

# Casting call for theatre group's new show inspired by Shakespearean anniversary

**Emma Knights**

emma.knights@archant.co.uk

A Norwich theatre group is looking for new cast members to take part in its 2014 production celebrating Shakespeare.

Total Ensemble Theatre Company is part of the Hostry Festival each year, and the company is now getting started on its 2014 production for the autumn arts extravaganza which takes place in Norwich Cathedral's Hostry.

Shakespeare has been picked as the starting point for the inclusive theatre group's latest performance piece in tribute to 2014 being the 450th anniversary of the great playwright's birth.

Rehearsals are already under way but people have until May to join the cast.

"We are inviting people to come and try out the group up until May, and from May 3 we want to settle our cast," said Total Ensemble artistic director Rebecca Chapman.

"We work with all ages and people with additional needs. Everybody is welcome.

"People do not need to have had previous performance experience but they do need to be passionate about being in a theatre production."

She said this year's show would build upon Total Ensemble's 2012 production Prologue, a piece of movement theatre inspired by the play Hamlet and which was performed before the Hostry Festival's 2012 headline show Hamlet: The Undiscovered Country.

"We are still deciding what our piece is going to be about but it will relate to a Shakespeare theme to celebrate his 450th anniversary," said Miss Chapman.

"It is a nice development of our Prologue project. We are developing it with further stories from Shakespeare and it will be up to the cast which plays will feature."

She said that Total Ensemble



■ Total Ensemble Theatre Company is looking for performers to take part in a new show for the 2014 Hostry Festival.

Picture: SIMON FINLAY

members were already working on some ideas, and that the show would be devised from scratch by the cast. Music is also being composed for the show by Chris Ellis.

One of Total Ensemble's current members is musician Lily-Ann Reeve who at last year's Hostry Festival was awarded the Peter Barrow Bursary Award for Best Newcomer at the 2013 Norfolk Arts Awards.

She had been spotted by Norfolk Arts Awards judges performing Someone Like You by Adele with Lee Vasey at the Surlingham Ferry, and

she chose for part of her bursary to be spent on a guitar.

At a recent Total Ensemble rehearsal Lily-Ann was presented with her new instrument by Peter Barrow, founder and executive producer of the Hostry Festival.

Anybody interested in joining Total Ensemble should email enquiries@totalensemble.org or call Miss Chapman on 07966 525003.

Up until April 4 Total Ensemble is meeting on Fridays at The Garage, in Norwich, from 5.30pm until 7pm.

There will also be workshops on

April 8 from 2pm until 6.30pm and on May 3 from 10am until 4pm. For more about Total Ensemble visit [www.totalensemble.org](http://www.totalensemble.org)

Sevenwolves and Booja Booja are sponsoring Total Ensemble this year. Any other businesses that would like to sponsor the group should email enquiries@totalensemble.org or call Miss Chapman on 07966 525003.

■ Do you have a story about the arts in Norwich? Email arts correspondent Emma Knights at [emma.knights@archant.co.uk](mailto:emma.knights@archant.co.uk)

## Album boost for group

Musicians Ronnie Upton and Steve Jinks are donating money raised by their latest album to inclusive performance group Total Ensemble.

The self-titled album – Ronnie Upton and Steve Jinks – features 12 tracks of original music.

Mr Upton, from Gorleston and who used to play in a ska band called Monkey Spanner, said: "The album is a bit of



■ Mr Upton with his new CD

blues, a bit of country, a bit of folk. It's an eclectic mix of acoustic guitar."

The album was recorded in Mr Jinks' studio in Scratby.

"It's just something we really love doing and we thought it would be nice to offer any proceeds to a good cause," said Mr Upton, whose wife Sharon is a member of Total Ensemble.

■ The album costs £5. To buy the album email [ron.u@ntlworld.com](mailto:ron.u@ntlworld.com) or find Ronnie Upton on Facebook.



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