

sedos grapevine

april 2014

Ask Dr Witchie

Dr Emily Sidonie Grossman, who plays the Witch in Sedos' *Into the Woods* — which opens this week — is one of the stars on Sky 1's *Duck Quacks Don't Echo*. Emily is an expert in molecular biology and genetics, with a PhD in cancer research and a triple first in natural sciences from Queens' College Cambridge, so who better to answer some of the scientific questions this magical show poses?

Can a giant exist?

If a human were to be scaled up, it would need disproportionately more support and structure to hold it up and to prevent it breaking under its own weight. Let's say a giant were 10 times as tall as a man, each of her dimensions would be 10 times larger, so her volume (and thus, importantly, her weight) would be $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1000$ times greater.

However, the cross-sectional area of her legs would only be $10 \times 10 = 100$ times greater, and so they would no longer be strong enough to support her giant weight. Galileo put it like this: "Nature cannot produce a giant 10 times taller than an ordinary man unless by miracle or by greatly altering the proportions of his limbs and especially his bones, which would have to be considerably enlarged over the ordinary."

Could a boy climb a beanstalk?

A beanstalk is actually the stem of a bean plant, and is proverbially known for its tall-growing properties. These plants can grow up to 12 feet tall — remember a beanstalk is not a tree,

so it is not surrounded by rigid dead bark like a tree trunk, but relies instead on the support provided by the water pressure inside its living cells.

Now a giant beanstalk reaching up the clouds would have to be at least 6,500 feet tall — that's more than 500 times taller (and 125 million times heavier) than a normal beanstalk. This means that even to support its own weight, let alone the additional weight of a boy, a giant beanstalk would have to be more than 11,000 times wider than a normal beanstalk (which we can estimate to be around 6 inches wide).

That's nearly 2,000 yards wide, or the length of 20 football pitches! If this giant beanstalk could indeed exist, then the small extra weight of the boy could easily be accommodated.

Could Rapunzel's hair really support the weight of her prince?

Human hair, like skins and nails, is made of keratin. Keratin consists of highly structured fibres, making it remarkably strong. Pound for pound, hair is as strong as aluminium — and

even as strong as Kevlar, the material used to make bullet-proof vests.

A single human hair can hold about 100g in weight — about two chocolate bars. On an average head of hair there are approximately 150,000 hairs, so the combined hair of a whole head could support up to 12 tonnes. This is the weight of 2 elephants... or 150 princes!

Could Cinderella pick a pot of lentils out of the ashes in under two hours?

An average dry lentil has a mass of approximately 0.04g. If we assume the stepmother's pot contains one large bag of lentils weighing about 1kg, then this means that the pot would contain approximately 25,000 lentils.

If Cinderella had two hours to pick these out of the ashes, this is 720 seconds, so she would need to pick out 3-4 lentils per second — without taking a break. Given that the lentils would be obscured by the black ashes, and that her hands would probably get tired, I would say this is pretty impossible!



Emily on the Sky 1 show
Duck Quacks Don't Echo



Emily in rehearsals
to play the witch in
Into the Woods

**Into the Woods is on 2-12 April at
the Bridewell Theatre. Tickets at
sedos.co.uk**

Let's play 'Le Jazz Hot'

Our autumn musical will be the musical comedy *Victor/Victoria* — a warm, funny, wildly energetic look at the nature of love, gender perceptions and the battle of the sexes, with music by Henry Mancini, lyrics by Leslie Bricusse and a book by Blake Edwards.

Director Angus Jacobs, who directed last year's *Hot Mikado* in the same slot, says: "I'm back with an exciting — and slightly quirky — show for the end of 2014 season and can't wait.

"*Victor/Victoria* is a musical comedy which tells the story of an out-of-work singer whose life changes when she meets the flamboyant Toddy. With his help, she becomes an overnight sensation in the nightclubs of Paris performing as 'Victor', a female impersonator. But success becomes complicated when she meets the love of her life, King Marchane, a macho Chicago gangster.

"This is a challenging production to pull off and the lead role — played by Julie Andrews in the film and on Broadway — is an amazing part for a female singer/dancer/actress, there are other great acting roles plus some exciting



Angus Jacobs, *Hot Mikado* director, returns to the hot seat

production numbers for the dancers.

