

COMING UP AT THE BARN



18th - 27th April at 7.30pm

Matinees on 20th and 27th at 2.30pm

Oom-pah-pah! Oom-pah-pah! That's how it goes!

Bringing Charles Dickens' beloved novel to life, Lionel Bart's *Oliver!* takes audiences on a wild adventure through Victorian England.

10th - 18th May at 8.00pm

Witness the unforgettable tragedy of Madame Bovary - a night of captivating theatre.

A refreshing comic take on Flaubert's classic tale of bourgeois boredom, as Emma Bovary longs to escape life with her dull doctor husband. Zaniness, creativity and surprise replace the gloom and doom of the original as our heroine fights for a happy rather than tragic ending.



20th - 25th May at 8.00pm

A week of entertaining, dramatic competition.

We are very pleased to be welcoming the Welwyn Drama Festival once again. It's their 89th year and they provide a wonderful week of entertaining, dramatic competition.

There are two or three short (one-act) plays each night. Teams must adhere to the festival rules and will be awarded marks by professional GoDa adjudicator Bob Tomson for acting, production, stage presentation and dramatic achievement.



*Two lonely people
and a fish finger
sandwich.*



**B
E
G
I
N
N
G
S**

BY DAVID ELDRIDGE

 **BARN THEATRE**

DIRECTED BY PAUL MORTON | £1.50 | SEASON 2023/2024

WWW.BARNTHEATRE.CO.UK

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I'm very happy to welcome you to this performance of *Beginning*, my directorial debut for the Barn Theatre. A regular director and actor for the Company of Players in Hertford, I was delighted when the Barn's Artistic Director, Clive Weatherley, invited me to direct a main house production this season.

And it didn't take me long to decide on the production. *Beginning* is a play I'd wanted to direct for a long time and, luckily, the rights were available, so we were off! Like most good theatres, the Barn holds open auditions, and I was delighted to cast Jessica Drucker in the role of Laura and Pete Bryans to play opposite her in the role of Danny.

Set in north London in 2015, this intimate and naturalistic two-hander speaks to the experience of most of us – how to survive lonely times, how to go about finding love, who you can trust. Statistics tell us that it's even more difficult to find love now than it was before social media. In today's world, Harry probably would never have met Sally!

So Laura and Danny, slightly sozzled, meet in the early hours of the morning when everyone has left after her flat-warming party. Just the two of them – awkward, uncomfortable, but interested in each other. Where do they go from there?

We've had a great time in rehearsal, getting to know these two characters. There's been much laughter and a few tears which, apparently, is what playwright David Eldridge was hoping for. He said: 'Audiences enjoyed themselves more than I expected – they laughed more and they cried more!'

Enjoy the show – laugh a bit and cry a bit!



Paul Morton

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Described by The Observer as 'a poet of the East End overspill', David Eldridge (a less well-known writer than he deserves to be) is nevertheless regarded by many as one of the prominent playwriting voices of his generation. His productions have premiered across the UK at venues including the National, the Royal Court, the Royal Exchange, and the Donmar. Television credits include *The Scandalous Lady W* for BBC 2, and *Our Hidden Lives*, a BBC adaptation of the Simon Garfield novel.

Beginning, the first of his promised trilogy, collected five stars and sold out when, directed by Polly Findlay, it premiered at the National's Dorfman Theatre in 2017. Transferring to the West End at the end of its run, the 'brave, beautiful, intimate two-hander' was immediately singled out by critics as a classic of British theatre.

'Eldridge combines a hugely sympathetic sensibility with rare dramatic power, and one leaves this exceptional play rejoicing in his talent and impatient for his next,' said the Telegraph.

Middle, the second in the trilogy, premiered and sold out at the National in 2022, and the third, *End*, is expected this year.

We wish to extend our huge thanks and appreciation to our local business supporters.

Sainsbury's


The Howard Centre
Welwyn Garden City Shopping

CAST

PETE BRYANS | Danny



It's great to back on the Barn stage since scheming as Alastair in *Whipping It Up* in 2020 and taking life far too seriously as John Proctor in *The Crucible* in 2019. It's been a joy to explore the freakishly true-to-life character of Danny and it's a treat to have only one act so that we can all have more time in the bar! Although I stumbled across my love of theatre way back in 1998, *Beginning* is my first ever two-hander. The rehearsal

process and intensity has been amazing, especially getting to act opposite the wonderful, creative and talented Jess. I hope you like, and can perhaps even relate to, the characters we've crafted, and that you enjoy the show!

JESSICA DRUCKER | Laura



This play gets under your skin, with many rehearsals interrupted by conversations about love, life and the perils of dating in the modern world. I previously performed in *The Ghost Train* and *Alys Always* at the Barn, with fabulously large casts - this is my first time sharing a stage with just one other actor, Pete Bryans. It has been such a pleasure to work with Pete and the terrific crew who have

helped us to bring this intimate two-hander to the Barn stage. I hope everyone enjoys the rollercoaster!

