

FEBRUARY 2024 newsletter

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sewellbarn
THEATRE

Constitution Hill
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www.sewellbarn.org

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Our next production : **Amy's View**

by David Hare / directed by Pip Sessions

29 February-2 March, 6-9 March 7.30pm, matinée 9 March 2.30pm



Photography: Barry Parsons

Amy's View uses a mother-daughter relationship to explore love, loss and cultural clashes. The themes of marriage, fame, sacrifice, financial crises and betrayal are brought together to make the case for personal and artistic integrity, also for the importance of theatre itself. The play premiered in 1997, starring the award-winning Judi Dench. Revivals, such as those including Felicity Kendal in the leading role, have been praised by reviewers for both the quality of their actors and the play itself: "Some plays shrink with time: others grow... David Hare's drama has matured well" (Michael Billington/Guardian).

This production in the intimate setting of the Sewell Barn theatre was initially scheduled for May 2020 but was then disrupted by Covid. The director, Pip Sessions, has fortunately been able to re-assemble many of her previous cast, commenting "*Amy's View* is a play I've wanted to direct for a long time having seen the original production at the National Theatre. David Hare is not only one of our premiere political dramatists, but he is also a writer of sharp dialogue, keenly-observed human relationships, and complex, challenging and emotionally-charged roles for women. These factors made the play particularly attractive to me. In addition, the mother-daughter relationship at the core of *Amy's View* has special resonance, given that my own mother is playing the role of Esme Allen".

In the play, we first meet Esme in 1979 as a successful West End actor. Yet there are already signs of trouble ahead—with uncertainty whether theatre can successfully compete with other forms of popular

culture, and continue to offer actors a regular way of life. A visit from Esme's daughter, Amy, with her new boyfriend, Dominic, an ambitious arts journalist, sets in motion a series of events which reach their conclusion sixteen years later. Mel Sessions plays the role of Esme, with Hollie Harrington as Amy and Joe Seeney as the antagonist, Dominic Tyghe. Joy Davidson plays Amy's grandmother, Evelyn, with Kevin Oelrichs as Frank, Esme's adoring neighbour and financial advisor. Wesley Burgess completes the cast as Toby, a young actor who appears in the final act of the play. Regarding the casting, Pip reports "I am pleased to say that my mother and I have just about managed to maintain a professional director/actor relationship within the rehearsal room, to the relief of the rest of the cast!"

Tickets available online at £12 and £13 from TicketSource via www.sewellbarn.org, also by phone via 0333 6663366. Booking fees are included in the ticket prices. Includes strong language and adult themes.

Coming next : Barbed Wire and Teddy Bears

by Karen Forbes

directed by Robert Little

14-16 March 2024

Following rapidly after *Amy's View*, we are very excited to welcome back local author Karen Forbes, working with director Robert Little, for this original and inventive show. This is a 'mini-slot', with get-in, set up and four performances all taking place in the course of a week. A talented troupe of new and familiar faces take the stage, and the show promises to be a moving and highly entertaining evening. With a short run, tickets are limited, so do book now.



Photography: Andrew Evans

The play is based on the collected memories of islanders who lived in Jersey during the Occupation years. The stories are all told from the perspective of the children who would have gone to school, got into mischief and played their games in the shadow of the Nazis. The piece is both funny and poignant in equal measure and gives a sense of how those youngest members of society reacted to the Germans, played tricks on them and grew up under their watchful eyes.

Profits from the show will be donated to the Red Cross / Ukraine appeal.

Our previous production : *Comic Potential*

by Alan Ayckbourn / directed by Joe Flatt

18-20, 24-27 January



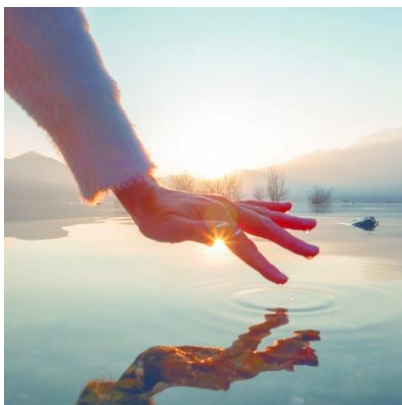
Photography: Barry Parsons

This unusual and very quirky creation from Mr Ayckbourn drew great praise for the actors and crew alike, and played to excellent houses, including some sell-out performances. Thank you to new (to us) director Joe Flatt and his talented team for a delightful and successful show.

