

Hark The Herald



Newsletter of the

Herald
PLAYERS

Winter 2009

Yes folks, it's back!

Don't mind the 'home-made' looking format – this is my first bash at this and I'm sure it'll get slicker as time goes on. Plus, this was a bit of a cobbled-together rush job, or as one of my sisters regularly says in *e v e r y* Christmas card she writes "Please excuse the hurried scrawl!"

Hello there, everyone! *Season's Greetings* to all! After a short spell away, the Herald Players newsletter returns with a bang. Or something - insert your own seasonal pun. The name's bound to change, but it was too good a chance to pass up. Hoping to bring you news, views and reviews and enough info to keep you happy well into the New Year, if you have anything (and I mean anything - within reason!) you'd like included in the next edition, send it to me at spookypurple7@hotmail.com by January 31st. (if I don't get it, it don't get in!)

Thérésa Hedges



In this edition....

Current production
Productions for 2010
Upcoming social events
Other news
A Christmas Tale - a silly seasonal something



current production

Performance Dates: **21-24 April 2010**

No sooner than the last mince pie gets eaten, those **Top Girls** will be getting going in earnest. Guaranteed to be powerful, funny, thought-provoking and generally a great night out, this play set in Thatcher's 1980s Britain will be the first time a Caryl Churchill play will have been produced at the Electric. It promises to be massive – make sure you don't miss out on this piece of history!

Cast List

In order of appearance:

Waitress / Kit / Shona	Kelsey Williams
Marlene	Pippa Winslow-Rolandelli
Isabella / Mrs Kidd	Elaine Brace
Nijo / Win	Louise Thomas
Gret / Angie	Thérésa Hedges
Joan / Louise	Jane Bryant
Griselda / Nell / Jeanine	Leonie Blackburn
Joyce	Gayle Lafone

Watch this space for further information!



future productions

Now here's a novel idea... how about if you knew ahead of time not just what plays were coming up, but also what parts were available? Wouldn't that just make life easier? Wouldn't you like to have that information? Well, here it is - get your diaries out!

SUMMER

Performance Dates: **July 2010**

"ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN"

6 hander: 3m and 3f- sort of 30s-ish

The events of one weekend as seen from the Garden. In which Ruth thoroughly confuses Tom - Tom succeeds in asking Annie - Annie gets a glimpse of Norman's pyjamas - Norman tells Sarah stories by moonlight - Sarah disapproves of Reg's outdoor sports -and in which everyone gets to roll in the grass.

AUTUMN

Performance Dates: **November 2010**

"NOISES OFF"

6 M, 4 F

Lloyd Fellowes is the director of a theatre company. He's desperately trying to get his production together, despite the best efforts of the cast, the crew, and Lady Luck. We follow the production from final rehearsals, through opening night, and onto the tour: as with any group of actors forced to work closely together for any great length of time, romances and arguments are bound to break out. Quite often, what's happening on stage is nothing compared to what's happening backstage....

SPRING 2011

Performance Dates: **April 2011**

“PRIVATE LIVES”

4-hander, and 2 can be a bit older

Elyot Chase and Amanda Prynne, divorced from one another five years previously, arrive coincidentally at the same French hotel. They are both honeymooning with their respective new spouses, but find that the old bond between them cannot be swept aside.

social events

Friday, Jan 2010 – Chinese night! Time and location to be confirmed as soon as you let me (Thérésa) know that you're coming!

other news

Want to support amateur drama? Of course you do! Here's a shameless plug for the Friends of the Electric Theatre. Join today. You know it makes sense...

Contact janemacintyre@hotmail.co.uk for details.

and now, with apologies to Charles Dickens...

A Christmas tale

by Thérésa Hedges

The wintry London streets were full of bustling souls as Will Drabblewatch made his way home to Seventeen Crudpocket Lane, EC1. For it was Christmas Eve and his mind was full of the coming festivities. As he trudged through the eddying snow drifts, he thought of roaring fires, chestnuts exploding merrily, the smell of a roasting turkey large enough to live in, and of the fact that he could not afford any of these luxuries that were meat and drink to the muffled bustlers drifting past, like embers of jollity.

Instead he blew on his fingertips, poking through his ragged mittens and thought of his beloved wife Betsy and the three little Drabblewatches: Vicky, Bob and Little Willy. Ah! Poor Little Willy. A child with the countenance of an angel, the disposition of a saint, who had been of late struck down with a mystery lameness. What kind of Christmas would he have? The Drabblewatch home was poor (little more than a hovel) with unreliable walls and holes in the roof where the pigeons fell in. What kind of man was he that could not rise above poverty to provide for his family? He thought again of Betsy, her dancing eyes and the enigmatic way she smiled as she put the roast pigeon and gruel every day on the table.

