



Little Theatre News



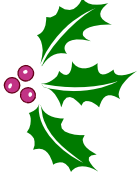
Bournemouth (Issue #11)

Members' Edition

Friday, 13 November 1998

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

BLTC PRESENTS



from Monday, 7 December
to Saturday, 12 December
at Jameson Road

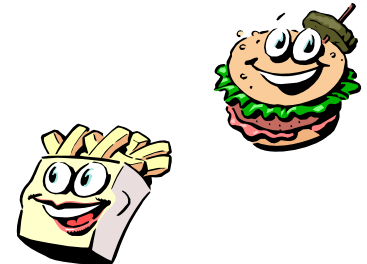


The Hilarious Comedy

MY FAT FRIEND

By Charles Laurence

Director Tony Orman
says:



This modern very English comedy derives from the school of Noël Coward, crossed with Joe Orton. It tells the story of Vicky, an attractive, though overweight young woman, who lives in her own terrace house in Hampstead. She has converted the downstairs front room into a small bookshop, and she has as lodgers Henry, a middle-aged openly gay tax inspector, and James Anderson, a Scottish drifter who takes care of the shop to pay his rent. Into this strange, but platonic *ménage à trois* steps a customer, Tom. He is looking for a book about the Middle East, which he is about to visit on business. Vicky is instantly smitten, but Tom goes off, leaving a gap in Vicky's life. It is Henry who persuades Vicky that if she wants to keep Tom's affection, she must go on a crash diet, so that she will be slim and beautiful by the time Tom returns to England for Christmas. This light-hearted, witty play is for anyone who has ever tried to diet, or has lived with anyone else who has struggled to shuck off the poundage. And everyone will recognise and laugh at the efforts, trials and tribulations that Vicky goes through. Does she succeed? Come and see for yourself, and as the Christmas Eve denouement unfolds, we are sure we will send you out warm into the snow with a smile and a chuckle for the festive season.



Meet the cast of 'My Fat Friend'

The world really has been **Don Gent's** stage. He has acted and directed in Nepal, Gibraltar, Kenya, Germany and Singapore. In Germany one review said of him, "Don Gent always appears to be ideally cast in whatever part he plays." Abroad, he appeared in the world amateur première of *Becket*, and his credits include, among many others, roles in *Lysistrata*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *The Italian Girl*, *Murder Mistaken*, *Semi-detached*, *The Heiress*, *Arms and the Man*, *Conduct Unbecoming*, and on TV Singapore in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. In England he has appeared in *The Lion in Winter*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Anniversary* and *Hayfever*. Last season he appeared in BLTC's *Grand National Night*. This last September he directed for us the enormously successful thriller *Nightmare: The Fright of Your Life*. In *My Fat Friend* he stars in the role of Henry.



Francesca Button was seen at BLTC last season as Tess in *The Sisters Rosensweig*. She is currently studying for an A level in Theatre Studies, having already attained LAMDA Gold Medal Honours. In earlier seasons, as a student, she appeared at Pelhams Theatre as Sarah in *The Kidnap Game*. At the Regent Centre she played Scruffy in *Looking for Lucky*, Sebastian in *The Tempest* and Mabel in *Bugsy Malone*. And she appeared as Dick in *Dick Whittington* at the Pavilion. We welcome her back to the Club in the current production when, belying her glamorous appearance (left), she stars in the title role as the Fat

David Hinton, for whom the term 'stalwart' might have been invented, has been with BLTC since 1989. Including one-man shows, he has been in over 40 productions, having recent roles in *Sisterly Feelings*, *Straight and Narrow*, *The Sisters Rosensweig* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He has appeared in 8 Shakespeare roles for BOAT, being awarded the Echo Curtain Call Award as Best Supporting Actor for the role of Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1997. He was further nominated as Touchstone this season in *As You Like It*. He is always in demand for foreign or regional accents, French in *Plenty*, Italian in *Amadeus*, Welsh in *As You Like It*, American in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Ladies Who Lunch*, and an American Bison in *Indians*. Not surprisingly, he has been asked to play a Scottish drifter in the current production of *My Fat Friend*.



Peter Vesey acted at school in numerous productions, including an ugly sister in *Cinderella*. He was in the school choir, and in 1993 acted and sang in a show called *The Visit* at Bournemouth University. During 1997 he sang in the chorus of two Big Little Theatre concerts at the Pavilion Theatre. He joined the 1998 production of BOAT's *As You Like It* to play the courtier Amiens. His singing voice was a surprising revelation, and he was chosen to perform all the solo songs in that show. We welcome this new member of BLTC in the role of Tom Reynolds in our current production.

