

Thanks

The first thanks must go to

MICHAEL-WHEATLEY-WARD for co-producing the play and for his generous patience in helping us realise our vision and for encouraging new writing. This simply could not have been performed without his continued support. Not only has Michael helped to publicise the event, he has helped with set design and has lit today's performance.

To all the **cast** - your commitment to line-learning and rehearsals has been greatly appreciated. I couldn't ask for better thespians! Bruce, for turning down free VIP tickets, including a free flight to Munich to watch the big cup game on 19th. I hope Chelsea doesn't win so he won't wish he'd been there...

Rev. Stefan Thomas & Samuel Pearce for loan of props
Martell Press

OUR teachers - for inspiring us and/or putting a bomb behind us to ensure we learned something at school to help us get jobs to pay the bills to afford us to do theatre. School looks different from the other side of the desk!

And finally, to **YOU**, the audience - without whom, the play would not live.

Inkling Media and

Sarah Thorne Adult Drama Group present...

THOSE WHO CAN... TEACH



- written and directed by
Tristan John S

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

Programme

Act I

- the action in Act I is in real time and starts at the end of a lesson preceding lunch on a

Friday.

Scene 1: The Staffroom

Scene 2: The School Hall

Scene 3: The Staffroom

(Interval)

Act II

Scene 1: The Staffroom (the following Monday morning)

Scene 2: A cafe (Monday evening)

Scene 3: The Staffroom /
Headmistress Byers' Office

(Tuesday morning)

Scene 4: The School Hall

(Tuesday afternoon)

Scene 5: The Staffroom (a bit later)

"Everybody thinks they have good taste and a sense of humor but they couldn't possibly all have good taste." (Marie, *When Harry Met Sally*)

Writing comedy is challenging because everyone has their own sense of humour and there are different types of comedy - physical, wordplay, one-liners &c. I try to encompass as many of these as possible but no writer can expect to get a laugh from everyone for every joke.

I suppose my favourite humour is observational and word play. Act II Scene 2 was one of my favourite to write because I wanted the rapid word play to have a physical manifestation - much like the 'tennis' game in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

Existing comedies that have influenced me are too numerous to name but some of you might recognise elements of "Yes Minister" and Woody Allen.

Unfortunately most jokes require someone to be the butt of them which is why it is essential to be able to laugh at oneself.

Finally, I believe a truly great comedy is a mixture of pathos and comedy - a recipe I believe Richard Curtis/Ben Elton perfect in *Blackadder*

"What is truth?"

Characters

This is, of course, the question that Pilate famously asks Jesus at His trial in John 18. The answer has already been given in the previous chapter. 'Your Word is truth'.

"Everything is a matter of opinion" says Ric, "especially historical facts: historical facts are simply those opinions which stuck because the winners were too strong to argue with". This is an interesting assertion in light of the gospel text and many sceptics will argue that the gospels are unreliable because of their bias towards the supernatural. Of course, the historical strength of four, somewhat disparate accounts becomes an argument in favour of their authenticity: just as Kathy and Lucy give different testimonies of the same event.

The epistemological trauma of the human condition is that we cannot know. As Tom Stoppard puts it in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: "Truth is only that which is taken to be true". Kathy, as an empiricist, finds it difficult to believe in a being beyond our physical senses and Ric's background in history makes him sceptical. Lucy never discloses her religious persuasion but she expounds a lot of energy trying to ascertain the verity of the allegation against Ric.

The other overarching theme in the play is vocation. Every human being seeks to find their purpose in life and the characters on stage tonight are no different. The aforementioned correlation between priesthood and teaching is that both professions are centred around the pastoral, practical and pedagogical care of people.

Ric Carter (History teacher)

Lucy Allbright (Religious Studies teacher)

Kathy Rhode (Head of Science/member of Senior Leadership Team)

Rev. Chris Goodstreet (Visiting speaker)

Michael (a helpful Year 10 student)

Voice of Tannoy

*

Please Note:

There is a sound cue of a fire drill during the first half. Please do not respond with emergency procedures unless directed to!

Cast

Bruce Grant (Ric Carter)

Bruce can often be found treading the boards at the Minster Playhouse when he is not treading the thin line between educator and rehabilitator at Roberta and Elizabeth House – a new direction for him since his days teaching FE.



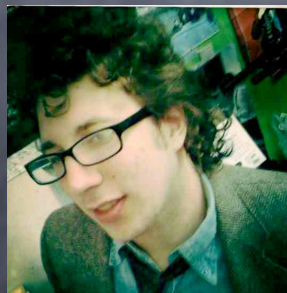
Hannah Pearce (Lucy Allbright)

Hannah graduated from with a 2-1 in Dance from Manchester Metropolitan University. Since 2009 she has worked as an assistant teacher in the English and Dance Departments of the Ellington and Hereson School and recently completed her Graduate Teacher Programme for which she was graded Outstanding. We wish her luck as she embarks upon her first post as a Newly Qualified Teacher on Monday.



Tristan John S (Rev. Chris Goodstreet)

Tristan has enjoyed acting since his stage debut as a child playing the Hitler Youth in Cabaret. (Somewhat ironic – Tristan's father is Jewish). He has been a regular at the Sarah Thorne, taking roles in new writing as well as established works like A Streetcar Named Desire.



