



LEWES THEATRE CLUB
Newsletter No.44 June 2013



**The
Sunshine Boys**

by
Neil Simon

directed by
Jenny Lloyd Lyons

Saturday 20 July to Saturday 27 2013
at 7.45 pm except Sundays
Matinee Saturday 27 July at 2.45 pm

www.lewestheatre.org

Editor's notes

Welcome to the summer – we have had a few warm days and people's moods have improved. *Entertaining Angels* was a sunny play – all set in a garden – with dark undertones. It was a pleasure to watch and unusual to have four women and only one man in a play. Well done Adrian Bowd, cast and backstage team for presenting a funny and engaging piece.

We had a struggle to get permission to perform our next play, *The Sunshine Boys*, so soon after its sell out West End run, but Jenny Lloyd Lyons has put together a talented cast and rehearsals are in progress. Make sure you book for this end of season dazzler.

Our Announcements section contains several interesting items including advance notice of plays being performed next season, our 75th.

I would like to thank Jack Wilkinson who stepped in at the last minute when I was taken ill in April and helped put together the last newsletter – thanks Jack!

Micheal Turner

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The Sunshine Boys in rehearsal

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DIARY DATES

PERFORMANCES

The Sunshine Boys

20 July - 27 July

Crime and Punishment

12 - 19 October

Dostoevsky Lecture

20 September

AUDITIONS

Gosforth's Fete

17 August 10.30 am - foyer

Volunteers' Lunch

29 June 12.30 pm

AGM

Tuesday 24 September

PREVIEW

The Sunshine Boys

by Neil Simon directed by Jenny Lloyd Lyons

The Sunshine Boys is a comedy by Neil Simon set in the early days of television. A Vaudevillian double act is reunited for a television special on the history of comedy, despite years of bitter rivalry between them. As the producers and their families struggle to even get them in the same room, the cantankerous performers' feud is reignited as they perform their famous comedy routine one last time.

You may well be familiar with the successful 1975 film with Walter Matthau and George Burns for which George Burns won an Oscar. Woody Allen was originally asked to direct the film but he was more interested in playing the role of Lewis and declined the offer. Twenty years later, he would be cast as Lewis in a television adaptation with Peter Falk.

However, we are proud to present the Tony Potter and Nigel Sharpe version for Lewes Theatre Club to round off the season with a laugh. They are well supported by Mark Pelham, last seen at Lewes in that excellent production of *The Arsonists*, and Hannah Wilson, Douglas Wragg, Jenny Cook, Keith Gilbert and Belinda Sharpe.

Little bit of trivia about the 1975 film - initially, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby were proposed for the leads, but Neil Simon was opposed to the idea, as he felt the roles required Jewish comedians. Several actors, including Groucho Marx and Phil Silvers were also considered and the roles eventually were given to real-life vaudevillian veterans Red Skelton and Jack Benny. However, both dropped out leaving the way clear for Matthau and Burns.

Incidentally, Neil Simon is said to have based Lewis and Clark on a real Vaudeville duo – Smith and Dale who were known for “The Doctor and his one surviving patient!” YouTube does have one of their sketches *The Fireman's Sketch*.

Jenny Lloyd Lyons
Director

Evening performances at 7.45pm. Matinee at 2.45pm on Saturday 27 July.
THE BOX OFFICE 01273 474826 will be open daily except Sundays from Monday 15 July to Saturday 17 July 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 Entertaining Angels



Playwright Richard Everett began his career in 1970 as a professional actor, making regular appearances on TV, in the theatre and in films such as the 70s cult classic *If...* starring Malcolm McDowell. He is now the author of eight produced stage plays which have been published and translated into several languages, and are regularly performed in the UK and abroad. *Entertaining Angels*, starring Penelope Keith, opened the Chichester Festival season in 2006 and has had successful UK tours. It opens in the autumn of this year in New Zealand. Richard has also written plays for BBC Radio 4 and scripts for animation.

The phrase “entertaining angels” refers to the practice of treating all guests - be they kings or peasants - as if they were visiting angels which is a challenge set to Christians. Playwright Richard Everett is clearly a practising Christian. On the Dean of Guildford Cathedral’s website there is an interview with him and a piece he wrote about a modern day

soldier being visited by Jesus after his resurrection.

Entertaining Angels is a play about faith, loss, family secrets, confession and forgiveness. These painful, thought-provoking themes are played out against the seeming calmness of suburbia, set in an English country garden (in this production well designed and executed by Adrian Bowd and his crew).

