



Bournemouth Little Theatre News



Issue #30

www.theatreclub.plus.com

2000/2001 Season

Friday, 22 June 2001

A Bright New Season

Highlights of our productions for the New Season 2001/2002

First we offer, from Monday 3 September to Saturday 8 September, 2001



Daphne du Maurier's Masterpiece

Rebecca

directed by Keith Rawlings



Then we present, from Monday 22 to Saturday 27 October, 2001
Oscar Wilde's Sparkling Comedy

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

directed by David Weeks



In December, from Monday 10 to Saturday 15, please laugh along with
Ivan Menchell's heartwarming American Comedy

The Cemetery Club

directed by Tony Orman

And, from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 February 2002
we offer

Two One-act Plays



Nudes in Waning Light by George Brockhill
directed by Clifford Page

Sandcastles on the Beach by John McCall
directed by Jack Snell



For our Spring offering, from Monday 15 to Saturday 20 April 2002,
we have David Tristram's Comedy, a cross between *Ayckbourn* and *Abigail's Party*:

The Opposite Sex

directed by Lee Tilson

And finally, from Monday 3 to Saturday 8 June 2002, we will offer
the famous Crime Thriller by Jack Popplewell



Dead On Nine

directed by Hugh Norris

Join the party!

LAST season, for the first time in a long time, we experimented — not only did we send out membership renewal forms to our current members, we also sent out new membership application forms to our Playgoers. Who knows, we thought, perhaps some of our Playgoers harboured thoughts of joining the Club to participate actively. Or perhaps they might like the idea of joining the Club so as to lend us financial support through their subscriptions. Then there was always the consideration that, as members, they could purchase play tickets for £2.

Well, whatever the reasoning, we have to say that the idea was a success. Quite a number of Playgoers joined us for the first time this last season as full members. We hope then that they will consider renewing their memberships again this year. All current members will be receiving renewal forms with this present newsletter. We hope you will want to renew, as we need your patronage to enable us to put on the six plays we plan for this coming year — seven actually, because one of our productions consists of two plays.

Audition

Tony Orman is holding an audition for the modern American comedy *The Cemetery Club* on Friday, 24 August 2001, at 7.30 pm at Jameson Road.

Rehearsals, starting on Monday 29 October, will generally be on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, but the final week of rehearsals will be Monday 3 to Friday 7 December. The dress rehearsal will be on Sunday 9 December at 3 pm. The production will run from Monday 10 December to Saturday 15 December 2001.

Without giving away the plot (hah! What plot?) this is the story of three New York Jewish widows who have made a monthly visit to the graves of their deceased husbands into an art form. If you like sharp Jewish humour (or humor) with a Woody Allen accent, you will love

Additionally, we are re-opening the Studio. "The what?", you ask. The Studio is a concept we have had over the years, that comes and goes. Sometimes our theatre group is full of young people who are keen to learn the thespian arts; but then there are times, as at present, when we find ourselves short of younger actors. In a separate article on this page, we try to explain how we propose to rectify this situation. But we cannot to this without your help.

So, if you are a current member, active or inactive, please send back those renewal forms with your subscriptions. And if you are a Playgoer who would like to join us, whether actively or inactively, please fill in those membership application forms and get them back to us as soon as possible.

After all, what other amateur group do you know in this area that mounts at least six plays a year? If you are reading this you are probably already a supporter. So, why not support us more by signing up now? If you do, we'll love you forever and be your best friend!

this show. It calls for four women, who are either in their late 50s to early 60s or, can play in that age range. One of the women's roles is only 5 pages long. (Oy, is that a cameo?!) but the other three roles fill the rest of the play, and will require experienced performers, who have no qualms about being in star roles. (No, really, you don't want to play the lead?). There is also a role for one lucky middle-aged male widower, who doesn't object to being chased by the four ladies.

Needless to say, all performers will require to demonstrate an ability to speak with American accents.

If you would like to be considered for a role, but can't make the audition date, Tony will audition you at any reasonable date before 21 September. And if you would like to see the script, or just feel the need to talk to anybody, then just call Tony on 01202 554291.

Audition

for
Oscar Wilde's brilliantly witty comedy
adapted by Constance Cox
Directed by David Weeks
Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

Dates:

Play reading Wednesday 15 August at 7.30 pm, Green Room, BLTC
Audition Wednesday 22 August at 7.30 pm, Stage, BLTC
Performances Monday 22 to Saturday 27 October 2001, at BLTC

THIS is a costume production set in London in the 1890s. It is Oscar Wilde at his best, drawing on his most famous characters from his best loved plays and adding funny others that only Wilde could create. It has the full flavour of Wilde's genius, the only danger being that, whilst laughing at the uproariously comic situations that could develop, one easily misses the subtle humour that follows, rendered in true Wilde form. It is a very funny play.

CAST

Female

Sybil Merton	17 to 25	Lovely, charming, sincere, possibly a bit twee. A subtle lisp might help.
Lady Windermere	40 to 55	A lovely lady, from Wilde's play of the same name!
Lady Clementina	60s	A delightful lady, a bit frail
Lady Julia	60+	Lady Bracknell from <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> . Enough said.
Nellie	20 to 40	Could be a nice cameo role.

Male

Baines	45 to 70	The faithful butler. The Geilgud/Dudley Moore film Arthur could have been derived from this play.
Lord Arthur	18 to 25	Algernon Moncrief from <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> . Again, enough said.
The Dean of Paddington	65+	Active. Bit dithery. Absent minded.
Mr Podgers	40+	The Palmist. Shady, manipulative. A great chance for someone to camp around — unless the director can stop him! A character role.
Herr Winkelkopp	40+	An excitable German anarchist. Here we go again! A character role.

A rehearsal schedule will be issued at the play reading, requiring a commitment to 22 rehearsals, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, plus two Wednesdays and two Fridays. Audition pieces available at the play reading.

If you cannot make either of the above dates and would like to be considered for a part, please telephone David Weeks on 01202 419050.

Audition

Jack Snell is holding an audition for the One-act play *Sandcastles on the Beach* commencing 10 am on Saturday 25 August 2001 at the Club.

This play is expected to be entered in a various local festivals in 2002, and may, God willing, proceed to regional festivals.

Sandcastles is one of two plays to be presented at Jameson Road for 6 evenings from Monday 18 to Saturday 23 February 2002.

The play calls for 2 males and 2

females. One male is aged 70s, the other is aged 40s. One female is aged 70s, the other is aged 25 to 30.

Jack does not want to reveal the plot in advance to the public, but will tell anyone phoning him all about it!

Apart from auditioning, Jack would like to hear from anyone interested in working backstage on Sound, Lighting, Stage management, Props or Prompt.

Anyone interested in any of the above categories, or seeking further information, can phone Jack Snell between 4 pm and 8 pm between now and the audition date on 01202 519994



Natalie Walter and Stephen Mangan in Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*

Backstage to front

The revival of Michael Frayn's farce *Noises Off* has moved from the National to the Piccadilly: Times critic Benedict Nightingale gives his review

today's farcical counterpart of yesterday's frightened husband: he must sustain a performance when a gaping abyss is a step or a line away.

Moreover, Frayn has his reflective side, and from *Alphabetical Order* in 1975 to *Copenhagen* in 1998 he has suggested that the world subverts our attempts to make sense of it. Disorder is the natural human condition.

Here, too, *Noises Off* scores strongly. Misplace a cue, a box, or even a plate of smelly fish, and the unruly spirals into the chaotic. "Getting on, getting off," wails Peter Egan's Lloyd Dallas, the exhausted director of *Nothing On*. "Doors and sardines. That's farce, that's the theatre, that's life."

But there's nothing dryly philosophic about the confusions of *Noises Off*. Act One, a midnight rehearsal of *Nothing On*, shows how dependent that piece is on timing, but also introduces us to the imperfect beings who must perfect it. And since Lloyd is a lascivious cad, Christopher Benjamin's old-time thesp a deaf alcoholic, Natalie Walter a shortsighted bimbo, Jeff Rawles a sad cuckold, Stephen Mangan a juvenile lead who is ferociously jealous of anyone who gets anywhere near Redgrave's Dotty — well, trouble is all too likely to occur when performances of *Nothing On* are successively shown from backstage and the front.

