



HANDBAGGED

by Moira Buffini
Directed by John Davies

17th – 25th November 2017

A sparkling duel of wits between the two most powerful women Britain has ever known.

NARNIA THE MUSICAL

by Jules Tasca
Directed by Darren Barsby

15th – 31st December 2017

The first and most famous story of The Chronicles of Narnia.

84 CHARING CROSS ROAD

by Helene Hanff
Directed by Rob Graham

19th – 27th January 2018

The true story of two strangers with a shared love of literature.

BRONTË

by Polly Teale
Directed by Louise Wallace

16th – 24th February 2018

A glimpse into the real and imagined world of the Brontë sisters.

WWW.BARNTHEATRE.CO.UK

Peter Quilter's

GLORIOUS!



27th October -

4th November 2017

Directed by Hannah Sayer

£1.50

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I was first introduced to Florence Foster Jenkins while on a flight home to Cyprus for Christmas: the recent film was the inflight entertainment. The girl sitting next to me, who I didn't know from Adam, said 'You'll love this, it's a great film' – and indeed it was and I did. I remember while watching it thinking 'This would be awesome to do as a stage show'. Fast-forward a couple of months and imagine my delight when in fact there was a stage version of this wonderful woman's life: *Glorious!* by Peter Quilter, AND the rights were available. I knew I had to do it.

While I dodged the bullet of the Directors' Evening (one of the most terrifying nights of the year if I'm directing in a season), I was reliably informed that it was presented well and had generated a lot of attention. That's an understatement! I had a very difficult decision when it came to auditions: it seemed that most of the Barn women (within Florence's age bracket – not to be mentioned, we are after all 21) wanted a chance to be the 'first lady of the sliding scale' and why wouldn't they? Florence was a truly wonderful woman: throughout the rehearsal process, the more I learnt about her the more I knew I would have been one of her biggest fans. There is no denying her vocals were... alternative – however, her performances by all accounts were spectacular: she put everything she had into creating a good show and really didn't care what others thought. She did what she loved because she could... isn't that wonderful? personally I find her inspirational and very empowering.

Although she had this great zest for life, her actual history is not a pleasant one. She was born into wealth, and reached early acclaim playing piano in her youth, however her father cut her off financially when she declared that she wanted to sing in public. To spite him, she eloped with a doctor who was 16 years her senior. Less than a year later she left him taking nothing other than his name and the syphilis he gave her, and they divorced in 1902. Still she was not to be brought down. She continued to support herself by teaching piano, met St Clair Bayfield in 1909 who became her common-law husband and manager and, when her father died later that year, she inherited everything. From that moment on she was unstoppable, living her life to the full despite having a debilitating illness. She became a matriarch of many clubs and societies including founding the Veri Club. Regularly featured in the *New York Times'* arts sections for her shows and recitals, she sold out every record she made, and famously sold out Carnegie Hall on 25th October 1944, certainly showing the naysayers where they could go!

To me this play has been an absolute delight; my affection for Florence has grown to the point where I actually feel the need to defend her against 'the enemy'; and rehearsals have been ridiculously funny with my cast threatening to evict ME for laughing too much! I hope that joy and light transcend to the audience and that you all leave with the feeling that if Flo can... you can!

I have to thank all my cast, backstage crew, set builders and anyone I may have forgotten for the superb amount of work they have put in over the past couple of months to create this magical show. It's been a pleasure for me as a director to work with such a wonderful, talented and committed bunch.

I leave you now with a lovely quote by St Clair Bayfield: 'People may have laughed at her singing, but the applause was real'.

Hannah Sayer

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the Barn Theatre and to tonight's performance of *Glorious!* This is the second play this season, following hard on the heels of Alan Ayckbourn's *A Chorus of Disapproval* which played to full houses. You're in for a great evening's entertainment and, not wishing to give the plot away, I can assure you that earplugs are not available for purchase in the theatre!

During our close season in the summer some improvements were made to the fabric of the building. The foyer has been completely repainted and some very important structural work was done 'behind the scenes' – actually above the stage to add further strength to our very old beams. For those of you who might be new to our theatre we did some carbon dating of the timbers to discover that the oldest part of the building dates to 1598, when Hamlet was premiered – but not here! We continue to make improvements and shortly, I hope, we will be embarking on some fundraising to significantly improve the foyer toilets, actually to completely rebuild them. I hope we can raise the funds and get the work done next summer in readiness for the 2018/19 season.