'Mistletoe!' called an urchin, scrabbling the last few farthings trade on this frozen Christmas Eve. He, and countless other freezing urchins like him. Drabblewatch trudged on. He blew on his fingers again, hoping to coax a little life into them. Such was the fate of a junior under-clerk in the venerated firm of Scrapple, Scrapple and Amblethrop. If only there was a guardian angel who could see his heart.

'No, mate, but I can see your backside's nearly out yer trousers.'

Drabblewatch jerked his head up, trying to find the voice which spoke from on high. As the pounding of his heart subsided, a feathery fluttering sounded clear as a bell.

'I beg your pardon?' he mumbled.

'I said, I can see your-'

'Nuts!' yelled another trader.

Drabbletwatch flinched.

'Hot roasted chestnuts! Warms yer fingers a trea-eat!'

Drabbletwatch was swept back into reality. Warm fingers...

'Backside!' called the voice again, and with a more ominous tone. 'Now listen to me, Drabbletwatch!'

Drabbletwatch continued to stare about him. His eyes were drawn to a pair of flittery wings, attached to a perfect little child, perfectly naked.

'It is cold, let me be brief, Will Drabbletwatch. I am here to offer you a choice which will change your life forever.'

'With respect, tiny naked sir,' replied Drabbletwatch, 'I am only a clerk of mean understanding.'

'Oh bother.' muttered the wingéd cherub. 'Bereft of the vestiges of human intelligence! I am here to offer you four wishes!'

'Now of this I have some knowledge - you offer me one wish too many, tiny clothesless sir.'

'Be silent and tell me what you desire!'

Drabbletwatch gazed on in confusion. 'Which shall I do first, little nude sir?'

'Clarence.' said the wingéd child. 'My name is **Clarence!** I fear you were about to run out of homonyms. What is thy first wish?'

'Is this truly real?'

'Truly. Please choose. An ethereal being I may be, but it is still below freezing out here!'

'Very well!' chirped Drabbletwatch cheerily, keen to unravel a new destiny. 'I wish – I wish ... to never have to worry about anything again!'

Clarence clapped his tiny hands 'Fortune change, destiny bring – liberation upon the wing!' An aurora collapsed around Drabbletwatch as though the universe coursed through his body. He became aware of everything... especially the cold. He was high in the air, high above the vibrant city, free! He was exhilarated. He was completely naked. It was then that he realised that he too, was a wingéd being. So this was his freedom?!

'It works for me.' said Clarence, knowing Drabbletwatch's very thoughts. 'You wished for freedom from your worries... Well...' the tiny cherub indicated his work with a majestic wave of his little hand.

'No!' exclaimed Drabbletwatch. 'This is not a seemly state for a grown... human. Plus, as you pointed out before ... it is a trifle on the chilly side!'

'I see what you mean.' smirked Clarence. 'Very well. Another wish!'

'I fear I must give greater consideration to my words.' uttered Drabbletwatch. 'I wish to be free of poverty – I wish I had all the money in England!'

'From being poor you shall be free – a vault of wealth shall be the key!'

Again the aurora, dizzying Drabbletwatch as his senses reeled. As he steadied himself, the ground underfoot felt... soft...papery... like...

'Money!' screamed Drabbletwatch. 'Hahaha! Money!' It was all around him. Underfoot. Behind him. Before him. He picked up great handfuls and threw it about him. The smell and sound of it was all around him. Except for the sounds of fast approaching footfalls, and the sound of a cumbersome metal door being closed to.

'G'night, Fred!' called a voice without. 'I'm just locking the vault.'

'Good job! That's it for us then.' called another voice in response. 'Four days off!'

'Yeah. Right. Closing the vault now. Jeez. All that money. 'f only we could get our 'ands on it, eh?'

A pair of laughs rang around the building and the clang of a heavy door rang out – just ahead of Drabbletwatch. His mouth fell open as the realisation dawned with an eastern intensity.

'Where – oh.' Drabbletwatch wrung his hands. 'I am in the vault of the Bank of England.' He said with deadly certainty. 'I am going to be stuck here over Christmas! For four days! Clarence!'

There was an implosion and Drabbletwatch found himself back on the icy street. He now knew that wishing for himself was mean-spirited, thankless and simply did not work.

'Clarence – grant me this! I wish my wife were the richest woman in the empire!'

'His wish no longer spurious – we send his lady – happy and glorious!'

No sooner had the tiny being's words escaped like lace into the gelid night air, than Drabbletwatch found himself cosied in a sumptuous room bursting with warmth and colour and light. He found himself attending to the lacing of a delicate feminine shoe.

'What fat ankles!' came the words from his mouth, though his voice sounded foreign to him. It startled him, though no more so than the response to his comment.

'Albert! Well, really! If we wish to be insulted so, we would visit Bath!'

