

## NORWICH

# Rehearsed reading of new work excites playwright

## HOSTRY FESTIVAL

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By **EMMA KNIGHTS**

Audiences will have the chance to see brand new writing and experience the creative process that goes into making shows at an arts festival taking place at Norwich Cathedral this autumn.

The Hostry Festival, for which the EDP is a media partner, is an eclectic celebration of the arts.

As well as premiering a brand new full production with its headline show *Hamlet: The Undiscovered Country* – which picks up where Shakespeare left off with one of his most famous tragedies – the festival will also feature an assortment of new writing being presented as what is known as “staged readings,” where the focus is almost exclusively on the words without the additions of elaborate sets, costumes and special effects.

Among the authors whose latest work will be presented this way is Adrian Drew, a playwright based in London and near Castle Acre, and who has devised his show *Voices – Moments from the Lives of Others* especially for the festival.

The show looks at how even the most ordinary of people have extraordinary stories to tell, and Mr Drew said he decided to create it for the festival after being inspired to get involved while watching the festival organisers’ production of *The Night of the Iguana* in 2010.

He said: “I just think it is quite important to support ventures like the festival because it is a wonderful showcase for local talent, and Norwich for some reason seems to be an extraordinary centre for creative talent.

“The festival is a remarkable undertaking and almost unique.

“I would just encourage people to support the festival and what the team are doing. Let’s hope it flourishes.”

About the idea of a rehearsed reading, he said: “At a rehearsed reading the audience will have the opportunity to hear a new piece of



**‘EMOTIONAL TOUR DE FORCE’: Adrian Drew says there is a range of monologues in his new play, *Voices – Moments from the Lives of Others*.**

writing where the actors – with no specially-designed set, limited props and with some possibly reading from scripts but with the benefit of a few days rehearsal – give a complete performance of the work.

“This can be a very interesting experience as it gives audiences an opportunity to see ‘work in progress’ and experience how final theatrical performances come into being.

“Such occasions are immediate, raw and often very exciting indeed –

on the day of the show, and he said the audience could expect an “emotional tour de force” for the finished result.

“We have four extremely talented actors all resident in Norwich who play a range of different roles, from a young girl who meets the love of her life on the internet, to a young medical student who the less said about the better, to an older man returning from his wife’s funeral. There are comic monologues and there are very serious monologues,” he said.

“The audience can expect an emotional tour de force ranging from high comedy to material which I suspect may move many people. It certainly moves me when I see a couple of the monologues.”

About the inspiration behind the show, he said: “It is the idea that we are surrounded by people whose lives we do not have a clue about, but we make assumptions about people, like they look nice or they look nasty.”

He added: “The bottom line is there is no such thing as a boring person and you can never ever take people on face value.

“There will be aspects of these characters’ lives which will be very surprising in these monologues. *Voices* is about the very extraordinary stories of ‘ordinary’ people.”

*Voices* is one of a number of plays Mr Drew has written in recent times, another – *You Bring Me Joy* – is set to have its West End premiere in spring 2013.

A former producer at the BBC, Mr Drew is a media consultant, a member of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts and chairman of Ability Media, a broadcast and training initiative of Leonard Cheshire Disability which aims to promote a more inclusive world for people with disabilities.

He is on the board of Westacre Arts Foundation, near Swaffham, and the founder of the Cokesford Company, a professional theatre group based in London that showcases new writing and talent.

■ ***Voices – Moments from the Lives of Others* is being performed in a double bill with *A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII* by Julian Maclaren Ross on Saturday, October 27 at Norwich Cathedral’s Hostry. The double bill starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £10. To book call 01603 218450.**

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## NEW AWARDS

The cream of Norfolk’s creative scene will be honoured at a new ceremony opening the Hostry Festival.

The 2012 Norfolk Arts Awards, in association with the EDP, will start the arts festival on October 26 and

## THE 2012 NORFOLK ARTS AWARDS

in association with the **Eastern Daily Press**

features 12 awards spanning the different aspects. EDP readers have the chance to nominate their favourite local artist, performer, venue, show or organisation for one of the awards – the EDP People’s Choice Award. The main criteria is that all nominees must be based in or have produced work in Norfolk. To nominate, visit [www.norfolkartsawards.co.uk](http://www.norfolkartsawards.co.uk). Entries must be received by September 14. A shortlist will be selected and published on the website, where you can vote for your favourite.

## FESTIVAL SHOWS

■ *A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII* by Julian Maclaren Ross – part of the double bill with *Voices* on Saturday, October 27 – is a recreation of a typically stylish 1956 radio drama that incorporates reminiscences of an encounter with Oscar Wilde. The double bill starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £10.

■ *Five Mary’s Waiting* by David Banks is set in Jerusalem in 44AD where an impassioned Jewish Sect has been without its founding leader for 11 years. His followers are persecuted, scattered, arguing

about his promise to return, and now their current leader has been arrested. Five Marys meet to explore their grief and belief, to remember, and to wait.

The show is part of a double bill with a concert featuring cellist Clare O’Connell and violinist Marcus Barcham-Stevens that takes place at 2pm on Sunday, November 4. Tickets £10.

■ For more about these shows and others at the Hostry Festival visit [www.hostryfestival.org](http://www.hostryfestival.org) or call the box office on 01603 218450.

## MEPAL

## Agency in court over death of crane driver

The Environment Agency yesterday admitted health and safety failings over the death of a driver who drowned when his crane fell into a river.

Simon Wenn, 43, of Three Holes, near Wisbech, died after the crane he was operating toppled over into the Old Bedford River at Mepal in December 2010.

His employer, the Environment Agency, admitted failing to ensure the safety of employees.

Two other charges were withdrawn by the Health and Safety Executive, which investigated the accident.

The case has been committed to Cambridge Crown Court for sentencing at a later date.

Mr Wenn, who had more than six years’ experience operating cranes, had been dredging the shallow Old Bedford when his machine slipped on the icy banks.

At an inquest into his death earlier this year, the coroner was told that emergency services reached the scene of the accident within 10 minutes.

Rescue teams managed to free Mr Wenn’s head and shoulders from the cab and bring them above the icy water – but his leg was trapped by the crane, preventing him from being released.

Mr Wenn was confirmed dead two hours later by a doctor who attended the scene. Jurors at the inquest returned a verdict of accidental death.

## NORWICH/BUXTON

## City man in court on device charge

A city man charged with planting a suspicious device under a car in Buxton on Sunday morning has appeared in court.

Jonathan Taylor, 49, of Southwell Road, was charged with acting with intent to endanger life or injure property under the Explosives Act.

He entered no plea when he appeared yesterday at Norwich Magistrates’ Court yesterday, supported by members of his family.

The charge requires approval from the attorney general, and Taylor was remanded in custody until next Thursday while prosecutors obtain permission.

Police evacuated homes after the device was found in Coltishall Road.

Two men, aged 25 and 35, have been released on bail pending inquiries.

## NEATISHEAD

## Villagers to host farmers’ market

A farmers’ market at New Victory Hall in Neatishead, near Horning, will take place from 9am to noon tomorrow.

A range of stalls will offer everything from fish, locally reared meat, vegetables and homemade cakes to plants from an award-winning nursery.

Craft goods will include wood products from decorative bowls to food safe chopping boards, jewellery and needlecrafts.