We are always looking for new members because putting on a play demands lots of disciplines other than acting. This play for instance might only have a cast of seven, but it takes around another 30 (set builders / bar staff / front of house – I could go on!) to bring it to the stage. Please pick up a leaflet from the foyer if you're interested.

Now please sit back and enjoy tonight's performance.

Nigel

CAST

Rachel Thomas	<i>Florence Foster Jenkins</i>
Roly Taylor	<i>Cosme McMoon</i>
Simon Parr	<i>St Clair</i>
Mary Goodfellow	<i>Dorothy</i>
Sarah Doyle-Smith	<i>Maria</i>
Sharon White	<i>Mrs Verrinder-Gedge</i>
Ricky the Dog	<i>As himself (with thanks to Michal Parr)</i>

CREATIVES

Hannah Sayer	<i>Director</i>
Sharon White	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Michal Parr	<i>DSM & Prompt</i>
Lucy Winston	<i>Production Manager & ASM</i>
James Rowles	<i>Sound</i>
John Cude	<i>Lights</i>
Georgie Palmer	<i>Props</i>
Andrew Read	<i>Props</i>
Rosemary Bianchi	<i>Set</i>
Anne-Marie Austin, Yvonne Bartlett	<i>Wardrobe</i>
Tammy Wall	<i>Makeup</i>
Ian Bage, David Fairhurst, Robert Gill, Keith Lambert, Norman Merry, John Sear, Colin Timney, Eddie Washington, Trevor Watkins	<i>Set Builders</i>

With special thanks to Nick Jackson, Joshua Losben – who provided the Radio City voiceover – and Mary Sanderson for assistance with and creation of costumes.

ACT I

- Scene 1 - Florence's apartment at the Hotel Seymour
- Scene 2 - The Melotone recording studio, 54th Street

ACT II

- Scene 1- Ballroom of the Ritz Carlton Hotel
- Scene 2- Funerary gardens outside a church
- Scene 3 - The stage of Carnegie Hall
- Scene 4 - The stage of Carnegie Hall

Time - 1944

Florence Foster Jenkins

Florence Foster Jenkins (1868-1944) was an American socialite who, as a child was an accomplished pianist: thus began her lifelong devotion to music. In her adult years, Florence became famous for flamboyant costumes, charitable good works and an exquisitely bad singing voice. She funded her own performances, with audiences selected by interview, and was protected from the harsh reality of her lack of ability by a coterie of supporters, in particular St Clair Byfield. Fans included such luminaries as Cole Porter and Enrico Caruso.

It is possible that nerve damage was at the root of her inability to hear her voice but what we can definitely say is that she was a shining example of triumph over adversity who seems to us humble non-professional actors as a sweet and generous, if deluded, woman.

It must be remembered that Florence's final performance at Carnegie Hall was a sell-out: a testament to her unintentional comedic value and unswerving tenacity!



RACHEL THOMAS

Rachel has been involved with the Barn as an actor and musical director since 1974, her favourite roles being Mrs Johnston in *Blood Brothers*, Ida in *Honk!* and, most recently, Annie Besant in *The Matchgirls*.

In the real world, she is a singing teacher, choral director, orchestral conductor and class teacher of music, drama and philosophy at Knights Templar (Secondary) and Round Diamond (Primary) Schools.

Her favourite costume in this play is the Spanish dress – wearing it has fulfilled a lifetime's ambition.

Rachel has fallen in love with Florence, and has enjoyed the liberating experience of emulating her unique sound.

Cosme McMoon

Cosme McMoon was born in Mexico in 1901. He moved to New York City in 1920 to further his musical studies, meeting Florence in the late 1920s. Sadly, after Florence's death, he was unable to pursue a career in music and instead switched to bodybuilding and judging bodybuilding contests. He was a master chess player and was fascinated with mathematics.

He died in 1980.

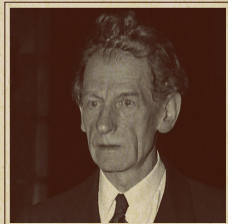


ROLY TAYLOR

Roly Taylor has been performing in one way or another since childhood, occasionally professionally, although it doesn't show. When he isn't on stage he is one of the directors of a veterinary supplies business, so if you need anything, stay behind and talk to him (10% discount if you mention the Barn Theatre*). He also performs musical comedy with his doppelgänger (find out more at classicalmayhem.com). He's had an illustrious and successful career in many things but doesn't like to talk about it. And on one day in 2011 he met both HM Queen Elizabeth II and Dame Helen Mirren at the same party and came away quite confused.

