



welcome to WODYS 2025

spring newsletter



hello everyone

Welcome to the Spring edition of our WODYS newsletter!

Our focus for this issue is our wonderful members – past and present. What a talented bunch of humans they are, as was proven in the Footloose auditions.

Rehearsals are very much in full swing with all cast members working hard and we are ready to run Act 1 on our return from the Easter break!

You'll already have spotted some huge Footloose banners at prominent points around the city, and now it's time for us to step up our advertising campaign. Thank you to those of you who have offered to display posters in your gardens and windows. We have a plentiful supply of flyers and invite all parents to help by doing leaflet drops in any community spaces around your neighbourhoods. Caroline and our cast members are working hard on our social media campaigns, and we ask if you could share, share, share so that Worcester knows how wonderful this show is going to be and ensure it is a sell out for our cast. Footloose t-shirts and bags will be ready for collection at rehearsal on May 10th.

Don't delay – buy your tickets today!

Tickets for Footloose will no doubt sell out, so don't leave it to the last minute to buy yours – get them early so you get the best seats in the house! You can get them online at <https://worcestertheatres.co.uk/whats-on/footloose> or call in to Huntington Hall Box Office (opposite Bill's in Crowngate) to avoid paying the booking fee, from 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and 11am - 2.30pm on Saturdays.



Confessions of a Rehearsal Pianist (AKA our very own Brian Giles)

Brian has been our legendary rehearsal pianist for many years and has helped Hattie steer countless WODYS members through the musical numbers of dozens of shows. Known for his cheerfulness, encouragement and bucket of tea at every rehearsal, Brian also plays with the band in 'the pit' every show week, championing the cast.



"I don't mind revealing that as a youngster, I was a real handful for my mum (who'd have thought that). I had way too much energy, I would never stay in one place for any length of time and often disappeared from sight for long periods (you might see that occasionally now).

One day, at the age of eleven, I watched a girl play the piano in the classroom, and other pupils gather to listen. That evening I asked my parents if I could learn the piano, to which they agreed to try (but I don't think they were optimistic about the success). My dad found a second hand piano that someone had stored in their garage, collected it, and I started lessons.

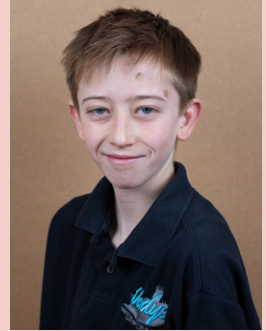
Needless to say, at last I had something to channel all that energy into, and my brother often reminds me that I changed overnight, from hyper kid to focused. The rest is history.

That's what I love about WODYS, seeing new members join, who also may need something to focus on (maybe they too are a challenge for their parents), and watch how they develop. It makes me so proud to be a part of their journey".



A Budding Pianist

WODYS wishes to congratulate Jack Cunningham, who has just taken his Grade 4 piano exam! After initially teaching himself, Jack has been receiving lessons for 3 years. He has played on a grand piano at a Christmas recital at St. George's and recently started to play in a rock band at school. Jack also plays the guitar.



Dates for the diary

Saturday 5th July:

Singing in Town (Cathedral Plaza, full cast) 1.30pm-3.30pm

Saturday 5th July:

Footloose Family Quiz 7pm, WODYS hall

Thursday 24th July:

Costume call (evening)

Sunday 27th July:

Band call (AM principals) and Technical Rehearsal (PM mandatory for all)

Monday 28th July:

Dress rehearsal

Tuesday 29th July:

Opening night



Our Senior WODYS are now 18 and are therefore in their final year of WODYS. Here are some of their reflections of their time at WODYS and some advice for those of you performing in your first WODYS show.

Hi I'm Caitlin

I've been in WODYS for six years, and this is my fourth and last show. I started WODYS the first year of Shrek (before Covid happened). I was a dancer in both Shrek and Carousel and was lucky enough to get the role of Morticia in The Addams Family last year. I'm so grateful for everything WODYS has taught me, from how to pick up harmonies to being confident in myself. Next year, I am having a year out before heading off to university to study business and arts management, where I hope to continue my love of the arts that WODYS helped me find.

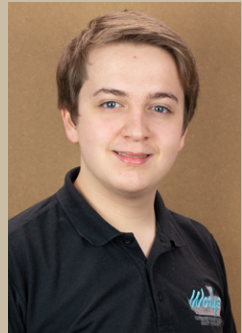


One of my best top tips for show week is keep everything organised! The dressing rooms get messy and chaotic very quickly when people are changing costumes and hair throughout the show, you don't want to accidentally lose something just when you need it. Show week is loads of fun so just remember to enjoy it all, onstage and offstage.



