STAR PROFILE



Sián Eiles

Sián's involvement with NPV spans its entire ten year existence - they have both grown up together, so to speak.

Sián, who currently works for a communications firm in the West End, received her education at Sydenham School, where she gained 9 GCSEs plus 3 'A's', including one in Theatre Studies. She has subsequently attended numerous courses connected with the arts, and it is claimed that her ambition is to go to Hollywood and be a Star! If this ambition eludes her, then she will settle for Acting! Acting!! Acting!!!, and cares little whether this is in the theatre, or a television studio, film location, or if it is in Hollywood, Harlesden, Battersea or Bali!

Sián recently auditioned for the Poor School who were most impressed with her, and invited her to return in two years (this school usually takes students form their mid-twenties onwards).

Early theatrical rôles have included *A Boy and his Robot* - the original production, in which she played a Girl Robot; two productions of *Dinosaurs and All that Rubbish* - she was *Desirée* in the second one; *Burglar Bill*; *Tale of the Tooth Fairy* (title rôle); *Animal's Tale*; *Raggedy Christmas* (touring with Kathryn Gilfroy); and as *Zoya* in *The Bedbug*.

Together with Tom Brayshaw and Daryn Ives, Sián hosted the recent London International Festival Education Conference at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith last July.

Although her mother (who is Teresa Early) claims not to have influenced her in any way theatrically, it wouldn't be at all surprising if she achieved her ambition!

From Front Page...

Keith Palmer of Zoom Vision Entertainments (also of NPV's 'Magic Cake', 'Tale Of The Tooth Fairy' and 'A Boy and his Robot' will be hosting a trial run of his Black Performers Cabaret in this Autumn, providing all goes well with the funding of Southwark Council's Race Equality Unit and local shops and businesses.

This Cabaret has been running very successfully at the Tom Allen Arts Centre for some time now, until unspecified moves within Newham Council killed off the Tom Allen Arts Centre and with it, Keith's Cabaret. If the run is successful, other cabaret evenings could follow as audiences build.

Curtis Walker from "Curtis and Ishmael" and "The Real Mckoy" opens the first of this new comedy slot on Friday 20th October with his one man show.

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AUTUMN TERM DATES

The term starts on Monday 11th September and will finish in early December. The exact finishing date will be dictated by rehearsal commitments for the Christmas Shows however members will be given plenty of notice once plans are complete.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 20th October

Black Performers Cabaret

with Curtis Walker

NPV NEWS



Keith Palmer brings comedy to South East London.
See back page...

A Twice-Termly Diversion for New Peckham Varieties' Members for which there is no charge

JULY 1995 **No.2**

From the Editor...

Here is the second edition of NPV News! The past couple of months have been very eventful for all of us - not least due to 'The Bedbug', touring shows of 'Tale of the Tooth Fairy', Burglar Bill and 'Rise and Shine', plus three matinées of 'Mrs Plug the Plumber' at The Civic at the end of July. Both 'Bedbug' and 'Mrs Plug' have gone into a well earned hibernation and we are all now looking forward to a decent rest during the summer break.

Advance details about our Christmas productions appear in this issue - two new and highly original pieces of musical theatre which will not only keep our artistes well and truly occupied during the autumn but also draw upon many of the talents they have acquired here at NPV.

Finally, you will all be delighted to learn that our own Nikki Wheeler has gained a place at the famed Brit School in Croydon. Nikki is an outstanding young dancer, and she will be able to develop her talents to their full potential at the Brit, while continuing her conventional education at the same time. Well done, Nikki!

Very best wishes to everyone for an enjoyable Summer Holiday. - Ed.

Thank you to some of our members for informing us of their concern about the joke article published on Aaron Dives (aka Daryn Ives).
We realised to our horror that some members who don't know Daryn very well might possibly have mistaken the contents of that article for a true account of his life and career.
Although Daryn was quite happy with the article, we hasten to assure our readers that NOT A WORD OF IT IS TRUE - and to make up for this we will print the true story of our favourite rising young star in a future edition of NPV NEWS. - T.E.

