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2013-2014 Season Newsletter 6 March 2014 Editor: Jill Fuller, 20, Blofield Road, Brundall, Norwich, NR13 5NN 01603 715346; jill@ramatuelle.co.uk

WHAT COMES NEXT

Sadly we have had to cancel our much looked forward to production of Brave New World. We would like to thank Roger, his cast and crew for all the work they had put into it.

It was then left up to the Artistic Directors to fill the performance slot. In under a week, a play has been found, performing rights issued, a cast secured, poster designed and printed. Jonathan Adkins is working on set design, lighting techies are reading the play, costume ladies are working on dressing the actors, and Robert and I... we are working hard to show you just how the Sewell Barn Theatre Company pulls together in a crisis and how much talented support we have.

The photos you see are of our very first rehearsal. Although we were aware of how much work we have ahead of us, the evening was incredibly relaxed and filled with amazing ideas. We also shared much laughter – or could that have been hysteria!



If you have already bought tickets for Brave New World, we would be really grateful if you could let the box office know you are happy to swap the booking to the new production – I promise it will be an exciting performance for you to share in.

For those who have yet to book, or would normally buy on the door, I implore you to pick up the phone and make a reservation. This is one of those times when we can show just how much we love our unique space and how much support the Company has.

As Friends of the Theatre, I would also ask that you pitch in and 'do your bit'. Maybe you could publicise the production to family and friends and help us sell this play.

Before I sign off I would like to thank all those who are helping us get this play to the stage – especially Dave Green, who has offered to be assistant director and Luke Owen for his continued support. I look forward to seeing you there! Michelle Montague

Our Next Production

Can't Stand Up For Falling Down

By Richard Cameron, Directed by Michelle Montague
April 3rd – 5th and 9th – 12th at 7.30 also a matinée on April 12th at 2.30 LYNETTE. JODIE. RUBY. Three Women. Four Stories.

They didn't know one another, but they all knew him. Three women. One man.

And the event by which they're inextricably linked. This multi-awarding winning play is as beautiful as it is

Set in South Yorkshire, this is an extraordinarily delicate portrait of love, perseverance, heartbreak and strength. CAST:

Lvnette - Charlotte Pound Jodie - Louise Waller Ruby – Alice Haskell

Box Office – Jarrolds Customer Service – 01603 697248



Our Previous Productions

Once in a Lifetime

Robert Little's production of 'Once in a Lifetime' was a spoof on Hollywood - or was it? - it was not hard to recognise some of the realities behind the hilarity - the three young people hoping to make their mark on Hollywood as the 'Talkies' overtook silent films - with their ingenuous hopes for a 'School of Elocution'. The loud and brash ego of the Hollywood producer - the naivety of the giggling starlets, who needed to learn how to 'talk' for the new era - the pseudo gracious patronising of the producer's secretary towards those hoping for an appointment.

It is almost impossible to pick out `star turns` as the production absolutely depended on all parts being well executed, convincing and right for the era - and they were - no-one let the side down. From the largest to the smallest part - we enjoyed the feeling of the 1920s.

The other thing that made the production so successful was the `energy` displayed by every cast member - this never flagged once.

The costumes were exactly right and gave a real feeling of the time.

The use of different parts of the stage area for different venues worked well as did the slick and unobtrusive scene changes- these were impressive.

Towards the end of the play the adulatory lighting up of the photograph of the least probable of the ingenuous trio - whose every success was accidental -showed clearly the irony of the Hollywood scene.

On the day that I attended the audience clearly loved it and clapped at the end of each scene. Everyone involved in this production can be proud of `a good day`s work` Vivienne Hillier.

Down Among The Wines And Spirits

Having attended the workshop on Old Time Music Hall and the Shakespeare Review, I

was confident that "Down Among The Wines And Spirits" would be an uplifting and entertaining experience, and so it was. I understand that the first night was packed with an enthusiastic audience, and although Friday's performance attracted slightly fewer people, they were quickly drawn into the mood of the

evening.

An impressive set of velvet drapes provided an authentic background, replicating the stage of the Old Norwich Hippodrome which unbeknown to me prior to the evening once stood where we now see St Giles car park.