"The show also features one of my all-time favourite musical theatre songs 'Le Jazz Hot', which long-term Sedos members might recall from my 2008 cabaret *Red Hot & Black*. I'm looking to incorporate some new and interesting ideas, and have a great team to help me pull it off. Bring on the sequins of Paris in the 1930's."

The show was originally an 1982 movie musical (itself a remake of *Viktor und Viktoria*, a German film of 1933) and was nominated for seven Academy Awards, winning the Oscar for Best Original Music. The stage adaptation opened on Broadway in 1995 and Julie Andrews earned a Tony Award nomination in the lead role.

The rest of the core team for the Sedos production comprises Matt Gould (musical director), Clare Harding (producer), Laura Graham-Matheson (stage manager) and Alex Magliaro (assistant director).

The show runs from 26 November-6 December at the Bridewell. More info on audition dates etc in due course.



Matt Gould — more recently seen directing — is MD for *Victor/Victoria*

From the committee

• **Into the Woods:** break a leg to everyone involved in *Into the Woods* (see page one). We're hugely excited about seeing this great Sondheim show and know it's going to be a great success. Have fun — we'll see you in the bar afterwards!

• **Heaven Can Wait:** huge congratulations to the cast, crew and production team of our first production of 2014, the comedic fantasy *Heaven Can Wait*. 420 people pre-booked to see the show and it was a real pleasure to see the original 1938 drama that inspired the hit TV series *Quantum Leap* and a number of successful movies. See pictures on page six.

• **Autumn musical:** you'll find more information about the recent announcement of our 2014 autumn musical in the story on the left, but we wanted to add that we're very excited about welcoming *Victor/Victoria* into the season. It's a musical comedy with a terrific score, but it also has a dark core and a bold take on sexual politics. It's also great to welcome back Angus Jacobs as director and Matt Gould as musical director, who returns to the piano after five previous Sedos shows as MD and an absence of four years (in which time he's directed for us!).

• **AGM:** we look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on Wednesday 23 April — please put it in your diary now.

• **Production Group:** as well as organising City Library and making it a pleasant space to rehearse in, the Production Group have been on a bit of a spending spree for the society and we're now the proud owners of 200m



The *Into the Woods* team hard at work — see the show to find out what they're making

of scaffolding, a circular saw and a mitre saw, plus some music stands and lights. All of which means we'll be able re-use these items time and time again and save on hire costs. Future plans include getting a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) cupboard for storing flammable substances and a transport case for tools etc.

• **City Library:** phase III of the City Library reorganisation takes place this Easter with a much-needed extra rehearsal room being created. If you can help, email production@sedos.co.uk. Thanks in advance to everyone and good luck!

• **Pub chat:** if you want answers to any rumours you may have heard about Sedos then email pubchat@sedos.co.uk email address. Feel free to send us your questions and we'll pick the most interesting ones and answer them in the Grapevine. So, what do you want to know?

Are you our next treasurer?

After five years, our fantastic treasurer, Craig Topp, has decided that it is time to hand over responsibility for the society's finances to someone at the AGM on Wednesday 24 April (although we are very pleased that Craig will still be standing for committee).

If you are interested in this role, we would be delighted to hear from you. The role could be split — and a lot of it can be performed without being on the committee — but that is

all up for discussion with anyone interested!

Treasurer responsibilities include:

- Managing the society's finances
- Paying all expense claims and other bills and issuing invoices
- Preparing the annual accounts for the Charity Commission
- Agreeing show budgets with the show's producer

- Keeping the committee and show producers informed on ticket sales

- Liaising with box office manager regarding final box office and reconcile to cash receipts

- Reconciling final show P&Ls to receipts / payments and signing off final versions

- Liaising with other Sedos groups regarding general expenditure

- Acting as the general point of contact for all finance related matters

If you are interested in getting involved and would like to discuss it, contact secretary Matt Gould at secretary@sedos.co.uk.

From Belinda Sherlock's desk at Cardboard Citizens

Today feels to me like a typical Cardboard Citizens day, if such a thing exists. Twenty homeless young people and four corporate executives are making theatre together in the rehearsal space; it seems to involve a lot of beat-boxing. One of the young people brought his new puppy in, who has taken up residence under our chief executive's chair.

