



LEWES THEATRE CLUB
Newsletter No.43 May 2013

Entertaining Angels

by Richard Everett

directed by

Adrian Bowd

Saturday 25 May to Saturday 1 June 2013
at 7.45 pm except Sundays
Matinee Saturday 1 June at 2.45 pm

www.lewestheatre.org

Editor's notes

What a tour de force *The Diva in Me* was. Meg gave the performance of a lifetime and critics and audiences alike were full of praise. What a pity the inclement weather – including snow and ice – meant we had to cancel one performance. One person shows, of little known plays, always have difficulty in drawing a full house but I suspect that Meg would have had much bigger audiences if the weather had been better. At present T.S. Eliot's description of April as 'the cruellest month' seems to be appropriate. Let's hope that 'the winter of discontent', will become 'glorious summer' in May for Adrian Bowd's production of *Entertaining Angels* a comedy about marriage.

Micheal Turner

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The Diva in Me

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 3 PREVIEW** *Entertaining Angels*
- 4 REVIEW** *The Diva in Me*
- 6 NODA Review** *The Diva in Me*
- 7 REVIEW** Cafe Theatre
- 8 REVIEW** Youth Theatre
- 9 AUDITION ALERT**
Crime & Punishment
- 10 DIRECTOR'S NOTES**
- 12 LEWES THEATRE NEEDS YOU**
- 14 WELCOME TO
THE SILVER SCREEN**
- 15 ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND INFORMATION**
- 16 BOOKING FORM**

DIARY DATES

PERFORMANCES

Entertaining Angels
25 May - 1 June

The Sunshine Boys
20 July - 27 July

AUDITIONS

Crime & Punishment
23 March 10.30 am - Foyer

AGM

Tuesday 24 September

PREVIEW

Entertaining Angels

by Richard Everett directed by Adrian Bowd

As a clergy wife, Grace has spent a lifetime on her best behaviour. Now, following the death of her husband Bardolph, she is enjoying the new-found freedom to do and say exactly as she pleases. But the return of her eccentric missionary sister Ruth, together with some disturbing revelations from the past, forces Grace to confront the truth of her marriage. The sharp-edged comedy and probing wit of this play asks whether God can be trusted to do anything right at all, or is the whole thing a divine exercise in trial and error ?

Richard Everett's thought-provoking comedy was first staged in 2006 at Chichester. The version that you will see here at Lewes was first performed at The Theatre Royal Bath in 2009, with Penelope Keith in the lead role of Grace. The production was very well received, the *Daily Telegraph* writing "An evening of pleasure, a funny, touching, and genuinely thought-provoking comedy", while the *Sunday Times* said "Richard

Everett has written a warm, glowing, serious comedy, like an Ayckbourn play finished by J.M.Barrie". The play went on to complete two sell-out UK tours.

The cast includes two newcomers to Lewes, Chrys Tarr and Graham Stapley, and also some more familiar faces with Dilly Barlow, Lindsey Holledge and Kirrily Long. I count myself very fortunate to have been able to assemble such an experienced and highly competent cast, and feel confident they will get the best out of this well written play, presenting the audiences with an absorbing and enjoyable evening's entertainment. Well worth the trip to the Theatre!

Adrian Bowd
Director

Evening performances at 7.45pm. Matinee at 2.45pm on Saturday 1 June.

THE BOX OFFICE 01273 474826 will be open daily except Sundays from Monday 20 May to Saturday 1 June 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

the diva in me



Multi award winning playwright Charlotte Jones was originally an actress who left the profession, reportedly, due to the obsession with physical appearance within the industry. Her first play *Airswimming* debuted in 1997 at The Battersea Arts Centre and since then she has had a number of writing successes including *Humble Boy* which began at the National Theatre and then played in the West End. She dramatised *A Woman in White* for Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical. She also writes for television.

Charlotte Jones wrote *The Diva in Me* in 2010 for her friend the actress/mimic Philippa Stanton. Originally it had one performance at The Brighton Festival and hit such a chord with the audience that it was remounted for the following festival and then toured. It was also produced as a Radio 4 play.

