

Summer 2022

scene

*Back in
Orkney*



The magazine of Scottish Community Drama



The National Youth Final

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Due to the coronavirus the office is still currently closed. Brenda is working from home. Anything sent to the office by post will be collected weekly. An answering service is operating on 07407 387086 please leave a message and Brenda will get back to you as soon as possible.

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Cover - Fintry ADS' production of 'Housebound', winner of the Wheatley Tassie at the recent Scottish Final.

Photo by **Bryan Leslie**



Chairman's chat

With the summer months approaching and the hope of some lovely warm weather many of us are beginning to think about a relaxing break. It's been a busy few months for many clubs who are celebrating the return of productions and subsequent much needed income. The benefits of feeling part of an active group are also well documented as positive for good mental health.

For those looking for something to keep themselves occupied over the summer break or perhaps a new challenge we have re launched our Monologue Competition. Our first competition was very successful and we're hoping for as many entertaining entries again this year.

In SCDA we are reaching the conclusion of our One Act Play Festival after a two year absence. From a personal point of view it has been absolutely fantastic to be able to travel around some of the Festivals in different parts of the country. It has given me the opportunity to meet so many members and share in the experiences and challenges they have faced recently. Clubs and committees have shown great resilience to overcome difficulties often at very short notice with reserve adjudicator panels becoming certainly more of a feature!

The most heartwarming aspect of the Festival season this year was the genuine enthusiasm of audiences across the country just delighted to be back watching live theatre. Even some of our adjudicators expressed feelings of genuine emotion at being back on stage. Standing in the foyer watching the audience flooding in to the Scottish Final in Kirkwall was truly inspirational and moving. This great feeling of community spirit is something we should be proud of as we continue to support each other. Have a great summer everyone!

Carolyn

Welcome

To new Individual members

Jamie Rae Perthshire - Northern

To New Life Member

Sweyn Hunter - Orkney -Northern

To new Patrons

Michael McLaughlin Orkney - Northern

Pam Howat - Perthshire - Northern

Grant Wilson - Angus - Northern

Thank you

Thornhill Players

Margaret Neale

Margo Campbell

Mrs Barber

David Syme

RA Clements Associates

Bob Davidson

For your kind donations

Thank you also for the continued support from our Patrons, which is much appreciated.

Don't Forget to Renew your Membership for 2022-23

All annual individual, joint and club memberships expire on 30 June.

SCDA no longer send out paper renewal notices. If your contact details have changed, please notify us by filling in one of the forms that can be found on our website, [scda.org.uk/membership](https://www.scda.org.uk/membership).

If you are an individual member aged over 55 why not consider taking out life membership of SCDA? Prices start at just £550 and full details can be found on the website.

SCDA prefer memberships to be paid by standing order and at just £25 (£35 for joint membership), this is the cheapest way for you to renew your membership. Standing orders are easy to set up and if you need help, just speak to your bank. Our account details are:

Account Name: Scottish Community Drama Association

Account Number: 06094792, Sort Code: 80-11-00

If you prefer, you can pay by Paypal on the website, or by BACS to the account details given above, but please note the different rates for payments made this way.

Please only send cheques if you have no other means of paying your subscription. Please ensure your name and address are printed on the reverse.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please consider helping SCDA to raise further funds by signing a gift aid declaration in our favour. You can get a form on the website [scda.org.uk/membership](https://www.scda.org.uk/membership).

Membership fees 2022-2023

Individual members:

STANDING ORDER ONLY: £25 (£35 joint members)

All other payment methods: Individual: £35 (discounted to £30 if paid by 30 June), Joint: £50 (discounted to £40 if paid by 30 June), Youth: £12.50

Club fees:

Discounted rate for renewals received by 30 June: £30 (£20 youth)

Renewals received after 30 June: £50 (£30 youth)

If you have any questions, please contact SCDA at headquarters@scda.org.uk or phone our answering service on 07407 387086 and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Lesley Syme

Many of you will know that we lost our National Treasurer, Lesley Syme, in February.

Lesley was born in 1955 in Melton Mowbray, to her Scottish parents who hailed from Leith. Theirs was a military family and she spent much of her childhood 'on the move' due to her father's postings. She studied at Edinburgh University where she met her husband Dave and in 1982 they settled in Killin where Dave became the village GP. I think it's fair to add that any thoughts of Lesley being considered a "typical GP's wife" should be immediately discarded! Over the years as they raised sons Jamie and Rory, Lesley was involved in many local groups and committees as her organisational skills were in demand.

In the early 1990's Killin Drama Club was reformed and Lesley soon became one of a small group of enthusiasts who re-generated the club. Plays were simply set but well supported and along with good friend Glenda Mardon she achieved success with a National Lottery application becoming one of the first drama clubs to secure a major grant. (£20k in 1996 - wow!)

Around this time the club placed an advert in a local shop window seeking a Pantomime Director and following many months of sitting on the fence, I went along to Lesley's home to meet and 'be interviewed' by Lesley and Glenda – along with the then chairman Bill Douglas. I'd had some panto experience at Comrie Drama and promised to give it a go. Little did they know what they had started!

Over the following months and years Lesley and I became great pals and she was always on hand to help as we produced pantomimes over a 29-year period. The amount of work she undertook for our Club was enormous – as we discover on a daily basis now. Back-stage she ran a tight ship, and to see her working under pressure with husband Dave was always 'entertaining' – if only for the rest of us! As Stage Director and Club Treasurer she was in her element – although from time to time she fulfilled many other roles.

In the year 2000 we took part in our first SCDA festival and decided that we should get involved in SCDA to encourage a friendlier welcome to everyone as a priority! Lesley was part of the team assembled to host the 2004 Scottish Final at Stirling and with others we travelled the country to many festivals to work on promotion of the forthcoming Stirling event. Locally, Killin took its turn at hosting District and Divisional Finals and became known as a friendly place to visit, where the Stage Manager Lesley did whatever she could to assist visiting teams. She and I always believed that Festivals should be fun, and we certainly did our very best to achieve that, including enjoying a glass or three at after-show events!

