

JULY 2018

newsletter

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sewellbarn
THEATRE

Constitution Hill
Norwich NR3 4BB
Box office: 01603 626414
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Our Next Production

Tomfoolery

Adapted by Cameron Mackintosh and Robin Ray | Directed by Cassie Tillet

12-14 & 18-21 July 2018 at 7.30 pm, matinée 21 July at 2.30 pm



Photography: Barry Parsons

Musical revue is a curious beast. Instead of one story told across an evening, the audience is presented with little vignettes, sharp sound-bites and extraordinary character cameos, each condensed into a few minutes or even seconds. A four-minute song can convey an entire personal history, political situation or lifelong relationship; a three-sentence speech can give you food for thought for days afterwards.

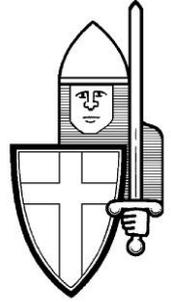
Tomfoolery was first produced in 1980 in London, and it celebrates the work of the extraordinary Harvard-educated-maths-professor-turned-entertainer, Tom Lehrer. It's seldom been off stage since its creation, and it's easy to see why. The songs (and spoken links) are witty, painful, intelligent and sarcastic; we have spent most of our rehearsals oscillating between helpless laughter and shocked intakes of breath at yet another 'non-PC' comment. Lehrer's humour, to me, is Flanders & Swann on acid: acutely observant, devil-may-care, driving a skewer to the heart of society - and it's somewhat depressing to realise just how little we, as a society, have learned in the last half-century.

I have been having more fun than can possibly be legal with my talented cast. They've not only been coping loyally with fiendish harmonies, ridiculous tongue-twisters and the obligatory kick-line choreography, but they've been excelling at all these skills and working as a wonderfully unified team, sharing the delight of Lehrer's magnificent work. Our muse celebrated his 90th birthday in April this year, and we couldn't have a better opportunity to salute his enduring genius. Come and enjoy it with us, and be ready to poison some pigeons, do the Vatican Rag, go back to Dixie, and indulge in pre-nostalgia for World War III...

Cassie Tillet - Director

Bookings

Our telephone and walk-in ticket bookings are handled by **St George's Music Shop** (near the Norwich Playhouse). Chris and his team will be pleased to welcome you to 17-19 St George's Street Norwich NR3 1AB, tel: 01603 626414, or visit our online bookings link at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/sewellbarn>. Payment can be made by credit or debit card at St George's, but please note that only cash payments can be made if purchasing tickets on the door.



Our previous production

A Month of Sundays

by Bob Larbey | directed by Mel Sessions

14-16, 20-23 June 2018 at 7.30 pm, matinée 23 June at 2.30 pm



Photography: Barry Parsons

We were thrilled to welcome Mel Sessions, deservedly well known as a highly accomplished actor and director around Norwich, to direct her first show at the Sewell Barn. She was joined by a first-class crew and a magnificent cast of familiar faces and welcome new members, and the results were a triumph.

"It's getting a bit boring, all this excellence from the Sewell Barn. Never anything to be cleverly critical about. Last night the same - a very good play worked by six top-class actors, who seemingly effortlessly kept us enthralled, laughing and sometimes crying, in a gentle but so-effective study of the poignancy of twentieth-century humanity's handling of the inevitable, but never-prepared-for, descent from vigour and loss of riches, physical and mental." *RF-W*

"Saw 'A Month of Sundays' on the first night. It was humorous, poignant, sad, and **like many Sewell Barn productions, keeps you in discussion for several days later.** Great direction from Mel Sessions, and all of the cast were equally brilliant. A great evening's entertainment." *MC*

"One of the best plays I've ever seen. The writing, direction, storyline and acting terrific. I cried." *JT*

More reviews of this and other shows can be found on our blog at <http://sewellbarntheatre.blogspot.co.uk>.

Coming Soon

Handbagged

by Moira Buffini | Directed by Clare Williamson

11-13, 17-20 October 2018



Moira Buffini's witty and intelligent Olivier-winning play imagines what may have happened in the weekly meetings between the Queen and Margaret Thatcher from 1979 to 1990. There were rumours that they did not see eye to eye, and this titanic struggle between two women of different backgrounds but of similar ages – both shaped by fathers they adored – is fascinating and moving. Major events of the period are explored, with two queens and two Thatchers disputing what occurred whilst two male actors multi-role a range of key players as varied as Ronald Reagan and Arthur Scargill to create a sharp satirical comedy.

Joint Artistic Director Clare Williamson is delighted to be working with a strong team of six experienced performers. The Queen is portrayed in her older and younger incarnations by Gillian Tichborne and Mandy Kiley; Margaret Thatcher by Alexandra Evans and Angela Rowe; and every other character (including Neil Kinnock and Nancy Reagan!) by Will Harragan and Kevin Oelrichs.

Recently highlighted by Michael Billington as one of his 'best plays since Jerusalem', *Handbagged* is an exciting and highly-recommended show with which to open our 2018/19 season. We look forward to seeing you there.

Audition news

Our second show of the 2018/19 season, **Not About Heroes**, has now been cast. Matt Scantlebury (presently performing in *Tomfoolery*) plays Siegfried Sassoon, and we welcome Zachary Green to the Barn for the first time as Wilfred Owen. We're tremendously excited about this beautiful two-hander, directed by Rob Tiffen, which performs in November – the very month of the centenary of Armistice Day.

Next up is our January production, **These Shining Lives**, directed by Jessica Hutchings. A powerful and moving play, it is based on the true story of the 'radium girls' who were assured that working with the substance would not only be harmless, but positively beneficial to their health. **Auditions will be held on Tuesday 28 and Thursday 30 August.** There are four superb roles for young women (around mid-20s), plus two men, and additional characters. Please visit our Auditions page on our website for further details, and contact Jess with any queries.