TWO GREAT SHOWS FOR CHRISTMAS

NPV's Christmas 1995 line-up is nothing if not ambitious, with rehearsals starting in the autumn for Early & Goslyn's quirky new adaptation of the classic children's tale *Great Big Enormous Turnip*.

This will be performed by the Junior Musical Theatre team, plus one older narrator, and will be presented at matinée performances during the run up to Christmas. There will be opportunities for each of the children to stand-out, for there are many characters in this story and therefore individual tales to be told!

Also, E&G are presently putting the final touches to the second NPV Christmas offering, provisionally named *Poppy's Boy*. This piece of theatre which will combine music and dance, and sound and light, will be performed by the older players over some matinées and most evenings. It would be premature to say too much about the show at this stage, but suffice to say for the moment that it concerns a lad who has a loving mother, seven grandmothers, but no evident father save for a pair of twins - Vlad and Igor - one of whom *might* (or might *not*) be his dad, but as they're identical, *which one is it* (if indeed either)? And what about the cantankerous Russian teacher of ballet? Wherever does she fit in to the story? What duties must the poor boy carry out during his mother's frequent absences, carousing with one of her many suitors? Oh *Woe*!

THE CIRCUS IS COMING...

With the departure of the dance classes to the new premises in Sumner Road, we are introducing two entirely new CIRCUS SKILL WORKSHOPS at Havil Hall starting next (Autumn) term on Thursdays. Run by Julie Simpson of the Rin-Tin-Tin Circus Theatre Co these workshops will be open from 4pm - 5 pm for five to nine year-old age groups, and from 5pm to 6pm for the nine years-plusses. The skills which will be learned include juggling, diablo, plate-spinning, stilt-walking and tumbling. Later, as the children become proficient, we shall be looking at wire-walking, and acrobatics!

The Story of NPV



New Peckham Varieties was founded ten years ago - on the 10th June 1985, to be precise - by Teresa Early (who appears above far left with cast and crew members form 'The Bedbug')

Teresa, who lived in Peckham (and still does) with her three young children, had identified a need to establish a Community Arts medium, to serve a local population which had had little or no exposure to live theatre performances.

She had up to that time been involved, together with Roger Goslyn and Michael Hamilton, in an arts project at the Pitt Street Settlement, however she literally got on her (motor) bike and spent weeks riding around looking for the sort of venue which would be right for the Community Arts facility she had in mind.

Eventually Teresa found a suitable vacant property - St Luke's Church Hall, off Commercial Way - applied successfully to the then Greater London Council for funding, and with a grant from Sir John Cass's Foundation, for children's' classes, NPV was born.

Teresa Early's qualifications as an Arts Project Director are impressive, and include:
a BA (Hons.) in Music/Education from the Open University;
Licentiate Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Speech and Drama);
University of London Teacher's Certificate;
Royal Academy of Dancing (Ballet);
and Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (Modern Stage, Tap, Modern Dance, National Dance, Greek Dance and Natural Movement).

With such an awesome string of qualifications, it would hardly have been surprising if Teresa had not jetted off with her family, to lend her many talents to a part of the world which some may consider offers just a *tad* more glamour than SE London! However, not only was she *not* prepared to uproot her family, but also she very much wanted to meet, and overcome, the challenges she would have to face in setting up and running this essential community service where it was needed, on her home territory.

Michael Hamilton moved on to become Head of the Riverside Youth Club in Deptford, and Roger Goslyn has maintained his association with NPV by collaborating with Teresa in writing the music for numerous productions over the years. Roger's "day jobs" include playing with Jools Holland's Band, for which he is also Musical Arranger, and he plays for *and* arranges music for Rolf Harris as well.

Following a long and productive stay at St Luke's, NPV moved to Havil Hall in the summer of 1992 and the staff, together with many stalwart members, rolled up their sleeves, donned their overalls, and transformed the Hall (which had been unused for years - and looked it!) into its present state. Membership has grown steadily and substantially, and the classes have become increasingly well attended.

