LEWES THEATRE CLUB
Newsletter No.42 FEBRUARY 2013

the diva in me

by
charlotte jones
directed by joyce fisher

Saturday 9 March to Saturday 16 March 2013
at 7.45 pm except Sundays
Matinee Saturday 16 March at 2.45 pm

Editor's notes

It was good to see young people on the stage again in *Shakepeare's R&J*. They brought a fresh approach and had high energy. We will be seeing more of the Youth Theatre group this season with their contribution to Cafe Theatre Sundays on 24 March. Tea will be provided by the young actors and their parents.

Welcome back too to the multi-talented team of Sue Bain, Edmund Jenner and Jack Wilkinson who are presenting two Cafe Theatre Sundays in the auditorium for two consecutive Sundays, 7 & 14 April. Sally Jenner will be providing her usual wonderful tea on both occasions. The next production, *The Diva in Me*, is an opportunity for one of our favourite actors to demonstrate her talent in a one woman show – our best wishes go to Meg Depla-Lake in this demanding role.

Micheal Turner

michealturner@btinternet.com

Shakespeare's R&J

IN THIS ISSUE...

3 PREVIEW *The Diva in Me*

4 REVIEW *Shakespeare's R&J*

6 DIRECTOR'S NOTES

7 OBITUARY JimTucker

8 CAFE THEATRE SUNDAYS

9 AUDITION *Sunshine Boys*

10 LETTERS

11 ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION

12 BOOKING FORM

DIARY DATES

PERFORMANCES

The Diva in Me
9 - 16 March

Entertaining Angels
25 May - 1 June

AUDITIONS
The Sunshine Boys
23 March 10.30 am

CAFE THEATRE
7 & 14 April 2.45 pm.

YOUTH THEATRE
24 March 2.45 pm.

PREVIEW

the diva in me

by Charlotte Jones, directed by Joyce Fisher

Over a year ago Meg Depla-Lake and I independently came across *The Diva in Me*. Meg saw it at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne and I heard it in a radio version. Meg immediately 'dreamed a dream' that she might one day perform it and I felt I'd love to direct her in it, following our collaboration on *Noel and Gertie* in 2010-11. We came together in our mutual enthusiasm with some astonishment and started to plan a possible small scale, maybe touring production. When permission for my projected production of Harold Pinter's *Birthday Party* was refused, Pat, our Artistic Director, uttered the fateful words, "What about your Diva play?" Meanwhile I had got to know Charlotte Jones socially and from her had received both the script and encouraging words. "Yes", I replied ,"if you can find me a pianist". I thought that would be the end of the matter, but within two days Roger Roser, who played for our *Oh What a Lovely War* and *Privates on Parade*, had been approached and agreed to come on board, and the rest as they say, is history. Working with these two talented and enthusiastic performers has been a sheer joy, as we explore the story of Philippa, the single mother from Coventry with the soul of a diva, who punctuates the sad, funny and poignant story of her life with the songs of her diva of the moment, be it Maria, Edith, Billie, Liza or Amy. She is guided to her final kind of triumph by Judy Garland, her most powerful muse and constant diva companion, who shows Philippa that "a diva is only a diva when she has found her audience. She is nothing without them."

Meg has embraced the huge challenge of the part of Philippa with delight and gusto. Keith Gilbert has designed an imaginative setting and the stalwart backstage crew is in the capable hands of Sue Tait.
We all hope that we have found our audience. Please come and share our enjoyment of this heart -warming play which shows that dreams can come true if you persevere and 'follow the yellow brick road'. We hope to see you there.

Joyce Fisher, Director

Evening performances at 7.45pm. Matinee at 2.45pm on Saturday 16 March.
THE BOX OFFICE 01273 474826 will be open daily except Sundays from Monday 4 March to Saturday 16 March from 10.30 am until noon and from 7pm to 7.30pm. Postal bookings received before the Box Office opening period will be given priority. Tickets not paid for 15 minutes before the performance is timed to start may be resold.

In any case seats booked in advance but not taken up must be paid for if not resold.

