

WESSEX ACTORS COMPANY: VENUES PLAYED/BOOKED BY 01/04

Abbotsbury VH
Amesbury Library
Ampney Crucis VH
Andover Cricklade Theatre
Ashcott VH
Axbridge Market Square
Axminster Sports Centre
Bampton VH
Bath Rondo Theatre
Bath St Marks School
Bawdrip Kingsmoor Primary Sc
Blandford Tivoli Theatre
Blockley VH
Bournemouth University
Brent Knoll Parish Hall
Bridgwater Arts Centre
Bridgwater Blake School
Bridgwater Haygrove School
Bridport Arts Centre
Bristol Backwell School
Bristol Bartonhill Settlement
Bristol County Cricket Ground
Bristol Filton Avenue Junior S
Bristol QEH Theatre
Bristol Redgrave Theatre
Broadmayne VH



Brockweir VH
Brockweir Festival
Brushford VH
Buckland Newton VH
Burnham-on-Sea Princess
Theatre

Burton Bradstock VH
Butterleigh VH
Calne Library (Festival)
Cannington College
Cannington Brymore School
Canford Magna, Layard Theatre
Chard Guildhall
Chard Cricket Club
Cheltenham Axiom Centre
Chevithorne Church
Chilton Trinity VH
Christchurch Regent Centre
Cirencester Brewery Arts
Clayhidon Parish Hall
Clifton High School for Girls
Clyst Vale Community College
Codford St Mary Woolstore Theatre
Cold Aston VH
Corsham Arts Centre
Cove VH
Crewkerne Church Hall
Curry Rivel VH
Dartington Hall
Devizes Library (Festival)
Devizes Lamb Inn (Festival)
Devizes Bear Hotel (Festival)
Dorchester Corn Exchange
Dumbleton VH
Dunster VH
Dursley Comm'y Centre (Probus)
Evercreech (private house)
Exeter Barnfield Theatre
Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre
Exeter Maynard Junior School
Farrington Gurney Hall
Ferndown Barrington Theatre
Frampton Mansell VH
Frome Merlin Theatre
Glastonbury Assembly Rooms
Gloucester Guildhall Arts Centre
Gloucester Folk Museum
Gloucester New Olympus Theatre
Hants Cricket Club Basingstoke
Ilminster Warehouse Theatre

Torrington Plough Arts Centre
Trowbridge Arc Theatre
Trowbridge Library (Wilts Lit
Fest)

Upton Noble VH
Warminster Arts Centre/
Athenaeum

Warminster Library

Wedmore VH

Wellington Arts Centre

Wells Little Theatre

West Monkton Primary School

Weston, The Blakehay

Weston-super-Mare Museum

Weston-super-Mare Playhouse

Weymouth Pavilion

Wilton Council Hall

Wimborne Queen Elizabeth
School

Wimborne Tivoli Theatre

Wincanton King Arthurs
Community School

Wincanton Memorial Hall

Wincanton Red Cross Centre

Winford Primary School

Wool D'Urberville Hall
Wootton Bassett Lib (Wilts Lit
Fest)

Worle St Martins School

Yeoford VH

Yeovil Swan Theatre

(Most on multiple visits)

*(Not listed: venues toured with
Bridgwater College's version
of "A Life in the Day")*



SOME RESPONSES TO OUR SHOWS

"A wonderful and inventive production"

"An excellent performance"

"Most enjoyable - I'll tell all my friends"

"The Wessex Actors Company is in the vanguard for originality in this imaginative adaptation... It certainly held avid attention from a full house".

"Thank-you for a very lively and enjoyable performance."

"It was a huge success. Everyone was really pleased with it."

"Please come again. It was a pleasure to have your company here."

"Please thank all the cast for such an enjoyable and memorable performance."

"Our grateful thanks for a splendid evening - everyone who came expressed their real enjoyment... for a lovely production"

"Thanks again for a great evening.."

"I would like to say how much my wife and I enjoyed your production. We look forward to your next."

"The jovial New Age audience loved it. This play deserves to be played to full houses."

"A clever Wessex Actors Company give huge value for money.....the energetic physicality of this production....five actors work in slick ensemble fashion..... A heart warming, feel good effect sends us home in time-honoured fashion, turkey-stuffed full of theatrical goodness.... This excellent adaptation of Dickens' classic tale is totally engaging, and quite frankly better than any glittering TV personality filled pantomime."

"How much I enjoyed the play! It was a very memorable evening! My friends were equally enthusiastic"

"How much I enjoyed Wessex Actors visit..."

