

**A SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB PRODUCTION**



DIRECTED BY  
**MARGARET  
MANN**

**23rd April  
to  
1st May,  
2010**

**7.45pm**

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# **STEPPING OUT**

## **BY RICHARD HARRIS**



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## Director's Notes

Last year, we closed our season with Joan Littlewood's *Oh What a Lovely War*, a fitting tribute to all those who suffered, because of it, in what was the ninetieth anniversary of the end of those horrific years.

This year, we haven't such a powerful play to end our season, but it has been great fun, as well as very challenging to do. The story follows a group of eleven females and one male as they meet each week at a tap dancing class. As the months go by, we learn more about the characters, their lives and why they attend the classes so regularly. We see, too, which members take to tap dancing easily and which ones don't! However, ultimately, this disparate group becomes a well-knit band of performers, working as a team and tasting success.

It reminds me of directing a play! A group of actors meets at the first rehearsal and, by the end of the run, they know a great deal more about each other and many lasting friendships are formed. Once you have been connected with someone in a production, you always have something in



## Margaret Mann

common. I have good friends whom I first met in productions over forty years ago, both on and backstage. In fact, I have known several of this current cast since they were little children! I actually remember our choreographer, the talented Pippa, without whom we could not have done this show, being born! So, perhaps, *Stepping Out* mirrors the SDC!

We last did *Stepping Out* twenty years ago. The late Gwen Storey, who directed it, was a good friend whom I met through the world of Drama. I supported Gwen during that show as she wasn't very well. Gwen was a much respected and important figure on the Southport Arts scene and is greatly missed. I should like to dedicate this production to her memory.

Thank you to everybody involved in this production for their wholehearted dedication and co-operation. Lastly, we thank you, our subscribers, for supporting us this evening and throughout the season.

Margaret Mann

## Acknowledgements

The director would like to thank the Loreto-Bamber Dance Academy, especially choreographer, Pippa Morris, for the loan of top hats, advice on Dance wear, and consistent support. Also, Lindsay, Chris, Jean, Sherel and Margaret for their expertise and full co-operation, plus the fantastic group of girls - and Geoffrey - who have been so dedicated to the play and such good fun. Thanks go to Dave White of Birkdale Cycles for the Bicycle.

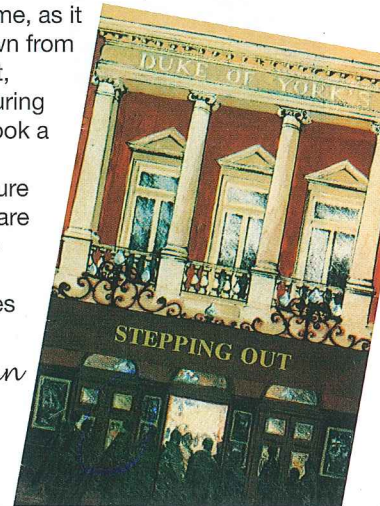


**STEPPING OUT**  
**BY RICHARD HARRIS**

## Memories of the play

I saw the play in September 1984, when it opened at the **Duke of York's theatre**. **Julia McKenzie** directed the play and it featured **Amanda Barrie**, **Lynda Baron** and a cluster of well-known actresses. I realised that this was a play for the SDC, once it was released for amateurs. We have had special permission to do the play, this time, as it has been withdrawn from the amateur circuit, because it was touring professionally. It took a good deal of negotiation to secure the rights, but we are delighted we were able to do so. We hope our audiences think so, too!

Margaret Mann





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# Richard Harris



Given the nature of the featured play it would surprise many to learn the author's main activity has been in the crime and detective genres and the list is impressive: *The Avengers*, *The Sweeney*, *The Saint*, *Armchair Mystery Theatre*, *Target*, *Adam Adamant Lives*, *Man in a Suitcase* and *Shoestring*.

He has more strings to his bow, however, such as situation comedies like *Hancock* and pilots for Comedy Playhouse.

Born in 1934 in London, he became a prolific British television writer, most active between the 1960's and 1990's, his first commission being Sydney Newmans' 1960 ITV series *Police Surgeon*, for which he wrote the final episode.

From the 1960's onwards, producers began allowing him to write a number of "first episodes", effectively making him co-creator on a number of projects like *The Gambler* and *Life and Death of Penelope*.

