

EA Review

Absurd Person Singular

By Alan Ayckbourn

This nineteen seventy-two festive offering from Alan Ayckbourn tells of varying fortunes of three couples over three successive Christmases. The Hopcrofts are pleasant and aspirationally mobile, the Jacksons are cynical and ambitious and the Brewster-Wrights are upper class and snobbish. While the play itself is widely regarded as a comedy, it features a dark underscore as we witness the powerplay between each of the partners: Sidney's slow destruction of Jane's self confidence; Eva's pitiful suicide attempts and recovery at the expense of her husband; and Ronald's bewilderment at his wife's fall into gin-soaked alcoholism.

The set requirements demanded that each act was played out in a completely different kitchen. The EA team chose, unconventionally, to have two intervals allowing the crew to completely re-dress the set, which when combined with subtle lighting changes, effectively created the three different rooms the script required. However, while trying to allude to the period of the script, some inevitable anachronisms crept in although the solid performances on stage ensured that these glitches were not a distraction.

In terms of performances it has to be said all three women outshone the men. That's not to say that the males-Mark Campbell (Geoffrey Jackson) Paul Friett (Sidney Hopcroft) and Hugh Wootton (Ronald Brewster Wright) turned in poor performances: it was just that the trio of Tina Crook (Eva), Eileen Warner (Marion) and Linda Gay (Jane) inhabited their roles fabulously.

Debut director Sarah O'Hanlon deserves praise for producing a respectable interpretation of the piece, and has put in solid work bringing it to the Edward Alderton stage. With the support of her excellent back stage team, she has produced a lovely Christmas cracker which the audience thoroughly appreciated.

We have a Social Evening every Wednesday at the theatre from about 9pm onwards (except during performance weeks). Come along and get to know some of us, show us your talent and have a drink!

EA News

*The newsletter of the Edward Alderton Theatre
January 2011*



*The tale of a Man, a Cunning Plan
and a Turnip shaped like a thingy*

BLACK~ ADDER II

24 FEBRUARY 2011 ~
5 MARCH 2011

News

Editorial

Welcome to the latest Edward Alderton Newsletter, where the theatre keeps you informed of what is going on at the EAT. Going forward, we will bring you details of all the events, auditions and productions happening at the EAT so please keep an eye out for future editions. For the very latest news please check out our website www.edwardalderton.org which is regularly updated with the theatre's goings-on.

2011 is already looking to be a great year for the Edward Alderton, with our next production, the classic comedy *Blackadder II* (in aid of Comic Relief) opening at the end of February. This will be followed by a change of pace with two wonderful character pieces: *Duck Variations* by David Mamet and *Soldiering On* by Pamela Reeves, produced together as double bill under the banner of *New York Stories*. More on that in the next issue!

Tickets for all our productions can be purchased by phoning 0208 301 5584 or in writing c/o 29 Chapel Road, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA7 4HW

Times are a changing!

You may have noticed a slight change in format to this newsletter: our long standing publicist Mark Campbell has decided to step down from the role to spend more time with what remains of his sanity! Seriously, we would like to thank Mark for all his hard work in compiling these newsletters over the years and wish him success with his other projects. Mark is also stepping down as Artistic Director of the Theatre at our next AGM (details below).

Also standing down are our current Treasurer, Jenny Devonshire and committee Member, Viv Stapleton. Again we would like to thank Jenny and Viv for all their hard work for the EAT over the years.

Annual General Meeting & Election of Officers

Our annual AGM will take place on 8th March 2011 at 8.00pm, where we will be announcing details of our forthcoming 2011/12 season plus electing the officers and committee members for the next twelve months. If you wish to attend the AGM and vote in the election you must be a fully paid up member of the Edward Alderton Theatre. Please contact us if you would like to join and have a say in how the theatre is run.

Preview

Blackadder II

By Richard Curtis and Ben Elton

Adapted and produced by Rebecca Mason

Directed by Wendy Marsh

The late seventies was a pretty dire time for the British situation comedy. While the earlier part of the decade produced such gems as *Porridge* and *Fawlty Towers*, by the time the decade came to a close these classics had long since ended and all the two main channels (yes kids, there was a time when there were only three channels) were producing were safe suburban offerings such as *Terry and June* and *George and Mildred*. It was a time when stereotypes were still acceptable on television and racism and sexism were still considered "funny". However, the political and social revolutions of the eighties caused the typical sitcom to change somewhat. More anarchic and less traditional comedies like *The Comic Strip Presents* and *The Young Ones* popped up, slowly pushing the 'old fashioned' sitcoms off the screen.

In 1983 the first series of *Blackadder* appeared on our screens. Although not considered successful at the time, it was given a guarded reprieve which led to the show being effectively re-imagined into the format that spawned three further successful series, culminating in one of the most memorable moments in television history—the evocative ending of *Blackadder goes Forth*.

However, it is the second series which forms the basis of our show—the one that set the template for the rest of the series' run. Set in the Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth I, it features a cunning Lord Edmund Blackadder scheming away, only to be confounded by his idiotic sidekick Percy and his fetid manservant Baldrick. Along the way he is disinherited by the puritanical Whiteadders, imprisoned by the German master of disguise Count Ludwig and wins the hand of a girl named Bob!

It is uncommon for non-professional theatres to be granted permission to perform *Blackadder* (in any form) so we at the Edward Alderton are very proud to have secured the rights to this prestigious comedy and, in doing so, supporting Comic Relief in its work across the United Kingdom and in the developing world.