

◆ Little Theatre News ◆

Members' Edition

Bournemouth

Friday, 27 March 1998



ANNOUNCING TWO SHOWS!



Relatively Speaking

the sparkling comedy
by
Alan Ayckbourn

Presented for six evenings at BLTC
Jameson Road, Winton from
Monday, 20 to Saturday, 25 April

For advance booking for THIS show only, see bottom of this page

This was Ayckbourn's first major commercial success in the West End in 1967, three years before he became Director of Productions in Scarborough. As our most successful post-war writer of sharp comedies about middle-class manners and morals, his plays have received critical acclaim and popular approval. His rare play-writing professionalism is revealed partly through his brilliantly terse dialogue and intricate situations, but it also comes from his clear observation of how people behave. His humour is tinged with sadness and even bitterness, more pronounced in his later plays. He wrote this play "after a phone call" from Stephen Joseph (son of actress Hermione Gingold and publisher Michael Joseph) himself a great developer of English theatre in the round, for whom the Stephen Joseph Theatre was named in 1976, and where Alan Ayckbourn tests out all his plays before they go to London. Ayckbourn says Joseph asked "simply for a play which would make people laugh when their seaside summer holidays were spoiled by the rain and they came into the theatre to get dry before trudging back to their landladies. This seemed to me as worthwhile a reason for writing a play as any, so I tried to comply."

Ayckbourn says he set out to write a 'well-constructed' play. It is. He also says that maybe it is old-fashioned: well, maybe from the standpoint of 1998. But it could never have been written before the mid 1960s. Consider the opening scene, in a modern young lady's bed-sitter, in the morning, with her young lover naked in her bed! And her, naked in the bathroom. This was part of the revolution of the 1960s. But, of course, there is more. Greg and Ginny are living together, but Greg is becoming suspicious that he is not the only man in her life: little things like telephone calls that are cut off the moment he answers, a drawer full of boxes of chocolates, and a pair of slippers that are neither his nor hers. Ginny has an ex-lover, an older man and wants to break with him. He has a wife, and soon we are at their home in the country where Greg mistakes the ex-lover and his wife for Ginny's parents, and the ex-lover thinks Greg is his wife's lover. Ginny arrives and further compounds an already wildly hilarious situation. An old fashioned farce? Maybe, in structure: but the jokes, the arguments, and above all the attitudes could be Bournemouth this morning. What Georges Feydeau did with doors, Ayckbourn does with mere words.

To book for *Relatively Speaking*. By telephone from Monday, 6 April to Friday, 10 April between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. call on 424640.

By telephone from Monday 13 April to Friday 17 April between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. call the Club on 513361. OR

Come in person to the Club from Monday 13 April to Friday 17 April between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. OR book by post to BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH92QD, enclosing payment and SAE for reply.

AND REMEMBER payment for telephone bookings must be received in full within 48 hours of booking or seats may be resold. Prices £6 and £5. Concessions.

Studio Double Bill : There is no advance booking for this show. Tickets will be on sale at the door. Price £4. Concessions.

All shows start at 7.45 p.m.

Studio Double Bill

On three evenings only:
Thursday, 30 April to
Saturday, 2 May at Jameson Road

No advance booking for this show.
Tickets available at door

Audition For a Writer

by Doris M Day

The protagonist, a writer, creates fictional characters who then appear before us. But complex issues arise when the writer tries to manipulate the characters who are strong enough to rebel, refusing to act as the writer intends, with a final violent twist to the plot. The theme is not unlike Pirandello's *Six Characters In Search of an Author*, where the characters appear, announce that they are incomplete, and demand that they be permitted to perform the drama that was never written for them but is implied in their lives. There are also resonances here with Mary Shelley's gothic novel *Frankenstein*. How do we control the beast once we have created it?

Last Tango in Little Grimley

by David Tristram

Members of any amateur dramatic society will recognise the Little Grimley Amateurs, the village group from Hell! Starting with its annual general meeting, where we see the desperate chairman and his clueless committee members, this satire swipes at all the pretensions you have ever met in the amateur theatre, the vanity, the stupidity and the genuine total lack of talent, all encapsulated in this one useless village club. It's losing money, it has virtually no members left, no audiences and no future. Until, that is, the chairman pushes them into performing a sex-play, written by himself, in which all the important citizens of the village are to be held up to ridicule and embarrassment in scenes intended to titillate and amuse the local villagers. And to the amazement of the drama group, the one-night stand is a complete sell-out. Unfortunately this set of chumps is stuck with having to rehearse and perform this unlikely spectacle. The question is, can they do it?