CREATIVE TEAM

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Director | Paul Morton |
| Assistant Director..... | Calypso Powell |
| Production Manager..... | Carol Bush |
| Stage Manager..... | Derek Palmer |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Brenda Onyon |
| Set Design | Chris Janes |
| Set Construction | Ian Bage, Bob Cameron, David Fairhurst, Colin Hickey Ian Major, John Sear, Eddie Washington |
| Set Dressing | Kris Moore |
| Lighting | Brenda Onyon, Derek Palmer |
| Sound | James Rowles |
| Props | Sheila Grimmant |
| Press Relations..... | Carol Bush, Barbara Holgate-Stuckey |
| Production Photography..... | Simon Wallace |
| Poster & Programme | John Cook, Clive Weatherley |

The play is set in 2015, in Laura's Crouch End flat.

This play runs for approximately 90 minutes, over real time, with no interval.

We rely enormously on our bar revenues so please support our bar before and after the show if you are able to – thank you.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF THE INTERNET

Londoners like Danny and Laura, looking for love, need more than a good sense of humour in times like these. Over the past decade, dating apps such as Tinder and Bumble have made meeting new people easier than ever. Yet, according to recent data, 31 per cent of London's single adult population live alone.

In 2015, when the play is set, more Londoners were reliant on dating apps to find love, and meet their new dates online, than anywhere else in the UK, research reveals.

So, how did people meet pre-internet? Here are some Barn audience stories:

'I was out with my boyfriend, and was introduced to his older brother who was home on leave from the Navy. He joined us for the evening and I walked home holding his hand. We've been married for 45 years and I still hold his hand!' - **J**

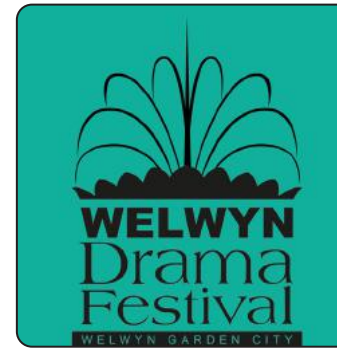
'I went up to visit a friend at university but he'd got himself a 'new' girlfriend and pretty much abandoned me for the week. He left me with one of his flatmates, who was very lovely. Three years later we got engaged, another two years and we were married - and that was 24 years ago. Still smiling, still laughing!' - **S**

'Clive and I met in 1964 on holiday with our parents at a small holiday camp on the Isle of Wight. I was 16, he was 19. 59 years on, two children and four grandchildren later we're still married.' - **D**

'The night I first met my husband I was with some girlfriends in the pub watching rugby (aka hoping to meet some cute guys) and was introduced via a friend. He was good fun and super nice. We all persuaded him to stay and not head off to a party. However... I ended up kissing a different guy and dating him for a few weeks. It took another few months for our paths to cross again. Timing really is everything!' - **L**

'He was my Macbeth while playing Lady M on tour in Germany. The relationship didn't survive being back in Blighty.' - **S**

Never trust an actor! What goes on tour should stay on tour! - Ed



WELWYN DRAMA FESTIVAL NEARLY NINETY!

The Welwyn Drama Festival is 89 years old this year and is probably the oldest festival of one-act plays still surviving in the UK.

It all started in 1929 when Welwyn Garden City, with a population of only 7,000, decided to celebrate its 10 years of existence by having a Grand Week of Festival. It comprised events including an Industrial Exhibition, featuring a nicely browned tablet of the Shredded Wheat for which the town became famous; a Military Tattoo of the British Army and the Boy Scouts; and a display by the Metropolitan Police. There was also a musical ride-by from the 17th/21st Lancers with over 40 horses and music supplied by the Regimental Band of the Grenadier Guards straight from the Tower of London. The week ended with fireworks and, of course, a drama festival. Special trains were laid on to bring the visitors from King's Cross station and an average of 5,000 people patronised the Cherry Tree pub (now Waitrose) each day, and 1,500 attended the open-air church service of the Bishop of St Albans.

This year this ever-popular Festival has 16 one-act plays in competition at the Barn Theatre from Monday 20th to Saturday 25th May.

The advertisement is on a dark green, textured background. At the top left is a gold crown icon. To its right, the text 'SIMON WOODS' is written in a gold, serif font. Below this, the word 'HANSARD' is written in a large, bold, gold, serif font. To the right of 'HANSARD' is a large, gold, stylized letter 'D'. Below the main text, there is a line of text in a gold, serif font: 'If you missed *Hansard* recently at the Barn then you're in luck! There will be one final performance at:'. At the bottom, there is another line of text in a gold, serif font: 'HERTFORD THEATRE WEEK on Saturday 1st June 2024'. Below that is the website address 'www.hertfordtheatreweek.org.uk' in a gold, serif font.