

issue eight december 2007 - january 2008

# WAITING IN THE WINGS



**Issue 8 is here and includes interviews with Claire Thomas and Elliott Jordan and the much anticipated WitW 2007 Awards!**

**Liz & Katie xx**

---

## **REVIEW**

**Chatroom / Citizenship**

**Lowry, Salford**

**November 2007**

It's not very often I'm above the target audience for a play but tonight I was. 'Chatroom' and 'Citizenship' by Enda Walsh and Mark Ravenhill respectively.

'Chatroom' was a brilliant study of the maliciousness of some teenagers and how chatrooms can be sinister things. Steven Webb as Jim was very moving, it was his sad story that the play follows. Top performances from all six cast members. Especially Jade Williams and George Rainsford.

'Citizenship' is another play about the 'yoof' (that means youth!) But it speaks to dem in der own wordz, ya get me?

Sorry! I can't do that anymore. For me to see an essentially middle class cast with the hair, the walks, the teeth sucking, the innits and the ring tones. And then the people who genuinely act like that speaking on a NT videoblog saying how much they can relate to it. If it inspires one person to go back to the theatre then I wouldn't dare knock it.

'Citizenship' is a tale of Tom trying to sort out his sexuality. Good performances from Ashley Rolfe and once again the wonderful George Rainsford. And special mention to Richard Dempsey as the highly strung teacher.

The show is off to Hong Kong soon and I am interested to know how it goes down over there!

-Katie

## REVIEW

**Joe's Palace, BBC1**

**Real Summer, BBC2**

**Capturing Mary, BBC2**

If you're going to have a different opinion it's best not to let me know about it as I get VERY defensive when it comes to the work of Stephen Poliakoff (apart from 'Friends and Crocodiles'). I adore his work. The colours, the luxurious language, the slightly heightened acting style he encourages, the music (Adrian Johnston) but most importantly the stories. The Stories! I defy anyone not to be drawn in by Henrietta's story in 'Shooting the Past' or the sister's story in 'Perfect Strangers.'

So I was very much looking forward to 'Joe's Palace' and 'Capturing Mary.' Joe's Palace was a sumptuous one off drama set around the happenings, or lack of them in a large house owned by millionaire Elliott Graham (Poliakoff stalwart Sir Michael Gambon) Our guide throughout the show is the Joe of the title, an unassuming boy who works as the 'concierge' of the house and who is instrumental in helping Mr Graham with his trouble. The house was owned by Graham's father who he suspects had dealings with the Nazi's and is desperate to know how he came by all the money before he feels he can spend it.

Where Joe's Palace had a story near the end, Capturing Mary was completely a story told by Mary (Dame Maggie Smith) about her past (young Mary by Ruth Wilson) as she revisited the house that Joe is working in where a lot of events in her life were played out. Here she was 'captured' by aloof and haunting Greville White (David Walliams). Old Mary tells her story so that she can recapture herself.

The whole show was like a waking dream, or nightmare depending on your view, the lavish house when Mary first arrives in a ball gown. I had a rather large criticism. Yes that's right, I doubted my hero! David Walliams... I know he *was* an actor before 'Little Britain', I have seen attachments (!) but now he is so associated with vulgar comedy that casting him in a serious drama was not something I was looking forward to. Which of course was the point. Any genuine drama lover didn't want to see Walliams, just as Mary didn't want to see Greville, I disliked him before the titles rolled! Poliakoff is a genius!

Maggie Smith as older Mary is a delight to see back on the small screen, a medium from which she is much missed and also, I know that I have slated Wilson in the past but in this she was genuinely good, an intriguing and beautiful damaged Mary. Also, her performances in 'A Real Summer' a monologue that formed part of the Poliakoff trilogy.

I hope his next project is on soon. I think the BBC rely on him for half their decent one off drama output. (The other half being a couple of shows at Christmas. What has happened to British drama?)

-Katie

---

## INTERVIEW

**Clare Thomas**

### 1. Name:

Clare Thomas

### 2. D.O.B:

2nd April

### 3. Nickname:

Not really got one, although certain people call me Clarey

### 4. How did you first get into acting?

A friend of mine when I was younger was playing young Cosette in 'Les Mis' in the West End and gave me her agents number cause I was interested and it went from there



**5. What was your first acting experience (professional or not)?**

First experience was the nativity at school when I was about five; I was originally supposed to be part of the chorus but due to another girl's illness I was promoted to Head Inn Keeper. Proudest moment ever !

