

PRESS RELEASE: Creative Cow Revives Classic Seventies Comedy

Creative Cow's latest production, *Born in the Gardens* by Peter Nichols, combines an examination of the choices faced by a comically eccentric family with a sharp look at the state of the nation.

It was first performed in 1979, just a few months after The Iron Lady came to power. British behaviour was changing under the onslaught of a different morality in business and upheaval in social structure.

As director Amanda Knott points out, it is a timely revival: She says: "Born in the Gardens is a beautifully written and very funny play, while at the same time being a devastatingly accurate snapshot of it's times. Britain was as broken then, certainly divided, as it is now and our historical perspective on the play makes it even more fascinating.

She adds: "Social commentary alone is not enough to make extraordinary theatre, but Nichols' characters are so well drawn that audiences can't help but care for them, laugh with or at them or be angry with them, all the time hanging on every word they speak and every action they take."

Living in a crumbling mock-Tudor house in Bristol are elderly Maud and her stay-at-home son Maurice who have settled into a routine seemingly undisturbed by the very recent death of Maud's husband.

Maud wants nothing more than a good sit down, to chat with the people on her television and to create exotic cocktails made with ingredients like "tequinol". One of many hilarious Bristolian malapropisms uttered by Maud, others include "michaelwave" and "Afrodisiac" for her hairdo. All entirely accurate as Bristol, or "Brizzle", was Nichols' birthplace and a city for which he has evident affection.

70-odd Maud is played by 30-something Katherine Senior who, having played 5 parts in the Tiverton-based company's most recent production of Dickens' *Hard Times*, is up for the challenge. She says: "Leaving aside the obvious comic potential of the role, Peter Nichols has created a character with a history. She's so much a part of her time, which audiences will see, but she yearns for a past beyond even that."

Maurice (Edward Ferrow) overprotects his mother, talks to the cat, plays his drums and adores his jazz 78's. Into this idyll comes the future - Maurice's older brother Hedley (Jonathan Parish), now a Labour MP, and his twin sister Queenie (Rachel Howells) who escaped to America. They are back for the funeral, always a situation that reveals the cracks in a family. Can Hedley and Queenie convince Maud and Maurice to split apart, turn their backs on Bristol and lead a more "normal" life in L.A. and London?

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there", said L P Hartley in *The Go-Between*. Come and see *Born in the Gardens*, a tender and tough, fascinating and funny play to see if Maud and Maurice do anything different in a country which you will certainly remember.

ENDS

13 February 2012

For interviews and complimentary review tickets please contact Andy Sinclair on 07832 166377 or at info@andysinclair.net

Photos attached: Katherine Senior as Maud and Jonathan Parish as Hedley in rehearsals, February 2012 (Photos: Andy Sinclair). Available in larger file/higher resolution JPEGs.

Notes for Editors

Creative Cow on Tour with *Born in the Gardens* by Peter Nichols, 11th April - 30th June

Cast:
Maud - Katherine Senior
Maurice - Edward Ferrow
Hedley - Jonathan Parish
Queenie - Rachel Howells
Directed by Amanda Knott

Creative Cow - Happy 5th Birthday

Creative Cow is a touring repertory theatre company formed in 2007 by Amanda Knott, Katherine Senior and Jonathan Parish.

It presents the very best in classic and contemporary playwriting to diverse audiences around the UK.

The atmosphere at a Creative Cow production is one of intimacy and informality within a professional framework, with imaginative and accomplished performances.

Performances are designed to be simple, direct and entertaining and easily transportable to theatres, studio spaces, pubs and private houses. The company takes pride in touring the same show to 900 seat theatres and 40 seat art galleries.

Headquarters and rehearsal space are on a devon farm - home to many cows - hence the name Creative Cow.

Find out more at www.creativecow.co.uk

Tour Dates

APRIL

11th & 12th New Hall, Tiverton. 7.30pm, 01884 255827 (Pre show dinner at The Flying Pickle)
13th & 14th Victoria Hall, Tisbury. 7.30pm, 01747 870367
15th Mill Arms, nr Romsey. 7pm 01794 340401 (Theatre supper + performance)
17th - 20th Fisherton Mill, Salisbury. 7.00pm, 01722 500200 (Theatre supper + performance)
21st Shaftesbury Arts Centre. 7:30pm, 01747 854321

London week:

26th - 29th Rosemary Branch Theatre, Highbury & Islington
Thurs & Fri 6:30pm, Sat 6:30pm and Sun 5pm, 020 77046665

MAY

2nd & 3rd The Lighthouse, Poole. 7:45pm, 0844 406 8666
4th Kenton Theatre, Henley on Thames. 8pm, 01491 575698
5th Regal Theatre, Minehead. 7.30pm, 01643 706430
9th Town Hall, Budleigh Salterton. 7.30pm, 01395 445275
10th & 11th The Hawth Studio, Crawley. 7.45pm, 01293 539418
12th Town Hall, Dulverton. 7.30pm, 01398 323474
16th & 17th New Theatre, Exeter. 7.30pm, 01392 277189/665885
23rd Mowlem Theatre, Swanage. 7.30pm, 01929 422239
24th The Maltings, Farnham. 7.30pm, 01252 745444
25th Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. 8.00pm, 01892 678 678
26th Under Ground Theatre, Eastbourne. 7:30pm, 0845 680 1926
30th & 31st Kings Theatre, Portsmouth. 7.30pm, 023 9282 8282

JUNE

10th Simonsbath Festival- St. Lukes Church, Simonsbath, Exmoor. 7:30pm 01643 831199 or 01643 831491
12th - 14th The Key Theatre, Peterborough. 7:30pm, 01733 207 239
15th & 16th Connaught Theatre, Worthing. 7:30pm (Sat Mat 2:30pm), 01903 206206
19th - 23rd Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon. 7:45pm (2:30pm Mat Thurs & Sat), 020 8688 9291
28th - 30th Mill Studio, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, 8.00pm, 01483 443900