Lesley's SCDA career is known to many of you. At District, Divisional and National levels she worked hard to help and



enhance SCDA. As with her local club, it has needed her passing to remind us of the many tasks she undertook – she'll be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

On a Sunday evening prior to the District festival planned for Killin in early March, Lesley rehearsed with her friends on the McLaren Hall stage. Within a few short hours she had left us for ever, leaving the unused empty set on our stage. She left us suddenly, choosing to keep her health issues private.

A few days ago the club hosted the 10th Killin Comedy Festival which together we devised to raise funds for SCDA. It was a huge success and over £10k has been raised for SCDA in this way over the years. She'll be so proud.

Personally, I'm glad that I went to that Panto Director interview. I had dreams and visions of wonderful panto scenes and Lesley, with others, helped make them happen – a rocket vanishing through the stage ceiling? -no problem. A giant beanstalk operated by an under-stage winch? -easy! Over the years Baddies were dispensed with in ever more dramatic ways as we learned more skills. A monster fish flying above the audience in a UV scene? - You got it! We hired the best Panto costumes in the UK, we sourced the biggest GIANT available in British theatre, created a wonderful Cinderella transformation scene to name but a few – and we had a ball! Without Lesley, yes, the show will go on and our club members have pledged to do that, but we have so much to thank her for.

Finally - along the way we also had FUN. RIP my dear friend Lesley.

Gordon Hibbert

JD Stewart

A couple of months ago, I had an email from Carole Williams, our drama advisor. Susan Stewart, a long-time member of SCDA had been in touch with her about her son, David's, upcoming play being produced by A Play, A Pie and A Pint.

David/JD had fond memories of going to the SCDA camps as a young person and Carole thought he might have a good story to tell. She was right!

For a young man, JD has covered some ground in his 30-something years. His work includes 12 plays and spans three continents, winning many awards along the way.

Rooted in the real and painful experience of growing up gay in an unforgiving and bullying environment at school his focus inevitably reflects his life experience. One of his mantras is to write about what you know - and life is what you know.

Following is a precis of his biography. It is extensive, impressive and hugely varied.

JD Stewart is a gay Scottish-based writer, performer and digital content creator, whose work has been performed around the world. He graduated with a BA Hons from Stirling University in 2008 and an MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University in 2017.



In 2015, while living in Korea teaching English as a Second Language, he completed a professional programme in screenwriting through UCLA.

Recently winning a full scholarship, he completed an MSc with Distinction in playwriting from the University of Edinburgh.

His most recent production 'Daniel is Getting Married' was commissioned by Jemima Levack, the artistic director of Oran Mhor, for the globally acclaimed A Play, A Pie and A Pint. It completed its run at the Traverse in Edinburgh in April this year.

I asked him about his first steps into the world of theatre and where his influences had come from. His parents were hugely supportive. They had themselves an amateur theatre background. He grew up, as many of us did, taking part in his local panto in Kirk Yetholm in the Borders then in SCDA productions in Kelso.

Encouraged by his mother, he attended Edinburgh Acting School and, by secondary, he had a pretty solid grounding in performance. He was a very quiet boy and did not join in the usual clubs due to the invidious and consistent bullying he experienced.

Enter stage left, the late and great Colin Peter and the SCDA summer camp.

He was unequivocal in his praise for all Colin and the programme offered.

"Colin was so encouraging, understanding, supportive and would listen. Everything about summer camp was so welcoming and it felt like it was a place I could go to where I could be myself without being judged. Knowing summer was coming and being around other people who liked what I liked was so helpful".



from SCDA Summer School to Oran Mhor

He attended for four summers and made friends for life. Colin was a benevolent, welcoming and engaging presence and JD blossomed. He remembers amazing workshops with groups from America, attending Fringe shows and the highlight of marching in the parade on Festival Sunday.

I asked him for his advice to young people trying to break into the industry.

“Mental health is really important if you want a career in the arts. Firstly, you must take care of, and look after, yourself. When writing it is important you understand yourself and really get to know your voice. For me, writing is living, and trying to make sense of what is happening in the world. If you don’t understand what’s happening, you can’t write anything.”

What does success look like? I asked.

“The industry pins a lot of success on winning big awards and TV appearances. The reality is that if you’re working in a touring company of musical theatre, that’s a success. To be working, doing what you love that’s a success. Graduating from theatre school is a success. Winning an SCDA final is a success. The industry is built massively on accolades and we forget everything else in between and how important they are. Don’t be hard on yourself.”

He is full of enthusiasm for the future of the Association and hugely supportive of our plans to reinstate summer school. Anything he can do to advise, to run workshops etc he has freely offered to do. He was very keen to



ensure we should make the week accessible for everyone, as he remembers it was back in Colin’s day.

“It’s so important to make these things inclusive for everyone.”

I assured him that what was certainly our intention. Our young people are our legacy and succession is vital.

Finally, I asked JD if he saw any positive change in society’s acceptance of the LGBTQ+ and how important the role of theatre is in that understanding.

His response was

“That is a rather big and wide question, but I think theatre gives people an opportunity to meet others who are like-minded to create something which will hopefully connect to a wide audience and instil change in the future world. Theatre is a place which embraces those who are different, a place where you can be treasured for being unique and not like everyone else – and that is incredibly important.”

JD Stewart’s personal website is www.jdstewart.org



Colin Peter leads the Festival Parade down Princes Street

Paula Gibson

That first time feeling . . .

Oh, I wonder how many clubs can remember their first festival victory ?.

Well we can! And I want to warn others. It eats your phone battery!!!