Tony Orman, the Director of *My Fat Friend*, has been a member of BLTC since arriving in Bournemouth in 1986. For BLTC he has acting credits in *Wait until Dark*, *Cause Célèbre*, *Dial M For Murder*, *Loot*, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and *Hotel Paradiso*. During the same period he appeared in five Shakespeare plays for Brownsea Open Air Theatre, most recently this season as Duke Senior in *As You Like It*. While working abroad, he appeared in many shows, for Freeport Players Guild, Nassau Players, Theatre Monte Carlo and Bermuda Musical and Dramatic Society. In Nassau he directed *Billy Liar*, and *My Three Angels* and wrote and directed *The Quintessence of Shavianism*. In Bermuda he directed *The Secretary Bird* and also wrote and directed *Modified American Plan*.

Tony used to be thin, when he played the role of Henry in *My Fat Friend* in 1978. Twenty years later he was enormously fat (see him, pictured here, backstage in August this year as Duke Senior). He is directing *My Fat Friend* partly as therapy, hoping against hope that it will inspire him to lose one and a half stone by Christmas. You can meet Tony after the show and see if he made it.



ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS (price £6, with concessions)

1. WRITE enclosing cheque and S.A.E. to
Box Office, BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH9 2QD OR
2. CONTACT SUE at home **ONLY between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m.** Monday 23 November to Friday 27 November
on her home number **424640** OR
3. BOX OFFICE OPENS Monday 30 November to Friday 4 December, **between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m.**
for personal callers OR by telephone on **513361**

Business matters

First, an apology. Our last newsletter inadvertently omitted the name of **Don Gent** as an elected member of the 1998/99 Committee. Sorry, Don!

The first meeting of the new Committee did the usual thing: it first co-opted on to itself **Hilary Jefferys** and **Trevor Irons**. And then it elected from within itself the various posts, as follows:

Chairman, Andrew Whyatt
Treasurer, Noel Davenport
Secretary, Hugh Norris
Publicity, Derek Hyder
Stage Director, Trevor Irons
Wardrobe Mistress, Hilary Jefferys
Membership Secretary, and Newsletter Editor, Tony Orman
Development, Don Gent.

We do not yet have an official Bar Manager, though that role is being covered by certain people who probably don't want their names mentioned in case they find themselves permanently doing the job. We are slowly drinking (whoops!) *thinking* our way through the problem.

And for the politically correct reader, we offered Hilary the post of Head of Costumes, but she thought that 'Wardrobe Mistress' sounded more fun.

In the same vein, **Angela Whyatt** is, for the time being, assuming the unenviable task of **manning** the Front of House Rota. If you can think of a better job title, you have our address.

Review

Linda Kirkman writes in the Daily Echo of *Ladies Who Lunch*:

"The plot of this specially commissioned BT Biennial play is largely about how three women raise vast amounts of money for charity by using knowledge of their extremely rich husbands' business affairs for a little 'insider dealing'.

It is just a tad long-winded, and thirteen scenes on from the prologue I was more than a little bemused by the whistle-stop visits between Belgravia, Sydney and Manhattan — although the stage crew showed no such signs and coped admirably with in impressive multi-venue set.

The ladies of the title are particularly well cast. Angela Whyatt is ideal as Lady Amelia Sasson, the English perpetrator of the scheme, and Hannah Strange is equally convincing as her American friend. Yvette Leahy's larger-than-life Australian veers close to caricature at times, but ultimately emerges as the character who elicits the most sympathy.

Strangely for a play written by a man, the male characters are not particularly well developed and although Noel Davenport, Lee Tilson and David Hinton do their best they do not seem entirely happy in the roles.

There are good supporting performances from Joey Gabbay and Rachael de Courcy Beamish and the cast is completed by Geor-



Derek in Wonderland

What happened on the BLTC trip with Pinter's *The Collection* to the International Festival at Benton Harbor, Michigan?
Derek Hyder's exposé is a warning to all young girls not to accept alluring offers from strange looking foreigners offering fame and glory abroad!

Those of you who know the play will be aware that a telephone box is required on stage. We thought that the chance of finding a BT telephone box in Des Moines was nil, so I built one in the modern style in sections.

Monday 22 June 1998. Up at 4.30 am. Our coach trip started from the Club's premises at 5.30 a.m. complete with baggage and the telephone box in a 3'6" sack. Checked in at British Airways, Heathrow. Thence to Chicago by air and onwards over bumpy roads by coach, we arrived at Benton Harbor. We elected not to go to a party and went to bed after 20 hours on the go.

Tuesday 23 June. Our 3 hour rehearsal in the theatre was at 8 a.m! We arrived at the Mendel Center For Arts & Technology, a \$20 million complex. This has got to be the most magnificent venue I have ever played in — 1525 seats, high-tech, state of the art. A stage area to die for, 30 feet deep and a width varying between 36 and 56 feet. There was space everywhere!

