

# FOOTLIGHTS

The Newsletter for Barton Theatre Company

Issue 13: May 2012

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### 1. EDITORIAL

You can have too much of a good thing.

Recently, your issues of Footlights have been produced and emailed to email by the beginning of the month. And I bet you were getting used to it

But as I keep telling you, I am a terrible procrastinator – especially when I have other things I want to do or have an excuse to do something later. When I have both... I put it off straightaway

The other thing to do was go see the Avengers movie (now retitled Avengers Assemble – Hollywood thinks we may

confuse Mavel's superheroes with the uber-cool Steed and Mrs Peel.) which I have eagerly been awaiting.

The excuse was I had tickets to a brand new musical that premiered at Manchester's own Opera House. And I thought you lot might like to read a review. So was the show worth making you wait that extra week?

The answer plus the latest on Macbeth and all the usual fare lies within

Andrew Nevill (Editor  
[nevillandrew@gmail.com](mailto:nevillandrew@gmail.com))

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### 2. MACBETH

After all those months of rehearsal, it's almost finally here. We're just over a week away from the performances of Macbeth. It's been a heck of a long trip but the end is almost in site.

Rehearsals have been well. Recently we hit upon the idea of rehearsing of doing a whole act, doing notes and the doing the

(hopefully) improved version and it really seems to have worked.

At the Sunday afternoon rehearsal yesterday we finally did a full through in costume. It was great getting to do the whole thing from start to finish and to see how marvellous everyone looks (Joan and Bev, you're fantastic)

From yesterday, I reckon we have the makings a great show here. At the moment it's like a birthday cake without the candles. It's almost there but not ready to put on the table. So we have a week to scramble round in the kitchen drawer for the candles and Swan Vestas (Watch out for the sharp knife – there's always a sharp knife) that will set our tasty cake (in the shape of a dagger, what else) alight.

We get into the theatre next Sunday to put up the 'set', do some painting and basically get the theatre ready for us. There always lots to do on the Sunday so it'd be great to see as many people as possible

True there are often periods where there no jobs to do but that just means we can run some lines and put one more candle on that cake.

After that we'll be in the theatre for a week with at least a tech and a dress rehearsal followed by a glorious run of superlative performances from Thursday to Sunday (Hey, you have to be positive).

Even then it's not over. Dave has put together an extract of the play for us to perform at Wilmslow Guild, date still to be confirmed and at Contact Theatre on 24 May. In fact Contact has given us a massive 30 minute slot to fill forcing Dave to extend the extract. If that goes well, there's even the possibility of doing it again in July on the stage at the RSC Stratford.

Now would be a treat, a chance to tread the same boards as M, Prince Vultan and Captain Picard\*.

\*Also known as Dame Judi Dench, Brian Blessed<sup>#</sup>, and Sir Patrick Stewart.

# What? Brian Blessed isn't a Sir? That's just... wrong!

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### 3. REVIEW: VAMPIRETTE

As the programme article describes, vampires seem to have a hold on our collective imaginations and currently seem more popular than ever with the twin phenomena of Twilight and True Blood leading the rise of the bloodsuckers.

Vampirette, a new musical comedy that's currently making its debut at the Opera House is the latest creature of the night trying to tap the vein.

It follows another trend in that it's a jukebox musical using existing songs rather than original compositions. That's no criticism, however, as some of the most successful current musicals such as Mama Mia, We Will Rock You and Rock of Ages, (so successful that Tom Cruise stars in the soon to be released film version) all follow the same formula.

The plot follows the eponymous character Vampirette or Vampi, the youngest member of a clan of vampires. Vampi has all the usual teen angst but with one difference. Whilst most teens would probably die to be different, Vampi just wishes she was the same as everyone else. Being a vampire sucks.

Things seem to be looking up when Vampi falls in love with a great guy. He's smart and he's kinda cute. He's also called Dr Van Helsing. And that could be a problem

Another problem is Stanley Pea. A muck raking scandal mag journalist who's determined to expose the truth about why Vampi and her family don't show up in photographs.

Lauren Samuels (who came third in Over the Rainbow) takes the title role imbuing it

with a confidence and energy that makes Vampi immediately likeable and sympathetic. She has a cracking voice too which effortlessly deals with the range of numbers from kicking pop-rock to soulful ballads and sixties do wop.

The rest of the cast do well with strongly defined characters and all of them get their musical moments to shine. If some of the acting seems a bit stiff, well these are primarily singers and after all they're supposed to be undead.

In any case, the sometimes stilted performances just added to the fun and that's what this is, a frothy piece of fun that never takes itself too seriously.