"We had a wonderful evening. Your show was, without a doubt, the finest piece of theatre we have seen since moving to the West Country, and was, indeed, better than many a production we have seen in London. Not only was the acting of the highest quality but your sensitive adaptation of Hardy's stories was faultless".

"...splendidly stifling in its Victorian atmosphere of repression and hypocrisy. Entertaining, attractively presented and refreshingly welcome..."

"Michael Barry has a strong track record for Thomas Hardy adaptations, and he has come up trumps again with this attractive version of one of the best-known short stories... The combination of his observant writing and Barry's sympathetic assimilation for the theatre makes this a pleasantly bitter-sweet experience... put across with affecting simplicity, but also considerable style and splendidly acted."

"First class - well done"

"We very much enjoyed our evening"

"Brilliantly witty"

"Excellently done - first rate acting"

"Great acting, good production"

"Lots of suspense"

"A super performance thoroughly enjoyed"

"We look forward to the next production"

"Theatre at its best"

"Thanks for the superb performance. We're still receiving many very complimentary comments about it and with good reason, as such a high degree of professionalism was exhibited.

"The magic began - under the sure direction of Michael Barry. It takes an unusual ability to transport an audience to another age and ambience without the benefit of the usual theatrical mechanics, and the Wessex Actors Company has this ability to a high degree".

"An appreciative audience enjoyed a lively dramatization. Members of the Company combined mind-numbing feats of memory with lightning changes of character.... look forward to future productions by this talented company".

"The three studies provide a good insight into government and the prevailing consensus of corruption"

"Thank you for a very entertaining evening"

"What a delight! Delivered with much verve by Kim. Her delivery - of male and female characters - was varied, lifelike and entertaining. A truly accomplished performance".

"Vastly entertaining evening - a real treat!"

"The world of Christmas past as depicted by Charles Dickens. Three performers captured that atmosphere with their beautifully delivered readings (and) create an intimate and evocative feeling. Charming night out!"

"... most enjoyable and when we watched (A.N.O.) on television - what a poor performance in contrast. Your interpretation was perfect."

"We very much enjoyed the evening and the drama workshop (which) was particularly successful"

"Everyone was delighted with the evening. I don't think any of our events have solicited such a unanimous chorus of approval. Our grateful thanks for a delightful evening".

"What a splendid evening! A varied and well researched programme with so many voices and nuances of character. We loved it!"

"The audience enjoyed the show and were most complimentary about the acting".

"This professional, entertaining evening of raunchy 18th century comedy... This fine new adaptation by Artistic Director, Michael Barry, was faithful, hilarious, full of character, rich dialogue and action".

"Group's Passionate Performance. This version of Henry Fielding's book was packed with passion and innuendo. The company must be complimented."

"Sex, seduction, deception and hypocrisy - and that's all in the first five minutes. Michael Barry's version (has) more double entendres than an explosion in a Carry On film factory. It fairly bounces along".

"The Wessex Actors Company succeeded in captivating the audience with this skilful adaptation by MB who also directed....noteworthy entertainment.

"Thank-you, thank-you. It was a wonderfully entertaining evening - we haven't laughed so much for ages, and we very much admire your amazing skills and dedication. Come back again soon".

"What a wonderful performance. We enjoyed every minute, word, swoon and flatulation of it. We are absolutely delighted".

"We thoroughly enjoyed it. Excellent performances. The pace of the show was breath-taking. I hope it gets the acclaim it deserves".

"The Wessex Actors Company make a welcome return"

"The cast tackle the switches in style and message with considerable skill".

"The piece is very well handled".

"The plays had punch and a lot of black humour, mostly at the expense of macho behaviour."

"Your production has provoked much discussion amongst the pupils".

"Fay Weldon tells us how pleased she is with what you've done with the production".

"Many thanks for a most enjoyable and thought-provoking evening".

"An ambitious and challenging evening. Full credit to Michael Barry's company".

"High professional standards".

"I so enjoyed the performance, and so did the audience."

"The cast gave a powerful and professional performance. Assured and convincing".

"WOW! That is the best way in which I can describe the performance. I would like to thank you and all involved, it really was a memorable evening"

"I was very pleased with the success of the evening and would welcome a further opportunity to work with The Wessex Actors Company"

"The performance last night attracted a large and attentive audience which thoroughly enjoyed the production by your company."

"This regional company deserve the support of their community, good luck to them for a fine debut"

"The key scene was splendidly handled. The action was carried forward with developing tension, foreboding and a sense of tragedy"

"The Wessex Actors Company were impressive. A clear cut, sensitive production in every way.... It was in all respects an impressive evening's entertainment, with a polish many well established groups might envy. One looks forward to future productions with keen anticipation."

