

Rehearsing Mill on the Floss



Caitlin Hare and Andrew Nance precariously rehearsing for Mill on the Floss

Vanessa began rehearsals with improvisation together with games and exercises to encourage the bonding of the company and the sharing of creative ideas. Confidence building and team work exercises have also been employed and as a result the actors are comfortable with each other and their roles and also feel able to share their own opinions, views and ideas about the production.

Because the play lacks unity of space and time the set is of necessity relatively complex in order to create different levels. However the early Victorian authenticity of the piece has been maintained not

drama, love and cruelty that has made George Eliot's novel a classic of literature. The show opens on 23rd March at the Gladstone Theatre, so book early to avoid missing a real theatrical and literary masterpiece.



Andrew Nance and Ian Maddock rehearsing a fight scene

Interesting times abound at Richmond Hall for the big cast assembled by Vanessa Colquhoun to put on Helen Edmundson's acclaimed 1994 adaptation of George Eliot's 'Mill on the Floss' - that classic love story with themes of love, class, and feminism which are still relevant to a modern audience.

The cast consists of a mix of new and experienced actors and Vanessa has drawn on the techniques of The Shared Experience Co. To create a rehearsal process that is experimental, open and questioning thus making it possible to take risks that can lead to ways of redefining individual actors roles and thus the overall production.

only by the script but with the use of costumes and props. A peek into the workshop reveals a piano and a boat both of which will add to the spectacle as well as figure in the plot.

Rehearsals are well under way and there was evidence of energy and commitment from the cast. Vanessa is clearly able to offer her many years of experience as a drama teacher to actors and despite her usual modest self deprecation she appears to be enabling the creation of something very special which will appeal to new and seasoned theatre goers as well as students and scholars of English literature and drama.

This is clearly an ambitious production, full of all the tension,

Dates For Your Diary

Social Events

Quiz Night
Sat 19th March
7.30 pm
Richmond Hall



Light Supper included
Contact Katie Welshman
07591759610

Plays

Mill on the Floss
23rd -26th March
Gladstone Theatre
Curtain Up: 7.30pm
GET IN
0900 Sunday March 20th

Update on the Plays for Next Season



Johnny Kennedy courtesy of his website - www.johnnykennedy.co.uk

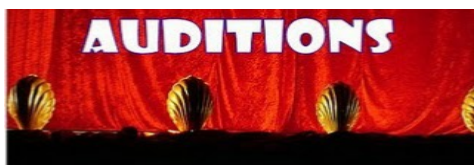
You will recall that last month's CentreStage broke the news of the plays for next season. These included Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* in October and in November 'The Deep Blue Sea' by Terence Rattigan in honour of the centenary of his birth. Originally, John Welshman had intended to direct the November play but it became clear that not even John could manage to direct three plays in a year (April in Paris in May; Deep Blue Sea in November followed by Willie Russell's 'One for the Road' In March 2012. Consequently it has been decided to invite a guest director to take on the Rattigan play and to this end Johnny Kennedy has consented to step in.

Many of you will remember Johnny in the role of Alec in 'Brief Encounters' in March 2010 so he is no stranger to Riverside Players. He brings a wealth of talent and professional experience which I am sure we all hope will enable us to put on a production worthy of the great playwright.

Stop Press: Calendar Girls for 2012

Hold on to your hats! - or whatever other apparel might cover your modesty. Riverside Players have secured the first amateur performing rights to Tim Firth's 'Calendar Girls' in October 2012 - "a play about a group of extraordinary women, members of a very ordinary Yorkshire WI, spark a global phenomenon by persuading one another to pose for a charity calendar with a difference! As interest snowballs, the girls find themselves revealing more than they'd ever planned..."

Wendy Lee-Forrester will direct and she adds, "...fully clothed - I only remove my thermal vest when in the tropics! So girls start checking your attributes..." Well done Wendy. A coup for Riverside!



Auditions will be held for the following plays on two successive Sundays. May 29th & June 5th at 7.30pm at Richmond Hall:

'Lady Windermere's Fan' by Oscar Wilde.

Directed by Ann Warr at Gladstone Theatre Oct 9th - 16th 2011
Cast 7 men 9 women.

'The Deep Blue Sea' by Terence Rattigan

Directed by John Welshman at Heswall Hall. Nov 20th -27th 2011.
Cast 5 men 3 women



Heswall Hall Website



It may seem like pulling teeth but the plans for Heswall Hall continue apace. There is now a website at www.heswallhall.co.uk giving information about the activities at the hall (and at Alexander Hall) as well as news about the move later this year to Community Management. It also has a link within it to our website although not until it was pointed out to them that we aren't the Riverside Players at Eynsford in Kent. No wonder we have dwindling audiences - they are all getting on the bus to Kent!

