



# News

Summer 2002 Issue 29

## **DEAF DEBATING DANCE: Is Mainstream dance interesting to a Deaf audience ?**

Sadler's Wells is looking for people interested in taking part in the following project.

Led by a deaf facilitator, this is an opportunity for deaf people to watch, discuss and find out more about mainstream contemporary dance and ballet. This 'review club' meets regularly, focussing on a series of 5 selected dance performances throughout the Winter Season at Sadler's Wells. Members will have the benefit of additional ticket discounts. Selected performances are accompanied by BSL interpreted pre performance talks, providing information and insight into the company's work and performance. Following the performance, a time is allocated to discuss the performance and work towards review writing. All activities are all BSL/English interpreted.

### **BSL Interpreted pre performance talks**

White Oak Dance Project- **Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 6.30**

Dance Theatre of Harlem - **Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Nov 6.30**

Rambert Dance Company (talk by Jane Prichard) **Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> of Nov**

Efman Ballet: Red Giselle (talk by Gianandrea Poesio) **Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> of Feb 6.30**

Lyon Opera Ballet: Cinderella – **Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> February 6.30**

For more information please contact:  
[wieke.eringa@sadlerswells.com](mailto:wieke.eringa@sadlerswells.com), Text  
phone 020 7863 8015 020 7863 8128

## **Deaf Focus Group: making our views heard**

Paula Garfield is co-ordinating SPIT's latest initiative – the Deaf Focus Group (DFG), made up of 26 Deaf and Hard of Hearing theatre-goers, meeting for the first time earlier this year. DFG members choose two signed performances and write a review, including feedback on the interpreter, booking process, and facilities like loop systems. This feedback is then shared directly with the individual theatres, with SPIT offering support and advice on how to develop services for Deaf attenders.

As Co-ordinator, Paula is responsible for tracking which shows are attended and reviewed, ensuring that there is no duplication or overlap. She will also encourage group members to see shows which are not covered and liaise regularly with Sarah Sills, SPIT's Administrator.

Paula says, 'The DFG gives us the opportunity to open a dialogue with theatres about signed and captioned shows and how access could be improved. We see it as an important and positive step for Deaf and Hard of Hearing attenders to share views with theatres on the services provided for us.'

We would welcome more DFG members from the Midlands and the North, so if you're interested or have any queries about the DFG please contact Sarah Sills at the address on page 3. You can also read John Wilson's review of *Dr Faustus* on page 2.

## REVIEW OF *DR FAUSTUS* – YOUNG VIC APRIL 2002 By John Wilson

When SPITasked me to write a review of a captioned performance for this letter my first thought was “What is the point, as a review informs an audience and will encourage or discourage them from going to see a play. Deaf people only have one opportunity to see a play properly, when there is an SLI, or open captions are available, and usually for one evening or at most two evenings in a run?” By the time you read this you may well want to go to see the play but knowing that the quota of access facilities has been used up, you won't bother!

*Doctor Faustus*, by David Lan at the Young Vic, is a very intelligent production. It includes a thrilling and mesmeric performance by Jude Law as Christopher Marlowe's doomed scholar. His presence alone was a “droll factor” and a number of the deaf people in the audience will have turned up just to be able to stare at him, but that must have been true of the rest of the audience too.

The staging was intriguing, consisting of a long catwalk structure on stilts, between two doors where the actors entered, over a grey slate ground. Every prop, from book to goblet, was systematically thrown into the “pit” as soon as it had no further use.

I went to the play with a limited knowledge of it – knowing only that it centred on a tussle between Faustus and Mephistopheles, the Devil, to whom Faustus sold his soul in return for unlimited power. As the detail of the play unfolded I began to recognise other references, for example to the Seven Deadly Sins and to Helen of Troy and the cultural significance of the work started to become clear. I was intrigued in particular by the concept of representing Helen as a shaft of light emanating from two double doors, leaving her actual appearance to the imagination. This was a neat way of getting round the problem of playing the most beautiful woman in the world!

If I had any criticism it would be that the character of Mephistopheles, played by Richard McCabe in a 20th century red suit, was played in a way which was too straight-faced for my liking but he proved to be the perfect foil for the writhing, screaming Faustus in his 16th century doublet and hose.

