

NOVEMBER 2022

newsletter

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sewellbarn
THEATRE

Constitution Hill
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Box Office: 0333 666 3366

www.sewellbarn.org

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Our next production: ***Betrayal***

by Harold Pinter | directed by Clare Howard

24-26 November, 30 November-3 December



Photography: Andrew Evans

Robert and Jerry have been best friends for years. But when Jerry starts an affair with Robert's wife Emma, the deceptions begin. Many other layers of betrayal arise from this central deceit - and time and memory can also play us false. There is no room to hide and everything is stripped bare. Yet *Betrayal* is funny, as well as being intriguing and painful: people can be at their most absurd when they are most serious. Described as the 'greatest and most moving' of all Harold Pinter's plays, every word is carefully chosen. The characters in *Betrayal* have education, careers and money, they are in the years between the end of youth and the onset of middle age, and they make mistakes. Their life, work and family dilemmas are exposed to us.

Clare Howard, the director of the Sewell Barn's production of *Betrayal*, commented "This is a very intimate play, and Sewell Barn's unique space is particularly well-suited to the power, poetry and enigma of Pinter's language. A lot of my previous productions have been large scale with big casts and sometimes epic stories. *Betrayal* gives me the challenge of working far more precisely. I love the way that the play's structure – starting at the end of a relationship and working towards its beginning – shows us the layers peeling away. In each scene there are new connections to make and new understanding of the things we have already been shown, with our sympathy for each of the characters changing accordingly."

In this production, the part of Emma is played by Verity Roat, Robert by John Davis and Jerry by Steven Scase. All three actors are well known to Norwich audiences: recent appearances by Verity and Steven

include roles in *Private Lives* and *Three Russians* respectively, both at Sewell Barn, and by John, Art at the Maddermarket Theatre. Clare Howard has directed, and acted in, many other Sewell Barn productions, and served as the company's Artistic Director between 2005 and 2011.

Contains strong language and adult themes. Trigger warning: some domestic violence.

Tickets are limited to 85 per performance due to the set design, and advance booking is highly recommended. Available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/sewellbarn or on 0333 666 3366.

Our previous production: The Welkin

by Lucy Kirkwood | directed by Jez Pike | **13-15, 19-22 October**

We were really pleased with Norwich Eye's review of our opening night: "This is a memorable and moving drama which takes you on an emotional rollercoaster... Sewell Barn Theatre have a right to feel very proud of their achievement in bringing this large, complex and demanding work so effectively into their atmospheric venue" (<https://norwicheye.co.uk/whats-on/norwich-eye-reviews-the-welkin-by-sewell-barn-theatre/>). But then - as most friends of the Sewell Barn will know - the show became a distressing victim of COVID; when we were notified after the first night that one of the cast had tested positive for the virus, we feared the worst. The second performance went ahead with director Jez Pike reading in for the missing actor, and both evenings were highly praised by those who saw them. Sadly, by the third day, there were more cases; and by the weekend it became clear that we would be unable to stage any further performances at that time. (In the end, seven members of the cast fell ill. Happily, all are now fully recovered.)

The show had been a great box office success with high levels of interest and advance booking; and the cast and crew were all dedicated to bringing the show to our audiences at a later date. As such, we are delighted to announce **new dates for this show in July 2023: Mon 3 - Sat 8 July 2023** at 7.30pm with a matinee on Sat 8 at 2.30pm.

In order to make this happen, Claire Stretton, the director of our July production, ***The Cemetery Club***, has kindly agreed to move her show into August. The new dates for ***The Cemetery Club*** are: **Thurs 3 - Sat 5 & Wed 9 - Sat 12 August 2023** at 7.30pm with a matinee on Sat 12 at 2.30pm. We are very grateful to Claire for her co-operation and flexibility, to Jez and his cast for their dedication, and to many of our committee for their hard work in rearranging the season to accommodate the show.

Please put the revised dates in your diary, and we hope very much that we will see you when we recreate this first-rate piece of theatre.



