

# COMING UP AT THE BARN



## A BUNCH OF AMATEURS

**4<sup>TH</sup> – 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** AT 8PM

**THEY WISHED FOR A STAR... THEN WISHED THEY HADN'T.**

A fading Hollywood star arrives in Stratford to play the lead in *King Lear* – but this Stratford is a sleepy Suffolk village whose am-dram club are fighting to survive. As two acting worlds hilariously collide, and two cultures clash, ego and vanity give way to acceptance and surprising resolutions...



## SYDNEY AND THE OLD GIRL

BARN STUDIO

**16<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** AT 8PM IN THE STUDIO

**A MOTHER AND SON AT WAR WITH EACH OTHER - WITH NEITHER PREPARED TO LOSE A SINGLE BATTLE.**

Nell Stock and her son Sydney are at war. After 50 years cooped up in a shabby east London flat, the points scored in their twisted game continue to bind the pair together. And then there's the not-so-simple matter of the inheritance...

CONTAINS ADULT THEMES, SWEARING AND LANGUAGE THAT MAY OFFEND.

This is a **WORLD AMATEUR PREMIERE.**



## HANGMEN

WHAT IS ENGLAND'S SECOND-BEST HANGMAN GOING TO DO NOW THEY'VE ABOLISHED HANGING?

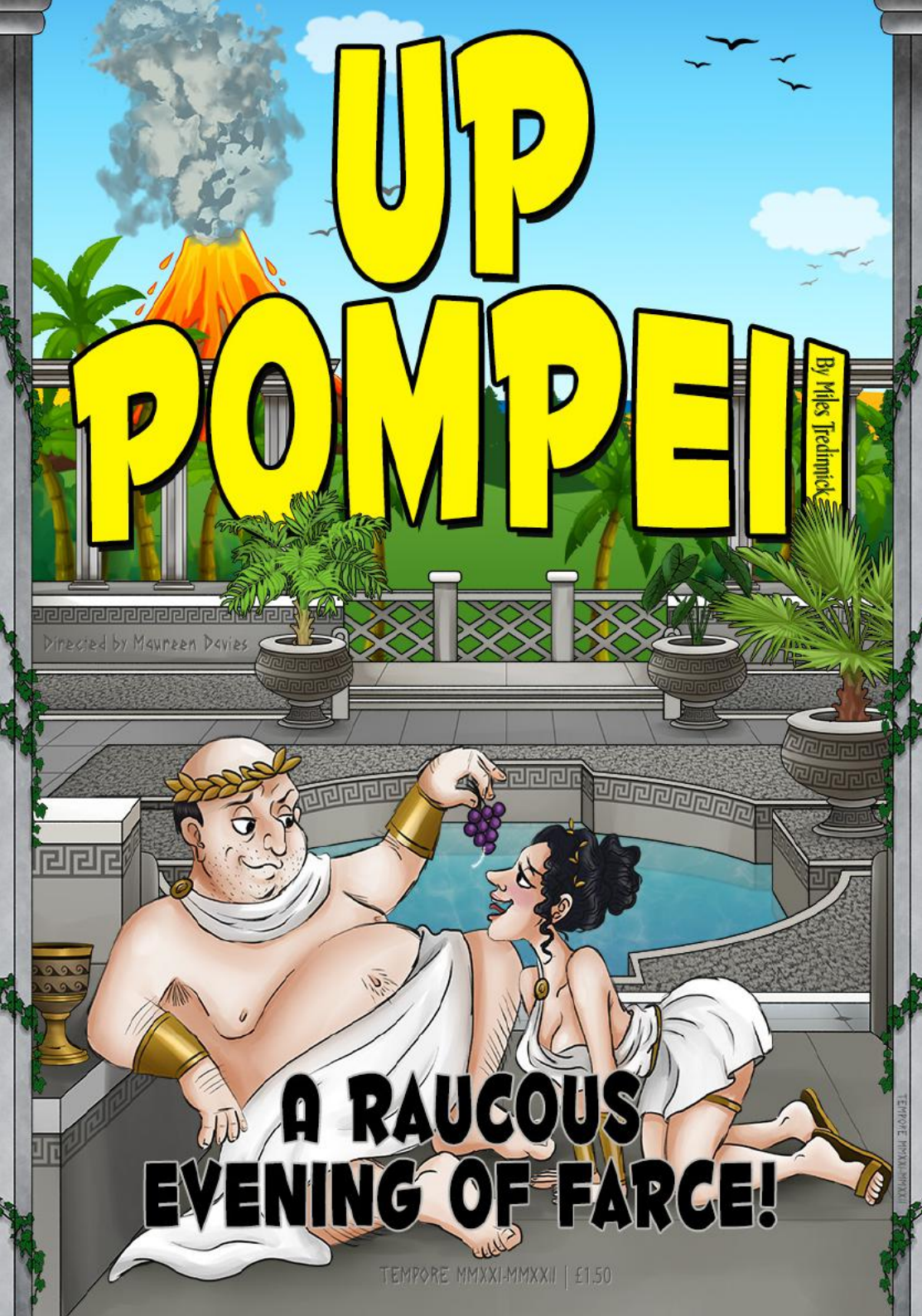
CONTAINS ADULT THEMES AND SOME OFFENSIVE 'OF-ITS-DAY' LANGUAGE.

