

PROSCENIUM

A Month of Sundays

By Bob Larbey

A Month of Sundays

Wednesday 8 to Saturday 11 March 2023
Compass Theatre, Ickenham

A Month of Sundays

The Cast

Cooper (our hero)Paul Davis
Nurse Wilson (Cooper's main carer)Eva Peerless
Mrs Baker (a cleaner).....Angela Evans
Aylott (Cooper's friend)David Pearson
Julia (Cooper's daughter).....Lynette Shanbury
Peter (Cooper's son-in-law).....Charles Anthony

Directed byZena Wigram
Stage ManagerIzzie Cartwright
Assistant Stage ManagerMarion Chamberlain
Props, Costumes, PromptCrystal Anthony
Anne Gerrard
Lighting Design, Lighting and Sound Operation.....Helene Smith
CostumesDiana Bowles
Sound DesignMark Sutherland

The action takes place in Cooper's room in a rest home for the elderly, somewhere in the home counties, on the first Sunday in April and then the first Sunday in May, during the 1980s.

Act 1

Scene 1April, early Sunday morning
Scene 2Early afternoon, the same day
Scene 3Early evening

Act 2

Scene 1May, Sunday morning
Scene 2Later that afternoon
Scene 3.....Evening

There will be one interval of 15 minutes between Acts 1 and 2
With thanks to Duncan Sykes, Mike Williams, and Steve Adderley

Bob Larbey (June 1934 - March 2014)

Bob Larbey was renowned as a television sitcom and screenplay writer with his professional partner John Esmonde, for some 30 years. They wrote *The Good Life* (starring Richard Briers, Felicity Kendal, Penelope Keith and Paul Eddington as the Surbiton neighbours) and a second Briers vehicle, *Ever Decreasing Circles*. Larbey had no theatrical background, but his first stage play, *A Month of Sundays*, won the Evening Standard best comedy of the year award when it played at the Duchess Theatre in the West End in 1986, starring George Cole and Geoffrey Bayldon. The play won praise for its humour, delicacy, and humane consideration of growing older, qualities evident in all of his writing.

Larbey was the youngest son of a carpenter who attended the Henry Thornton Grammar School in Clapham where he met Esmonde, two years his junior, and was captain of cricket. He worked as a printing-block maker, then in an insurance office in Soho, and did his national service with the education corps in Germany. Three years of after-hours writing with Esmonde yielded a BBC joint fee of two guineas in 1965.

Sketches for the comedian Dick Emery led to their first radio sitcom, *Spare a Copper*, and in 1969, *Just Perfick*, adapted from HE Bates's stories about the Larkin family. Twenty years later, Larbey dramatised the first television series adapted from the same source, *The Darling Buds of May*.

Their television debut followed in 1966 with *Room at the Bottom* for the BBC, and then came *Please Sir!* This touched a national nerve, and even spun off into a secondary series in 1971, *The Fenn Street Gang*.

The pair exploited their national service days with *Get Some In!* (1975-1978) which made a coming star of Robert Lindsay as a teddy boy recruit. They developed their Briers association in *The*

Other One (1977-1979), with Michael Gambon as a glum-faced bachelor stooge, before hitting their stride again big-time in *Ever Decreasing Circles* (1984-1989), again with Briers, supported by Penelope Wilton and Peter Egan.

Between these series, Larbey went solo on *A Fine Romance* for Judi Dench and her husband Michael Williams, a four-series saga (1981-1984). Though Larbey never repeated the success of *A Month of Sundays*, his theatre output continued and is often revived in repertory theatres and amateur companies around the world: *A Small Affair* (1990) charts the romantic perils of TV rehearsal rooms; *Building Blocks* (1992) was written from the heart about family traumas during a domestic building extension; and *Sand Castles* (2001) is a seaside comedy of beach-hut politics.

