



Review: Beryl Cook: A Private View

King Alfred Phoenix Theatre, Golders Hill Park, NW11

By Jessica Holt

Kara Wilson's 'painter play' focuses on Beryl Cook, whose comical depictions of people in pubs, in the shower and sunbathing, to name a few settings, are all so easily recognisable to the public. Kara's one-woman show incorporates with great skill the history of Beryl's life at the same time as she reproduces on canvas her famous work *Ladies Night*, which portrays several women delighting in the performance of a male stripper known as Ivor Dickie.



Painterly: Kara Wilson

Bouncers, sailors and tattoos

Many of the events and inspirations of the artist's life are humorously told. Based on extensive research and time spent with her son and daughter-in-law John and Theresa, the audience hears about some of the funniest moments and her favourite things such as bouncers, sailors and tattoos. Through Kara's accomplished writing, the audience also learns about the artist's crippling shyness – from loathing parties to not having the confidence to receive her OBE from the Queen.

The set is simple and a visual delight. There is a screen, a table with paint pots, a chair from which she paints and two cameras, one placed either side of the stage. Kara/Beryl begins the show by addressing one of the cameras. She is too shy to be interviewed by 'George' in person, happier to speak to him via a camera. This device works well, reminding the audience of how incredibly famous and successful she is and adding another presence in the acting space, which enables Kara/Beryl to talk to us more directly.

Kara's play is a complex piece that succeeds in sharing Beryl's life story in depth, with great humour, skill and sincerity, all of which the audience enjoyed immensely. It comes back to King Alfred Phoenix Theatre on Thursday 9 May. Find tickets on Eventbrite.co.uk by searching 'Beryl Cook A Private View'.



All at sea: The cast of *Silver Lining* at the Gatehouse

Silver surfers ahoy!

Garden Suburb Theatre's next production *Upstairs at the Gatehouse* in Highgate will be *Silver Lining*, a comedy by TV host, comedian, and writer Sandi Toksvig, billed as *The Golden Girls* meets *The Great Escape*.

On a dark and stormy night at the Silver Retirement Home, five elderly women are trading stories of their (un)remarkable lives. But with a Biblical storm brewing outside, the flood waters rising, and no rescue team in sight, the residents are faced with the realisation that in order to survive they are going to have to do what they have done their entire lives – do it themselves!

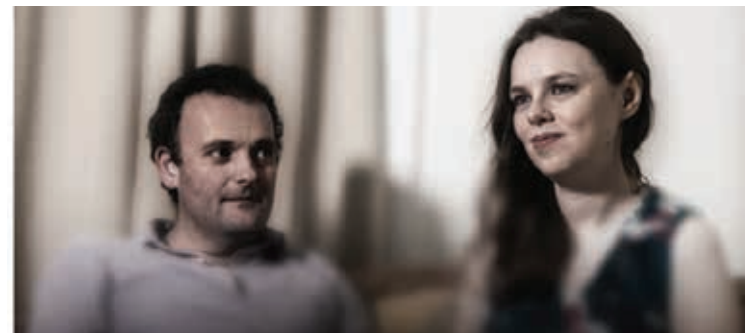
Director Daryl Hurst said: "Sandi Toksvig wrote this play as an antidote to not seeing

any great parts for women-of-a-certain-age in theatre and I am so proud to have a cast that are showcasing their incredible talent on this stage." The show contains strong language and adult themes.

The production runs from Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 April. Tickets priced £15 (with £13 concessions) are available from www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com. Anyone in groups of 10+ can contact boxoffice@gardensuburbtheatre.org.uk for group discounts.

What happens when two strangers meet

Theatre in the Square, who rehearse at East Finchley Methodist Church in the High Road, are performing David Eldridge's 2017 play *Beginning* this month. This is the first of a trilogy of plays looking at love and relationships and was first seen at the Royal National Theatre before transferring to the Ambassadors Theatre in the West End, where it enjoyed a sold-out run.



Encounter: Matthew Pert and Naomi Smallwood

In the play *Danny and Laura*, played by Matthew Pert and Naomi Smallwood, are the last two remaining after a party. Unknown to each other, they both have their story, and the baggage that goes with it. Can they connect? Audiences find out what transpires between them in an hour and a half of real time.

Performances are at The King Alfred Phoenix, North End

Road, Golders Green, NW11 7HY from Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 April at 8pm. Tickets priced £12 are available online at www.theatreinthesquare.org with the usual concessions. Formed 57 years ago to provide amateur drama opportunities in north London, Theatre in the Square puts on three to four productions each year. Find out more at www.theatreinthesquare.org.

What's On at the Phoenix in April

By Zalan Pall, general manager



An extraordinary foreign drama, an exciting romcom, a legendary biopic, live ballet, opera, and theatre and much more awaits you at the Phoenix Cinema in April.

A journey toward hope, *Io Capitano* perambulates through the ravishing Saharan landscape encountering the most sublime and debased corners of humanity. The story is told through the mind's eye and experiences of two Senegalese teenagers living in Dakar who yearn for a brighter future in Europe. Winning top directing and acting prizes at the Venice Film Festival and nominated for Best International Film at the Oscars, it plays from Friday 5 April.

The extraordinary story of Amy Winehouse's early rise to fame and the making of her groundbreaking album, *Back to Black* is on screen from Friday 12 April. Told from Amy's perspective and inspired by her deeply personal lyrics, the film follows the remarkable woman behind the phenomenon and the tumultuous relationship at the centre of one of the most legendary albums of all time.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have the Royal Opera House's production of three of Kenneth MacMillan's ballets *MacMillan Triple* on Tuesday 9 April, the Met's *La Rondine* on Saturday 20 April, the National Theatre's *Nye*, with Michael Sheen, on Tuesday 23 April, the Royal Opera House's *Swan Lake* on Wednesday 24 April, followed by *Carmen* on Wednesday 1 May, and *Macbeth* starring Ralph Fiennes and Indira Varma on Thursday 2 May.

From visionary filmmaker Luca Guadagnino, *Challengers* follows three players who knew each other when they were teenagers as they compete in a tennis tournament to be a world-famous grand slam winner and reignite old rivalries. It's on court from Friday 26 April.

Finally for April, set in 1858 in the Jewish quarter of Bologna and based on indefensible truths, *Kidnapped* from Friday 26 April tackles institutional abuse with cinematic pomp and political circumstance.

In amongst all these screen treats, the Phoenix is hosting *East Finchley's Got Talent* and the *East Finchley Bake Off* on Sunday 21 April. Come along to take part and enjoy a host of local performance and baking talent. To book tickets, visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or drop into our box office. We look forward to seeing you soon.



On show: *Bento Box* by Michelle Weiner

Collaboration of memories and form

A new collaboration will grace the walls of Lauderdale House in Highgate this April as north London-based artists Caroline Matthews and Michelle Weiner join forces to present their inaugural exhibition, called 'Rooted Memories – Lasting Connections'.

Caroline Matthews creates soft pastel worlds that immerse viewers in a tapestry of emotion, colour and texture, while Michelle Weiner's prints intertwine organic forms and human relationships.

Rooted Memories runs from Thursday 4 to Monday 29 April in the Upper Gallery at Lauderdale House, Waterloo Park, N6 5HG. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk