

Love Letters **

(from the story "On The Western Circuit" by Thomas Hardy)



Edith Harnham's young protege, beautiful, uneducated Anna is training to be a domestic servant. One evening, she succumbs to a handsome lawyer briefly in town touring the Western Circuit. Charles is totally captivated although she's quite unsuitable for a professional man's wife.

Anna, who is only just learning to write, persuades Edith to write her

love letters to Charles but Edith with mistaken judgement improves them, and soon Charles' soul is captivated too.

With Anna in the family way, these letters can only lead to tragic disaster for the true lovers, Edith and Charles, in one of the most moving romantic tales ever written.

(3M, 2F Doubling enables 2M, 2F. Composite set)

Tess of the D'Urbervilles **

(edited version of T Hardy's 2nd dramatisation)



The heart-rending tale of pure, innocent Tess, driven to the extremes of murder by Angel and Alec, the two very different men in her life, still has the ability to enthral audiences of all ages. Hardy's swingeing condemnation of the

hypocritical mores of his age (1890s), which declared that a mere slip of a girl, seduced, indeed overcome while asleep by an experienced man of the world, is a "fallen woman" beyond the pale of society, is as powerful today as it was a hundred years ago.

This is the first republication of Hardy's own second dramatisation of his famous novel for many decades. It has been edited for modern performance by Michael Barry, the play's only director (twice) since Hardy himself.

(7M, 6F. Doubling enables 3M, 4F. Composite set)

Plays Published by New Theatre Publications

(www.plays4theatre.com > Authors B > Michael Barry)

Tom Jones **

(from the novel by Henry Fielding)

A great love story complicated by the fact that women cannot keep their hands off the irresistible "base born" young hero and that the twists and turns of the fast-moving plot seem hell-bent on dooming him to twist and turn on Tyburn's infamous gallows!

Now "one of the great comic novels in the English language", but at the time outrage was so great that Dr Johnson declared "I scarcely know a more corrupt work". Only a year later, "Fanny Hill" joined it on the best-seller lists of the times!

This tried and tested adaptation is above all faithful to the raunchy original! The press loved it: "packed with passion and innuendo." and "more double entendres than an explosion in a Carry On film factory", amongst many similar responses.

(Cast: 6M, 6F. Doubling enables 3M, 3F. Composite set)

Passion and the Revolutionary **

(from the story "A Committee-man of the Terror" by Thomas Hardy)



An intense and intimate love affair that faces insuperable obstacles. Set in Weymouth during the brief peace with France in the very early 1800s. Will the passionate lovers overcome these obstacles and find happiness together? Hardy himself is one of the characters,

manipulating the other two in his search for the perfect story.

(A one-act drama for a cast of 3 (2M, 1F). Composite set)

Submission for publication pending

The Indiscretion of an Heiress **

(from the story of similar name by Thomas Hardy)

Tragic young love across class divide.

(2M, 1F. Composite set)

Burning Passions **

(Original - with songs and lyrics by Marck Pearlstone)



Just days after marrying simple Jane Shorney, popular young charcoal-burner John Walford clubbed her to death in despair. In love with another woman, intense frustration and a

passionate nature saw him condemned to hang by a judge who wept openly at his tragedy. His body was left swinging from a gibbet in a cage for a year afterwards. This true 1789 Somerset story of a crime of passion lives on in folk memory today: it appalled Wordsworth and Coleridge, Walford's Gibbet is still on the map, and audiences for the play's first production were deeply affected by this re-enactment – which is also strong on music (one singer, one guitarist) and humour.

(Cast: 7M, 4F, 1 boy + 3. Doubling enables 4M, 2F, 1 boy. Comp. set)

Latest original play seeks premiere:

The Balance of Mind (*)

Elise, London nurse, activist and poet, takes a break in a farm holiday chalet - to recover from a misbehaving partner. She is thrown head-first into a world of livestock crises and heavy-handed bureaucracy. Jack Williams, the farmer, coping with intense pressures, converting to arable from dairy, is trying to clear an old standing stone. It's in the way. For Elise, it's a source of energy and peace.

Kath, stolid farmer's wife, dislikes this emotional city girl, but suffers her as a holiday guest – a critical new direction for the farm business. Chas, the young farm lad, develops a devastating crush on her. Then Jack commits suicide. Is it depression caused by Eurocracy, or his attempts to disturb the ancient site, acting as a focussed outlet for the earth's energies?

In the end, there are different routes for different people to stability, positive energy, a balance of mind.

(Cast: 3M, 3F. Composite set)

WORK AS WRITER INCLUDES:

Portfolio of **independent film, video and radio productions** (drama) in development - available to interested sponsors, commissioners or co-producers. **All own scripts.**

These include some 8 feature film, two TV serials, a major drama series, some one-off TV/radio drama projects, (status varies from complete scripts to treatments + sample script).

Inc. *"Thomas Hardy's TWISTS OF FATE"* (26 x 1 hr classic adaptations) – 1st series of 13 (+2) scripted (1st draft)

Produced work as writer incs:

1968 - researched, compiled, wrote *"The Tay Bridge Disaster"* – produced, published. Nominated for STV Award.