Ok I suppose I should introduce who we are

St Kentigern's Youth Theatre from West Lothian (Edinburgh District, Eastern division) is based around an after-school club. Its purpose is to allow all students the opportunity to gain practical skills and experience in drama, social skills and skills for life. The club operates a whole school inclusive policy where all are welcome, indeed many teaching staff are very surprised at some of the students who are members and are even more amazed at the improvements in all aspects of their school-work and social interaction that occur after a few weeks in the Club.

We have been a regular at the SCDA Edinburgh Youth festival since our first entry in 2018 with no real success, apart from a second place in a divisional round in 2020. We lost most of our senior students to College and University in 2020 and 2021 as well as our pipeline of talent during the periods of lockdown. As the education system slowly reopened, I was inundated with requests to restart the club as soon as possible. Many thanks go to our school leadership team for their interpretation of the rules allowing the club to restart before any others. Despite only being back to any form of rehearsals since October, the

club quickly picked up where it left off, deciding to enter the usual round of festivals. As a club we pride ourselves in encouraging students to take on all roles within the theatre and not just acting, but the backstage and technical roles are also undertaken by students.

Anyway, back to the first win. As we all know the 2020 and 2021 seasons are not ones that will soon be forgotten and 2022 was also shaping up to be similar with ever changing rules and guidelines, even as I type this the effects of Covid-19 are still around. In the run up of this festival season we, along with ever other performing group, have had to contend with many issues both legal and late cast changes and doubling of parts. Indeed, in some cases reading in but we managed. By the way our cast loved me reading in during rehearsals, especially for the female leads.

The Edinburgh District round took place with only two youth plays managing to perform. We finished second at this event. Runners up in a two horse race did not bode well. The Divisional round was next and with only a few short weeks Covid struck again, would this bug ever go, with our tech team and principals all succumbing, but we managed to get everyone back in time – just!

Now on to Bathgate for the Eastern Divisional round competing against four teams from two other clubs all of whom had suffered in a similar way, losing cast at just the wrong time.



... through to a Final !

Well, they say strange things happen in Bathgate and what could be stranger than the 2020 Eastern Divisional Youth Final. Those with memories as long as a Shakespeare monologue may well remember that this was held the weekend immediately before the lockdown started, thus was one of the last SCDA events to go ahead.

Well, 2022 tried hard to top it. We returned to the venue and on the day to be told our Adjudicator Mr Gavin Orr, and his family were struck down with this nasty little bug.

Therefore, for the first time in a long time an emergency panel had to earn its crust. Speaking for competitors and clubs, our eternal gratitude to the SCDA for having this contingency, preventing a bit of a let down on the day for the competitors.

However, these events may have been foretold by our entry, the curse of festival organisers Mr Alan Richardson's festival farce *Platform Party*.

A very competitive event took place under these extremely difficult circumstances and many congratulations go to those who stepped in and stepped up to take on roles and allowed a festival to go ahead.

At the event, our regular adversary Mill Youth Theatre from East Lothian with their winning entry from the district round. We also welcomed a new club, Beath High School, who were competing in their first ever SCDA festival, the Fife youth round having been cancelled.

An interesting sub-text was that this group were led by our former director and drama teacher Miss A Hanson. So no rivalries at this event then...

So, to the result...

Certificates were presented to cast representatives prior to the trophy ceremony and then St. Kentigern's '*Platform Party*' won the Peter Gorman Memorial Cup, for Best Moment of Theatre and the Millennium Trophy for First Place.

The cheering of the three members present filled the hall.

Why just three? Well, those in the know will understand that any school has rules about students being at organised out of school events, even at weekends with parental consent forms and the myriad of other forms designed to cause major headaches for all concerned. Therefore, as we had competed on the Saturday the rest our cast and crew were at home, and unaware of the outcome.

I had to make a hard decision and that was to keep this a secret until the whole club could meet and share the news. I managed to do this with the collusion of those there. And our head teacher who had insisted I let him know outcome.



So on the Tuesday following the competition we called a meeting with the pretext that I have had a complaint. Right on cue the Head Teacher arrived shaking his head and not looking happy.

So, I explained:

"Well, if I get one single complaint about this " pausing as I pulled out the millennium trophy "I will disown you all. We are going to the Scottish Youth Final".

This was met with tumultuous cheers! Now for what I personally think is truly great achievement.

This production was directed (with only a little advice) by a 17 year old!! Former student - Miss C. Gray, an ex-member of the club and a great future talent and already planning our next productions. Now the phone bit. The barrage of texts, messages and calls followed the announcement, I never knew we were such a popular group!

So be warned and get a good charger and power bank for any future competitions. If you win you will need it.

And to any new clubs out there it can be done just keep at it and learn from the feedback it really helps. It might be you next year.

J. Yeardley

Eastern Youth Final

Bathgate's splendid Art Deco Regal Theatre once again hosted large groups of talented young actors in early March when Eastern Division's Youth Final returned to the venue following a two year absence due to the pandemic lockdowns.

However with COVID infections still rife in the community, all the competing teams had continued to encounter cast absences, roles being swapped and lines being read from either scripts or mobile phones in the weeks preceding the event.

The organisers themselves were not exempt when popular Adjudicator Gavin Orr called off within hours of curtain up as family members had tested positive and he was required to self-isolate. At short notice Mark and Diane White with Eastern Chairman Robin Smith, stepped into the breach as Emergency Panel members.

After the customary introduction by a team representative the Saturday evening programme launched with the first contribution from **The Mill Youth Theatre** who offer opportunities in the performing arts to young people aged 5-18 in East Lothian through drama workshops. They love devising and creating exciting new theatre works. "Bright Young Things" by Georgia Christou centred around the structured format of a children's talent show with a simple and symmetrical setting - the gold telephone gaining special mention. There was excellent teamwork, characterisation and line delivery in unison. Sound effects worked well. Greater projection was needed especially when speaking dialogue over music.