REVIEW Shakespeare's R & J

Joe Calarco's 1990s award winning reworking of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was originally written to be performed by young actors. This would have echoed the Shakespearean theatre world in which young boys often performed the female parts. Calarco adds another layer by using that device because it strengthens the intrinsic forbidden love theme of *Romeo and Juliet* for a modern day audience. In this production Chris Weber-Brown uses a cast of young actresses which, although possibly making it less of a muscular and earthy experience, nevertheless does highlight the pathos and pain of a love that dare not speak its name. It also accentuates the place of young women trying to find an identity in an adult world.

Set in the 1950s in a girl's Catholic school, the suffocating constrictions and conventions echo the forbidden emotions, yearnings and conflict of Romeo and Juliet's teenage lives. So a parallel is drawn between the school's control and the parental control that Juliet has to obey. But more than that, in this play, illicit love arises not from the hatred between two families but between two school girls coming to terms with their sexuality. The school girls find a copy of Shakespeare's text and act it out, using the play's eroticism as a cover for their own emerging desires.

At the beginning and end of the play Calarco weaves in some Shakespeare sonnets and speeches from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This highlights the wish fulfilment for a more open, free flowing environment, and hints at the intoxicating element which is so much part of teenage fantasies and imaginative life.

The satisfyingly plain black box set by Gerry Cortese, embellished only by the religious school emblem projected on the backcloth, set up the austerity of the school environment and served Calarco's aim of stripping back *Romeo and Juliet* to the simplicity of its central emotional core. The six actresses, all in their regulation grey sexless school uniforms and scraped back hair, were the perfect embodiment of girls on the cusp of womanhood. The act of taking off their ties and jumpers at the start of the second half appropriately ramped up the energy and drive of the passion of the play as it develops.

REVIEW Shakespeare's R & J

This cast of six young actresses were chosen from a number of girls from various schools and colleges who attended a series of workshops studying this play during the summer at LLT. Chris Weber-Brown then started rehearsing with them in November. The time and commitment put in by both director and cast was very apparent. Unfortunately, when I saw the production on Monday night the theatre was not very full (possibly due to terrible weather) but despite that, the cast did not drop their attention or energy levels at all. *Romeo and Juliet* is one of Shakespeare's most poetic plays - even the servants speak poetically - and it is a big ask for any actor. The cast made good sense and use of the verse in a way that would have been impossible if they had not had full control of the meaning. Proving the point that Shakespeare is not an intellectual art all about perfect diction or a perceived RSC/BBC accent, but that it is about intent and inhabiting the life of the characters through the richness of the language.

This production is a truly ensemble piece where, even when not performing, all the cast are present on stage watching the action. Therefore there is nowhere to hide. The generosity and support of the cast for their fellow performers was palpable.

This was a refreshing and worthwhile choice for LLT. It was presented by truthful, intelligent and hardworking actresses led by their director, Chris Weber-Brown, with care and clarity. And yes, it did freshen up my *Romeo and Juliet* experience. Calarco's careful reworking vividly brings to life the universal truths of Shakespeare's play with added resonance for today's world. As we left the theatre the audience were very appreciative of the work of these 21st Century actresses and their director.

Lucie Fitchett

Club Director's notes

A January – February production often causes difficulties weather-wise. This year was no exception. In the weeks before the production of *Shakespeare's R & J,* the cast and backstage crew all turned up for rehearsals, battling in the snow, with most of them living outside Lewes. Luckily we did not have to cancel any performances as conditions had improved by the opening night. The young cast worked hard under Chris Weber-Brown's guidance achieving good ensemble playing.

The costumes and music certainly took me back to my schooldays. The skirts had to be made by the ladies of the wardrobe, as today school skirts are considerably shorter. Sometimes costumes have to be made so anyone with sewing skills is particularly welcome to join us.

Our next production is 9-16 March, *The Diva In Me*, featuring Meg Depla-Lake with Roger Roser at the piano. Joyce Fisher is directing this play by Charlotte Jones, who wrote the very successful *Humble Boy* which we put on in 2006 directed by Nicholas Betteridge.

The Youth Theatre will be performing again in the Foyer for a Café Sunday on 24 March. Tea will be provided by the young actors and their parents.

Jack Wilkinson and Ed Jenner with Sue Bain at the piano will perform in the auditorium for two consecutive Sundays, 7 & 14 April. Sally Jenner will be providing her usual wonderful tea on both occasions.

