**, (Whistle Down The Wind, 1994). While **KATIE BEARD**, (recently engaged to Joe Stilgoe – many congratulations!) and JJT have just been directing a workshop production of MOMMA MIA in Dublin, **TASHA TAYLOR JOHNSON** (The Dreaming, 2001) and **WARREN SOLLARS** (Tin Pan Ali, Bugsy Malone 1996-8) are performing in the real thing in London.

In **LES MISERABLES** on stage, **TAM MUTU** plays Jean Valjean and **PHOEBE STREET** (Whistle Down The Wind, 2007; All Above Board 2008) has joined the ensemble and as 1st cover Cosette. **THE PHANTOM** tour features **JAMES BISP** (The Dreaming, 2002), **RICHARD (Woodie) WOODFORD** (Poppy, 1993) and, of course, **KATIE HALL** (The Dreaming, 2006; Fiddler on the Roof, 2007) as Christine.

In soap world, **DAVID WITTS** (The Dreaming 2006; Whistle Down The Wind 2008; All Above Board 2008) is now appearing as Joey in **EASTENDERS** and has just won the Inside Soap Award for

Sexiest Male in a Soap whilst **BENNY GUR** (Whistle Down the Wind 2008; Totally Over You, 2009) plays Gus Hancock in **WATERLOO ROAD**.

Finally, great good luck to **NEIL RUTHERFORD** (The Ragged Child,1986; Bodywork,1987; Les Petits Rats,1988; Captain Stirrick,1990; The Caucasian Chalk Circle,1991; Not Quite Bedtime, 1998) who has finished his time as Head of Casting for ATG and has moved to Sydney to work at the Opera House. Neil's new book, MUSICAL THEATRE AUDITIONS AND CASTING: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE VIEWED FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AUDITION TABLE (METHUEN DRAMA) is highly recommended to all!

Congratulations to **STEWART CLARKE** (Sweeney Todd, 2010/11; Songs for a New World, 2012) on his upcoming role as Eddie in **LOSERVILLE** by **JAMES BOURNE** (Aurelius,1997; Buggy Malone,1997/8) at The Garrick Theatre from October.