

Network Theatre, 246A Lower Road, Waterloo, London SE1 8SF
www.networktheatre.org

February 2010



Now cast. Performances Thurs 11th – Sat 13th March 2010

Hello Networkers.

Welcome to February 2010's edition of Networking.

Sometimes, when you're waiting for an external group to finish their Noel Coward impressions at their after show party so you can lock up the bar and go home, you wonder what Network Theatre is all about. Then you pick up a leaflet (thanks Gaelle) and look at the line up of our shows and get reminded that we churn out some damned fine productions. This month's edition brings you snippets galore of the next few.

First up, we have an interview with the talented Director/Writer Bernie C Byrnes on *A Long Night in London* – see above. Grab your tickets for a double whammy of goodness; one that you've helped a very worthy cause and the other that you're in for a cracking good play.

And meanwhile, the Fred & Madge cast and crew are gearing up to their performances next week (Wednesday 3rd - Saturday 6th March). I'm told this show is officially listed on the Joe Orton site so we may be hobnobbing amongst the hoi polloi. I've got my ticket. Have you got yours?

Kirsty, The Editor

All submissions are welcome.

Please send to the editor at newsletter@networktheatre.org.

© 2010 Network Theatre Company.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Network Theatre Company, its committee or its members.



A LONG NIGHT IN LONDON

An Interview with Bernie C Byrnes, Writer/Director

1. Some people may not know about this show as it is a new entry into the schedule. Tell us a bit how this has rocketed forth recently.

The piece is being written in time for a free reading at Bethnal Green Library for the Survivors and their families on the 67th Anniversary of the tragedy (3rd March) as part of the remembrance activities. This will feature 4 actors, no lights or sound, literally just reading the play out loud.

The second stage is to mount 3 'work in progress' performances at Network Theatre from Thursday 11th – Saturday 13th March, using lights, sound and a full cast of Network actors to perform alongside the original 4 actors from the Bethnal Green reading. I will be asking for feedback from the cast and the audience about the piece. All proceeds from this will be going to the Stairway To Heaven Memorial Trust, which is a registered charity.

The third stage is to redraft the piece for Edinburgh Festival this year and then hopefully tour.

2. Can you tell us a bit more about the Bethnal Green bomb shelter incident of 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. At 8.27pm 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...It's a very sad story.

3. What inspired you to write this play?

I saw some of the survivors being interviewed last year on 'The Week We Went to War' on the BBC and was touched by it. I was also confused that I had never heard about it even though I use Bethnal Green tube all the time. I got in touch with the Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust and discovered that they are a group of pensioners who devote all their time to this cause without much support from the authorities. I wanted to help out in some way and being a playwright this seemed the logical thing to write a play about it. Around the same time I was also lucky enough to be approached by Trailer Trash Theatre who were interested in commissioning a piece from me for the Edinburgh Festival. I told Lindsay about this project and she liked it.

4. What is the Stairway to Heaven memorial trust?

The Trust is made up of survivors and their families who are campaigning to get a monument built in Bethnal Green. It's a desperate race against time to erect a monument before the last survivors die (they are all pretty elderly). They've got planning permission and a grant from the council but still need to raise another £100,000. At the moment there is a tiny insignificant plaque at the station and nothing else to commemorate the tragic loss of lives. The whole event was covered up at the time in case it affected morale.

5. How did you source interviews with the survivors and witnesses?

I have been working alongside some of the board members who have been incredibly helpful about putting me in touch with people: Sandra Scotting (whose mother was Ivy Brind who survived the crush but tragically was holding her baby nephew who did not), Derek Spicer (who lost several family members) and Alf Morris (who was pulled from the crush by an ARP Warden). There are also survivor accounts on the Trust's website (www.stairwaytoheavenmemorial.org). They make chilling reading.

People were incredibly brave and generous about sharing their stories with me - even though they often simply didn't have the words to express what they were feeling. I met a lot of the people affected and have included some of their stories in the play in the form of 'verbatim' sections.

The piece isn't intended to be a re-enactment - it's a play not a documentary. I'll be using theatrical techniques like physical theatre, split-stage and reported speech to get the facts across. I'm also including verbatim sections - speeches that are what people actually said in articles and interviews. I wouldn't know how to try to express what these people must have gone through and I feel it wouldn't be respectful to even try. It's not intended as a biopic.