We have started to discuss next season which is our 75th Anniversary.

We have already had a setback with one choice of play. Unfortunately amateur companies are suffering because plays are being withdrawn by agents. We used to be able to plan the programme a year ahead, but now we have to wait some time before being granted licences. In the past year we have been unable to get *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter, as it was withdrawn. We waited until recently to get permission to perform *The Sunshine Boys*, and Derek Watts who wished to direct *Journey's End* in 2014 has to think again as this play has been withdrawn, "for the foreseeable future". As 2014 is the Anniversary of WW1 then most of the plays written about the war will be in the hands of the professional theatres.

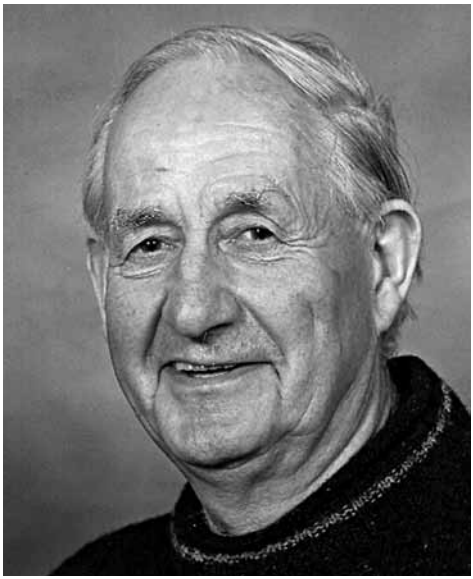
I think we are very lucky to have been granted permission by Charlotte Jones to perform her play. With all good wishes.

Pat Shrimpton

OBITUARY
Jim Tucker

Jim Tucker was a farmer, painter, glider instructor, and, for the theatre, the Stage Director from the late 1980s until 2002. He came to the Club in the 1980/81 season.

Jim was born into a farming family in Gloucestershire and the family came to Sussex, to a farm in Chailey as 'milk prices were better'. He recalled how the whole farm came to Chailey by train. He left school at thirteen and a half and by fifteen was running the farm as his father was unwell. Later in 1958 he set up his own farm in Chailey and remained there, with his wife Cecily, bringing up three children, until he retired. He was a stalwart member of the local NFU and, unknown to many, a glider pilot and chief instructor at Parham airfield. He also was an accomplished watercolour artist. Sadly Jim's wife Cecily, who was a well known figure in the local Conservative Party, died not long after he retired from farming and for the latter part of his life he lived alone in a cottage in North Chailey.



During his years as Stage Director, Jim had a major input in over 80 productions, designing many of them, although his contribution to the theatre was much greater than that. He spent many hours in the theatre assisting in general maintenance and served on many committees. Above all he was a very lovely person and had considerable interpersonal skills which cooled many an inflamed spirit in the hurly burly of backstage… that is, if you could understand him! Jim spoke with a very rapid Gloucestershire burr! Maybe this was the secret of his undoubted success in sorting out problems as you had to concentrate to find out what he was saying! What he said usually made very practical sense.

After Jim stepped down from the role of Stage Director he regularly helped at working parties and occasionally as Stage Manager. Unfortunately in the last few years he found that coming to the theatre saddened him as he was unable to assist physically and as he stated, he did not like 'sitting around'. He continued to draw and paint and also to visit many of his friends. I saw him two weeks before he died and we talked long about his farming, the theatre and his gliding. His warm personality will be sadly missed.

Don Funnell

with thanks to David Williams and Jo Cull

CAFE THEATRE

A Miscellany of Mirth

By Edmund Jenner, Jack Wilkinson and Susan Bain.
Sunday 7 April and Sunday 14, at 3.00pm
Followed by Tea

Following the success of our two Flanders & Swann shows, this time we are spreading our wings a bit. There will be a good helping of Flanders & Swann, familiar and less so, but there will be other songs, a poem and sketches from other sources including, amongst others, Tom Lehrer, Noel Coward and Gilbert & Sullivan. There will be guest appearances by Ann Thomas and Miles Jenner.
The show will take place in the main theatre and will be followed by tea in the foyer.

