**Essex and Hertfordshire Branch Meeting 22nd March 2025**

**At Wylotts Theatre, Potters Bar and via Zoom**

**Present**

Dee Mardi,(Chair), Stephen Moriaty (Secretary) Andrew Alton-Read (Treasurer), Danny Worthington, Merelina Kendall, Alison Whismore, Russ Whismore. Anne Albici, Ian Britten-Hull, Sharon Eckman

**On Zoom**

Liz Mullen, Erin Battle, Andrew Wilkinson, Bao Tieu

**Apologies**

Martin Reed, Charlie Wilson, Martyn Harrison

**Speaker**

LM introduced Jenny Sealey founder of Graeae Theatre who gave us a fascinating talk. Deaf from the age of 7 she has gone on to promote theatre for people with disabilities. She was involved with creating the opening ceremony for the 2012 Paralympics. Boris Johnson’s comment was that he didn’t expect anything academic or political. “I think they were expecting the Teletubbies” she said.

She makes theatre that matters for people that matter. A friend died because of benefit cuts so she did a play about the cuts.

She is on the board of the Royal school of Speech and Drama and believes that school boards should have more disabled representation. Drama schools should reflect society.

She continued with ballet after becoming deaf. The difficulties. Her dance teacher also taught blind people and understood. When she appeared on Desert island Discs she was asked how she appreciated music. She can feel the rythmn and can also hear very high and very low notes

Asked if she has any unfulfilled ambitions she replied that she has a million ideas coming to Graeae. It would be nice to be at the national Theatre, Royal Opera House or RSC but unlikely

Jenny can be contacted on **jenny@graeae.org**

**Reports**

**Chair**

NikkiSimon has resigned as Variety officer as she has transferred to another branch. AAR will be resigning from the committee so we need more committee members and someone to be Variety Officer and Treasurer.

The showcase at The Actors Church was not as well attended as hoped but there were some excellent performances and it was a good networking opportunity.

She has attended the singers committee. EB raise an issue concerning a Netflix production and was advised that Lottie Stables the Industrial Officer is the person to contact.

DM’s detailed report is on the webpage. [**Essex & Hertfordshire Branch - Equity**](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=6badcf595e3d33dfJmltdHM9MTcyNjE4NTYwMCZpZ3VpZD0xZjhjY2VkMC1kODlmLTYyZTYtMmMzNi1kZGZlZDk3ODYzZjkmaW5zaWQ9NTIwMQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=1f8cced0-d89f-62e6-2c36-ddfed97863f9&psq=equity+essex+and+hertfordshire+branch+website+login&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZXF1aXR5Lm9yZy51ay9nZXQtaW52b2x2ZWQvZmluZC15b3VyLWJyYW5jaC9lc3NleC1oZXJ0Zm9yZHNoaXJlLWJyYW5jaC8&ntb=1)

**Treasurer**

AAR confirmed that the present balance is £2561.55

**Speaker Secretary**

LM confirmed that our next speaker on 24th May will be Natasha Rickman the new Artistic Director at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester.

**Secretary**

The annual Equity conference will be in Derry from 10-12 May. DM has expressed interest in being on of our representatives. This branch can have 3 representatives and names have to be submitted by 11th April. Erin Battle and Bai Tieu both expressed interest in being a rep.

**AOB**

SE mentioned the Equity New green deal, working on sustainable work places. The Equity pension scheme is now green. More information on the Equity website or email **equity4gnd@gmail.com** for more information.

IBH said a lot of young people are making their own work and suggested a network for such people.

Although Colchester Fringe is very good there is a danger of being ripped off by some of the Fringes.

Also his company AMA are starting audio theatre.

The next meeting will be in Chelmsford on 24th May