Jonathan Choat, the writer is never afraid to lighten the mood as demonstrated when Vampi's mom, in the middle of the emotion filled mother-daughter heart-to-heart number, tells her distraught little girl, 'Excuse me, whilst I walk centre stage to sing the second verse!'

That shouldn't work but it did. The audience fell about laughing yet as soon as the second verse started, we were all feeling sorry for Vampi again.

The set was also very good - the main feature being a balcony with a sweeping staircase at each end. It gave the show that gothic vibe that every vampire craves as much as their fix of A-. On a practical level it gave flexibility, the set effortlessly becoming the family home, a nightclub and several other locations, Having the balcony and stairs allowed for some lovely staging and positioning as characters could be on several levels.

Some things (I felt) didn't work. One was the running joke with the spotlight. Everytime someone was mentioned by name, they would enter and be briefly illuminated by a spotlight. For example, 'I am in love with Eloise (spotlight on Eloise)' I found this distracting as your attention was forever being forced away from the character that was speaking onto someone else and then back again. It grew annoying.

I also think that Jonathan Choat could have got more out of the story. With a 7.30 start and a twenty minute interval, I was still out of the theatre by 9:30. I was enjoying myself and would have liked more bite for my bucks.

I'm not sure how this would play in the home of musicals, the West End. I think it needs a few more show stopping memorable tunes that you go home singing. (Perhaps amp up the arrangements a bit). It needs to be longer too, extend the story and give the piece a few more fangs.

But that said, I went home having seen a really enjoyable show that had me laughing out loud, singing along and dancing in and out of my seat. I had a great night out and felt I'd got my money's worth. When's all said and done, you can't ask for anymore than that.

Vampirette runs at the Opera House from 4-19 May. Performances 7:30pm.  
Matinees Wednesday & Saturday 2:30pm

Tickets: 0844 871 3018  
[www.atgtickets.com/Manchester](http://www.atgtickets.com/Manchester)  
Box Officer: Palace Theatre Oxford Road,  
Manchester

[www.vampirettethe musical.com](http://www.vampirettethe musical.com)



#### 4. QUIZ

This month, the quiz is all about the songs featured in Vampirette. All you have to do is match the song to the original artist.

1. Martian Hop
2. Young Blood
3. Total Eclipse of the Heart
4. Moonlight Shadow
5. Eloise

The answers, as usual, are at the end of the newsletter

- a) Dana
- b) Bonnie Tyler
- c) The Randells
- d) Barry Ryan
- e) The Coasters

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#### 5. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Barton Theatre Company Dates:

##### **Macbeth**

*Rehearsals:* Monday & Thursdays,  
7.45pm, St Michael's Community Centre,  
Liverpool Road, Eccles

*Get in to /theatre:* Sunday 13 May

*Tech Rehearsal:* Tuesday 14 May

*Dress Rehearsal:* Wednesday 15 May

*Performance:* 16-19 May 2012 Evenings  
(Thurs-Sat): 7:30pm Matinees (Sat, Sun)  
2pm

Salford Arts Theatre

Kemsing Walk

off Liverpool Road

Salford

M5 4BS

*Bookings:* Phone: 0161 799 4685

0161 925 0111 (Theatre)

E-mail: [boxoffice@salfordartstheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@salfordartstheatre.co.uk)

<http://salfordartstheatre.co.uk>

*Contact Theatre:* TBA

Thursday 17 May 7pm.

*Bookings:* Smiths Restaurant

1-3 Church Road

Eccles

Manchester

M30 0DL

Tel: 0161 788 7343

<http://www.smithsrestaurant.net>

Salford Arts Theatre:

Unfortunately, SATS website wasn't working so I have no details of forthcoming productions.

Salford Arts Theatre

Kemsing Walk

off Liverpool Road

Salford

M5 4BS

*Bookings:* Phone: 0161 925 0111

E-mail: [boxoffice@salfordartstheatre.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@salfordartstheatre.co.uk)

<http://salfordartstheatre.co.uk>

Smiths Bite Size Theatre

Theatre By Numbers presents: '**Death at the Theatre**' – Smiths 1<sup>st</sup> Murder Mystery Evening

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#### 6. THE FINAL CURTAIN

And so that's the end of the Newsletter for this month. Hope you enjoyed reading it.

Any comments, suggestions or – better still – contributions greatly received. You

will receive full ~~blame~~ credit. The email address is below.

If you know someone who you think might like to receive this newsletter, please email

me with their email address (Please ask their permission first).

Equally, if you're getting this and don't want to, please email me and I will remove you from the mailing list.

**Quiz Answers:**

- 1 c
- 2 e
- 3 b
- 4 a
- 5 d

**Contact Information:**

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Barton Theatre Company Committee  
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