Hi, I'm Joshua

This is my fifth year in WODYS. I have always enjoyed my time performing on stage however this year I will be working backstage. I have studied production arts and stage management at BOA Stage and Screen Academy for the last two years and my passion for bringing shows to life will continue at LIPA next year where I am going to study Theatre and performance design. My advice about show week is to be kind to everyone including all the adults involved and enjoy every minute.



Hi, I'm Maya

I've been a part of WODYS for 3 years now. I was 15 when I did my first show: carousel, and I must say it is my favourite WODYS show. Carousel is what really got me into legit musicals, and it was an incredible introduction to WODYS. Next year I will be going to drama school to further pursue Musical Theatre. My top tip for any new members is to learn your lines! When you know your words and choreography it makes the show so much more fun. You can then start making more acting choices and really get creative with it when you know what you're doing! I recommend just listening to the songs or watching the videos whenever you have any spare time, even putting aside 5 minutes a day to watch will help. And trust me when you know the show back to front you will have such a good time!



Hi, I'm Nina

I've been a member of WODYS since I was ten years old, so for eight years. I have been in Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Back to the 80s, WODYS at the Woods, Shrek, Carousel and The Addams Family. My favourite show was Shrek as I've always been a dancer and so loved the opportunity to take part in some really exciting dance numbers like the Duloc jazz dance and being a tap-dancing rat! My advice for new members would be to make sure you know your dances so that you can be confident and enjoy show week and also pay attention to any stage directions given in rehearsal, as I remember the stress of not knowing what the stage looked like! Most of all, try and be confident to speak to new people, as personally I have made some of my best friends and memories here. I have always loved the community within WODYS and hope that the new members will look forward to Saturday mornings as much as I have over the years. Always feel free to come and ask me if you have any questions about WODYS!



Performing Arts at School

James Keetley-Smith is currently studying GCSE Drama in Y10 at RGSW and recently enjoyed performing in the role of Greed Monkey in the Senior Production 'The Ash Girl'.



Lara Banks and **Bobby Underwood** were Sandy and Danny in Christopher Whitehead's production of Grease. They did a fabulous job and were able to showcase their dancing, singing and acting skills. Rave reviews all round!



Edie Jones recently played Nancy in RGS Springfield's production of Oliver.

Are you considering your options for GCSE/A Levels or equivalents in Performing Arts subject at school? The following members would be more than happy to talk about their courses to you.

Drama: **Kate Sutton** and **James Keetly-Smith**

Music: **Kate Sutton** and **Nina Davies**

Dance: **Jess Cosh**



Performing Arts at 6th Form

• Spotlight on BOA

Hi I'm Alfie

I am currently in Y12 studying Musical Theatre at Birmingham Ormiston Academy. I joined for sixth form and I am thoroughly enjoying my time there.



Going to BOA has certainly widened my outlook of the performing arts industry and created lots of opportunities for me already! I also feel I have a clearer view of what I want to do after college and in the future as there is a lot of knowledge and discussion about drama schools and career options in the arts.

In February, I performed in my year group showcase called 'Our Time' which was at The Old Rep Theatre in Birmingham. The rehearsal process felt very professional, and it was really rewarding to work on small group pieces as well as the big year group ones. We have now gone on to our full-scale production of 'Grease' which will also be performed at the Old Rep Theatre.

Being surrounded by the arts and so many talented individuals is so inspiring, and the atmosphere is electric.

I also enjoy the coursework/written side of the course as we learn about the history and evolution of musical theatre and the future of the industry. This is not always written in the form of an essay; I am currently doing a module on an app called Canva.

Any members with questions about BOA can speak to Alfie Thompson, Maya Sumera, Lily Kidman-Beeson or Joshua Silvester who would be happy to chat about their experiences. Congratulations to Megan Adshead and Bobby Underwood, who will start Y10 in September.



• Spotlight on Kidderminster College

Hi I'm Issy

I'm in my first year of completing the UAL Level 3 extended diploma in performing arts (musical theatre) at Kidderminster College. The course takes place from Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.15pm and involves training in acting, singing, and dancing. Acting classes can range from Shakespeare to TV and film technique sessions, whereas dance classes on the musical theatre course offer training in 4 different styles including jazz, ballet, commercial and tap. Singing training covers Estill voice training which focuses on the power, source and filters of the voice for healthy, supported singing and improved control. Over 1 year there is the offer of being involved in 6 shows ranging from physical theatre to a musical, or a full dance show. Since I started this course, I feel as though I have really improved and been challenged and have a safe space with my teachers. I am really excited to be currently working on our musical final major project 'Little shop of horrors'. Though the course is really tiring, I have found it very rewarding.