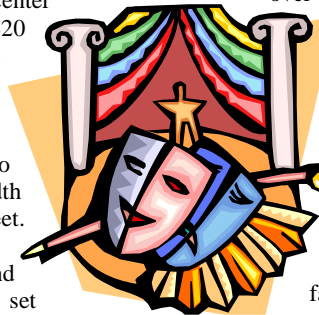
We started our rehearsal and while the stage was being set with the general furniture I put the BT telephone box together again and it was placed in position on stage. The lighting which is vital for this play took nearly two hours to put on computer and then we had about 30 minutes to run to get the lighting cues in order, check the sound cues and voices and entrances and exits. Our time was up and Ukraine were anxious to start, so the stage was cleared and off we went, happy that all was well.

Wednesday 24 June The big day arrives. Opening ceremony at 11.30 a.m. followed by performance by Russia and then England. Originally it was England to open with Russia to follow but because of the Russian set for their *Romeo and Juliet* they requested to open. The Opening Ceremony went on and over-ran. Finally the festival got under way. We did not see the Russian piece as we were in our dressing rooms awaiting the call. We had a long wait, as there was an adjudication after the play by the three nominated adjudicators. The Russian play was very well received by a large audience. Our stage was set and we were

ready to go, but there was a delay which went on and on. An apology was made to the audience — **England had a problem with the lighting!** We knew of no problem. Everything was fine at our rehearsal. Then the news came to us that we had no lighting at all. The cues had been erased either by the Russian team who had been given our disc by mistake, or by the technicians at the theatre. We do not know exactly what happened except that we had no lights at all — nothing worked. The audience had been waiting for 45 minutes and it was decision time. Either we went ahead with little more than working lights or we could take another slot but with only one hour for rehearsal which was of no use to us as it would take two hours for our lighting engineer to reset the lot to cope with over 50 cues. So we agreed to go

ahead and play with what we had. By now we had lost a lot of the audience who decided to have an early dinner. The whole thing was soul-destroying. We played and gave it our best shot and the audience responded well in the circumstances. The afterburn was like a death in the family — all the emotions unspoken, anger, dismay, gloom and utter disappointment. We went for our public adjudication which was very kind but, as we were not asked to supply any scripts for the adjudicators, we assumed that it was a personal adjudication of what was seen without knowledge of the play. We were most thankful for the sympathy received from the Irish team from Dundalk, who knew what we were feeling.

Epilogue Before I finally left the theatre on Sunday lunchtime I went backstage for a last look at this great, now empty theatre and stood on the stage thinking of what could have been if only —. On my way out I saw my telephone box now dismantled and by a rubbish skip. It had died backstage, and we Well maybe another time and place. Three of our members went straight back home. I went to California and the other 6 went on an adventure. We all met up for the journey home at Chicago. A funny thing, our visit to Benton Harbor has yet to be mentioned.



And now, back to the Funny Farm!

And whatever happened to the Des Moines trip? After calling for volunteers in four editions of this paper, we regret to announce that very few members have indicated any interest in the project. Coupled with the fact that the Des Moines Drama Group, with whom we have been E-mailing like mad, have only offered us such inferior space, times and conditions that we felt indicated that we are obviously not very high in their list of priorities, we have called the whole thing off. This will not affect our Bournemouth efforts, however, so expect to see our June production of Noël Coward's comedy *Relative Values*, to be directed by Andrew Whyatt. In the centenary of Coward's birth, this is the only play of his released to be performed by amateurs.

David Hinton's Christmas Quiz



1. Name the 'play within a play' in *Hamlet*.
2. Who said "Merry Christmas and God bless us one and all!"?
3. In which play was 'Salieri's revenge'?
4. Which author and playwright was married to Sir Max Mallowan, archaeologist?
5. Name the longest running farce in Britain.
6. Who was 'Mr Marilyn Monroe III'?
7. In which play is the 'backward' village of Llaregyb?
8. What was Lord Archer's first play?
9. Name the play set in a cricket pavilion.
10. Who was the author/playwright/ex-spy in a land of his own?
11. A Don surprised by Joy, who was the subject of *Shadowlands*?
12. Name our BT Biennial play.
13. Who is 'Mr Scarborough', the all-round playwright?
14. Whose garden shed at Ayot St Lawrence was re-opened this year?
15. Which American playwright was Charlie Chaplin's father-in-law?
16. Which play tells the story of Sir Thomas More?
17. "Dead, and never called me Mother!" An emotional line from which play?
18. "Even educated fleas do it" sung at Las Vegas by which centennial playwright?
19. Which Mayor wrote a play on a pier (sic) of the realm?
20. Which play is a deadly ghost story set at Yuletide?
21. Mrs Thatcher famously misquoted the title of which play by which author?
22. Which author of Whitehall farces and cricket lover reached 90 not out?
23. Name the play set in a US asylum in the 1960s.
24. Name the play set in a European Asylum.