This one woman play begins with Philippa, a middle aged divorcee, spending Saturday night eating toast and fantasising about a young man from Southern Electric who comes to sort out her wiring. She then recounts

her life beginning in a West Midlands guest house run by her parents. She was clearly a little girl who wanted to be special and began singing in a local choir, encouraged by her grandfather. Philippa then goes to drama school, falls hopelessly and helplessly in love with a gay Welshman who becomes her soul mate, marries a Gene Kelly lookalike who proves to be a terrible mistake and has a son who she is left alone with when her marriage dissolves. Throughout her life she has managed difficult and mundane times by exercising her inner diva through song. During the play Philippa sings everything from Bjork, Amy Winehouse, Judy Garland, Shirley Bassey, Eartha Kitt and many more, expressing the inexpressible or buoying herself up by mimicking these larger than life stars singing larger than life songs. As Philippa says, later on in the play, 'If I do not sing it I do not feel it'.

Meg Depla-Lake, in the role of Philippa, had buckets of warmth, sincerity and candid, impish charm which carried us with her. This is, to use the words of Charlotte Jones, 'a virtuoso role which

REVIEW**the diva in me**

requires an awful lot of the performer' and Meg was relaxed and in control of the challenge. She communicated Philippa's personal story effectively and impersonated the characters that peopled her life with detail. I especially liked her inhabiting Shadwell, the gay Welshman she meets at drama school, who becomes a life-long friend and her version of her father attempting to control the comings and goings of the B and B she grew up in. Musically (as well as emotionally) this show is non-stop for the actress performing it. Meg did extremely well 'becoming' hugely famous divas with a multitude of different styles and voices. She worked seamlessly with her Pianist/Musical Director Roger Roser who played with sensitivity throughout.



I very much liked the set by Keith Gilbert and his team – a bedsit that housed all Philippa's worldly goods including her collection of cuddly toys, decorated a bit like a 1970s backstage dressing room. It reminded me of many a teenage bedroom which was apt for a character using imaginative fantasy to get through life.



However, I thought the play itself was a little thin. In the second half there is a very effective segment when Philippa's dear friend Shadwell commits suicide. Philippa recounts the events of his funeral and the reaction of his Welsh family who have not admitted that their son was 'the only gay in the village'. This emotionally strong scene, played perfectly by Meg, is well placed structurally and shows the depth of writing Charlotte Jones is clearly capable of. It would have been nice to see a bit more of that throughout the play.

Director Joyce Fisher clearly supported Meg Depla-Lake with expertise in what is a challenging role. Meg inhabited the stage with poise and confidence, keeping up her energy and concentration throughout. She left a very appreciative audience as she exited the stage. How rewarding it is that Joyce Fisher and LLT managed to get the amateur rights to this play at a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure well known plays.

Lucie Fitchett

REVIEW

the diva in me

Meg Depla-Lake's performance as Philippa in this one-woman play was an absolute tour de force – the reaction of the audience on the night I attended certainly confirmed this. I'm sure we all have an inner diva just below the surface and Charlotte Jones' clever writing gave us all food for thought.

Philippa is a fascinating character – very happy to come home on Saturday night to eat the toast she enjoyed so much - a quite ordinary girl but with a wonderful imagination. Meg took us through Philippa's divas in great style, performing their songs at will. She also brought to life the characters she had met during her life so far, including her father who preferred to speak to his family via his intercom and her wonderful gay boy friend who she met at drama college and who sadly eventually committed suicide – one of Philippa's great sadnesses. There were happy moments as well and we were all drawn into her life from the outset.

The accomplished Roger Roser accompanied Meg in Philippa's search for her divas from Edith Piaf to Amy Winehouse with many different voices in between including Judy Garland, Eartha Kitt, Maria Callas, Shirley Bassey and more.

Keith Gilbert's set design was fascinating – it was Philippa's home with a wonderfully imaginative backdrop and plenty of props to help tell this story which did have a happy and much more settled ending for her. Although only two people were on the stage, there were many more supporting roles backstage and director Joyce Fisher together with stage manager Sue Tait and their team

are to be congratulated on bringing this piece, originally written for the Brighton Festival, to the intimate surroundings of Lewes Little Theatre where it worked so well.