**6. What is your favourite part you have played?**

I love all of the parts I've played but I feel the role I'm currently doing of Ingrid in Young Dracula is the most challenging as it's fantastical and the scripts (especially this series) have allowed me to experiment with body and voice in more depth. New series on the CBBC Channel!

**7. What is the one part that you would love to play?**

Haha my friends and I always have this discussion and although it's sad I would love to do Lara Croft! Apart from that...any part that is exciting and part of an exciting production is great

**8. What influences you as an actor?**

Other actors are obviously a major influence, as well as directors, producers etc. I'm a big fan of film and theatre so anything that I see that inspires me influences me to try and strive to be as good as the actors I've watched

**9. What is your most memorable audition?**

I remember my first audition for Young Dracula very well as I had been asked to come in at a time when they were auditioning for my part and for the part of my brother. Unfortunately I had my driving theory test so had to come in later with a load of boys auditioning for Jonathon Van Helsing. I passed my theory and got the part!

**10. And your worst audition?**

I once had an audition with a really strange and rather sexually influenced script when I was about 15. Let's just say that it was a fairly uncomfortable experience especially as I didn't know how much they wanted me to follow the stage directions or not.

**11. What is the coolest thing you ever got to do because you are an actor?**

Anything to do with green screen still fascinates me because it amazes me what computers and technology can do nowadays. There was a lot of green screen work in Fungus and it was amazing seeing the actors in body tight suits covered in ping pong balls then coming to life on screen.

**12. Favourite actor you have ever worked with?**

There have been too many to pick a favourite

**13. All time favourite actor?**

I love Leonardo Di Caprio, not just because he's gorgeous but because he's very talented. Tom Hanks is also a favourite; Forrest Gump is one of my all time favourite films

**14. Is there anywhere you would draw the line for a role, or would you pretty much do anything?**

I would draw the line at anything not necessary in the script, for example extreme violence or nudity just for the sake of it, unless it was tastefully handled and was being used to express the story artistically rather than to try and entice more viewers.

**15. As an actor would you rather be in:**

**Comedy / Drama** - either or, I love both

**Shakespeare / Modern** - I prefer modern work, but also love Shakespeare so wouldn't mind

**Musical / Straight** -definitely straight, I'm not a singer what so ever

**Resident / Tour** - wouldn't mind

**16. What is your favourite play?**

I would say probably 'The History Boys'

**17. And favourite TV show?**

At the moment probably 'Heroes' or 'Torchwood'

**18. And film?**

Forrest Gump

**19. You were in 'Madeleine' when you were only very young, what was it like to film?**

It was great fun, there were twelve young girls spending almost every day together in Paris, getting to work at beautiful locations or visit them in time off.

**20. How did you get the role in 'The Railway Children' and had you read the book?**

I'd read some of the book, but knew the story roughly any way. I just auditioned for the part and then got the role

**21. What was it like to play alongside an original 'Railway Child' Jenny Agutter?**

To be honest I don't really think it bothered me much, I was only ten and didn't really understand or respect successful, talented actors back then. Jenny was great though and I also met Sally (who played my part) and they were both supportive of all three of us playing the roles the second time around.

**22. 'All About George' was a great show, were you all sad it hasn't run for a second series?**

Yeah a little bit, I think it had the potential to do well as it confronted very modern issues head on such as homosexuality. However, I believe if things aren't meant to be, they aren't meant to be.

**23. What was 'Bus Life', as it seems to be quite popular with the people who watched it.**

'Bus Life' was a programme for the Disney Channel UK that consisted of five minute episodes to be used as programme fillers. It basically followed cliques on a school bus on their way to and from school every day.

**24. What was it like to have Martin Clunes as your Dad in 'Fungus the Bogeyman'?**

Brilliant, Martin is a lovely, lovely man, he's extremely funny and sweet.

**25. Do you enjoy playing Ingrid in 'Young Dracula'?**

I love it, it's weird but for some reason it's very enjoyable playing nasty characters.