In one of many funny and perceptive lines, recently bereaved vicar’s wife Grace sums up her life so far, “I’ve made four thousand six hundred medium-sized quiches and personally baked two tons of light crust pastry. And for what?” As she contemplates her life of devotion and duty, she wonders what the future holds and, unable to move on, talks to her dead husband Bardy who appears in his beloved garden mostly via the potting shed. ChrysTarr in this challenging role, made it all her own. This is a compliment in the wake of Penelope Keith, the original Grace, whose trademark voice I couldn’t help hearing during this

REVIEW Entertaining Angels

production, almost as though the play had been written for her. I liked her spiky, no holds barred quality very much, and it was interesting to experience the empathy an audience can have with a character as divisive and angry as Grace is during her journey. It paid off when Grace finally found the strength to forgive and move on. Congratulations to director Adrian Bowd and ChrysTarr for pulling this off.

The new female vicar Sarah arrives to view her home and reveals her own personal traumas to Grace's daughter and struggles with whether she is ready to take up her first ministry. Kirrily Long was funny, touching and totally believable as Sarah who, having had an affair and abortion when newly married, subsequently learnt what real forgiveness meant from her husband.



Grace's daughter Jo, a counsellor, is going through marital problems while being exasperated and upset by her mother's bitterness as she mourns her father, Bardy. Lindsey Holledge whose work I enjoyed in *Flarepath* and *Importance of Being Earnest* is always watchable and truthful. She was a calm and convincing intermediary between

the sibling madness of her mother and aunt while juggling her own grief and problems.

The return of Grace's earthy missionary sister Ruth who lives in Africa and uses her faith in a very different world of 'Aids, abortion and domestic carnage', leads to the disturbing revelation that Ruth and Grace's beloved husband Bardy had a brief liason which produced a son now 30 years old. As is later revealed, Grace finds this particularly upsetting as she miscarried a son around the same time. Dilly Barlow was perfectly cast as Ruth - quirky, warm and truthful with a playful, mischievous side - the perfect foil for her controlled sister Grace.



Graham Stapley had the perfect quality for Bardy, the English vicar, whose calm, spiritual, empathetic exterior is to the fore while he counsels his bereaved wife and helps her let go so he can (literally) leave his beloved garden. Graham's talent for light comedy meant he served the script well. He also captured the confusion of a man who had struggled to do the right and Christian thing in his own personal life.

In reviews *Entertaining Angels* has been likened to Ayckbourn plays. Indeed it

Entertaining Angels



is a very cleverly constructed play with real heart, authenticity and lots of well written humour. It was clear that this play really resonated with the audience. A woman behind me was there for a second night running. Adrian Bowd and his cast brought out the themes of the piece as well as the intricacies of the relationships and did justice to the comic writing. I really enjoyed this production.

Lucie Fitchett

AUDITION ALERT AUDITION ALERT

Gosforth's Fete

by Alan Ayckbourn, co-directed by Keith Gilbert & Adrian Bowd
 Performance Dates 30 November to 7 December
 Audition Date Saturday 17 August at 10.30 am Theatre Foyer

Gosforth's Fete is a one-act play and part of Ayckbourn's *Confusions* which will be performed as part of a double bill with the Youth Theatre Group's *Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

Publican Gordon Gosforth is running the local fete; he is being assisted by Milly Carter, with whom he has been having a secret liaison. Their liaison is revealed to all and sundry in a most unfortunate manner, which her fiancé Stewart Stokes, the local scoutmaster does not appreciate. Despite the sympathies of the vicar, he tries to drown his sorrows. Against this chaotic backdrop the special guest speaker, Councillor Mrs Pearce, tries her best to deliver (unsuccessfully) her well-rehearsed speech. As one might expect, notwithstanding everyone's best intentions, it all goes hilariously wrong. This is one of Ayckbourn's funniest plays.

Cast

- Milly** - mid 30's A local teacher, rather timid, overawed by Gosforth.
- Mrs Pearce** - age non-specific, but older than Milly, a local councillor full of her own importance.
- Gosforth** - 40 - 60 a driving force, full of self-confidence until it all starts to go wrong.
- Vicar** - age non-specific, tries his best to be helpful - unsuccessfully.
- Stewart** - mid 30s upwards, Scoutmaster and Milly's fiancé. Weak and ineffectual

**For any further information, or for a copy of the script, contact Adrian Bowd
 adrian.bowd@talktalk.net or 07815 646366
 or Don Funnell at the theatre**

PREVIEW

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Our 75th Season opens with an award-winning adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* by Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus. Originally produced at the Writers' Theatre in America, one review described it as "stunningly lean, taut and emotionally searing...a work of theatre that never feels like a condensation of a seminal 500-page novel, but rather has the swift, sharp impact of a blow from an axe."

Our production will run between 12 and 19 October. As a prelude, on Friday 20 September at 7.45 pm Dr. Sarah J Young of University College, London, will lecture at the theatre. She is the UK representative on the International Dostoyevsky Society and has written extensively on his works.

Please put these dates in your diary. Many have expressed interest - including staff at the Russian Embassy in London - and we hope to start the new season in style. Further details will follow.

