

what's on

The Bath Chronicle

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AT THE HEART OF ALL THINGS LOCAL

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Reviews



Mission Theatre
 Corn Street, Bath
 Tel: 01225 463362
 Oct 11 and 13 **Cheer From Chawton**
 Oct 12 **Love Arm'd**
 Both plays written and performed by Karen Eterovich. **Cheer From Chawton** finds theatregoers caught up in the Jane Austen family. **Love Arm'd** explores Restoration London and the turbulent life of Aphra Behn, poet, playwright and spy.
 Plays start at 7.30pm.
 Tickets cost £10 and £8



RESTORATION COMEDY: Karen Eterovich plays poet, playwright and spy Aphra Behn in *Love Arm'd* at the Mission Theatre tonight and on Saturday

Cheer From Chawton Mission Theatre, Bath

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single female in possession of a good literary reputation must be in want of someone to write and perform a one-woman show about her.

And in Karen Eterovich, Jane Austen has found the right person to do it.

Billed as a "Jane Austen family theatrical", it's just that. Karen, as a bright, witty, sparkling Jane, performs parts from *Pride and Prejudice* in front of her family (the audience). Adapting herself to the various roles brilliantly and using a drawing room set, she pulls the onlookers into the action, commanding their attention. Dropping off is not recommended. You may be asked questions. Although, for those with a horror of audience

participation, don't worry.

It's all done in the best possible taste. It's also done in the best possible English accent which, as Karen is from the USA and has just flown in for the week, is quite amazing. "I always love to do the accent, and do it right," she says. "You've got to step up the plate." Taking questions later, in the upstairs bar, it's a shock to hear the American accent take over. Full marks to voice coach and co-director Amy Stoller, and to Mission supremo (or should that be supremess?) Ann Garner, for bringing another gem to Bath.

For Austen lovers it's a must, but for anyone simply interested in good, intimate theatre, it's highly recommended too. Catch it before she flies off.

Philip Horton

It can be seen tonight (Thursday) and on Saturday at 7.30pm. Call 01225 463362.

Love Arm'd Mission Theatre, Bath

It seems extraordinary that the 17th century dramatist Aphra Behn, a contemporary of Nell Gwyn and the playwright Dryden, is so little known in her home country.

An exotic beauty, she took numerous lovers, was at the centre of scandals, and was even employed by Charles II as a spy.

She wrote numerous witty comedies and was the first English woman to earn her living as a writer. It's even stranger then that it takes an American to bring her to life. But this is just what New York actress Karen Eterovich is doing at the Mission Theatre this week.

Karen has turned her fascination for the dramatist, born out of once playing the part of Angelica in Aphra's play *The Courtesan*, into

her own one-woman play *Love Arm'd - Aphra Behn & Her Pen*. And what a delight it is. The talented actress fairly romps through Aphra's colourful history as she bemoans her lot.

She begins by importuning her faithless lover John Hoyle but it is we, the audience, whom she addresses in this intimate drama.

We learn of her forced marriage to the "lusty two-legged cheeseworm" Mr Behn who died of the plague, leaving her penniless, of her travels in South America, of her time in the debtors' jail and the scorn poured upon her as a woman playwright.

It's beautifully done, and when she asks "Can anything that's great or moving be expressed in filthy English?" the answer is yes - especially when it's done like this by an American.

Catch it tomorrow night at 7.30pm

Jackie Chappell