

AUGUST 2021

newsletter

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sewellbarn
THEATRE

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*We're thrilled to be back – and keeping everything firmly crossed for the new season. Read on for news of **our forthcoming shows**, celebrations of a couple of very special **birthdays**, **audition notices** and **reviews** of our successful July production.*

Our next production: Love, Love, Love

by Mike Bartlett

directed by Clare Williamson

14-16, 20-23 October 2021 at 7:30pm,

matinée Saturday 23 October at 2:30pm

Lost idealism and parental responsibility are the themes of this sparkling satirical play. Kenneth and Sandra meet, get married, have children, divorce and settle into retirement. We follow their trajectory in three acts, that take place in 1967, 1990 and 2011 – each capturing a specific moment in family life and British politics. Written ten years ago, Bartlett's play eviscerates the still-mostly-with-us '60s generation with a painfully funny savagery. The pertinence of his ferociously sharp, and sometimes simply ferocious, observations about the baby boomers and their disaffected Generation X children has not changed in the intervening decade.



Joint Artistic Director Clare Williamson is delighted to be working with five accomplished performers on this show, and rehearsals start very soon. Jonathan Redding and Ayshea Christian play Kenneth and Sandra, with Kevin Oelrichs as Kenneth's brother Henry; and their children Jamie and Rosie are played by Jose Tarouca and Emma Kirkham.

Contains strong language and adult themes

Our previous production: Private Lives

by Noel Coward · directed by Cassie Tillett · **19-24 July 2021**

As pandemic restrictions lifted, we decided to go ahead with our first fully staged production since February 2020. A stunning bunch of auditionees meant we were spoilt for choice; two weeks after casting, we started rehearsals; and five weeks to the day after that, the show opened. We restricted our audiences to 50 (half capacity), keeping our theatre safe and comfortable; we welcomed excellent houses, and the feedback was wonderful for our five talented performers.

"Congratulations to Cassie, cast and crew for a wonderful, joyous and laughter-filled evening! Inspired casting and the actors' palpable chemistry brought Coward's sparkling wit to life, whilst the set and costumes reflected the period perfectly. All together a marvellous tonic for theatre deprived audiences. Thank you so much." *Jan F*

"What a great show you put on last night! The acting was first class, set was brilliant and costumes were perfect ... Piano too of course was first rate! You must have been so pleased. It was remarkable and left a big impression. An amazing tour de force in such a brief and unpredictable time!" *Shelagh S*

You can read more comments on our blog at <https://sewellbarntheatre.blogspot.com/>. Thank you to our splendid performers and crew for such a joyful experience, and our audience for their loyal support through these difficult times.



Photography: Sean Owen

New season: 2021-22

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE

by Mike Bartlett

directed by Clare Williamson

14-16, 20-23 October

THREE RUSSIAN ENCOUNTERS

The Yalta Game and *Afterplay* by Brian Friel,

Swansong by Anton Chekhov

directed by Tony Fullwood

25-27 November, 1-4 December

WOMAN IN MIND

by Alan Ayckbourn

directed by Peter Wood

20-22, 26-29 January

THE FATHER

by Florian Zeller

trans. Christopher Hampton

directed by Chris Bealey

3-5, 9-12 March

EDITH – IN THE BEGINNING

by Karen Forbes

directed by Robert Little

21-23, 27-30 April

ORCA

by Matt Grinter

directed by Sabrina Poole

2-4, 8-11 June

UNDER MILK WOOD

by Dylan Thomas

directed by Cassie Tillett

14-16, 20-23 July

Some of these shows will look familiar as they come from the 2019-20 season that was abandoned due to the pandemic; still more were originally planned for 2020-21, and were never even announced, much less performed. In the case of *Orca* and *Under Milk Wood*, casting preference will be given to those who were given the roles last time round, and auditions held for any gaps. There are seven shows in the season rather than the usual eight, allowing us to space the projects more widely and avoid large numbers of people using the building at one time.

The first show has been cast (see first item in this newsletter), and auditions for shows 2 and 3 are due very soon (see below). Full information about auditions is available on our website:

<https://www.sewellbarn.org/casting.html>

Audition notice: Three Russian Encounters

THE YALTA GAME & AFTERPLAY by Brian Friel (after Chekhov)

THE SWANSONG by Anton Chekhov translated by Marian Fell

Director: Tony Fullwood: fullwoodthomas@ntlworld.com

Performance dates : 25-27 November, 1-4 December (matinee 4 December) 2021

The two Friel plays are long one-acters. The Yalta Game has 25 pages and lasts about 45 minutes, Afterplay has around 30 pages and lasts a little longer. Each play has just two characters so they all have plenty of lines. Chekhov's The Swansong will form an epilogue: it plays about 15 minutes and also has two characters.

Director Tony Fullwood is in search of five actors (the main character in The Swansong has been pre-cast): 2M and 2F. One of the women should be in her 20s, the other three are all in their 40s. The Prompter, Nikita (in The Swansong) is written as an old man but could be played by any gender and any age. Full details of characters and other details can be found on our website at <https://www.sewellbarn.org/russian.html>.

Auditions: Thursday 2 September 5pm-7pm / Friday 3 September 5pm-8pm / Saturday 4 September 10am-12 noon. Individual auditions on these dates **by arrangement with the director.** Please contact by email - fullwoodthomas@ntlworld.com - to request an audition time.