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

meet the cast:



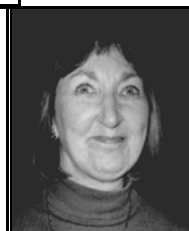
Hilary Naylor - "Ginny" - has performed farce and panto with the Upton Players, and played Belinda in *Noises Off* for Castle Players. For BOAT she has played roles in *Richard III* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. She joined BLTC to work with The Studio but has immediately been selected for this major role.

Lee Tilson - "Philip" - appeared for BOAT in *The Winters Tale*, and *Richard III*, and as Macduff in *Macbeth* while still serving as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army. As such, he has played in Chekov, Gilbert & Sullivan, Shakespeare and Ayckbourn in places as diverse as England, Germany, Cyprus and the Gulf, in more than 50 roles over 35 years. Most recently he was Canon Chasuble in Big Little's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



Ian Davies - "Greg" - joined BLTC on leaving school and has been everything from ASM to Club Chairman. He has also appeared for Footlights and Balloon Theatre in numerous roles. For us he has played substantial or leading roles in *A View from the Bridge*, *Habeas Corpus*, *PVT Wars*, *All My Sons*, and, memorably, as the Foreman of the Jury in *12 Angry Men*.

Pat Richardson - "Sheila" - played for Balloon Theatre for 14 years. She has also appeared for Fern-down Drama Group where she played in *Steel Magnolias*. Recently, she has appeared for ImpAct Theatre in *The Glass Menagerie*.



Lin Denning, the Director, 10 years with BLTC, she has directed twice for BOAT, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Winters Tale*. For BLTC she has directed *Suburb of Baby-*



lon, Our Town, Waltz of the Toreadors, and When We Are Married. She played leads in *Cause Célèbre, Hotel Paradiso, The Madwoman of Chaillot* and *The Physicists*, and this season for ImpAct Theatre, she scored a resounding success as Eleanor of Aquitaine



Studio Double Bill



David Hinton directs *Last Tango in Little Grimley*. For BOAT he has appeared eight times. He played Balthasar in *Romeo and Juliet* and Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. For his performance as Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, he was voted Best Supporting Actor in the Curtain Call Awards. For BLTC he has appeared as an actor many times. This season he appeared in *The Sisters Rosensweig*. In the Studio tradition he brings his talents as an actor to direction for the very first time

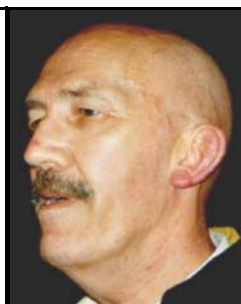
Jena Killingback directs *Audition For a Writer*. She has played Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, Hermia in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* in Swansea, Margaret More in *A Man for all Seasons* for ECB Productions in Bournemouth, Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* for the Castle Players and, for BLTC, Beth in *A Lie of the Mind* (voted Best Actress, Curtain Call Awards) and Louka in *Arms and the Man*. She likewise is directing for the first time.



The Studio in rehearsal



Jack Snell is now running The Studio. He oversees the work of the directors. His aims are to give guidance to anyone who wants to improve or learn from scratch. Jack started acting in 1971 for BLTC. His credits include 5 Best Actor Awards, 2 Adjudicator Awards, and 2 Best Director Awards, all in festivals. He ran his own group for over 3 years, winning first place in 8 festivals, plus one runner-up award and one critic award. He has appeared as an amateur actor and director on innumerable occasions, but he considers himself to be 'an average actor and director'. He points out that other members of The Studio have won awards, including Neil West as Best Actor. There will be more!



"A Doll's House": the review is in!

As good as her word, Linda Kirkman, the new *Daily Echo* amateur theatre guru, did not wait for Friday to write her review. She saw the show on the Monday and the review appeared on Wednesday! Can't ask fairer than that. And such was her praise that after two well-attended but not huge houses, once the paper had come out, the phone began ringing off the hook! The article is worth reprinting in full. She said:

"When Ibsen wrote his classic in 1879 the idea of a wife leaving her husband and children to 'find herself' must have been almost unbelievable, and even now it comes as something of a shock that a mother could abandon her offspring, particularly when they are as enchanting as the three in this production.

"That Nora needs to get away from her husband is made patently obvious in Frank McGuinness' new translation. Alan Jarvis' excellent Torvald is suffocatingly chauvinistic and seems unlikely ever to realise quite where he has gone wrong, leaving his audience's sympathies entirely with his wife. Jane Wright rises admirably to the challenge of her demanding role - she is hardly off the stage - and demonstrates superbly the increasing desperation behind Nora's immature twittering.