1976 - 2 episodes of *"Garnock Way"* (STV) commissioned.

1992 - dramatization of Max Beerbohm's *"Zuleika Dobson"* - BBC World Service "Play of the Week" (90 mins).

1997 - *"Old Mrs Chundle"* - 18' film based on short story of Thomas Hardy (Producer/ Director/ Writer).

2002 - Original play *"Dead Woman's Ditch"* (production and tour 2002). Now called *"Burning Passions"*

Classic stage adaptations: *"Tom Jones"*, *"The Warden"* (Trollope), *"Love Letters"*, *"Passion and the Revolutionary"* and *"The Indiscretion of an Heiress"* (Hardy) for Wessex Actors Company (set up, ran 1993-2006). Also *"O McGonagall"*. (All produced)

Compilations for stage inc: *"From 10 to 20"*, *"A Woman for all Seasons"*, *"Christmas Through the Ages"*.

2008 – *"The Balance of Mind"* (stage and radio versions seeking production)

"Chronoclasm" performed and won a Scotsman Award at Edinburgh University (now *"A Love Beyond Time"*)

3 scripts dramatizing the procedures of Appeals Tribunals - produced by Edinburgh University

6 short stories: 5 broadcast by BBC Somerset Sound; some published in assorted publications.

Inclusion in Daily Telegraph Book of the Minisaga (200 selected out of 7000 entries)

Series of approx. 20 articles for various magazines on "Vinegrowing and Winemaking" (Book proposed).

Several articles, with own photos, published on photography. Book proposed on film language and criticism for general movie audiences (Several chapters written) Internet information publisher.

200 app writer/ researcher credits – STV features

100 app producer/ director/ writer credits – corporate AV.

THE STAGE PLAYS

Full-length

Burning Passions ** - original story of an famous and tragic Somerset murder (1789).

Love Letters ** - immensely successful adaptation of Thomas Hardy.

Tom Jones ** - epic and raunchy adaptation of Fielding's racy Somerset novel.

The Balance of Mind (*) – a London nurse recovering from romantic betrayal finds herself suddenly involved in agri-politics, a livestock crisis and primitive mysticism.

The Warden ** - adaptation of Anthony Trollope's opening story in the Barchester Chronicles. Cast of 3, simple setting, narrated links.

The Indiscretion of an Heiress ** - Hardy short-story of tragic young love. Cast of 3, simple setting, narrated links.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles ** - *edited* for production version of Thomas Hardy's own second adaptation of his famous novel. M Barry sole director of this play since Hardy's 1928 death (twice).

The Tay Bridge Disaster ** - dramatised documentary, originally produced at Dundee Rep in 1968, published (now out of print), nominated for STV Theatre Play of the Year.

Titus Andronicus (Shakespeare) and **The Atheist's Tragedy** (Tournear) - two one-hour adaptations of these famously gory revenge tragedies.

Tony & Cleo – compact 1930s version of Shakespeare's greatest love story. Cast of 6 and upwards.

A Question of Balance - play examining three-way relationship and the imperatives that make it viable. Has four endings (one can be selected by author or by audience).

Bella-Vista - based on a story of Colette's, of three comprising 3-play theatre evening. Each shows Colette at a different stage of her life - transmuting her direct experiences into short stories.

One-act plays:

Passion and the Revolutionary ** - half-hour adaptation of Hardy story.

A Love Beyond Time * - inspired by John Wyndham time travel romance. Small cast, single set. (Edinburgh University production 1963, winner of Scotsman Student Play Award).

Compilations:

A Woman for All Seasons * - compilation for small group of women of famous scenes from classical drama, linked by narrative. Amateur production 1989.

From Ten to Twenty * - compilation for teenagers of famous scenes from classical drama, linked by narrative. Drama College production 1976.

O McGonagall ** - humorous small-scale touring production showing life of Dundee's famously bad poet interspersed with declarations from his works. Toured from Dundee Rep 1970.

Christmas Through the Ages ** - a pot-pourri of Christmas readings from mediaeval times to modern days, embracing the secular as well as the religious. WAC tours.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STAGE PLAYS OF MICHAEL BARRY



Plays published by New Theatre Publications (to 11/09):

www.plays4theatre.com > authors B > M Barry
NTP Contact page gives UK and US offices.

Other plays via

www.perceptivecreation.co.uk/cvs/playlist.htm and contact details below.

Inside: ** = professional production

* = amateur production

(*) = scratch night/ development performances

Contact:

The Counting House, Dodington, Bridgwater, Somerset
TA5 1LE, UK

01278 733100/ 07906 364189

michaelis@perceptivecreation.co.uk

www.perceptivecreation.co.uk

"This fine new adaptation by Artistic Director, Michael Barry, was faithful, hilarious, full of character, rich dialogue and action".

"... in the vanguard for originality in this imaginative adaptation... It held avid attention from a full house".

"Last word must go to playwright and director Michael Barry for a wonderful piece of story telling."