**26. How did you feel when 'Young Dracula' won Best Children's Drama at the 2007 Royal Television Society Awards?**

It was a great feeling and everyone who worked on the show was extremely proud and excited that we managed to win it from our first series which not many children's shows manage.

**27. Is there anything you really wish to do as an actor / person that you haven't got round to doing yet?**

I'm just taking each day as it comes and seeing what each new opportunity brings me. I can't say there is anything I really strive for, except to keep working.

**28. And finally... Anything else the WitW readers ought to know?**

Watch out for 'Young Dracula' Series Two, coming out November on CBBC digital, then on BBC1 in the New Year.

---

**REVIEW****Dr Dolittle****Palace Theatre, Manchester****November 2007**

I am probably going to be killed for this.  
Hunted down by the blue rinse brigade,  
Beaten by ladies of a certain age and stabbed by every luvvy in town.

'Dr Dolittle' is rubbish. REALLY. It has no story. It's has pretty lame songs and it's as flimsy as soggy loo roll.

"But it's a musical! It's meant to be like that."

No! Musicals can be soft and gentle (dull) but they can have a serious backbone, look at 'West Side Story' or 'Cabaret', one of the most serious issues in history. I'm not saying all musicals should be political or make serious issues but even cats has a couple of decent songs and at least 'Oliver!' has a story.

But this is the bit that will blacklist my name. Tommy Steele was rubbish. You couldn't hear him and he didn't hold his notes. The young lady who is supposed to fall in love with the doctor was my age which made the whole affair really creepy. Joanna Forest as young Tommy Stubbins and Conor Michael – Sheridan as Matthew were very good, they had great voices. But a huge set and clever puppets cannot dissuade me from having 'Dr Dolittle' put to sleep.

-Katie

---

## **REVIEW** **The Golden Compass**

Liking this film was always going to be a hard one for me seeing as though I adore the 'His Dark Materials' books so much, but I did try to view it with an open mind. For those who haven't seen the film it's a nice enough adventure film, for those who have it's disappointing. With a runtime of just under 1 hour 40 minutes, it's about an hour too short, if an extra hour on the run time had been added, then maybe we would actually have got a properly put together story rather than the fragmented excuse for a film that we were given. We didn't have time to fall in love with Lyra, who was played wonderfully by Dakota Blue Richards, or any of the characters she meets along the way. The scene Little changes to the story I can understand, and the introduction of the Church early on was a touch that works well with the film version. But changing Iofur's name was completely unnecessary, the powers that be were worried that viewers would get Iofur and Iorek confused, give us some credit!!!! And the ending was acceptable, quite a nice ending for those unfortunate beings who haven't yet read the books, actually, but the re-arrangement of the time-line felt so wrong to me. The CGI is excellent and the bear fight scene especially was done beautifully.

I won't go on about it, as it's very difficult to critique it without comparing it directly to the book thus spoiling the storyline for those uneducated readers. So I shall conclude by saying, if you've read the books, you will be disappointed, if you haven't, you will find it watchable though not great.

-Liz

---

## **REVIEW** **Dealer's Choice** **Menier Chocolate Factory, London** **November, 2007**

Dealers choice by Patrick Marber may be about Poker or it may just be a study of the male psyche. From rather dim Mugsy to intelligent but broken Steven (Malcolm Sinclair) via crafty cockney Frankie (Jay Simpson) and creepy Ash (Roger Lloyd Pack) the professional poker player.

Most of them are in debt or suffering and all of them are addicted to the power surge a poker win means and the triumph that the weekly game will leave them.

A fantastic use of space by director Sam West. Very good levels. I'm a fan of levels. I like shouting and silence but getting the right balance of each.

Stephen Wight deservedly getting the WOS newcomer award even though he's hardly a newcomer (did anyone see 'Trestle at Pope Lick Creek' in 2005? Brilliant!)

Strong performances from the all the cast. I only hope it gets audiences in it's new home The Trafalgar Studios.