Ticket prices are £7 (including tea) or £3 for the show only.
You can book by post or telephone to the box office in the usual way. The box office itself will be open before and during the run of *The Diva in Me*. See page 3 and back page for dates and times.
We do hope you will be able to join us for what we hope will be another afternoon of fun and laughter. There will be a limit of 40 people for tea after each performance, so please book early if you require tea.

YOUTH THEATRE

Members of the Youth Theatre group will be presenting a programme of readings and monologues in the foyer on Sunday 24 March at 2.45 pm.
This will be followed by a tea prepared by the young people and their parents

AUDITION ALERT AUDITION ALERT

the sunshine boys

by Neil Simon directed by Jenny Lloyd Lyons
Saturday 20 July - Saturday 27 July 2013

Audition Saturday 23 March 2013 at 10.30 am in the theatre foyer.

Neil Simon, best known for *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple*, tells the story of a Vaudeville double act, Willie Clark and Al Lewis, who performed together for over forty years despite bitter rivalry. Willie's nephew, Ben, is an agent and brings the news that CBS television are interested in screening a "History of Comedy" retrospective, but this would mean a reunion with his partner Al who he has fallen out with. Ben does not have an easy time persuading him, but Neil Simon's dry, Jewish wit is ever present. One of their most well known sketches, The Doctor, provides an opportunity for other characters: a stage manager, a patient and a buxom nurse (hired for all the wrong reasons)!
The play ends with Al and Willie together again but not in the way they had intended. This is a wonderful opportunity especially for two, mature male actors to demonstrate a range of emotion, and some lovely supporting roles.

Cast

Willie Clark	70s Never off stage, irascible, witty, a kid at heart with a temper.
Al Lewis	70s. Apparently calmer, the "peacemaker" but also shows a range of personality traits including his share of child-like petulance.
Ben	Willie's nephew 30-50. Earnest, gets easily exasperated with Willie for totally understandable reasons.
Patient	Ageless. Doctor sketch only. Small, fun role, lots of laughs.
Nurse	Young. Doctor sketch only. Buxom, with many opportunities for stereotypical "blonde" wit.
Eddie asst. director	Young. Doctor sketch only. Always appears with head set, trailing wires, trying to keep the whole thing together.
Registered Nurse	54ish. A lovely scene with Willie both trying to outwit each other. Very dry sense of humour, and eats lots of chocolates!

Scripts are available from Chris Weber-Brown email, chriswb16@hotmail.com
If you have any queries about the play or would like information about audition pieces, please contact me, Jenny Lloyd Lyons - email, jennylloydlyons@gmail.com or call my mobile 07864 565153.

READERS' LETTERS

Dear Sir,
The Browning Version,
I saw this play on 1 December and just had to write. Please pass on my compliments to Cathryn Parker and her dedicated cast and crew on an outstanding production. The set was well designed for clarity, period and ease of movement and of course the lights and music were effectively chosen and complemented the mood. The cast worked as a strong ensemble and the newcomer, Jake Croeger, created a very believable Taplow.
Congratulations must go to Peter Wellby for his interpretation of Crocker-Harris. "The Crock" was a demonstration of a strongly drawn but understated character, creating and maintaining the tensions within the play - a memorable performance.
This was production not to have missed. Thank you.

Kaye T Smith

The Editor, LLT Newsletter
Sir, I was delighted to find myself featuring in both the 30 and the 15 years ago photographs in the foyer during the wonderful production of *Shakespeare's R & J.* If only I had lied about my age and got a part in *Animal Farm*, then I could have had the full set. Have any of my fellow more mature members achieved the hat-trick of 30 years, 15 years and most recent productions? To make it even more difficult in future, can I suggest that the 4th side of the display boards be given over to the forthcoming production? We really should advertise the coming play as part of the foyer displays, especially now that many non-members come who do not have the advantages of viewing your splendid publication.

Dudley Ward

Our reviewer Lucie Fitchett sent this short biog in to enlighten our readers.