"The audience was treated to one of those rare evenings of theatre magic by a versatile, highly accomplished, self-contained team"

"I wish to record my thanks and appreciation for the Company's excellent production, which I enjoyed so much"

"The Wessex Actors Company with Michael Barry's sympathetic, uncluttered direction continues to give value with performances of local playwrights."

"A magnificent week... we thank you all for your hard work."

"The Wessex Actors Company totally transfixed the audience from start to finish. The acting was superb.... The actors went from strength to strength as the drama unfolded almost in our laps. The tension came to a gripping climax and the sense of tragedy was almost unbearable. The After Scene was moving and uplifting, with a powerful end met by loud applause. A thoroughly enjoyable evening's theatre performed by a highly talented group. This powerful production is not to be missed."

"Thomas Hardy's own adaptation of his most celebrated novel is given enthusiastic fresh airing.."

"Thank you for the wonderful performance. We are still receiving enthusiastic reports of how much people enjoyed the evening. We are thrilled that you attracted such a large audience. Many thanks for all the hard work from all the company."

"How much I enjoyed "Tess". The split-level stage was used to best advantage, the pace was just right, all the characters were entirely convincing"

“...passionately depicted by a vivacious cast - justice was expressly delivered.... At the finale I experienced total sympathy for this most downtrodden of women and was barely able to prevent myself crying out in her defence. ...the pacy, evocative direction of Michael Barry. In all this was a compact, shoulders-to-the-wheel effort from a highly capable collective of performers, and a compelling night's entertainment. Rep isn't dead, it's alive and well and producing mini-masterpieces like this all over the country, and long may the tradition continue.

“A piece of Somerset history has been brought dramatically to life with the Wessex Actors Company's production.”

The subject matter is perfect for a dramatic retelling,...(and) the writing does it justice. Powerful drama.

“Thank-you for such a tremendous performance. Powerful stuff. Totally believable.”

“The play was excellent - story, content and production. A very enjoyable evening.”

"How much we enjoyed it... a grim but fascinating slice of rural life 200 years ago and ...a tale well told.... an entertaining evening. It was a pleasure to witness the ancient English tradition of the company of strolling players being so impressively continued into the 21st century."

“Thank-you for a really great evening of theatre”

“How much we enjoyed such skilful producing and directing combined with very accomplished acting. We had a thoroughly interesting and absorbing evening.”

“It was a great performance and I enjoyed it tremendously.... You deserve all the positive publicity you can get because your company are great”

“This is a powerful and thought-provoking play and well acted.”

“A powerful story inhabited by rounded characters.... sympathetically and truthfully told in stirring style by a talented cast of seven. Last word must go to playwright and director Michael Barry for a wonderful piece of story telling..”

"Without such a company live professional drama would not be available in smaller venues such as libraries, which play an important role in the cultural life of the local community"

"The innovative professional touring group".

“Hard-working Barry, with his extraordinary ability to gather together regionally relevant material, talented West Country actors, then produce so well, plays of such entertaining and stimulating quality, deserves far more recognition than he has received...”

“Credit for marshalling Hatt’s many elements into such an enjoyable spectacle, must go to Michael Barry with his unerring sense for creating enjoyable theatre.”

“Playing to a full house...a performance of rare subtlety and sensitivity... in a riveting production”

“Such a fine performance... we have really enjoyed not only this specific evening, but also the many other shows your company has brought to us”

“..warm thanks for a fascinating evening... It was a tour de force both of acting and of memory. We have had an enthusiastic response from many Festival-goers”

“It was a wonderfully entertaining evening and couldn’t have been more topical... The play was absolutely hilarious... (and) proceeded at a cracking pace thanks to the very talented actors who switched roles, sang brilliantly and made each character believable and endearing...a huge success”

“Another hit! Many thanks for your inspiring visit – all round praise for (the show)”



Patrons:
The Most Hon The Marquess of Bath
Lord King of Bridgwater, CH
Ned Sherrin
Robin Bush, Chairman Somerset County Council

The Wessex Actors Company has pioneered The Community Chest - a portfolio of performances for community venues such as village halls, community centres, schools, libraries and so on, all available at low cost.

The Community Chest programme is listed over. These are small-scale productions, which are technically self-contained and can in principle play anywhere and any date. Some have narrated as well as dramatised sections.

A reduction in the minimum guarantee required can result from District Council support. However, in cases of potential or actual hardship, our terms can be negotiated if there is good reason. We hope that organizing committees will respond to this innovative programme of live drama.