Beath High School making their debut appearance serves the West Fife communities around Cowdenbeath, Kelty and Crossgates.

The cast and crew of Douglas Maxwell's "Too Fast" were S3 pupils studying an Acting and Performance Elective Course in addition to normal studies.

The minimalist set provided scope for creating a good mixture of stage pictures and tableau with actress using script complimented on her reading.

The candlelit conclusion was most effective.

St Kentigern's Youth Theatre from West Lothian is based around an After School Club where the pupils are allowed to develop their drama skills outwith the curriculum.

The group who returned to rehearsals last October encourage all their students to participate in acting, backstage and technical work with their current director a former student.

"Platform Party" updated by Edinburgh based playwright Alan Richardson proved an ideal choice for an amateur drama festival.

There was attention to detail throughout with actors projecting well and reacting to onstage action. Several cast members were singled out for special mention particularly the Chairman - the National Anthem and the Adjudicator's Final exit were classic farce.

The Mill Youth Theatre opened the Sunday matinee with the second version of "Too Fast" by award winning writer Douglas Maxwell who had participated in SCDA Festivals whilst a student at Stirling University

The cast were complimented on overcoming various COVID related difficulties in staging this production and their abilities to keep scripts well hidden.

Scene changes were well handled and there were some moving performances with first class diction and facial expressions.

"The Postman Pat" song was especially well delivered.

Beath High School's final contribution was "Dexter and Winter's Detective Agency" by Bryony Lavery.

Opening "Mission Impossible" theme music particularly appropriate with good sound effects. Empty stage with minimum props was effective although scenes staged against the cyclorama could have been moved forward.

Stage punch, comic skipping routine and door business worked well.

Dialogue delivery required slowing down at times but there was great pace and energy during the action scenes.

The Adjudication Panel awarded the trophies as follows:

Peter Gorman Memorial Cup (Best Moment)

St Kentigern's YT - 'The Platform Party'

Ovens Quich (Runners-up)

The Mill Youth Theatre - 'Too Fast'

First place and the Millennium Trophy to

St Kentigern's YT - 'The Platform Party'

Stephen Lambert

From Monologue to One Act

Playwright, Producer and Creative Director of In Motion Theatre Company Lisa Nicoll has been working with some SCDA members over the last nine months to write and develop new one act plays.

The idea was born after Lisa (who is an ex Carnoustie Theatre Club member) worked with ten writers from SCDA clubs during the first lockdown to create a series of monologues through live and recorded workshops which were then performed by people linked to Carnoustie Theatre Club including Alan Cumming, Robin Laing and Caroline Deyga.

The group continued on after these monologues and wrote a collaborative piece called Truth or Dare which was a series of interspersed monologues by the ten writers. This led Lisa to devising a programme of work for one act plays so that the writers could start to develop their dialogue and develop their skills to write a one act play.

The programme is a series of live and recorded workshops online which means that people all over Scotland can access them. Led by Lisa the writers are taken through the workshops with advice and exercises.

One of the participants in the first set of workshops was Julie Forrester, President of Dunoon Players. Julie had taken part in the monologue workshops and took an idea from the character she had created there and began writing her play 'Waiting for Winter'.

After Julie's one to ones Lisa felt the play was at the stage that it needed to be read by actors and whilst talking to her Uncle, Dick Gibson (founder member of Carnoustie Theatre Club) she told him about the play. It was a coincidence that he was currently rehearsing a two hander play with two actors for the SCDA festival who fitted the casting of Julie's play perfectly and he offered to take this on and direct a rehearsed reading of Julie's play.

Four rehearsals took place (one with Julie on zoom in Portugal)! at the Dibble Tree theatre in Carnoustie and during this process Lisa assisted in editing the script further to make it even tighter.

The play was then performed at the beginning of March as a rehearsed reading at the Dibble Tree Theatre by Kim Brymner and Eve Swinley to audiences over two nights and was greatly received. Julie made the trip from Dunoon to the Friday performance.

The aim also of these workshops is to develop playwrights in clubs and to create new material for SCDA festivals and beyond and for clubs over the country to share what they are creating not just in their own club but with other clubs too in the way Carnoustie Theatre Club and Dunoon Players have done.

Julie hopes the play will be performed by Dunoon Players soon and Carnoustie Theatre Club are also looking at how

they could take it to production as well – perhaps even at an SCDA festival.

"The workshops aren't just about how to write a play but are there to empower the writer and see how they can use the world they live in as a basis for their work. It is important people can write about what they want to and have their voice heard. Seeing Julie's play go from a seed to a full 50 minute one act play is a joy to be a part of." - **Lisa Nicoll**

"To my delight Carnoustie Theatre Club agreed to add my play to their programme. Because of the short preparation time, they used a rehearsed reading format with script in hand. It was a wonderful experience for me, not only to meet Lisa in person but to see my play performed". - **Julie Forrester.**

"We got permission from CTC to include the reading in our Festival Preview with an invited audience. We had only 4 rehearsals and no budget. So fancy setting and costume changes were out. We introduced some music indicated in the script and simple cross fade lighting for each of the acting areas. The script addresses some little talked about but somber, every day, life and death social issues. We felt it was important to get the comedy elements out to keep the audience with us. The audience laughed and cried and gave us a rousing applause on the final blackout. Most people never noticed the A4 scripts. A great new experience for us ", - **Kim Brymner and Eve Swinley.**



"Waiting for Winter' is a great, modern, one act festival play. A two hander that leaves your audience talking about it after the show-and for days." - **Dick Gibson**

There are a number of writers currently working on their plays and the aim will be to continue with more workshops like this and create a bank of plays that can be shared and accessed. Lisa will be running a new set of workshops for SCDA clubs and members in September 2022.