While the vast majority of his career has been spent as a freelance, he has been an occasional script editor, with shows like *Hazell* and *Hunter's Walk*.

He is an intermittent radio dramatist and has won the Giles Cooper Award for adapting his teleplay *Is It Something I Said*. One of his most successful plays, *Stepping Out*, has appeared in three different versions, ultimately allowing him the opportunity of musical film adaptation.

A substantial part of Harris' body of work is adaptation. Often, as in examples cited above, this has taken the form of adapting his own work from one medium to another. However, he has also taken a number of literary characters and adapted them into ongoing series. The most long-running of these adaptations are *A Touch of Frost* and *The Last Detective*, but he has also converted works including Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* into limited-run serials. A third and more minor kind of adaptation has been the conversion of non-English sources into English drama. His play, *The Last Laugh*, derives from a Japanese work and his adaptation of a Norwegian source into the dual-language film, *Orions belte*, won the inaugural Amanda for Best Norwegian Film in 1985.





# Cathy Milner

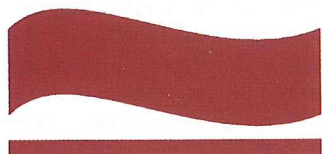
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# The History of Tap Dancing

Mitch Hedberg said  
*"I would imagine that if  
you could understand  
Morse code a tap  
dancer would drive you  
crazy."*

**T**he above statement stands absolutely true because this is a form of dance where hearing the dance is as important as seeing it. Tap dancers create rhythms or patterns of beats, using shoes that have metal taps under the shoe toe and heel.

There are three types of tap dancing:

- Hoofing, emphasizing complex footwork
- Class act, emphasizing whole body movement
- Flash acts a combined form of tap and acrobatics

Tap dance has its roots from the time when slavery was introduced in America. Slaves brought for plantation work were forbidden to use drums, therefore, they developed to beat rhythms out of their feet and hands. The dancers were called **levee dancers**. Plantation masters developed a liking for it and introduced clogs, jigs and reels from their Irish and English backgrounds. **Clog** in Irish dance is a dance where almost the whole of the upper body is kept motionless, leaving the part below hips the for movement. Tap continued to develop in theatre in 1800s in the form of minstrel shows. Mock slave dances were added to early vaudeville shows in a degrading way, and this is how tap became known. Dancers would paint their faces pitch black and dance around in imitation of black farmhands. This type of performance was known as **blackface comedy**. Often rattles and other clacking materials would be placed on the blackface costume. In 1892 the first blackface minstrel show premiered a tapping dance by the famous dancer Thomas Rice. This performance was different from previous ones because of the hard, metallic soles he had placed on the bottom of his stage shoes. His movements were then immediately imitated by other blackface dancers,



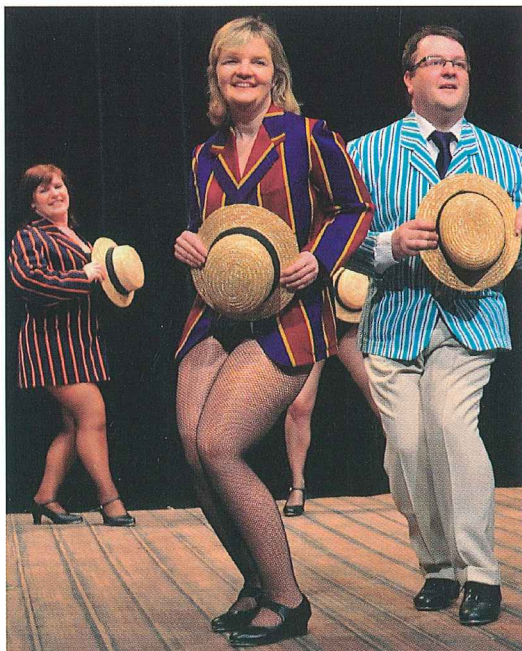
and tap became an accepted form of comedy.

Tap became more and more popular during the 1900s. Tap dancing was introduced into movies, and it became really famous. During 1930s and

to 1950s, **Ann Miller** was one of America's top female dancers. She claimed her fame because of her unbelievable speed. She was listed in *Ripley's "Believe it or Not"* as the **world's fastest tap dancer**, when a speedometer attached to her feet recorded 598 taps per minute in 1942.

