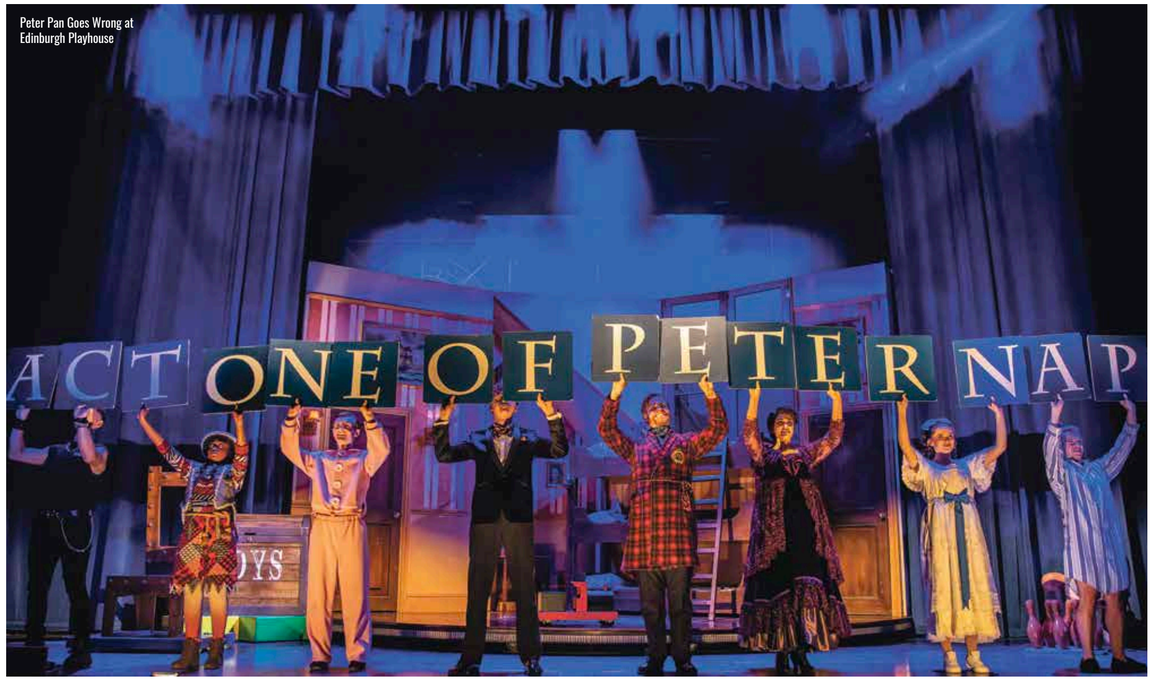
LIAM RUDDEN – MUST SEE THEATRE

Edinburgh's Mr Entertainment picks his Hot Tickets to see in the Capital and beyond



Peter Pan Goes Wrong at Edinburgh Playhouse

off script. Noises Off springs to mind too.

The title of this one is pretty self-explanatory, as we rejoin the members of the Cornley Drama Society we find them battling technical hitches, flying mishaps and cast disputes as they attempt Barrie's much-loved tale, but will they ever make it to Neverland?

Running time 2 hours 10 minutes including interval. Tickets £13-£48.50.
www.atgtickets.com/shows/peter-pan-goes-wrong/edinburgh-playhouse/

"When someone tells you not to look, OPEN THE BLOODY DOOR!". That would appear to be the message of Blue Beard (12-30 March), a brand new co-production at the Royal Lyceum, that finds the Grindlay Street theatre collaborating with writer Emma Rice's Wise Children company, Birmingham Rep, HOME Manchester and York Theatre Royal.

Charles Perrault's Blue Beard, written in 1697, is the story of a wealthy man who murdered six of his wives. Little doubt then that Rice's reworking promises to be dark and, from the murmurings coming out of Bath where it premiered at the Theatre Royal last month, more than a little intoxicating.

That said, until it appears on the Lyceum stage, all we really know is this from the press blurb: "Blue Beard the Magician makes hearts flutter and pupils dilate. With a wink, a stroke and a flick - things just seem to vanish. Cards, coins, scarves…and women. Puff! Gone. Without a trace. He meets his match, however, when his young bride discovers his dark and murderous secret and summons all her rage, her smarts and her sisters, to bring the curtain down on his tyrannous reign".

Exploring "curiosity and consent", "violence and vengeance", this Blue Beard carries a warning of strong language, adult themes and depictions of violence.

Running time 2 hours 20 minutes including interval. Tickets £16-£38
lyceum.org.uk/events/blue-beard#dates-and-times

Blue Beard

It's always great to see Blythe Duff back on one of our city's stages and as Glasgow's Tron Theatre Company return to The Traverse this month with Escaped Alone by Caryl Churchill (13-16 March), they bring the Taggart legend with them.

