



**ttc**

TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION BY SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH LTD

# Stevie

**By Hugh Whitmore**

From the works of Stevie Smith

Directed by Jenny Hobson

Sun 13 Nov – Sat 19 Nov 2016

£1.50



Hampton Hill Theatre

## Looking for a reception venue?

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.

Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.

All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or visual recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.

An infra-red hearing assistance system is available in the Auditorium but not in the Coward Room. Personal systems with a T-switch will require an additional unit available in the foyer. 'In ear' headsets are also available.

Wheelchair positions are available in both Stalls and the Balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.

TTC Ltd, as managers of the Theatre, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

# Teddington Theatre Club Ltd

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Teddington Theatre Club acknowledges with grateful thanks the practical and financial support given by local residents, businesses and community groups.



Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain and to Arts Richmond.

This production is entered for the Arts Richmond Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.

# Stevie Smith

Poet and Author

1902-1971

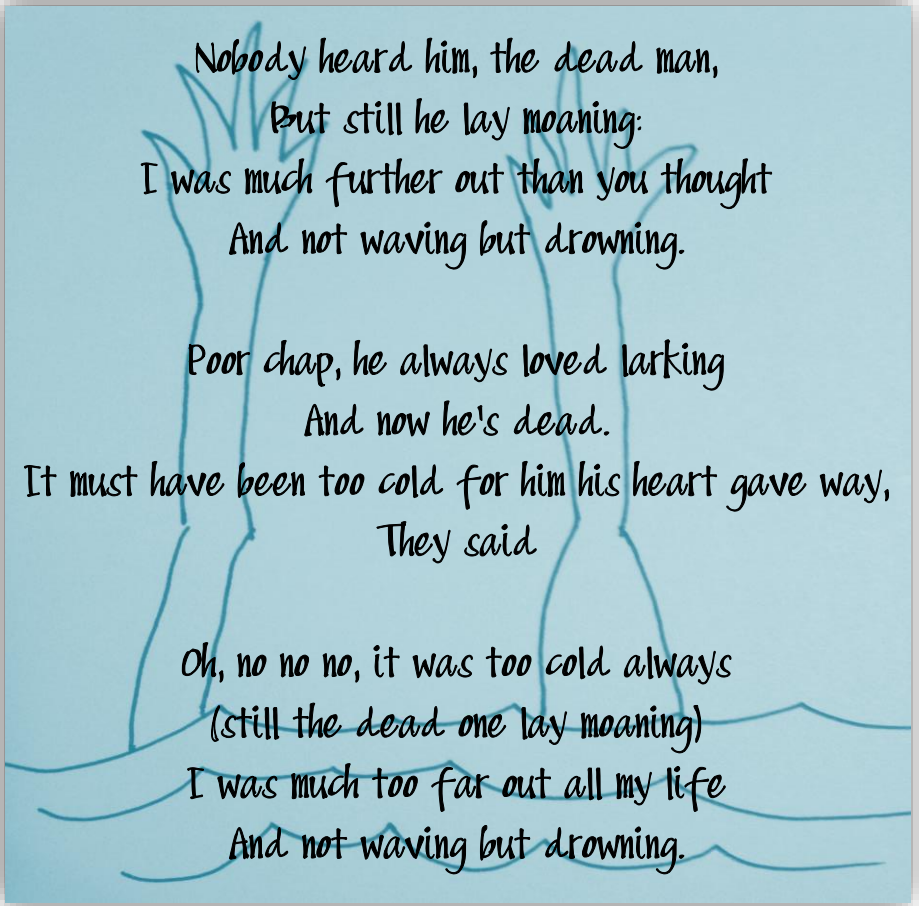
The American critic Annie Dillard describes Stevie Smith as a "magnificent wild card in the deck of the 20th Century's great writers" and in Hugh Whitmore's cleverly constructed drama, we are taken on an intriguing journey, which charts Stevie's life from childhood, through adolescence to her middle years, when she enjoyed a level of fame as she mixed socially among the leading literary names of the day.

Some elements of her undoubtedly fractured life are revealed through the voice of *The Man*, yet much emphasis is placed on the love and stability provided by her beloved Aunt, with whom she lived in the then leafy suburbs of Palmers Green. "The Lion" had cared for her since childhood, following the departure of her father who abandoned the family when she was only three, and the premature death of her mother when she was just 20. As a child Stevie contracted TB, and spent several years in and out of convalescent homes. It is perhaps unsurprising then that she describes herself as "an off the ground person, not perfectly balanced, and apt to fly off at a tangent somewhat easily."

