



Bournemouth
Little Theatre News



Issue #40

2002/2003 Season

Friday, 15 November 2002

**We Present
at Jameson Road**

**A Comedy Thriller
by the author of "Sleuth"**

Anthony Shaffer



Whodunnit

**Directed by
Don Cherrett**

Monday 9 to Saturday 14 December 2002

For information about the play and booking details, please turn to page 2

Meet the cast of the Comedy Thriller

Whodunnit



Peter Beebee



Noel Davenport



Paul Mole



Virginia Harrington



Janet Chiesa



Andrew Whyatt



Tom Swadling



Rebecca Gross



David Clements



Don Gent

Director Don Cherrett says:

This witty, wickedly funny satire, was a long-running success on Broadway for playwright Antony Shaffer.

If you like Agatha Christie mysteries you may feel you are in your element as this play opens. But be ready for a few surprises as the plot unveils itself.

It is the 1930s. A group of strangers, of various backgrounds, have been invited to dinner at Orcas Champflower Manor. One of the guests, Capodistriou, a Levantine, informs the host (and one by one each of his fellow guests) that he has the means to blackmail them. Not surprisingly he ends up getting murdered, and in a rather gruesome way.

But the question is *who dunnit?* — was it Silas Bazeby the

host, a respectable Family Lawyer — or what about the Old Sea Dog, a Rear Admiral who has a secret he would not want revealed?

Perhaps it was Lady Tremurrain, a Dotty Aristocrat — or maybe Lavinia, the Sweet Young Thing who is perhaps not quite so sweet and innocent.

Roger Dashwell has a background which he would not want anyone to know about — or maybe the Eccentric Archaeologist Dame Edith is not as short-sighted as she appears!

Of course, they always say the Butler did it, and Perkins the embezzling butler also has a lot to lose.

It's up to Inspector Bowden of the Yard and his bumbling Sergeant to solve the case!

The Author

It was Anthony Shaffer's fate in life to be haunted by two things: one he could not control, the other he caused.

First, he could not control the fact that he lived in the shadow of his identical twin brother, Peter Shaffer, the brilliant author of *Equus*, *Amadeus* and *Royal Hunt of the Sun*.

Secondly, Anthony wrote the ultimate mystery play, later the famous film, *Sleuth*, starring Michael Caine and Laurence Olivier, and that play shadowed and defined him for the rest of his life. He himself always referred to the play as "the main event". *Sleuth* was first performed in 1970, having long runs in the West End and on Broadway.

He was less successful with the mystery drama *Murderer* in 1975, but he had more fun in 1977 with the oddly titled comedy-thriller *The Case of the Oily Levantine* (and can you imagine getting away with that title today?). Quite rightly, when the play was mounted in the West End in the 1979 it had been re-named *Whodunnit*. This was a play "full of twists, turns and jokes to please connoisseurs".

Shaffer was much in demand by Hollywood, after the success of *Sleuth*. Alfred Hitchcock sought him out to write the screenplay for *Frenzy* and he was called upon to adapt Agatha Christie's most famous novels for the screen — *Death on the Nile*, *Evil Under the Sun* and *Appointment With Death*. Shaffer, barrister son of a Jewish estate agent, was twice divorced and when he died last November at the age of 75, he was survived by his third wife, the actress Diane Cilento. **Tony Orman**



Anthony Shaffer

Advance ticket bookings

Tickets £6 (with concessions) Members £2

1. **WRITE** enclosing cheque and S.A.E. to Box Office, BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH9 2 QD OR

2. **PHONE** to book by calling Sue **ONLY between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm** on her home number **01202 424640**

EITHER Monday 25 November to Friday 29 November

OR Monday 2 December to Friday 6 December

Please Note

The Box Office is not open for callers in person or by phone at Jameson Road the week before any show. Tickets booked and paid for with S.A.E. will be issued two weeks before the show in the order the bookings were received. If you have a problem after receiving your tickets, phone Sue on the dates and times set out in 2 above.



