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Press Release

The Killing of Sister George

By Frank Marcus

22, 23, 24, 28 February; 1, 2 & 3 March 2018 at 7.30pm
Matinée 3 March at 2.30pm.

Darkly comic tale of emotional dependence

Sister George is the much-loved district nurse in Applehurst, a hit BBC radio soap opera that bears more than a passing resemblance to *The Archers*. That role is played by a gin-guzzling, cigar-smoking actress – who is convinced that her character is about to be killed off, and takes her frustrations out on her trusting and naïve female companion. Public misbehaviour, national mourning and re-arrangement of relationships follow, mixing tragedy and farce whilst exploring multi-layered patterns of domination, dependence, loneliness and loss.

Written in 1964, first performed in 1965 and filmed in 1968, the *Killing of Sister George* took time to find its audience. It is now regarded as a classic depiction of gay relationships. Clare Williamson, the Director of this production by the Sewell Barn Theatre said: “I’m fascinated by the complexity of this play which can be read on so many different levels. The challenge is to convey its bittersweet combination of wit, malice and aplomb. The audience’s sympathies and allegiance change as the complexity of the characters and their motivations are revealed”.

The play is unusual in having an all-female cast of four. Gill Tichbourne plays June Buckridge, the actress whose role as moped-riding Sister George is so different from her true personality. Mandy Kiley plays her boss, the radio producer Mercy Croft who has her own private agenda; both have previously given many exceptional performances at Sewell Barn. Sophie Blythe makes her debut as Alice, who has to disentangle herself from June’s increasingly erratic, and sometimes cruel, behaviour. The ensemble is completed by Joy Davidson, another talented newcomer to the Barn, who plays the clairvoyant Madame Xenia.

The *Killing of Sister George* has plenty of poignant resonances for today. Whilst same sex partnerships are no longer shocking, unbalanced relationships can still struggle and may founder. The BBC continues to have financial and PR problems, at the same time as chasing audience ratings, and the fictitious death of a popular soap character is still likely to be treated as a real news event.

The Killing of Sister George opens at Sewell Barn Theatre, Constitution Hill, Norwich NR3 4BB on Thursday 22 February 2018. Tickets are available online via www.sewellbarn.org, or from St George’s Music Shop, 17-19 St Georges Street, Norwich or by phoning 01603 626414. Because of the nature of the themes that are explored by this play, it is not considered suitable for young children.

Photographs of **The Killing of Sister George**, Sewell Barn Theatre

For downloads, see <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9emtsmndmrhs8tw/AADj1xEToDY1cWwTRooDwdypa?dl=0>

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Sophie Blythe, Gill Tichbourne and Mandy Kiley



Sophie Blythe



Joy Davidson



Sophie Blythe and Gill Tichbourne



Gill Tichbourne and Joy Davidson



Mandy Kiley and Sophie Blythe