

'Hare mixes love, death and the theatre  
in a heady and original way.'

 GALLERY PLAYERS  
PRESENT

# Amy's View

by David Hare

Sir John Mills Theatre

14-18 March

2006

01394 386603

(for information)



 GALLERY PLAYERS  
PRESENT

Winner of the  
Verity Bargate Award  
2004

The regional premiere  
of

# A Night at the Dogs

a new play by Matt Charman



 GALLERY PLAYERS  
PRESENT

# PASSION

a musical by stephen sondheim



June 6 - 10th 2006

information tel: 01394 386603

**THE NEW WOLSEY**  
THEATRE IPSWICH



## A Message from Neil Stuke

(Carl in the original production)

When I first read "A Night At The Dogs" I knew I had to play Carl. A tragic figure in a modern urban setting. A slice of everyday life just there for the audience to witness. The dialogue reminded me of Mammet. Fast paced rich and naturalistic yet theatrical. Matt is incredibly detailed and adept at this even though he was only 25 years old when we performed this production at The Soho Theatre. Jo Armstrong and I soon set about establishing a brotherly relationship. We became inseparable throughout rehearsals and during performance. We thought that was essential for this piece. It paid off. We ran to very good reviews and, as they always do with new writers, the critics gave Matt a little lecture. It didn't stop him being scooped up by most television companies for future productions.

I wish you the best of luck.

Neil Stuke



### The Verity Bargate Award

The Verity Bargate Award was established in 1982 to honour the memory of Soho Theatre Company's co-founder, Verity Bargate, who set up the Company to discover, develop, and produce new plays and new writers. The award is presented every two years to identify and celebrate the most outstanding unproduced new play by an emerging playwright. Past winners include: Dianne Samuels, (**Kindertransport**), Fraser Grace, (**Perpetua**), Adrian Pagan, (**The Backroom**), Judy Upton, (**Bruises**), Toby Whitehouse, (**Jump**), and Shan Kahn, (**Office**).

Over 700 entries were received for the Verity Bargate Award 2004 and **A Night at the Dogs** by Matt Charman was announced as the winner at a ceremony on 24 November 2004.

It was first performed at the Soho theatre on 8 April 2005. This is the first time the play has been seen outside London.

\*'Kindertransport' was Gallery's Spring production earlier this year.

## Soho Theatre and Writers Centre

This is the third play performed by Gallery Players that was first seen at the **Soho Theatre** in Dean Street, London.

The Soho Theatre Company is passionate in its commitment to new writing, producing a year round programme of original and accessible new plays many of them from first time playwrights.

In 2001 we performed '**Kiss Me Like You Mean It**' by Chris Chibnall, which went on to win the NODA Eastern Region Councillors Cup and the ESTAA cup for Best play.

In March of this year we performed '**Kindertransport**' by Dianne Samuels, which like 'A Night at the Dogs' won the Verity Bargate Award.



## Acknowledgements

Norsk Antiques of Felixstowe

James Hayward and Lynne Mortimer

Helen Johns, Evening Star

David Henshall, East Anglian Daily Times

Eastern Angles Theatre Company

Chantry High School

Helen and Jos Leeder and Amberfield School

Mike & Zena Steward, Station Farm

Andrew Clarke - Images

The Buttermarket

Ipswich Central Library

Colbourne Electrical - Felixstowe

Judy & Mike Wadman

Red Cross - Felixstowe



**Past Shows:-** 1985 Cowardy Custard, 1986 Happy as a Sandbag, 1987 Sail Away, 1988 Something's Afoot, 1989 Company, 1990 The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 1991 The Hired Man, 1992 Snoopy - The Musical, A Little Night Music, 1993 Stepping Out, Cabaret, 1994 Assassins, The Ghost Train, Into the Woods, Hobson's Choice, 1995 Man of La Mancha, Steel Magnolia's, City of Angels, Scent of Flowers, 1996 Little Shop of Horrors, The Most Happy Fella, Blue Remembered Hills, 1997 Dancing at Lughnasa, Pacific Overtures, Chicago, Hard Times, 1998 The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Sweeney Todd (The Demon Barber of Fleet Street), Shadowlands, Something's Afoot, 1999 Carnival\*, Trip to Bountiful, The Boys From Syracuse, Tons of Money, 2000 On Golden Pond, The Bakers Wife\*\*, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, A Slice of Saturday Night, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, 2001 Mrs Warren's Profession, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, Billy, Breezblock Park, 2002 The Memory of Water, Flora The Red Menace, A Slice of Saturday Night, Radio Times, 2003 Kiss Me Like You Mean It\*\*\*, Days of Hope, Honk!, And A Nightingale Sang, 2004 Bouncers, Merrily We Roll Along, Talking Heads, You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, 2005 Kindertransport, She Loves Me, A Night at the Dogs.

