ALTRINCHAM LITTLE THEATRE

SEASON 2014—2015 NEWSLETTER No. 2

BARRY SWITHENBANK

We have just learned of the death of Barry Swithenbank. Barry has been a fixture at the theatre for the last 15 years, during which time he has designed many of the sets that you have seen over that time. He was a talented lighting designer and could see immediately what needed to be done to achieve a particular effect. I personally have worked with Barry on the stage and in the committee where his experience and dedication meant that he worked tirelessly to drive the theatre forward.

In his youth he wanted to become a professional theatre lighting designer but circumstances stopped him. He was instrumental in replacing the lighting console last year with a system that ran off a laptop computer, which he mastered in his own way by producing guides to using the system based on the requirements as he saw them.

One of his several works in progress was the replacement of the signs outside the theatre and we intend to introduce them as soon as planning consent can be obtained.

His legacy will live on in the many improvements he made and in the fact that he had completed the design of the first four play sets and had almost completed the last one.

Here we are at the start of yet another season of plays and we hope you enjoy what we have chosen for you. Our first play, Neighbourhood Watch by Alan Ayckbourn, is a brand new play—so new that we believe we will be the first amateur group in the country to present it. It is a very funny comedy but there are darker undertones (and a little bit of strong language). Brother and sister, Martin and Hilda Massie, set up a Neighbourhood Watch group following petty crime from a nearby estate, only for the group to go out of control and become an authoritarian force controlling the lives of the people they are supposed to protect. Martin and Hilda are played by actors new to our stage; Mark Rowlands and Victoria Johnson will be familiar to quite a few of you but this is their first time in one of our productions. The rest of the cast are all faces you will recognise: David Black, Meg Cooper, Ian Butterfield, Hannah Davies , Robert Smith and Jacinta Russell. Our Director is also a very familiar face but in a different role. Charlie Cook has appeared in several productions here recently, usually in farces at which he excels, but this is the first time he has directed for us. We hope it won't be the last.

Manchester and Salford Film Society—Season 2014/2015

SEPTEMBER 13 BLUE JASMINE Woody Allen 2013 USA 98m

New York socialite, deeply troubled and in denial, arrives in San Francisco to impose upon her sister. She looks a million, but isn't bringing money, peace, or love...

Won Oscar, Golden Globe, and Bafta for best leading actress 2014 *'Blanchett in Blue Jasmine is beyond brilliant, beyond analysis.This is jaw-dropping work, what we go to the movies hoping to see, and we do. Every few years.* San Francisco Chronicle

October 11 CRÍA CUERVOS Carlos Saura 1976 SP 110m

In Madrid, the orphan sisters Irene, Ana and Maite are raised by their austere aunt Paulina after the death of their parents. Ana is a melancholic girl, fascinated by death, after seeing her mother having a painful death and her father dead in bed. *This is Carlos Saura's masterpiece and perhaps the best film ever made about the mysterious inner world children live in and create". IMDB reviewer*

November 1 OH! WHAT A LOVELY WAR Richard Attenborough 1969 GB 138m

With John Mills, Jack Hawkins, John Gielgud, Maggie Smith, , etc etc. Based on Joan Littlewood's stage production, a stylised, satirical and ultimately very moving tribute to the soldiers who fought in the Great War Won Golden Globe best English-Foreign Film, and various BAFTA awards

'Truly a masterpiece of acting and direction, and without doubt the best anti-war film I have ever seen… all the more telling for its simplicity' IMDb reviewer

All enquiries regarding the M&SFS should be addressed to the Secretary; John Grieve, 17 Bradley Close, Timperley, WA15 6SH, 0161 283 6565, secretary@mandsfs.org.uk. Annual membership £35.

BUYING TICKETS FOR OUR SHOWS

With this newsletter you will find a booking form for tickets for Neighbourhood Watch. Tickets go on sale on Wednesday September 10th. Here are a few tips that may help.

1) To save you money, order your tickets by phone. The telephone is staffed every Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening from 7.45pm to 10.00pm and you can pay by credit or debit card. You can also send us your ticket order by post (or put it through the theatre letter box). If you want your tickets posted back to you, please enclose a s.a.e. with your cheque, but we will hold your tickets at the door for you to collect when you come to see the show (saves the cost of postage).