**25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL** AT 8PM

**MARTIN MCDONAGH HAS NOT INVENTED BLACK COMEDY BUT IS CERTAINLY PERFECTING IT!**

In his small pub, Harry Wade, the second-best hangman in England, is something of a local celebrity. But what's he to do on the day they abolish hanging? Amongst the cub reporters and sycophantic pub regulars, dying to hear Harry's reaction, a peculiar stranger lurks, with a very different motive for his visit.

[WWW.BARNTHEATRE.CO.UK](http://WWW.BARNTHEATRE.CO.UK)



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Frankie Howerd asked Miles Tredinnick to write a brand new stage play for him based on his most successful TV show, *Up Pompeii*. Howerd's plan was to do a UK tour and then perform it in the West End. Tredinnick set to work writing the play basing the characters on those created by *Carry On* scriptwriter Talbot Rothwell and Sid Colin for the TV series. The play was just about to roll into action when Frankie Howerd was asked to reprise his role as Pseudolus in Sondheim's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at the Piccadilly Theatre – which had inspired *Up Pompeii* in the first place.

As there's only so much Roman slavery a man can do, *Up Pompeii* was temporarily put on the back burner. Fast forward a few years and theatre producer Bruce James heard about the play and tracked down a copy. Fortunately, it made him laugh enough to produce a UK tour.

*Up Pompeii* is now back entertaining audiences with Lurcio, Ludicrus Sextus, Ammonia, Erotica, Senna the Soothsayer, and several others. So many thanks Bruce!

I've thoroughly enjoyed directing this play, and I've been so lucky to be able to work with such a fabulous cast. We've all enjoyed ourselves and, along with my fantastic crew, had so many laughs during rehearsals. I can honestly say with hand on heart this has been one of the most enjoyable plays I've worked on.

I do hope you enjoy it as much as we have – and we all wish you a very happy new year.

*Maureen*

**Maureen Davies**  
Director



## FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to ancient Rome (or Pompeii!) – after a first half of the season filled with some lighter plays, time for a heavier piece, with the historically accurate *Up Pompeii* here to educate us. I for one am convinced that this piece should be classified as a documentary, reliant on word of mouth passed down through generations of trustworthy narrators.

Maureen Davies has grabbed a stellar cast of Barn regulars – many of whom have not had hair this long in years – who are determined to bring us some light-hearted fun. Originally penned in 1988, this lovely play was first presented in Chesterfield in 2011, and has been performed across the UK many times since. For those of us old enough to remember, it has its roots in the TV series of 1969/70 starring Frankie Howerd. For those of you who may be concerned about the content, fear not: it's just as full of tongue-in-cheek double-entendres as ever it was, and just as much fun. After the couple of years we've all had, and the glum nature of January weather, what better way to kick-start a brighter year than grabbing a drink, a snack and a good laugh.

Ignore the old adage 'titter ye not' and settle in for a fun performance!

*Simon*

**Simon Parr**  
Chairman, Barn Theatre Club



# CAST

Lurcio.....	Paul Russell
Ludicrus.....	Chris White
Corneous.....	Carl Westmoreland
Nausius.....	Alfie Hart
Captain Treacherus.....	Mark Skrebels
Kretinus.....	Tallan Cameron
Ammonia.....	Jane Southey
Erotica.....	Hannah Humbles
Suspenda.....	Hannah Sayer
Voluptua.....	Devi Smart
Senna.....	Mary Powell

The play is set in ancient Pompeii, in the courtyard of a villa belonging to Senator Ludicrus Sextus.