Narrative

Structuralist narrative theorists will tell you that, in order to drive a narrative forward, there must be sets of binary oppositions. More often than not, there are 'good' and 'evil' characters. In writing TWCT, I wanted to depict a sense of camaraderie amongst the staff. To ask who the villain of the story is complicated. The main antagonists in the play are never seen on stage (Headteacher Jane Byers, pupil Gary Oakes and OFSTED). Of course, when it boils down to it, the protagonists know that their Headteacher is working for them as much as they are for the students and that the whole school need to pull together against the latter foe who, themselves are simply trying to make sure that our schools don't fail our young people.

In trying to give a snapshot of the lives of teachers, whose perpetual stress seems varied and unending, I had to hang the characters on some sort of plot line. The very real-to-life situation of being suspended following a pupil allegation seemed a natural peripetia to work up towards and away from. Moreover, I wanted the audience to be as ignorant as the other characters as to Ric's guilt or innocence so the crucial moment happens off stage.

Bruce observed during rehearsal, that Chris is the 'lynchpin' of the play. Although he appears in the least of scenes, he is the only character who has private moments with every other main character. His role as an outsider serves not only as a foil for the other characters who are challenged to re-examine themselves, but also to act on behalf on the audience who might be bewildered by the constant bombardment of acronyms and school jargon.

Producing The Play

Producing a play is something of a logistical nightmare. We began with a different 'Lucy' and were rehearsing in a different space until March. One of the drawbacks of amateur dramatic societies is, of course, that actors have day jobs! The wonderful people you will see treading the boards on Saturday and Sunday have given absolutely freely of their time, energies and expertise with grace, humour and professionalism. I cannot thank them all enough.

As a writer, directing my vision of the play has been exciting. Of course, Theatre is a collaboration and we have enjoyed playing things out in rehearsal. Every member of the cast has brought a little of themselves and suggestions to improve the direction and the whole process really has been a collaboration.

The set has to be simple and largely reflects some of the working staffrooms one might see in local schools. Books everywhere, a kettle and, of course, the ubiquitous tannoy. I took the decision to utilise other areas of the stage to double up as an Assembly Hall, the Headmistress' Office &C.

Cast (cont.)

Amy Reynolds

(Kathy Rhode)

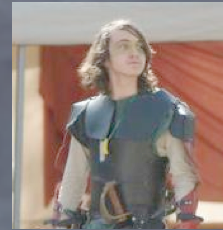
By day a busy wife, mother and shop assistant, Amy has appeared on stage several times since 2010 in her moonlight career as an actress. Treading the boards at the Sarah Thorne, Minster Playhouse and appearing in short films.



Connor Sandum

(Michael)

Currently a Year 10 student at Chatham House Grammar School, Connor appears for the first time with his sister, Amy as part of the Sarah Thorne Adult Drama Group.



Vanessa Culliford

(Voice of Tannoy)

Another veteran of the Sarah Thorne theatre and, herself a director/playwright, Vanessa has tripled up as stage manager, prompt and tannoy for TWCT. Vanessa has run several businesses from home and, when she isn't dog walking or horse riding, can be found in various theatrical endeavours.



About the Playwright



Born the eldest of non-identical twins, Tristan's first ambition at the age of five was to become a writer. Having trained as a classical pianist and violinist at the Royal College of Music, where he was a Junior Exhibitioner from 1995-2001, Tristan decided to concentrate on his academic studies, and went up to Homerton College, Cambridge, to read Theology and Religious Studies. It was there that he really began to explore his passion for literature again and started to develop an idea of Imaginal Theology - that is, that, in order to speak meaningfully of the divine (or even the moral) we must use our Imagination. Thus the creative arts are particularly suited to the work of theology.

After Cambridge, Tristan returned to Broadstairs and trained as an RE teacher at The Hereson School. He currently works at the amalgamated Ellington and Hereson School, teaching Religious Studies and Music.

In 2008 he formed Inkling Media with fellow collegiate Warren Drew, and Samuel Pearce came on board soon after. In 2009, Tristan co-wrote the screenplay for and directed a feature film adaptation of the book *Blitzed* by Robert Swindells, in collaboration with Newlands Primary School. *Inkling Media* works closely with Blues Band *Nine Below Zero*, and produces several of their music videos.

In addition to writing for theatre, Tristan composes choral works for St. Andrew's Church Choir, Reading Street, where he is Organist, and writes prose and poetry. He also teaches an annual Playwriting Course for Adult Education at Hilderstone.

A note on the title

In 2008, the Teacher Training Agency ran a campaign called 'those who can, teach' set to Thomas Newman's score to the film 'Meet Joe Black'. This sought to spin the jocular insult, 'those who can, do...those who can't, teach' on its head. Those amongst you who are educators know how rewarding teaching can be but also, how exhausting it is. One is performing, constantly and the only tools one has at one's disposal in a classroom is one's own personality. With ever increasing pressure from Government targets, pedagogy and politics (internal and external) often become a tangle. Yes, we love the holidays but, as you may agree after watching tonight's performance, we need them! As with all professions, there are good and bad teachers. Like any other public sector job, teaching is, essentially a vocation - teachers have a duty of care. We might joke about punishing student behaviour, or become exasperated at our colleagues but, as Ric says in Act I - if you don't like kids, what are you doing in a school? At the end of a hard day it is sometimes difficult to see the silver lining to the examination prediction sheets or the reports files. Writing this play made me fall in love with teaching again. I think passing on knowledge and skills is one of the most natural human activities. Part acting, part admin, part priest, the infinite complexity of working with young people every day is a challenge and privilege. Those of you who are not educators shall, I hope agree this evening that the TTA were not wrong.