At times she longed for close and enduring friendships, yet at the same time she rejected suburban attitudes, and managed to deeply offend friends by including them in her writings in barely veiled derogatory terms. Never more so than in her book *Novel on Yellow Paper*, which was written on office stationery during some of the long, empty and dull hours spent working for Newnes Publishing House. The book brought her recognition, and inspired her to branch out further into poetry writing. In studying this aspect of her work, it is impossible to detect a consistent style. Sometimes simplistic and childlike, often lacking punctuation and metre, tragic at times, at other times bizarre and comical, her poetry often reflects her apparent obsession with death, seen as a friend, and an ever present figure in her life. In her time Stevie's witty, abrasive, sometimes malicious humour was both admired by those who were keen to stretch creative boundaries, yet criticised by those who sought a more conventional style.

Today Stevie Smith's name may be unfamiliar to some, but to study her life is to unearth a kaleidoscope of fascinating material.

Perhaps her most recognised and enduring poem is Waving Not Drowning.



*Nobody heard him, the dead man,  
But still he lay moaning:  
I was much further out than you thought  
And not waving but drowning.*

*Poor chap, he always loved larking  
And now he's dead.  
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,  
They said*

*Oh, no no no, it was too cold always  
(still the dead one lay moaning)  
I was much too far out all my life  
And not waving but drowning.*

The poem was written in 1957 and was published alongside one of Stevie's simplistic drawings, representing a woman rising out of the water, wet hair hanging over her face, the possible explanation being that the poem alludes to Stevie herself, a woman who often appeared to enjoy "larking", but who throughout her life continued to send out distress signals.

Ironically at the end, Stevie lost the power of speech, and on March 7th 1971 the life of the woman who had enjoyed breaking the rules both at home and in her work ended. "Life is like a railway station..." Stevie said "...the train of life brings us in, the train of death will carry us away".

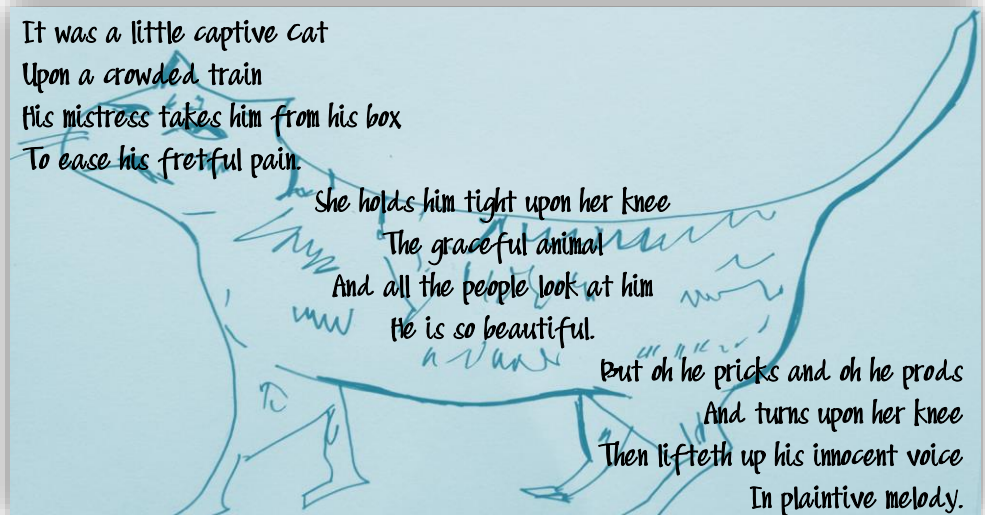
Jenny Hobson

Director

## Stevie on cats

In her book *A Very Pleasant Evening with Stevie Smith*, the poet writes eloquently on the subject of her favourite animal, the cat. Despite many other creatures mentioned in her work, from frogs to swans, and dogs to budgerigars, there is no doubt that her greatest interest lies in studying the attributes of her feline friends. Perhaps quite predictably Stevie has little time for dressed up "catsie watsies" preferring more common suburban cats, or those "going sorrowfully about the palings of a poor London street". She rails against an elderly and rather unpleasant cousin who pampers her equally unpleasant cat Fluff, but comes to accept that the interaction between the woman and the cat, misjudged though it may be, does little harm, and affords the old lady comfort.

