

Media Release for immediate publication



The smoking ban hasn't just affected pubs and clubs - local theatre festival 24:7 has also felt the storm of fresh air blowing up and down the country. Rose Cottage features three hospital cleaners making their own efforts to beat the ban by hiding out in the mortuary for their fag breaks. Fortunately, unlike Scottish legislation which prevented Mel Smith smoking as Winston Churchill at last

year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, English law permits performers to smoke during shows where 'artistic integrity' requires smoking. "We investigated alternatives to real smoking," says Preston based playwright Steve Pearce, "but they all looked utterly ridiculous. Puffing clouds of Johnson's across the stage really doesn't cut it, not to mention the risk of litigation if anyone in the front row had a allergy to talcum powder!

"I never intended to write a play to challenge the ban - in fact I quite support it. It's ironic that this ideal excuse to circumvent the law is wasted on a cast containing exactly zero smokers. Still, we are looking for stage hands and the line of yellow-fingered rasping smokers stretches around the block. I don't have the heart to tell them the exemption only applies to the actors!"

Rose Cottage by Steve Pearce

Produced by ShrinkWrapped Theatre (www.shrinkwrapped.co.uk).

Runs from 24-28 July at Pure/Funktion, The Printworks, Manchester as part of the 24:7 Theatre Festival. Tickets available from www.247theatrefestival.co.uk, or by calling 0161 236 7110.

Notes for Editors

Steve Pearce's plays have been performed at numerous venues around the North West, in addition to the Soho theatre in London's West End. He is a member of the hugely successful South Manchester Writer's Workshop, and is the only known Physics and Drama teacher currently teaching in Lancashire. These are his feet (photographed by Mark Whitaker). Steve is available for interview, but only by arrangement due to teaching commitments. Please contact him on 07966 479705 or by email at steve.pearce@shrinkwrapped.co.uk.

The award winning, critically acclaimed 24:7 Theatre Festival makes a welcome return to Manchester for its fourth successful year, once again bringing ground breaking theatre to non theatre venues from 23 to 29 July. Running for seven days, the eclectic programme includes drama, storytelling and a dozen shades of comedy.

