

NETWORKING

The Newsletter of the Network Theatre Company

NETWORK THEATRE, 246A LOWER ROAD, WATERLOO, LONDON SE1 8SJ
WWW.NETWORKTHEATRE.ORG



Autumn/ Winter Edition

November 07

HUIS CLOS: A hell of a show!



Ursula Smyth as Inez and Ailish Jeffers as Estelle in Huis Clos

Dear Networkers,

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of Networking. We are doing our best to time the release of each newsletter prior to the next lot of big dates and following a production. That way you get the best of both worlds. Our next newsletter will be in the New Year so here's my opportunity to invite you all to:

The Network Theatre Christmas Party.

7pm, Friday 14th December

Congratulations to Robin and his cast and crew on a rave review of Huis Clos by Mark Aspen, which you'll find in this edition. We've also got an end of year note from our Chairman, David Murray and a jam-packed diary going in to 2008.

If you'd like to air your views, suggest any improvements to the newsletter or the operating of Network Theatre itself, please write to newsletter@networktheatre.org

Enjoy,
The Editor.

All submissions are welcome.

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

Network Theatre Guides

I just wanted to remind you all about the various guide documents we have at Network. These guides build on the ways we have operated in the past and on the experience of members and friends in the theatre world. Not only do they help us in our activities, but they also fulfil authority regulation requirements.

The guides include:

- **Production Handbook:** how Network Theatre Company puts on a production including on-stage and off-stage roles involved from selecting a play, performing and the get-out. Aimed at Network productions the handbook is also useful to other groups using our theatre. This document is very handy if you are putting on a show, particularly directors/producers.
- **Theatre Users Guide :** how to make best use of the Network Theatre and its equipment while adhering to regulations. Please read this if you are in anyway involved in a show.
- **Technical Information:** details technical equipment in the theatre, how it is set up and how it can best be used. This is aimed at technical crew and is kept in the Control Box.

Hardcopies of the Production Handbook and Theatre User Guide are in the Green Room (behind the bar), the Control Box and the SM's Desk. Please do take a look, but don't remove them from the theatre - softcopies are available on request by e-mail to info@networktheatre.org We hope to add them to the website too.

These are living documents. You can help by sending new material or comments to info@networktheatre.org

David Harvey, Stage Manager

Network Theatre History Detectives

Network Theatre (est. 1939) has a long history, rapidly heading towards 70 years now, but while we've learned a lot, we have many holes. We're trying to fill these holes starting with more recent history: We'd like to gather material about our previous productions or other information about Network Theatre, initially electronically with a view to putting more of our history online on the website and ultimately building a complete archive. So... do you have any items, which would help build the collection - or maybe you know someone else who does?

Please send electronic documents (e.g. programmes, flyers, posters, programmes, newsletters etc) or digital photos to stage@networktheatre.org - if large please "zip", or if too big to send/ you only have physical copies, just let us know what you have. Please include production/ event details with names and dates if possible.

Legal stuff: If the material belongs to you (e.g. photos you've taken), by sending it you have granted Network Theatre Company a perpetual non-exclusive world-wide license to use the material in relation to the Network Theatre Company and Network Theatre. If it doesn't belong to you, please let us know who it does belong to and confirm that they have granted permission for us to use it.

I look forward to seeing what I can detect...

Many, many thanks, David Harvey

Members and Friends E-mail Lists

As you probably know we run an e-mail list for our members, and a separate list for our friends.

Members who give us their e-mail address are automatically added to the members e-mail. If you've recently got a new e-mail address please let us know at info@networktheatre.org

The friends list is based on addresses given by guests and users of the theatre, together with contacts in other groups, and lapsed members. Anyone can join by e-mailing us at subscribe@networktheatre.org and can leave at any time by e-mailing unsubscribe@networktheatre.org

You will only receive e-mail about Network Theatre Company or events at Network Theatre. This can include details of our productions, other productions at Network Theatre, other productions our members are involved in and opportunities to get involved yourself. We'll also send other Network or theatre-related things, which we think you may be interested in. We won't pass on your details to others. Only committee members can send e-mail to the lists so you won't get spam.

