

# Audio Description Association

## note pad

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August/September 2013

### **50 ADA Annual General Meeting/Song and Spectacle Workshop**

A few places are still available at ADA's post-AGM workshop for describers on Wednesday, 18 September. Music, comedy and high drama will all feature in what promises to be a lively afternoon exploring audio description for musicals and opera with **Anne Hornsby** from Mind's Eye, and **Jonathan Nash** plus **Julia Grundy** from Sightlines. More information is given in the attached flyer – the essential details are:

**Date/Time** Wednesday 18 September 2013, 2.00-5.00pm

**Venue** Meeting Room, Theatres Trust  
22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL  
(nearest tube station: Leicester Square)

**Cost** ADA/ADA (Scotland) members: £20  
Non-members: £40

**TO BOOK NOW**, email [office@audiodescription.co.uk](mailto:office@audiodescription.co.uk) to reserve a place and organise payment.

ADA's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting will be held beforehand in the Meeting Room at Theatres Trust from 12.30 -1.30pm. Non-members are very welcome to attend as observers. Coffee will be served in the interval for people who are leaving after the AGM, or staying on or arriving for the Workshop.

### **51 ADA Newsletter**

Expect rain in ADA's latest newsletter which visits the wider and often wetter shores of audio description. Six contributors relate their encounters with the unfamiliar during a year

in which the London 2012 Games and a host of cultural events around the country stretched sporting and artistic boundaries as never before.

In York, **Ted Kendall** escapes the showers while describing the *Mystery Plays* in the grounds of the Castle Museum; at the Olympics, **Julia Grundy** describes rhythmic gymnastics from the shelter of Wembley Arena; and **Anne Hornsby** dodges the downpours during her description of a promenade performance at Hillingdon Lido.

Elsewhere, **Judy Dixey** reflects on access provision at the 2012 Games and her own role as an Olympics volunteer; **Bridget Stevens** reports from Edinburgh Festival Theatre on audio describing Scotland's first relaxed performance; and **Marie Barenskie** shares the frustration of her first experience of cinema audio description. A growing number of venues are now offering 'relaxed' (British) or 'autism-friendly' (American) performances of their family shows, and audio description's contribution to relaxed performances is the topic for editorial comment.

Meantime, **Louisa Sanfey** investigates the development of audio description in Serbia for her dissertation project. Her account of the fledgling service at the National Theatre in Belgrade is published as a supplement.

The newsletter and supplement are on their way by post or email to all corporate and individual members of ADA who joined or renewed their membership in 2012-13, and will be archived in the members' section of ADA's website.

## **52      *Equity Committee Elections***

Despite polling 424 votes, **Pat Hayes**, audio description's champion on Equity's Audio Sub-Committee, was not re-elected to the slimmed-down committee last July. This does not mean either Pat or audio description will drop off Equity's radar. She remains in touch with the Committee's organiser and fellow sympathisers on the new Committee, and will be on tap to advise the Committee on matters relating to audio description.

As an emerging profession, we are indebted to Pat for her work in gaining Equity recognition of audio describers as on a par with other creative practitioners in the entertainment industry and so eligible for Equity membership. The model contract for the engagement of theatre describers, forged during discussions between ADA and Equity, will be available

on ADA's website for any venue or describer to adopt or adapt as the basis for a working working agreement.

**Pat Hayes** is available to answer your enquiries about Equity at: [celestebrian@aol.co.uk](mailto:celestebrian@aol.co.uk)

### **53      *Research into AD for Children***

VocalEyes has received some funding from VICTA and from the MFPA for a piece of research into describing for children. They have entered into a partnership with The Egg in Bath, a venue that specialises in theatre for children. With the children, their parents and siblings, VocalEyes describers will explore the descriptive language, storytelling and delivery that is needed to engage young audiences and lead them into a lifetime of theatre. This follows previous work into touch tours and workshops for children that VocalEyes undertook in partnership with Mousetrap Theatre Projects.

In preparation for the workshops and later audio described performances, an accessible online questionnaire has been developed to gauge current perceptions of audio description. It is being distributed as widely as possible, but the more respondents, the more representative the information is likely to be. If you have contacts with blind or partially sighted children who might like to participate, please email **Roz Chalmers** for a link to the questionnaire at: [roz@vocaleyeyes.co.uk](mailto:roz@vocaleyeyes.co.uk)

Once the research findings have been written up, VocalEyes plans to use the remaining funds to disseminate the information amongst describers countrywide.

As a result of the initial investigations into possible partnerships, the Polka Children's Theatre in Wimbledon has been inspired to offer fully supported audio described performances, and is working with VocalEyes and their own independent describers to deliver a quality service.

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# **AUDIO DESCRIPTION ASSOCIATION**

## **SONG AND SPECTACLE**

### **workshop on describing opera and musicals**

**Wednesday 18 September 2013**

**2.00-5.00pm**

**Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road  
London WC2H 0QL**

Join us for an absorbing afternoon exploring the challenges of weaving your description round a score, songs and spectacle.

Share your experiences of working with this genre and join in the debate about how much is too much, and when and when not to intrude!

#### **The workshop**

The workshop leaders are two describers with extensive experience in this field: Anne Hornsby (Mind's Eye) and Jonathan Nash (Sightlines). The format is similar to previous ADA workshops. Anne and Jonathan's presentation on how they approach the challenge of describing opera and musicals will be followed by a chance for everyone to comment and ask questions, before dividing into groups to experiment with describing recorded extracts. Feedback from the groups will lead into a general discussion of issues raised during the afternoon with a further chance to share ideas and experience.

#### **The leaders**

Between them, Anne and Jonathan have notched up nearly half a century's experience as audio describers. Sightlines, the company Jonathan co-founded in 1994, handles contracts for Welsh National Opera, English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, as well as regular theatre engagements. Anne's company, Mind's Eye, was launched in the early nineties and operates across the UK and across most genres. For more about their work, see their websites:

[www.mindseyedescription.co.uk](http://www.mindseyedescription.co.uk)

and

[www.sightlines-audio-description.com](http://www.sightlines-audio-description.com)

## **The venue**

The workshop will be held in the Meeting Room at Theatres Trust on the first floor of the building (press street entry pad for admittance). For directions to 22 Charing Cross Road, visit the Theatres Trust website:

[www.theatretrust.org.uk](http://www.theatretrust.org.uk)

ADA's AGM will take place earlier in the Meeting Room from 12.30-1.30pm. Coffee will be served from 1.30pm for people staying on or arriving for the workshop, with a further coffee break mid-afternoon for workshop participants.

## **Booking a place**

The cost is £20.00 for members of ADA and ADA Scotland, or £40.00 for non-members. Please complete the attached booking form and send it with your payment to the address given on the form.

The closing date for booking is 7 September 2013 or when all places are filled. Places are strictly limited and early booking is advised. Allocation will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Further information**

For further information about the workshop itself, contact Anne Hornsby at:

[mindseyedescription@gmail.com](mailto:mindseyedescription@gmail.com)

For enquiries about availability of places, membership, or payment methods, contact:

[office@audiodescription.co.uk](mailto:office@audiodescription.co.uk)