There will be one 20-minute interval.



# CREATIVE TEAM

Director.....	Maureen Davies
Production Manager.....	Stephanie Dunn
Stage Manager.....	Nigel Rive
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Lucy Winston
Set Design.....	Stephanie Dunn
Set Construction.....	Ian Bage, Bob Cameron, Keith Collingwood George Georgiou, Robert Gill, Keith Lambert Michael Merry, Norman Merry, Martin Moore, Nigel Rive John Sear, Eddie Washington
Set Painting.....	Colin Hickey
Lighting.....	Nick Mogg, Nigel Sadler
Sound.....	John Gardner
Special Effects.....	Mike Peacock
Wardrobe.....	Anne-Marie Austin, Yvonne Bartlett Sheelagh Mogg, Monica Guzik
Properties.....	Barbara Foster, Linda Miles
Prompter.....	Beverley Triber
Photography.....	John Davies
Poster and Programmes.....	John Cook, Clive Weatherley

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# A BUNCH OF AMATEURS

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## BACK AT THE BARN!

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What a terrible time it has been for theatre over the past two years. The lockdown policies implemented by the Government may have helped the NHS not be overwhelmed but they certainly have had a catastrophic impact on theatre at all levels. West End theatres were closed for several months with many staff being laid off, whole casts for major musicals had their contracts terminated, and even as we enter our third year of Covid restrictions, the impact of isolation policies has impacted both shows and their audiences. We can only hope that as restrictions are slowly lifted, we will see a return to 'normality' but personally I think it will take several months or maybe years (assuming there are no further restrictions) before this is the case.

The Barn has managed the situation exceptionally well, doing its very best to present shows (in one way or another) during this period, whilst obeying the draconian laws imposed.



The *A Bunch of Amateurs* team were originally scheduled for an October 2021 date and thanks to a herculean marketing effort were looking at a great run, however tragedy was about to strike after a great opening night. One of the lead actors fell ill just before the second show, we had to

cancel the performance... next thing we know, two of our leads tested positive and were not at all well. So, what do you do when you lose your two leads?

In the West End you would normally have 'understudies' of course: actors who maybe had smaller parts in the show but who knew the leads' lines, and also 'swings', the unsung heroes of the West End – they understudy all the understudies! Unfortunately, in non-professional theatre that's seldom an option: having a stand-in 'on book' could possibly be an option, but two stand-ins – on book – trying to play a romantic scene?

You can imagine the disappointment of the crew and cast. Theatre is about timing: getting your show to exactly the right point for the opening night. Having a great opening night was wonderful – to have to close from then, tragic. Many shows would simply have had to be cancelled and quietly forgotten about: the scenery repurposed, the scripts placed on bookshelves, never to move again.

With *Bunch* we had a lucky break. A proposed play for the February 2022 slot had to be cancelled, and the Barn needed a replacement...we were asked, could we? Would we? The cast said yes, the crew said yes, but how exactly do you keep a performance on ice for three months?

The backstage management at the Barn were terrific and agreed we could store all the set, most of which had been painted by the extraordinarily talented Rosemary Bianchi, costumes left on rails and carefully stored away (the lead actor's costume being principally my clothes... but that's another story) and props boxed up. Sorted.

But how do the actors keep on top of the lines? I know personally that as soon as I think a play is over the lines disappear from my head into the ether (assuming they were actually there in the first place). We would meet up every few weeks and simply do a straightforward line run (sitting round just running the lines), but acting isn't really about sitting round running lines, and the actors (gawd bless 'em) were soon in full performance mode albeit to an audience normally of two or three.

What was quite fascinating to see as a director was how the group, who have now been together far longer than most and in extreme circumstances, were interacting in a very natural manner. The characters in the play know each other very well and on the whole like each other: now our cast do as well which has added another dimension to the performance.

So, what's the moral of the story? Well, the show may not have gone on in the short term, but it will in the long term, and I do hope you'll come along and see a truly very talented and committed bunch of amateurs, in a play about a bunch of amateurs, called *A Bunch of Amateurs*.

**Bob Thomson**

Director