If you've changed your contact details (address, phone, e-mail) please do let Graham Harris, our membership secretary know. You can e-mail info@networktheatre.org

CHOREOGRAPHER REQUIRED



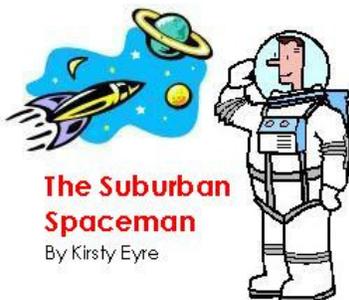
Can you teach aliens to dance?? We're looking for a choreographer for The Suburban Spaceman...

Please contact:
Kay Murray or
Kirsty Eyre

NEXT OPPORTUNITY AT NETWORK

The Suburban Spaceman: A brand new Musical !!

Author: Kirsty Eyre
Director: Kay Murray
Musical Director: Nigel Morgan
Stage Manager: David Harvey



NEXT WEEK!

Reading: 7pm Tues 13th Nov

Auditions:

- 7pm Thurs 15th Nov
- 7pm Thurs 22nd Nov

An Interview with Kirsty Eyre

1. The Suburban Spaceman? What a title! How did you dream that up?

I was introduced to The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah's *Urban Spaceman* song by our music teacher at school. She had an unfortunate lisp, accentuated by 'spaceman' and our class would relish in requesting it every week for pure comedy. The poor woman- she must have known! The song still tickles me today. Separately I knew I wanted to write about your average Joe Bloggs, who lives in suburbia, works nine 'til five, has 2.4 children, washes his car every Saturday... and is suddenly propelled out of his surroundings in to an adventure in space. It fitted: The Suburban Spaceman.

2. Come on then, what's The Suburban Spaceman all about?

I don't want to give away everything but in a nutshell the Head of the Universe commands a mad professor to create a human robot who infiltrates a space technology company. A parody of corporate life is played out. I think most people who work for large businesses can relate to the ridiculous ritual of meetings for meetings sake, acronyms, and buzzword bingo. In real life would you really run something up a flagpole to see if the budgie bites? A whole corporate culture exists in the city and it isn't particularly pretty. But it's done to afford the polar weekend life of luxury in suburbia. The Suburban Spaceman breaks this routine when a group of every day people have to form a rescue party to free the professor from Planet Billabop. Through song and dance we meet goodies, baddies and lots and lots of aliens.

3. So it's a musical? I didn't know you did music...

Neither did I! I'd written a chunk of the script and found myself humming a ditty about a househusband needing to reclaim his masculinity and then the rest followed fast and furious. I have come up with the tunes and lyrics but as I cannot score music, I am working with Nigel Morgan, our Musical Director, to transform them in to polished songs. I didn't half feel a wally singing song after song in to his Dictaphone between cups of tea! Nigel has great musical talent so I can't wait to hear the end result.

4. What sort of songs are they?

A mixed bag really- plenty of witty ditties, a love song, a scary song and a couple of reworked numbers, which you'll recognise. It should be a fun show to be part of. We're looking at off-the-wall choreography and are need singers and dancers of all varieties. Come along and have a read through and get your auditioning shoes polished ☺

5. And Kay Murray is directing this one? How does Kay feel about directing aliens?

Yes, The Suburban Spaceman will be in Kay's capable and experienced hands. She's looking forward to it whilst quietly wondering how on earth to build a space shuttle, create a planet Billabop set and turn actors in to aliens. It might be worth taking out shares in face paint companies who are bound to up their sales over the next few months! If anybody wants to help build our shuttle, please get in touch with David Harvey our stage manager.

We need a mix of ACTORS, SINGERS and DANCERS. Not all characters have to sing or dance...
Hopefully see you at the Reading and Auditions next week.

FROM THE NETWORK THEATRE CHAIRMAN

As we approach the end of another year, it is perhaps only natural to look back on what the Network Theatre and its members have achieved during the past twelve months.

The thing that sticks in my mind has been seeing the theatre full of people, during rehearsals, workshops and social evenings but mainly on performance nights. We have had some exceptional audiences and Nigel Oatway, our Box Office Manager has reminded me of the numbers. For the past seven Network productions on the stage of our theatre, 1,429 people have paid to get in, an average audience of just over 200 per show. With the normal run being 4 nights, that equates to an audience of 50 per night which for a sixty seat theatre is very good indeed. Our fellow Central London theatres would do well if they could match our average of nearly 84% seat occupancy!

Why have we been so successful over the past two years or so?

I think the first factor has been the choice and variety of plays presented. Looking through Nigel Oatway's list, these have included Amy's View, The Merchant of Venice, Abigail's Party, Huis Clos, Facades and Class, the last two having been penned by our own members. Each one has been of a standard, which most people define as close to professional, in the quality of the acting, presentation and direction.

