

At the Brewhouse - One Night Only!

Delora Jones *spreads the word about great performances.*

Have you noticed anything different about the Brewhouse lately?

About a year ago when my step-daughter was visiting, she saw that *Broke*, a Paper Birds production, was coming to the Brewhouse - for one night only. She'd been wanting to see *Broke*. I had never heard of it but Louise, who lives in London and whose background is in theatre, highly recommended it. So I went.

And then I went to see Caroline Horton's *Mess*, and Gerard Logan's *Wilde Without the Boy*, and comedy one-nighters featuring the likes of Susan Calman, Shappi Khorsandi, and others you may know from Radio4. Award-winning performances and performers, touring the country and who now include Burton on their tours. BURTON! No more travelling to Derby or Nottingham or Birmingham or Leicester - they're coming HERE! How did this happen? I met with Chloe Brown, manager of the Brewhouse, to find out.

And this is what I learned. Back in 2014/15, a decision was made to invest in the Brewhouse. This is when the Quad, Derby's cinema & arts organisation (formerly 'The Metro'), was brought in for consulting.

As part of their recommendations to breathe new life into the offerings at the Brewhouse, the Quad suggested bringing in Simon Hollingworth, a theatre freelancer, and also recommended creating the role of manager, which Chloe now fills. The Quad consultation finished in April 2015. Chloe continues to work with Simon Hollingworth to bring to Burton these fresh and original one-night touring performances.

Prices for these touring performances are usually £12-£14, but there's also a quirky, yet brilliant, pricing - or *non-pricing*

- scheme, which is applied to just one show per season, and it's this: 'Pay What You Think It's Worth' (PWYTIW).

How does this work? If there's a PWYTIW performance that you'd like to see, then order your tickets as normal. When you go to see the performance, present your ticket to be admitted. Watch the performance. Decide what you think it's worth and have that money to hand as you exit the theatre. You'll see, near the main entrance, a container for the collection of money. Put into it the amount of money you felt the performance was worth. Simple.

However, ticket-pricing, I feel, is not an issue; attendance - or the lack of it - is. These touring performances, being just one night, means there's no time for word-of-mouth to spread. By the following night, when people have started to hear about what you just saw at the Brewhouse, the performers have moved on to their next venue.

In a recent one-night-only performance - one so articulate and eloquent and spellbinding, I actually wrote to the actor to thank him for including Burton on his tour - there were only ten of us in the audience. TEN - who felt we'd attended a command performance, who wondered how we were so privileged and lucky to have been there to see Gerard Logan's enthralling *Wilde Without the Boy* at the Brewhouse. But ten who also knew that for these inspiring, stirring performances to continue to include Burton on their tours, word must spread.

Which is why I'm writing this article. So that in future, you don't miss gems like *Mess* — a fantastic and illuminating comic performance by Caroline Horton, and *Wilde Without the Boy* — Gerard Logan's stunning one-man performance, and *Broke* — Paper Birds' refreshingly honest and thrillingly creative piece on making ends meet (the sped-up audio tape bits were brilliant!). They've all played in Burton. More one-nighters are coming. Spread the word.



Mark Steel's *Who Do You Think I Am?* is in Burton on Friday, 8 April.



The next PWYTIW performance:

Joan, a drag-king cabaret
starring Lucy Jane Parkinson

at the Brewhouse
Friday, 6 May.

NB: The new Brewhouse brochures are available now. You shop at Sainsbury's? Then why not also pop over to the Brewhouse and grab one?

And spread the word ...