

FEBRUARY 2023 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: **Still Life and Red Peppers**

by Noel Coward | directed by Cassie Tillett

2-4 & 8-11 March at 7:30pm | matinee 2:30pm on 11 March



Photography: Barry Parsons

Noël Coward is renowned for his light-hearted wit. Yet his writing also gives us fundamental truths on the human condition, with his characters illuminating timeless emotional and moral challenges. Both these aspects of Coward's theatrical genius are readily apparent in the Sewell Barn's presentation of the double bill *Still Life* and *Red Peppers*, fully justifying the author's sobriquet of 'the master'.

These two short plays were part of a ten-play cycle originally presented in 1935-36, *Tonight at 8:30*, that alternated comedy with pathos. Coward himself first played the leading male roles – opposite the legendary Gertrude Lawrence – showcasing his wide repertoire and flamboyant personality, combining “chic and cheek, pose and poise”, as summarised by Time magazine.

Still Life explores the pain of an intense attraction that cannot, under any circumstances, come to good. It is better known as its cinematic adaptation, *Brief Encounter*, frequently cited as one of the best British films of all time. *Red Peppers* brings us a warring music hall partnership, now struggling at the bottom of the bill – worsened by competition from the silver screen: “Nobody wants to come and see the Red Peppers for three bob when they can see Garbo for ninepence!”.

Cassie Tillett, the director of this production, commented: “I have been fortunate enough to direct two other of Coward's plays at the Sewell Barn (*Private Lives* and *Waiting in the Wings*) as well as the revue *Cowardy Custard*, so the opportunity to create this show has been a delight. Our cast – six men and six

women, all blessed with great talent, skill and flexibility – have worked tremendously hard to present these plays in a way that is true to Coward's original concepts, while remaining relevant to a twenty-first century audience."

Tickets are available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/sewellbarn or on 0333 666 3366.

Our previous production: **Queers**

curated by Mark Gatiss | directed by Michelle Hutchings

19-21, 25-28 January



Photography: Sean Owen

"Startlingly good performances" ... "skill and quality" ... "outstanding theatre" ... "amazing, moving and thought provoking" – just a few of the wonderful comments received about this splendid production.

"To find seven cast members of the skill and quality of this lot is a remarkable achievement. Each actor seems to fit in their role like a nicely tailored glove." *Julian Swainson/Norwich Eye*

"...The whole collection was a triumph from start to finish, and for a directorial debut, Michelle Hutchings can be so proud of what she achieved.... It's a bit late for me to say this is a production that shouldn't be missed, but I'll instead simply congratulate everyone that's worked on the production for such a magnificent piece of theatre." *East Anglian Theatre Podcast.*

For more reviews of this and other productions, please visit <http://sewellbartheatre.blogspot.com>.

Coming soon (1): **Di and Viv and Rose**

by Amelia Bullmore | directed by Emma Kirkham

13-15 & 19-22 April

Three very different young women find themselves drawn together in the 1980s sharing a university flat, and their lives, with each other. Over the following thirty years we follow their funny, moving and sometimes unexpected journey through life and friendship as both evolve over the passage of time. *Di and Viv and Rose* is an account of female friendship that is





neither nostalgic nor sentimental, just real. What is the impact of their friendship on their lives? What is the impact of their lives on their friendship?

Emma Kirkham makes her directorial debut with this show, but she is by no means unfamiliar to Barn regulars, who has variously acted and stage managed many shows, as well as being a member of the management committee. Emma (left) is thrilled to be working with a strong group of

actors - Charlotte Carter, Verity Roat and Tara Woodley - on this show, supported by Moira Harragan (right) as stage manager.

Coming soon (2): A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare | directed by Clare Williamson

1-3 & 7-10 June

Casting is now complete for our June show after an exciting audition process with 48 people trying out for roles. For the second round we called back 19 so the last few weeks have been very busy. It was great to see such a talented bunch of local actors with familiar faces as well as plenty of people new to the Barn coming along. Casting was a real challenge and many thanks to all who attended!



Oberon & Theseus: Sean Bennett
Titania & Hippolyta: Netta Jones
Puck & Philostrate: Dean Kenneth
Bottom: Rob Tiffen
Helena: Eva Wright
Hermia: Naomi Cunningham
Demetrius: Zach Burbridge

Lysander: Jose Tarouca
Quince & Egeus: Barney Matley
Flute & Cobweb: Megan Saunders
Starveling & Moth: Alexandra Evans
Snout & Peaseblossom: Lewis Garvey
Snug & Mustardseed: Mel Peter

Clare Williamson

Audition: The Cemetery Club



Director: Claire Stretton

Contact details: claire@strettongraphics.co.uk / 07788 428285

Dates of performances: 3-5 & 9-12 August 2023*

Auditions: Sunday 12 March at 2:00 pm

**please note amended performance dates, due to the re-staging of The Welkin in July*

The Cemetery Club is a comedy about three Jewish widows who meet once a month for tea before going to visit their husbands' graves. Ida is sweet tempered and ready to begin a new life. Lucille is a feisty embodiment of the girl who just wants to have fun, and Doris is stuffy and judgemental.

One day they bump into their butcher, Sam, at the cemetery, who was visiting his deceased wife's grave, and a new friendship is born.

Ida and Sam fall for each other, but the budding relationship gets squashed and compounded when Mildred, the seductress that Sam decides to bring to Selma's wedding, particularly unnerves Ida...

Please visit our website at <https://www.sewellbarn.org/cemeteryclubcasting.html> for full details of auditions, rehearsals, performances and characters, and contact director Claire Stretton as shown above to register your interest and book an audition slot.

Wardrobe volunteers required

We welcome assistance in all areas of the theatre; this is a particular shoutout for help with our wardrobe department. Jen Flitton has taken over the role of supervisor and would very much value support as we costume our wide variety of shows. If you can help, please contact Jen on wardrobe@sewellbarn.org.

Moldovan Green makes the 2023 INK Festival in Suffolk

In 2021 the talented Jane Keidan performed my monologue *Moldovan Green* [in the fourth of the Sewell Barn's Zoom-broadcast pandemic entertainment series, *Sewell Barn Shorts*]. Jane gave a wonderful scouse rendition of Barbara who loves dogs and finds out that an object she has in everyday use holds value.



A year later Jane emailed me a link to the INK Festival suggesting I submit the play for consideration in the 2023 season. I did and last year I was advised that *Moldovan Green* had made it on to the short list, and I was put in touch with a couple of actor/writers who made a few minor suggestions of script changes. In January 2023 I heard it had been chosen for performance and will be professionally directed and acted; although in my opinion Jane's performance will always be the original and best.

INK Festival runs from April 13th-16th in Halesworth, Suffolk. <https://inkfestival.org>

If you go to the festival and happen to catch a performance of *Moldovan Green* you may notice a tiny alteration to the original script; I give a fleeting reference to a certain "Reverend Tillett". (I hope he doesn't demand an appearance fee.)

Alexandra Evans

What's on in Norwich

The History Man adapted by Antoinette Moses

The Norwich Players at the Maddermarket Theatre

Wednesday 8 to Sunday 12 March: 6 performances (inc matinee)

<https://maddermarket.co.uk/event/the-history-man/>

A hilarious staging of Malcolm Bradbury's bestselling campus novel. This provocative, witty play mocks the seventies while asking questions about today.