Dancers such as **Gene Kelly**, **Fred Astaire**, **Eleanor Powell** and **Shirley Temple** made the tap dance an essential piece of American dream Movies, especially, used tap dancing to personify the slap-happy air of the new American ideal. Famous movies that include tap dancing are: *An American in Paris*, *All that Jazz*, *Swing Time* and *Top Hat*.

continued on page 9.





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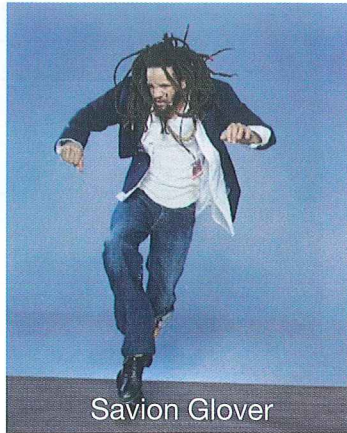


# The History of Tap Dancing

continued from page 7.

**D**espite its popularity to most American public, however, tap has been a controversial issue for African-Americans. Because tap was initially meant to be a mockery of early slaves, many African-Americans protested the popularity of tap dancing, which even until 1960s still contained irreverent references to black slavery. Certain movements of the feet in tap dance were originally meant to indicate clumsiness, buffoonery and running away.

But all that has changed. A popular African-American artist of today, Savion Glover, is popularizing tap throughout the US for another generation. Born in Newark, New Jersey, Glover stands at the forefront of tap, having revolutionized it to include hip-hop rhythms and rap beats. Glover has been called "the man who saved tap dancing" by news sources all over America, and for good reason. Savion started his



performances on Broadway and in Sesame Street as a young actor, and became famous after his Tony award winning performance in "Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk". This musical achieved international renown after introducing tap steps which were blindingly fast and set to wild, thumping beats. Since his success, Glover personally has begun a crusade to keep tap dancing from being forgotten

and the programmes he has started to train other young artists to tap with new style and new expression. His protégé, Cartier Williams, is another African-American young prodigy. It is ironic and wonderful that a dance form that started as a mockery of the African-American people is now a venue for internationally acclaimed dramatic and physical expression for African-American artists.

## From the Editor's Notebook

Working on this programme brought back memories from my youth, when I was a great admirer of American musical films from the 1930s and 1940s. By the way I still am. I think that films like *Top Hat*, *Swing Time*, *Daddy Long Legs*, *Singin' in the Rain* and *An American in Paris*, just to mention a few, were really good entertainment with the swinging music and fantastic dancing.

It might be because of my age that I find that modern musicals – be that on film or on stage – have never reached the same level as the good old classics.

The show you are going to see tonight is about tap dancing and on other pages in this programme you will be able to read about the history of tap dancing, but I think we should also find room for paying tribute to three of the most famous dancers from the golden age of film musicals in which tap dancing was an essential part. See pages 14 and 15.



## Brain Teaser

Who was the leading actress in *Singin' in the Rain* - Was it?



Cyd  
Charisse



Debbie  
Reynolds



Leslie  
Caron

Answers on page 16.



# A Southport Drama



**Hilary Thomson**  
*Mrs. Fraser*



**Jan Hale**  
*Janice*



**Trudi Hirsch**  
*Lynne*



**Ceri Watkins**  
*Dorothy*



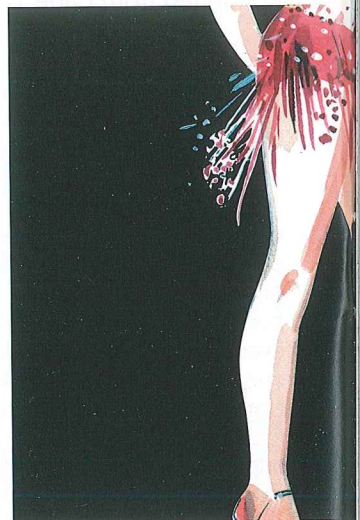
**Marilyn Fletcher-Hill**  
*Andy*



**Stephen Hughes-Alty**  
*Geoffrey*



**Pippa**  
*Mavis and C*



## STEPPING BY RICHARD

**DIRECTED BY**  
**MARGARET**

**Act 1**  
Scene 1 February  
Scene 2 March  
Scene 3 April  
Scene 4 May

**Act 2**  
Scene 1 May (one week later)  
Scene 2 May (two weeks later)  
Scene 3 June  
Scene 4 June (three weeks later)  
Scene 5 July (Night of the Dress Rehearsal followed by the Grand Finale, one year later)