-Katie

**REVIEW****Rent: Remixed****Duke of York's Theatre, London****October/December 2007**

It was a brave task that William Baker undertook when he decided to remix such a loved, cult-classic show, but he's succeeded. With the set minimal, and the stage painted stark white, the focus is purely on the performances of the cast, so if there was a bad performance it would show; luckily there is nothing bad about the production. The cast were faultless; particularly impressive was Jamie Sampson who was on as Mark, his interpretation seemed more real and loveable than Oliver Thornton who I have previously seen in the role. Luke Evans' voice is perfectly suited to the role of Roger and Siobhan Donaghay's voice portrays a sad, vulnerable and weak Mimi. Jay Webb is fabulous as Angel, bending in a way that only an Action Man doll should be able to, his scenes with Leon Lopez as Collins are both beautiful and later on, heart-wrenching.

I feel that the new arrangement of some of the songs is rather hit and miss, on 'What You Own' it's an improvement, but on 'Take Me or Leave Me' the new up-tempo version seems to lack the charge that the original arrangement had.

-Liz

---

**REVIEW****War Horse****National Theatre, London****November 2007**

If it's a sad story about animals it'll mean I will cry.  
If it's a story about the war it'll mean I will cry.  
The play was called 'War Horse'  
I didn't have a chance.

I sobbed, and unashamedly too! I'm sick of the Brit stoney faced 'no emotion allowed' attitude to art. If it moves you, go with it. It's cathartic.

Needless to say 'War Horse' is the story of Joey the Horse, who is commandeered for World War One. His story being microcosmic for many animals during the wars.

The human cast (as apposed to puppets) have to deal with some fairly clunky dialogue and some over laden exposition but the puppets! They make up for everything. Luke Treadaway carried a lot of the story as Joey's owner who goes from boy to man and must be emotionally drained at the end of the day.

There is no way to describe how amazingly real the puppets were. The Puppeteers worked so hard and were so amazingly in the character. It was awesome, in the real sense of the word.

Funnily enough, and something I like to think was a happy accident, the star of the show was a goose puppet! Possibly because it provided the only comic relief in a rather heavy play. The goose and Puppeteer received a huge cheer during the curtain call.

All children should go and see this, they will be gripped for life at what theatre can do, I am 22 and am still gripped by what theatre can do. Well done NT, yet again!!

-Katie

## **INTERVIEW**

### **Elliott Jordan**



**1. Name:**  
Elliott Jordan

**2. D.O.B:**  
22/04/83

**3. Nickname:**  
Ell/Smelly (which I hate!)

**4. How did you first get into acting?**  
I started off in school plays and then did Saturday classes at the Sylvia Young Theatre School...

**5. What was your first acting experience (professional or not)?**  
First acting experience was playing a school kid in a 'Clearasil' advert!!

**6. What is your favourite part you have played?**  
Ste in 'Beautiful Thing'.

**7. What is the one part that you would love to play?**  
I would love to play Christian in the stage play 'Festen'- wicked role.

**8. What influences you as an actor?**  
Lots of things but generally it's "people".....essentially as actors we are just playing other people so I often study them i.e. when I am on the tube or sitting outside a cafe.....

**9. What is your most memorable audition?**  
About four years ago I auditioned for Will Turner in 'Pirates of the Caribbean'. Obviously I didn't get it!!!!.....but I remember thinking "I would love to land this one"...

**10. And your worst audition?**  
About 3 years ago I auditioned for an Israeli telecommunication advert set in a prisoner of war camp and when I got there they told me I had to sing a song. I'm not the best singer in the world so that one was pretty much the most embarrassing one I could think of!

**11. What is the coolest thing you ever got to do because you are an actor?**  
I just played a soldier in Iraq for a BBC drama where I had army training and learnt how to fire guns- that was pretty cool.

**12. Favourite actor you have ever worked with?**  
Well I've worked with tons of great "older" actors (well older compared to me!). So if I could choose one actor closer to my age I would probably say Andrew Garfield. We did a play called 'Mercy' together and he was a very clever actor.

**13. All time favourite actor?**  
I love Gary Oldman. I love Jack Nicholson. But it would have to be Daniel Day Lewis. In my eyes he sets the standard.

**14. As an actor would you rather be in:**  
Comedy / Drama - Drama  
Shakespeare / Modern - Modern  
Musical / Straight - Straight  
Resident / Tour - Resident

**15. What is your favourite play?**

'Blue Orange' by Joe Penhall

**16. And favourite TV show?**

Aaaahhhh..... far too many to mention!