For more details contact her at lisa@inmotiontc.co.uk

Three days in Orkney

Wednesday 20th April – Arriving at St. Margaret’s Hope I have never seen Orkney looking so beautiful. The sun is shining and the sea is a lustrous blue. Looking forward to a wonderful festival!

Thursday 21st April – A day’s sightseeing included Stromness, Yesnabay and the Brough of Birsay. Then, in the evening - the main event – our first Scottish Finals in three years. How exciting it was to see everyone again!

We were certainly rewarded with a cracking first night’s entertainment. First up was ‘In Other Words’ from Greenock Players. This was a tender love story about a marriage blighted by Alzheimer’s and explored the use of music as a



The Florians



Greenock Players

the outset. The typing of words on a keyboard necessarily resulted in a slowing of the pace, which, of course, in the genre of farce, should be slick and fast moving. As a result, he said, the performance lacked spark.

Finally, we had ‘Housebound’ from Fintry A.D.S. This was a comedy/drama involving Fiona, an agoraphobic banker’s wife being held hostage by Bone, an accomplice in a crime to coerce Fiona’ husband into handing over £100,000 of the bank’s cash. As the narrative progresses, it becomes clear that Fiona’s marriage is not a happy one, and may even be a contributory factor to her agoraphobia. These were two strong performances with plenty of black humour, and the audience clearly enjoyed it. Dave Bennet was equally impressed saying that it had been masterfully done and was a convincing portrayal of transformation. He said it had been skilfully directed and involved a good use of space and a good use of pause. He was particularly impressed by the closing tableau of the two characters touching hands in silhouette.

copied mechanism. It was a powerful and harrowing performance, and the subject matter was skilfully handled by the team. Our adjudicator, Dave Bennet, felt that the play had been very well done but had some reservations about certain aspects of lighting, sound and staging.

Next up was ‘A First Hand Farce’ from The Florians. This was a light hearted romp in which a playwright’s ideas spring to life immediately he commits his words to the keyboard. The obligatory scantily clad French maid and a naughty vicar extracted laughs aplenty from the audience. Dave Bennet, in his summing up, felt that the play presented significant challenges from



Fintry ADS

... the tension rises



sympathy of the audience. However, he had a couple of reservations regarding lighting and the positioning of the actors.

Next up, we had Carnoustie Theatre Club with 'Day Trippers'. This was a colourful portrayal of two ladies on a works outing to the coast. The humour was in typically bawdy seaside postcard style, and when the two helpless ladies find that they have inadvertently planted themselves on a nudist beach they are mortified. Their embarrassment is compounded when they spot that one of the nude bathers is one of their co-workers! Dave Bennet talked about the importance of conversational reality, and how the dialogue should not come across as simply the delivery of rehearsed lines. He felt that in these two assured performances there was good interaction, and that conversational reality had been achieved. However, he also felt that the pitch and modulation of the voices of the two characters had been too similar on occasions.

Friday 22nd April – In the morning, we met outside the Ayre Hotel, and set off on the coach trip which had been specially organized for SCDA. We were very well looked after by our tour guide, SCDA member Chris Matthews, and our driver Jimmy. Chris provided a highly informative and entertaining commentary as we explored vast swathes of the West Mainland of Orkney, stopping off at the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Brough of Birsay and the Broch of Gurness. Oh, and the carrot cake was amazing! It was an excellent trip enjoyed by all.

Back to the Orkney Theatre in the evening where 88 Theatre provided the opening offering with 'After the Cuts'. This was set in the 2040's, a dystopian future in which the NHS and the principle of free healthcare has been abandoned. Aggie receives a cancer diagnosis but discovers that her medical insurance won't cover the treatment. Husband, Jim, who is a 'Mr Fixit', decides that the only way out of this hopeless situation is to teach himself how to operate on Aggie and remove the diseased lung. Sadly, this act of desperation, driven by love, ends tragically. The adjudicator felt that these were two highly engaging performances, and felt that they had gained the



The final play of the evening was 'It's Behind You!' from Red Rag Theatre. The scene is the dressing room of the famous panto double act of Norrie and Nicky. It soon emerges that Norrie is in fact Nicky's dad, and that while Norrie's star is fading, Nicky's is on the rise. What starts as quick fire comedy soon changes pace as it becomes clear that Norrie is jealous not only of Nicky's success but also of his relationship with his late mother. There is some mind boggling tongue twisting along the way, and the piece ends with a reconciliation of father and son. The adjudicator enjoyed the setting and the attention to detail therein. However, returning to his theme of conversational reality, he felt that at times this had been compromised by the pace of the delivery. Nonetheless, he felt that this was a high energy performance from two competent and experienced actors.



. . . final results

Saturday 23rd April – And so to our final evening! First up were Wick Players with ‘Womberang’. Chaos erupts in the waiting room of a gynaecology out-patient clinic of the local hospital when a group of rebellious women take over. The ensuing mayhem sees breaking waters, frolics in the changing cubicle, and doctor under the influence. The adjudicator felt that the set was too minimalistic and cautioned against using black costumes on a black background. He also advised against having a character speaking in profile for lengthy periods, and returning to his theme of conversational reality he felt that this hadn’t been achieved.

The closing entry in this year’s festival was ‘Jock and Blind Mary’ by Stromness Drama Club, a piece which presented multiple complex technical challenges. It told the story of tinker Jock and his blind partner, and of their travels through Orkney, culminating in the miraculous return of Mary’s sight. Dave Bennet found both the set and the costumes very creative and effective. Lighting, sound

effects and music also won his approval. He admired the smooth, seamless transition between scenes, and was impressed by the ensemble choral work. He was unsure about the use of multimedia, and felt that much of what had been portrayed, could have been left to the imagination of the audience.

