



Looking Back Falling Forward

Death Of A Clown by Paul Beard

Ruby of Elsinore by Bruce Kane

Norma by Alun Owen

Night by Harold Pinter



Programme

6th, 7th, 8th, 13th, 14th and 15th October 2011

www.semi-circle.ch

Treasure Island

The Panto




December 8th 19:00
9th 19:00
10th 14:30 & 19:00
11th 13:30 & 17:00

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WELCOME

A very warm welcome to The Semi-Circle's Autumn Production 2011, a collection of sketches and short plays entitled *Looking Back Falling Forward*. This has been an exceptional year for The Semi-Circle Verein. For the first time in our history our entry to the European Festival of Anglophone Theatre Societies (FEATS) was placed and received the Taché Diamonds Award. The play, *Death of a Clown* by Paul Beard, is the core around which tonight's production was built. Following quickly on from this success at FEATS we brought our production of the rock opera *Rent* to the stage. This was the biggest project ever undertaken by The Semi-Circle and was extremely well received by the audience, the biggest we have had for over 25 years. Many reports, including those on TeleBasel, pointed to the immensely high standard of the production, the quality of the performances and the authentic New York winter atmosphere that was created amid the soaring summer temperatures of Basel. Though this production absorbed a huge amount of time and energy we managed to present a land-mark event, to learn an immense amount and to have a lot of fun. Each year we stage a main production and a collection of shorter plays and sketches which brings variety to the stage and the opportunity for new experience to performers, directors and production teams. This autumn we are offering a wide range of styles covering mystery, comedy, tragedy and the slightly absurd. During the Autumn Production 2010, *Unoriginal Sin* by David Tristram, we carried out a survey and found out that our audience preferred to go to the theatre in the city centre. Appropriate venues are hard to find at present but after an extensive search we managed to secure a short season at the refurbished Berufsfachschule which combines a city centre location with simple but convenient facilities. We will be returning here for the Spring Production 2012. We invite you to enjoy the plays and join us after the event for a drink in the bar where you are welcome to share your thoughts on the show and the venue with us. If you have enjoyed the plays and the atmosphere perhaps you would like to consider joining us and taking part in our productions, play readings and sketch nights, on which more information can be found on our website, www.semi-circle.ch. Please sit back and join us in a series of rather different realities.

Richard Brown
President



www.semi-circle.ch

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PROGRAMME

Night

Death of a Clown

Interval

Night (reprise)

Norma

Ruby of Elsinor

JOIN US!

As you sit there waiting for the lights to go down, the music to play and the story to unfold, you may wonder how all this is arranged and organised, who are the people involved and why?

Well, it is just a bit puzzling. After all our spare time is precious to us, so why spend it involved in amateur dramatics? Some explanation is to be found in the biographies of the cast and directors. Of course, other than those you see on stage, there are many more less visible team members who help plan, organise and support the action that is seen on stage, from sound and lighting to props and paying the royalties; more such retiring creatures are to be found serving behind the bar, pushing buttons at the lighting and sound desks and sneaking behind the curtain. Our members come from many different countries and backgrounds. If you are curious enough to try-out, either on stage or in a less conspicuous place, please visit our website www.semi-circle.ch.

NIGHT

By Harold Pinter

Directed by Richard Brown

This short sketch was first played at the Comedy Theatre in London in 1969. More recently it has been produced at the Royal National Theatre in 2002 and at the Haymarket Theatre, London, in 2007. It is a dialogue between a married couple in their forties who reminisce about their past. These two live together in what they call love, yet on the memories of their initial and most intimate moments there is an inexplicable discrepancy. Though traditionally played sympathetically, the text is so rich that it is open to a number of interpretations which we will explore as the piece opens both the first and second acts in different guises.

Man - Antony Hehir

Antony (30) grew up in Botswana and moved to Basel in 2008. He has always had a passion for the performing arts and in addition to a career in marketing he has been involved in musical and theatrical productions since primary school. He has thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Liz Shaw for this production of *Night* and hopes you enjoy it.



Woman - Liz Shaw

Liz is originally from the North East of England but left the UK 10 years ago to live in the US, moving to Basel 6 years ago. This is her second role for The Semi-Circle, the first being Cissy in *Quartet* in 2010 which she enjoyed immensely. Whilst the role of Woman in *Night* is challenging, she is pleased that there is not so much text to learn this time around!



