

Wicked women and world premieres - a sizzling summer awaits at the New Vic!

Summer 2009 Season

Something wicked this way comes as the New Vic announce an unmissable season, with three premieres, two birthday bashes, not to mention a host of women behaving badly...Summer is sizzling at the New Vic!

Highlights:

- **Women behaving badly:** Mancunian barnstormers from smash hit Channel 4 shows *Phoenix Nights* and *Shameless* come to Staffordshire for *A Taste of Honey*. Janice Connelly swaps *Phoenix Nights*' character Holy Mary for spirits as alcoholic mother Helen and *Shameless*' wild child Maxine (Joanna Higson) takes centre stage as Jo for Shelagh Delaney's iconic play.
- **Celeb culture and media vultures:** The New Vic presents the **regional premiere** of Joe Penhall's furiously funny comedy on celebrity culture and tabloid journalism, *Dumb Show*. Award-winning director Phillip Breen takes the creative helm. Watch this space for casting news!
- **Head for heights and a body for sin:** Specially written by Tony-nominated playwright Bryony Lavery for the New Vic, aerial extravaganza *The Wicked Lady* receives its **world premiere**.
- **Happy birthday Uncle Eric!:** Much-loved purveyors of '60s musical mayhem Uncle Eric and co celebrate 10 years at the New Vic in style.
- **Christmas premiere!:** In another **premiere**, the New Vic brings the magical land of Narnia to life for Christmas with a stunning new adaptation of CS Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
- **A decade of building futures:** New Vic *Borderlines*, the theatre's award-winning community initiative, celebrates 10 years of transforming local lives.

Making a welcome return in May, ex- New Vic Artistic Director Gwenda Hughes brings ***A Taste of Honey*** to the stage, the sensational first play by unknown 18 year-old writer, Shelagh Delaney. Part of theatre history, the play was a West End and Broadway sensation, with the much-loved film version a high-point in the history of British cinema. A cast of TV faces includes Janice Connelly (*Phoenix Nights*), Joanna Higson (*Shameless*) and Mark Chatterton (BAFTA award-winning BBC drama, *Cops*).

At the end of May, Joe Penhall's exposé of celebrity culture and tabloid journalism ***Dumb Show*** receives its regional premiere at the New Vic. Making his New Vic debut is award-winning director Phillip Breen. (Watch this space for casting news!)

July sees North Staffordshire host a rare world premiere as spectacular action-adventure ***The Wicked Lady*** gallops into the round. Specially written for the New Vic by Tony-nominated Bryony Lavery, the play centres on the story of a beautiful Lady gone to the bad. In a New Vic first, this breathtaking production has thrilling, mid-air action created with the help of specialist aerial company, Upswing.

No summer would be complete without the annual visit from Uncle Eric. Once a one-off show, now a North Staffordshire tradition, the ultimate dysfunctional family are back with their 10th anniversary show, **Carry on Uncle Eric!**, an unashamed feast of hand clapping, foot-stomping musical mayhem!

And finally, the New Vic announce another premiere! Get set for an unforgettable journey through the wardrobe this Christmas as the magical land of Narnia is brought to spectacular life on the New Vic stage. Artistic Director Theresa Heskins writes and directs a stunning new adaptation of CS Lewis's **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**.

Add to this a busy and varied programme of concerts and events, from thought provoking drama **Boo** from multi-award winners Mind the Gap, to Take That and Paul McCartney saxophonist **Snake Davis** and there really is something for everyone round at the New Vic this summer!

NEW VIC PRODUCTIONS

A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney

Directed by Gwenda Hughes

(Fri 8 – Sat 23 May)

With her very first play, Shelagh Delaney wrote herself into the history of British theatre. A sensational success at Joan Littlewood's Stratford East in 1958, it moved into the West End, then Broadway. And the much-loved film version is a high point of British cinema. Not bad for an 18 year-old usherette from Salford!

