

The Club News

Volume 1, Issue 4

Friday 16th February 2001



Happy Valentines Day
for the 14th!

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One stressed editorial!

Hello and welcome to the February newsletter. I will apologise now if this newsletter doesn't seem particularly organised or 'together' - the fact is, I'm anything but 'together' as I'm working flat out to complete one dissertation and four essays before the end of March, then I've got lovely finals exams to cope with in May. So I'm well and truly not with it! Still, that's enough of my problems!

A few reminders for you. If you get this newsletter in time, don't forget to come to the Dunham Massey Singers concert at the theatre on Tuesday, 20th February, doors open 7.00 pm, starting at 7.30 pm. Tickets will be available on the door if you haven't already got them. Please do make an effort to be there, and have a fantastic evening's entertainment by an excellent choir.

Also, don't forget to ask for tickets to see East is East, kindness of



Hello from your overworked, underpaid, well and truly stressed-out editor!

Manchester and Salford Film Society, on Saturday March 31st at 7.30 pm - it's supporting the theatre too, as they are kindly donating the ticket money to us! Most importantly, it's an excellent film.

And of course, don't forget to book early for the next play: *Two Dozen Red Roses*, directed by Keith Spavin (of *Murdered to Death*, and *See How They Run* fame). We strongly advise early booking, as demand does get very high, and we wouldn't like you to miss out.

Well, for anything else, you'll have to read the rest of the newsletter, assuming I get it written in time (otherwise you might get an editorial and nothing else!)

See you soon, from Anna

Two Dozen Red Roses

The next play, *Two Dozen Red Roses*, written by Kenneth Horne, is a romantic comedy set in the picturesque town of Rome. It is directed by Keith Spavin, mainly known here for his acting, but far from new to directing either.

Kenneth Horne is more known for

his radio and television work than his plays: how many of you remember the radio series called *Round the Horn*? That was him! But he has written numerous plays as well. We hope you enjoy this one of his. Don't forget to book early!

Chaos on Stage Part 3

In previous editions I have told you of the unfortunate Chaos in “Duchess of Malfi” and “Athalie”. But Chaos can strike anywhere, even modern drama. Nothing is safe from Chaos. There is no hiding place, and it is always unseen and unsuspected until it rips off its false whiskers and pounces.

Dad, in “The Bastard Country”, an Australian drama, is a very nasty character and also mentally unstable. The problems of coping with wife, two sons and sheep farm get too much for his fragile mind, and at the end of Act II he flips and bashes Son #2 over the head. Son #2 slumps unconscious to the floor. Curtain, interval, coffee, raffle, etc.

During the interval, Doctor arrives, and as Act III begins, the whole family is on stage. Son #2 is still out for the count and is lying on a table, being tended by Doctor. Dad, completely over the top, is menacing the entire family with his loaded shotgun and threatening to shoot them all. They are cowering away from him.

At least, that’s what’s supposed to happen. Unfortunately one night, the Stage Manager has a funny turn and forgets to count heads. Son #2 has just climbed on to his table, Doctor is unpacking his bag of assorted medical props, and Son #1 has just walked on. Then the Stage Manager opens the curtains without warning. Chaos has struck. Puzzled audience and

shocked actors. What do they do? Stand around looking foolish and waiting for Dad and his gun?

Son #1 turns a ghastly pale and tries to think of a way of hiding Chaos. “Is he going to be all right, Doc?” Doctor:- (thinks – “Thanks for landing me in it, friend.”) “Well, he’s badly concussed and he needs hospital treatment.....” and for what feels



The Doctor thinks to himself: thanks for landing me in it, now I’ve got to do the ad-libbing!!

like a geological aeon, he rambles on and on about what he hopes are the signs, symptoms and treatment of concussion and anything else that Son #2 could be suffering from.

Meanwhile the other cast members have realised that Chaos has struck. They aren’t sure what has happened but they know that the play has somehow managed to restart without them and that something unwanted by author or producer is happening. They hastily gulp their coffees, stop whatever

they are doing, adjust their costumes etc and begin to sidle onto the stage one by one from the nearest convenient entrance. Doctor is still ad libbing frantically, sweating and running out of inspiration; Son #1 is shaking his head in despair and hoping for a small earthquake. Only Son #2 is happy. All he can do is lie there while Chaos happens around him. He’s lucky.

Doctor surreptitiously counts heads. Is everyone on stage who should be here? Can we get on with the b....y play please? No, not yet, Chaos hasn’t finished. Dad hasn’t arrived yet and the action depends on him. Unfortunately he was otherwise engaged when the dreadful news dawned and some things always have priority.