Brian The Riddler is mystified

Gotham City and Heswall are agog with the news that despite advanced notice (see last month's CentreStage) there are still a few tickets left for the **Annual Riverside Players Quiz Night**. Brian (The Riddler) Jones your quizmaster is mystified as to why the evening has not entirely sold out and has vowed his revenge in the form of incredibly demanding sets of questions such as

“What colour is a Higg’s Boson?”;

“Why are we here?” and

“Why is there always a teaspoon left in the bottom of the washing up bowl?”

These and many others will only be answered if you come to the quiz night.

The date for your diary is

Saturday 19th March 2011

7.30 pm, Richmond Hall

Light refreshments including a drink for ponly £5.

Please book your tickets now before it is too late:

Telephone: **Katie Welshman on 07591759610**

Come and help defeat the Riddler!



A rare photograph of Brian (the Riddler) Jones donning his disguise prior to question setting. (At least we think it's him)

Chairman's Chat

Can you believe that it is nearly the end of February already and we are looking forward to 'Mill on The Floss' at The Gladstone Theatre the first production of 2011. Smaller audiences are affecting all companies at the moment and the reasons include such factors as fewer school parties, a general 'tightening of belts', the right choice of plays and better advertising; things that the committee are continuing to address. Nevertheless it is important that each member makes every effort to broadcast the forthcoming play and sell as many tickets as possible to ensure good audiences to support Vanessa and her cast in what promises to be an exciting production.



Coming up soon, on March 19th to be exact, will be the next Riverside Quiz evening - always an excellent occasion. Please phone Katie Welshman if you are joining in so that we have numbers for catering. A light supper and drinks will be provided for only £5 per person. A bargain for a convivial and competitive evening.

Rehearsals for 'April in Paris' will be beginning at the end of March and, as always offers of help for rehearsal teas and coffee will be most welcome. It is not particularly onerous and only takes at most an hour. Lets see if we can add to the regulars who have so willingly given up their evenings on numerous occasions. To offer help please ring Katie Welshman.

Katie can be contacted on 0151 632 4923 or 07591759610



**NOT GETTING YOUR
CENTRESTAGE BY EMAIL?**

**CHECK YOUR SPAM FILTER OR
JUNK EMAIL BOX.**

**(BUT HERE'S A CONUNDRUM! HOW
WILL YOU KNOW TO DO THIS IF YOU
DON'T GET THIS EDITION?)**



Ars gratia artis

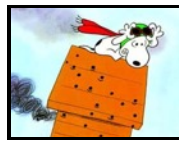
Not a phrase found in the front of a sniggering schoolboy's Latin primer, nor even Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's slogan. On this occasion the phrase aptly denotes the wonderful artistic work undertaken by Val Marshall.

Val is well known to us both as an actor and designer for various productions both with Riverside Players and Hillbark Players. Who could forget her extraordinary and evocative costume designs for both 'As You Like It' and 'Macbeth' - adding as they did to the drama and with excellent absorptive qualities on the nights it rained? However Val's talents do not stop at costume design. With her eye for form and colour Val, a Fine Arts graduate, is a talented painter who has worked as a freelance artist while teaching Art to secondary school students. She describes her work as a fusion of figurative, often overlaid images "...with textures conveying mystery and depth in a ...blend of muted colours".

Val has combined her talent for art with her passion and love of Shakespeare and she painted a number of Shakespearean characters. Most recently, a photograph of John Welshman as 'The Old Man' in Macbeth immediately reminded her of Lear and having persuaded John to pose for a number of photographs (not a difficult task I am given to understand) she produced a painting which she has kindly permitted us to reproduce here. The picture hardly does justice to Val's artistic talents but it gives you some idea of her ability.

Val is of course a busy woman but she now has a website which she is using as a 'shopfront' for her work and she hopes gradually to show more of her work in this way. She is making available very high quality limited edition prints for sale for those interested in owning some of her highly original work. For more information see Val's website at:

www.galleryvalerie.com



Errata - mea maxima culpa

As I sit here with all the parts of the Sopwith Camel that is CentreStage in bits about me and only the absence of complaints from last month for comfort, I find myself in admiring and envious in equal measure at talented Riversiders such as Val, Vanessa and Caitlin. Why then, I muse, are we experiencing dwindling audiences? Is it financial? Or the choice and blend of plays (traditional vs. modern)? Or is it also, as I suspect, the need for much wider advertising to bring 'Theatre to the People of Wirral' rather than just to the members of Riverside? Such are the musings of your beagle pilot as he attempts to get CentreStage airborne again. Any thoughts? Any talented advertising executives out there? Let the committee know!



Bringing Theatre to the People of Wirral

www.riversideplayers.org

The Riverside Players is a Registered Charity No. 514741



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Deadline for the next Edition:

Friday March 19th 2010