6. So, come on spill the beans on your cast and crew...

The lovely David Harvey is heading up the stage crew and luckily we have the lovely Dan Young designing and operating the lighting. And then we are very lucky to have the following cast, who have been bonding over email and World War II songs, given our lack of rehearsals (we have one rehearsal, one tech/dress and then we're up), so we have a team of super dooper troupers:

Character	Cast
Warden	Cheryl Felgate
Maggie	Heather Wilson
Cath	Sally Lofthouse
Joe	Murray Smith
Ivy Brind	Fleur de Henrie
Carole Monk	Alison Rycroft
Babs Clark	Lesley Winterflood
Alf Morris	Andy Bradshaw
Louisa Tyrer (nee Newman)	Eleni Young
Marlene Deathridge	Emily Godowski
Bob Rosamond	Nigel Oatway
Peter Perryment	Keith How
Chorus	Hannah Few
Chorus	Rachel Barnett
Chorus	Sharan Hunjan
Chorus	Paul D'Orley
Chorus	Rafiq Asam
Chorus	Kevin Healy

OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR IN SHORT FILM

Members of Network Theatre are shooting a short film, *The Lonely Gladiator*, which requires a couple of Valentines speed-dating scenes being filmed in our green room on **Wednesday 24th March, to start shooting at 7.30pm**. We are looking for extra speed-daters- any age (over 18).

We will be opening up the bar for real so it will double up as a social event and an opportunity to share a drink with fellow members/ friends (everyone welcome).

Dress: to impress (you are hoping for a Valentines date after all)

Timings: We will be working to a tight schedule so will need you ready to rumble in all your gear to start filming at 7.30pm (theatre opens from 6.30pm)

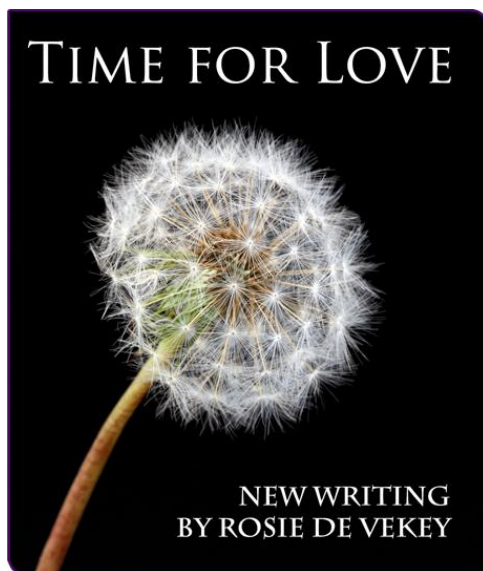
Interested? Contact kirstyeyre@hotmail.com for more details

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Weds 3 rd – Sat 6 th March, 7.30pm	FRED & MADGE performances
Thurs 11 th – Sat 13 th March, 7.30pm	A LONG NIGHT IN LONDON performances
Weds 24 th March, 6.30pm (7.30pm start)	Short Film opportunity (see page 3)
Weds 21 st – Sat 24 th April, 7.30pm	TIME FOR LOVE performances
22 nd July, 7pm	OUTWARD BOUND reading
6 th July & 8 th July, 6.30pm	OUTWARD BOUND auditions
22 nd – 25 th September, 7.30pm	OUTWARD BOUND performances

COMING SOON

Rosie de Vekey's *Time for Love* is now fully cast and into rehearsals.



More on Time for Love in the next edition...

NEED A SHOWREEL?
DOES YOUR SHOWREEL NEED
UPDATING?
Visit www.adamsimcox.com
for a Network Member discounted
rate.

Cast	Character
Suzy Delezameta	Alison
Sean McMullan	Bernard
Alison Rycroft	Judith
Michael Mayne	Viking
Gaelle Compte	Marie-Antoinette
Amanda Joy Tidewell	Lady in Waiting
TBD	Dr Andrews
Sue Small	Mary
Michael Mayne	Fingers
Adam Simcox	Knuckles
Steve Simler	Elbows
Rob McCann	Barman
Yuriko Walker	Club Singer
Susan Hodgetts	Pianist
Alison Rycroft	40s interval singer
Kevin Quinn	ARP Warden
Steve Simler	Da Vinci
Sharan Hunjan	Mona Lisa
Emma Byrne	Anne of Cleves
Steve Simler	Minstrel
Kevin Quinn	Nurse
Paul D'Orly	Peter
Sharan Hunjan	Alison's Mum