Now, if there's one thing I've learned about Blythe, it's that she has impeccable judgement when it comes to choosing projects, so if Escaped Alone is good enough to tempt her on stage, it's a shoo-in for my Must See list. Churchill's play has been described as magnificent, intricate, revolutionary and of having an "acutely female view of the apocalypse". Again, the press blurb gives little away: "I'm walking down the street and there's a door in the fence open and inside there are three women I've seen before...Three friends meet for a chat in the garden. A neighbour is invited in and as darker secrets emerge, their afternoon is punctured by flashes of catastrophe". I'm intrigued.

Running time 50 minutes, no interval. Tickets £20.
www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/escaped-alone-spring-24#datesandtimes

The announcement that Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is to bring Donny Osmond back to the Capital and The Playhouse to "channel his inner Elvis" as Pharaoh (3-29 December) sparked memories of the last time we met.

Appearing in the Royal Variety Show at the Festival Theatre in 2003 (Can it really be 20 years ago already?) Donny, who also played Joseph more than 2,000 times in his younger days, was keen to show off his Scottish accent for the press… my money's on that happening again when he returns. He pretty much nailed it too.

As ever, I'll be reviewing most of these productions as the month goes on and am pleased to be able to reveal that, going forward, you will also be able to access my Edinburgh "Must See Theatre" reviews on The Edinburgh Reporter website. For my London and other "Must See Theatre" reviews, subscribe free at **liamrudden.substack.com**

Until next time, happy theatre-going.

Liam

Local actor Kieran Lynch will return to the capital after playing Peter Pan in panto, and timely advice on what is a must see on a trip to the West End

There's nothing like local talent to put bums on seats and over the years Edinburgh has produced more than a few stars.

It's a tradition being continued right now by former Boroughmuir High boy, Rory MacLeod, who found himself dancing the lead role in Matthew Bourne's Romeo + Juliet at the Festival Theatre last September, having debuted there with New Adventures' dance company just 18 months before when he played the Pink Gobstopper in The Nutcracker.

A definite star in the making, watch for his return. Or if you happen to be visiting Paris this month, you can still catch him as Shakespeare's star-crossed lover as Romeo + Juliet plays the Theatre du Châtelet 9-28 March.

Also making a name for himself right now, this time in the world of musical theatre, is Edinburgh's very own Peter Pan, Kieran Lynch, who wowed audiences at the Festival Theatre over the festive season in this year's panto.

Edinburgh actor Kieran Lynch returns home as Doody in Grease after his starring role in Peter Pan

Rory MacLeod, here in The Nutcracker, is currently starring in Matthew Bourne's Romeo + Juliet, in Paris.

There's good news for fans of the former Broughton High pupil too. He's heading home again later this year in everyone's favourite Fifties-fest. Kieran has landed the role of Doody in the UK and Ireland Tour of Grease, which stops off at The Playhouse in June, and if he looks familiar it may well be because it's not that long ago he could have been showing you to your seat or serving you a drink at that very venue. From front of house to centre stage, always follow your dreams, folks.

We stay with JM Barrie's "boy who never grew up" and at The Playhouse for the first of this month's Must See shows in the Capital, the calamitous Peter Pan Goes Wrong (27 February-2 March), a follow up to Mischief Theatre's The Play That Goes Wrong.

Anyone who has read Michael Green's brilliantly observed 1964 book The Art of Coarse Acting, or better still, who was lucky enough to see the 1977 Edinburgh Fringe production that transferred to London's West End, will know exactly what to expect from Peter Pan Goes Wrong.

It's the latest in a long line of plays that celebrates an audiences' often barely concealed glee when witnessing actors going

One for the Donny Osmond fans out there

London calling. If you find yourself in the big smoke this month looking for a show to see, my West End "Hot Ticket" pick for March is An Enemy of the People (until 6 April) at the Duke of York's Theatre, starring former Doctor Who and one of the most engaging actors of his generation, Matt Smith.

In director Thomas Ostermeier's new reimagined production of Henrik Ibsen's classic, Smith plays Dr Stockmann, a man who makes an unbelievable discovery about the healing waters in his local baths. It's a discovery that allows him to hold the future of the town in his hands, but those with everything to lose refuse to accept his word. As the battle goes beyond contaminated water and truth is sacrificed, barriers are broken and doubt spreads faster than disease in a society driven by power and money.

Running time 2 hours 50 minutes including interval. Tickets £25-£195.
www.atgtickets.com/shows/an-enemy-of-the-people/duke-of-yorks-theatre/

Matt Smith in An Enemy of the People