Secondly, the size of the cast can make a big difference to the number of people who come to see a show. The website and ease of communication has opened up the Network Theatre to a much wider number of potential actors and audience which generally means that a Director has a wider range of people from whom to cast their production. From this stems more friends of cast members who have not been to our theatre leading to more audience and so it goes on.

Thirdly, our licensed bar has drastically improved the whole experience of an evening at our theatre. Drinks at reasonable prices in comfortable surroundings amongst friends can be enjoyed before, during and after a show, which has made a significant contribution to the popularity of the venue and to our balance sheet!

The fourth element of this success story has been the whole question of money, how we pay for things and keep in business. The rent we pay as well as the cost of productions, utilities, maintenance and all the hundreds of things which require funding has always been a struggle since our premises were "Privatised" when Spacia, our landlord was formed. However, the Arch 200 Club and the income from the bar sales has made our financial circumstances a lot easier and we are now in a position to spend money on improving the theatre.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who have contributed so much to the success of the Network Theatre. None of what I have mentioned earlier would have been possible without all the many actors/ actresses and backstage crews, who have worked on the shows we have presented. Special thanks must go to the Directors and Producers as well as our home grown writers who put in so much work and so many hours of rehearsals for so little reward save that of the satisfaction of seeing their show on the stage before an appreciative audience. The other group I would mention specially are the members of the Network Committee. Although mostly unsung, they do between them keep the whole ship afloat. I would especially mention Katy Robb, our Treasurer who has recently stepped down in anticipation of her own "production" due to make a debut in December. Congratulations to both Ben and Katy.

As a last word, I would like to mention Kay's father Ted Gallard, who died in September. He had been a supporter of our theatre for many years, and our Mr. Fixit when it came to making practical props or tricky bits of scenery as well as helping at the many jumble sales we used to run to provide funds to keep going.

David Murray, Chairman

FACEBOOK FANATICS

For those on Facebook, you can join the Network Theatre group at:
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4991767626>

Searching brings it up but depending on your network and settings it may be quite far down the list.

I try and post an event for each date we have something on. The group itself and all events are set as 'global' network so that anyone can see them. Anyone who is a member can post photos, videos(!) and messages on the Discussion Boards and Wall.

Join in the Facebook fun!
Sam Bullock, Treasurer

Huis Clos: A review by Mark Aspen

Now here's one hell of a play: an introspective play written by a philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre's *Huis Clos*. Indeed this is a play set in hell: one that I once had a burning desire to stage until I sat through several productions that I could not get fired up about. So it was with some trepidation that I approached The Network Theatre's version, *No Way Out*, translated and adapted by the late Frank Hauser, best known as the innovative Artistic Director of The Oxford Playhouse.

The three main characters feature in the play, who (we soon discover) have just died and are now in hell. However, the hell is not the stereotypical pit of fire and brimstone, but what seems to be a modern room into which they are shown by a butler. They reflect on and relentlessly explore each other's lives, make futile attempts to seduce or to subdue each other until eventually they realise that they are locked together forever in a miasma of their own memories, desires and jealousies: a sort of self-service hell. The conclusion is the infamously oft-quoted, "l'enfer, c'est les autres".

Director, Robin Lansman's production was innovative and engaging, making good use of a set that was stark, yet still claustrophobic. This was reminiscent of a trendy boutique hotel, black and white, with translucent "wrapped" furniture. A black triangle upstage left was a no-go area once they had entered. Here side-battens provided light, flooding in through the "door" through which they were never to return, even when it opens to tempt them away.

The lighting design by Dan Young was exemplary, furniture, door and fireplace all being internally lit. A Pepper's ghost effect, which was technically perfect, allowed the three protagonists to see the dwindling aftermath of their presence on earth. Now here was something different from Sartre and one that I was not altogether comfortable with, for we the audience saw, acted out by non-scripted characters, what should have been privately felt by the newly dead characters, but to which we had access only by their words.



Joseph Garcin is a man of the world, a South American revolutionary who has deserted the army (a really shameful act at the time when the play was first shown in Paris during the German occupation). He is tormented in his thoughts by his own cowardice, but it is his callousness that has sent him to hell. To get the measure of the man, he had made his devoted wife bring him and his mistress coffee in bed. Michael Mayne's portrayal (smartly be-suited in an our-man-in-Havana style) was a clean precise and clinically analytical exposé of a man desperately seeking a redemption he knows will never come.