Company members (homeless participants) are popping in for a cup of tea, for advice and guidance, and to update their CVs. Preparations are underway for tonight's workshops — "Intro to Acting" for new members, and "Writing for Performance" for the more seasoned.

Shortly the van will head over to Drapers City Foyer, a young people's hostel in Bethnal Green, for tonight's show of Glasshouse by Kate Tempest. Tomorrow we're playing a lunchtime how for clients at Westminster Drugs Project.



Glasshouse is forum theatre, based on the experiences of our members — we invite the audience to identify some of the problems the characters faced, stop the action, and try out their own solutions on stage. We've been using this technique for 20 years to instigate debate, problem-solving, and, we hope, resilience to address similar situations in real life.

Touring hostels, day centres, prisons and theatres across the UK this spring, we're aiming to give 2,000 homeless and at-risk people a life-changing experience. At London venues, our ex-homeless actors connect with

audiences afterwards, inviting them to become part of the Citz community. This means ongoing workshops, training, performances, socials and support.

"Brilliant as ever! Clients were really excited about the event and really enjoyed it. Energetic, professional, fantastic and above all a quality performance," said one hostel worker, while a resident told us it was: "Blooming brilliant. I'd love to see you come back. I'm even going to head down to one of your workshops."

Glasshouse finishes its tour at the Roundhouse, 14-18 May, 8pm — come and join us (tickets from Roundhouse website). You can also support us, alongside other Sedos cyclists, in Nightrider (7-8 June), a 100km moonlight cycle across London. Info at cardboardcitizens.org.uk or email me: Belinda@cardboardcitizens.org.uk



Dates for the diary

2-12 April

Into the Woods performances

14 April/22 & 24 April/27 April

In Cahoots workshop/auditions/recalls

23 April

Sedos AGM

7 May/12 & 13 May

Government Inspector workshop/auditions

1-5 July

The Eurosedos Song Contest — Strictly NOT Winners performances

8-12 July

In Cahoots performances

15-18 July

Government Inspector London performances

Contacts

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Sedos website

sedos.co.uk

Find us at

facebook.com/sedostheatre

youtube.com/sedosvideo

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Sedos committee

Chris de Pury (chairman), Matt Gould (secretary), Craig Topp (treasurer), Stephen Beeny, Dawn Harrison-Wallace, Matt Hudson, Angus Jacobs, Deborah Lean, Pippa Roome, Bob Stanex

Contact the Sedos committee

committee@sedos.co.uk

Three weeks of fun

Festival history: did you know?

- This is the third year Sedos has staged a Summer Festival.
- Enron, which opened the Festival last year, is Sedos' best-selling play since records began.
- The first year of our Summer Festival, 2012, was also Sedos' first year of residency at the Bridewell Theatre.
- Over 100 people are involved in making the Festival happen each year.
- The first Summer Festival culminated in the Grease Sing-A-Long on the final night.
- Sedos weddings and the Festival seem to go together — last year a member got married on the penultimate Saturday and this year another gets married on the final Saturday.
- Our first Summer Festival featured four shows because the final week played host to a one-act double bill, Man of Destiny and Sink the Belgrano!
- 2014 is the first year the Summer Festival has included a show which is touring to the Edinburgh Fringe later in the year.
- Sedos chairman Chris de Pury directed the first show of Sedos' first Summer Festival, Roland Schimmelpfennig's Push Up.
- Last year the Festival coincided with our "Sedos at the Bridewell" exhibition of photographs in the theatre bar.



Last year's Summer Festival producers and directors

Picture by Neil Ballinger

The Festival's back! Yes, our three-week summer extravaganza of theatre returns this year to the Bridewell Theatre. We asked the teams to introduce us to their shows with a few fascinating facts

The Eurosedos Song Contest 2014 — Strictly NOT Winners: did you know?