Cast

Raskolnikov - Jonny Fitzpatrick
pictured

Porfiry - Nick Betteridge

Sonia - Jennifer Henley

Directed by Miles Jenner



Club Director's notes

We are coming to the end of our 2012-13 season with Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys*. Jenny Lloyd Lyons has assembled an excellent cast and crew to match. Backstage volunteers are busy making, erecting and painting the set, gathering props, plotting the lighting and acquiring and fitting the costumes.

I do hope that this play, a classic comedy, will be well supported by our members.

We were all surprised but delighted to hear that the Theatre has been awarded the District 2 Drama Accolade by the NODA South East Region, Accolades of Excellence 2012 for our October production of *Calendar Girls*. Our thanks are due to Sandra Tomlinson, the cast and crew of this production.

Next season is an important one as it is the Theatre's 75th Anniversary and we are making plans to celebrate the event.

12 to 19 October

Miles Jenner, the director of *Crime and Punishment* adapted from the novel by Dostoyevsky, is already generating interest and publicity for this production. As the play is somewhat shorter than the novel, he is also presenting *Polly Honeycombe* by George Coleman, a Georgian afterpiece, which he hopes to take on tour in 2014, as he did with *Noel and Gertie*.

30 November to 7 December

The Youth Theatre will present *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, adapted by Glyn Robbins in a double bill with Adrian Bowd directing Alan Ayckbourn's *Gosforth's Fete*.

1 to 8 February

The first play of the New Year is *My Boy Jack* by David Haig directed by Mike Turner. We feel it is very appropriate as it harks back to 1914 and the anniversary of the First World War and is a very moving piece of theatre.

29 March to 5 April

Nick Betteridge makes a welcome return as a director with *Richard III*. This should prove to be a popular, topical choice considering the King's appearance in a council car-park. I wonder how many people have noticed the drawing of Richard III by Clive Francis which has been on the wall for several years, just inside the entrance of the theatre? Have a look next time you come in.

24 to 31 May

Derek Watts gave me a list of several plays, however once again, the rights were withheld for all amateurs. This practice by the agents is extremely frustrating for us. Derek decided to direct Alan Bennett's *Enjoy* - I hope you will.

19 to 26 July

Gini Comyns makes her debut here as a director with *Time of My Life*, by Alan Ayckbourn. Gini was in *Calendar Girls*. She appears in the calendar as Miss January, wearing little except Marigolds and wielding a washing-up brush.

There will be five Café Sundays, two performed by the Youth Theatre.

Many thanks to all our volunteers and members for their support of Lewes Theatre Club.

Pat Shrimpton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual General Meeting

As the last AGM held in September 2012 was not quorate, you may remember we had to hold another Special Meeting on Tuesday 29 May. This was well attended and at a follow-up committee meeting, we thought that instead of holding the next AGM on a Saturday it might be more convenient for our members to meet on a weekday, therefore our AGM

will be held on Tuesday, 24 September 2013 at 8.00 pm.

The Falstaff Club will meet beforehand at 7.30 pm.

Would members wishing to put questions to the committee in AOB please write your questions in advance and send them to

Derek Watts
General Secretary.

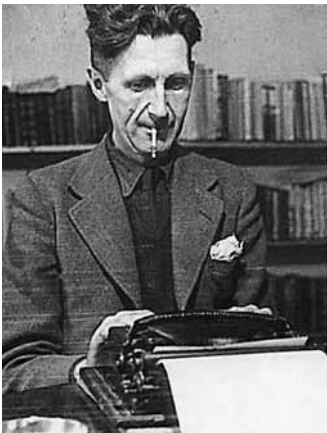
TELL US YOUR MEMORIES

Next season is our 75th anniversary, and we are looking at the possibility of producing a book about theatre in Lewes, and having one or two Café Sundays full of reminiscences about the theatre. We may also convert these memories into a booklet.

If you have any interesting, amusing or poignant memories of the theatre, especially from the earlier years, please get in touch with us.

Any documents or photos you have will also be very helpful. We can copy or scan these at the theatre and give them back to you. If you are willing, we would also like to record any stories you may be able to tell us.

Please write to Joanne Cull at the theatre or email her at joanne.cull.cull@btinternet.com.



George Orwell

Miles Jenner has said that he would like to reprise his presentation on *The Life and Works of George Orwell* later in the year. Watch this space for further details.

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.

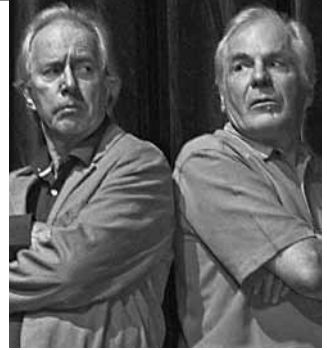
OFFICERS

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



*The
Sunshine Boys
in rehearsal*

The Sunshine Boys



OPENING

Saturday 20 July 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 Sunshine Boys			Evening £8.00			
The Sunshine Boys		X	Matinee £6.00			
Crime and Punishment			Evening £8.00			
Crime and Punishment		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.