Travelling hopefully — again

Tony Orman was at the Curtain Call Awards. This is his personal view

Every year it's that "same old same old ..."eagerly turning up to the rubber chicken dinner, followed by the *Daily Echo's* answer to Hollywood's Oscar Ceremony. Usually the ceremony is held in the same room as the dinner itself, but this time we were packed into a smaller room to eat, and then, table by table, we were escorted downstairs to the dance

venue in the basement of the Carrington House Hotel (nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there).

The Award Show this year was different because they mixed up the straight theatre ("ST") awards with the musical awards. BLTC types like me have been known to leave at half-time after the ST awards. This time I soldiered on through *all* the awards, and I watched all the cabaret pieces that the organisers inserted between the award announcements. I was particularly impressed by bits put on by a group I didn't know, called Theatre 2000. The two pieces they did from the musical *Cabaret* showed why they won best musical, and best actor and actress in a musical.

I was extremely pleased that our own Don Gent won the award for Best Actor in a Drama. He's been short-listed a couple times before, and the honour was well deserved, especially as he won it for the lead in a one-act play, *Sandcastles on the Beach*.

Alas, Don was our only winner out of the eleven nominations BLTC nominations.

However, we were honoured that two of our members, Pam Wright (whose latest cartoon is at the foot of this page) and Don Cherrett (the director of our next show) were both given special awards for their many and varied contributions to amateur theatre over the years.

No fat lady!



Sue and Derek Hyder

SUE Hyder, Derek Hyder and Hugh Norris were granted life membership at the recent annual general meeting of the Club. The Committee had secretly agreed by phone to make the awards. This was because Derek and Hugh are both members of the Committee. Naturally, neither of them was consulted. And when Derek heard the announcement at the AGM, his response was a combination of gratification and shock: he had always associated such awards with the onset of — well, the end of a career.

But if you saw the audition notice for



Hugh Norris

Death of a Salesman, you will know that Derek is slated to play the starring role next February, and Hugh is busily preparing to direct *Waters of the Moon* next April.

As for Sue, our Doyenne of the Box Office, she is pursuing this difficult and (by us) much appreciated role with undiminished vigour.

So, if you think that the award of life membership signals that it's all over, remember it ain't over till the fat lady sings. And in our Club we ain't got no fat ladies — and, as we don't do musicals, *nobody* sings.

Pro versus Am

Rarely is an amateur version of a play licensed for performance when a professional version is being aired at the same time. Amazingly, BLTC's licence for *Absurd Person Singular* was granted to clash with the final week of the professional production at the Pier Theatre. Linda Kirkman of the *Daily Echo* saw both shows. Her article which appeared the same week has some interesting conclusions.

HAVING spent many years proclaiming the fact that, in my opinion, the best amateur shows are as good as some professional ones, how could I resist the opportunity to compare this week's Bournemouth Little Theatre Club production of Alan Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular* with the professional version of the same play, now nearing the end of its Summer season at the Pier Theatre?

At the Pier there was no doubting the play's setting, with carols playing in the auditorium and a foyer filled with illuminated snowmen and Christmas trees — a total contrast to BLTC, who appeared to have gone out of their way NOT to stress the season. However, BLTC's other props complemented the script in ways not always obvious at the Pier.

Set-wise BLTC certainly scored with the ingenious idea of having three completely different 'kitchens' with one, set in a high-rise apartment, actually built on a platform above the stage, as opposed to the Pier's use of one basic framework,

but with a variety of props to ring the changes.

The productions themselves differed considerably, with the amateur version focusing as much on the poignancy of the script as on the comedy, and with disturbingly true-to-life characters, whereas I felt that at the Pier the show was being played largely for laughs — perhaps inevitable in a seaside summer season.

Possibly the most obvious difference in the two productions should have been in the performances. The Pier Theatre version features Soap stars but they all have considerable theatre experience, and most were trained at well-known drama schools, whereas at BLTC the performers are experienced but with little or no professional training. Yet I can truly say that there was no discernible difference at all, save that on the Pier the actors appeared to have adopted the technique of playing to the 'fourth wall'.

My verdict? Both thoroughly enjoyable, but which you'd prefer depends on what you expect from an Ayckbourn play.