Director - Richard Brown

Richard is the President of The Semi-Circle and the director of *Night*. This year Richard was the producer of *Rent* with a cameo role as Mr Grey, the owner of the 11th Street lot. He has appeared in a number of previous Semi-Circle productions including as Lucky Eric in *Bouncers*. A native of Norfolk in England, Richard works for Syngenta in Basel and has three beautiful daughters who work and study at Stanford University, Yosemite National Park and the Royal Veterinary College, London.

DEATH OF A CLOWN

By Paul Beard



A familiar face on The Semi-Circle's stage over many years, David was last seen as Father Tomlin in *Unoriginal Sin*, Ralph in *Bouncers* and Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Tonight David takes on the role of Ringmaster in Paul Beard's award-winning dramatic comedy which depicts a power struggle between two estranged brothers to gain control of the family circus. David also directs *Ruby of Elsinore*, one of the other plays performed this evening.

Zuzana Cox is listed with the cast of *Ruby of Elsinore*

Steve would like to thank everybody in both The Semi-Circle and the Basel English Panto Group for fun and friendship over the last four years. Steve's first acting role in Basel was Micky, the gangster's heavy, in *Roleplay*; then came Dracula in *Frankenstein – The Panto*, an ugly sister in *Cinderella – Lost in Space*, one of the bouncers in *Bouncers*, a lawyer in *Unoriginal Sin...* and finally the clown in *Death of a Clown*. Steve has also been busy behind the scenes as stage manager, set builder, stage hand, sound technician, committee member and webmaster. And there he was, gone!

As they wait for the death of their father – the ringmaster and head of the family circus – his two sons (the circus clown and his estranged brother) fight to gain control of the circus and its future. The balance of power moves backwards and forwards between the two in this highly dramatic, black comedy. The Semi-Circle's production of this play won the Taché Diamonds award at the 2011 Festival of European Anglophile Theatrical Societies, at which Steve Martin received a nomination for best actor for his performance as the Clown.

The Semi-Circle received the Taché Diamonds Award for Third Place at the FEATS European theatre festival, which was held in Geneva in June 2011.



Crew in Geneva (left to right):
Helen Baldomero (Make-up and Prompter),
Judy Martin (Stage Hand) and John Hyland (Stage Manager)



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NORMA

By Alun Owen

Directed by Penny Rettig

A playlet about an unmarried couple, an affair and the end of it. Written in 1970 as part of *Mixed Doubles*, a collection of eight short plays; an entertainment on marriage, which gives an amusing if acid picture of the progress of married life from honeymoon to cemetery.

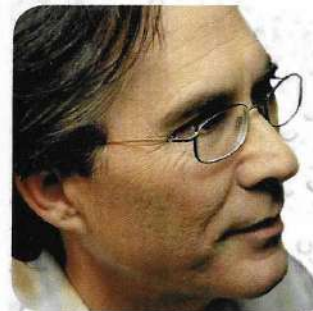
Norma - Karolina Kowalska

Daughter of Polish immigrants, Karolina was born in Basel and performed on stage from the ages of 9 to 17 in the Jugend Circus Basilisk. During her studies she joined the Gay Beggars, the English-speaking theatre company of the English Seminar at the University of Basel. With them she performed as Verges in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (2008) and as Venus in John Lyly's *Gallathea* (2011). She also performed in The Semi-Circle's production of Jonathan Larson's *Rent* (2011). Since she is also very interested in the work behind the scenes she will be co-directing Michael Frain's *Noises Off* in 2012.



Man - James Sievert

Originally from Southern California, Jamie launched his acting career with The Semi-Circle ten years ago in Neil Simon's *Rumours*. Since then he has appeared in *The Guest Lecturer*, *Same Time Next Year* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* as well as several other plays. During this time he has also managed to write a few plays which have been produced at the Pittsburgh New Works Festival and other venues in the United States. This is his first time back on stage for a few years, so he is pleased to have



the opportunity to work with Karolina and Penny.

Director - Penny Rettig

Although Penny has taken to the stage occasionally, she is more often to be found in the wings clutching a script or manning the Abendkasse. This is her first foray as a director for The Semi-Circle, but in the past she has directed *An Inspector Calls* for Capital Players in Botswana and a radio production of *A Man for All Seasons* for Radio Botswana's education service.



