

Altrincham Little Theatre – First Play Newsletter

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON CHANGES TO OPERATIONS DETAILED BELOW – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Membership Renewals

I realise that this newsletter and the accompanying ticket booking form for Dead Certain is only a couple of weeks after you will have received your renewal letter and forms. We are currently renewing your memberships as fast as we can, so if you have not yet received your ticket vouchers back from us, bear with us as we process them and send them straight back out to you.

I realise that the earlier membership renewals did not have any acknowledgement note with the vouchers – I have realised this and have now found the normal acknowledgement slips for both membership and 300 club.

If you haven't yet renewed your theatre membership but still intend to do so, then please let us know by returning the membership renewal form as soon as possible so that we can issue your ticket vouchers which obviously entitles you to the vouchers to exchange for play seats.

Unfortunately, as we are so late renewing your memberships then we will end up administering ticket bookings at the same time as membership renewals. I will apologise in advance if there are any resultant delays returning either vouchers or tickets to you because of this. We are going as fast as we can on this.

4th and 5th Play confirmation

We can now confirm that the 4th Play (13th to 19th March 2022) will be 'Hysteria' by Terry Johnson, a comedy fictionalised on a real-life meeting between Salvador Dali and Sigmund Freud, directed by Lisa Barker.

The 5th Play (22nd to 28th May 2022) will be 'Suddenly at Home' by Francis Durbridge. This is a drama/classic thriller and will be directed by Julie Broadbent.

The third play selection and arrangements are still under ongoing discussions. We will advise you in due course once we know more.

New Play Arrangements – Front of House

As this is our first play since re-opening, we will be arranging how we work slightly differently during plays to bear in mind the challenges of the past 18 months and to help protect yourselves, the members, and all our volunteers here at the theatre. With Dead Certain being the first play, then you will be the first people to see the effects of these changes. We will review the changes over the coming weeks, some may remain for longer than others but will always be driven by government advice.

Ticket Desk – we will ask that people do not crowd this area whilst waiting to collect any tickets. Groups of people are encouraged to congregate outside the theatre until all attendees are present, then will be allowed to collect tickets and go into the theatre. We will be reducing the number of chairs available in the foyer but will keep one each side should anyone need to sit down briefly on arrival or leaving.

A free programme will also be available for you to collect at the ticket desk – this will be an A4 sheet – so minimal compared to our usual booklet program but will still contain the vital information about the play, cast and setting.

Coffee – we do not propose to serve milky coffee in the auditorium for the start of the season but will still be selling black coffee which is available at the usual coffee bar. This can then be taken into the auditorium or consumed in the bar. For coffee, we will not be issuing the usual red or blue plastic tokens but will instead issue a single use paper voucher which can be exchanged for a coffee. Milk will be poured into your coffee on your request by the volunteer behind the coffee bar and sugar/sweeteners will equally be available on request.

Bar drinks will also be sold in the usual manner. At present, our suppliers have not had our usual range of drinks in, so whilst we hope to have a wide range of drinks for sale, we cannot guarantee each line normally sold will be available.

To reduce the pressure on the bar's capacity, all drinks purchased can be consumed in either the bar area or can be taken into the auditorium. However, any drink containers taken into the auditorium will need to be returned to the bar area before the play will be permitted to restart – so any crockery, cutlery, or glassware, must be back in the bar before the end of the interval.

Bar Closing – we will now be closing the bar at a set time after the end of each night to enable sanitisation and other cleaning to occur in the bar area (as well as typical bar restocking and clearing the till). This will be earlier than our licensed hours but anticipate that this is likely to be about 40 minutes after the end of the play. This is not to be a 'drinking up time' request which would roll on for further time but will instead be a drink up and leave the building request so that the bar staff can restock and clean thoroughly the bar area for the next night.

Front of House Staff

As ever, we are reliant on a small number of volunteers whose valuable help enables the play and associated refreshments and operations to run smoothly. We are finding out already that we have fewer volunteers than usual going forwards which obviously increases the pressure on those that are available. If you feel that you may be able to help on front of house, it would be appreciated, even if only for one night during the play week. Front of house staff will obviously have revised roles and duties, retaining the essential fire marshal roles. Some activities such as preparing milky coffee will now cease, however coffee vouchers will still be sold and we hope to still have a raffle. Front of house staff will however be needed to help clean contact surfaces within the theatre both during the play and after the auditorium is closed.

Cleaning Arrangements & Sanitisation

During the first part of the play, all entrance handrails, door contact surfaces, tables, toilets & sinks will be given a contact clean using virucidal wipes or suitable disinfectant washes. After the interval and once the tables are cleared, then all tables and contact surfaces will be cleaned again. Once the play is over, the auditorium will be closed off to allow the usual rubbish pickup to occur but also a clean, as above, of all the handrails, seat backs and armrests – so that the auditorium is ready for the following nights performance.

Once the bar is closed after the 40 minutes has elapsed, then a further detailed clean of all bar tables, shelves, contact surfaces and seat armrests will be done in readiness for the next nights performance.

Hand sanitiser will be available in various places but as a minimum in the entrance foyer, the auditorium foyer and the bar area. Toilets will also have hand sanitiser provided.

Masks will be encouraged to be worn by all volunteers, especially as some may come face to face with hundreds of people through the week of the play. I certainly will be wearing one for my own protection and for the protection of people around me. We would strongly encourage all theatre visitors to wear a mask, but we will not enforce this. However, it is agreed widely that this is an eminently sensible precaution especially given the rapid changes in infection numbers at the present time.

Covid Awareness

As with any venue, if you show any of the signs of Covid infection or have had a recent positive lateral flow test or PCR test, then please stay away from the theatre. Whilst we are keen to welcome everyone back, we also must protect our members and volunteers for us to carry on. Please take heed of the latest government advice and ensure you are following the guidelines in both your interests but the interests of the theatre.

Finally, welcome back to Altrincham Little Theatre and to our first production – 'Dead Certain'. I look forward to seeing you all back at the theatre and chatting to as many of you as I can through the coming play week.

Steve Smith