- The Eurovision Grand Prix began in 1956 as a way of uniting war-torn European countries with a light entertainment programme and a competition of songs was arranged.
- The United Kingdom has won five times, but has come second 13 times!
- The European Broadcasting Union spreads its net much farther than geographic European countries, including nations such as Israel, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Armenia, Russia, Georgia and Ukraine, all of whom are eligible to be included in the show.
- In theory, Iraq, Jordan, Syria & Saudi Arabia, as European Broadcasting Union members, could also take part.
- The first show in our Eurosedos trilogy, in 2005, took over 18 months to organise, as there were only a few backing tracks available and YouTube didn't exist to view the performances.
- The Eurosedos shows in 2005 and 2007 were among the most successful shows that Sedos has ever staged at The Bridewell.
- We featured 30 Eurovision winners in our previous two shows.
- With singers, dancers and backing vocalists, there are over 80 parts to cast and costume in our spectacular show.
- There are eight different languages featured in this show, making the learning of songs a much more difficult task for our cast than it was for the original artists!
- Half of the audience is arranged into 15 different countries who cast their votes to the giant scoreboard in true Eurovision fashion. THEY decide who wins each night! The cast do not know!

The Eurosedos Song Contest 2014 — Strictly NOT Winners is on 1-5 July at the Bridewell Theatre. Tickets at sedos.co.uk

In Cahoots: did you know?



- There are 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 144 countries
- Brownies were first organised by Lord Baden-Powell in 1914, to complete the range of age groups for girls in scouting.
- In 1918 Lady Olave Baden-Powell took on responsibility for Girl Guiding
- The name 'Brownies' comes from the story "The Brownies" by Juliana Horatio Ewing, written in 1870. In the story two children, Tommy and Betty, learn that children can be helpful Brownies.
- The current Australian Guiding promise is "I promise that I will do my best; To be true to myself and develop my beliefs, To serve my community and Australia, and live by the Guide law."
- Girl Guiding has four world centres: Pax Lodge in London, Our Cabaña in Mexico, Our Chalet in Switzerland and Sangam in India
- In Cahoots features an all-female cast, the first Sedos show to do this since The Odd Couple in 2007.
- Clare Harding (In Cahoots' producer) was awarded Sawbridgeworth's young volunteer of the year award in 2005 for her services to Girl Guiding
- This will be the first time In Cahoots has been performed in the UK.
- Emma J Leaver (In Cahoots' director) went to Brownies in the Australian Outback where a baby crocodile attended a Brownie meeting without any prior parental permission.

**In Cahoots is on 8-12 July at the
Bridewell Theatre. Tickets at
sedos.co.uk**

Government Inspector: did you know?



- The Fawlty Towers episode "The Hotel Inspectors" is based on Gogol's Government Inspector. Basil Fawlty mistakes a guest to be a hotel inspector but, in fact, he is a spoon company manager. At the end of the episode Basil cream pies the spoon manager but unfortunately, in front of the actual hotel inspectors.
- Inspiration for Gogol's 1836 play came in part from an anecdote told to him by poet Alexander Pushkin, who had once been mistaken for a government inspector.
- 2014 marks Sedos' sixth tour to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Previous tours: 2012 (As You Like It), 2010 (The Tragedy of the Prince of Denmark), 2008 (Don Carlos), 2007 (Mary Stuart and The Odd Couple - Female Version), 2005 (Sexual Perversity in Chicago and Six Degrees of Separation)
- Our production is drawing inspiration from Noises Off, League of Gentlemen, Perfect Nonsense and Starsky & Hutch. If you can imagine that, you're guaranteed a role (you are in no way guaranteed a role).
- A Hollywood musical comedy version was released in 1949, starring Danny Kaye and set in Napoleon's empire instead of Russia. This film was neither a critical nor box office success.
- In 2012 the Sedos Edinburgh team gave away 400 knit moustaches along the Royal Mile.
- Our designer is already keeping her eyes peeled for camel hair coats, paisley jumpsuits and crocheted waistcoats.
- Our director was a wardrobe assistant on this adaptation which debuted in 2011 at London's Young Vic Theatre and starred The Mighty Boosh's Julian Barratt and Smack the Pony's Doon Mackichan.
- The Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world. Last year, there were 2,871 shows by 24,157 artists from 41 countries in 273 venues.
- Since 2010, our producer has been involved in seven shows, our director in 38 shows and our designer in a whopping 142.

**Government Inspector is on
15-18 July at the Bridewell
Theatre. Tickets at sedos.co.uk.
The show also tours to Monkey
House at ZOO Venues as part of
the Edinburgh Fringe from
17-25 August.**



We're in Heaven now

Our production of Harry Segall's Heaven Can Wait opened the 2014 season, with Peter Bryans making his directorial debut, James Franey as assistant director and Pip Deppeler producing.