And so to the prizes! (cue drum roll). Stromness took the awards for Scottish life and character, best stage décor, highest direction marks, and came second overall. Greenock came third, whilst Fintry won best theatrical moment, but most importantly scooped the top prize, the Wheatley Tassie, and they will go on to represent Scotland at the British Finals in Rhyl. Our congratulations and best wishes go with them!

Overall this was a wonderful festival with some great performances and productions, and it was a real joy to be back together again after three years.

Grant Wilson (photos by **Bryan Leslie**)



Back - Carolyn Harrison,
Mike Drever, Anna Foran,
Dave Bennet

Front - Graham Garson,
Gavin Paterson,
Lauren Fisher,
Andy Barr

Trophy winners

- | | |
|---|--|
| Wheatley Tassie - Winner . . . | Fintry ADS - ‘Housebound’ by Simon Mawdsley |
| Jim Porteous - Runner-up . . . | Stromness DC - ‘Jock and Blind Mary’ by George Mackay Brown |
| David Baxter Salver - Third . . . | Greenock Players - ‘In other Words’ by Mathew Seager |
| Connie Fisher - Highest Direction . . . | Stromness DC - ‘Jock and Blind Mary’ |
| Donald T Farmer - Best theatrical moment | Fintry ADS ‘Housebound’ by Simon Mawdsley |
| Grampian TV - Best stage décor . . . | Stromness DC ‘Jock & Blind Mary’ |
| Glen McKemmie - Scots Life and Character | Stromness DC ‘Jock and Blind Mary’ |
| Scott Slaver - original play ‘Just Another Day’ by Drew Young | |
| Dunmore Poster Trophy , ‘Roald Dahl Double’ by Union Theatre | |

Scott Salver 2022

Due to the continuing COVID restrictions and positive tests affecting clubs around the country earlier this year with many District Rounds being cancelled or combined, it came as no surprise that this would have a detrimental effect on our annual competition producing only five entries mainly from established playwrights.

Our Judging Assessors also had considerable difficulties this season with varying marks and opinions across the board but eventually after much discussion Drew Young was announced the eventual winner with **"JUST ANOTHER DAY"** performed by his home group Banchory Drama Club which reached the Northern Divisional Final at Birnam in late March.

A nostalgic piece as two argumentative friends, Col and Dave, recall personalities, theme tunes and news items from Sixties TV programmes although you would require to be familiar with the era to fully appreciate the references. Essentially a conversation piece - fairly sedentary with limited movement although Mary's arrival for the word game and Dave's predictions concerning the world's end provide an explosive conclusion.

"A FIRST HAND FARCE" by Dave Smith reached Scottish Final at Kirkwall performed by The Florians from Inverness. Novel insight into the development of farcical situations on stage featuring stock characters and ribald humour - removal of trousers, kilt wearing, French maid, chases and general naughtiness.

Cast plotting future action by laptop slowed the essential pace at times however frenetic activity developed leading to the Archbishop's entrance.

The action flowed easily through 8 scenes in Catherine M. Prodger's **"THE WEE MAN IN THE BOX"** premiered in Perthshire District by Perth Drama Club with Fiona proving a likeable eccentric obsessed with mail ordering.

With the exception of Ben, her next door neighbour, the remaining characters are not fully developed although the humour contained in the broad Scots dialect and relationships come across well.

A little repetitive and predictable as storyline progresses. Good interaction between characters, opportunities provided for stage movement and some original ideas with scope for invention in Sean Connery dummy.

Suitable period set dressing and costuming essential in Fiona Schofield's **"THE WALL"**

based on a true story concerning Charles Dickens' relationship with his wife.

Largely conversational piece with excellent use of period vocabulary and Victorian manners. There were sub-plots concerning a bracelet gift and the revelation concerning Nelly's child but greater variation in pace and tone would have improved action.

Staged by Leitheatre at Edinburgh District Festival.

Finally from Thurso Players in Caithness District came Faye Sutherland's **"JUST VICKY"**.

The central character recovering from a mental breakdown recalls how the controlling voice of a Victorian woman in her thoughts fed into her paranoia leading to low self esteem and ruining her personal relationships.

Progressive plot becomes slightly predictable moving through 13 scenes but nonetheless a powerful psychological drama which should hold audience attention.

Drew Young who had achieved previous success with **"Triptych"** in 2017 was delighted to receive the Scott Salver again on stage at Scottish Final in Orkney Theatre.

Reading copies will be available from our National Library at Summerhall Arts Centre, Edinburgh and all five scripts have been forwarded to this season's Geoffrey Whitworth Competition and we wish our playwrights every success in that event.

Stephen Lambert
Playwriting Convenor



Play on words

New plays from Scottish authors entered in last year's **Play on Words** competition

***Simon and the Selkie* by David Mazza**

Cast 3F 2M

The play tells the story of a selkie, Jenny in her human form, who meets and falls in love with Simon, a retired lighthouse keeper on a remote Scottish island. The pair have a peaceful contented life together until Simon becomes unwell. Jenny cares for him instead of returning to the sea. After Simon's death, Jenny stays in their home and in time – many years later needs care herself but after contact with carers, GP and ministers makes the decision to move on... A moving and effective play with potential for enhancement with live music. running time 35/40 mins. Approx.

***Mnfpee* by Gerry McCartan**

Cast 2f 3m

Bernard Colander is becoming more and more confused by the melodramatic and increasingly eccentric behaviour of this wife and live-in in-laws. His in-laws intended stay of a few days has lengthened into an intolerable three years. With no sign of their departure any time soon the only person who seems to make sense to Bernard is the ever reliable Doctor Krypen. Skillfully written, very funny comedy. Running time 30/35 mins approx.

