

# *Two Shades of Blue*

## *Company Information*



# *Two Shades of Blue*

*two universities working together*



*Paradox, 2006*

Two Shades of Blue is a collaboration between members of Oxford University and Cambridge University Light Entertainment Societies. We formed in 2003 with our first production "The Three Musketeers" at the Edinburgh Fringe, and have been to the fringe with a variety of different productions, including two sell-out shows in 2007 and 2008.

This year's company is drawn from current and past members of the Oxford and Cambridge University Light Entertainment Societies. These are long-running societies, whose alumni include Sandi Toksvig, Graeme Garden, HRH The Prince Edward and John Cleese. The company are an enthusiastic, fun and talented group of actors with a flair for making audiences of any age laugh. The main aim of the Light Entertainment Societies is to bring theatre to those who cannot get to the theatre of their own accord, such as old people's homes and special schools; all the actors are used to delivering performances which go down well with a variety of people, as audience reviews from our previous Edinburgh runs demonstrate.

## *Production Team*

### **Executive Producers**

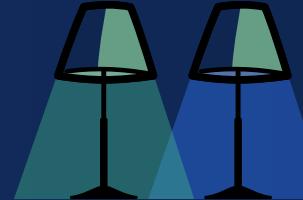
Emilie Yerby  
Richard Owen

### **Press and Publicity**

Clemency Cooper

### **Artistic Directors**

Catherine Howdle  
Ben Parker



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# Reviews

*...fun which doesn't stop for an entire hour*

*Three Weeks*

*The Dalmation of Faust makes for an achingly funny hour in the theatre*

[edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com)

*Two Shades of Blue theatre company have come up with some of the worst puns this side of the Seine.*

[forthone.com](http://forthone.com)

*One from the Mel Brooks school of literary adaptation... a barrage of bad puns and camp spoofery in a titanic struggle between giggles and groans from the audience.*

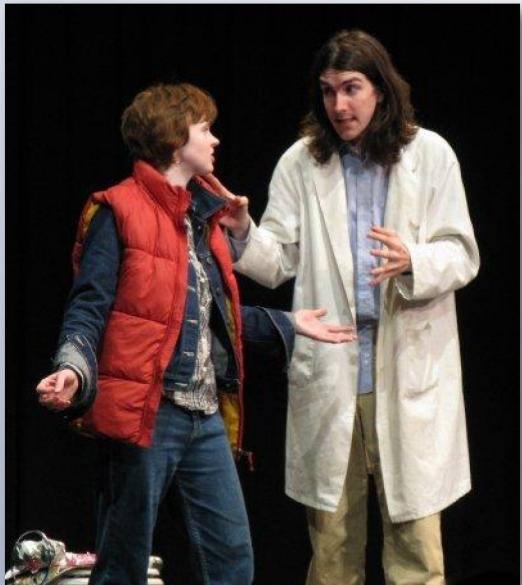
*The Scotsman*

**Comedy Gold**  
*Three Weeks*



# *Our Philosophy*

Two Shades of Blue is a theatre company whose members have a solid background in the light entertainment tradition. This gives our company a different outlook from that of a typical theatre group.



*Doc. Emetic Brown and Marty McFly,  
Back to the Future: the Pantomime, 2008*

Although our production values and professionalism are high, our main aim is to entertain our audience, ourselves, and anyone we meet in the street. We produce shows which are fun to do and to watch; there are no gritty modern dramas told through the medium of graffiti mime, no Shakespeare set in a monkey sanctuary, and there will certainly be no contemporary dance. What we promise you, and our audience, is an outstanding play that anyone with even half a sense of humour

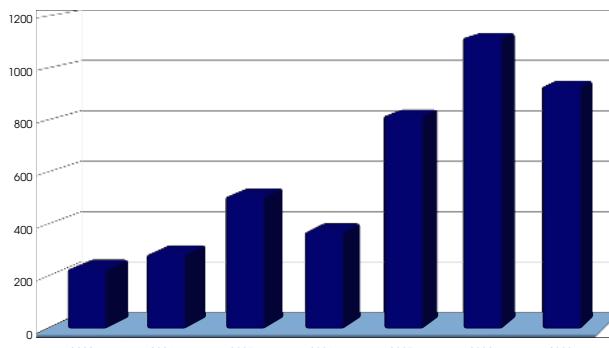
# Audience Satisfaction

## *a large audience, and a satisfied one*

Through an effective, hands-on and mixed-media marketing strategy, we consistently draw a large audience

