

NOVEMBER 2015

newsletter

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sewellbarn
THEATRE

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Our Next Production

Twelfth Night

William Shakespeare | Directed by Carole Lovett

26-28 November & 2-5 December 7.30 pm, matinée 5 December 2.30 pm



Photography: Michael Stanislaw

Rehearsals for this production are going really well and I am thoroughly enjoying working with my enthusiastic and talented cast. Shakespeare's plays never fail to astonish; they have an immediacy and energy that is timeless and seductive. The medieval tradition of Twelfth Night, the final night of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', was one of anarchy and misrule and it is this social topsyturviness that is the drama's underlying theme.

For a play that is listed as one of his comedies there is a dark sadness about this one which is never very far from its decorative and beguiling surface. Shakespeare, as is exemplified in Twelfth Night, understood everything about human frailty and dealt with his characters with extreme compassion. How, then, has he managed to combine all this and still present us with one of the funniest, wittiest and most warmly loved plays ever written in the English language? I don't know the answer to that question - but then I am not a literary genius! Come to one of our performances and decide for yourself.

Carole Lovett

Booking

Tickets can be booked at Prelude Records who are located on St Giles Street in the city centre. With this new service, you can continue to buy tickets in person and over the phone by calling 01603 628319. We've also introduced online booking, available on our website and via Prelude Records (a small booking fee applies if you use a credit card online).

**PRELUDE
RECORDS**

Coming Soon

The Go-Between

Adapted from L P Hartley's novel and directed by Roger Parsley

14-16 & 20-23 January at 7.30 pm, matinée on 23 January at 2.30 pm

This production has recently been cast with an amazing company of actors including known and new Barn members. Bradley Flint and Josh Oram are two young actors filled with enthusiasm. Jonny Gale joins us having been away for a couple of years - he last played the radio operator in *The Long and The Short and The Tall*. We have managed to lure Emma Kirkham back onto the stage from the costume department. Matt Rolls, a regular Theatre Royal Youth Theatre Company actor, joins us. Jack Rumsey is also, I believe, a first time actor for Sewell Barn Theatre Company. Luckily for us, Wendy Atkinson and David White grace our stage again. Completing the casting list is Susan Kyd, newly settled in Norwich, who brings us a wealth of experience from stage and screen – one of her credits being 'Dance with a Stranger', the film about Ruth Ellis.

The story goes that Roger Parsley and Henry Burke, founder of Sewell Barn Theatre Company, came up with the idea at exactly the same moment – agreeing that it was obvious a stage adaptation of L P Hartley's wonderfully evocative novel would have to be included in a Norwich Playhouse season. The story's Norfolk setting is part of the attraction of course, and many people probably associate it with the house used in the Joseph Losey film – the magnificent, but sadly derelict Melton Constable Hall.

Roger is busy liaising with his team before his first read-through on the 15 November. All you have to do is remember to book your tickets!

Miche Montague

Reviews: at home and away

A Visit to Edinburgh

Having attended the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for many years I have to say that for this year in particular both the Sewell Barn and the local acting community were very well represented. Shedload Theatre put on an impressive production of Jack London's 'The Star Rover' which David Green directed and which included in the cast some familiar Barn faces. David also wrote and performed the accompanying music. Little did I know at the time but his stage manager, Sabrina Poole, is now my stage manager for 'Twelfth Night.'

There was an imaginative and original show from the UEA entitled 'The Cupboard' which came to a very unnerving conclusion. Finally I must mention The Mask Theatre from Peterborough - which is quite near Norwich! - and their production of 'The Jeremy Kyle Show does Shakespeare' which was very clever and witty. I am already looking forward to next year!

Carole Lovett

The Thrill of Love

Amanda Whittington | Directed by Ginny Porteous

This powerful play was received with great enthusiasm by our audiences. Here are some of their comments. (For more reviews, of this and other shows, internet users can visit sewellbarntheatre.blogspot.co.uk.)

"Absolutely enthralling and powerful production last night. The Thrill of Love tells the tragic story of Ruth Ellis through an eavesdropping view of her emotions leading up to the murder and the acceptance of her fate. Just five amazing actors hold your emotions in their hands and squeeze them till you come away realising that the death penalty can never be right."

"[We] were at the theatre on Friday night to see the Ruth Ellis story "The Thrill of Love". The acting was superb and all are to be congratulated. We did not go home hopping and singing - but thoughtful, and feeling it was a very worthwhile experience."



Photography: Sean Owen

Chad Mason at the Barn

Time had told me that you don't go to listen to music on personal recommendation, you listen, you like and you go. But I broke that rule to see Chad Mason's outing at the Barn as our venue hosted the first gig anyone can remember there. And it could be the precursor to more.