***Chekhov's Gun* by Michael C Appleby**

Cast 2m 2f

Chekhov is advising a student Andrei on his writing and emphasises the principle, known as 'Chekhov's Gun', that every element in a story must be relevant. Andrei is confused: does this just apply to the play he is writing, or also the scenes he is experiencing – which also form the play we are watching? We can ask ourselves the same question. This comedy drama has well drawn characters and the theme cleverly woven through the narrative. The conclusion was strong and the final picture struck the right note. Running time 30/40 mins. Approx.

***The Italian Interloper* by Phil McNicol**

Cast 1m 1f.

When Tony and Ruth return home from a holiday abroad, an uninvited guest unwittingly reveals to them some hard

truths about the state of their relationship. The numerous themes within the characters relationship ebb and flow through comedic and dramatic moments. The scenes incorporate a satisfactory unwrapping of the story with interest always being sustained. Surprising ending! Running time 30 mins approx..

***To Bee or not to Bee* by Bob Davidson**

Cast 1m 1f

Davie is an eighty year farm worker who lives alone in the tied cottage he's lived in for decades. He receives local authority care and this is how he meets Rachel a new carer who one morning finds Davie sprawled out on a patch of grass. After various conversations it turns out Davie is a bee keeper and his bees are dying and he doesn't know why? Rachel vows to try and help him find the cause of the bees demise. Some lovely comedic moments throughout especially naming the Bees! Setting open for fantastic interpretation for a director. Running time 30/35 mins approx..

***Slush* by Jane Orr**

Cast 3f

Annie and Diane are in patients in a mental health unit. As they sit chatting Diane wonders why Annie is so interested in the snow falling outside. As they discuss Diane's potential discharge from the hospital, Annie expresses how she will too possibly be discharged very soon, But is she ready for it? A lovely easily to stage touching piece about mental illness. Two well drawn characters with a particularly moving conclusion. Running time 20/25 mins.approx

***Bleeding* by Isla Cowan**

Bleeding is a play that challenges contemporary taboos surrounding menstrual bleeding. Interweaving character monologues and snappy dialogue, the play follows three women at very different stages of their lives. A young woman experiencing her first period, a woman in her late thirties who is pregnant and fears a miscarriage and an older woman going through menopause. When these three women meet in a gated garden, they are forced to confront their biggest fears and greatest grievances. This is a play of hidden emotions, complex relationships and female empowerment. A sophisticated piece of work visiting issues not often discussed.

Cast 3f running time 55+ mins approx

Reading scripts of plays entered in the Play on Words, Geoffrey Whitworth and Scott Salver competitions can be borrowed from our SCDA National Library at Summerhall Arts Centre, contact library@scda.org.uk.

Arts Development Activities



Our Drama Advisor Carole Williams has been particularly busy during the past two years with zoom meetings and workshops. She is now looking forward to more face to face meetings during 2022. Here are some of the activities she has already arranged and some she is developing.

Workshops

There are 4 full weekends of workshops booked across 2022 - Banchory, Braemar, Stornoway and Orkney. She also has an evening booking with Dunoon Players in July and a full day workshop with Dunlop Players in August. EK Rep have enquired about a date in September/October. It will be difficult to fit in any more full weekends this year, but she does have capacity to deliver a few more closer to home in an evening or a single weekend day. She also has 1 online workshop booked again with Braemar. It is hoped that they might write an article about the benefits of continuing with online workshops (they invite people who are no longer based in Braemar as a way of staying in touch creatively).

Workshop Handouts

She continues to create handouts for workshops - prioritising any that are being delivered this year but it is hoped to have created them all by the end of 2022 on other priorities permitting

Promotion of Youth/Youth voice

Leaders felt that young people would be interested particularly in creating social media content.

Youth questionnaire

There have been 25 responses to the youth questionnaire which is now closed. Next steps will be to agree priorities and actions with the National Committee.

13 of these clubs offer regular drama activity

Respondents' priorities from the four offered were: -

- 1) Youth Handbook
- 2) Summer Activity
- 3) Promotion of Youth
- 4) Filmmaking project

Youth Handbook

This was the top priority, with the most interesting sections being - examples of warm-ups and drama games, resources specific to life skills and information relating to PVG and Child Protection.

SCDA Youth Final

She has created an initiative to empower young people to report on the festival themselves through an appointed young media representative from each club. Each will receive support to create the pre-festival buzz, report live on the day and compile an article for Scene.

Summer activity

A series of non-residential weekends was the preferred option with a 5-day residential course where students sign up independently 2nd. There were only 5 clubs willing to bring a chaperoned group to a residential camp.

Film activity

Although this was the priority overall, when clubs had to rank the areas of film related skills they were interested in, the top 3 were: -

- (1) workshops about screen acting,
- (2) individual clubs receiving mentoring in filmmaking skills
- (3) workshops about screen writing.

SCDA might consider finding ways to deliver some of this training in the future without committing to a full project.

As always, you can contact Carole on nda@scda.org.uk

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examining the options for providing training for young people.

Leslie Amateur Dramatic Club has outgrown its current premises off the High Street and is looking forward to having a larger rehearsal space and its own performance venue, which will enable the club to open a youth section.

develop a sustainable centre at the cultural heart of Leslie. We are currently seeking local volunteers to

join the steering group from which will evolve the management structure of the Hall.

The welcome return of the Leslie Gala this year and the 150th anniversary of the original opening of Leslie Town Hall mean that we will be working as rapidly as possible to bring the first phase of this project to fruition.

To get involved, pledge support or get further information visit

www.leslietownhall.com or email - management@leslietownhall.com

WATCH THIS SPACE!

“When I was told that Fife Council was looking to dispose of Leslie Town Hall as surplus to requirements, I saw an opportunity for Leslie Amateur Dramatic Club (LADC) and the local community. Encouraged by fellow club members I made an offer for the building, which has been accepted by the Council, subject to a period of public consultation.” said Mark White, Chair of LADC and director of the newly-formed Leslie Town Hall Ltd.