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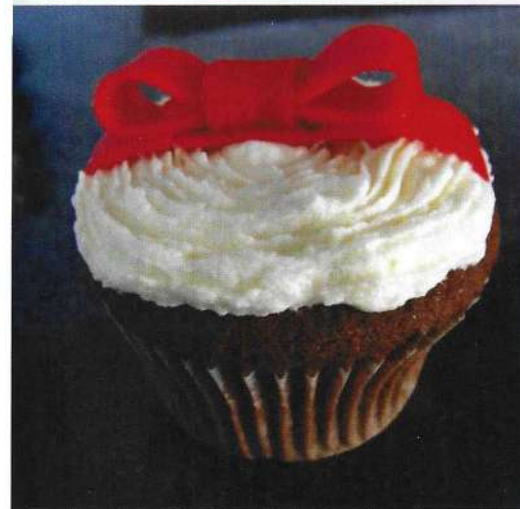
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RUBY OF ELSINORE

By Bruce Kane

Directed by David Cox

... and so it happens that the person who is best informed about the intrigues and goings-on at the court of Elsinore is Ruby, a hairdresser with lots of attitude. In theory "what's said at Ruby's stays at Ruby's", but news and gossip slip through in this hilarious one act comedy which shows the main characters of a well-known Shakespearean play in a new light. A slovenly and indecisive Hamlet, a marriage-bent Ophelia, an over-sexed Gertrude, a power-hungry Claudius and a revengeful Ghost all let their hair down at Ruby's House of Beauty, the hippest hairdressers in town! ...

Ruby - Zuzana Cox

Zuzana has been involved with The Semi-Circle for many years. Her parts have ranged from the smooth and sophisticated to the rough and ready - and she has enjoyed every one of them. She has never before directed and performed on the same evening. To all hairdressers and clowns in the audience she offers her sincere apologies!



Ophelia - Eleanor Low

Eleanor has gathered stage and music experience since childhood. She followed a classical music path at London's Centre for Young Musicians until she discovered theatre at the Battersea Arts Youth Theatre Group, and now nowhere does she feel more alive than on stage! Since then she has had numerous stage appearances in Basel with recent roles including Charlotte in *Twist & Shout*, Bridget in *A Slice of Saturday Night*, Paige in *Roleplay* and Alexi Darling in the musical *Rent*.



We extend our grateful thanks to Kate Michaels and Claudia and Eva Ott for the generous loan of costumes.



Hamlet - Marcel Halid

Back on stage again! Marcel had his first Semi-Circle acting role in 2008 as an abused author, hidden from the public. He has now developed into a play-writing but torn and indecisive prince Hamlet. Marcel himself has not yet written a book or a play ... although he would have many funny stories on his mind and interesting tales to tell. Marcel is Swiss with an international background, lives in Binningen (not in the castle) and works as a self-employed marketing consultant and project manager, looking for the right solutions for his clients every day and solving their key "To-do-it or not-to-do it" questions. He may consult the Royal family of Denmark after the play, but in the meantime

he hopes the audience will have a great evening enjoying this fun "Shakespearean-style" comedy.

Claudius - David Laurie

David first took to the stage in the 1980s singing in the chorus of amateur operettas, *Carmen*, *The Merry Widow* and *Turandot*. After a short (20 year!) gap he has finally got his priorities right and has come back to performing, singing this year in the chorus of *Rent* (as Mr Jefferson). Now, in addition, he is happy to be experiencing his acting debut in *Ruby of Elsinore*.



Gertrude - Christine Archer-Lockwood

This being my debut I have no prior acting experience, except life! As a musician I usually hide behind a piano, or have my back to the audience while conducting a choir or orchestra. Now I have to face the audience, remembering words not music, keeping my expressive hands and arms motionless under a hairdresser's smock and acting from the face upwards! Scary and exciting at the same time.



Ghost - Eric Collino

A Swiss friend once described Eric as a "Lebenskünstler". If true perhaps that is the reason he found himself, years ago, without previous experience, attracted to The Semi-Circle. Audiences and directors seem to have tolerated his stage appearances sufficiently well to allow him to remain active to the present day. He hopes that those watching *Ruby of Elsinore* will experience as much pleasure as he has had participating in this amusing play.



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