InfoBarrel's review said: "This humorous play is full of laughs reminding us of the working man ethics of the 1940s. Sedos give this production their all. High production values and consistently focused performances by the entire cast make for an outstanding performance. Praise must also go to the designers for their simple, but extremely effective scenery, and to the crew for the smoothest of scene changes, as one comes to expect with a company of this calibre.

"As usual – an outstanding production...

"With plenty of challenging productions every year, ranging from drama to musical theatre, nothing frightens this aspiring company whose well-deserved reputation in the world of amateur theatre comes from sincerity, dedication and very hard work."

Pictures by Michael Smith



In the wings with... Kara McLean

They say you always remember your first time. Mine was in Aberystwyth, back in the year 2000, in a small hall with about 20 people. When my turn came I felt a thrill like no other as I finally got to do something I'd dreamed about for months. Sing a solo with an orchestra. There is nothing quite like the joy of a sitzprobe. As a cast member, after weeks of rehearsals during which you have become accustomed to the sound of just your voice and a piano, the first meeting with the orchestra is a real high. It

is an opportunity to rediscover your show with a whole new level of detail; a chance to revel in the full depth of the score and how much it adds to the production.

It is easy to forget during the preceding months exactly what the show sounds like (especially when your musical director bans you from listening to any soundtracks) and what a joy and relief it is to find how much more sense many of the more complicated moments make once you've added the layer of strings,

woodwind and brass necessary to (often) point you in the right direction.

The sitzprobe is always a highlight of the process for me. From that small hall in Aberystwyth to City Library with our 15-piece orchestra for *Into the Woods*, I will never get over how exciting it is to sing with an orchestra for the first time with each new show.

*By day Kara is commercial rights administrator for Faber Music. She plays the Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods* this week and next.*



Picture by Roger Cook, 2009

A glass of wine with... Clare Harding

When did you join Sedos and what was your first show?

I joined at the beginning of 2012 as costume assistant and sound operator for *Three Sisters* and feel like I have barely been out of the Bridewell, Ocean House or City Library since.

Are you involved in a Sedos show at the moment?

I have just been operating lights and sound for *Heaven Can Wait* and am producing in *Cahoots*, as well as being the Production Group lead.

What do you do in real life?

I am a business analyst for Kingston upon Thames. This basically means I spend my day

number crunching, writing reports, drawing process maps and, in the true nature of local government, drinking lots of tea. I am also a ride leader for British Cycling so can be found out leading bike rides across London on the occasional weekend mornings.

What's the worst thing that's happened to you backstage/on stage?

How much time have you got! The worst incident was when a brand new backstage carpet got ruined by a broken pair of costume shoes for a show I was producing. I got an angry call from the theatre manager the morning after opening night summoning me to his office. I spent the whole day scraping the marks off the floor and covering the backstage floors with dust sheets, draining any profit from the show in the process. You could say I was not best pleased when the cast turned up that evening.

If you had 24 hours before the world combusted, what would you do?

Gather up all my friends and family for a stroll along the South Bank and a pub lunch, then off to see a show in the evening before partying the last few hours away in a bar.

It's our round, what are you having?

G&T please.

One food you couldn't live without?

Toast — works as a snack, part of a meal and at anytime of the day — what's not to like?

Name the first and last show you ever saw and were they any good?

The first theatre trip I really remember was going to see *The Lion*, the *Witch* and the *Wardrobe* at Sadlers Wells and coming away thinking the whole thing was quite magical.

My last show was Masquerade Theatre's version of *Enron* (which I co-produced last year for Sedos). It's such a great play and was interesting to see how another company had interpreted the script. Worryingly I could still quote most of the lines from memory.

A great production starts with...

An amazing team who share the desire to put on a great production. Putting on a show is all about team work and without strong team spirit things have a habit of falling apart at the seams.

And ends with...

A hangover.

Name that show

In each Grapevine issue we bring you a small part of a poster, prop, piece of scenery or costume from an old Sedos show. Your task? To name the show. Answer at the bottom of the page.



Name that show answer: A Little Night Music, 23 November-3 December 2011. See the full poster here: sedos.co.uk/2011/11/little-night-music.htm