

## Ploutos, The Space, stage review: 'Whimsical romp drawing on Greek folk traditions'

This 'droll moral parable' is the first in a series of live plays at the Covid-secure Isle of Dogs theatre

SARAH BIRCH

Performance-starved theatre-goers will be delighted to hear that The Space on the Isle of Dogs has launched a new season of live plays this autumn.

The first in the series is Thiasos theatre company's re-interpretation of Aristophanes's classic drama *Ploutos*.

The word 'ploutos' means 'wealth' in ancient Greek, and this comedy dating from 408 BCE is a droll moral parable exploring the timeless themes of affluence, virtue and just desert.

When money comes to those who truly merit it, the effect can be both unsettling and highly entertaining.

Drawing on Greek folk traditions of carnivalesque role reversal, this whimsical romp makes up for a spare set with exuberant costumes, ribald humour and song-and-dance routines to live music.

An electric Salv Scarpa gives the standout performance as rambunctious

slave Carion; Charles Sobry is also highly compelling as his master Chremylos.

If you are nervous about attending live theatre, rest assured that it felt very safe. Social distancing and sanitary measures are taken seriously (so much so that there were more people on stage than in the audience).

The Space is also exploring ways to livestream performances for those who are not comfortable venturing out.

Upcoming performances include Mrs C's Collective's *That Was All* by Francis Grin (8-10 October), all-female company Sixteen Sixty's dark comedy *In Bad Taste* (15-17 October) and cabaret collective I Need to Cher's *How to Survive the Cherpocalypse* (23-24 October).

All tickets must be booked in advance.

[space.org.uk](http://space.org.uk)



The Space theatre is taking social distancing seriously, 'so much so that there were more people on stage than in the audience'. Photograph: courtesy The Space



People were captured at close quarters. Photograph: courtesy of Paul Trevor and Hoxton Mini Press

## In Your Face, Paul Trevor, book review: 'Up close and personal'

Naturalistic photographs alternating between Brick Lane and the City from the late '70s to the early '90s, this collection leaves the viewer 'engrossed in detail'

SARAH BIRCH

The 1980s were without a doubt a turning point in British culture; blatant materialism was unleashed while society found its very existence called into question.

Yet many fought back against this transmutation of values. Networks of solidarity grew and local cultures thrived.

The modest street of Bishopsgate was a central battle-line in this clash. To the west sprawled the City of London with its striving bankers and neophyte robber barons. To the right unfurled Spitalfields, with the commercial artery of Brick Lane at its heart; this was a different kind of capitalism – community based small businesses embedded in the huge variety of immigrant-based cultures that have long mixed throughout the East End.

Documentary photographer Paul Trevor was there, up close and personal, snapping a series of images of the denizens of both worlds that has now been published by Hoxton Mini Press as the handsome volume *In Your Face*.

In creating this collection, Paul Trevor invented a novel genre – part street photography, part portraiture.

The naturalistic pictures were shot between 1977 and 1992 at distances of no more than a couple of feet, often less, to capture locals unawares – scowling, snogging, dozing, nursing a bloody nose.

Following *Once Upon a Time in Brick Lane* (2019), the volume is the second of the photographer's East End work that Hoxton Mini Press has brought out.

Publication of the images was a long time coming. They were exhibited in various places in the early 1990s, and a dummy book circulated for a number of years, but lack of funding meant that the pictures did not make it into printed form until documentary photographers Martin Parr and Stephen McLaren rediscovered the collection a couple of years ago and helped to bring the project to fruition.

The uncropped images alternate, one of Brick Lane, followed by another of the City. We smile at the slicked-back hair and brick-like mobile phones, and furrow our brows at the ubiquity of cigarettes, cigars and pipes. But most of all we are engrossed in detail: the unshaven chin of an exhausted financier, the sadly pensive gaze of an old man in a hat, the proudly raised face of a young

black banker sporting a corporate tie, the cheeky smirk of a bleached-blond East Ender sucking on a fag.

*In Your Face* is both a valuable historical archive from a seminal period in British history and a great collection of photographs.



*In Your Face* by Paul Trevor is published by Hoxton Mini Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-910566-80-0; RRP: £16.95.