



newsletter

no.31 May 2010

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Nowt !!

Arts Council decide to give us not a penny

After thirteen years of producing new theatre from Northern writers, Cloud Nine recently learnt that its application to the Arts Council for the coming year had been thrown out.

The decision came after the company had twice been in discussions with the Arts Council before submitting a bid. In fact, on the advice of the council, we submitted two bids, the first for £28,096, and, knowing the restrictions imposed by the recession and the voracious demands of the spiralling Olympics budget, a lesser amount for a smaller Plan B programme of work.

We were informed by the standard impersonalised letter that we were not to receive a penny.

For several years, *Cloud Nine* has campaigned unsuccessfully to be a regularly funded client of the Arts Council, a status that would afford us some security when planning ahead.

Creating a regular programme

of theatre work, year in, year out, as the company has done, requires a good deal of forward planning, yet such planning is virtually, impossible if we are dependant on *Grants for the Arts* scheme, which makes every application a hazardous gamble, and reliant on various unpredictable circumstances.

Lucky

Sometimes we are lucky, and get the full grant; other times it is reduced. Now it has been refused altogether.

After 13 years of consistently good and original new theatre, which has given opportunities to a whole new generation of playwrights in the region and with every project delivered on time and within budget, we do feel quite strongly that we deserve a bit more than to be at the whim of this annual lottery. Nor is the company totally dependant on the Arts Council for funding. North Tyneside Council funds our Sixties Group work, and Colette Stroud funds both our web site and this

newsletter. Plus which we are always on the lookout for other sources.

Important

But the Arts Council money is hugely important to us, and its non-availability for the next year leaves our plans hijacked - hence the smaller newsletter this time. Much of the planned content is now on hold.

Letters of support for *Cloud Nine* went to the Arts Council from Ray Spencer at The Customs House (with whom we had our exciting three year New Writing Partnership), Dot Owston of the Linskill Centre, North Shields, where we increasingly base our range of activities, and from Colette Stroud herself. We have also been back to talk to Arts Council since the decision (a brand new regime is now in place there), and as you'll see from page two, we are picking ourselves up off the floor. *Cloud Nine* will fight back, and we hope you out there will support us.

Any news, info, ideas or letters for the newsletter, and any bookings, audition queries or to be put on our mailing list, please contact: Kitty Fitzgerald at CLOUD NINE, 5 Marden Terrace, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear NE30 4PD.

T: 0191 253 1901 E: cloudninetheatre@blueyonder.co.uk

our web address is: www.cloudninetheatre.co.uk



The cast of 'Strangers'. We're assured John Wallis (top, next to writer/director Neil Armstrong) is drinking only coloured water

The Cloud Nine AGM

What does the future hold for *Cloud Nine*?

Will the Arts Council decision see us come crashing down in ruins?

Will we rise from the ashes like some triumphant Phoenix?

Come and discuss the future.

**Annual General Meeting
Linskill Community Centre,
Linskill Terrace, North
Shields Thursday
May 20, 7pm.**

Please advise us in advance if you can make the meeting (see bottom of page one for phone and email details). You will be more than welcome and may even get a glass of wine and a nibble.

It has been a rocky road of late and a strong turnout would be good for our morale!

The Best-Laid Plans....

Plans for the Dick Curran play *Company* are on hold.

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Plans for the Ed Waugh & Trevor Wood play *God Only Knows* are on hold.

Plans for the large scale outdoor production of *Grendel's Mother* by Kitty Fitzgerald are also on hold. But after talks with NorthTyneside and The Customs House things are more hopeful.

Let us say that we have given up on none of the above, and we are talking to people all the time. We hope to bring more definite news at a later date.

Keep with us!

Sixties Group Pull out all the (Bus) Stops in Much-Acclaimed Show

Amid all the trials and tribulations of the company's finances, our Sixties Group staged a brilliantly successful show at North Shields Central Library and Segedunum, Wallsend.

Strangers on a Bus, which was written in workshops with Neil Armstrong, who also directed the show, was performed lunchtime for six performances at the library and twice at Segedunum. Audiences built up daily, with standing room only by the end of the North Shields week, and full houses at both Segedunum shows. Almost 500 people saw the production.

Talks

We have since been in talks with NorthTyneside Council for the next Sixties Group project (the group is open to anyone sixty or over, who then work with a professional writer and director to help create their own plays). Plans are afoot to have a new full-length play to be staged at The Saville Exchange Theatre in October of this year as party of the *Age Takes*

Centre Stage Festival.

Sixties Group members will soon meet up to discuss the proposal and take it forward.

PlayDays To Go Marching on

Our valuable *PlayDay* projects, which give new writers the opportunity to see their work on its feet before an audience, look to have been saved, despite the Arts Council decision.

In a meeting with Ray Spencer, the Customs House have agreed

to fund the next *PlayDay*, which will eventually see new work staged at the Customs House early next year in a rehearsed reading.

Interested writers, who need to have a full-length play-in-progress, are asked to contact Peter Mortimer at *Cloud Nine*. Ten writers will attend a day-long workshop, then be given time to complete their scripts. One will finally be chosen to be put on its feet at the *PlayDay* itself. Thanks Ray, for your valued support at this time !