On Ageing

I live in that solitude which is painful in youth, but delicious in the years of maturity. *Albert Einstein*

The more sand that has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it. *Jean-Paul Sartre*

I have left orders to be awakened at any time during national emergency, even if I'm in a cabinet meeting. *Ronald Reagan*

Just 'cause there's snow on the roof doesn't mean there's not a fire inside. *Bonnie Hunt*

It does not take much to make us realize what fools we are, but the little it takes is long in coming. *Flannery O'Connor*

To me, growing old is great. It's the very best thing – considering the alternative. *Michael Caine*

A man growing old becomes a child again. *Sophocles*

I look forward to growing old and wise and audacious. *Glenda Jackson*

Growing old on screen is not for the faint of heart. *George Clooney*
If you worry, you die. If you don't worry, you also die. So why worry? *Mike Horn*

I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather . . . not screaming and yelling like the passengers on his bus. *Anonymous*

Do not deprive me of my age. I have earned it. *May Sarton*

At age 20, we worry about what others think of us. At age 40, we don't care what they think of us. At age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all. *Ann Landers*

Cherish all your happy moments: they make a fine cushion for old age. *Christopher Morley*

In fact, looking back, it seems to me that I was clueless until I was about 50 years old. *Nora Ephron*

Wisdom is the reward for surviving our own stupidity. *Brian Rathbone*

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work, I want to achieve it through not dying. *Woody Allen*

If you spend all your time worrying about dying, living isn't going to be much fun. *Anonymous*

(Sources: <https://landmarkseniorliving.com/101-timeless-quotes-about-aging/>, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/growing-older>)

Middlesex's 1947 Championship Winning Team

Middlesex won the County Championship in 1947 thanks to the unprecedented run scoring of Denis Compton and Bill Edrich. They both passed Tom Hayward's 1906 record of 3,518 runs in a season with Compton making 3,816 at an average of 90.86 and Edrich 3,539 at 80.43 with a dozen centuries. Compton's 18

centuries surpassed Jack Hobb's former record of 16, set in 1925. Together with Jack Robertson's 2,214 runs and Syd Brown's 1,709 and the bowling of Jack Young, Jim Sims, Laurie Gray and Compton and Edrich themselves, the championship was won. The following season Compton and Edrich made their record unbeaten stand of 424 for the 3rd wicket against Somerset at Lords.

So, who is the eleventh man Cooper and Aylott cannot remember? It could either be the Captain Walter Robins, Ian Bedford or Alec Thompson. John or George Dewes? - *"but we agree on John"* **John** Dewes surprisingly didn't play in the 1947 side instead he made his debut in 1948. A mistake by the author or just the memories of two old men playing tricks?

(With thanks to the Skipton Players, who included this note in the programme for their 2009 production, based on information supplied by Middlesex County Cricket Club)



Back PI Bedford, AW Thompson, LH Gray, LH Compton, JDB Robertson, SM Brown, JA Young

Front WJ Edrich, FG Mann, RWV Robins (captain), JM Sims, DCS Compton

The Pump House
Theatre



Local Board Road
Watford WD17 2JP

Belmont
Theatre

JEKYLL & HYDE

(amateur production by arrangement with Nick Hern Books)

Wed 24th to Sat 27th May 2023
BOX OFFICE 07917 324179
www.belmonttheatre.co.uk



by Neil Bartlett
based on novel by
Robert Louis Stevenson



THE ACCUSED

by Jeffrey Archer

*Is Patrick Sherwood
GUILTY or NOT GUILTY
of murdering his wife?
YOU decide
how this play ends.*

Thur 25th, Fri 26th, Sat 27th May @ 7.45pm
Matinee Sun 28th May @ 3.00pm
Thur 1st, Fri 2nd, Sat 3rd June @ 7.45pm

Doors open 30 minutes before curtain up

BOOK ONLINE

www.eastlanetheatre.co.uk

Our Next Production

ART

By Yasmina Reza

Serge has bought a modern painting for a huge sum of money. Marc hates it and cannot believe that a friend of his could possibly want such a work. Yvan attempts, unsuccessfully, to placate both sides. Three friends and a white painting...

Yasmina Reza's dazzling comedy received the Moliere Award for Best Play when it opened in 1994. It ran for 18 months at the Comedie des Champs-Elysees, Paris, before the English translation by Christopher Hampton opened at Wyndham's Theatre in London in October 1996. It played there for 8 years straight and became an international hit.

Awards for the play include Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, Tony Award for Best Play, and Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy.

Directed by Richard Kessell

Wednesday 31 May to Saturday 3 June 2023, 7:45pm

Compass Theatre, Ickenham
Box Office : 01895 250 615

About Proscenium

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week in Harrow for rehearsals, and up to four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund-raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year.

Secretary : Marion Chamberlain

Chair : David Pearson

Contact us at www.proscenium.org.uk