



www.sewellbarn.org

2013-2014 Season

Newsletter 2: September 2013

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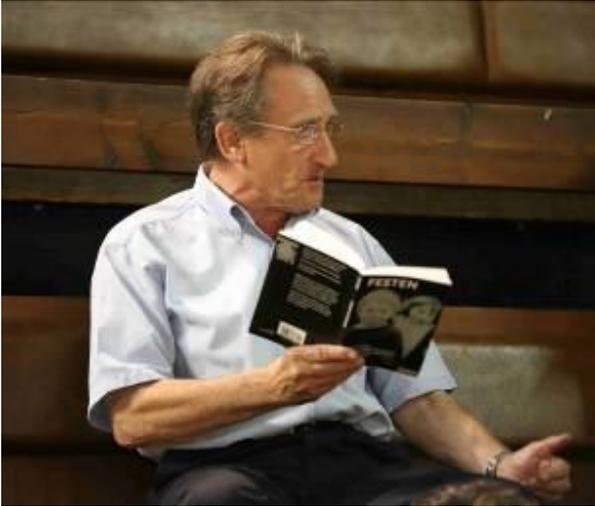
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Our Next Production

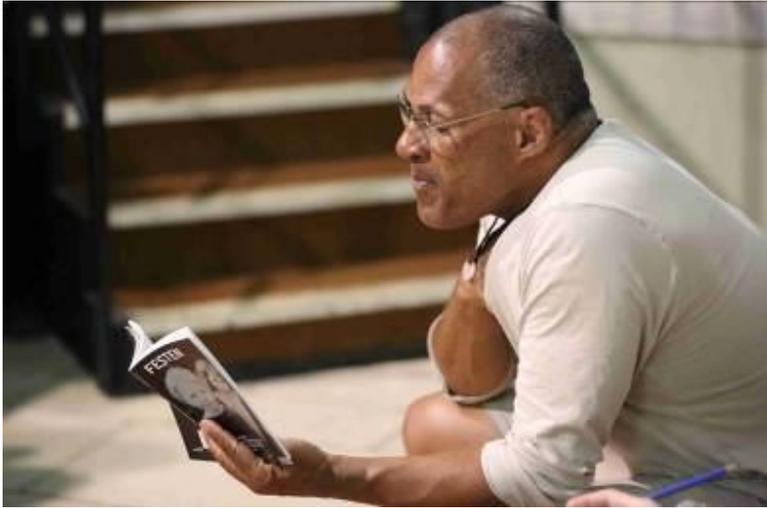
Festen

By David Eldridge Directed by Michelle Montague
A CELEBRATION!

We launch our new season with *Festen* by David Eldridge. Thought-provoking and challenging to both actors and audience, *Festen* has been labelled a landmark play, bringing new life to tragedy. A son destroys a father by accusing him



of raping him and his sister. The charge is ignored and



dismissed as the birthday celebration continues, throwing the evening into absurdity.

The prospect and daring of telling this story thrills me. The writing has allowed for an organic rehearsal process and highlights my belief that the power of theatre lies in the heart of the story and character. It is proving to be an inspiring process as the play's Danish roots are naturally revealing a stark Nordic style to the production. Engaging in the

creativity of my cast and production team has proved to be a unique experience. This exciting piece of theatre explores long-submerged family secrets, suicide and sexual abuse which, when performed in the confined space of the Barn, will undoubtedly achieve an undeniable intensity.

Please remember to book your tickets and support our opening production of a new season that promises to be a powerhouse of fringe theatre. Without an audience, there is no Sewell Barn Theatre! (early rehearsal photos)

***Festen* runs from 10th – 12th and 16th – 19th October, with a matinée on the 19th. Tickets can be bought from Customer Services, 2nd Floor, Jarrolds, Norwich, or by phoning 01603 697248**

Visit www.sewellbarn.org for further information.

Michelle Montague



AGM



As usual, we had a really good turn out for Sunday's AGM. It was a lively meeting and a very sociable affair too with everyone staying to enjoy some lunch.

This year was a little different for me as I have now taken over from Jenny Hobson as chairman of the management committee.

Before standing down, Jenny gave us a comprehensive look at the past year. Robert Little summed up the year from an artistic point of view and Ginny Porteous told us that the finances are in good shape but we, as always, need audience numbers to rise in order to keep us solvent.

Jenny will be a very hard act to follow! She had been chairman for 15 years and has been extremely dedicated to the Barn



in all ways. We all thank her for her time, energy and loyalty.

As a mark of our appreciation, we presented Jenny with an Empress chair ... a chair for a chair! Stella Jay, who retired from some of her duties front of house earlier this year was presented with a hamper containing teas, a pretty teapot and tea cups with a special spoon to stir things up!