\*Won N.O.D.A Eastern Area 'Best Production' Shield 1999

\*\* Won N.O.D.A Eastern Area Councillors Cup 2000

\*\*\* Won an ESTAA for best play 2003 and the N.O.D.A Eastern Area Councillors Cup 2003

#### Forthcoming Productions

'Amy's View' by David Hare. 14 - 18 March 2006. Sir John Mills Theatre, Ipswich.

'Passion' by Stephen Sondheim. 6 -10 June 2006. New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich.

#### Friends of the Gallery Players

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If you would like to help us to continue to present our shows to a high standard and, just as importantly, help to raise money to help others, perhaps you would like to become a 'Friend of the Gallery Players'. You will receive advance information and discount booking forms for all our productions, newsletters and an invitation to the VIP reception for our major musical. To become a 'Friend', or for any information on other forms of sponsorship please contact Pat Taplin on 01394 386603



# A Night at the Dogs

## a new play by Matt Charman

Directed by	<b>Steve Wooldridge</b>
Set	<b>Dave Borthwick</b>
Research Assistant	<b>Tracey Cory</b>
Lighting	<b>Philip Rawe</b>
Sound	<b>Kaye Extance</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Georgie Beard</b>
Stage crew	<b>Georgie Beard, Dave Borthwick,</b>
Props	<b>Sue Simmons</b>
Set Construction	<b>Dave Borthwick, Nigel Andrews, Ian Quickfall, Matt Meyrick, Georgie Beard &amp; Cast</b>
'Tigger' chaperoned by	<b>Sylvia Carthew</b>
Programme	<b>Steve Taplin, Tracey Cory, Steve Wooldridge</b>
Front of House	<b>Linda Wooldridge, Tracey Cory, Ruth Hayward, Ian Quickfall, Kerry Henderson, Caroline Whitfield, Margaret &amp; Colin Mudd</b>



**Grant Aided by:**  
Ipswich Borough Council



affiliated to  
N.O.D.A

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with  
I.C.M.

## A Short History of Greyhound Racing



### Cast

(in order of appearance)

**Carl**    **Phil Cory**

**Danny**    **Mike Cook**

**Chalky**    **Steve Taplin**

**Lionel**    **Tony Cook**

**Paul**    **Mike Henderson**

**Sharkey's Necklace**    **'Tigger'**

### Setting

**A one-bedroomed flat in the South of England**

### Act One

**Carl's lounge and kitchen. Early evening**

### Act Two

**Carl's bedroom. Later that evening**

It is believed that the first greyhound race took place on 11 September 1876, at Hendon, when six dogs raced down a straight track in pursuit of a mechanical lure. It is thought that transport difficulties in getting to Hendon were somewhat responsible in failing to catch the public's attention. The Times dubbed the new sport "coursing by proxy" and interest in the sport quickly waned and died.

In 1912, the sport took off in the USA, when an American named Owen Patrick Smith invented a mechanical hare which could run in a circular path. Later that year, he opened the first greyhound racing stadium in California.

As in England, the idea of greyhounds chasing a synthetic hare was not taken immediately to the hearts of the public; it was only when bookmakers were allowed to operate on the tracks that the new sport proved to be a success.

In 1926, the Greyhound Racing Association was formed and a new stadium was built in Manchester at Belle Vue and on Saturday 24 July the first greyhound race meeting was held.