*Only if you buy him a drink.

St Clair



St Clair Bayfield was a very successful actor, with over 40 credits on Broadway spanning several decades. He was also fiercely loyal to Florence, clearly deeply in love with her, and determined to support her in any way he could. In this production, however, he is written as a big man, and not that successful but a bon viveur and slightly eccentric stereotypical 'English actor'. This, of course, leads to more humour, and makes him enormous fun to bring to life. His dry asides and sheer love of life help with the heart-warming message of this wonderful play.

SIMON PARR

Simon has found that coming back to the theatre after a long career elsewhere has been a delight. He has been lucky enough to have been involved in a number of productions over the last few years and, while all have been enjoyable, this one has provided more laughs than most during rehearsals. It has also allowed him to put his Spanish Degree to good use in assisting Sarah Doyle-Smith with her role as Maria. Simon finds that after a fairly dry day at work, heading out knowing he is going to have such fun is something to really look forward to.

Dorothy



Dorothy is a fictional person characterising Florence's best friend and costume designer. Slightly eccentric, colourful and in some ways more eccentric than Florence – she is a loyal, protective and sweet-natured true friend who appreciated and loved Florence as much as Florence appreciated and loved her.

MARY GOODFELLOW

After an earlier professional career working in cabaret and theatre for schools, Mary has directed, choreographed and acted for Digswell Players for seven years. At the Barn she has appeared in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Steel Magnolias*, as part of the ensemble in *Lilies on the Land* and as Old Nell in *The Matchgirls*.

Maria



Florence Foster Jenkins' maid Maria is from Guadalajara, Mexico. We are given no clue in the play as to why she ends up in New York, but her overall air of seething resentment and obvious dislike of her circumstances hint at a troubled past. It's likely that she fell into domestic service, as did many immigrants at that time, because the job gave her a roof over her head. Despite wanting it to be the contrary, it seems that Maria is a purely fictitious character.

SARAH DOYLE-SMITH

Sarah Doyle-Smith joined the Barn in 2012 and *Glorious!* is her 10th Barn production. She also performs with Hertford-based Company of Players

Every Barn show Sarah is involved in she claims will be her last, leading a good friend to comment that she's had 'more comebacks than Sinatra'. You can catch her next in *84 Charing Cross Road*, which opens here at the Barn in January.

In her spare time, she enjoys cookery and needlepoint.

Mrs Verrinder-Gedge

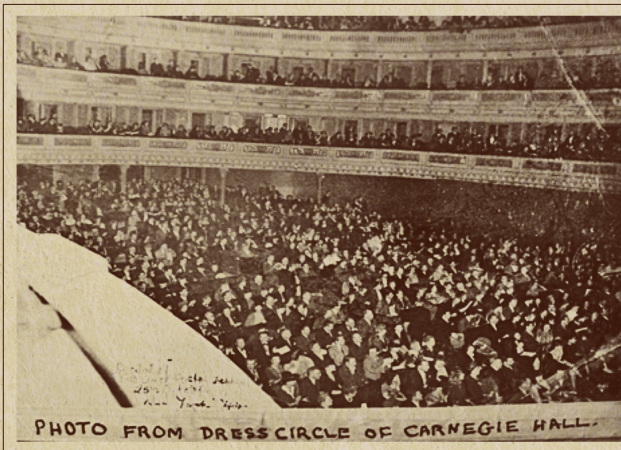


Florence was a larger-than-life character and, while she had a legion of fans and followers, there were a number of people who were not appreciative of her musical 'abilities'. While Mrs Verrinder-Gedge is, as far as we are aware, a fictitious character brought to life for this play, there

were a number of similar people who doubted Florence and were very much surprised by her success.

SHARON WHITE

This is Sharon's debut at the Barn Theatre and the first time she has performed for a significant number of years! She has been involved with numerous productions, predominantly as Stage Manager, but when the opportunity arose to be part of *Glorious!* she couldn't resist.



Florence 'entertains' friends!



We would like to acknowledge the enormous and wonderful team of front-of-house and back-office volunteers who provide a host of fundamental services and facilities for all of our productions and for the theatre as a whole - they all deserve a huge vote of thanks.