Issy Mann would be delighted to talk to anyone with questions about her course.

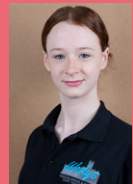


Grabbing Opportunities with Both Hands!

During the last week of February, **Sophie Maidens** and **Isabella Clark** travelled to Manchester and did three days of work as supporting artists on the BBC One drama, *Waterloo Road*. During this experience, they were acting as students at their Year 11 prom, so were dolled up in gowns, and had their hair and makeup done by the crew. They had to learn some simple choreography and got to meet many of the main cast members. It was a fantastic insight into the behind-the-scenes world of television. The girls told us it was an exciting, exhausting and exhilarating experience, and that they are thankful for the wonderful opportunity.



Megan Adshead is joining Malvern Theatres Young Company for their summer production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which she is very excited about after seeing it on tour in Cheltenham last year.



West End Calling is a national competition for musical theatre performers giving fantastic opportunities to young people all over the UK! Each year, we audition hundreds of young performers in cities across the country to find the best talent the UK has to offer. After auditioning, successful contestants sing in live performances leading up to the Grand Final in a West End Theatre.

Congratulations to Maya, who successfully auditioned, progressed to the heats and won the judges' choice with her performance of 'Ballad of Jane Doe' from *Ride the Cyclone*, so is now moving on to the semi-finals in London!



Post 18 Pathways – after school and WODYS

Ella Holland was a member of WODYS for 9 years and played the principal role of Julie in Carousel.



"I would not be in the position I'm in as a performer without the wonderful experiences and guidance I gained from being a member of the WODYS/WODS community. Since performing in my final show, Carousel (2023), I have completed a CertHE in Dance and Musical theatre at SOTE Birmingham. SOTE has really helped me to prepare for my drama school auditions, expand my knowledge of the industry and help me to build a solid foundation developing my skills and confidence to prepare me for professional training. Alongside other offers, interviews and recalls this course has enabled me to secure a place to study Musical Theatre at one of my top choice drama schools, The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Alongside my course, I joined WODS to perform in Sister Act last October. This was an incredible experience and was a joy to be part of. For any of the older members of WODYS, I would highly recommend auditioning for future WODS shows as it's not only another great opportunity to perform on stage but also to expand yourself into the wider WODS community, who are all truly amazing people! I'm so ready to start my new journey in becoming a professional performer and am excited to see what the future holds for my career and training.

I can't wait to come and see Footloose in July and to see you all shine on stage! Good luck with the rest of the rehearsals; the memories you make at WODYS are ones you will keep with you forever, enjoy every moment! Being part of such an amazing community has gained me friends and family for life and I thank you all for helping me be the person I am today! Saturday mornings will never be the same when you leave so make the most of them ;)".

Lots of love, Ella xxx

My Social media is always available if anyone needs any advice or help with auditions/training/general questions -

@Ella.Louise.Holland (Instagram) **Ella Holland** (Facebook)



Follow your dreams – some of them come true!

Here are what just a few of our ex-WODYS are up to...

Grace Whyte is currently performing in the ensemble in the world tour of Phantom of the Opera. She made her debut as cover for Madame Giry on her last day in Beijing and is currently in Mumbai!



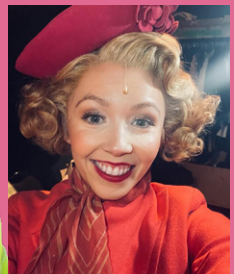
Issy Khogali graduated from ArtsEd. Her theatre credits include Opening Night at The Gielgud Theatre; Flowers For Mrs Harris at Riverside Studios and she is currently starring in Maltilda in the West End!



Harry Jobson graduated from Urdang and his first professional role upon graduating was Biff in Back to the Future!



Dawn Williams graduated from Laine Theatre Arts. She has numerous theatre credits and is currently Dance Captain in Matilda in the West End!





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Music by TOM SNOW

Lyrics by DEAN PITCHFORD

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KENNY LOGGINS and JIM STEINMAN

Learn a little more about WODYS at
www.wodys.com



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