**CONTACT MICHAEL BARRY ON 01278 733100 FOR QUERIES
/ BOOKINGS**

Financing:

Our normal terms for the Community Chest are 75% of box office with a minimum guarantee of £175. For schools, this is a straight fee of £175. Workshops £100 (but £80 on day of performance).

Where District Councils finance us directly, we offer subsidized discounts to the guarantee for a certain number of performances in the District: to £125 where a venue has experience of acting as an Arts Promoter (sharing risk and reward with us); and to £100 where there is no experience of this, or where maximum sensible seating is around 40.

Please note that a number of District Councils prefer to finance our performances to their venues directly to the venue in question. We can advise you on this and inform you on whom to contact.

"Professional Drama for the South West"
The Counting House, Dodington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 1LE
01278 733100
e-mail: wessexactors@perceptivecreation.co.uk

THE COMMUNITY CHEST

The Warden

The first part of Anthony Trollope's magnificent 6 volume epic "The Barchester Chronicles" has received a tremendous reception to date.

("The magic began - under the sure direction of Michael Barry")

Courtship

Jane Austen's delightful views on romance and marriage presented by actress Kim Hicks in the most successful, long-running show from Bristol, Bath and the Edinburgh Festival.

("What a delight! A truly accomplished performance")

Couples?

The abrasive American wit of Dorothy Parker - 1930s arsenic, tenderness and pathos, shaken not stirred, in another winning show from the talented Kim Hicks.

("Vastly entertaining evening - a real treat!")



The Indiscretion of an Heiress

A popular Thomas Hardy novella telling the story of forbidden young love between a teacher and aspiring writer and the wealthy daughter of the squire - across the social divide. A poignant and tragic tale.

("Michael Barry has a strong track record for Hardy adaptations and he has come up trumps again")

Dickens at Christmas

Unashamedly popular and heart-warming fare with a very strong "feel-good" factor. Perfect for venues wishing to fund-raise with seasonal catering.

("Beautifully delivered... intimate and evocative feeling. Charming night out!")



Christmas Through the Ages



A festive gallimaufry of poems and prose, drama and diaristic intimacy, with some musical accompaniment, celebrating both the Sacred and the Mundane at this special time of the year.

("What a splendid evening. We loved it!")

Man of the Minute

John Aubrey - 17th Century author, antiquarian and irrepressible gossip - entertains with his brilliant character sketches and witty anecdotes, well served in the hands of actor David Weller.

("Splendid in every way" - "I was spellbound")



A Father for My Son

Kathleen Scott, sculptor, student of Rodin, and wild spirit, was wife to Captain Robert Scott (of the Antarctic) and mother to Peter Scott, the naturalist. Actress Jenny Coverack presents the story of this enthralling woman in a new one-woman show.

("A riveting production" - "A great success")

East Lynne - the Victorian Story

At last - a straight-forward, non melodramatic, version of Mrs Henry Wood's famous and powerful novel of the 1860s. David Weller and wife actress Vera Hughes present their play in a condensed 1 hour version or as a full evening with interval.

("Drawn with uncanny realism")

The Snow Queen

A retelling of this timeless classic for young children - for school or holiday bookings. A story promoting the values of friendship, loyalty and courage.

("It was the best show I've ever seen in my life... It was terrific")



Workshops

These are available independently of the above productions, or (at reduced cost) on the afternoon of a production. Normally lasting 2-3 hours, workshops can blend theatre exercises and games with text-based work to suit any group. Playwrights workshops are also on offer.



*The resident stage management caught in the act.
Michael Barry and Carolyn Free cover all shows personally.*



WESSEX ACTORS COMPANY - FUNDING SOURCES.

We are indebted to the following sources of supportive finance:

The Foundation for Sport and the Arts
The National Lottery through the Arts Council of England (Capital grant)
Arts for Everyone Express (National Lottery)
(a second award to production company Perceptive Creation also benefitted the Company)
Awards for All (National Lottery)
The Chase Charity
The Pilgrim Trust
Somerset County Social Services
Anonymous business donation (for "Love Letters")

and the following District Councils - in particular:

Sedgemoor
Mid Devon
Cotswold

and also for help from:

West Wiltshire
Woodspring (now North Somerset)
Bath City and Bath & N.E. Somerset
South Somerset
West Somerset
Purbeck
West Dorset
Salisbury
and Taunton Deane (in kind)

We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support and sponsorship of the following for our National Lottery Capital Grant:

The Pilgrim Trust
The Chase Charity
Stage Electrics
B.C.C. Photocopiers
Whites of Taunton

Significant educational funding through the Somerset Skills Support Project was also sourced for the Company's training course for serious actors.