'Albert'? What was this? What fresh embarrassment had Clarence placed upon him? He looked up at the owner of the voice...

And gazed directly into the face of the Sovereign of the Empire. Drabbletwatch all but prostrated himself before her.

'We are not amused.' said Queen Victoria. 'Please get up, Albert.'

Again that name! He stood up and caught sight of himself in one of the gargantuan mirrors of the Royal Ballroom. The elegant uniform; the regal mien. In short, the handsome features of the Queen's Consort stared back from the mirror. 'Oh no.' he sighed. 'Clarence, release me from this!'

No sooner uttered than Drabbletwatch was face to tiny face with the fluttering Clarence.

'You turned me into Prince Albert!' he said in a tone more of disbelief than dismay.

'I merely brought forth your wishes, Drabbletwatch. It is for you to be enlightened in your choices.'

'Truly I have been too materialistic. I gave no thought to the deeper meaning of Christmas. The joy of being with my beloved wife and family. The delight of seeing Vicky, Bob and Little Willy unwrap their meagre gifts on Christmas morn.' Drabbletwatch's voice grew tremulous, and his words began to stick in his throat. 'Poor Little Willy! How selfish I have been! Wishing for personal serenity and monetary gain! I could have wished a cure for his accursed and mystery lameness! What have I done?! Clarence! What have I done?!'

'Forgotten something.' replied Clarence, his smile one of gentle impatience. 'Will Drabbletwatch, I may remind you that one wish still remains.'

Drabbletwatch's heart filled with joy and was touched with eternal gratitude to the tiny naked child, fluttering brightly before him.

'I will not waste this wish, Clarence! I wish for the goodwill and joy of this blessed season to be visited upon me and mine!'

'So be it. Will Drabbletwatch, you are the first soul I have met who has made such a simple wish; these are the wishes most difficult to make happen. For truly, they are the most important. Go home, Will Drabbletwatch.' And with that, the naked wingéd infant melted into the air.

Drabbletwatch returned home with joy in his heart and a spring in his step. Forgotten were the cold fingers, the threadbare clothes. Forgotten too was his failure as a breadwinner.

He broke into a trot, and soon number Seventeen Crudpocket Lane came into view. But it was no longer a broken, crumbling hovel; it was now a resplendent hovel, with (gleaming) windows, and a roof no longer patched but glistening red tiled, where pigeons strutted without fear of injury.

The atmosphere within as he entered was one of incandescent happiness. He looked about him in joyous bewilderment. Beyond doubt it was the selfsame house he had left many hours before dawn, but... all was repaired, cosy, full of light, warmth, the glorious smells of food cooking, and Christmas Cheer.

'Papa!' shouted Vicky and Bob as they leapt upon him with vigorous hugs. 'We have such news for you! Mama! Mama! Papa has returned!'

Betsy drifted into the room, her patched dress replaced by a new gown. 'Will, my dear! Such a day it has been! Soon after you left, a messenger came to say that you have been promoted to chief clerk in the venerated firm of Scrapple, Scrapple and Amblethrop. And that it should have happened a year ago but someone forgot.'

'We are longer poor, Papa!' exclaimed Vicky, whose talent lay in the illumination of the obvious.

Her mother continued, while Bob jumped up and down on the spot. 'Then an army of men came to fix the house, followed by hampers of presents and the finest foods, all gifts of Mister Amblethrop.'

'Oh my dears!' wept Drabbletwatch. 'We are indeed fortunate!'

'We have a tree, Papa!' yelled Bob, still jumping. 'With an angel on the top! Come see! Come see!'

Drabbletwatch was led to a magnificent fir, hung with opulent decorations. And there, sure enough, was a tiny angel dressed in a perfect little heavenly gown. Drabbletwatch blinked. There was something in the tiny figure's countenance... Could it be? It was Clarence. Drabbletwatch was simply unfamiliar with his angelic accoutrements. 'Thank you, Clarence.' He whispered. And the tiny tree-top figure winked. 'But what of Little Willy? My brave lame son? Where is he?'

'Here, Papa!' called a cheery little voice, and a tow-headed little boy bounded into the room.

'My boy! What miracle is this on this wondrous eve? You are no longer lame!'

'Is it not a wonder, Papa!' laughed Little Willy. 'When I tried my new shoes on, I discovered a piece of holly which had been nestling inside my boot. Now I can jump and bounce like brother Bob. Is Christmas not wonderful, Papa?'

'It is indeed, my brave lad.' replied the overjoyed father.

'And do we not have a guardian angel watching over us, Papa?'

'We do indeed!' smiled Drabbletwatch, with a grateful gaze at the tree. The family gathered round it, gazing in awe at this symbol of the good fortune that was theirs. Little Willy hugged his parents. 'Happy Christmas, everyone!'

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