Stevie admits to enjoying a moment when she can fold a cat into her arms, but she recognises too that at any moment the docile creature may turn, bringing out his claws if human pressure becomes too much. After all, cats undoubtedly appreciate attention, but only when they want it, and only on their terms. One wonders whether she recognised this trait in herself, particularly in respect of her somewhat tempestuous relationship with her fiancé Freddy. Indeed, there is much to compare between her and cats. She felt isolated, yet longed for friendship. She revelled in the warmth and love offered by her Aunt, yet like the cat, her mood could change in a moment from playful and loving, to striking a cruel blow to those most close to her, in particular her friends. Stevie's poems and essays are often illustrated by her own quirky doodles and caricatures, that fit in neatly with the eccentricity of her work.



In directing this production, I have travelled down many avenues in the search of the true Stevie, nevertheless, much of her remains elusive. However, in seeing this production I hope that you will agree that in the words of Clive James quoted in *The New Yorker* "A more individual talent than Stevie Smith's you don't get ...She's a rare bird, a Maltese falcon."

Jenny Hobson

Director

# Cast

Stevie	Jane Marcus
The Man	Graham Titcombe
Lion Aunt	Liz Salaman

# Creative Team

Director	Jenny Hobson
Production Manager	Linda Sirker
Set Design	Fiona Auty
Lighting Design	Nick Osorio
Sound Design	Harry Jacobs
Stage Manager	Martin Stonelake
Props	Penny Heighes
Wardrobe	Mags Wrightson
Photography	Jojo Leppink Jen Laney
Rehearsal Prompt creator of Drawings	Jeremy Gill Fiona Auty

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## With thanks to...

Sanctuary Kitchens and Bathrooms, Shepperton, for loan of the chaise.

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The action takes place in the sitting room of Stevie's house at 1 Avondale Road, Palmers Green between 1950 and 1960.

# Cast Biographies



## Jane Marcus **Stevie**

Playing Stevie is a huge acting challenge and Jane is both excited and terrified by the role, but honoured to have a stab at playing this wonderfully quirky and creative writer. She was last seen in *Breaking the Code*, as Sara Turing, and as Myra in TTC's production of *Colder Than Here*, and before that in *Equus*, as Dora Strang. Other notable roles have been Mrs Bates in *Brimstone and Treacle* for TTC, the irrepressible Lady Fidget in *The Country Wife*, Hester in *The Deep Blue Sea* for RSS, Joyce in *Last Tango in Little Grimley*, and Susan in *Woman in Mind* for OHADS.



## Graham Titcombe **The Man**

Graham seems to manage about one production a year on average, *Stevie* being his seventh appearance at TTC since 2010. High points for him (never mind what everyone else says) were playing Underling the butler in the wonderful musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*, in which he got to dance, sing, and have "iced water" spat at him repeatedly; and, by way of complete contrast, Michael, one of three hostages in the Middle East in the powerful *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (another three-hander) in which he was chained to a wall throughout the play. He therefore greatly welcomes his parts in *Stevie*, in which not only can he move about freely, but no one spits water at him (well, maybe a bit in rehearsals).



# Cast Biographies



## Liz Salaman Lion Aunt

Liz Salaman was, for a few years, part of a group at The Rose Theatre performing rehearsed readings of Shakespeare. Looking for brighter lights, and not wanting to be like Eliot's character J. Alfred Prufrock, "I measured out my life in coffee spoons," she ventured further and joined the Rose Plus workshops for adults. There followed several terms of scary actor's games of improvisation and wordplay designed to make or break you. She did not crack but the break came when she joined Richmond Shakespeare Society and was cast in *Collaborators*, a play about Stalin. This was followed by *Tom and Viv*, which looks at the marriage of T.S.Eliot. One poet has led to another and Liz is delighted to be with TTC wearing the flowery frock of Stevie Smith's faithful Lion Aunt.

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## THE BAR IS OPEN AFTER THE SHOW

The foyer bar remains open after the show and is well used by cast, crew and members. We extend a very warm welcome to everyone who has been to see the performance - it is an ideal opportunity to meet the actors you have seen performing, find out more about our theatre and our club or simply relax over a drink.



Please  
Turn off Your  
Mobile Phones

## PLEASE DON'T SPOIL THE PERFORMANCE

We respectfully request all members of the audience to make sure that mobile phones are switched off during the performance. Thank you.