Audition notice: Woman in Mind

by Alan Ayckbourn

Director: Peter Wood: peterdwood@hotmail.com

Performance dates: 20-22, 26-29 January (matinee January 29) 2022

Premiered in Scarborough in 1985 and drawing upon autobiographical experiences, Ayckbourn's work centres on Susan, a middle-aged wife and mother who has devoted much time and emotional energy to her marriage and family. Her efforts, however, have failed to bring her happiness and satisfaction; in fact, she has been left feeling undervalued and unappreciated by her family members who treat her with both condescension and some disdain. She is, in effect, trapped in relationships that, in the end, will overwhelm and destroy her. In order to cope with her increasingly desperate situation, Susan has created in her mind a fantasy family that dresses in white, quaffs champagne at every opportunity, lives in a stately home and who adores and respects her. As her level of disillusionment increases, Susan turns more and more to her family

of the imagination but, crucially, is less able to control the characters she has created for herself. It is the blurring of the worlds of fantasy and reality that will ultimately have dire consequences for her. From the outset of the play, when Susan comes to after being knocked unconscious by accidentally standing on a garden rake, all the things that happen are seen and heard from her perspective: the audience are compelled to look at the world through the eyes of a woman whose mental health is failing.

Director Peter Wood is looking for eight actors: 5M and 3F, across a range of ages from 20s to 50s. Please visit <https://www.sewellbarn.org/womaninmind.html> for full details.

Auditions: Sunday 3 October at 7.00 pm in the Barn. Audition pieces will be provided on the night. There is no need to prepare anything in advance though it would be beneficial for those auditioning to be acquainted with the play. If you are interested but unable to attend the audition, please contact the director.

Membership

This has been a difficult year but we are excited to be up and running again. We did not ask for membership renewals last year (as we were closed), but many thanks to those members who sent their membership subscription anyway ... it was much appreciated. Also thank you to all of you who made donations as well.

The membership of the Sewell Barn runs from July to July so, if you are a member who pays annually, it is now time to renew your membership by sending £10 for a single person, £15 for a couple living at the same address (or £50 per person for a lifetime membership).

This can be sent by BACs transfer to Sewell Barn Theatre, sort code 30 96 17, account 02167536 (please use your surname followed by MEMBERSHIP as a reference, and drop an email to membership@sewellbarn.org to notify us of the payment); or by cheque to 20 Blofield Road, Brundall, Norwich NR13 5NN. Many thanks!

Jill Fuller

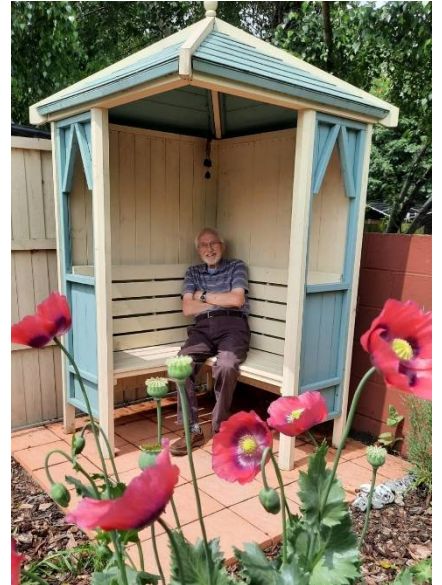
Some special birthdays

We were delighted to spot two of our long-term members celebrating their birthdays last month.



Neville Miller has played many roles all over the Norwich community circuit (he's especially well known for his clerics!) and has been a loyal supporter of the Barn for many years. He was also responsible for compiling a booklet charting the history of the theatre for our 30th anniversary back in 2009. Neville celebrated his 91st birthday on 10th July, and is seen here sharing an appropriate beverage with David Newham on that day.

Terry Dabbs has been a valued member of the Barn family for a very long time, and shows no sign of quitting the boards. He celebrated his 80th birthday while playing Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 2011, and since then has taken part in more shows, including *Lark Rise to Candleford* (2017) and most recently *Waiting in the Wings* (2019). Terry's daughter Ruth Howitt (also a Barn stalwart of many years) provided this wonderful photograph of Terry when he turned 90 on 3rd July.



We send our congratulations and affection to two splendid gents, and wish them many more happy years.

Help needed: Technical Operators

For our forthcoming 2021-22 season, we would like to recruit more operators to the 'box'. Our technical co-ordinator, Chris Jones, does a wonderful job of programming and designing, using our QLab software and our new LED lights; but as we move (hopefully) back to several shows each year, and eight performances plus tech and dress for each show, we need to spread the load. Please contact Chris on technical@sewellbarn.org if you'd like to make use of your existing skills or learn some new ones, and help us to continue to offer professional-standard entertainment to the local community.

What's on in Norwich

Our colleagues at the Maddermarket and the Great Hall are also preparing to entertain you once more. Do support our local theatre community as we take steps out of such challenging times.

The Merry Wives of Windsor Norwich

by William Shakespeare

adapted and directed by Tony Fullwood

Friday 27 to Monday 30 August: three performances at 14:00, four at 18:00

<https://maddermarket.co.uk/event/the-merry-wives-of-norwich/>

A Lady Mislaid

by Kenneth Horne

Wednesday 3 – Saturday 6 November 2021: 5 performances (inc matinee)

at the Assembly House

<https://www.greathalltheatre.org.uk/>