Photo: Michael Mayne as Garcin with Ailish Jeffers as Estelle

Inez Serrano, the second "guest" is a "damned soul", 1940's-speak for a lesbian. She had taken her cousin's wife as her lover and distraught he had thrown himself under a tram. Inez manipulates the other two, but is disarmingly honest about her sins. Ursula Smyth, playing this role shrew-like, crouched in sly manipulation, gave an incisive interpretation. However, Robin Lansman's innovative approach was to cast Inez as a Cockney postie, complete with 40's headscarf and wraparound cotton overalls. In Sartre's original she is a civil servant, an executive in charge of the postal services. Nevertheless, this worked really well and made a stark contrast to the elegant Estelle.

Estelle Rigout is a socialite who has married a wealthy man for his money and then embarked on an affair with a younger man. She kills their illegitimate baby who results from this union and, beside

himself, her lover commits suicide. She offers herself to Garçin merely as a sex object, ostensibly to infuriate the watching Inez, but with the deep motivation of diverting herself from the past. Ailish Jeffers played the role with a charming, if slightly inconsistent, French accent, portraying her as unrelentingly conceited. She gives her coat to the butler: there is no contrition in this inhabitant of hell. Ailish's measured seductive interpretation was a joyously edgy experience. But Estelle is smoothly shallow: "I'm giving you my mouth, my arms, my whole body, my trust! You must have something pretty ghastly on your conscience to make such a fuss about my trusting you."

The Butler gives nothing away. (How does one get this job? Maybe it's his punishment, although he does say that his uncle is the chief butler. Perhaps it's hereditary?) David Wade, in this part, showed a Butler who was coldly blank, insouciantly polite, but never servile, always in control of events. David Wade, together with Eilidh Nairn and Linda Klockare, played out the shadow scenes in the Pepper's ghost effect. Here was some delicate acting in beautifully expressive mimes.

The protagonist's torments are inescapable, and when Estelle stabs Inez with a paper knife, nothing happens. After all, she's dead.

Sartre was often questioned about whether Garçin's expression of their frustration at the conclusion of the play, that hell is other people, represented his own philosophy about social relationships. Sartre would reply that the characters were all dead and their conversations were taking place for eternity. All their choices had been made and the protagonists could exact no influence upon the world whatsoever. In this hell there is no trust and no free-will, but we, as humans existing in the world, can make choices. There is no absolute authority and no fundamental meaning to our lives, this meaning is something that we must choose. This is a theme that Sartre had developed the previous year in his existentialist work, *Being and Nothingness*, his investigation into the nature of what it is to be human.

But let's forget about the philosophy. My trepidation about The Network Theatre's version, (and about Frank Hauser's translation) were consumed in the hell-fires. This was the best of the productions I have seen: a devilishly good performance!

ARCH 200 CLUB

Every production that we put on at Network works to a limited budget. No director ever feels that the amount agreed with the Committee truly meets the needs of the production. The level of our rent means that every production has to cover its costs and contribute to the rent. This is why box-office sales, membership and participation fees are so important to our continued survival.

We are surviving and have every intention of continuing to do so but we cannot maintain and improve the premises themselves on ticket sales and subscriptions alone. Therefore the Arch 200 Club was created in December 2000 to raise money for the maintenance of the theatre itself and improvements to the facilities and equipment.

The Arch 200 Club has funded, the new sound system, the kitchen refurbishment and toilet water heaters, the new fire extinguishers, the lighting rig refurbishment, the auditorium rebuilding, skip hire for the annual clear out, the piano cover, the never ending need for masonry paint and the various improvements to the storage of props and costumes. These are just some of the more obvious things. There are countless smaller purchases that help to keep the theatre going. There are always things that need doing just to keep the place functioning and your help is needed.

Membership costs £5.00 a month (or any multiple of £5.00 if you wish). You are allocated a membership number for every £5.00 and each month three numbers are drawn. Half of the total subscriptions for the month are paid out in three prizes: with the other half going to funds. The bigger the membership the bigger the prizes.