Jo is a young girl with some grown-up problems. It's hard enough living hand-to-mouth with her gadabout mother in a succession of dingy bedsits. And that's before there was a new fancy man on the scene. Now she's discovered that her boyfriend is about to sail off round the world - and there's something she needs to tell him. But, in this enchanting play, directed by Gwenda Hughes, Jo's never giving up on her dreams. With love, friendship and faith in the future, she's determined to show that, no matter what, life can still be sweet.

A New Vic production in association with Richard Jordan Productions Ltd

Dumb Show by Joe Penhall

Directed by Phillip Breen

(Fri 29 May - Sat 20 June)

A furiously funny exposé of celebrity culture and tabloid journalism by multi-award winning writer Joe Penhall, directed by Phillip Breen.

Millions of fans may know him as television's Mr Saturday Night, but Barry's worried that his 15 minutes of fame could be coming to an end. So, when a couple of hot-shots say they can help him make some serious money, he's more than happy to go along. Back in the luxury hotel suite, the champagne and the jokes are flowing. But it's not long before the laughter turns hollow. Seems that Barry's show is on the skids, his marriage is a mess and he's tried - and failed - to stay off the drink. Is it a good idea to empty the mini bar? Or to make a pass at Jane? And just how big will his hangover be?

The Wicked Lady by Bryony Lavery

an adaptation of the original novel, *The Life and Death of the Wicked Lady Skelton*, by Magdalen King-Hall

Directed by Theresa Heskins

(Fri 3 - Sat 25 July)

A spectacular action adventure, specially written by one of our finest playwrights. Directed by Theresa Heskins, in a first for the New Vic, this breathtaking production has thrilling, mid-air action created with the help of specialist aerial company, Upswing.

Lady Barbara Skelton is beautiful, wild and truly wicked. Forced into a respectable marriage with a man she can't love, she soon becomes bored and embarks on a secret life of gambling, highway robbery and murder. But she's playing a dangerous game. Shadowed by betrayal, threatened by revenge, can Barbara escape her wicked life? Or will she be abandoned to her terrible fate?

***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis**

Adapted and directed by Theresa Heskins

(Sat 21 Nov – Sat 23 Jan)

Join us as the magical land of Narnia comes to spectacular life on the New Vic stage. The classic story in a dazzling production that will enchant children of all ages and their families.

Four children step through a mysterious wardrobe and find themselves in a bewitching fairytale world. But the land lies under the power of the White Witch who has cast a terrible spell: it is forever winter – but never Christmas.

With Mr Tumnus, Mr and Mrs Beaver and a host of forest friends, Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter join the great lion, Aslan, to battle the White Witch. Can they triumph? And can they bring happiness – and Christmas – to the land of Narnia once again?

VISITING PRODUCTIONS

Mind the Gap presents

Boo by Mike Kenny

Directed by Tim Wheeler

(Mon 18 May)

When he was born, his parents called him Beau. It means beautiful. As the years went by, the other children started to call him Boo. Was it because he was afraid of them? Or were they afraid of him? Inspired by the character of Boo Radley, the forbidding yet friendly, timid but ultimately heroic character from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. What does society these days make of this scared bogeyman? And who really gets away with murder?

Mind the Gap is an award-winning theatre company that works with learning disabled and non-disabled artists as equals.

A David Graham production

Carry on Uncle Eric

(Tues 18 - Sat 29 August)

The ultimate '60s musical celebrates 10 years at the New Vic! Uncle Eric and the rest of the gang carrying on in the latest musical installment in the life of the ultimate dysfunctional family.

When Eric goes to the cinema to see *Carry On Camping*, he finds himself inspired - a camping holiday at a nudist camp! He's soon made a booking at the Paradise Camp Site but, when Madge finds out and tags along, all his beautiful plans start to go wrong. And when he arrives to find a collection of characters very similar to those he's just seen on the screen . . . oo'er, missus! This summer's fabulous musical is filled with comedy, nostalgia and loads of the very greatest 60s music! Warning: nudity, filthy jokes and gratuitous sex are all absent from this production - mostly.