I trained as an actress at The Arts Education Drama School in the Barbican.
I co-founded The Magnificent Theatre Company. Our productions toured middle, large scale and London theatres including the Lillian Baylis Theatre and the Young Vic. We were invited to the Royal Shakespeare Company Visitors Season in Stratford upon Avon with our acclaimed revival of the restoration play *Sir Courtly Nice.* As an actress I have worked with directors including Mike Leigh, Ken Loach, Mark Ravenhill and Brian Clarke *Whose Life is it Anyway?* TV includes *The Bill*, *Eastenders, Holby City, Doctors* and *Grange Hill.* I have recorded numerous Radio 4 drama productions and documentary voice overs.
In 2010 I co-wrote and produced the play *Could it be Forever?* receiving 5 star reviews at The Edinburgh Festival. At present a producer is developing it for touring and a London run.
I am also a qualified Forum Theatre practitioner having trained with the celebrated Nobel Peace Prize nominee Augusto Boal whose work as a writer, director and innovator has helped numerous groups around the world in empowerment work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Calendar Girls

The latest total of collections plus profit on calendars for the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research Fund is £433.80.

Mobility Requirements

We want your visit to Lewes Little Theatre to be as comfortable as possible, therefore if you use a walking aid, e.g. stick, wheelchair, walking trolley or you have any other mobility requirements, please tell us at the time of booking, or give us as much notice as possible before your attendance date. We regret that if we are not told of your requirements ahead of your visit we may not be able to accommodate you on the day.

INFORMATION

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £10 Double £16
Over 60s, Student & Juniors £6 Double £10
ADMISSION PRICES Evenings £8.
Matinées £6

THE FALSTAFF CLUB
Anthony Jenner Bar, all L.T.C. members are automatically members. The Bar is open before, during and after all evening performances and on special Club social occasions. Interval drinks may be ordered in advance.

THE NEWSLETTER
Published before each production. Contributions in the form of articles or correspondence are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX.

MEMBERSHIP
Applications should be sent to the Membership Secretary. Acting Membership involves no extra subscription. Members wishing to act are invited to attend auditions announced in the Newsletters.

CAR PARKING
Limited space at the theatre is available to those with disabilities. Municipal Car Parks, close by in Brook Street and the Needlemakers Centre, are open free of charge after 6pm.

THE WORKING PARTY
This hard-working group undertakes set building, costume, repairs and maintenance, both inside and out, meeting every Tuesday evening.

THE WARDROBE
Hiring of costumes – phone the Wardrobe Team. Alison 479471 Kate Palmer 472622 or Gerry 479432 ten days before to make an appointment. Deposit required.

DISABLED PEOPLE
Members who have difficulty negotiating stairs and steps may enter the Theatre by the former entrance on the east side of the building. Seating close to this entrance is in Rows G9-11, H10-12 and J5-7. We can accommodate one wheelchair at certain performances. For details, ask at the Box Office. A disabled persons' toilet is located between the two main doors to the Auditorium. A fully operational induction loop has been installed. Aids should be adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

OFFICERS
Chairman Joanne Cull
Director Pat Shrimpton
Treasurer Bob Leeds
General Secretary Derek Watts
Membership Secretary Nick Cooper

the diva in me

OPENING
Saturday 9 March 2013
7.45pm

BOOK NOW

NAME .....

MEMBER NO .....

ADDRESS .....

TEL DAY ..... TEL EVE .....

Please complete the form legibly and send it with remittance and S.A.E. to Box Office, Lewes Little Theatre, Lancaster St. Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2PX. Cheques should always be made payable to LEWES THEATRE CLUB.
TELEPHONE BOOKINGS: 01273 474826. See page 3 for Box Office hours.

PLAYS	Preferred Date	Alt. Date	Matinee or Evening	No. of seats	Preferred location	**Total**
The Diva in Me			Evening £8.00			
The Diva in Me		X	Matinee £6.00			
Cafe Theatre + tea 7 April		X	£7.00			
Cafe Theatre no tea 7 April		X	£3.00			
Cafe Theatre + tea 14 April		X	£7.00			
Cafe Theatre no tea 14 April		X	£3.00			
Youth Theatre + Tea		X	£7.00			
Youth Theatre no Tea		X	£3.00			
Entertaining Angels			Evening £8.00			
Entertaining Angels		X	Matinee £6.00			

Grand Total

Please note. If the Box Office is able to fulfil only part of a request, a refund may be collected from the Box Office during opening hours. Alternatively, members may prefer to enclose either separate cheques or an open cheque crossed with a maximum amount.