If you would like to join the Arch 200 Club please pick up an application form in the Green Room or contact Nigel Williams at arch200club@networktheatre.org

Dates for your Diary for the rest of 2007	
Sunday 11 th November, 1pm	Stage Fencing workshop
Tuesday 13 th November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Reading of The Suburban Spaceman (brand new musical)
Thursday 15 th November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Auditions for The Suburban Spaceman
Sunday 18 th November	Theatre tidy up and sort out (bizarre rummage!)
Tuesday 20 November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Reading of Bazaar and Rummage
Thursday 22 nd November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Auditions for The Suburban Spaceman
Saturday 24 th November, 7.30pm	Rehearsed reading of Binding Ties
Tuesday 27 th November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Auditions for Bazaar and Rummage
Thursday 29 th November, 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm)	Auditions for Bazaar and Rummage
Weds 5 th - Sat 8 th December, 7.30pm	Performances of The Kitchen
Friday 14 th December, 7pm	NETWORK CHRISTMAS PARTY!

2007 -2008 PRODUCTIONS

The Suburban Spaceman

by Kirsty Eyre

Director: Kay Murray

Read through 13 November 2007

Auditions 15 and 22 November 2007

Performances 12 – 16 February 2008

Bazaar and Rummage

by Sue Townsend

Director: Mary-Alice Stack

Read through 20 November 2007 at 7.00 p.m.

Auditions 27 and 29 November 2007 at 6.30 p.m.

Performances 2 – 5 April 2008

The Humble Boy

by Charlotte Jones

Director: Jennie Rich

Iff

by Andrew N. Hill

Director: Nigel Williams

Read through 6 March 2008 at 7.00 p.m

Auditions 11 and 13 March 2008 at 6.30 p.m.

Performances 11 – 14 June 2008

Read through 8 May 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

Auditions 13 and 15 May 2008 at 6.30 p.m.

Performances 23 – 26 July 2008

A production yet to be confirmed

Performances 1 – 4 October 2008

The Three Musketeers

by Willis Hall (adapted from the novel by Alexandre Dumas)

Director: Leigh Shine

Read through 18 September 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

Auditions 23 and 25 September 2008 at 6.30 p.m.

Performances 10- 13 December 2008

THE SUBURBAN SPACEMAN by Kirsty Eyre

Director: Kay Murray

Read through: 7pm, Tuesday 13 November (doors open 6.30pm)

Auditions: 7pm, Tuesday 15 and Thursday 22 November (doors open 6.30pm)

Performances Tuesday 12th – Saturday 16th February 2008

THE SUBURBAN SPACEMAN is a brand new modern musical mixing a parody of corporate life with an adventure in space. Are humans perhaps the biggest aliens of all? The Truman show meets The Office and The Apprentice on Planet Billabop. Packed with songs, dance and ditties, can Stanley make it as The Suburban Spaceman?

BINDING TIES by Cailin M. Harrison

Director: Leigh Shine

BINDING TIES is a poignant story of a young lesbian couple who decide to have a child fathered by a married man who is a close friend and the events that unfold as a result of this union.

Tickets £2.00

Doors open at 7.30 p.m.

This new work had a staged reading in October 06 after a Network workshop. Over the past year the writer has been working on the script in the light of observations made by both the cast and audience.

BAZAAR AND RUMMAGE , by Sue Townsend

Director: Mary-Alice Stack

Read through: 7pm, Tuesday 20 November (doors open 6.30pm)

Audition: 7pm, Tuesday 27 and Thursday 29 November (doors open 6.30pm)

Performances Wednesday 2 to Saturday 5 April 2008

Gwenda leads a self-help group of agoraphobics who have been unable to leave their homes for a variety of reasons. An ex-agoraphobic herself, Gwenda decides that the perfect way to help them overcome their fears is to get them involved in staging a bazaar and rummage sale at their local church hall. With the help of trainee social worker Fliss, they tackle the first major obstacle – getting there – only to be faced later on with the horrifying prospect of having to make their way back home...

THE HUMBLE BOY , by Charlotte Jones

Director: Jennie Rich

Read through: 7pm, 6th March 2008 (doors open 6.30pm)

Auditions: 7pm, 11th and 13th March 2008 (doors open 6.30pm)

Performances Wednesday 11 – Saturday 14 June 2008

Felix Humble is not having a good summer. Searching for peace in his late father's garden, he is disturbed by his mother's plans to remarry so early into widowhood. Family secrets are revealed as Felix tries to convince his mother that George Pye isn't the man for her. Will he succeed or will unnatural forces intervene? A bittersweet tale of bees, astrophysics and love.