Photography: Sean Owen of Reflective Arts

Coming soon: Queers

Monologues curated by Mark Gattiss | directed by Michelle Hutchings

19-21, 25-28 January



This poignant, personal, funny, tragic and riotous set of monologues celebrate a century of gay life. Curated by Mark Gattiss in 2017 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Sexual Offences Act, which decriminalised homosexual acts in private between two men over the age of twenty-one, each monologue is a sensitive exploration of the highs and lows of the queer experience.

Michelle Hutchings is well known to Barn audiences from her stage performances – most recently in our production of *The Female of the Species* (February 2020), our final show before lockdown intervened – and she now makes her directorial debut, working with a strong cast and crew.

Contains themes of a sexual nature, homophobic/transphobic language and mental health issues including suicide.

Audition: Di and Viv and Rose

by Amelia Bullmore | directed by Emma Kirkham

Contact: emmakirkham@gmail.com / 07841 702776

Auditions: Monday 5 December 2022 at 7pm

Performances: 13-15, 19-22 April 2023



'How do you want to live here? I mean we could come and go and lead separate lives. Or we could really live together. What do you think?'

This is a great play full of wit, humour and pathos with three great roles for female performers who need to be versatile enough to age throughout the play.

Heading off to university aged 18 in 1983 three incredibly different women join forces to live and experience life together. The play follows the trio through three decades and explores their friendship over those years and the various life events that impact on it. The play is both humorous and hard hitting as life is not straightforward for our trio or their relationship.

Please visit our website at <https://www.sewellbarn.org/divivrosecasting.html> for full details of auditions, rehearsals and characters, and contact director Emma Kirkham to register your interest.

Our 2023/24 season

It may feel hard to believe, but planning will start in December for our next season! The choosing of directors and plays, applications for rights, leaflet design, marketing and much more needs to be finalised ready for our season launch, which will take place in May 2023. This also marks the first season in which Clare Williamson will step down as Joint Artistic Director, to be replaced by Sabrina Poole, working alongside Cassie Tillett

Cassie and Sabrina will be contacting previous directors, as well as others who have expressed an interest in being considered, in the first two weeks of December. If you are interested in being considered for this, please email them on artisticdirector@sewellbarn.org, and we'll be in touch very soon.

An appeal from one of our members: supporting children in Morocco

Verity Roat, who is presently part of the cast of *Betrayal* featured earlier in this newsletter, has asked if we are able to share the following. She writes:

"I am reaching out for your support for Moroccan Children's Trust and its Moroccan partner, la Fondation Amane pour La Protection de L'Enfance, to ensure that we can keep providing critical social work services in Southern Morocco. I have been supporting them since I volunteered in Taroudant for six months in 2016. Our vision is to create a safe and fulfilling environment in which vulnerable children are able to thrive and grow; a Morocco in which children and families living in poverty or disadvantage can count on effective and appropriate support to help them realise their potential.

Unfortunately, the stability of our work has recently been put at risk. One of the funders who had committed to supporting MCT in 2022-2023 has withdrawn their support at a late stage due to internal problems at their organisation. This means that this year we need some further financial support so that Centre Amane's pioneering and life-changing work can continue.

As this is cause that is close to my heart, I wonder if you would consider donating to our Crowdfunder:

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/urgent-appeal---moroccan-childrens-trust>

Thank you!"

What's on in Norwich

The Book of Will by Lauren Gunderson

The Norwich Players at the Maddermarket Theatre

Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 November: 6 performances (inc matinee)

<https://maddermarket.co.uk/event/the-book-of-will/>

In tribute to their dead friend, two actors of the King's Men's company - John Heminges and Henry Condell – set out to collect and publish complete versions of all Shakespeare's plays. They overcame enormous practical and financial difficulties and succeeded against all odds. Without the 1623 folio, we would not have Macbeth, Twelfth Night, The Tempest or Antony and Cleopatra, and half the plays would exist in dubious versions. Lauren Gunderson is one of the last decade's most produced living American playwrights. The Maddermarket Theatre is delighted to bring her witty and moving play, with all the noise and colour of 17th Century London to its stage, built as a replica of Shakespeare's own theatre. Many familiar faces, from the Sewell Barn and other Norwich theatres, can be found taking part in this exciting show.

