

FOOTLIGHTS

The Newsletter for Barton Theatre Company

Issue 26: June 2013

CONTENTS

1. Editorial
2. Iron
3. Annual General Meeting
4. Quiz
5. On the Move
6. That's Entertainment
7. 80³
8. Dates for your Diary
9. The Final Curtain

1. EDITORIAL

Hi and a warm welcome to your June issue of Footlights NEWSletter.

Why the capitals? Well, it must be must admitted that for a newsletter, sometimes there's not that much news. But not this month. This month it's positively stuffed with news. Important news.

Seriously, apart from our regular features, the Quiz and the Dates for your Diary,

there is very little trivia this month. Things are happening that we need to tell you about.

That's why Footlights exists. So to embrace a cliché – Read all about it.

Andrew Nevill (Editor)
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2. IRON

Our last production Iron was performed at Salford Arts Theatre from 16 – 18 May. It was a fantastic show – intense and gripping.

As Assistant Director I saw the dress rehearsal on Wednesday and was on the edge of my seat. On Saturday, I was helping Front of House and said I wouldn't go in to watch as I'd already seen it. However, director Elaine McCann was insistent (she literally pushed me into the auditorium). I am very glad she did.

The show I saw on Saturday was levels above what I saw on Tuesday. By turns tender, funny, intense and gripping, the actors ran the whole gamut of emotion and swept the audience along with them.

I do not think I have seen actors from Barton perform so well. Mags Ridings was stunningly good and Val Ridings was no less brilliant. Elly Hayton and Vicki Ward also shone in their supporting roles.

The whole thing was enhanced by the wonderful setting. The set itself was minimal. Tables and chairs to represent various areas of the prison with some columns placed to help delineate areas (The column with the prison gates sign being a particularly serendipitous find). But mainly it was Derek Riding's sublime lighting that did all the work and doing it beyond anything we ever expected.

What makes this all the more remarkable is how difficult the play was. It's fair to say that when we picked it we didn't realise what we were getting into.

Firstly the play is almost a two hander – two main characters with two much smaller supporting roles. The script itself, whilst well written, tends to go on tangents and has elements that repeat themselves.

That puts a lot of pressure on the two leads. I don't think Val and Mags have ever had to learn and then of course remember so much script.

On top of all that, we had a relatively short rehearsal period. For us to produce a play as outstanding as we did through all those challenges is something Barton should be really proud of.

It's a show that deserved an audience. Unfortunately we don't always get we deserve. The audiences were very small and on Saturday, which should have been our biggest night, people stayed in to watch Bonnie Tyler not win Eurovision. If that was you, what were you thinking?

As a result, due to the royalties and venue hire, we made a considerable loss.

It is a dilemma. You can choose to only do plays that will get 'bums on seats' and make money. The problem with that is you only ever do the same plays and you never try anything different. Or you can take a risk and do something different that stretches you. If you make a profit, that's an unexpected bonus.

I'm proud of the fact that Barton always takes the second option.

3. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Barton Theatre Company's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 23 May 2013 at St Mike's

Chairman, Brian Cogswell opened the meeting by stating that it had been a good year. However, he stressed the need to get more people involved in the group. It was commented that Macbeth had been fantastic as so many people had been involved but a shame that it had not resulted in a broader membership.

Brian ended by revealing his 'highlight' of the last year – the infamous Eccles Christmas light's switch on.

Treasurer Elaine Hayton then took us through the financial figures for 2012. Overall we made a PROFIT on the four productions (Macbeth, Wilmslow Festival, Eccles Mural and Pinocchio) of £966.31.

Income for the whole year was £1797.36. Expenditure for the year was £1831.98. Overall then, we made a very small loss of £34.63.

However our bank account and other assets are a healthy £6174.05.

So we aren't broke yet.

It was then time to elect the committee. There have been a few changes and so Barton Theatre Company's committee for 2013 is as follows:

Chairman: Brian Cogswell
Treasurer: Elly Hayton
Secretary: Andrew Nevill
Officers: Joan Breen, David Milne, Mags Ridings, Val Ridings, Cathy Warburton

Footlights would like to thank outgoing committee members Janet Johnston and Beverley Greenhalgh for their hard work

and valuable contributions whilst they were on the committee.

Following the election of the committee the meeting moved onto Any Other Business. There were discussions about the current rehearsal room situation and the next production.

