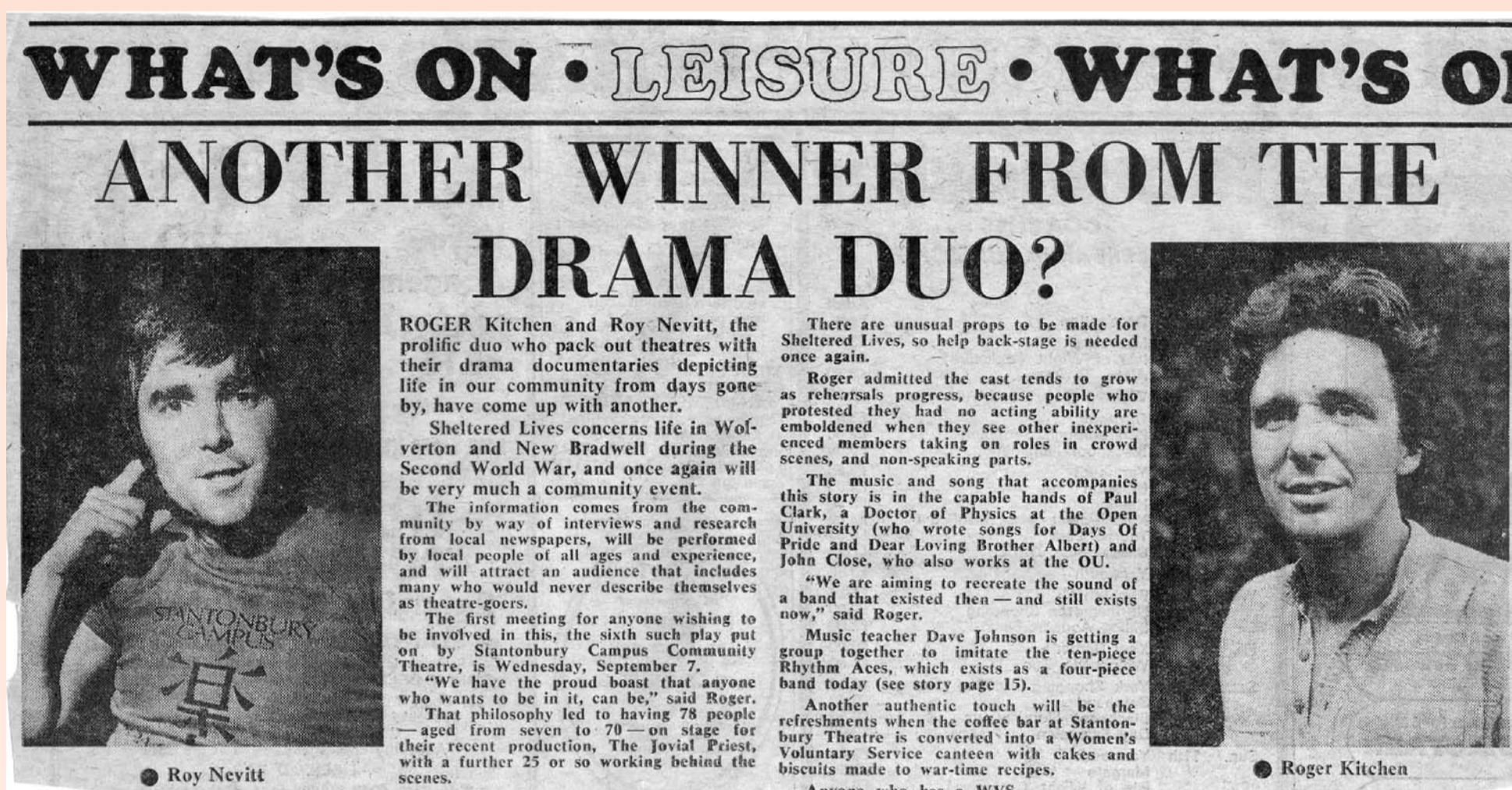




BIG PLAYERS

in Milton Keynes: Sports, Arts & Media

Roy Nevitt and Milton Keynes Theatre



Press release in the MK Gazette in Autumn 1983 for the Community Musical Documentary Drama Sheltered Lives

'No one was more surprised than me by the success of my one-act play Too Much Punch For Judy. In its 11-year history, it has been performed nearly 4000 times ... It grew from an idea from Roy Nevitt, Director of Drama at Stantonbury Campus, an innovative secondary school in Milton Keynes. Roy's philosophy to put 'bums on seats' was to serve up plays telling stories from the local community ... 'Dig where you stand' was his motto. Milton Keynes, in the late '70s/early '80s, was a particularly interesting city to test this out. Few of us had lived there for longer than a few months. Roy developed productions which helped the infant city gain a sense of 'self' - and which were incredibly successful at drawing interest from the local community and beyond.'

Mark Wheeler, author of 20 plays and musicals, Executive Director of the Arts of Oasis Lord's Hill Academy



'Milton Keynes Theatre is probably the most enjoyable modern theatre I have performed in, encapsulating a modern air as well as masses of character.'

Linda Nolan, star of 'Blood Brothers' at Milton Keynes Theatre

Roy Nevitt...

- Champion of Theatre in Education
- Chairman of Drama Projects Committee of the Arts Council of Great Britain; Chairman of East Midlands Arts Drama Panel, initiator of Buckinghamshire Arts Association; Member of South Arts Drama Panel.
- Director of Drama at Stantonbury Campus, now the largest arts college in Europe.
- Co-founder, with Roger Kitchen, of the Living Archive, Milton Keynes
- Pioneer of Documentary Drama
- Producer of six large-scale community musical documentary plays at Stantonbury Theatre based on local stories from Wolverton and New Bradwell: *All Change, Your Loving Brother Albert, Days of Pride, Sheltered Lives, Nellie, The Jovial Priest*
- Chairman of Milton Keynes Theatre and Gallery Company
- Awarded an Honorary Degree of Master of the Open University

Milton Keynes Theatre...

- opened on 4 October 1999, after 25 years of campaigning
- designed by architects Blonski-Heard
- kicked-started with £20 million National Lottery award with further capital from English Partnerships
- has movable auditorium ceiling, lowered or raised depending on the scale of the production
- accommodates audiences of up to 1400 people.
- has highly advanced technical equipment including induction loops for the hard-of-hearing
- is the most successful theatre outside London
- operated by Ambassador Theatre Group with many varied national productions
- The first drama on the new theatre's stage was a revival of Roy Nevitt's *All Change* bringing together nearly 1,000 local people, actors, dancers, musicians and backstage staff.