Our sales have shown an increasing trend over the years as we have honed our technique and improved our productions

Total Average per-Performance Sales at the Fringe Each Year



Size alone, of course, isn't everything. The diversity of our productions attest to this: our pantomimes draw crowds, our sketch shows appeal across the board and, in 2009, "1984" showed that a more experimental show, in a smaller, more experimental venue, also fills the seats! We always aim to provide something that people will enjoy. Our company philosophy is to guarantee our audience a good time, and we include a review in full from our 2008 production to show our popular (and press!) appeal.

*Back to the Future:  
the Pantomime*

I won't patronise you by describing what this show is about - it's exactly what you'd expect from the title. And this show doesn't patronise as it plays to its audience of 20 plus eighties nostalgia freaks. The jokes range from so-bad-they're-good (including this writer's favourite ever bad joke about Tom Jones), to so clever it takes us a minute to get them. The plot of the first film is rejigged to fit a budget that won't stretch to a DeLorean, with every catchphrase present and accounted for, and brought up-to-date in a genius fashion. Gloriously ramshackle, there is nothing slick about this production, but it all adds to the fun which doesn't stop for the whole hour.

★★★★★ *Three Weeks*



# *Edinburgh 2010*    *our cunning plan*

## *previously*

We learnt that presenting a popular story which appealed to a large section of the typical visitors to the Fringe was a good starting point. We also quickly learnt that having a cast and crew who are all dedicated to promoting the play by handing out vast numbers of flyers and taking time to talk to potential audience members produces incredibly successful results, even on the low budget that the Fringe demands.

The audience figures we achieved have been much higher than the average for our venues and for the Fringe itself. Our audience figures have continued to improve, and we attribute this to the way in which we advertise on the Royal Mile, handing out flyers and performing comedy to advertise the show. The whole cast and crew get involved in advertising, and feet on the street really works in Edinburgh!

We also made use of promotions (come dressed as a time-traveller for two pounds off!), and attracted many audience members through the half price hut and other discounts. In previous years we have run stage-fighting workshops, generating a lot of interest in our shows, and our highly-skilled team promise to put on another entertaining series this year!

Our website, **www.twoshadesofblue.org.uk**, gathers more visitors from year to year. Our mixed-media advertising included a YouTube trailer last year which attracted over 750 hits. Our chatty and welcoming style brings in more potential audience members, and helps them choose the right show to see.

## *this year*

Having found a winning formula for the shows so far, and learnt a great deal in the process, we would like to keep the essentials.

The most important thing, in our view, is to have a cast who act well together and work well together, and who enjoy doing both. This year's company has a good proportion of members who have taken part in previous productions, and who have experience of how to go about performing and selling a show at the Edinburgh Fringe. The group will combine these experienced hands with newer actors and company members, who will bring a fresh air (and new jokes) into this year's productions.



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# Our Production Team

## Executive Producers



**Emilie Yerby** took on the role of flat-finder, train-tracker, feeder of the hordes and general "mum" to a whole company of actors in 2008 and enjoyed it so much she came back for more last year! Having been heavily involved on the production side of student theatre this year, and with experience of being Production Manager for a second company at the Fringe in 2009, she has taken up the reins – well, half of them, at least! - as Two Shades of Blue Executive Producer for 2010. Emilie comes flat-packed from IKEA for domestic assembly.



**Richard Owen** was at Oxford for 4 years and did too much theatre. He managed to co-found TAFF, the society for Oxford University theatre Technicians and Designers... So far he's been the Technical Director for all of TSoB's jaunts and has enjoyed every one! In 2007, Richard also donned the Director's hat and this year dons half of the Executive Producer's hat. With probably well over a hundred shows under his belt, he also somehow finds time to write about himself in the third person.