Full details of these issues are in the individual articles 'On the Move?' and 'That's Entertainment' elsewhere in this newsletter

4. QUIZ

Our quiz, this month, is inspired by our prison based production, 'Iron' Below are six TV series set in prisons together with six characters from those series and the actors who played them. Can you match

the actors to their characters *and* the shows they appeared in?

Answers as always at the end of the newsletter

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Bad Girls | a) Veronica | I. Fiona Spence |
| 2. Prisoner: Cell Block H | Campbell | II. Robin Tunney |
| 3. The Governor | b) Eugene Boffy | III. Brian Wilde |
| 4. Porridge | c) Vera Bennett | IV. Craig Charles |
| 5. Prison Break | d) Mr Barrowclough | V. Zoe Lucker |
| | e) Tanya Turner | |

5. ON THE MOVE?

The Committee have been aware for some time that the rent we pay for our rehearsal room would be increased. However, I've not reported it in Footlights until now as we did not know what the rent increase would be. Thus any report I might have written about the increase and its consequences would have been speculation.

However, shortly before the AGM, St Mikes informed us of the new rent. It's worse than we expected.

The rent for the rehearsal room will increase to £20 per night. We will also be charged £5 per week for the under stage storage where we keep our scenery. Finally, due to, what we are told are, insurance reasons we must **vacate the wardrobe cupboard.**

We currently pay £1300 a year rent for the rehearsal room and wardrobe. The combined rent for the rehearsal room and stage would be £1540 a year. That's an

increase of £240 pounds whilst *losing* our costume and props storage

So we have a stark choice. Stay at St Mike's or find somewhere else.

You won't be surprised to learn that this situation has been discussed in Committee meetings and at the AGM. You probably also won't be surprised to learn that the consensus is to move.

Let's examine this. These are the reasons we stayed at St Mike's. It has been Barton's home for a long time so the place does have some sentimental value. The rehearsal space is large. We have everything all in one place –rehearsal space, costume and scenery storage. There's a bar so we can have a drink.

However, despite the recent improvements, the room has seen better days. It is poorly lit and badly heated. Many times we've turned up after a function has been on to find it uncleaned and have had to tidy up the room ourselves before we can use it

Leaving aside the fact that we're losing it, the wardrobe room was full of damp – not ideal for storing costumes - when we took it over. We had to buy a dehumidifier to make it (and keep it) usable. St Mike's charge us for the electric we use on top of the rent. The wardrobe is now getting full

As for the under stage storage - that they now propose to charge us for, every time we use it we have to clear the rubbish that's piled on top of the trap door. Then we have to find something to lever the trap door open because it doesn't even have a ring fitted to pull it up.

Sadly, the rehearsal room is also dangerous with fire exits permanently locked. If we had to get out of there quickly, we would have little chance of doing so.

Finally, there's the warm and inviting welcome we always receive. [1]

I have felt for some time that we don't get value for money for what we pay. I don't think I'm alone. The rent increase makes that even more the case. The loss of the wardrobe space means it's no longer viable to use St Mike's. Charging us for the stage just feels like a final insult.

So if we leave St Mike's where do we go?

The Committee do have a number of options in mind and all these are currently being looked into. As nothing is yet set in stone, I've been asked not mention to specifics as it would, again, be speculation.

However, we are currently in negotiations with the relevant parties regarding these options. The progress of these has been very encouraging. A final decision is expected to be made at the next Committee Meeting.

This will be held on Wednesday 12 June at 8pm at Elly's House

Please note that Committee Meetings are open to all. As this is such an important issue, you are especially invited to attend this meeting

I'm not going to put Elly's address in the Newsletter (Footlights is published on the Internet so anyone can see it) but if you would like to attend and don't know Elly's address, please contact me

[1] Yes, that *was* sarcasm



6. THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Our next production will be something a little bit different. Rather than a play we're planning on staging an entertainment night provisionally titled 'That's Entertainment'

Produced and directed by Brian Cogswell and Joan Breen, (hereafter called BriJo) the show will be a mix of sketches songs and dance showcasing entertainment throughout the 20th Century starting in the 1920's and travelling right through to today.

The exact line up is still to be confirmed but BriJo already have some definite ideas. At the meeting on Monday, we had mention of Laurel & Hardy, an Abba medley, classic Childrens TV. Lady Gaga and loads more – all ending with a full cast rendition of There's No Business Like Show Business, with Brian (sans Joan) doing his best Ethel Merman.