2) Get your order in as soon as possible. If you leave it until close to the show you may find we cannot let you have the seats you want. This is particularly important if you want gangway seats. These tend to sell very quickly and there are only a limited number of them available each night.

3) We apologise if we caused confusion by asking for cheques to be made out to The Club Theatre and Altrincham Little Theatre. It makes no difference which title you use. Our Bank quite happily accepts cheques made out in either name.

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

A.C.T. 'OUT OF THE SPOTLIGHT' AWARDS

We were delighted on July 13th to be presented with two awards at the Association of Community Theatre Members' Day. These were for **Most Original Artwork** (our posters) and **Front of House**. Congratulations to Lisa Barker for the spectacular posters she produces for each of our plays and to Alan and Janet Reidsma and their dedicated staff who welcome you to the theatre, make sure you have programmes, raffle tickets and coffee tokens and then make and serve the coffee in the interval. (Then wash up afterwards!).

Since then we have also received A.C.T. nominations for their 'Spotlight' awards for actors and stage productions. We won't know the winners until the end of November, but congratulations to Kathryn Fennell (Edith Harnham) and David Garner (Arthur Harnham) both in The Day After the Fair, Ian Butterfield (Stanley) in A Bedfull of Foreigners, and Meg Cooper (Ruth) in Entertaining Angels. That play was also nominated as the Most Creative Drama Production. We will keep you informed about who won what.

Another winner was Maddie Goode, who won the Greater Manchester Drama Federation award for Best Actress under 21 for her performance as Anna the maid in The Day After the Fair. Soon after this Maddie went to London to spend 6 weeks working with the National Youth Theatre.

All in all a very successful season.

CHANGES OF JOBS

This summer has seen several people give up their responsibilities here at the theatre and others take them on. We have just heard the devastating news of **BARRY SWITHENBANK 's** death. For many years he has been our Stage Director, designing wonderful sets and the lighting to enhance them, and supervising their construction. It won't be the same without Barry at the theatre , apparently all day every day and most weekends as well. We send our deepest condolences to his wife, Val, and family and all his many friends. His role as Stage Director has been taken by Steve Smith. **ALAN and JANET REIDSMA** have been Front of House Managers for every show, including outside lets. I suspect they haven't been able to watch one of our shows as audience members for many years—they have been too busy selling programmes, coffee tokens and raffle tickets, serving coffee and then washing up. They will be a very hard act to follow, and we thank them for everything they have done to make the theatre such a welcoming, friendly place for you, our audiences. **GIL LANE-YOUNG** is the third member taking on a new role. At the recent AGM he was appointed Treasurer in place of the much-missed PETER BALL. He has spent the time since then realising just how much work the Treasurer actually does. **We thank them all.**

With this newsletter you will find two separate leaflets about areas of the theatre work where we really could do with some extra help. There seems to be more and more to do and fewer and fewer of us to do it. Some of the areas in which you could help are:

BACKSTAGE: the wonderful sets you see on stage don't just happen—they have to be built, and our team of set-builders could always do with an extra hand or two. You don't have to be an expert carpenter—we need help with painting and decorating, wallpapering, holding ladders and many other jobs.

ADMIN: You don't have to be a computer expert to help in the office. If you have a working knowledge of Microsoft Excel we would welcome you with open arms.

TICKET-SELLING: The three weeks before a play starts is always a hectic time, trying to sort out ticket requests so that you can all have the tickets you want. We can teach you how our ticketing system works but if you really are a computer-phobe, how about helping by manning the phones for a couple of hours on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday evening? Or could you spend the 45 minutes before a show starts manning the ticket desk at the front entrance for us?

You would be welcome with open arms if you could help with any of these.

HELP US ADVERTISE OUR THEATRE

When you come to see the first play, don't forget to top up your supply of season flyers and business cards which you can place at strategic places round the area to help spread the word. Over the next few months we shall be trying to make more use of the QR codes— those neat black and white squares which look a bit like a chess board but which reveals a wealth of information if you point a mobile phone at it. (You do need a free QR reader app to do this). If you don't have one of these clever phones, ask someone at the theatre to demonstrate it to you.

CONTACT DETAILS

Should you need to get in touch with us at any time, these are the relevant contact details;

By phone — 0161 928 1113

By email — alt.theatre@msn.com

Ticket sales — ct.tickets@gmail.com

Costume Hire Service —0161 928 1113

Our website — www.alttheatre.org

Charity Registration Number: 517914