I am fully committed to the Sewell Barn and will do my very best to make sure we continue in the successful manner that has been the norm.



Please feel free to contact me with any ideas, concerns or matters that we can discuss at our committee meetings. You have my contact details at the top of the newsletter.

Jill Fuller



Thanks from Jenny Hobson

Having stepped down from the Chair of the Friends at the recent AGM, I would like to thank everyone who attended, giving me a wonderful send off with so many kind words. Some will be aware that this is a difficult time for me, and therefore I have also greatly appreciated the many expressions of comfort and support.

The very appropriate gift in the form of a chair is beautiful, and will sit very well in my new house. As some of you know I plan ultimately to move to Shepperton in Middlesex, however am fortunate in being able to choose my time to make the move. One or two friends kindly attended the meeting in order to bid me farewell, however it is unlikely that I will leave until early Spring, not least because the Barn provides a very secure and happy focus to my life, I therefore look forward to being around for the next few months and maintaining the many friendships I have enjoyed over the past 20 years.

Jenny Hobson



Wednesday Performances

Don't forget that if you are in the audience for a Wednesday performance and you show your current membership card at the door, you will receive a free drink voucher for the bar!!



Looking Ahead

Our December production is **A Cricket Match** by one of Britain's most popular playwrights, Alan Ayckbourn. Carole Lovett has recently started rehearsals and is already excited about the possibilities being offered by her two actors - Mandy Kiley and Nick Lawrence. I can only imagine with that combination, and Carole at the helm, we are in for an amazing production.

Luke Owen, director of **The Shape of Things**, will have had his audition by the time the newsletter goes to print. He has had a great deal of interest in the play, attracting new young actors, filled with energy and talent. Luke recently won the prestigious Papatango Award for his new play, *Unscorched*. It opens at the Finborough Theatre next month. Described as 'an astonishing debut play from a first-time playwright', *Unscorched* was chosen unanimously from more than 500 entries. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the company, to congratulate him.

Michelle Montague

Helping your Theatre

The Sewell Barn puts on excellent productions but it is all in vain if our audiences don't know what is happening!

We already have a loyal group who distribute posters and flyers for each production but we would like to increase their number in order to spread the word more widely.

There are several ways to help:

- putting flyers through letterboxes in your area (maybe one or two roads)
- persuading businesses to display our A4 posters (shops/pubs/eateries/etc).
- taking posters and/or brochures in to work
- maybe you can think of others.

It need not be time-consuming - an hour or so for each of our 8 productions - but it does need to be done regularly and consistently. You may even make new friends as I have done in the course of my poster round over the years!

Posters/flyers are always ready for collection from the Barn during the preceding production and you will be coming to see the show anyway, won't you?!!

Please give this some serious thought and even if you can only distribute a few, it all helps. This really is a case of **"many hands make light work"** In order to avoid duplication we do need to know where you will be covering so please, do get in touch and let us know what you can do. We really would love to hear from you.

To our existing distributors

Please would you let us have an up to date list of your poster sites etc? This will help to identify areas which are not being covered and do something about it. Our thanks for all your support and we do hope you will be able to continue helping in this way.

Anne Giles and Mike Beavis, Poster co-ordinators Contact: annajane.giles@virgin.net

Next newsletter

The next newsletter will be due to go out November 14th If you have anything to be included, please let me have it by November 7th.

Many thanks

Jill

Company News

Workshops

WEDNESDAY 23rd October 2013 – DOING IMPROV & LAUGHING

Led by Daniel Taylor

The session will include the opportunity to use “warm-up” techniques to increase confidence and overcome nerves and play some famous improv comedy games (taught by UEA HeadLights Comedy Society), as played in the TV series “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” and BBC’s “Fast & Loose”. The session will encourage active participation from the audience and performers and, a great deal of fun should be had by everyone. Developing quick thinking in response to an audience can be helpful in learning to deal with character development and reacting to unpredictable events when acting. The session will also allow socializing and hopefully a lot of fun for performers and audience alike.

The bar will be open!

Auditions

October 22nd 7.30 pm in the Barn

Audition for Once in a Lifetime.

There will be no need to prepare an audition piece. I will be looking for people who can work as an ensemble and who are committed to bringing lots of energy to the rehearsal process. So the workshop will be a mix of group work and maybe broken into smaller groups working with small sections of the script.

For more details, please look at the web-site www.sewellbarn.org

Robert Little

October 28th 7.30 pm in the Barn

Down Among the Wines & Spirits

- **Are you an entertainer?** Can you deliver a song or monologue direct to an audience and create a whole character in three or four minutes? Can you work on your own as well as in a large company?
- Can you deliver a monologue in a way that’s natural and musical (not necessarily **sung**)? Can you **project, focus and keep a rhythm**?