On entering through the Vom we were handed delightfully designed programmes which gave not only a huge amount of information, but caused many smiles as we read old advertisements, promising cures for ruptures, wedding rings from between 10/6d and £3, and corsets for 3/11d. Selwyn Tillet in the guise of a one Mr Fitt (and incidentally the Grandson of a well know music hall artist Ben Norman)

welcomed the crowd warmly in his role as Master of managed to keep the

artistes and audience strictly in order.

Nine cast members took us through many areas of Music Hall. Well known names such as Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley, George Robey, and Bransby Williams were in the programme, alongside some lesser known names (those who were "down among the wines and spirits" listed alongside the refreshments) leaving the major stars to top the bill.

It is dangerous to name names, because every single member of the gifted and versatile cast made extremely polished and professional contributions to the evening, however I hope they will forgive me when I say that I will never quite see Mr John Griffin in the same light again. His various entrances and exits wearing a striped Victorian bathing suit delighted everyone! Clearly the Wardrobe department coming hot foot from the previous large period production had worked hard to dress the cast in attractive and authentic costumes.



Whilst the evening might have appeared to be just a pot pourri of well known songs and acts, it soon became clear that Director Cassie and her cast had put in much thought and effort to re—create the originals, using various sources of archive material in their quest for authenticity. Placed alongside some of the gutsy laughter-inducing numbers were some very poignant musical moments. These seemed to underline the truth that beneath seemingly glamorous lives lead by the stars of the day, behind the scenes they, alongside many other poverty stricken people suffered huge hardship and deprivation.

Putting together such a packed programme must have been hard work, but great fun for all concerned. I believe some rehearsals were held at the Vicarage where Cassie and Selwyn live in Weston Longville. I wonder whether the customers at the Parson Woodford Pub opposite felt compelled to set up in opposition when the strains of Down at the Old Bull and Bush wafted across the road?!

I was pleased and proud to introduce two new friends to the Barn who were amazed by the quality of singing and acting, and for those who so often say they like an evening of fun and entertainment it was a must. Congratulations to the many people both on stage and behind the scenes who made it such a pleasurable outing.

Jenny Hobson

Jane Burke

Sadly Jane Burke died in the early hours of 8th March whilst in hospital. Jane was very much at the centre of the Sewell Barn Family. Her husband Henry founded the company and Jane was always by his side. One could say that Jane was the "First Lady" of the company.

Many of you will remember her as a terrific host at many of the companies after show parties and she certainly put "Archers" butchers on the sausage map. Jane was always present in the company's business; she held the office of chair of the then society (now friends) for many years. Also Jane and Henry very generously housed the fantastic costume stock above their business "The Body shop" for many years, as well running the box office.

Jane's heart was always at the centre of the productions, where she would often; take on energetic roles for the company. She was Mrs Crumbles in the legendary

production of Nicholas Nickleby, and many more. Jane went on to direct Lorca's, "Yerma" to critical acclaim.

She was the proverbial glue that stuck the company together.

Jane will be sadly missed by all who knew.

Our thoughts and best wishes are with her family. Robert Little

Membership Secretary

We are looking for someone to take over the role of Membership Secretary.

This involves keeping the records up to date; recording new members; collecting subscriptions and banking; issuing membership cards; renewals etc. The membership secretary needs to be computer literate. If you are interested in helping the Barn in this way, please contact me for further details. Jill

The Third Norfolk One Act Playwriting Competition

Sponsored by June Owen of The Garboldisham Amateur Dramatic Society to Promote play writing for the amateur theatre. Open to all Norfolk Residents aged 18 or over

1st Prize £200

2nd Prize £100

3rd Prize £50

Closing Date the 31st of July 2014

Entry forms and full Competition Rules and Conditions of Entry by e-mail from june.owen1@sky.com

Margaret Dixon - an appreciation.