"I had the pleasure of watching probably **the best acting I've enjoyed for an age**. I'm including London theatre productions ..." Steve

"**Funny, insightful and extremely heartfelt**. It was surprisingly deep and thought provoking as well. The whole cast had multiple roles and worked incredibly hard. Well done everyone, a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining evening." KatLou

[Click here for more reviews of this and previous shows.](#)



Auditions : *The Memory of Water*

by Shelagh Stevenson

Director: Cassie Tillett

Contact details: cassie@tillett.org.uk / 07802 475110

Performance dates: 11-13, 17-20 July 2024 (including matinee on 20 July)

Audition: at the Barn, 17 March 2024 2-4.30pm and then 5-7.30pm with possible alternative dates and/or recalls as required – please email director to discuss. Ideally most auditionees are needed for the whole of

their booked session if possible (with the possible exception of Vi candidates) as most need extensive interaction with other actors.

Three sisters meet on the eve of their mother's funeral. As the conflicts of the past converge, everyday lies and tensions reveal the patterns and strains of family relationships. This play is equal parts hilarity and distress, soul-searching and flippancy, intense drama and belly-laugh comedy. It requires a close-knit cast with great sensitivity to the material and to each other. It's rewarding, painful and very, very funny, and represents a tremendous challenge (line-learning, emotion, comic timing, pace) to all involved.

NB: there may be some use of cigarettes in the production, but it may be possible for these to be 'prop' and as such unlit. Smoking is a key part of Viv's character, and the use of 'pot' is vital to one particular scene between the sisters.

PLEASE CONTACT ME as shown above to be sent the proposed audition pieces, letting me know which role(s) you are interested in playing, and whether you are available for either of the two sessions on 17 March. If you cannot attend then, please let me know and we'll look at alternatives. For full character descriptions and other details, please visit www.sewellbarn.org/memoryofwatercasting.html.

Cassie Tillett

Coming soon : Bette & Joan

by Anton Burge

Directed by Steven Scase

18-20, 24-27 April

Bette & Joan depicts the famously warring stars, in adjacent dressing rooms, between takes on the set of *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*. While Joan Crawford manages her anxiety by lacing her Pepsi with vodka and signing photographs for her beloved fans, Bette Davis chain smokes and muses on her lovelife, and her ability to pick a decent script, never a decent man. Behind the bitching and the practical jokes we see each woman's insecurities and regrets, and their rivalry is revealed to be underpinned by grudging respect as they attempt to identify their new roles in life as well as in their careers.

Director **Steven Scase** is no stranger to Norwich theatre, having acted and directed many times at the Maddermarket, and more recently stepped on to the Sewell Barn stage in *Three Russian Encounters* (2021). He is delighted to be making his directorial debut with us, working with two highly regarded local actors: **Julie Hewitt** plays Joan Crawford and **Alison Utting** plays Bette Davis. They are seen here at their readthrough, and look forward very much to the rehearsal process.



Cleaner required

The Sewell Barn Theatre needs a part time cleaner to start work at the end of February if at all possible. The job involves cleaning the foyer, bar, toilets and auditorium before and during the runs of our 8 productions which are staged from October to July each year. This amounts to approximately 10-12 hours' work per production. Competitive rates of pay plus two complementary tickets for each show. Please contact foh@sewellbarn.org if you're interested.

What's on in Norwich

The Norwich Players at the Maddermarket Theatre

Pride and Prejudice

by Jane Austen | adapted and directed by Sabrina Poole

Tuesday 19 – Saturday 23 March 19:30, Saturday 23 March 14:30

Austen's beloved tale of first impressions is brought to the stage with all the wit and humour of the original story.

The Bennet girls must marry and marry well to secure their futures. So, when Mr Bingley – a man with everything to recommend him – enters the neighbourhood there is cause for excitement. He brings with him his friend Mr Darcy. But good looks and a large fortune aren't sufficient for Lizzy Bennet to overlook Mr Darcy's pride and conceit; not least when he slights her at a ball, and she is not one to forgive and forget. Thrown together by circumstance, the two verbally spar, and it would seem that Lizzy may well have come up against her match, but is there more to Mr Darcy than she first thought...?



<https://maddermarket.co.uk/event/pride-and-prejudice/>

Drama Mavericks at The Garage

God of Carnage

by Yasmina Reza | directed by David Lester

15-16 April 2024 at 19:45



A gripping and darkly comic play that dives into the complexities of human nature and relationships.

When two sets of parents meet to discuss a physical altercation between their sons, what begins as a civilised conversation quickly devolves into chaos. With sharp dialogue and unexpected twists, the play exposes the thin veneer of civility that masks our baser instincts. This Laurence Olivier Best Comedy and Tony Award-winning masterpiece by Yasmina Reza is a must-see, offering a mix of laughter and thought-provoking drama that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Don't miss the chance to witness the explosive dynamics and raw emotions of *God of Carnage*.

There is a special £7.50 ticket offer for those under 25 years - please obtain the promo code voucher from dramamavericks@gmail.com. This is an amateur production, presented by newly formed, Norwich based, Drama

Mavericks. (As regular members will recognise, several familiar Barn faces are taking part in this exciting new project.)

www.thegarage.org.uk/shows/god-of-carnage/