

EDWARD ALDERTON THEATRE

E-newsletter

OCTOBER 2010

Our next production...

SECONDS OUT!

Book, Music and Lyrics by Terry Williams, directed by Terry Williams

Thursday 14 - Saturday 23 October 2010 at 8pm (no performance on Sunday 17th)

When Terry Williams decided a decade ago to write a musical about one of his childhood heroes, he certainly had all the bases covered. A former army PT instructor, an acrobat, singer and dancer in West End musicals for twelve years, a retailer and one-time gym owner, not to mention a county champion boxer, there could be no better man to capture the life of Freddie Mills, 1948 Light Heavyweight Champion of the World.



Williams, who hails from Downe, is currently directing rehearsals of his new musical, **Seconds Out!**, coming to Bexley's Edward Alderton Theatre this October. The all-singing, all-dancing show tells of the highs and lows experienced by Mills, an indefatigable underdog legend who led a chequered life to say the least. He won his first bout aged 16 and soon worked as a booth boxer, getting paid cash to knock out strangers at fairgrounds. He later served in the RAF and afterwards suffered a series of reckless poundings in a boxing career with only one short-term goal driving it — to take the world light-heavyweight title at all costs.

Mills spent his later years living in Denmark Hill, unable to continue boxing having taken such heavy beatings from larger opponents in his quest for success.

“His whole life was very romantic,” enthuses Williams, 75. “He was the son of a rag-and-bone merchant and was almost put into prison for stealing some rollerskates. The judge said he had to go to a youth centre, which was where he learnt to box. It’s a tale of ups and downs all of the way — a brilliant story”. Admittedly, Mills’ life became less romantic and more steeped in intrigue when he retired, bought a club in Soho, fell in with the Krays and wound up shot dead in his own car (verdict: suicide). But **Seconds Out!** only follows the boxer on his happier journey to world champion.

Seconds Out! will be Williams' first musical, and having performed in classics such as **My Fair Lady** in Drury Lane and **Barnum** at the London Palladium, he knows all about its fickle fortune. He said: "I think we're onto something here, but putting on a musical isn't exactly a recipe for success. I was in one with Barbara Windsor and Ronnie Corbett, **Clay** — it cost millions and only lasted two weeks."

Songs in **Seconds Out!** include 'If I Make It Through' – Mills' promise to love Christine if he survives the war — and a number sung by Christine as she witnesses the horrors of the Blitz — 'It Ain't Fair'. Both are stirring songs of optimism in the face of adversity, a brave face that captures the wartime zeitgeist for Williams.

He said: "It's an upbeat, happy story told against the background of war. But you could say that one is an analogy of the other. When Freddie heads off to a bout, his mother warns him to be careful because it'll be a dirty fight. He replies, 'I've been fighting all my life. I have to do it'.

"He reflects a time when it was much easier to differentiate good from bad — the Nazis wanted to rule the world and stopping them was clearly the right thing. Now with wars like Iraq and Afghanistan, people say we shouldn't be there at all. Things were black and white back then and you just had to struggle against the odds."

Jules Cooper, *Bexley Times* (reprinted with kind permission)

Starring: *Paul Standell, Nicola Foxfield, Michael Martin, Naomi Todd, Brian John, Claire Kingshott, John Penn, Clive Madel, Eileen Warner, David Hampton, Horry Stapleton, Will Thomson, Ella Banks, Daisy Bell, Marley Clark, Jill Peters, Dorothy Holmans and Sue Masterman*

Arts Council of Bexley Awards

At the 2010 Arts Council Awards Ceremony, held at the Edward Alderton Theatre on 18 September, **The Maids** and **Proof** picked up three well-deserved awards between them:

- Betty Bailey Award for Scenic Design: **The Maids**
- Harold Bull Cup for Best Actress: Caroline Main (**Proof**)
- Certificate of Merit for Best Production: **Proof**

Congratulations to Ian Long (dir: **The Maids**) and Maggi Law (dir: **Proof**) and their respective casts and crews for winning these prestigious awards.

EAT 2010-2011 Season (cont'd)

4-11 December 2010 **COMEDY**

Absurd Person Singular by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Sarah O'Hanlon

Three couples. Three kitchens. Three disastrous Christmas parties...

24 February - 5 March 2011 **COMEDY**

Blackadder II by Richard Curtis and Ben Elton, adapted by Rebecca Mason

Directed by Wendy Marsh

Hilarious exploits in Tudor England in a special Comic Relief show...

9-16 April 2011 **DRAMA**

New York Stories

Directed by Stephanie David and Helen Banks

*Two one-act plays — **The Duck Variations** by David Mamet and **Soldiering On** by Pamela Reeves — spanning half a century in the Big Apple...*

4-11 June 2011 **WHODUNIT**

And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie

Directed by Richard Banks

Ten strangers, a remote island, a psychotic killer on the loose...

23-30 July 2011 **DRAMA**

The Revenger's Tragedy by Thomas Middleton

Directed by Ian Long

The famous Jacobean drama of lust, ambition and murder...

Ticket prices are as follows: **Seconds Out!** is £9, **Blackadder II** is £10, and all the rest are £8. Please call our Box Office on 020 8301 5584 or email nicola.clark@yahoo.co.uk to book tickets, which are payable in advance by cheque or — imminently! — by credit or debit card.

Social Evenings every Wednesday at the theatre from 9pm onwards (except during performance weeks).
Come along and say hello. We're always looking for new members, especially anyone interested in working backstage.