The action of the  
in a Church hall

Time: 10

There is an interval of 20  
Why not beat the rush and  
bar prior to the

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# tic Club Production



NG OUT  
D HARRIS

ED BY  
T MANN



orris  
eographer

ay takes place  
North London

resent

tes between Acts 1 & 2  
-order your drinks in the  
performance?

visor, **ALAN NEWPORT**



**Mandy Evans**  
*Sylvia*



**Jacqueline Stober**  
*Rose*



**Rachel Kilpatrick**  
*Rachel*



**Helen Pickavance**  
*Vera*



**Tracey Batchelor**  
*Maxine*



**Laura-Jane Palmer**  
*Laura*

## Music used throughout the play

*The Entertainer* - Scott Jopling

*Happy Birthday to you!* - P. and M. Hill

*Tea for Two* - Vincent Youmans

*Let's face the music and dance* - Irving Berlin

*In the mood* - Joe Garland

*Revolutionary* - Chopin

*I Got Rhythm* - George Gershwin

*Top Hat, White Tie and Tails* - Irving Berlin

*Happy Feet* - John Powell

*42nd Street* - Harry Warren

Recording of sound - Christine Ratcliffe and Brian Hodge, Pianist - Margaret Mann





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# Staging

## Stage Manager

Lindsay Haywood

## A.S.M. (Book)

Jean Watkinson

## A.S.M. (Cast)

Ceri Powell

## Set Design

Syd Coley

## Lighting Design

Tony Berry

## Lighting Operator

Phil Hutchinson

Roy Carr

## Sound Design and Operator

Chris Ratcliffe

## Properties

James Hughes-Alty and cast

## Wardrobe

Sheryl Coley

Margaret Horne and cast

## Set Construction

SDC production team

## Scenic Artist

Bob Jessamine

## Stage Crew

Mike Clarke, Nick Evans

Colin Haynes, Sabrina Regazzoni

Jonathan Gosling

## Man's voice

Phil Hutchinson

## Announcer

Brian Hodge

## Photographs

Creative Mixed Media

## Programme

## Illustration and Design

David Charters

## Editor

Jorgen Petersen

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# Fred Astaire

(May 10th 1899 - June 22nd 1987)

**F**red Astaire's stage and subsequent film career spanned a total of 76 years, during which he made 31 musical films. He was named the fifth "Greatest Male Star of All Times" by the American Film Institute.

He is particularly associated with Ginger Rogers, with whom he made 10 films. It has been said that he gave her class and she gave him sex appeal. Their dance routines were complicated tap or graceful ballroom routines that portrayed romance. However, only once did the couple share an on-screen kiss.

According to another major innovator in filmed dance, Gene Kelly "The history of dance on film begins with Astaire." Beyond film and television, many classical dancers and choreographers, Rudolf Nureyev, Michael Jackson, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jerome Robbins among them, also acknowledged his importance and influence.

According to Hollywood folklore, a screen test report on Astaire for RKO Pictures, now lost along with the test, is reported to have read: "Can't act. Balding. Can dance a little." The producer of Astaire-Rogers pictures, Pandro S. Berman, claimed he had never heard the story in the 1930s and that it only emerged later. Astaire later insisted that the report has actually read: "Can't act. Slightly bald. *Also dances.*"

Astaire is credited with two important innovations in early film musicals. First, he insisted that the (almost stationary) camera films a dance routine in a single shot, if possible, while holding the dancers in full view all the time. Astaire famously quipped: "Either the camera will dance, or I will." Second, Astaire was adamant that all song and dance routines be seamlessly integrated into plotlines of the film. Instead of using dance as a spectacle Astaire used it to move the plot along. Typically, an Astaire picture would include a solo performance by Astaire - which he termed his "sock solo" - a partnered comedy dance routine, and a partnered romantic dance routine.