Don Gent

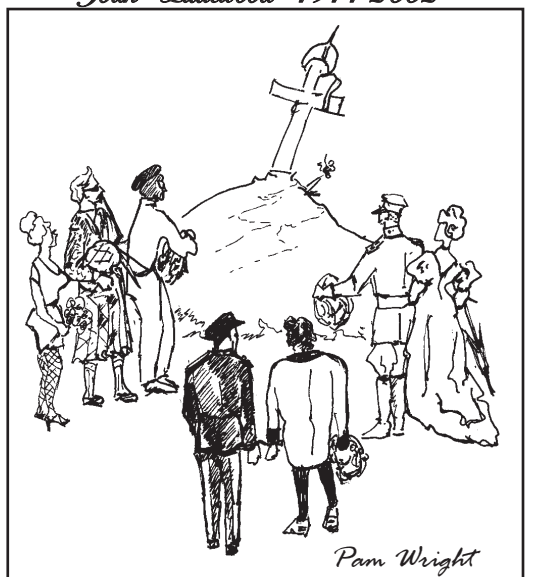


Pam Wright



Don Cherrett

Jean Littlewood 1914-2002



Pam Wright

R.I.P.

Places Quiz

by
Tony Orman

1. At the junction of which two rivers is Belgrade situated?
2. What is the oldest known walled town?
3. Which Cambridge college was founded in the late 1970s?
4. What does Tokyo mean, and what was its former name?
5. What is the main port of Libya?
6. Of which African country was Gondar once the capital?
7. What is the longest glacier?
8. Where exactly did Stanley find Livingstone?
9. Where does the Harmattan wind blow?
10. What is the deepest point on the earth's surface?

Answers at bottom of page

Audition Tonight!

Auditions are being held at the Club at 7.30 pm this evening, Friday 15 November for *Death of a Salesman*, our February 2003 production, directed by David Weeks.

As we told you in our last edition there are 8 adult male roles, 6 adult female roles and 1 juvenile role available for this prestigious show. David, who can be reached on 01202 419050, is looking for New York accents.

If you can't make it this evening, but are keen to be considered, please call David.

Wanted, a Guru

BLTC would like to hear from any Member or Playgoer, indeed anyone who reads this, who can help the Club mount and keep up to date a website supporting the Club's activities. We set one up recently with some outside help, but an error on the part of our Editor screwed the whole thing up. We need someone computer literate and website literate to set up and run a new website using, in part, text and images supplied by the Editor. The job is voluntary, but there must be someone out there who has the necessary technical skills to help us out in our hour of need. If you can help, please call Tony Orman on 01202 603709 please PLEASE!

Audition

Hugh Norris will be holding a play reading for the 'Gentle Drama'

Waters of the Moon
at the Club on

Friday 31 January 2003 at 7.30 pm followed by auditions at the Club on Friday 7 February 2003 at 7.30 pm.

Production dates are
Monday 14 April to
Saturday 19 April 2003.

There are 6 male roles and 4 female roles. The age range for both male and female roles is 20 to 70. If you want to know more about the play, or are interested but cannot make the audition please call Hugh on 01202 761400.

A detailed character analysis will appear in our January 24 issue.

The Desert Island by Hugh Norris

This is highly charged, politically incorrect, racially biased, crudely sexist, totally alienated, sado-masochistic and very marketable virulence dripping from the pen of the sinister fellow who gave us the ultimate in weird farce *Filthy Lucre*. If you have any problem with the article below, please shut your eyes while reading it. The Editor accepts no responsibility.

On a desert island in the middle of nowhere, the following people were shipwrecked: TWO Italian men and ONE Italian woman; TWO French men and ONE French woman; TWO German men and ONE German woman; TWO Greek men and ONE Greek woman; TWO Bulgarian men and ONE Bulgarian woman; TWO Japanese men and ONE Japanese woman; TWO American men and ONE American woman; TWO English men and ONE English woman; TWO Irish men and ONE Irish woman.

One month later, on this stunningly romantic island in the middle of nowhere, this is the state of things:-

One Italian man has killed the other Italian man for possession of the Italian woman.

The two French men and the French

woman are living together in a ménage à trois.

The two German men have a strict schedule of alternating visits with the German woman.

The two Greek men are sleeping with each other, and the (grateful) Greek woman is cleaning and cooking for them both.