The Management Committee has also expanded radically over the past three years, and it is now an enthusiastic and active, "hands-on" one.

Of NPV's former Youth Theatre tutors, Suzy Gilmour, Chris Harmar-Brown and Olly Animashawun are now at the prestigious Royal Court Youth Theatre, and our own Ali McLaurin is a successful Set Designer (although presently taking time out to become acquainted with her new baby!)

NPV productions include-
The Drum Game (Video)
A Boy and his Robot...(1st production)
Hard to Let (Video)
Bedtime for Frances
Mrs Plug the Plumber... (Christmas 1986 - Mark 1)
The Other Half
Animal Farm (Youth Theatre)
Dinosaurs (Mark 2)
A Boy and his Robot...(Mark 2)
Mrs Plug the Plumber...(Mark 2)
The Bedbug
A World History of Women (played at the Albany Empire, May 1987)
Children's' shows:
Burglar Bill (Mark 1 & 2)
Rise & Shine (Mark 1 & 2)
Christmas isn't always Hot
A Present for Santa #
Will Christmas ever Come?
Animal's Tale
Tale of the Tooth Fairy
Goodnight Johnny
Ellie and a Strange Thing called Splarg
Raggedy Christmas
***The Great Big Enormous Turnip* - in preparation**
Poppy's Boy - (provisional title), in preparation.

"THE BEDBUG" at the National Theatre

A large number of NPV members and staff attended the 1995 Showcase Presentation of The Bedbug by the winning company - Cheltenham Everyman Youth Theatre, Gloucestershire - on the 4th July at the National Theatre on the South Bank.

The Cheltenham players certainly gave a spirited and innovative rendition of this difficult play, and fielded a cast of over sixty young actors. They attacked the play with much humour and brio, concentrating upon wringing from the script a good many laughs, rather than dwelling for any time at all on the more serious side of the story.

Original music had been written for the show, much of it memorable, and this was ably played by between four and ten musicians - in addition to the sixty-odd cast - depending upon the piece, with pre-recorded, taped music as back-up. Their costumes and props showed imagination and were excellent; they must have cost more to put together than NPV's entire budgets for both Mrs Plug and Bedbug!

Dancing, however, is not among their strengths. NPV observers noted this not least during the firemen's scene in which numerous (I counted eighteen) Cheltenham firepersons tippy-toed most daintily.

I can see why they won: their resources (backed by the Eagle Star group) must be huge and it was clear that no expense was spared. The music was good and well presented, and they threw themselves into the show with much enthusiasm. While it would be churlish not to applaud Everyman's victory, I believe that had NPV had access to similar resources we would have beaten them quite comfortably - Roger Goslyn's music is very much better than theirs (which was not at all bad), our actors more accomplished, ditto our choreography, and Teresa Early's interpretation of the play paid due homage to Mayakovsky's objectives, achieving optimum balance between the near-farce and tragic ingredients, which are the essential elements of this story.

NPV did have a live band at its disposal, but after some heartsearching had to reject this as it was way beyond our financial means. In my own view, it is debatable whether or not live music at this strength should be admitted as part of the adjudication process anyway. However, they had it and they flaunted it, and who can blame them!

The Cheltenham Everyman Youth Theatre gave us an interesting and enjoyable hour and a half, and their evening of triumph was capped by the presentation of their award by none other than Alan Rickman, who I suppose got in for free.

10TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

New Peckham Varieties was ten years old on Saturday 10th June, and to celebrate we invited an audience of NPV members to attend a special performance of The Bedbug, followed by a party at Havil Hall, which continued into the small hours...

A good time was had by all and many toasts were proposed to the next ten years, and beyond...

- STOP PRESS -
NEW VENUE FOR DANCE CLASSES

NPV has acquired new premises, exclusively for dance classes and presentations, at the Sojourner Truth Community Centre in Sumner Road. These will "open for business" next September (Autumn Term).
The premises enjoy excellent facilities and come complete with sprung floor. Members will be sent full details when they become available.