"Jan Fox and Derek Hyder excel as Nora's friends Kristine Linde and Dr Rank, but Lee Payton is perhaps a little too pleasant as the blackmailing Nils Krogstad. Unusually it seems to be his character, rather than Torvald's, who realises the benefit of an equal partnership with a woman. Barbara Warde's marvellous production is well-paced throughout, and has the added benefit of being played on a most delightful set."

However favourable the critique may be, this is *our* newspaper, and, where we feel it is justified, there is a right of reply. We asked Lee Payton, a fine young actor with, we suggest, a promising professional future, what his views were. He said diplomatically, "I played the role the way the director asked me to." So we asked Barbara Warde her view. She told us, "Lee did what I asked. If the interpretation was wrong it was my mistake." Fair enough, Barbara. Well done Lee! Don't all our directors wish every actor could give back to the director exactly what was demanded?

The Club is justly proud of this fine show, continuing a season of what this writer considers to be an astonishing run of excel-

Cri du Coeur

One more time Ian Davies calls for volunteers to handle programmes, teas, coffees, bar and house management for the next two shows: don't be shy. Call him on 751435 (evenings) to offer your

The Voyage to 98/99 starts here!



Whyatt looks forward

LOOKING towards the future, Chairman Andrew Whyatt held the well-advertised meeting at the Club on 25 March, to take opinions and submissions from all those who wanted to direct, or suggest to others plays which might be put on during the next season. So anyone who comes up with one of those "why didn't you do this, that or the other" whinges, but who did not submit a suggestion in advance, has got no claim to complain about the decisions which may arise from the meeting. The play-choosing sub-committee, which this year consists of Andrew Whyatt, Ian Davies and Tony Orman, was disappointed to note that unlike last season, when we were spoiled for choice, only a very few turned up to suggest plays which they might like to

direct. We are grateful to those who did come along, but in the circumstances we cannot say yet what shows are definitely set for 98/99. The only certainty is a new play, *Ladies Who Lunch*, our October 98 show, to be directed by Ian Davies. This is offered to us free of royalties by British Telcom and it will be presented not only by BLTC but by hundreds of other amateur clubs up and down the nation, all at the same time. Our sixth show, next June, is not chosen, but it will be a very English type of play, and it will thereafter go to Des Moines, Iowa shortly thereafter. Do *not* complain if you are not chosen for this one: we said in the last newsletter that any member who wants to be considered for the cast or the crew should contact Andrew on 624221. But you have to pay your own airfare. The folks in Des Moines will host us. So this little troupe will be self-selecting. The actual play will be chosen, hopefully before the end of the present season when we know who is available to go.

By the way, talking of plays to the USA, you may have noticed the second double bill of one-acters (see 'Reminders' on page 4). This will go on in the week after *Grand National Night*. It means that our very little theatre will have mounted a massive eight productions this season! And they say amateur theatre is dying. The second play in the evening, after *The Sisters Donahue* will be Harold Pinter's *The Collection*, to be performed by Derek Hyder, Angela Whyatt, Andrew Whyatt and Lee Payton. How Derek got us the invitation to present a play at the International Drama Festival this summer in Michigan (pronounced 'Mish-ign') will have to wait to our next edition. But again, the actors will be paying their own way. We will have the opportunity to support them here before they leave.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Simon Trueick volunteered to answer the questions this month. When asked, he replied as follows:

1. What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A sunny day at Salisbury Races.

2. What is your greatest fear?

Getting old.

3. Which famous person do you admire?

Pete Tong (the disc jockey)

4. Who is your favourite film star?

Michael Keaton.

5. Who is your favourite actor or actress?

Anthony Hopkins.

6. What is your greatest extravagance?

Dinner at the Waldorf.

7. What do you always carry on you?

The Racing Post.

8. Where would you most like to live?

Singapore.

9. What is your most unappealing habit?

Tidying.

10. What is your favourite smell?

Pepper.

11. What is your favourite word?

Pillow.

12. What is your favourite play or film?

The Remains Of The Day.

13. What is your favourite journey?

Home to my parents in Ireland.

14. What do you dislike most?

Pretentious actors.

15. What is your greatest regret?

Being so shy as a child.

16. When and where were you happiest?

October 11, 1997 (my wedding day).

17. What single thing which would improve your quality of life?

A night out with Scary Spice.

18. How do you relax?

Watching racing or cricket (on a sunny day is best).

19. What is your favourite quality in others?

Genuineness.

