



# The Network Theatre Company

www.networktheatre.org

## Press Release

For immediate release 14th January 2011



### NETWORK THEATRE TO HOST A 400th ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION OF *THE TEMPEST* UNDER THE BANNER OF THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY.

In celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first public performance, Network Theatre Company is to present Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in a new version by Bernie Byrnes. The play, which opens on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012, features jazz and dance, and is a collaborative production with Kipper Tie Theatre and The Stage Company. It forms part of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Open Stages* programme, which involves 264 Shakespeare related plays being presented throughout the United Kingdom.

**Dates:** 9<sup>th</sup> February to 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2012 at 7:30pm.

**Location:** Network Theatre, 246A Lower Road, Waterloo.

*The year is 1962. A revolution is brewing in the back bars and dance halls. The Queen of Naples wields absolute power. The Duke of Milan, Prospero, with his daughter Miranda were banished to a far island and, when his betrayers are shipwrecked, he hatches a plot to exact revenge. With intrigue, sexual tension, treason, love and jazz – this is Shakespeare at his best!*

This abridged version of *The Tempest* features a fabulous jazz score, dance and physical theatre. Set in the glamorous 1960s, the abandoned Prospero, Miranda and Caliban retain the elegance of the 1940s. This high-energy production is interspersed by musical interludes that support or oppose the story for comic effect.

There will be nine Ariels, who sing, dance and perform physical theatre. A female Caliban, a result of Prospero's failed relationship with Sycorax, appears as a step-sister to Miranda. Prospero's treatment of Caliban develops a threatening sexual overtone, balanced with a flirtatious relationship with the female Ariels. The ruler of Naples is Queen Alonza, and female sibling rivalry is mirrored in the castaways. Antonio and (the now) Sebastienne's machinations echo Prospero and Caliban's sexual subtext.

The 1960s inspiration carries an intimation of the beginning of women's liberation as a part of popular culture. His being stuck in the past and his attempts to keep the women on the island under his control reinforce Prospero's isolation.

*The Tempest* had its first public performance in February 1612 at the Blackfriars Theatre in London. (King James I had been treated to private performance at Whitehall the previous November.) Later in 1612, *The Tempest* transferred to The Globe for its summer run. It continued until The Globe was destroyed in a fire in June 1613.

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Details of the producing companies are appended.

**Kipper Tie Theatre**

**Network Theatre**

**The Stage Company**

(see Supplementary Information)



## Supplementary Information



The Royal Shakespeare Company, which needs no introduction, has an exciting project in 2011–2012, which is known as Open Stages. This initiative aims to embrace, develop and celebrate amateur theatre, re-forging the bond with the world of professional theatre. The RSC, in partnership with a number of regional theatres and amateur theatre associations, are running a national programme of skills sharing events and showcases, with amateur societies from across the UK invited to produce their own RSC branded Shakespeare themed production. This may then become part of a regional showcase or become part of the World Shakespeare Festival, for which RSC Open Stages will hold a celebration over several weekends in mid July 2012.



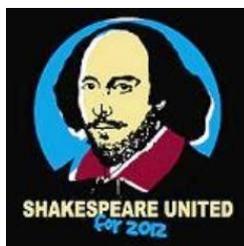
The Network Theatre is a well-established club theatre at Waterloo, London. Founded in 1939, the theatre company runs a programme of five in-house shows per year, in a wide range of genres, including Shakespeare. It has recently won the Writers' Guild Theatre Encouragement Award for promoting new writing. The company runs a dedicated theatre located under Waterloo station.



Kipper Tie Theatre is a professional company, partly funded by Arts Council England. It works mainly in children's theatre, and had a long and successful run of *The Mole Who Knew It Was None of His Business* at the Edinburgh Fringe this year. It is currently producing an adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling*. In the mainstream theatre, it has recently had a number of productions of *A Long Night in London* (a play about the Bethnal Green tube station disaster during the Second World War) in various London theatres. This autumn, it is producing shows in Bombay, Singapore and in Lithuania.



The Stage Company is a professional stage production company. This summer it produced *For Ever, In Trust*, a play commissioned to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of a prestigious grant-making charity. It has produced a number of shows on the Fringe, including *Silver Age Adieu*, which also had short runs at the Marlborough Theatre, Brighton and at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond. Its successful production of *Facades* ran at three London theatres, including the Riverside Studios.



*Shakespeare 2012* is an initiative in response to a call by Equity, the performers' union, for a nationwide, grassroots, all-inclusive celebration of the greatest creative artist of his kind in history, to coincide with the London Olympic Games. As the original concept of the Olympics in ancient Greece embraced performance and drama, *Shakespeare 2012* embraces theatre in the voluntary and professional sectors to create a unifying national Shakespeare celebration which is designed to be the greatest cultural event of the twenty-first century.



Aspects Productions is an entertainment promotion company which provides press and publicity services. Past productions have included the two Royal Gala Performances at Richmond Theatre, Big Band Blitz, and numerous cabaret shows, and corporate events. Aspects also operates the historic Eel Pie Club.



Lion's Mane Theatre Arts Limited is a production company working in the field of performing arts. Trading names include The Stage Company and Crazy Films.