ALL ROUND ENTERTAINMENT

Solas (Weds 13 May)

The most popular, influential, and exciting Celtic band ever to emerge from the United States. In their early days, The Boston Herald trumpeted them as "*the first truly great Irish band to arise from America*" and the Irish Echo ranked them among the, "*most exciting bands anywhere in the World*". Since then, the praise has only grown louder: "*mind-blowing Irish folk music, maybe the world's best*", The Philadelphia Inquirer. After this stunning concert, we think you'll agree!

/more

Jutta's Party Band (Weds 20 May)

Top quality jazz from five of the country's finest young players. Chris Garrick, hailed by The Observer as "*the best young violinist in jazz today*", guitarist extraordinaire Pete Oxley, piano maestro Dave Gordon, bass player Oli Hayhurst, one of the most in-demand players in the UK today, and drummer Russ Morgan, acknowledged as being one of the tastiest drummers in the land.

The Blues Band (Weds 10 June)

Paul Jones, Dave Kelly, Tom McGuinness, Rob Townsend and Gary Fletcher. Between them they've played with some of the greatest bands of the '60s and '70s — Manfred Mann, McGuinness Flint, Family, Medicine Head. More than 25 years on the road with the best Rhythm and Blues you'll hear anywhere. This band is seriously good. Their last New Vic visit was an instant sell-out so book soon!

Independent Ballet Wales

How Green Was My Valley by Richard Llewellyn (Weds 17 June)

This outstanding new production of one of Wales' best known stories features choreography from Creative Wales Award winner, Darius James, and some of the best young dancers in Europe. MacMillan Young Composer of the Year, Thomas Hewitt Jones, provides a stunning new commissioned score. And completing a memorable collaborative experience, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama have produced innovative sets and costumes. With remarkable classical dancers and expansive choreography this will be the most thrilling and entertaining dance event of the year.

Snake Davis (Weds 8 July)

Phenomenally talented saxophonist, flautist and composer, Snake Davis is in constant demand from the biggest names in pop music. You'll recognise his soulful, searing sound from recordings by Ray Charles, Tom Jones, George Michael, Tina Turner, Take That, Cher, Kylie Minogue, Paul McCartney, Robert Palmer, Motorhead, Eurythmics and the Spice Girls - to name just a few! He's on the road with his own band's wonderful mix of soul, world funk and jazz with his uplifting raw-power style.

Black Umfolosi (Mon 20 July)

Zimbabwe's greatest song and dance company is back! Spine-tingling a capella harmonies, compulsive drumming, captivating gumboot dancing. Bare-torsoed and hard-hatted, Black Umfolosi perform with fun and joyful enthusiasm. A thrilling show that's just bursting with life.

MUSIC IN THE ROUND

Ensemble 360 (Weds 3 June)

Rapidly gaining an enviable reputation as one of the UK's leading ensembles, the group brings together musicians from across the globe.

BEETHOVEN Piano Trio in D Op.70 No.1 The Ghost

MOZART Quintet for piano and wind in E flat K.452

BRAHMS Serenade No.1 in D Op.11

Cropper Welsh Roscoe Trio (Weds 15 July)

Peter Cropper, violin; Moray Welsh cello; Martin Roscoe, piano. These three leading chamber musicians with individual careers always create magic when brought together as a trio.

HAYDN Trio in E Hob.XV No.28

BEETHOVEN Trio in G Op.1 No.2

SCHUBERT Trio in B flat Op.99

Ensemble 360 and Polly Ives (narrator) present Giddy Goat

This zany, action-packed musical story of facing fears and making friends is an exciting introduction to music for children aged 2 - 7 years.

ACTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Exclusive to Staffordshire's producing theatre are the internationally-respected and award-winning New Vic Education and New Vic *Borderlines* departments, which continue to go from strength to strength and work with thousands of young people in Staffordshire and throughout the region.