Do you fall into one or more of these categories?

- Powerful, tuneful, confident **singers** (can deliver a good ballad)
- Actors who can **use music with confidence** without being 'singers' (think Victoria Wood, Noel Coward, Dame Judi) - this is probably our most important category
- People who can't sing at all (or don't think they can) but who can **deliver that monologue** with masses of character
- A **speciality act** (e.g. juggling, ventriloquism, tightrope-walking, fire-eating, magic illusions, etc etc)



If so - you have the opportunity to create a unique experience for performers and audience alike. For four shows only, we’ll bring to life the characters who entertained the UK from around **1880 until World War 1**, the era that became known as **The Golden Age of Music Hall**. Many might still be familiar names, even to a 21st century audience (Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley, George Robey) and were at the top of the bill; many others you’ll never have heard of, but they were able to earn a modest living ‘down among the wines and spirits’ – at the foot of the bill, next to the list of refreshments.

So yes, we need you to help create this. Ideally around 12 performers, but could be as few as 8 or as many as 16, playing probably two characters each in the course of the evening and covering as wide a range as possible. We’ve identified many of the artistes who played alongside Marie Lloyd herself at the Norwich Hippodrome in 1913, and it depends on YOU who will be resurrected for the delight of the Sewell Barn audience a century later.

Our script will be created **after** the auditions, since we won't know till then whether we have a Dan Leno, an Albert Chevalier or a Gus Elen; a Vesta Tilley, a Nellie Wallace or a Florrie Forde. **Please don't try to second-guess what we want**, because in many cases we won't know until we see it! And you may well end up playing somebody you've never previously heard of.

The one fixed point in the show will be one of those representing the 'foot of the bill': Selwyn's real-life grandfather, **Ben Tillett**, who performed on the halls for many years with his three children. Ben needs to be fairly young (early 30s), will act as observer and link-man (in the absence of a 'chairman', who belonged to an earlier era), and will need to perform one or two of his own songs and re-create the patter of his double-act with a suitable colleague.

If you can entertain in any of the ways above, **please come along and audition**. Enjoy the chance to captivate an audience and move them to tears or laughter; create a tiny and memorable vignette. Celebrate the legacy that's seen today in more aspects of the performing arts than many probably realise – and be a part of a unique homage to our theatrical ancestors.

While the show will only include items that would have been performed during the 'Golden Age', **audition pieces can be from any era**, as long as the style's correct. So, many of the songs of Flanders & Swann, Victoria Wood or Noel Coward would be ideal to show us your skill for entertaining; likewise, many songs-from-shows tell a story in a few minutes. Or, of course, any genuine music hall numbers.

- If you can entertain, **please audition**
- If you have a speciality act, **come and demonstrate it**
- If you want to sing or perform a monologue that's underscored with music, **bring the music with you**
- And remember, there are **no obvious castings** in this show – its form depends completely on the combination of characters we're offered.

Our auditions are of course open: we need to see you 'play an audience'. They are at 7.30 pm at the Barn on **Monday 28th October**. If you can't make that date, please let us know and we'll make another opportunity for you.

For more information, thoughts and ideas, please check out our blog:

<http://downamongthewinesandspirits.blogspot.co.uk/>

Contact us if you have any questions – and we very much hope to see you there. If all goes as we'd like it to, the auditions alone would be worth paying to see!

- Cast meet-up in early November
- Rehearsals begin during w/c Sunday 5th January
- Rehearsals on Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons, but you'll probably only be called for 1 rehearsal per week until they increase in the final fortnight as usual
- Performances Thursday 6th to Saturday 8th March 2014 (matinée on 8th March)

NB: it's unlikely that you could take part in this show if you are in *Once in a Lifetime*, as our final rehearsal period clashes with the performances of that show.

Cassie & Selwyn Tillett

cassie@tillett.org.uk



What else is on in the Area?

The Maddermarket Theatre:

'The Seagull' by Anton Chekhov: November 21st – December 1st Time: 7.30pm; also matinée December 1st at 2.30 pm.

Great Hall Players: (At the Assembly House Norwich) 'The Diary of Anne Frank' adapted by Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich

November 5th – 9th Time: 7.30 pm; also matinée November 9th at 2.30 pm.

Dinosaur Adventure Park: Primevil... a Halloween Experience. (One of our members, Ruth Howett, will be taking part!) October 25th – November 2nd 6pm – 11pm

See their website for more details: www.primevil-scare.com