Only 1700 people passed through the turnstiles of that first meeting and the meeting made a loss of £50. However, one week later 16,000 people shuffled through the turnstiles and "going to the dogs" became a National pastime.

London had hosted the Olympic Games in 1908 at the White City Stadium. It was here on 20 June 1927, that the first greyhound meeting was held in the capital.

For a short while after the Second World War, racing was banned in Britain, but was lifted again, much to the relief of the populace of the city, who were in desperate need of entertainment. In the post-War years the sport gained even more popularity and this boom lasted right through the 50's and into the 60's, when High Street bookmakers and televised broadcasts of live horse racing caused gates at greyhound stadiums to drop by over 50%. In the 70's, a slump in the property market added further to the troubles of the Greyhound Racing Association. Many tracks disappeared for ever including the White City's of both London and Manchester.

Since the 80's, greyhound racing has been witnessing a resurgence, with many new and luxurious stadia being built and as we enter the new Millennium, these new stadia are once again attracting sell-out crowds.

### Greyhounds UK

Many of the greyhounds used in the greyhound racing industry are lucky enough to find homes once they are retired. Approximately 10,000 dogs retire every year from National Greyhound Racing Club racetracks. The Retired Greyhound Trust found homes for 3,110 of the NGRC's retired greyhounds in 2004, but much more needs to be done to address this problem.

Locally, there is the Maldon and Tiptree Greyhound Trust. If you're thinking of adopting a possible "Tigger", for more information contact [www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk](http://www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk).



# A Night at the Dogs

a new play by Matt Charman

This has been a great play to rehearse. There is much in it that has made us laugh and much in it that has been a catalyst for discussion.

One of its great strengths is that it so vividly captures the banter that is a hallmark of any workplace. The cast certainly developed banter of their own that ranged from jibes about punctuality to jibes at me for interrupting the flow of a rehearsal moment with a suggestion or direction but it was all well meant. At least I think it was!

The issues that the play raises are universally true. One of the global religions defines the meaning of life as 'hope'; without anything to look forward to or strive for, life can be humdrum and meaningless. For the characters in this play the dog becomes a symbol of hope, of something that will change their lives and give them a greater sense of self worth. We all slide up and down the ladder of self esteem but the men in this play seem to climb no further than the bottom rung.

As someone who now tours schools using Drama to do Anti Bullying work with students, I was particularly drawn to the issue of intimidation raised in the play. Bullying in adulthood can be very subtle. Sometimes we unknowingly reinforce it by siding with the bully, by ingratiating ourselves with them or, worse still, by affording the bully an unwarranted respect. At what point do we stand up and say enough is enough, particularly to a friend, even when we instinctively know that what they are doing is wrong?

I would like to thank Matt Charman for his support in allowing us to perform his play and also the Soho Theatre.

**Steve Wooldridge - Director**



# A Night at the Dogs

a new play by Matt Charman

It's amazing how much importance people put on a set of tiny animals chasing a chewed piece of rag on a rail. For the minute or so it takes these beautiful dogs to run a race, nothing else seems important. Whether it's your hound or whether you just happened to place a bet on a dog because something about the name caught your eye it means everything whether it wins or loses.

I used to love everything about going dog racing. The track being raked from the previous race. A new set of dogs being paraded before a sprint. The bookies furiously gesturing the odds to and fro before the last minute of betting (always the best time to lay your money down!). Then the race itself where all eyes hit the track for the brief moments that it takes for the dogs to churn up the sand again.

It's expensive to own a racehorse. They take the sort of care and attention that only a stable and money can provide but greyhounds are different. A syndicate of normal men can afford to buy a dog, they can feed it and house it and on race night they can get their fix of excitement and attention and maybe, just maybe, see their dog cross that line before any other.

For the five men in this play the dog means different things but also essentially the same thing; "It means each of us owning a little piece of something that's been bred to win" as Carl puts it. It's what we all want. To win at something, anything. To stop being beaten all the time. For these five, the dog is the promise of great things but also a sad symbol of chasing something we might never catch up with.