The two Bulgarian men took one long look at the vast expanse of the Pacific, one long look at each other, one long look at the Bulgarian woman, and set off swimming.

The two Japanese men are still awaiting a reply from Tokyo to their e-mail.

The two American men are feeling suicidal, because the American woman keeps on about:

her body, the true nature of feminism, how she can do everything they do, only better (and quite a few things they

can't), the necessity of fulfilment, the equal division of household chores, how sand and palm trees and no clothes make her look fat, how her last boyfriend always respected her opinions and treated her nicer than they do, how her relationship with her mother is improving, and how nice it is that there are no taxes here and it isn't raining.

The two English men are still waiting to be introduced to the English woman.

The two Irish men divided the island into north and south, and built a distillery on the border. They can't remember if sex ever came into the picture as it gets sort of foggy after the first gallon of coconut whiskey; but they are happy that at least the English aren't enjoying it.

den country and a shocking portrayal of what appears to be an incestuous mother-son relationship, the play makes for uncomfortable viewing — but the performances make the discomfort a small price to pay.

Lin Denning gives what must be the performance of her life as the whisky-sodden, sluttish Ma, with an Irish accent honed to perfection. Luke Murphy is every inch the stuttering, backward child-man struggling to exist in a world he will never understand, while Tim Garton also excels as neurotic loser Cahill.

An outstanding set plus stirring mood music from the likes of the Dubliners and Pogues add the finishing gloss to a first-class production that was well worth the three-year wait it took to get it to the Club's stage."

Review

LINDA KIRKMAN reviewed our October show *Donny Boy* in the Daily Echo. She reported:

"THEATRE, at its best, has the power to shock and provoke strong feelings in its audiences. This drama, brilliantly directed by Jack Snell, does both, even though the Irish troubles are, for most of us, simply something we read about rather than experience first-hand.

It is set in present-day Ulster where the teenage brain-damaged Donny, who has brought home a gun just used in a murder, lives with his mother.

As both an insight into the minds of those living in a strife-ridden

Audition

Bournemouth Open Air Theatre are holding open auditions for their 2003 production of *Romeo and Juliet*

(directed by Don Cherrett) at The Quality Hotel (formerly the Durlston Court Hotel), Gervis Road, Bournemouth at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 January 2003. Recall auditions 16 January.

Production dates are 23 July to 8 August 2003. Details of audition pieces are available from BOAT Secretary Helen Cox who may be contacted by email on helen@coxh.fsnet.co.uk or by phone on 01202 621644

September Caption Competition



THANK YOU to the few competitors who participated. But the best caption (which no one got) is from the old song *Balling the Jack*: "First you put your two knees close up tight, Then you swing 'em to the left and you swing 'em to the right..."

Better luck next time.

Reminders

Fri.15 November 2002.

Auditions for *Death of a Salesman* at the Club at 7.30 pm.

Mon./Sat.9-14 December 2002

Performances of *Whodunnit* at the Club at 7.45 pm

Wed.8 & Thurs.9 January 2003

Auditions for BOAT production of *Romeo and Juliet* at The Quality Hotel at 7.30 pm

Fri.31 January 2003.

Play reading of *Waters of the Moon* at the Club at 7.30 pm

Fri.7 February 2003.

Auditions for *Waters of the Moon* at the Club at 7.30 pm

Mon./Sat.17-22 February 2003

Performances of *Death of a Salesman* at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon./Sat.14-19 April 2003

Performances of *Waters of the Moon* at the Club at 7.45 pm

Mon./Sat.2-7 June 2003

Performances of *Boeing-Boeing* at the Club at 7.45 pm

Answers to Quiz

1. The Danube and Sava; 2. Jericho; 3. Robinson College; 4. 'Eastern Capital'. It was formerly called Edo; 5. Tripoli; 6. Ethiopia, from 1632 to 1855; 7. The Lambert glacier; 8. Ujjain; 9. South-west on Lake Tanganyika; 10. Africa to the from the Sahara across W. Africa to the Atlantic; 10. Challenger Deep in Marianas Trench in the W. Pacific (approximately 36,000 feet deep).