Eventually he shuffles sheepishly on, Doctor breathes sigh of relief and Dad starts to menace everyone as per script. But the audience couldn’t quite follow the plot that night!

At the end of the show, cast and producer formed a long queue taking turns for a few quiet words with the Stage Manager. Some say he found sanctuary on some remote desert island. Others say his ghost can still be heard shuffling nervously around in the wings!

But it happened – I was doctor!

Many thanks to David Eastwood for this fascinating ‘Tale of Three Newsletters’, showing just how chaotic life on stage can get. Do write in with your own stories!

The Stage Crew story

You rarely if ever see them, though you may read their names in the programme. You may not have a clue how they do what they do. But you do see the results of their work every time you come to a play.

Yes, I'm talking about the stage crew. They are very much the unsung heroes of The Club Theatre. The actors and actresses cannot help but be seen and therefore 'sung'. Even the director gets his five minutes at the end of the Saturday night. But the stage crew, which includes the sound and light technicians, are very much behind the scenes.

I am amazed every time as I watch the stage change from the set of the previous play, to a complete wreck of a building site, then a shell, and finally the fantastic sets that our team produces for us play after play after play. You



only have to think of the back gardens of the last play to know what I mean – I wanted to live there!

The team varies a little from time to time, but there are a few regulars – Steve Smith, the stage director, Mike Jarvis, his assistant and sound guru, Barry Swithenbank, lighting guru, and Chris Nock, John Ross, Ian Haselgrove, and stalwarts Ian Bowden, Vernon

Evans and Roy Burman (and Sophie the dog!).

They have six weeks from beginning to end, in which to take down the old set and build the new. This work includes some heavy work, such as moving the flats (twelve feet high, and up to six feet wide), some light work (wallpaper stripping, painting, even clearing up

each night), and all sorts of stuff in between. Even the most non-technical of people (which includes myself!) can help in some way

And best of all, it's fun. You think it doesn't sound fun? You haven't met this team, obviously. They could make moving the Sahara desert fun. As for the rewards, you see them each play. Imagine being able to say, 'I made this', and mean it!

If you want to come and have a go, or know someone (whether or not they are a member), who would be interested, come along one Monday, Wednesday or Friday night at 7.30, or phone Steve Smith, on 0161 941 2116 or 07970 154 338.

Be part of the team!



400 Club Winners

Winners from the 400 Club draw held on Wednesday 24th January 2001 are as follows.



You're in the money!

£50

- Mrs V Lane

£30

- Mrs P Gilsenan

£10

- Mrs E G B Allison
- Mrs M Burton
- Mrs B M Hill
- Mrs A Shelley
- Mr R Burman
- Mrs C Lucas

£5

- Mr A K Lumsden
- Mrs J E Sherry-Brennan
- Mrs V Fox
- Mrs J B Gill
- Mrs M M Sykes
- Mrs M Waterall
- Mr D R Graham
- Mr and Mrs K G M Ball
- Mr and Mrs A J Huddart
- Miss P J Derbyshire
- Mrs D L McAree
- Mr W R Rimmer



The Club Theatre

17 Oxford Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 2ED
0161 928 1113

For further details, contact
Anna Dutson, Hon. Secretary
On 0161 941 2116

We're on the Web
www.clubtheatre.org.uk

Calling all volunteers

Do you know someone who might be interested in coming to the theatre to see our plays?

Or has one of your friends always had a bit of a dramatic streak in them that's never found an outlet?

Perhaps someone's hobby involves electrical jiggery-pokery, and they might be interested in trying out lighting a play?

Is there a seamstress who'd love a chance to break out and do some adventurous costumes?

Or maybe there's an organiser out there who'd fancy a go at stage managing.

If so, why not give them a copy of this newsletter, or ask us to send one to them? We're always delighted to meet new people, and introduce them to the work of the theatre. They may be grateful to you for the rest of their lives – and so will we!

And if you introduce five or more friends, who become members, you get a discount on next year's membership! (Just in case you needed a bit of incentive!)



Teacher needed urgently

Most of you will remember that Vicki Lane, our late Production Director, taught the Club Theatre Senior Drama School for many years. In doing this, she brought many youngsters to value drama highly, and several of her former students have continued to be involved in both amateur and professional drama.

When Vicki sadly died, last October, Val Harris generously stepped into the breach, and has



continued the school for this year, but due to personal commitments is unable to continue beyond next summer. We desperately need someone willing and able to take on this role, and continue developing Vicki's lifelong work of encouraging and nurturing the love of theatre in young people. If you would like to help with this, either as organiser or assistant, please contact Ian Bowden for more details.

Our young people need you!