

A note from the writer...DAVID SPICER

Welcome to the Epstein Theatre for the Northern Comedy Theatre's World Premiere of my new play, *Health & Safety*. This is my fifth play and the first to begin its life here in Liverpool.

I have been asked by Shaun, the director of the production, to write this note for the programme, and it has led me to ask a very important and relevant theatrical question that has puzzled me for years: Does anyone ever read the programme note? In my experience people buy the programme to see if there's anyone off the telly in the cast, check if there's an interval and if they'll have time to squeeze in a couple after the show before having the pay overtime to the babysitter. I don't think I've ever seen anyone sitting studying what the playwright's got to say before the curtain goes up.

I'm not sure anyone's that interested, are they?

Which is why if you have a mildly interesting fact to share, like the name of the Patron Saint of the Theatre, or a dark secret you're bursting to tell the world but at the same time don't want anyone to know, such as Lord Lucan's home address, you can bung it in the programme note and your secret will be quite safe. (Legend has it, the Riddle of the Sphinx was only a riddle because instead of just telling Oedipus the answer, the Sphinx decided to put it in the programme note he wrote for the Ancient World's Premier of *No Sex Please We're Etruscan* at the Giza Pyramid Playhouse.)

Now, I admit I may be wrong about that and just in case I am wrong about this and some poor soul is sitting reading this programme note, what can I tell you about the play you are about to see? Other than you're about to see it and I don't want to spoil it for you. But I am very happy that you've chosen to come along and I sincerely hope you enjoy it, laugh a lot and have a great time.

It's also very likely that I will be with you in the audience, even though attending a performance of a play one has written, even when it is being performed by such a marvellously talented troupe as we have tonight, is the most terrifying experience known to man (or at least, to a man like me).

So, if you take a moment to look around, you might be able to spot me. I'm the terrified-looking guy, sitting self-consciously hyper-ventilating and praying to St Genesius that people are going to laugh. I'll be somewhere near the back, as close to an exit as possible. Also, in order to avoid catching anyone's eye, I'll be the only other person in the auditorium reading this programme note.

I hope you enjoy the show.

David Spicer

P.S. Lord Lucan lives at 52, Festive Road, Putney. But don't tell anyone.