For many, many years Margaret was a stalwart and loyal supporter of the Sewell Barn. Although passionately interested in the theatre, she did not appear on stage, but was to be seen regularly behind the bar or selling tickets. Highly intelligent and with very firm views on many things, any conversation with her could lead down some unlikely, and entertaining paths. She always wore most unusual and elaborate earrings, of which she had a considerable collection - I never saw the same pair twice in all the years I knew her.

I shall always remember, with deep gratitude, her willingness to lend things for productions. Entering Margaret's house in Ash Grove was like taking a step back in time. It was packed with period furniture, ornaments and other knick knacks beloved of any set dresser. I remember well one particular production,



requiring a nineteenth century set, when her "parlour" was almost totally denuded of furniture. The chaise longue was carried in procession across Constitution Hill, to the amazement of passing motorists, followed by a couple of chairs. The aspidistra, in its pot, was packed into a shopping trolley and brought over by Margaret herself, with strict instructions on its care for the run of the play! If you wanted an elegant desk set or some good quality fire irons, she would oblige and was always full of good suggestions about other things she had which might be suitable. She was, indeed, an amazing resource for, not only the Barn., but the Maddermarket and Great Hall Players also.

That aspidistra alone turned up on several different stages!

Apart from her theatre interests, she was a keen member of the Richard III Society, convinced that he was not the villain of popular report. I remember one night behind the bar discussing that very subject when she almost convinced me of his innocence except we were interrupted by the arrival of the interval and the necessity to serve drinks. She would have been very interested to learn of the recent discoveries beneath a Midland car park!

In recent years, failing health prevented Margaret from supporting her beloved theatres and she moved to live with her daughter in Happisburgh where she died a few weeks ago. She was a real 'character', not afraid to speak her mind, and we are the poorer for her passing.

Anne Giles



The Maddermarket Theatre:

'As You Like It' by William Shakespeare:

March 27th -- April 5th Time:7.30pm; also matinée April 5th at 2.30 pm.

The Great Hall Theatre Company: (at the Assembly House)

'Fortinbras' by Lee Blessing: March 25th – 29th at 7.30 pm also matinée March 29th at 2.30 pm.

Company News

Workshops:

Led by Jeff Davies

The Sewell Barn Theatre is excited to be holding two informative and exciting workshops over the next two months. Jeff Davies presents Voice Matters; a pair of workshops dealing specifically with one of the key tools in any actors arsenal. These workshops are suitable for all, no matter what your experience level and can be experienced as a series or if you cannot attend both, then feel free to attend just the one date. Just be sure not to miss out on this wonderful opportunity to learn some new tricks of the trade.

Voice Matters. Part 1 April 16th

Voice is our main method of communication with an audience and a major means of expression. It is obviously essential to the actor. Have we studied it sufficiently, or at all? Can we improve it and our use of it, for acting and singings? We have only one voice; do we look after it? This session will introduce the mechanism and technique of voice production, by demonstrations, warm-up and specific exercises, including breathing, practical involvement for all, and a quick look at what can go wrong with voices. Handouts of notes will be provided. If you wish, please bring along a short monologue or poem, or lines from a play you are doing. Or, bring a folk, music theatre, or classical song to try (unaccompanied or with a backing track). Fear not, it will be fun!

Voice Matters Part 2 May 21st

A continuation of Part I, but also suitable if you missed Part I.

A brief review of vocal technique with practical group and individual exercises. What is so-called "projection"? What enables a voice to carry even if not loud? Work with individuals. Demonstration of vocal analysis by computer; what can it tell us? Practical involvement together and with volunteers reading or singing. Does voice relate to character? How do we change tone and texture? The brain and the voice. What to practice regularly yourself. Hand-out materials and references. An enjoyable yet informative workshop. Jeffrey Davies

Below is a comment received from an experienced actor and company member who was at Jeff's last workshop.

Those of you who weren't at 'Voice Matters – a workshop with Jeff Davies' missed a treat! A lively group of us gathered at the Barn to hear Jeff talk to us with great eloquence about the voice: how to train it, how to make the most of it and how to look after it. It was a really valuable evening for actors and directors alike, and a great contribution to pushing us all to improve our standard of performance.

Be sure not to miss out on these great events by adding these two dates to your diary straight away!