20. What is your favourite animal?

Theatre Quiz by Andrew Whyatt

Answers at bottom right of this page

1. Who wrote *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*?
2. Which Arthur Miller play concerns the fortunes of the Keller and the Deever families?
3. Who is diagnosed as being "sick of self love" (Shakespeare)?
4. In which play, by whom, did Olivier play a seedy music-hall comedian?
5. *Shakers* and *Bouncers* are two plays by which author?
6. Which character in which Shakespeare play is described as "a deboshed fish"?
7. Which venerable knight of the theatre is currently extolling 75 years of the BBC?
8. Which Shakespeare play is set in Illyria?
9. Who wrote *Entertaining Mr Sloan*?
10. "Sister George" was her soap opera name. What was her actual name in the

Apology

The Committee, through the chairman, Andrew Whyatt, wishes to apologise unreservedly to Jack Snell. Because the Committee had asked Jack to re-audition for his one-acter *The Donahue Sisters*, it also agreed with him that members of the Committee would attend the auditions on Friday 13 March, and would effectively choose the cast for Jack. (Don't ask why, it gets too complicated.) Anyway, Tony Orman and Hugh Norris were both away, and nobody else had put it in their diaries. So no member of the Committee attended, and Jack had to face the (not too) daunting task of carrying out his own auditions. His job was made easier by the fact that for the three female roles (there are no males in the play) only three actors came. They were Rachael De Courcy Beamish, Yvette Leahy and Amanda Garton. As these three ladies were eminently suited to the roles, happiness now reigns in the Snell household. Per George Formby "Turned out nice again!" Per Shakespeare "All's well that ends well." Per Snell "*****!"

Reminders

- Fri. 3 April.** Playreading of *Grand National Night*.
Fri. 10 April. Auditions for *Grand National Night*.

Grand National Night

Auditions are announced for *Grand National Night*, a firm old favourite, to be presented from **Monday 8 to Saturday 13 June**. The playreading will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 3 April. **AUDITIONS will be from 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 10 April.** Director Hugh Norris, on 761400, will give further information. This is a gripping play, with tension and lighter moments of humour, premièred just after the end of World War II, but set in the comfortable pre-war era of shameless comfort for the wealthy, attended by hordes of live-in servants. There are eight characters in this thriller: **Gerald**, a former amateur jockey and nouveau-riche tycoon; **Babs**, his alcoholic bitch of a wife (can she *really* be that awful?); **Pinkie**, her lovely older sister (can she *really* be that nice?); **[the two sisters are played by the same actress (a glorious double part)]**; **Joyce**, an ever-so-nice young "gel" from the aristocracy [posh speaker] enjoying a bit of adultery on the side; **Philip**, a dry old solicitor; **Buns**, a 40ish crashing bore and 'society sponge'; **Morton**, a slightly dodgy ancient butler with a shady past; **Chief Det. Inspector Ayling**, a very bright (*tall*) cop; and **Gibson**, a dim sergeant. All BLTC members who see themselves (or their theatrical *alter egos*) in the above descriptions are invited to offer themselves for selection. *Absolutely no pre-casting!*

A Great Honour

When we wrote a long article a few issues ago about Keith and Eileen Rawlings, it was devoted almost entirely to a light-hearted description of their contributions to amateur theatre in general and to BLTC in particular. However highly we may have esteemed them both, and however deserving of the praise of others, we did not know then that Keith would very soon thereafter be elected to be the next mayor of



Keith & Eileen seen at the Club just before the start of *A Doll's House*. Did they pay for their seats? Well, yes, actually. They donated the money to have the

Bournemouth! We are not quite sure as to how we are to address them in future. Is it Hizzonner, My Lord, Your Grace, or do we just quietly grovel? We will be looking it up in Burke's Peerage. Seriously, though, this may be glory for the Rawlings family, but we would like to think that a little of it will rub off on the rest of us. Keith, supported nobly by Eileen, has been doing good for the town (and BLTC) for so many years. And what a publicist for Bournemouth! Will we

ever forget waking up to hear Keith on Radio 4's Today Show, being harried, not very seriously, by the great John Humphrys as to why Bournemouth had declared a non-smoking section of the beach! Actually, it was only 100 yards out of seven miles, but it took in the BBC. May their year in office be blessed and happy. And oh yes, can we please have a free ride in the Rolls-Royce?

Mon. 20 - Sat 25 April. Performances of *Relatively Speaking*.

Thurs. 30 April - Sat. 2 May. Performances of *The Studio Production*.

Mon. 8 June - Sat. 13 June. Performances of *Grand National Night*.

Thurs. 18 June - Sat. 20 June. Performances of double bill, *The Sisters Donahue* and *The Collection* (by Harold Pinter)

- Answers to Quiz
1. Dale Wasserman
 2. *All My Sons*
 3. Malvolio
 4. *The Entertainer* by John Osborne
 5. John Godber
 6. Callan in *The Tempest*
 7. Sir John Gielgud
 8. *Twelfth Night*
 9. Joe Orton
 10. June Buckridge