Astaire's execution of a dance routine was prized for its elegance, grace, originality and precision. He drew from a variety of influences, including tap and other black rhythms, classical dance and the style of other dancers, to create a uniquely recognizable dance style which greatly influenced the American Smooth style of ballroom



Fred Astaire



Ginger Rogers

# Ginger Rogers

(July 16th 1911 - April 25th 1995)

dance, and set standards against which subsequent film dance musicals would be judged.

Fred Astaire said about his preparation of a dance routine: "Working out the steps is a very complicated process - sometimes like writing music. You have to think of some step that follows into the next one, and the whole dance

must have an integrated pattern. If the dance is right, there should not be a single superfluous movement. It should build to a climax and stop."

Astaire died from pneumonia on June 22nd, 1987 at the age of 88. He was interred in the Oakwood Memorial Park Cemetery in Chatsworth, California. One last request of his was to thank his fans for their years of support.

**G**inger Rogers was said to have done everything Fred Astaire did, except backwards and in high heels.

During her long career she made a total of 73 films, and is noted for her role as Fred Astaire's romantic interest and dancing partner in a series of 10 Hollywood musical films that revolutionized the genre.

In 1930 Rogers was chosen to star on Broadway in *Girl Crazy* by George and Ira Gershwin, the musical play widely considered to have made stars of both Ginger Rogers and Ethel Merman. Fred Astaire was hired to help the dancers with their choreography. Her appearance in *Girl Crazy* made her an overnight star at the age of 19.

In spite of the fact that only 10 out of her 37 films were with Fred Astaire she will always be remembered as his dancing partner. To this day, "Fred and Ginger" remains an almost automatic reference for any successful dance partnership.

She was outstanding among Astaire's partners not because she was superior to others as a dancer but because, as a skilled, intuitive actress, she was cagey enough to realize that acting did not stop when dancing began...the reason so many women have fantasized about dancing with Fred Astaire is that Ginger Rogers conveyed the impression that dancing with him is the most thrilling experience imaginable. According to Astaire "Ginger had never danced with a partner before.



continued from  
page 14

She faked it an awful lot. She couldn't tap and she couldn't do this and that... But Ginger had style and talent and improved as she went along, and she did it so well that after a while everyone else who danced with me looked wrong."

With the film *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle* in 1939 Fred and Ginger's partnership came to an end, but before and immediately after her great partnership with Fred Astaire ended, Rogers, now on her own and one of the highest paid actresses in Hollywood starred in more than a few very successful dramas and comedies.

However, by the end of the decade her film career was in decline. She was, in 1949, reunited with Fred Astaire for the last time in *The Barkleys of Broadway* which, while very successful, failed to revive Rogers' flagging career. Commentators of the time were keen to remark, somewhat unkindly, that the 1949 film highlighted how much the elfin girl of the 1930s had disappeared to be replaced by a robust framed, athletic woman.

In later life Rogers remained on good terms with Astaire. She presented him with a special Academy Award in 1950, and they were co-presenters of individual Academy Awards in 1967, during which they received a standing ovation when they came on stage in an impromptu dance.

Ginger Rogers died in Rancho Mirage on April 25th, 1995 of congestive heart failure at the age of 83. She was cremated and her ashes are interred in the Oakwood Memorial Park Cemetery in Chatsworth, California just a short distance from the grave of Fred Astaire.

**G**ene Kelly was an American dancer, actor, singer, film director and producer. A major exponent of 20th century film dance, Kelly was known today for his performance in *Singin' in the Rain*, he was a dominant force in Hollywood musical films from the mid 1940s until his demise of this form in the late 1950s.

His many innovations transformed the Hollywood musical film, and he is credited with almost single-handedly making the ballet form commercially acceptable to film audiences. He achieved his breakthrough as a dancer on film working with Rita Hayworth in *Cover Girl* where he created a memorable routine dancing to his own reflection.

His next film *Anchors Away* became one of the most successful films of 1945 and it earned Kelly his first and only Academy Award nomination for Best Actor. In *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946) Kelly collaborated with Fred Astaire – for whom he had the greatest admiration – in



## Gene Kelly

(Aug 23rd 1912 -  
Feb 2nd 1996)

the famous Babbitt and Bromide challenge dance routine before leaving for wartime service.

