



 The Playhouse Company Cheltenham

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www.theplayhousecompany.org.uk

CHELTENHAM PLAYHOUSE, BATH ROAD, CHELTENHAM, GL53 7HG

NEWSLETTER

July 2015

by **Dan Le Franc**



**Directed by
Malcolm Ball**

The Big Meal Tues 23 — Sat 27 June 2015

This story of a family, spanning 80 years in about 100 minutes presented challenges for both the director and the cast: overlapping dialogue; conversations happening in tandem; and having to shovel down large spoonfuls of dubious-looking food.

These were all extremely well-met by an experienced and talented director, and an excellent group of actors. It was lovely to see some new faces to the Playhouse Company, and we hope that this will be the first of many productions that, Sophie, Megan and Craig will get involved with.

The show received an excellent review in the Echo; and the audiences (406 seats sold), were won over by the high quality of the production and performances. Some even returned for a second sitting!

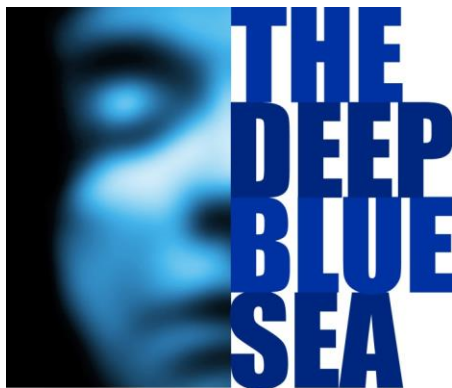
This was a family show in every sense, with Malcolm and his wife, Vanessa, working their socks off to bring this production to stage, as well as their daughter Kate running the backstage restaurant! Thank you so much, to you and your team, for giving the Company and the Playhouse theatre audiences such a wonderful show.

The Echo Review is included on the last page of this Newsletter.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Performance Dates:

**Wed 11 to Sat 14
(inc Saturday Matinee)
November 2015**



Written by Terrence Rattigan

**Directed by
Mike Charlton**

COMING UP

THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Thanks to all of you who joined us for the Reading, and Auditions for this production. We had a really good turn-out (eventually!) and Mike is delighted to report his Cast as follows:

Hester Collyer:	JO PRICE
Freddie Page:	GARY LINES
Ann Welch:	SOPHIE FLOWERS
Philip Welch:	EOGHAIN ORMISTON
Mr Miller:	PHIL WARD
Mrs Elton:	SHIRLEY BURGESS
Jackie Jackson:	ADAM WRIGHT
Sir William Collyer:	<i>to be confirmed</i>

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY



There are plenty of areas for you to get involved with: props, backstage, set-building and painting etc; so please don't be shy, just come along and join us at our first:

**Production Meeting on
Thurs 3 Sept 2015, at 7.30pm in the Green Room**

The Production Secretary is MARIE JAGGERS, who will be delighted to hear from you:

Email: mariejaggers@hotmail.com Mobile no. 07525 218751

COMING NEXT

4 -12 March 2016



Directed by Dave Wheeler

**Musical Director:
Paul Williams**

*Ladies and Gentlemen, we are full of
anticipatory scintillation for
our next production!*

So, get your 'ta tas' ready for

Old Time Music Hall

Warm up your vocal chords, and look out for details of Readings and Auditions in our upcoming Newsletters and on the website.

And announcing our Choreographer: Gill Holmwood

FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

June 2016

THE FINAL TEST



by Chris Paling

Directed by Liz Maisey

November 2016

THE CRUCIBLE



by Arthur Miller

Directed by Simon Young

**CHELTENHAM
PLAYHOUSE**

THEATRE STUFF

BOX OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

The Box Office and Foyer areas will be completely off limits whilst refurbishment takes place from Sunday 26 July to Thursday 6 August. The new on-line Booking System is also being installed.

Monday 27 - Friday 31 July: Telephone sales only from 10am - 1pm
Saturday 1 - Thursday 6 August: Totally closed for training purposes
From Friday 7 August: Open as normal

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Due to personal commitments, both Jo Jenks and Sue Bennett have stepped down from the committee.

Jo has served on the committee for many years, both as Treasurer and Publicity Manager, and has done a fantastic job in both roles. We are very sorry to lose them.

Thank you so much, Jo and Sue

REVIEW: The Big Meal

A simple, yet striking, American Diner set stays constant throughout the play, which follows a couple's years together from first meeting to their final goodbye. The themes of family life, love, marriage, parenting, ageing and death, are slickly handled by the Director, Malcolm Ball, with eight adult actors (supported by alternating teams of two children) undertaking a plethora of roles.

Whilst a bit of effort (though not too much) is needed to keep tabs on who's who, as the actors move through the generations and characters, and the use of piano chords to break up the time is a little confusing at first; neither detracted from a thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking evening.

The play opens with a young Sam, skilfully played by Craig Miller, with a clear articulated diction and solid Midwest American accent, encountering a waitress, Nicole, played by Meg Tissier. Before we know it, they have fallen in love, split up, got back together again, married (sympathetically played at this point by Toby Shergold and Sophie Flowers), and now have children. Tonight's children, played by Emma Parrott and Sean Whitten-Brown, smoothly slipped between playing four generations of children, and looked like they were enjoying every minute on stage.

Liz Shirley gave an outstanding performance first as drink-dependent Alice, Sam's mother, and later giving a heart-rendering monologue to her grandson, Robbie (Craig Miller) on the death of his son, and later as Nicole in her twilight years. Stephen Rayworth too, could not be faulted in his portrayal firstly of Sam's father, then Stephanie's father, and finally as the elderly Sam succumbing to dementia.

The play is not all serious doom and gloom. There are moments of comedy and comic behaviour that can be found in any ordinary family's story, with family gatherings filled with recognisable tensions and cranky behaviour. The Waitress of Death (Kate Ball) is both macabre yet at the same time quirkily amusing, plonking down the last meal before the soon-to-be departed.

This is a play well worth seeing; zapping through this family's 80 years and five generations on life's roller-coaster ride.

Judith Wordsworth

Gloucestershire Echo 24 June 2015