Brenda Gower
Regional Representative for the
National Operatic & Dramatic
Association



REVIEW**CAFE THEATRE**

Jack Wilkinson and Edmund Jenner's latest Café Sunday offering found them in more eclectic vein and, it must be said, since the scope of the material has widened, the appeal has worn rather more thin. There wasn't so much Flanders and Swann, which rendered the earlier selections so charmingly nostalgic.

This time Edmund took on Tom Lehrer, a uniquely American performer, and while the biting lyrics were there, Lehrer's panache and timbre weren't. There were excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan (always a problematic choice, I've found, unless done in costume and full chorus) and ventures in comic verse.

Miles Jenner contributed two precisely-delivered Noel Coward gems and gave us an object lesson in singing in public, a lesson not followed by many of his fellows: best to learn the words, I reckon. It looks rehearsed and it looks professional. With Ann Thomas, Miles delightfully re-created those archetypal 1930s screen lovers, Fiona and Charles from the classic 'Round The Horne', reminding us of the genius of Barry Took and Marty Feldman.

Susan Bain accompanied on piano in an afternoon which was very much like the curate's egg – good in parts. Bits were tasty, but the rest was noticeably underdone.

Derek Watts



YOUTH THEATRE

PREVIEW

The Youth Group have been working extremely hard each week devising, writing and rehearsing their monologues and duologues. With a little guidance we made sure that they had a sense of ownership with their pieces and let them discover which piece was suitable for them and that allowed them to discover the potential of characterisation in rehearsal and performance.

Along with atmospheric music played by members of the Youth Group, the students produced a well polished and entertaining performance with great respect to voice, movement and the character's objective in the scene. They showed diversity in their performance techniques by working in the round and used this staging technique to their advantage.

We are extremely proud of their efforts and can see how they appreciate the effects of workshopping a piece for performance. They seem to gain more and more discipline in response to the Cafe Sundays and this is always going to be reflected in their next main production.

Well done to all and many thanks to all the parents for their help in creating a brilliant afternoon.

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe

Glyn Robbins' version of the CS Lewis classic focuses on all the most exciting and memorable parts of the book. It is fun but also exciting with great dialogue. The play really does preserve the integrity of this much adored story. Lucy, Edmund, Peter and Susan are evacuated to a country house during the Second World War. Lucy explores the house and finds a magical wardrobe that transports her to the wonderful world of Narnia where the adventure begins with Mr Tumnus, a Faun. The audience soon learn that the land of Narnia is in danger and has become under control of the evil power hungry Queen. It is not long before her brothers and sister join her on the adventure.

The magical book is vividly brought to life on stage and will have children and adults alike on the edge of their seats as they embark on a wonderful adventure in Narnia.

Tim Rowland



AUDITION ALERT AUDITION ALERT

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

by Fyodor Dostoevsky

adapted by Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus directed by Miles Jenner
Playing dates 12 - 19 October 2013

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

We are opening our 75th Season with this award winning adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel. Considered to be the world's first psychological thriller and set in St Petersburg during the mid-nineteenth century, it revolves around Raskolnikov, an impoverished student who kills an unscrupulous pawnbroker, arguing that he can use her wealth to perform good deeds and counterbalance the crime while ridding the world of worthless vermin. His belief that murder is permissible in pursuit of a higher purpose is undermined by a growing paranoia that isolates him from mankind, nature and truth. With no evidence to convict him, his ultimate confession is an act of redemption. He has been described as "a timeless, rootless, disillusioned angry young man (whose) own existential problems are especially relevant today." This adaptation is performed on a minimal set by three actors. It runs for ninety minutes with no interval.

Cast

- Raskolnikov 20s - 30s** The protagonist referred to above. He combines intelligence and arrogance with anxiety and self-loathing. Cold, calculating and compassionate in equal measure. He is on stage throughout.
- Porfiry 40s - 60s** The detective has no evidence but becomes convinced that Raskolnikov is the murderer. He breaks down his bravado and plays on his guilt. The play is dominated by the interaction between these two. They combine like the dreams of a fevered mind. This actor will also play the part of **Marmelodov**, Sonya's alcoholic father.
- Sonya**
A range of ages A prostitute, Raskolnikov is attracted to her and she becomes his spiritual guide. This actress also plays the old pawnbroker **Alyona Ivanovna**, her simple sister **Lizaveta Ivanovna** and **Raskolnikov's mother**. It will require physical and emotional versatility but above all a range of truthful performances.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this production.