Membership renewals and Gift Aid

Just a reminder that **membership fees for Friends of the Sewell Barn are now due.** It's an excellent way to support our work at the Sewell Barn, and we very much appreciate it. It costs £10 for a year, £15 for a couple at the same address, or £50 per person for lifetime membership. The Friends are entitled to voting rights at our AGM in the autumn, giving you an active say in the running of your theatre, and receive a free drink on the first night each show.

We are also including, for the first time, the ability to make your membership (as well as any other donations, although not ticket purchases) tax efficient through **Gift Aid**: if you are a tax payer, the Sewell Barn can claim standard rate tax over and above your payment, at no additional cost to you. We can also backdate these claims by up to four years, so members have the opportunity to make a welcome contribution to our funds with very little effort! If this applies to you, please complete and return the form as indicated.

If you're receiving this mailing electronically, a link to renewal details and a Gift Aid form will be emailed to you separately; if you're receiving it by post, a paper copy is included with this newsletter.

Please note (as explained below) that our free drinks on the first night of each run will be available to paid-up members only, on production of a valid membership card. If you are an annual member you'll get a new card when you renew; if you're a life member, but have mislaid your card, please email membership@sewellbarn.org or write to Jill Fuller at 20 Blofield Road, Brundall, Norwich NR13 5NN to request a replacement.

Changes to ticket prices and membership benefits

At the Sewell Barn, we pride ourselves on providing excellent entertainment at a very affordable price. Our ticket prices last increased five years ago, for the 2013/14 season. With effect from the first show in 2018/19 (Handbagged), **our prices increase to £10 (standard) and £9 (concessionary)**. Group bookings receive a discount of £1 per ticket (£9/£8); student tickets on 'Welcome Wednesdays' remain at £5. We hope that you agree that this still represents excellent value for money.

We have also changed our offerings of free drinks during shows. Again, with effect from the new season, these will regularly be:

- a free drink **on first nights** for **paid-up Friends of the Sewell Barn** (see above) on presentation of a valid membership card
- free tea and coffee **on Saturday matinees** for **all audience members**

Privacy policies and data protection

Yes, I know you are fed up with hearing about it, but I am afraid we have to do it! To this end, our policies are now displayed on the website ... please go and have a look. Three members of your committee have worked very hard to produce them, with help and advice from other informed people.

If you agree with the policies, please do nothing. If you wish to be removed from our lists, please unsubscribe (if you're receiving this message by email you'll find a link at the foot of the message). If you are a paid-up member of the Friends of the Sewell Barn you will receive newsletters as part of your membership.

Help needed!

Technicians

We are urgently in need of ongoing technical support for the new season. Our productions rely heavily on the professional and dedicated work of our technical team, and are vital to every successful show. We are in the process of introducing updated equipment, and would be delighted to train volunteers. (This is also excellent experience for students wishing to further their knowledge.) Help is always required with rigging, programming and operating. Please contact technical@sewellbarn.org for further details.

Front of house

For every performance, we have to provide three stewards and two bar staff. We need you! Could you possibly spare an evening during the run of a production to help out? We will train anyone new to the job. It isn't an arduous task, and is in fact a very nice way to meet people and to promote the Barn through chatting to audiences. So if you would like to be involved, or haven't done it for a while, please contact Jane Page, who will put you on the rota, on foh@sewellbarn.org.

Barn clearout weekend

While the theatre is 'dark' over the summer holidays, we take the opportunity to have a good clear-out. This involves mainly sorting the scenery dock, disposing of unwanted items, and repainting in various areas. If

you're able to wield a paintbrush or move items around, your help would be very much appreciated! (We also could use a bit of muscle to help get the old photocopier downstairs ready for disposal...) Work will take place **between 10.00 am and 4.30 pm on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 August**. If you can come along, even for just a couple of hours, it will help enormously. Please email Andrew Evans on ozevans@strumpshaw.net if you're able to contribute some time.

RIP Joan Wheeler

Longer-standing Barn members may remember Joan and Mike Wheeler, who were for many years stalwarts at the theatre – Mike as general handyman and Joan as our Membership Secretary. Joan passed away peacefully at home on 24th June after a long period of illness, and will be much missed by her family and friends.

Congratulations to Norfolk Gin!

Jonathan Redding is well known to Barn audiences both on stage and off (he's presently our Stage Manager for *Tomfoolery*), and more recently, his successful company Norfolk Gin has kindly agreed to be one of our Gold Sponsors for the 2018/19 season. We're delighted to learn that his delicious tippie was recently voted best out of nine local gins by the Norwich Gin Club. Naturally, we plan to have Norfolk Gin available for your refreshment in our bar with effect from the start of the new season!



What else is on in the area?

We are taking a break between seasons, and our next newsletter will be published in early October; so here are some events for your diary to keep you entertained over the summer months.

Maddermarket Theatre www.maddermarket.co.uk

St. John's Alley, Norwich NR2 1DR

Quality Street by J M Barrie **20-28 July**

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame, adap. Mike Kenney **17 August-1 September**

Landscape and A Kind of Alaska by Harold Pinter **18-23 September**



Great Hall Theatre Company www.greathalltheatre.org.uk

The Assembly Rooms, Theatre Street, Norwich NR2 1RQ

Audacity by Simon Mawdsley **11-15 September**



MOCO Theatre www.mocotheatre.com

The Shoe Factory Social Club, St. Mary's Plain, Norwich NR3 3AF

Frankenstein **16-25 August**



Sound Ideas www.soundideastheatre.co.uk

visiting us at the Sewell Barn Theatre

This is a concert! **4-5 August**