**Matt Charman**

**Matt Charman** was born in Horsham, West Sussex, in 1979. He won the 2004 Verity Bargate Award for his first play **A Night at the Dogs**, performed at the Soho Theatre in April 2005. He is writer-in-residence at the Soho and is under commission with them for his second play.

For radio Matt has just finished *Standing Sideways* for BBC 4 and is working with Hartwood Film and the BBC on his first television project.

He is the recipient of the Peggy Ramsay Award 2005.

# The Cast about their characters

## Carl

I have very much enjoyed rehearsing the character of Carl. On the surface he appears a happy-go-lucky guy but I believe he has demons lurking and all is not well with his life. He is very sycophantic when the pressure of intimidation is on, but you must ask yourself the question, “What would you do in the same circumstances?” He has the chance to change things during the course of the evening but does not take it is he truthfully scared or just a coward? I believe he makes all the wrong choices but for all the right reasons. What do you think? - **Phil Cory**

## Paul

Paul is a sort of role I have always wanted to play. He can appear from the very first reading to be a thug with no redeeming features. On the second reading you realise that that is exactly what he is, but what he does do is to make you question the nature of “the bully”. Clearly he has the power to physically hurt others around him and his brutality is plain to see by the end of the play. However, he is vulnerable in the areas of his life over which he has no control and like many bullies is laughed at behind his back. He is shallow and intellectually bankrupt. The resistance he meets with Danny, and the manner in which Carl is desperate to please him and gain approval, have echoes right across playgrounds and workplaces nationwide.

Like most bullies, Paul wants retribution, no matter what the cost, even if it is misdirected in order to regain a measure of control and power. Taking on the role of a brute has stretched me in ways I couldn't imagine and made me develop traits that I hope I will never have to call upon in real life. - **Mike Henderson**

## Chalky

I'm sure we've all known a “*Chalky*”. Nice bloke, means well, almost all there but operating in a parallel universe where his slightly detached views make perfect sense. We don't learn much about his background or his life outside the Garage, apart from his Estonian lodger who, I'm sure, is a bigger part in his life than he is in hers. All too easy to take for granted and take advantage of, the “*Chalkies*” of this world can be a powerful irritant to even the most patient person and a natural victim for a bully. I've had great fun playing him and I'll never sit in a wicker chair again without thinking of “*Mr Chalk*”! - **Steve Taplin**

## Danny

I can honestly say that this experience has been nothing short of intense and despite the fact that every one of the characters is very “real”, we have all faced differing challenges. Danny has been a very interesting role to play. He is a level headed young man who displays a great deal of integrity, particularly when the evening's events take a turn for the worse. But at the same time, he is not afraid to show his emotional side.

I have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to explore the relationship between Danny and his brother Carl, something that does not come natural to an only child like myself. That said, the workplace banter has had us all in fits of laughter and has certainly allowed me to draw on my own experiences. It has been a privilege to work on this brilliant new play and with such a wonderful cast and director. - **Mike Cook**

## Lionel

Lionel will do almost anything for a quiet life. He has joined the syndicate because he did not want to lose out on a social life with his mates and it gives him a good opportunity to get out of the house for a while. Not that he dislikes home life; quite the contrary. He loves his wife and family and would rather be at home where he can spend his time being waited on by his ever expanding tribe. His ambition in life is to have enough children to keep his beloved Millwall for ever supplied with players for years to come. He and his family holiday in Southend in August and have the whole family round at Christmas whether they want to or not.

He does not respond well to change and would be more than happy to live the rest of his life in exactly the same way as he has spent it up to now.

A bit of excitement at the dog track is a bonus he never thought would happen. It is bound to be one of the highlights of his life. - **Tony Cook**

## Sharkey's Necklace

I was born in Ireland on 17 December 1995. My racing name was Cooneen Tower and I am a Brindle. I cannot own up to winning many races but when I retired I went to a retirement home for fellow racers called Kama's Cave in Bury St Edmunds. I would like to think that I am quite easy going. I love people but not necessarily other dogs. My new owner, Sylvia Carthew, took me in two years ago and I have been very happy with her. She gives me lots of cuddles and takes me on long walks. What more can I ask for? This is my stage debut and I have enjoyed every minute of it. - **Tigger**

