

ABB
BEY
THEATRE
ST ALBANS

COMPANY
OF TEN
PRESENTS

RADIO FUN

By Brian Leveson
& Paul Minnett



Programme

Live Stream 17 September 2020 - 19 September 2020

The Director Writes

Radio Fun is a compilation of comedy sketches and poems performed in the style of a radio show.

This gives us plenty of scope for social distancing which has enabled us to forge ahead with this as our opening production of our 2020/21 season. Apart from the challenges of rehearsing on Zoom and one night when my internet was taken out by a lightning strike, we have the added challenge and excitement of live streaming this direct into your homes - what did we do before we had Zoom? So anything could happen and probably will, but that is the joy of live theatre which we have all missed so much recently, and I don't know about you but we could all do with a laugh at the moment (hopefully we can provide you with at least one!).

Enjoy this journey with us and fingers crossed the technology doesn't let us down.

Katherine Barry

Chairman Writes

Welcome to our 2020-21 season, the product of many revisions during these strange times but also of our determination and commitment to continue our contribution to the cultural life of St Albans and its environs.

We are extremely fortunate to have a strong, engaged group of members in today's Company of Ten who will ensure that whether you see Radio Fun and forthcoming productions online or in the safety of your seat in our socially distanced theatre, you will have an entertaining and (sometimes) thought provoking time.

Martin Goodman

About The Writers



For over 40 years Brian Leveson, together with his writing partner, Paul Minett, have written material for some of television's biggest names, Russ Abbot, The Two Ronnies, Kenny Everett, Les Dawson, Frankie Howerd – and many others who are not dead. You will find their names on around 125 episodes of various sitcoms including 'The Piglet Files', 'May To December', 'Time After Time' (which won a British Comedy Award), 'Close To Home' 'Oh Doctor Beeching' and 'My Family' (which ran for over 100 episodes and won National and International Awards).

The pair also co-wrote one of ITV drama's biggest ever ratings hits, 'The Booze Cruise', starring Martin Clunes - a trio of full length films, two of which won The Royal Television Society's Award for Best Network Drama.

Paul and Brian are currently working on surviving COVID-19.

Cast



Andrew Baird

Andrew has been a member of the Company of Ten for ten years and enjoys working on the Marketing team as well as being on stage. He's had starring roles in numerous Christmas shows including Perks in *The Railway Children* and Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*, and has also appeared as Charles Stanton in *Dangerous Corner*, and the eponymous Ben Hur in *Ben Hur*.



Jill Priest

Jill trained at Mountview Academy and is involved in all aspects of theatre as an actor, choreographer, director and also a songwriter, having composed *AlterNativity*, a pop nativity, and the songs for *Lily and Bear* (Irrational Theatre). Jill has acted in a wide range of productions, from Shakespeare to panto. Favourite roles include Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Marmalade Theatre Co), Nellie Nora in *Eclipsed* (Company of Ten), Joy Gresham in *Shadowlands* (OVO) and the Wicked Queen in *Snow White* (Harpenden Public Halls). Jill has choreographed many productions, including OVO's Minack productions of *As You Like It* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Barnum* for Radlett Musical Theatre Co.



Ben Fricke

Ben has previously appeared for CoT at the Abbey Theatre as a pratfalling Soldier and Robber in *The Snow Queen*. For St Albans Musical Theatre Company at the Alban Arena, he has appeared as Sir Lancelot in *Spamalot*, Miss Understanding in *Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert*, Dad in *Our House* and most recently as Alfie Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*. Previous roles range from Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Waterman's, Brentford) to Cinderella's Prince/Wolf, *Into The Woods* (Magdalen College Gardens, Oxford & Wimbledon Theatre); as well as Cliff, *Cabaret* (Old Fire Station, Oxford) and many others, including Sophocles' *Electra*, T S Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, & Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*.



Katy Jane Meehan

Katy is thrilled to be returning to CoT after successful stints in Company and Arms and the Man in previous years, as well as directing and choreographing many times for SAYMT. Katy regularly performs with other local groups including SAMTC and HMTTC, as well as teaching performing arts at Stagecoach. She is a National Champion Freestyle Disco dancer and studied Dance and Musical Theatre at university. Katy is looking forward to treading the boards in this comedy romp with some real life people, after spending nearly 6 months alone with her cat.



John Pyke

John has 'trode' the boards for half his lifetime. He has appeared in numerous Company of Ten productions, a firm favourite with audiences. He usually enjoys comedies, although he has introduced a laugh into the occasional drama and, from time to time, in the occasional radio play. He is also a valuable member of the CoT backstage team, as a stage manager.....These days he is mainly asked to provide stage props and backstage assistance!

Production Team

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Stage Manager ASM | Cliff Stratford John Pyke |
| Lighting | Paul Davidson |
| Sound & Video Camera Operators | Stuart Barry Suzanna Cheek, Elouise Waltham |
| Wardrobe | Gill Stratford |
| Original Music | Emma Barry |
| Zoom Monitor | Matt Harker |

Forthcoming Productions

BUILDING THE WALL

13 - 17 October 2020



America, 2019. The President is impeached, a wall has been built on the border with Mexico and Rick is in prison awaiting sentencing for the crime of the century. He grants just one interview to Gloria, an African American historian.

As this extraordinarily relevant new play unfolds, the truth is chillingly and inevitably exposed – or is it?

The Stage called the play ‘bold, bite-size, and unapologetically political. A binge-worthy, 80-minute box-set of a show.’ Variety said it was ‘a hot-off-the-laptop scorcher of a play... sure to provoke shock, awe and much talk’.

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

6 - 14 November 2020

Greg and Ginny have been cohabitating for about a month and things are getting a bit edgy. Greg is bemused and hurt by gifts for Ginny of flowers and chocolates, which arrive hourly. He is perplexed by her decision to visit her parents without him.

Actually, Ginny is going to the home of her boss Philip to put an end to their affair. Greg follows, assuming he will meet her parents and ask to marry her. But Philip thinks Greg is the lover over whom his wife, Sheila, ostentatiously fantasises.

THE SECRET GARDEN

16 - 28 December 2020

A young, recently-orphaned girl is sent to England after living in India all of her life. Once there, she begins to explore her new, seemingly-isolated surroundings, and its secrets.



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COMPANY OF TEN

The **Abbey Theatre** was built in 1968 as a permanent performance space for the **Company of Ten**, who originally formed in 1934. We are totally self-funded and receive no grants of any kind but our theatre costs approximately £3000 per week to run. If you would like to become involved either on/off stage or as a 'Front of House' volunteer you can join online at www.abbeytheatre.org.uk or call the Theatre on 01727 857861 any morning between 9.30 and 12.00 (Monday to Saturday).

Besides plenty of acting opportunities, help is always needed with all kinds of backstage jobs, and Front of House activities such as selling programmes, ice cream and teas/coffees in the interval.

FRIENDS OF THE ABBAY THEATRE

If acting or backstage work is not your thing and full membership is not of interest, then you could become a **Friend of the Abbey Theatre** and support us that way. For just £12 per year you get discounted tickets and a monthly newsletter containing details of forthcoming attractions. You can then, if you wish, join our invaluable army of volunteers who help to staff the Front of House and help keep our theatre running smoothly.

Whether you wish to become a full member or a 'Friend' you are assured of a warm welcome. Our theatre bar is open every Sunday lunchtime for members and 'friends'.