**17. And film?**

'Stand by Me. or 'Shawshank Redemption'.

**18. How was your time with the NYT?**

Brilliant!! It's great to be surrounded by so many people that are obsessed by the same thing. It was just a really fun thing to do.

**19. What was it like to perform in 'Mercy' at the Soho?**

Yeah it was great. Great play in a nice space with a brilliant cast.....

**20. How did you get the role in 'The Toybox' and what was it like to make the film?**

I just auditioned like with most things. The filming was a great experience- but very harsh. We shot a film in two weeks so you can imagine that it was hard work!!

**21. How did you feel about playing the lead role of Mick in 'New Town Original?'**

It was daunting at first but ended up being one of the best jobs I ever did. It was my first lead in a film which I saw as a great challenge but as it was low budget I didn't have the added pressure of the film having to make lots of money!!

**22. Do you think going to Sylvia Young's deprived you of a 'real' childhood?**

No not at all. I was only there on Saturdays from the age of 15-17. Though I don't necessarily think full time theatre school for children is a healthy thing...

**23. How did you get the part in Lily Allen's music video, and is acting in a music video different to a normal show?**

Like most people I didn't have a clue who Lily Allen was at the time!! But I auditioned because it paid well!!! I never knew the song was gonna be so big....

**24. You've just finished filming 'Benidorm' is it easier to act in a warmer climate than Britain's?!**

Well not really!! I'm still filming in Benidorm at the mo and it keeps raining all the time. But it's always fun to be working abroad.

---

**REVIEW**

**A Conversation**

**Royal Exchange, Manchester**

**November, 2007**

What would happen if the parents of a murdered girl met the family of her murderer. David Williams' 'A Conversation' explores exactly that. It delves into some quite horrific areas, S and M, brutal acts, murder and how society may or may not create rapist murderers, how people are fallible and it is not only the victims family who feel pain.

The play is incredibly wordy. There is little movement apart from the beginning and end. All eight characters sit on chairs facing inward. In moving from the studio to the theatre in may have lost the suffocating feeling that 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf' can conjure up in a theatre that size. But at ninety minutes with no interval it's a very intense thoughtful piece. I'm glad they didn't try to eek it out for the main theatre. It would've diluted it terribly.

Strong performances from all the cast.

-Katie

**REVIEW**  
**Christmas in New York**  
**Lyric Theatre, London**  
**December 2007**

I've been wanting to see one of the 'Notes/Christmas in New York' evenings for several years now, this year I finally managed it, and I wasn't disappointed. A show of Christmas songs sung by some of the West End's best musical theatre talent made for a night of joyful seasonal entertainment.

One highlight was Rachel Woding's 'All I Want for Christmas is You' complete with wonderfully cheesy back up dancing by Alex Jessop and Paul Spicer. Julie Atherton singing 'Grown Up Christmas List' was another highlight as was Steven Webb's 'Jesus Was a Jew'. Oliver Tompsett looked thoroughly confused that he was on stage with a theatre full of people watching him, but what a voice that boy has, and the associate producer/creator and performer Paul Spicer is a very gifted performer. The choir from Arts Ed accompanied the songs nicely, and I'm sure there's some future talent among them.

*-Liz*

---

**REVIEW**  
**Cranford, BBC**

Bonnets, top hats, horses, carts, Dame Judi, Sir Michael, Dame Eileen, Dame Imelda (surely that's on the cards) a hulk of newcomers and not a heaving bosom or corset shot in sight.

Welcome to Cranford. Based apparently on Knutsford (not far from where I live!) A fantastic place where change is not endured, manners and etiquette rule all and a new doctor (Simon Woods) is turning heads.

How marvellous. A Sunday night drama that doesn't rely on bad plots, murder or absurd "comic" misunderstandings.

A stellar cast, a good script (Heidi Thomas) with no necessity to beef up the plot with sex or violence. A good hearty bonnets and bows and ladies gossip.

The BBC must have hugged themselves with glee knowing that they had this in a season of minimal decent drama to lead us up to Christmas.

