

A Network Theatre Company production

at Network Theatre, Lower Road

A Long Night in London: 11-13 March 2010

by Bernie C Byrnes / directed by Bernie C Byrnes



Performances: 11/03/2010 - 13/03/2010

Reading: 02/02/2010 19:00

Audition: 16/02/2010 18:30

Kipper Tie Theatre in association with Network Theatre Company

Network Theatre Company is providing support for workshopped "work-in-progress" performances of this new work to publicise the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust (Registered Charity 1118618). Performances of the play will be followed by a Q&A session with the author and members of the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust plus a chance meet some survivors of the disaster.

Proceeds from these performances will go to the Trust. The professionals involved are providing their services for free. The Verbatim Characters will be played by members of Network Theatre Company. There are plans to take the production to the Edinburgh Fringe and on tour.

The Bethnal Green Tube shelter disaster took place on the evening of Wednesday March 3rd, 1943. One hundred and seventy three people died in a terrifying crush as crowds of people tried to enter the station's bomb shelter; sixty-two of the dead were children. However, no bomb struck and not a single casualty was the direct result of military aggression, making it the deadliest civilian incident of World War 2.

At 8.27pm the touch-paper was lit. A frightening roar went out as a nearby anti-aircraft battery fired a salvo of a new type of anti-aircraft rockets. The weapon was secret, with an unfamiliar sound. Apprehension turned to panic. As the crowd surged forward down the slippery steps a woman fell near the bottom of the first staircase. A man tripped over her, and a tragic human domino effect had begun...

The play features sections of verbatim accounts taken from interviews with survivors of the tragedy. The author wishes to acknowledge the invaluable help of members of the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust in the creation of this piece.

In Memory of All Those Who Lost Their Lives and Loved Ones in the Disaster
www.stairwaytoheavenmemorial.org

With thanks for additional material to Jim Fowler.

Cast:

Warden, Mrs C, (40s - 60s) - Quite matronly.

Maggie Donovan (20s - 40s) - Works in a shop. She is a ballsy, quietly brave typical east end of London girl.

Vera Baxter (30s - 50s) - A bus conductor. Slightly dotty and well meaning.

Joe Moody (20s - 40s) - A secretly illiterate butcher. Is having an affair with Maggie.

Verbatim Characters:

Cissy - munitions worker, secretly afraid of dogs.

Annie - school teacher, secret drinker.

Mrs Tate - undisclosed, needs glasses.

Gene - Spiv, lied to get out of the army.

Alice - seamstress, steals change from other people's bedrolls.

Lorna - 5 and three quarters.

Timothy O'Dowd - Home Guard, doesn't like tea very much.

Charlotte - munitions worker, secretly in love with Timothy O'Dowd.

Auntie Rene - housewife, married to a German in 1937.

Uncle Albert - retired, secretly fancies Hitler.

Sally - widow, having an affair with two married men.

Kenneth Cooper-Hawthorne - bank manager, has to turn light on and off 10 times before bed.

Ivy Brind - Survivor.

Babs Clark - Survivor.

Marlene Deathridge - Survivor.

Carole Monk - Survivor.

Alf Morris - Survivor.

Peter Perryment - Survivor.

Bob Rosamond - Survivor.

Louisa Tyrer (nee Newman) - Survivor.

More information:

- Poster
- Flyer
- Programme
- March 2010 Newsletter article and May 2010 review