We plan to refurbish the Town Hall for rehearsal, performance and community use. A number of local amateur musical companies, both adult and youth, are struggling to find rehearsal space and we look forward to accommodating them.

As we will be installing full theatre lighting and sound systems, we are

The Scottish Community Drama Association and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society have both indicated that they would like to use the Town Hall for festivals & events.

We look forward to working with local groups and businesses to



Can you help SCDA by becoming a Patron?

Did you know that SCDA has a Patron scheme which raises valuable funds for the association?

Throughout the last financial year, the scheme raised over £7569 to support the association's activities and aims.

With external funding becoming harder to access, we need to raise as much money as we can from our members and supporters. Can you spare £5 a month to become an SCDA Patron? Clubs can also become Patrons by pledging £60 per year. Simply sign up at scda.org.uk/home/patrons-support/ and show your support for SCDA

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Killin Komedy Festival

After a hiatus of 2 years due to the Covid Pandemic, the Killin Komedy Festival returned in 2022 as big, funny and as friendly as it ever was. Despite the concern that people would be reluctant to attend the weekend, SCDA members and clubs turned out in force to make sure that it was a festival to remember and an event to honour the memory of Lesley Syme, one of the instigators of the Festival. I'm sure she would have approved.



There were attendees and participants from Leslie Amateur Drama Club, Bowhouse Amateur Dramatics, Perth Drama Club, Fintry Amateur Dramatic Society, Riverside Drama Club, various other members in the audience and, of course, Killin Drama Club were there in force! We were entertained royally with some hilarious pieces of comedy drama, sketches, monologues and even poetry.

On Friday night we had Fintry's play "Give a Little Love", by Alan Stockdill. 3 ladies of a "certain age" meet for a reunion after a number of years for a Bay City Rollers tribute night and to reminisce about their years following the band. Inevitably their past tangled lives, loves, memories and jealousies are the theme of the evening, particularly one lady, not present, who has become a successful TV personality. Inevitably, she appears at the night. The results from their "sharing" their lives was both hilarious at times, but also poignant and moving.

We also had Riverside's production of "Growing Old Disgracefully" by Ros Moruzzi. 2 elderly ladies are holding out against developers who have demolished the rest of their street. When the "lady from the council" arrives to reason with them, they deal with her in their own particular way, with hilarious results.

The remainder of Friday evening was filled with various other short pieces. Perth Drama Club entertained us with 2 sets of poetry with Steve Ashton and Catriona Podger. Steve's earthy humour went down extremely well, sometimes causing him to pause while members of the audience composed themselves, while Catriona hit just the right note with a poem written for the 10th anniversary of the KKF which was due to happen in 2020. The pandemic inspired addendum to the poem was very apt.

Leslie ADC performed a series of short plays/sketches: Diane White and Margaret Kinnear performed the Joyce Grenfell classic "Stately as a Galleon", and Margaret performed a monologue she first heard growing up at family get togethers, "Getting a Man", and "Boy" by Janice Sampson was performed by Adam Gibson and Janna Phillip. Adam played a foul mouthed, runaway dog and Janna was the distraught girl who was only looking after him. You can only imagine!

The evening's entertainment was rounded off by Martin Butler and Andrew Murphy performing the Scotland the What sketch "The Will" in what has become the regular demonstration that the KKF tech crew can also act! (Hopefully!). The evening continued until 12 with much chat, catching up and general good fun.

On Saturday night we were treated to 4 plays on the main stage. We had 2 from Perth Drama Club. There was an extract from "The Wee Man In The Box" by Catriona M Prodger (aye that woman again,) Fiona sits on the sofa with a dummy image of Sean Connery having numerous packages delivered and getting progressively drunker. Her dialogues with the delivery driver were hilarious. We also were treated to "Fish Fingers" by Susan Corbett. Unfortunately, due to the inevitable sickness call offs, 2 substitutes had to step in at the last minute, one being Susan Corbett herself! However, the use of scripts on stage was hardly noticed at all and this dark comedy was hilarious. Finishing off Perth's contribution was an extract from "Goodbye Charles" by Gabriel Davies, performed by Andrew J Illsley, proving that, as well as KKF tech crew, Perth' Directors can act as well!





was finished off with much chatting and mixing with friends old and new.

As if this vast display of entertainment wasn't enough Gordon Hibbert kept us all going with the, now traditional, auction throughout each night. All lots were purchased, including many bottles (no surprise there!), some meal vouchers, a side of smoked salmon and the usual welcome tickets for Pitlochry Theatre. However 1 lot must be highlighted. Catriona M Prodder painted a beautiful picture of 2 thistles with the drama tragedy/comedy masks on them. (In addition to I know this picture is going to a good home!

All in all this was a massively successful weekend

Bowhouse performed the fantastic comedy "The Night I Danced With Cyd Charisse" by Nancy MacPherson. We were told that there were some inexperienced actors in this cast, but you wouldn't have known it. The cast wrung every bit of pathos out of the play and really ramped up the comedy. 3 mechanics, a tea lady and secretary have never been so funny. A nice touch was Nancy being in the audience too.

The final play on Saturday was Killin's "The Death of Little Willie" by Ken Barrett. This reflection on drama festivals and a team's attempt to fully take on board the advice of an adjudicator is always hilarious and this was no exception.

Again the action was interspersed with sketches from Leslie DC. Again, the evening



and, although final figures are not available at the moment, it was one of the most successful financially. There are too many people to acknowledge here for its success, but all credit to Killin Drama Club and everyone else knows who they are.

Next year it will be even better. Book your slot early or you could miss out. Western and Highland Div clubs and members would be especially welcome as we missed you all this year.

Martin Butler

Stromness DC
'Jock and Blind Mary'



Gavin Paterson of FADS
collects the Wheatley Tassie
from Mike Drever.



Wick Players'
'Womberang'

Photos by
Bryan Leslie