Think fire-axes. Think shoelaces tied together, a hopelessly tangled phone, slippery sardines and much, much else. It's hilarious, and it's hilarious for an incongruous reason: Jeremy Sams's cast is physically and verbally so adroit that it can play inept actors getting things as immaculately wrong as they're meant to get them immaculately right.

Imagine nine people wobbling on cue, then falling a hundred feet head-first into buckets of water — and you've a feat that the most expert tightrope walker would envy.

Mementos of *Separate Tables*



IS Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* the best British farce ever? Maybe that's a meaningless claim: different eras laugh at different things, good plays soar or crash depending on the ability of particular casts and the responsiveness of particular audiences, and many other variables enter the equation. Roll into a theatre fuelled by bonhomie and booze, and the silliest stuff can have you rolling in that theatre's aisles. Still, I can't name another piece which so splendidly passes my key tests: *Noises Off* does not insult the mind; it is not gratuitously crass or vulgar; and it is very, very funny.

Also, nothing has been lost with the play's belated transfer from the National to the Piccadilly. One or two fine, game actors have left but they've been replaced with equally fine, game ones. Out goes Patricia Hodge, and in comes Lynn Redgrave, accoutred with girlish curls, and still droll as Dolly Otley, who plays the char in Frayn's farce-within-a-farce: a touring ribtickler called *Nothing On*.

The situation seems as inspired in 2001 as it did in *Noises Off*'s premiere in 1982. In our permissive era you can't easily raise laughter by cramming half-clad mistresses under beds or in wardrobes. Farce thrives on desperation, and that sort of desperation has gone out of infidelity. But when a theatrical production goes even slightly wrong, you can see and smell the sweat on the cast's faces. The terrified actor is, if you like,

Festival struggles

BACK in December 2000 rehearsals started for the two one-act plays which had been entered in the British Drama League One-Act Play Festival. It was not until May 5, 2001 that we completed the final performance, at the Ferndown Festival. It was an experience to savour, not only providing the opportunity to be directed by Jack Snell but also to be reviewed once and adjudicated three times. Although the plays were by the same author the subject matter was very different as were the production techniques applied by the director. In Sequence of Events only one member of the cast had previous experience of one-act play festivals and he was somewhat distracted by both acting in the play and directing it. The most valuable lesson for me was learning to stay absolutely still without even the flicker of an eyelid. Of course cue biting and pauses were used to great effect.

There were some very dramatic moments, particularly the birth sequence, vividly simulated by Ginnie Waters, the post-murder speeches from Claude, played by Jason Green, and the sound effect of a man being hanged. After we had played two performances at Jameson Road we were ready for the Festival at Shaftesbury but the different stage size and shape, the changes to lighting and sound still threw us into a somewhat confused state. We learnt from the experience and changed some costumes and props for the next festival at New Forest Arts Centre. Then, at the New Milton Festival, the adjudicator damned us with faint praise and treated us like children. However, we rallied, re-rehearsed and gave our all at the final local festival, at Ferndown. This time the adjudicator actually liked the play, so progress had been made. She gave a detailed talk

Don Gent's personal memories of our foray into the world of One-act drama festivals in 2001



about the play, the acting and production which left us all feeling that it had been a worthwhile experience.

The second play and the one that had the more experienced cast was *One Season's King*. There was an initial glitch in casting but the final cast achieved a balance in ages and heights, which were ideal for the play. Now this was a full production affair, all singing (in the end) and all dancing - from the waltz to the Gay Gordons. We all (except Lin Denning) took dancing lessons and had one-to-one rehearsals which, for me, gave an insight into the play and the way the director liked to work on a production. 'Rehearsals never cease' should be the catchphrase. We continued to build and develop the production until the very night before the final performance in Ferndown.