One of the great things about doing this is that this is not a play, which may have a limited number of or type of roles. This is totally inclusive. If you want to do something and be in it then BriJo will almost certainly find you something you can do. – even if it's just helping fill out the stage in the chorus. But knowing them you'll get to do a little more than that

We're meeting again at St Mike's on Monday (3 June 2013) once again to try and hammer out some of the fine detail of the show and to see who's interested in being involved. It would be great to see you there. If you've not been in anything with Barton for a while, this is your perfect opportunity to get involved again

It should be tremendous fun but the co-directors stressed that it will also be hard work as if we're going to do this we have to do it well. There will be a paying audience. Also if you say you'll take part, no changing your mind. If you do Brian says you'll make him angry. Don't make Brian angry. You won't like Brian when he's angry.[2]

As is the title the performance date is still provisional. However, we expect to perform this at Salford Arts Theatre on Saturday 14 September 2013. There's a possibility we may do it two nights which would possibly mean us doing the Friday as well [3]

[2] He turns into Joan Collins and we have to feed him a Snickers bar

[3] That would be Friday 13. BriJo. Not that I'm superstitious you understand but...

7. 80³

A snippet of good news contributed by Elly Hayton.

Eccles Rotary Club are 80 years old this year. To celebrate they've given 80 grants of £80 to community organisations in Eccles – including us!

Apparently, it's a reward for our support for several community events – including that Christmas Lights switch on.

It seems Brian's highlight of the year may have been one of Rotary's. Now it definitely has to be one of ours.

Seriously though, we should feel proud to get this. It shows that we are part of the community and it's wonderful to get that recognition

8. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Barton Theatre Company:

Committee Meeting: 12 June, 8pm, Elly's House.

That's Entertainment

Meeting: 3 June 2013, 8pm, St Michaels Community Centre

Rehearsals: To be announced

Performance: Saturday 14 September
(Provisional date only)

Pantomime: The Babes in the Woods

Performance: 1-8 December 2013. Salford Arts Theatre

Salford Arts Theatre:

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Adapted for Stage by Neil

Duffield

19-21 June 2013, 7:30pm, 22-2 June 2013, 2:00pm

£7.00 Full, £6.00 Concession, £26.00

Family (2 Adults & 3 Children)

Salford Arts Theatre

Kemsing Walk

Off Liverpool St

Salford

M5 4BS

Bookings: Tel: 0161 925 0111

www.salfordartstheatre.com/whats-on

The Lowry

Listings:

<http://www.thelowry.com/events/theatre-shows>

The Lowry

Pier 8

Salford Quays

M50 3AZ

Bookings: Tel: 0843 208 6000

Fax: 0161 876 2001

Email: info@thelowry.com

Web:

<https://tickets.thelowry.com/Online/default.asp>

Palace Theatre:

Listings:

<http://www.atgtickets.com/venues/palace-theatre-manchester/>

Opera House

Listings:

<http://www.atgtickets.com/venues/opera-house-manchester/>

Click on the Calendar link

Opera House

3 Quay Street

Manchester

M3 3HP

Bookings (Palace & Opera House)

Palace Theatre Box Office – address above

Web: <http://www.atgtickets.com/>

Royal Exchange Theatre

Listings:

<http://www.royalexchange.co.uk/page.aspx?page=453>

Royal Exchange Theatre

St Ann's Square

Manchester

M2 7DH

Bookings: In person at Box Office above

Tel: 0161 8339833

Fax 0161 615 6696

In person: 11.00am - 5.00pm

Email: box.office@royalexchange.co.uk

Web:

www.royalexchange.co.uk/bookonline



9. THE FINAL CURTAIN

That's all for this edition of Footlights. We will be back again next month.

Back Issues: Terry maintains an archive of back issues on our website. <http://www.bartontheatre.co.uk/footlights.html>

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Quiz Answers:

1. e V
2. c I
3. b IV
4. d III
5. a II

Contact Information:

Email: nevillandrew@gmail.com

Barton Theatre Company Committee

Chair: Brian Cogswill, *Treasurer:* Elaine Hayton, *Secretary:* Andrew Nevill
Officers: Joan Breen, David Milne, Mags Ridings, Val Ridings, Cathy Warburton

Web: <http://www.bartontheatre.co.uk>

All opinions are those of the author and not necessarily those of Barton Theatre Company, its associates and affiliates

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