NEW VIC EDUCATION

New Vic Education builds a programme of life-long learning around live performance, participatory drama and the opportunities offered by a producing theatre. The department tours the best in new writing for young people into schools and colleges.

To find out about our activities for ages 6-60+, contact Lynn Parry on 01782 717954 ext. 356 or email lparry@newvictheatre.org.uk.

NEW VIC BORDERLINES

This summer sees New Vic *Borderlines* celebrate 10 years of life-changing work with local people. Working with some of North Staffordshire's most disadvantaged communities, the team help people find new and positive ways to understand themselves, their communities and their responsibilities.

We have five main areas of work:

Interventionist Theatre Programmes

With young people engaged in or at risk of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour, with intergenerational groups and with whole communities; challenging anti-social attitudes, building self worth and positive attitudes.

Drama In Social Contexts (DISC) Workshops

Workshops in Youth Clubs, Schools and community venues tackling issues such as Racism, Bullying, Community Cohesion, Diversity, Sexuality and Discrimination.

New Work

Original, often hard-hitting pieces of theatre commissioned by communities. These include professional tours throughout Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and beyond.

Training

Specific training events for a range of organisations. Drama is a dynamic tool for learning, bringing about change and implementing new approaches.

Conferences

Topic-specific theatre performances for conferences, bringing themes and ambitions into sharp focus.

**Two Global Ethics Impetus Awards; IVCA Clarion Award; British Community Safety Award,
Sustainable Staffordshire Award.**

To discuss your ideas contact Adhia Mahmood on 01782 717954 ext. 309 or email amahmood@newvictheatre.org.uk

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

27 April - 23 May

Colour

Janet Bourne

Paintings about the relationship between layers. They suggest abstract memories of landscape enhanced with networks of colour so the viewer creates their own perspective.

25 May - 27 June

As We See It

The Orme Art Group

A group of artists with a range of experience and styles, showing individual responses to art.

29 June - 25 July

Landscape & Memory

Philip Bennett

My paintings are based on real locations: often incorporating an historical element. In some respects they become dreamscapes, allowing myth or legend into the context of modern landscape painting.

Monkey Music

Half-hour music classes for babies and youngsters aged 6 months to 4 years - action songs and rhymes, music games, music movement and percussion fun - will run on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am onwards during term-times at the New Vic Theatre. Please call 01785 814077 for details.

- Ends -

For more information, please contact Press Officer Clare Hargreaves on 01782 717954 ext 317, e-mail chargreaves@newvictheatre.org.uk or visit the New Vic's website: www.newvictheatre.org.uk

EDITOR'S NOTES

The New Vic operates thanks to a unique partnership between Arts Council England, West Midlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, and Stoke-on-Trent City Council

THE BEST VALUE TICKETS IN THE COUNTRY!

Dedicated to its audience and its community, the New Vic offers a variety of schemes aiming to make theatre available for everyone in the region:

- **Four friends for £50!** Four tickets for just £50 - a great value, great night out with friends.
Any play, any seats Monday – Friday
- **Buy one PLAY, get another HALF PRICE! Buy two PLAYS get another FREE!**
Choose from these great plays: *A Taste of Honey*, *Dumb Show*, *The Wicked Lady*
Any seat, any night, change your performance at any time*
- **Buy one EVENT, get another HALF PRICE! Buy two EVENTS get another FREE!**
Choose from these great acts: Solas, Jutta's Party Band, Ballet Wales, Snake Davis, Black Umfolosi, Ensemble 360, Cropper/Welsh/Roscoe*

* Top price band only; free or half-price tickets to be same value or less than paid for tickets; matinees excluded; cannot be combined with other concessions or offers; must be booked in a single transaction. All sales subject to availability and Box Office Manager's discretion.

BOOKINGS

Telephone: Box office (24 hrs - answerphone) 01782 717962 or online: www.newvictheatre.org.uk