I came away with mixed feelings about the impact of a big name like Jude Law on this production. It would guarantee full houses, no doubt, but would the discussion afterwards be about the play and the ideas in it or about the big star? I suppose there is a balance to be struck here and all in all if a name attracts deaf people to go to the theatre then I am all for it.

### DANCE SUMMER SCHOOL

#### AT SADLER'S WELLS

***“An amazing experience for a deaf child to perform in such a lovely setting”***

For deaf children and a hearing friend/sibling for boys and girls aged 6-9 and 10-16 years at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London from 22 to 26 July with Green Candle Dance Company.

All methods of communication welcome: BSL interpreter

For further information

telephone 020 7863 8092 or

fax 020 7863 8199

e-mail: [sheryl.aitcheson@sadlers-wells.com](mailto:sheryl.aitcheson@sadlers-wells.com)

post: 'Summer School' c/o CONNECT, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

### PERFORMANCE:

#### INTERPRETING – A PIECE OF ART?

The 2002 Conference of the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI) will be held in Clarion Hotel, Oslo Airport, Gardermoen, Norway on 5th-6th of October. The conference will be hosted by Tolkeforbundet, the Norwegian Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

The conference theme is **Performance**, on the basis that all interpreting has several elements of performance. What kind of responsibility does an interpreter have during his/her performance? Are interpreters professional performers? How do they interpret other peoples' performance, such as acting?

The organisers have put out a call for presenters, and organised a website, which is being regularly updated: [http://www.efsl.org.uk/oslo\\_2002.htm](http://www.efsl.org.uk/oslo_2002.htm).

Check it out over the next few weeks or e-mail the coordinator, Bente Bretting: [bbretting8@hotmail.com](mailto:bbretting8@hotmail.com).

Now in its fifth year, *Cambridge Arts Theatre's Deaf and Hearing Summer School* is becoming a training ground for deaf and hearing children, as well as an exciting project for the summer holidays.

The Summer School 2002 is already full with fifteen deaf and fifteen hearing performers and ten stage-crew taking part, but you can register now for the Summer School in 2003 by contacting Roberta on **01223 578926**. You can also **text phone: 01223 579003** or e-mail **rhamond@cambridgearts theatre.com**.

Check the SPIT listings for the free performance on the Arts Theatre stage on Friday 23 August.

## Keep in touch!

SPIT, 1 Stobart Avenue  
Manchester M25 0AJ

Tel/fax: 0161 773 1715

Email: [sarah@spit.org.uk](mailto:sarah@spit.org.uk)

website: [www.spit.org.uk](http://www.spit.org.uk)

The deadline for the next issue is:

**5 August 2002**

## Honeybee Theatre

### Workshop for 7 to 13 year old students in London

Visual Storytelling & Physical Theatre Workshop for Deaf & Hearing youth aged 7-13 years. Deaf & Hearing Welcome. For enquiries or bookings contact:

Lisa Mills, Honeybee Theatre, Unit G13, Broadway Studios, 28 Tooting High St, London, SW17 0RG

Website: [www.honeybeetheatre.com](http://www.honeybeetheatre.com) Email: [lisa@honeybeetheatre.com](mailto:lisa@honeybeetheatre.com) Phone: 0208 672 4465 Fax: 0208 767 3247

### 5-day Course for 14 to 25yr old students in London

Visual Communication Course for 14 to 25 year old students. Deaf & Hearing welcome \*\*\* Book your place by contacting: Sarah Davies, Director, Tower Hamlets Summer University, Canon Barnett School Gunthorpe Street, London, E1 7RQ

Phone: 020 7247 7900 fax: 020 7377 9793 E-mail: [sarah@summeruni.org](mailto:sarah@summeruni.org), w: [www.summeruni.org](http://www.summeruni.org)

## No Clash Diary

Avoid clashing with another venue offering a SLIP on the same night as you; use SPIT's National No-Clash Diary to check and register dates for your SLIPs.

**Remember - it only works if you use it!**

Up to date listings can be seen at [www.spit.org.uk/search.asp](http://www.spit.org.uk/search.asp)



## CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION

SPIT relies on Trusts and Foundations for a third of its income. All donations large and small are vital if SPIT is to continue its work. If you would like to support SPIT please consider Give As You Earn (GAYE) or contact us.

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SPIT, 1 STOBART AVENUE, MANCHESTER M25 0AJ Fax: 0161 773 1715

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