# Crew Biographies

## Jenny Hobson Director

The seed of Jenny's passion for the theatre was sown after her mother persuaded her up on to the stage of a local village hall at the tender age of five to sing a nursery rhyme, however stage fright got the better of her and she ran off in tears. Some years later she was tempted back, and immediately became hooked. Jenny says it feels as though she has been there ever since! Drama school was followed by some radio work and teaching, and over the years she has played many roles, latterly inhabiting the director's chair for her previous theatre company in Norwich on several occasions. Having discovered Hampton Hill Theatre following her move to the local area, Jenny feels privileged to have been on stage on two occasions, and to have been asked to direct *Stevie*, a play she loves. She is grateful for the friendship and support of many people in this her first production for TTC.

## Linda Sinker Production Manager

Linda has been a member of TTC for over 16 years, appearing in many productions over the years. She moved into directing in 2008 and has successfully directed two plays, both winning Swan Awards for Best Production. She enjoys putting productions together and realizes the importance of keeping the wheels turning whilst allowing the director to work their magic.

## Fiona Auty Set Design

Fiona only joined TTC in the last two years. After a midlife crisis forced her back on stage in a production of *Pippin*, she soon realised her place was firmly behind the scenes designing, building and painting sets. This is her third set for TTC following *Billy Liar* earlier this year and the panto, *Cinderella*, in 2015.

## Nick Osorio Lighting Design

Nick Osorio has been involved with TTC for well over 30 years and at Questors before that. He is now unable to single out favourite shows but *Amadeus* at the old theatre, *Women of Troy* in the main auditorium and *Not about Heroes* in the Studio come to mind. Now he is mainly doing studio shows which are easier for an ageing brain.

# Crew Biographies

## Harry Jacobs Sound Design

Since his migration from TV to theatre, this is Harry's 16th sound production involvement at Hampton Hill. Shakespeare, comedy, drama, musicals - and now a play about one of the most original women poets. All these show the diverse productions you can expect from working in this theatre.

## Martin Stonelake Stage Manager

A retired engineer and long-time member of TTC, Martin has been an occasional actor, but now does mainly backstage, and has stage managed many shows over the years. Other interests include classical music, movies and flying model aircraft. He lives locally with his wife Yvonne.

## Penny Heighes Props

Penny looks after all the small properties we keep at TTC and sources new ones for shows as they come along. Penny has sourced props and set dressings for, among others, *Calendar Girls*, Rudyard Kipling's *My Boy Jack*, *The Country Wife*, *Pravda*, *Boy on a Swing*, *Kitchen Sink* and *The Thrill of Love*.

## Mags Wrightson Wardrobe

Mags has worked on a variety of shows with TTC from main auditorium drama through musicals to three handers in the studio. Her first wardrobe job was as part of the team for *Snoopy the Musical*, also in the studio. No cartoon characters appear in *Stevie*.

## Jojo Leppink Photography

Jojo has been photographing at YAT and TTC for nearly eight years but has been pointing a camera in the vague direction of stuff for far longer. She can also be found on the lighting grid, hiding in the blues, building things or - heaven forbid - on stage participating in that acting and singing lark. Often all of the above at once.

## Jen Laney Photography

Jen joined TTC in 1992 and since then has appeared on stage many times. Since 2000 she has directed *Still Life*, *The Heiress*, *84 Charing Cross Road* and *My Boy Jack*. Jen has always had a passion for photography and is very happy to be the "Happy Snapper" for this show!

# Coming Soon

at Hampton Hill Theatre

## Cinderella

By Loz Keal

An old fashioned modern pantomime for children of all ages...

Sat 3 Dec 2016 – Sat 10 Dec 2016

Auditorium

## A Streetcar Named Desire

By Tennessee Williams

Passionate. Electric. Unsettling. A timeless theatrical masterpiece.

Sun 29 Jan 2017 – Sat 4 Feb 2017

Auditorium



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For up-to-date information on TTC and the Theatre, and to book tickets online, please check our website: [www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)

Postal bookings are accepted on publication of the booking form.

Telephone enquires open two weeks before each production.

Call: 0845 838 7529 (10am-8pm)

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To enjoy good theatre locally, join TTC today. It is easy to join as an audience member, or as a full performing and technical member.

Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

All are encouraged to help with Front of House, Bar and Marketing activities of the Club and Theatre. To find out more please visit our website

[www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk) or call our Membership Secretary on 020 8287 2663 or complete one of the forms you can find in the Foyer.