Answers across page

JACK SNELL SAYS

ANYONE, (you don't have to be a Studio Member) who wishes to be in two one-act plays due for production in the first week of July 1999 should contact me on 519994 by 1 December.

Also, in answer to your remark in LTN in August as to why I was not nominated for the Echo awards, I have specifically requested that no nominations for me be accepted by the Echo Awards Committee.



BROWNSEA
Open Air Theatre

AUDITIONS

For the 1999 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be held from 7.30 pm on Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 January 1999 at the Durlston Court Hotel, Gervis Road, Bournemouth. For audition pieces, call Denise Mallender on 515673.

BT Biennial — A Gala Opening



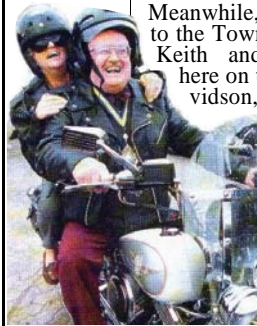
Chairman Andrew Whyatt with the Mayor and Mayoress



The Mayor in the foyer



Alison Howard with brother Simon Rawlings



Meanwhile, sources close to the Town Hall deny that Keith and Eileen, seen here on their Harley Davidson, are currently rehearsing for Panto in 'Toad of Toad Hall'

On 26 October we welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress of Bournemouth, Councillor Keith Rawlings and Mrs Eileen Rawlings, to the opening night of Ladies Who Lunch to mark our 80th season and to give support to the British Telecom Biennial Production. Unfortunately we have not seen then or since any representative of BT, but at least the phones continue to function well, so we are thankful for this.

Review

Linda Kirkman, in the Daily Echo, says about *Soirée*,

"... Controversy is almost totally overshadowed by humour in club member Tim Garton's first major play, which is part farce, part black comedy. There are some great one-liners, and his largely inexperienced

but hard-working studio cast make the most of every one. The story is loosely set around a dinner party Sally (Lisa Blangy) and her seriously weird husband George (Gareth Buxton) are giving to try a spot of match-making between Frank (Harvey Brice) and Ann (Michelle Newton). Unfortunately George has just accidentally killed

his best friend Hank (Andy Joiner), and brought the body home, which must be hidden from the guests. That is where the genres tend to overlap as the corpse comes to life every now and then, with the slightly surreal ending leaving a distinct question mark over its (his?) fate."

AUDITION

'An Evening with Gary Lineker'

David Hinton will be holding the audition from 8.00 pm on Friday 8 January. Particulars of parts available and details about the play and any audition pieces will be posted on the notice board in the Green Room. Further details available from David on 511295

Castle Players Present Wyrd Sisters

'A Fantastic Comedy'
By Terry Pratchett
Directed by Mike Satchell
At Lytchett Matravers Village Hall
On Wednesday 18 to Saturday 21 November
At 7.45 p.m.

Cast includes
Don Cherrett, David Evans, Rod Gilbert,
Claire Hiscock, Denise Nippard

ADVANCE BOOKING, phone 01202 631617
All tickets priced £4.50 (concessions)

About Your Club

Did you know that our annual theatre licence from Bournemouth Council costs £481? Before renewal we need an expert electrician's certificate that all wiring meets stringent requirements. We are also checked out by Environmental Health. Before the annual Fire Department inspection we have to have all fire extinguishers serviced. The police have to be satisfied that we take proper precautions against burglary, and that we are not abusing the bar licence conditions. We are provided with a printed booklet for making our own random checks (such as our weekly emergency evacuation drill). Those inspecting us always want to look at that document! Finally, the Secretary is summoned to the next meeting of the Council Licensing Committee to appear in person to answer any points that might arise. Only then may we receive a formal certificate authorising us to continue as before. The good news is we are now 'legal' until July 1999, but the bad news is the whole process starts all over again. **Hugh Norris**

Answers to Quiz

1. The Mousetrap; 2. Tiny Tim; 3. Amadus; 4. Agatha Christie;
5. No Sex Please, We're British; 6. Arthur Miller; 7. Under Milk Wood; 8. Beyond Reasonable Doubt; 9. Outside Edge; 10. Graham Greene; 11. C.S. Lewis; 12. Ladies Who Lunch; 13. Alan Ayckbourn; 14. G.B. Shaw; 15. Eugene O'Neill; 16. A Man For All Seasons;
17. East Lynne; 18. Noël Coward; 19. Keith Rawlings;
20. Exorcism; 21. The Lady's Not For Burning by Christopher Fry;
22. Ben Travers; 23. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.