Tel 01273 472779 or 07717 377316

Miles Jenner production director

Scripts are available from Chris Weber-Brown chriswb16@hotmail.com

Club Director's notes



Spring seems to be with us now but yet again we had to cancel another performance of a production, this time *The Diva In Me*. However Mike Piller doing stalwart work in the Box Office managed to re-book many tickets for the people who had booked seats for the Monday evening. To the eleven members who arrived to see the show, we offer our apologies for the cancellation. Everyone involved in the production managed to get to Lewes but there were concerns regarding return journeys home. For example, Meg, playing the Diva, came by train to Lewes after abandoning her car in Eastbourne. Mike Batchelor, Lighting struggled in from Uckfield, Chris Weber Brown from Haywards Heath, Sue Tait from Barcombe to name just a few. The return journeys of those living locally were reportedly fairly hazardous both by car and on foot.

The play was very well received however, and Meg was congratulated on her solo performance not only by members of the audience but also by the author Charlotte Jones, who came on the final Saturday evening. Our thanks go to Joyce Fisher director, Roger Roser the pianist and all the backstage volunteers who made this production successful.

Lewes Youth Theatre gave parents and members an afternoon performance of the work they have been doing on Thursday evenings since *Animal Farm*. It is very satisfying to see the progress they have made and the increasing confidence of the younger members is very noticeable and impressive.

Our next production *Entertaining Angels* is now in rehearsal onstage and Jenny Lloyd-Lyons director of *The Sunshine Boys* commences rehearsals later this month.

We have been invited to take part in

Club Director's notes

People's Day in Brighton on 15 June and the Societies Fair in Lewes on 13 July and hope to enlist members to help with these projects giving members of the public an insight into our theatre and how we work.

More people from the Brighton area are coming to our productions, so publicity at the Corn Exchange may help spread the word even further. Some Lewes residents, I've heard, are unaware of our existence. It would be helpful if we could have signposts around the town pointing in our direction but following enquiries, apparently this isn't possible.

The programme for next season, our 75th Anniversary, is nearing completion. We have been informed that the last two plays we have selected are "available at present". This means that they could be withdrawn nearer the time. If so, then it's back to the drawing board. The annual brochure will be published as soon as possible.

Note

Summer Workshops at Mountview Academy of Theatre, there are fliers in the foyer.

Directors Weekend

26 - 27 July 2013
£200

Acting / Musical Theatre

22 - 27 July 2013
£400

Tel Mountview Academy
020 8826 9217
web. Mountview.org.uk

LOST PROPERTY

The lost property is now in the Theatre Manager's Office. It can be claimed on most Tuesday evenings or during the day subject to making an appointment with Chris Weber-Brown
Tel 07588 531 888.

If unclaimed by June 3rd all lost property will be given to a local charity shop, as the bag is rather large and the office rather small.

Many thanks
Pat Shrimpton



LEWES THEATRE NEEDS YOU

Every now and again we put a note in the newsletter asking for volunteers to take on various roles in the day to day running of the theatre. But this time I thought I would present a picture of how our members, readers and audiences could help.

We have a theatre manager who looks after day to day repairs and improvements and bookings. We also have a strong and dedicated committee chaired by Mike Piller (who also runs the Box Office and is looking for someone he can train up to take over that role). Jo Cull is our President and she runs the props and furniture stores for the theatre – she would like volunteers to help with props for individual shows.

Derek Watts is our Honorary General Secretary and he would be happy to have some assistance at busy times. Bob Leeds manages our finances.

Mike Palmer runs the publicity committee which is working to increase our audiences and co-ordinates information for the programmes. Membership Secretary is a big task managed by Nick Cooper with help from Bob Leeds and they have an occasional need for people to stuff and address envelopes – a day's help once in a while would be gratefully received. Front of

House is a vital part of our audience care and development and our dedicated team led by Jane Rimmington is looking for volunteers to ensure safety and efficiency for performance nights.

