

M.E.N. FRIDAY,
JANUARY 29, 2010

Stage set for great theatre Re:Play

THE Library Theatre's splendid Re:Play festival, another chance to see some of the terrific theatre that's appeared over the last year, continues this weekend.

Billy Cowan's *Care Takers*, directed by Billy, plays at 7 tonight, tomorrow at 3pm and 9pm. A new teacher believes a pupil is being bullied because he's gay. She wants to help but her deputy head thinks it will sort itself out.

FirstStage on Monday evening offers writers, devisers and performers the chance to have ideas in development tested. Nicky Hatton and Claire Symonds present a selection of ideas from nearly 100 submitted.

MEN Theatre Award-winning

writer Simon Stephens has the *Falling Leaves* Production of his play *Hérons*. The effects of a tragic event are unravelled in a disturbing portrayal of teenage life on Tuesday and Wednesday, 7.30pm, Thursday at 3pm.

Ed Jones' *Exit Salford* is the tale of an unlikely friendship between an erstwhile TV writer, and group of youths, who before he bought his house in Salford, viewed its doorstep as their home. See it on Thursday at 9pm, Friday February 5 at 7pm and Saturday February 6 at 8pm.

There was a lot of great stuff at JB Shorts last year and the JB Shorts Bundle (Thursday, 7pm; Friday 5, 9pm; and Saturday,

6pm). The four in Re:Play are Peter Kerry's *Banal Encounter*, directed by Chris Bridgman; Dave Simpson's *Marriages Made In Heaven*, directed by Kay Patrick; Trevor Suther's *Can We Stop It There?*, directed by Brainne Edge; and *At The End Of The Day*, written and directed by James Quinn. All terrific, and all short and to the point!

Wyllie Longmore chairs the Re:Play debate which puts small-scale theatre in Manchester and Salford under the microscope. The panel includes Richard Morgan of the Royal Exchange Studio, writer Cathy Crabb and 24:7's David Slack, on Saturday February 6 at 3pm, tickets free.

A week that is fast and furious

EARLIER this week, The Big Gathering kicked off the public countdown to theatre festival 24:7.

Yes, the most exciting annual event in the theatre year is back with another line-up of original, exciting and challenging one-hour plays, nurturing new writing and acting talent.

There are dozens of performances taking place in non-theatre spaces throughout the last week of July, featuring imaginary friends, murderous mothers, thwarted lovers, re-united families, sinister neighbours – and a

few sheep costumes!

All the shows will be concentrated in The Co-operative's historic New Century House.

There's also a series of rehearsed readings for writers in development, a host of question and answer sessions, and late night events.

The line-up includes: *The Bluest Blue*, by Paul Osborne; *The Fading Hum*, by Charlotte Essex; *Hatch*, by Colette Kane; *The Inconsistent Whisper Of Insanity*, by Ian Moore; *Islanders*, by Dick Curran; *Make Believe*, by Luke Walker and Sally Law-

ton; *No View From The Window*, by Kim Jackson; *Pawn*, by Brian Marchbank; *Reeling*, by Sean Gregory; and *Sheepish*, by Joyce Branagh.

The four rehearsed readings are: *All Because Of Molly*, by Paul Ferguson; *Baby Shaped Hole*, by Julia Hogan; *Domestic Bliss*, by Roy Knowles; and *A Lady of Substance*, by Jonathan Cooper

»24:7 runs from July 26-August. Full details can be found on the website: 247theatrefestival.co.uk.

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