

A new play due to open during Deaf Awareness Week

Award-winning American writer and director Harris W. Freeman has produced a new play due to open during the Deaf Awareness Week in October.

Harris is hearing and currently learning BSL Stage III. His play *A Minute of Silence* will feature deaf and hearing actors including Paula Garfield, Ilan Dwek and Caroline Parker.

A Minute of Silence offers the audience "a rare glimpse of the world through the eyes of Barry, a deaf man. Barry's witty and playful approach to life challenges many of the hearing world's misconceptions about deafness."

The love story between Barry and Dora, a hearing woman, unfolds

through dialogue, physical theatre and sign language. Dora struggles to come to terms with her problems whilst under the illusion that it is Barry who needs help. An ensemble of eight actors 'act out the story, have fun and mock the seriousness of the scenes'.

A Minute of Silence won semi-finalist status in the 1998 Julie Harris Playwright Award competition administered by the Beverly Hills Theatre Guild.

The production opens at the Gatehouse, in Highgate, London on 6 October and then to Southwark Playhouse in November.

The play will take part in the European Theatre Festival in

November at Theatre Technis in Camden, London.

Contact Maria Balermpla of Mettle Productions for details: 0171 584 0760 (fax) and 0171 589 4311 (voice).

Voyager Arts Theatre

Voyager Arts Theatre was recently set up to provide deaf awareness through drama.

They offer short sessions in schools to develop sign language, finger-spelling and general deaf awareness. The company have developed a series of drama games which enable children and adults to develop skills to communicate confidently with deaf people. Their aim is 'to increase understanding between deaf and hearing worlds'. They recently held sessions at Hornsey YMCA play scheme and North West London College.

Contact: Mary Ensor, Voyager Arts Theatre, The City Lit, Keeley House, Keeley Street, London WC2B 4BA. 0171 242 1440 (voice and fax).



Caroline Parker



Ilan Dwek



Paula Garfield