The Wardrobe works as a co-operative and the hard working team are always welcoming to volunteers who can sew, who know about the history of costume or are happy to act as dressers for

individual plays.

Backstage help is always appreciated and the team led by Dudley Ward erects all the sets which are built by the workshop managed by Don Plimmer in what must be the best facility in any local theatre.

The lighting and sound departments are managed by Trevor Morgan and are well equipped with modern technology. Tuesday nights from 7. pm -10. pm are working nights

for all departments and a good time to have a tour of the facilities and a chat to people working on the plays. After 10. pm on work nights the bar is open for members. Carole Leeds manages the bar rota and would like to have volunteers to serve behind the bar during performances and/or on work nights (induction training is given).

The Newsletter is edited by Mike Turner and put in envelopes and distributed by a team led by Jack Wilkinson.



LEWES THEATRE NEEDS YOU

Volunteers

Help would be much appreciated for the seven issues per year including labelling on Tuesday nights and putting in envelopes on Friday mornings.

Jack would also like to hear from members who can deliver newsletters in their neighbourhood.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP ?

Please ring as many boxes as you wish, send it to us and we will contact you.

Acting

Directing

**Set
Designing**

Costume

Dressing

Sound

**Set
Painting**

Lighting

**Set
Building**

**Props & Set
Dressing**

**Front of
House**

Bar Duty

**Admin &
Publicity**

Box Office

**Stuffing
Envelopes**

**Delivering
Newsletters**

**Labelling
Envelopes**

Name

Address

Telephone email

THE SILVER SCREEN COMES TO LANCASTER STREET

In June 2012 Lewes Cinema left the All Saints Centre where it had been showing mainstream films on a commercial basis for ten years, providing a valuable and popular service for film-goers in the town. Lewes Cinema - actually Marilu Orman, director/manager and Kevin Orman, film programmer and technical advisor - needed to find an alternative venue for its operation.

After lengthy and detailed negotiations a licence agreement was signed to enable the cinema to operate at Lewes Little Theatre.

Considerable natural and justifiable concern was expressed, both in committee and among the wider membership of the club, about the impact which this joint enterprise might have on the Theatre Club's major activity, which is producing plays on stage. However, the committee was resolved throughout the whole process to do nothing that would jeopardise the prime raison d'être of the Theatre Club. It was the view of the majority of the committee that this project represented a unique opportunity for the club to further one of the objects outlined in clause 3 of its constitution, which is broadly to further the arts, including cinema, throughout the community.

In September 2012 Lewes Cinema installed a fully digital projection system to current cinema standards as well as a 5 metre wide electric screen to give a full wide-screen cinema experience. A 6 channel Dolby digital sound with new amplification was also installed, upgrading the theatre's existing speakers which are now shared between

theatre and cinema use.

Screenings began in October, since when the feedback and reaction from the public has been extremely positive. Kevin Orman says, "Many people visit us very regularly. We've been compared favourably by many to other 'quality' independent cinemas such as Uckfield and have been particularly complimented on the sound. One comment which we hear again and again is that many people are visiting the theatre either for the first time or for the first time in many years. Our intention was to screen a wide mix of films encompassing blockbuster, art house, foreign language and family releases."

There have been many sell-out shows. Since the opening show, *Anna Karenina* on 21 October, Lewes Cinema have screened on 28 days and have managed to feature 31 different films spread over 70 separate screenings, with approximately 5000 admissions. Kevin goes on to say, "I believe the venture had been a resounding success and we look forward to developing a continued artistic relationship between ourselves and the Little Theatre".

Members of the Theatre Club can find out details of forthcoming screenings in the local press, or they can e-mail info@lewescinema.co.uk or visit www.lewescinema.co.uk

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

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

Entertaining Angels



OPENING

Saturday 25 May 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
Entertaining Angels			Evening £8.00			
Entertaining Angels		X	Matinee £6.00			
The Sunshine Boys			Evening £8.00			
The Sunshine Boys		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.