## Press and Publicity



**Clemency Cooper** stumbled across Light Entertainment three years ago and has since produced, performed and assembled an atrocious array of accents in numerous shows. Amongst her publicity duties of serving tea and cake to the masses, singing and flyering on the Mile and liaising with cast and venue during the Fringe for the past two years, Clem has performed in various roles including "Pinocchio" in Once Upon a Time last year. When not organising a production company Clem is usually found herding hordes of school children and finds the logistics of these two occupations remarkably similar.

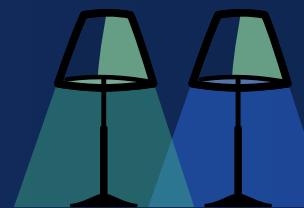
## Artistic Directors



**Cath Howdle** is a founder member of Two Shades of Blue, has directed "Three Musketeers" and "Comedy and Cake" and acted in "Dracula", "Wind in the Willows", "Comedy and Cake 2007". She has written several pantomimes, plays, sketches and songs and has spent althogether far too much time in the theatre for her own good.



**Ben Parker** is an experienced actor and director. He produced "The Three Musketeers" in 2003, directed "Dracula" at the Edinburgh Fringe 2004, and has been Executive Producer and sometime actor since 2005. His recent on-stage roles include D'Artagnan's mother in "The Three Musketeers: Le Panteau", and Don Armado in "Love's Labours Lost". He drinks tea and unfortunately has a propensity for making really quite terrible jokes.



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# *Staging the Production*



*Singing in Rehearsals*

All members of our cast are accustomed to performing in all sorts of spaces (varying from college gardens, via theatres of several sizes, to residential home television rooms!), and, together with the experience and talent of our directors and crew, we can bring the best out of almost any theatre.

Each production lasts approximately 1 hour, so a 1½ hr slot will be sufficient, to include setting and striking the stage (a team effort), and warming up the cast before the production starts. Our use of minimal sets will help to meet the challenges of sharing a theatre and keeping our costs low, and will also have the advantage of reducing the number of possible health and safety risks.

The productions have no specific lighting or sound requirements which would be beyond that which a relatively basic theatre and our award winning Technical Director could manage.



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# Advertising and Marketing

Having found that flyers worked best as the means of advertising previous shows, we are planning to distribute approximately **15,000 flyers**. We will also **place posters in key locations**, such as outside the venue and on the larger boards. Our **flyer design will be clear, simple and colourful**, rather than gimmicky. We will **produce t-shirts** for the company (and anyone who comes with us!) to wear whilst advertising, and about half each cast will advertise in costume.

We will once more use the performance spaces provided by the Fringe on the Royal Mile to promote the show, using music, action and comedy to get our message across quickly and effectively whilst the cast flyer around the stage.

We will try to ensure we can make full use of promotional opportunities, such as free publicity (for example our edfest.tv appearance in 2008), the half price hut, and offering discounts to family groups.

We will again use a thoughtfully-designed and humorous internet site to advertise our shows, and will use Fringe Office pre-sales to augment audience numbers. Advertising in the Fringe's official booklet goes without saying, as almost everyone who came to see us last year had either been flyer'd or said that they had been attracted by our listing in the Fringe Booklet, into which we put a huge amount of thought, until we felt that we had got the tone and the content just right.

We will take maximum advantage of any publicity opportunities offered by our venue to promote the show, and will willingly participate in any more general publicity for the venue itself.

Over the years, we have found that word-of-mouth advertising was also very effective, and that this was best achieved simply by having a high-quality and enjoyable show. It goes almost without saying that we will be striving to achieve this benchmark in 2010 too.



# Summary

We have had seven successful years at the Fringe so far! We've received great feedback and maintained healthy audience figures, with an average audience of over fifty people. We can do so again this year, and we are already very much looking forward to the Edinburgh Fringe 2010.

## *Further Information*

For any further information, please contact  
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Alternatively, E-mail us via **info@twoshadesofblue.org.uk**