A big enough, though not capacity, audience composed of a comfortable mix of Barn regulars and Chad Mason's own following was always going to be welcoming. And Chad obviously felt comfortable in those surroundings despite, as standing solo on the stage, he mused that it was like being the subject of some Victorian medical experiment.

Stripped down to his voice, his guitar and a loop pedal, Chad put me in mind of a mischievous Nick Drake* with a bit of Duke Special* thrown in for good measure. Jaunty and original guitar arrangements are wrapped around lyrics laden with dark humour and observation. After this experience, I'm listening out for more.

Chad was preceded on stage by Natalie Lake who managed, eventually, to leave the stage after a set which left everyone wanting more. Natalie bares her soul, and that of her younger self at times, in a style reminiscent of Suzanne Vega* (whose career highpoint was some years before Natalie was born).

Having myself performed music on the Barn stage in the past I did wonder if such a music night would work. But I think the Victorian experiment succeeded and hope to see more in the future.

** apologies for the music references – by all means Google these artists to find out more; but don't Google Chad Mason because you'll find the wrong one. Instead go straight to **chadmason.co.uk** and enjoy the video for Procrastination Time, filmed, in part, at The Barn.*

Bob Carter

Company News

Workshops

Front of House Workshop

On Wednesday 14th October there was a very successful workshop for Front of House helpers. Many thanks to Robert and Jo for running this evening, and to those of you who attended.

These sessions are essential for our stewards and bar staff as the safety and satisfaction of our patrons depend on the people they meet front of house. If you were not able to attend the workshop this year, please make every effort to come along next season, even if you have been to one before as our systems are constantly being improved and modified. Legally we must have *trained* stewards, so these sessions are of paramount importance. If you missed the workshop, just contact Jane Page (bernardpage@ntlworld.com) and she will arrange for you to have updated training when you next steward.

Jill Fuller

All Things Technical

Wednesday 9 Dec 2015 | Led by Dean Weston & Team

Come and learn all about our new lighting board and be introduced to MacSound. Don't be scared – Techie Virgins welcome. Running half hour breakout sessions with limited numbers, so please book early.

Please do not overlook this session. It is so important for directors to have a basic understanding of what they are expecting their tech teams to do for them and also for actors to have an understanding of all that goes on technically to support their performances. Book your place now!

Miche Montague

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on October 4th and despite a rather small number of people attending, it was a very successful and sociable event.

There was a plea from the Chair for more people to get involved in helping run the theatre. It cannot run itself! We are always in need of helpers front of house, in the wardrobe department and backstage. Some committee posts remain open: we are looking to co-opt someone to take on the building administration and a technical manager. If you feel you could possibly help in these roles, please contact Jill Fuller ... chair@sewellbarn.org. However, you do not need to be a committee member to make a difference, just offer your services and join a team: marketing, front of house, wardrobe, technical, backstage. If you would like to be involved in any of these, please contact Jill as above.

We said good-bye to Ginny Porteous, who has been our Treasurer for many years and Nigel Coates was co-opted to take her place. Adrian Wenn has also stood down from his committee position although we trust we will still be seeing him around a lot! Dean Weston has also given up his position as Technical Manager. We would like to thank these three for their efforts and loyalty over the years, and hope that they will still be around to take part in our activities.

Robert and Miche reported on the past season. They were congratulated on leading the theatre to receive the Theatre award in the Norfolk Arts Awards this year. This is in recognition of the imaginative and exciting programming of the season.

After the meeting, we enjoyed a simple ploughman's lunch, prepared by Rick Fuller, and we would like to thank him for this.

Can you help your theatre group?

There are many ways in which you can help the Sewell Barn Theatre. Several of them are described in the notice about the AGM (above); here are two more.

Costumes: An exciting opportunity to play an important part in our productions this season. Join our friendly wardrobe team and really feel involved in the excitement of getting a show on! Contact June Gentle: 01603 455614 or junegentle0@gmail.com.

Leaflet distribution: As you all know, we are always looking to spread the word about our fantastic productions. We would like to raise awareness in the area around the Barn. If you could spare a small amount of time to pop some Twelfth Night (or a future production) posters through doors in the immediate area, please contact Anne Giles : annajanegiles@btinternet.com or 01603 612087.

What else is on in the area?

Maddermarket Theatre

Edith and Jessie by Adrian Drew

November 12th –14th at 7.30pm

Star Quality by Noel Coward

19-28 November at 7.30 pm, matinées 21 & 28 November at 2.30 pm



Great Hall Theatre Company

My Three Angels by Sam & Bella Spewack

10-14 November at 7.30 pm, matinée 14 November at 2.30 pm

