

Audition Pack for Round and Round the Garden

Background: Round and Round the Garden is the third play in a trilogy of plays written by Alan Ayckbourn called "The Norman Conquests" we are performing this play as isolated but with the same cast of characters as the rest of the trilogy.

The Norman Conquests

Table Manners, Living Together, Round and Round the Garden

Three dovetailed events at a country house over one weekend; one shows us what happens in the dining-room, the next in the sitting room and the third in the garden.

The house belongs to an unseen but tyrannical invalid woman whose unattached daughter, Annie, cares for her. On the Saturday evening when the plays start, Annie's brother Reg and his wife Sara have just arrived to take over nursing duties so that Annie can go away for the weekend. Reg, one of a number of Ayckbourn men who can never quite remember the names of his children, probably hasn't thought about it at all, but Sarah assumes this has been arranged with Tom, the local vet, who has been hanging around Annie as fixedly as her old jumper but failing actually to court her. In fact, the weekend, in the less raffishly exciting hideaway of a Sussex town (East Grinstead), has been arranged with Norman, an assistant librarian, who is prepared to court anybody. Sarah - bossy, impatient, interfering but ultimately very vulnerable - soon talks Annie out of that but isn't persuasive enough to talk Tom into it. Norman, who has turned up expecting to take Annie away under the pretence of going to a librarians' conference, is therefore at a loose end about the house and free to wreak havoc, which he does. Interestingly though, his 'crimes' are all things the others to some extent encourage or need. Reg enjoys Norman's jokes. Tom thinks he is wise in the ways of the world and gives good advice. Annie wants to be swept off her feet by someone and Sarah is badly in need of attention and understanding of some kind. Finally Ruth, Norman's wife (and sister to Annie and Reg), joins the party unexpectedly. She is a high-powered but seriously short sighted executive who duly catches him with two women apparently fighting over him but is promptly talked into joining him on a much-abused fake fur rug for the night. Norman also attacks the invalid, which everybody else would like to do. *Table Manners* ends at 8.00 on Monday morning with Annie back in a clinch with Norman; *Living Together* ends at the same time with Sarah telling Reg she fancies a weekend away, without him. But the final scene of *Round and Round the Garden* an hour later, sees Norman alone in the garden, hurt and indignant that none of the women will take him up on his offer to make them happy. Each has recognized his opportunism for what it is.

Each play can be thoroughly enjoyed individually.

Although many of the characters are drawn from his own family background, Ayckbourn's stated interest is in something he perceives as more universal: 'This adult/woman and child/man relationship is pretty common'. However he has stated that Reg, Norman and Tom were all aspects of himself, adding that he would have liked to be more like Norman but was afraid he was most like Tom.

The Norman Conquests is a trilogy of plays written in 1973 by Alan Ayckbourn. Each of the plays depicts the same six characters over the same weekend in a different part of a house. Table Manners is set in the dining room, Living Together in the living room, and Round and Round the Garden set in the garden.

Synopsis of Round and Round the Garden.

In Annie's garden on a weekend she is supposed to go off for a secret tryst with her brother-in-law, Norman. Annie's gotten tired of waiting for dim veterinarian neighbour, Tom, to sweep her off her feet. Her brother Reg and wife Sarah arrive to care for Annie and Reg's mum, so Annie can leave. Norman shows up, hiding in the bushes, and before he can signal Annie, he's spotted and has to pretend he's come to visit. Tom pops round for food, and Norman's wife, the cool and tough Ruth, comes to visit mum. In the garden, Norman tries to spirit Annie away, Reg and Tom speculate on who Norman's got as his "bit on the side," and Ruth sunbathes. Will peace ever return to the garden?

Characters Please note playing ages are open to adjustment at the director's discretion.

Norman Dewers (20s-40s) is an unkempt, rather manipulative assistant librarian known for being a troublemaker, particularly in his efforts for attention and love. These conquests, in his own mind, come from an altruistic place and are laden with wit, charm and attentiveness. They also cause friction that headlines the dysfunction in his wife's family.

Ruth Dewers (20s-40s) is the somewhat vain and unadmittedly near-sighted wife of Norman. She prioritizes her business career over everything and accepts the personal consequences of that decision, at least up to the point of it affecting her job. She does have genuine affection for Norman and the rest of her family but when her buttons are pushed by any of them her temper can flair with caustic wit.

Reg (20s-40s) is Ruth's real estate agent brother, who in many ways is the opposite of her. Taking on a much lighter more carefree approach to life, he is gregarious and loves to joke even if he is the only one who laughs. Although not judgmental, Reg can become easily frustrated when people, particularly his family, don't quite take to one of his board games that he loves to design.

Sarah (20s-40s) is Reg's critical and generally disapproving wife. Sarah's desire to control every situation often leads to the opposite and prompts her overbearing side to take over. She is a proud mother and wife whose constant effort for everyone's own seems to go unappreciated which can leave her vulnerable to an understanding if not flattering ear.

Annie (20s-40s) is the rather plain, put-upon younger sister of Ruth and Reg. Although she does try to pretty herself up, Annie is the type that doesn't really think it's worth the effort. She has taken on the burden of caring for her mother and is growing tired of the mundane life that entails and tired of waiting for something or someone to take her away from it. As such, she can be prone to making rash, unwise choices for the sake of excitement.

Tom (20s-40s) is Annie's aloof but well-meaning veterinarian neighbour. While being very perceptive to the needs of animals, Tom is a bit dense when it comes to human

relationships and interactions. Any remark that is subtle or complex is as beyond him as a cat in tree. He is also a somewhat fearful man and hesitant to makes changes in his life even if it could be for his own good.

Those wishing to audition are also required to attend the read-through.

Read-through will take place at Clarence Road Baptist Church Hall at 7.45 pm on Wednesday 7th November with auditions on Thursday 8th November also at the same venue.

Lindisfarne is a modern and progressive drama group based in Southend on Sea. – past productions include – The History Boys, Romeo and Juliet, Ray Cooney farces, Steel Magnolias and The Diary of Anne Frank.

Rehearsals on Weds and Thurs throughout Jan – March with early blocking rehearsals on Weds in Nov to mid December.

Production Dates: 19th - 23rd March 2019 at Dixon Studio, Palace Theatre, Westcliff.

Social Media: Facebook Lindisfarne Players

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Director Graham Smerdon