*-Katie*

---

**REVIEW**  
**Avenue Q**  
**Noel Coward Theatre, London**  
**December 2007**

After one and a half years with the show, the original London cast moved out from Avenue Q and the new cast moved in. If you haven't seen the show before, this cast will appear wonderful to you, and they are great. But if you have seen the originals several times, then you notice a few things that could be improved, but seeing as though on viewing the show these guys had only been on for 7 shows, they did a stellar job. Daniel Boys as Princeton and Rod is faultless, and the way his Rod gets camper and camper as the show goes on is a nice touch. Rebecca Lock as Kate Monster and Lucy is a loveable Kate, but her Lucy lacks the sexiness that Julie Atherton's possessed, but give her time and I'm sure she'll get it. Mark Goldthorp as Nicky and Trekkie gave great performances in both roles, he didn't seem to have developed his own little traits as each character, but again that is something that will no doubt come with time. Christopher Fry's Brian wasn't as large as Sion's, physically he's not as big, maybe he needs to just be a bit louder and more imposing in his delivery of lines.

Overall, they deserve to be where they are, and a few weeks down the line all their performances will most probably be as polished as Daniel Boys' and in a few months, who knows, they may even be up to par with the originals!

-Liz

---

## **REVIEW**

**Russell Howard  
Lowry, Salford  
November 2007**

If I could pick a representative of my generation it'd be hard not to pick this man. He's off the cuff, random but intelligent enough to know how people really think.

His stand up tour (now been extended) is so full of enthusiasm and genuine joy he gets from sharing stories makes it feel like a show and tell session and you feel desperate to share your own experiences of Christmas and childhood and how now as an adult you feel angry with society. Anyone who can equate politics and 'Thundercats' is the sort of person whose brain is still youthfully happy.

Russell dances around the stage telling random things he's overheard often straying from his line of thought as other things occur to him. Makes me think of a Bristol based Ross Noble but with a little more social comment. Because at its heart he has a point. It's wrapped up in lovely stories that made me hoot very unattractively with laughter. But the one true, cold hard fact got the loudest round of applause. If you saw it, you know which line. And you wish it could happen.

I think I could definitely settle for someone who understands the importance of radiator pants but at the same time have the intellectual strength to reject all that's sinister about the media.

Already booked the tickets for March!

-Katie

For tour dates check [www.russell-howard.co.uk](http://www.russell-howard.co.uk) Or listen to BBC 6 on digital Sunday 10am for the Russell Howard show.

---

## **The 2007 WitW Awards**

Yes it's that time of year again, we put our heads together to decide who has entertained us the most (and least in some places) new categories are created every year and the traditional ones remain! Happy New Year.

**Best Play** – 'Leaves of Glass' by Philip Ridley  
**Special Mention** – Chatroom – Enda Walsh

**Best Actor in a play/ musical** – Rafe Spall (Alaska)

**Best Actress in a play/musical** – Andrea Riseborough (Pain and the Itch)

**Best Musical** – 'Parade'  
**Special Mention** – 'Rent: Remixed'

**Best TV show** – 'Cranford'  
**Special Mention** – Stephen Poliakoff's trilogy

**Best Actor on screen** – Matt Smith ('The Street')

**Best Actress on screen** – Ruth Wilson ('Capturing Mary' and 'A Real Summer')

**Best Film** – 'Hot Fuzz'

**Thank God it was a short play** – 'Triumph of Love' (Royal Exchange)

**Spread your Wings** – Ben Barnes (soon to be in 'Prince Caspian')

**Goodbye and Good luck award** - Original London cast of 'Avenue Q'

**Play that made Katie cry the most** – 'War Horse'

**Special Mention** – 'Chatroom'

**Stealing the Show** – The Goose in 'War Horse'

**Best onstage twins** – Jason and Simon Merrells ('Comedy of Errors')

**Special Mention** - Chris New and Iain McKee ('Comedy of Errors')

**Best onstage kiss** – Rafe Spall and Thomas Morrison ('Alaska')

**Special Mention** - Sacha Dhawan and Jonathan Bailey ('Pretend you Have Big Buildings')

**Best underwear** – Jonathan Bailey in the muck up matinee of 'Pretend you Have Big Buildings'

**Best Radio Show** – The Russell Howard Show (BBC 6 Music)

**Best Comedy** – 'The Mighty Boosh'

**Special Mention** – 'Mock the Week'

---

**That all for now. See you next issue!**