The review in the Daily Echo for the Jameson Road performances had been good and this sent us to Shaftesbury on a high note. At Shaftesbury Alan Jarvis was awarded the Best Actor Cup for his playing of Sam but our overall marks were not sufficient to go through to the second round. At the New Forest Festival we were treated to a lightweight critique which was somewhat dismissive, the final marks confirming the adjudicator's opinion of the production. At the final performance at Ferndown, where we played on the Saturday night, there was a sizeable audience which was very appreciative. The adjudicator liked the play and was fulsome in her praise of the production and the acting. Although we did not win the Festival, our Director Jack Snell carried off the Producer's Cup so honour was satisfied.

Film Quiz

by
Tony Orman

From the movie fans' all-time list of essential quotes, which actors in which films said the following:

1. I'll make him an offer he can't refuse.
2. I'll be back!
3. I remember every detail. The Germans wore grey. You wore blue.
4. Peel me a grape.
5. I want to be alone.
6. Show me the money!
7. A boy's best friend is his mother.
8. Love means never having to say you're sorry.
9. It was nice to meet you. Surreal, but nice.
10. A census taker once tried to test me ... I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti.

Thoughts of Chairman Don

MOST clubs have books of rules. They may have very formal committee meetings with formal resolutions, and occasionally battles, over the very meanings of words. In such clubs personal vendettas are fought using and twisting the rules in the rule book.

Thank the Lord, BLTC has rarely suffered from such internecine bickering. So we don't need any rules, right? Wrong! Don Gent, our chairman felt that the best way to formalise our procedures, if only ever so slightly, was to introduce a members' handbook, not so much to create bureaucratic chains, but to elucidate in simple language how the Committee believes the Club should be run, based on the accumulated wisdom gained over the past few years, during which time the Club has climbed out of a depressed mood of introspection.

So that is why those of you who are currently paid-up members of the Club will be receiving as a supplement to this newsletter a new Members Handbook, approved by the Committee.

You will note that it isn't full of numbered paragraphs, but sets out in very simple language what the Club is all about. It tells you how the Club was formed, how it grew and evolved, what its aims are, and how it works. There are no really new rules: in fact the Book closes by saying that the Club "is not constrained by lists of rigid regulations and that there are very few hard and fast rules. We try to operate in a flexible, democratic manner and rely on our membership to uphold the guidelines set out [in the Handbook]. Your Committee is always willing to listen to new ideas and proposals and any Committee member can be approached at any

The Noble Art of Spin

PETER Mandelson and Alastair Campbell could learn a thing or two about putting spin on a story from Adrian Noble, the artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

We were all thrilled to see Noble's recent press release announcing that Noble was so concerned that drama schools are neglecting to train young actors in classical stage drama in favour of television, that he is establishing his own academy at



Above, a thoughtful Adrian Noble. Below, Adrian's ace in the hole



Stratford-upon-Avon to provide a one-year postgraduate course to train the next generation of classical actors. He said: "Through the academy we want to continue to support classical actors and directors of the future — to offer a training ground to the next Judi Dench or Antony Sher."

This announcement was warmly supported by Sir Michael Gambon, though Sir Ian McKellen voiced a note of dissent: he doubted if Johnny Depp or Robert de Niro had done any Shakespeare. Noble, however, explained that classical training "repays the investment of time. Look at the careers of actors, whether Ralph Fiennes or Kenneth Branagh, who did so much Shakespeare when they were young. They would all testify that the Shakespeares they performed in the RSC stood them in great stead for everything they've done. Shakespeare enables you to grow as an actor."

Lady Olivier, the actress and widow of Lord Olivier applauded these views, and Jonathan Miller allowed that such training was "very important". Even Times theatre critic Benedict Nightingale said: "This is most welcome. Peter Hall has said to me that the speaking of classics has gone downhill and that he has come across new actors and had to train them in classical speech."

The Noble initiative was being announced, we should note, as part of a programme to secure the RSC's future which was being announced to the Company's staff. Other proposals included "a commitment to make the RSC a more attractive place to work for actors and directors" with, and this is where we begin to recognise the spin, "shorter contracts." The "new, more flexible model" will involve a number of smaller RSC companies opening plays throughout the year in a wider variety of venues throughout the country, and the Barbican Centre would no longer be its residency. A few jobs might be lost.