In 1951 and 1952 two films secured Kelly's reputation as a major force in the American musical film, *An American in Paris* and – probably the most popular and admired of all film musicals – *Singin' in the Rain*. As co-director, lead star and choreographer,

Kelly was the central driving force. Johnny Green, head of music at MGM at the time, described him as follows: "*Gene is easygoing as long as you know exactly what you are doing when you are working with him. He is a hard taskmaster and he loves hard work. If you want to play on his team you had better like hard work too. He isn't cruel but he is tough, and if Gene believed in something he didn't care to whom he was talking, whether it was Louis B. Major or the gatekeeper. He wasn't awed by anybody and he has a good record of getting what he wanted.*"

*An American in Paris* won six Academy Awards, including best picture and, in the same year, Kelly was presented with an honorary Academy Award for his contribution to film musicals and the art of choreography.

Looking at Kelly's development as a dancer there is a clear progression from early concentration on tap and musical comedy style to greater complexity using ballet and modern dance forms. Kelly himself refused to categorize his style: "I don't have a name for my style of dancing – it's certainly hybrid – I have borrowed from the modern dance, from the classical, and certainly from the American folk dance – tap-dancing, jitterbugging – but I have tried to develop a style which is indigenous to the environment in which I was reared."

Kelly died in his sleep on February 2, 1996, in Beverly Hills, California at the age of 83 after a stroke. His body was cremated the same day and he has left instructions that there was to be no funeral and no memorial service.












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18th - 22nd May 2010

Box Office opens: 11th May 2010



An Old Hall Brass Production

## Old Hall Brass In Concert

20th June 2010

Advanced bookings 01942 715684

A Loreto Bamber Production

## Loreto Bamber Summer Show

25th - 26th June 2010

Advanced bookings 01704 538351

A Too Friendly Theatre Company Production

## The Time of Your Life

by arrangement with Samuel French Ltd

27th - 29th May 2010

Advanced bookings 01704 541306 Box Office opens: 20th May 2010

A Southport Amateur Operatic Society Production

## Cole Porter's - Anything Goes

By arrangement with Music Scope & Stage Musicals of New York

3rd - 10th July 2010

Advanced bookings 01704 228936 Box Office opens: 28th June 2010

A Maghull Musical Theatre Company Production

## The Hot Mikado

By arrangement with Josef Weinberger Ltd

9th - 12th June 2010

Advanced bookings contact Betty & Graham on 01695 632 372.

Box Office opens: 2nd June 2010

**SDC Subscribers concessions  
only apply to SDC productions**

Box Office Tel: (01704) 530521/530460 [www.littletheatresouthport.co.uk](http://www.littletheatresouthport.co.uk). Hoghton Street, Southport PR9 0PA

Maghull Musical Theatre Company *presents*

I've got a little list

Three Little Maids

Tit Willow

A Wandering Minstrel

# HOT MIKADO

at the **Little Theatre**, Southport

**Wednesday 9th June to  
Saturday 12th June 2010**

Evenings 7.30pm Saturday Matinee 2.15pm

**Tickets £8.50 to £10**

Director: Stephen Hughes-Alty | Musical Director: Jeff Rimmer | Choreographer: Betty Hall

*Hear G&S as you've never  
heard them before!  
A dazzling mixture of rock,  
swing, jazz and blues!*

Advanced Bookings to

**Graham & Betty** on

**01695 632 372**

then from the

**Little Theatre Box Office**

from Wednesday 2nd June

on **01704 530 521**

(11.00am - 5.00pm)

Book and lyrics adapted by

**DAVID H. BELL**

Music adapted & arranged by

**ROB BOWMAN**

Based on "The Mikado" by

**W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan**

Originally produced at

Ford's Theatre, Washington D.C.

Frankie Hewitt, Producing Director

These amateur performances are

given by arrangement with

Josef Weinberger Ltd.

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



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# A SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB STUDIO PRODUCTION IN THE BAR

limited seating, please book early

Directed by Michelle Pappini

## 18th - 22nd May 2010

### 7.45pm

A warm, poignant elegy about growing up, growing old and growing or not growing-wise.



# My Mother Said I Never Should

By Charlotte Keatley



Box Office opens: 11th May 2010, 11am

Box Office Tel: (01704) 53021/530460 [www.littletheatresouthport.co.uk](http://www.littletheatresouthport.co.uk). Hoghton Street, Southport PR9 0PA.