

Queen bees join forces for *Hamlet*-inspired comedy

A New Vic Theatre production

Humble Boy By Charlotte Jones

Thur 1 - Sat 17 April 2010

Woman to Watch Theresa Heskins, award-winning actor Carol Royle and top designer Liz Cooke are the triumvirate of female talent joining forces for a new staging of Charlotte Jones's brilliantly original, *Humble Boy*.

The production is Heskins' first project after being recognised as one of the most talented and ambitious women in the UK creative industry, following her inclusion on the Cultural Leadership Programme's national list of just 50 'Women to Watch.'

Singled out by judge Kwame Kwei-Armah for being "*bold and brave*", the Artistic Director has been commended for an outstanding contribution to regional theatre by exploiting the impact and intimacy of theatre-in-the-round.

Joining her is acclaimed actress Carol Royle, who rose to fame in TV series' such as Dennis Potter's *Black Eyes*, BBC's *Life Without George* and most recently as Lady Brewster in *Heartbeat*. A former Chanel model, Royle is also an acclaimed classical actress known for her roles at the RSC, including an award-winning Ophelia. *Humble Boy* will see her return to the Shakespeare standard, this time as the play's 'Gertrude' – the formidable Flora.

Heskins, who studied with *Humble Boy* playwright Charlotte Jones at university, is also enjoying a reunion with designer and dedicated beekeeper, Liz Cooke, following their collaboration on award-winning aerial drama, *The Wicked Lady*. Bringing high summer to the stage, Cooke is transforming the New Vic's in-the-round auditorium into a living, Renaissance-inspired garden.

The cast includes *Heartbeat*'s Dr Tricia Summerbee, Clare Calbraith, New Vic regular Andy Hockley, Martin Miller (*Honeymoon Suite*), Julia Munrow (Dreamthinkspeak's *Absent* at the Royal Opera House) and Michael O'Connor (*Sweeney Todd*).

Humble Boy premiered at the National Theatre in 2001, receiving a Susan Smith Blackburn Award the same year. A Critics' Circle Best New Play and the People's Choice Award for Best New Play followed in 2002.

Tickets for *Humble Boy*, which cost £8.50 – £17.50, can be booked by calling the New Vic's Box Office on 01782 717962, or online at www.newvictheatre.org.uk

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For further press information, images or to arrange review tickets, interviews, photography or filming, please contact Clare Hargreaves on 01782 717954 ext 317 or e-mail chargreaves@newvictheatre.org.uk

Notes for Editors:

a New Vic production

Humble Boy

by Charlotte Jones

Thurs 1 - Sat 17 April

Past and present, broken vows, love, lust and life collide in a brilliantly original and award-winning comedy directed by Theresa Heskins.

Bumbling Felix Humble may be an astrophysicist with a brain the size of Saturn; but when it comes to life he's bottom of the class. And when he leaves his search for the unified Theory of Everything to return home following his beekeeping father's demise, he finds himself in a real hornets nest.

His impossible mother has taken next-door neighbour George as a lover. The beloved family bees have been exiled. And with the appearance of a visitor from his own romantic past, it soon becomes clear that life in the Humble hive will never be the same again.

*'Rich, original, intelligent, funny and touching . . .
I can't recommend this lovely play too highly.'*

Daily Telegraph

'This is a marvellous play: sad, very sad; funny, very, very funny . . .'

Sunday Times

Cast and Creative Team

Cast

Rosie Pye.....Clare Calbraith
George Pye.....Andy Hockley
Felix Humble.....Martin Miller
Mercy Lott.....Julia Munrow
Jim.....Michael O'Connor
Flora Humble.....Carol Royle

Creative Team

Director.....Theresa Heskins
Designer.....Liz Cooke
Lighting Designer.....Charles Balfour
Sound Designer.....James Earls-Davis
Casting Advisor.....Kay Magson

Company Stage Manager.....Struan Sewell
Deputy Stage Manager.....Katie Bevan
Assistant Stage Manager.....Robyn Hayes