And that was the point: it was only later that the theatre trade union BECTU, which represents 8,000 theatre staff, vowed to fight what it feared would be up to 100 redundancies. The Union's Gerry Morrissy stated the scheme, which he branded a "shoddy plan" was "cultural and commercial madness".

Whether the plan is shoddy, one may think the presentation certainly is.

A G M

THIS is just the first of, no doubt, many reminders that the Annual General Meeting of the Club will take place at Jameson Road at 7.30 pm, on Sunday 23 September, 2001.

Please, please put the date and time in your diary now. Whether you are active in the Club's affairs or not, every paid-up member will have an equal vote in the Club's affairs.

Review

LINDA Kirkman, writing in the Daily Echo, said of Separate Tables: "If Bournemouth ever had a small private hotel such as the Beauregard, I can well believe that it was inhabited by the type of social misfit so well portrayed in Tony Orman's excellent and deeply moving production.

These characters really came alive, from Joy Taylor's gloriously eccentric spinster, Miss Meacham, and Tommy Egerton's domineering Mrs Railton-Bell to Hugh Norris' dithering retired schoolmaster, Mr Fowler, and Ginnie Waters' sympathetic manageress, Miss Cooper.

Kelvin West's drink-sodden journalist with a past proved a fine foil for the superb Penelope Goddard as his actress ex-wife, Anne Shankland, with his occasional memory lapses cleverly disguised as drunken ramblings.

But it was in the relationship between the disgraced Major Pollock and Mrs Railton-Bell's daughter, Sybil, that the most pathos emerged, and I really felt for these sad people, outstandingly performed by Derek Hyder and Vanessa Turner.

And, given the postage-stamp size of the stage, many congratulations are due to Mike Satchell for his excellent two-level set that doubled as both the hotel dining room and lounge. The lack of space almost caused a nasty accident during one scene change, but how they managed to get seven tables and chairs into such a small area was nothing less than outstanding."

Reminders

Season 2001/2002

Wed. 15 August 2001. Play reading of Lord Arthur Savile's Crime at the Club at 7.30 pm

Wed. 22 August 2001. Auditions by David Weeks for Lord Arthur Savile's Crime at the Club at 7.30 pm

Fri. 24 August 2001. Auditions by Tony Orman for The Cemetery Club, at the Club at 7.30 pm

Sat. 25 August 2001. Auditions by Jack Snell for Sandcastles on the Beach at the Club at 10 am

Mon. 3 to Saturday 8 September 2001. Performances of Rebecca, directed by Keith Rawlings, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon. 22 to Sat. 27 October 2001. Performances of Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, directed by David Weeks, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon. 10 to Sat. 15 December 2001. Performances of The Cemetery Club, directed by Tony Orman, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon. 18 to 23 February 2002.

Performances of Nudes in Waning Light, directed by Clifford Page AND Sandcastles on the Beach directed by Jack Snell, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon. 15 to Sat. 20 April 2002. Performances of The Opposite Sex, directed by Lee Tilson, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon. 3 to Sat. 8 June 2002. Performances of Dead on Nine, directed by Hugh Norris, at the Club at 7.45 pm

Committee

Don Gent, Chairman	389725
Noel Davenport, Treasurer	766690
Hugh Norris, Secretary	761400
Lee Tilson, Stage Director	874072
Hilary Jefferys, Wardrobe	298356
Derek Hyder, Publicity	424640
Marcia Caton, Bar/FOH	430039
Tony Orman, Members/ newsletter	554291

Answers to Quiz

1. Al Pacino in The Godfather (1972)
2. Arnold Schwarzenegger in The Terminator (1984)
3. Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca (1942)
4. Mae West in I'm No Angel (1933)
5. Grete Garbo in Grand Hotel (1932)
6. Tom Cruise in Jerry Maguire (1996)
7. Anthony Perkins in Psycho (1960)
8. Al MacGraw to Ryan O'Neal in Love Story (1970)
9. Hugh Grant to Julia Roberts in Notting Hill (1999)
10. Anthony Hopkins in The Silence of the Lambs (1991)