

NEWS

Restoration comedy among Hostry Festival's mix of shows

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A bawdy Restoration comedy from the time of Charles II is the headline show at this year's Hansells Hostry Festival.

William Wycherley's play *The Country Wife* opens at Norwich Cathedral's Hostry tonight and is being performed every night until Saturday.

Performed by a mix of both professional and amateur actors, the show pokes fun at the humourless, the jealous and the adventurous alike.

It features a country wife whose husband believes she is too naive to cuckold him – or is



■ *The Country Wife* in rehearsal for the Hostry Festival. From left, Jonathan Massey as Sparkish, Rebecca Aldred as Alithea, and Robin Watson as Mr Harcourt.

Picture: BILL SMITH

HOSTRY FESTIVAL

she?

"It's a bawdy Restoration comedy, really fast and really witty," said Peter Beck, who is directing the show.

"The show was quite controversial in its day – it talks about the so-called virtuous society which was actually pretty lewd behind the scenes. It was making a social comment about people who pretended they were pure and innocent."

The Country Wife was first performed in 1675 by the King's Company at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in London.

It was just 15 years after the theatres – closed by the Puritans for 18 years – were

reopened following the restoration of King Charles II.

But the show was later banished from the stage for many years.

"Recently there have been a lot of revivals of *The Country Wife*, and we are doing ours in a very traditional way with big Charles II wigs and costumes," said Mr Beck.

→ **The Country Wife is at Norwich Cathedral's**

Hostry from tonight until Saturday
Performances at 7.30pm each night.
Tickets £15 (£12 concs). To book call 01603 598676.

→ **Hansells Hostry Festival runs until November 2.**

→ **For details of all the festival events visit www.hostryfestival.org**

Discussing dementia

A new play exploring the issue of dementia has been commissioned for this year's Hostry Festival.

Called **Disappearing Friends**, the show, pictured, is at University of East Anglia's Drama Studio from tomorrow until Saturday at 7.30pm each night.

Written by **Hamilton Wilson**, the show tells a family's story in four short, moving scenes, and between each scene specialist dementia nurses

will briefly talk about what has happened.

Tom O'Sullivan, the show's director, said: "This is a play about a family who have to change, and have to find new ways of coping when such a brutal disease begins to affect their wife, their mother. It's the warm, surprisingly funny story of how that family learns to talk to each other about dementia."



→ **Tickets £7 (£5 concs). To book call 01603 598676.**

Debut event celebrated talented young writers



Young Norfolk wordsmiths took to the stage in a special event celebrating emerging writers.

Debut was at City College Norwich's Platform Theatre on Saturday and featured writers aged 13 to 20 who presented new work they had created.

Songs, poetry, short stories, flash fiction and dramatic text were all part of the programme.

Debut coordinator Melanie Kidd said the young people were "just incredible."

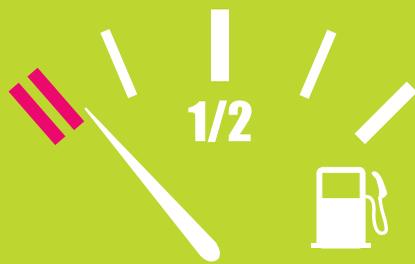
"Debut was an opportunity to celebrate young people's writing, and to get an insight into what inspires young people," she said.

The young people who took part were Amber Allen, Ruby Carter, Rianne Francis Collins, William Eason, Charlie Fulcher Baker, Kerry Hardesty, Kate Maguire Buck, Hoshi Morris, Michael Palser, and Tom Waghorn.

■ **Singer songwriter, Rianne Francis Collins performing.**

Picture: DENISE BRADLEY

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