



Bournemouth Little Theatre Club  
Presents for six evenings  
Monday, 6 to Saturday, 11 September 1999  
At Jameson Road, at 7.45 pm

A Thriller!



DEATHTRAP

Ira Levin's

Directed  
by  
Don Gent



Jack Snell



Patricia Richardson



Director  
Don Gent

Last Season we opened with a thriller, *Nightmare: The Fright of Your Life*, directed by Don Gent. This was so successful that we are repeating the formula again. Don chose *Deathtrap* for its sophisticated approach to the genre of astonishing plot-twists, sinister surprises, immoral viciousness and sudden retribution. The denouement, indeed most of the plot, so astounds audiences that we have to say of this one, "When you've seen it, please, please, don't give the plot away to your friends!"

All we can tell you, to whet your appetite is that the scene is set in the comfortable country home of Sidney Bruhl, a playwright living on his past reputation. He hasn't written for a long time, suffering from writer's block, and is living off the inherited wealth of Myra, his wife of 20 years.

One day, out of the blue, he is sent a script of a play called *Deathtrap*, written by a young male admirer, who would like Sidney's expert views and advice. Sidney applies his convoluted mind as to ways in which he can possibly steal the play from its rightful author.

The resulting *sturm und drang* arising from his evil desire forms the body of a story that thrilled and illuminated the stages of Broadway and the West End and was successfully filmed, starring Michael Caine, Dyan Cannon and Christopher Reeve.



Tim Garton



Yvette Leahy



Lee Tilson

For booking details, see next page



## Keeping in touch

Youthful-looking former chairman Ian Davies, in renewing his membership for the nineteenth year, would like all his friends and well-wishers, among whom we all include ourselves, to know that his recent move to living in Chandlers Ford does not signify any lessening of his desire to be connected with the Club. However, he has taken a complete change in his aspirations and directions in life. He tells us that he will this Autumn be commencing a degree course at Bournemouth University, leading to BA Hons. in Scriptwriting

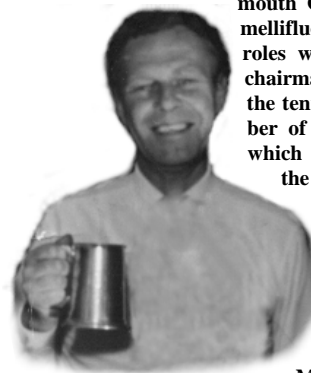
and Television. This is a three year course and, as we might imagine, he is looking forward to it very eagerly.

He took a rest after directing *Ladies Who Lunch* last season, which fitted in well with the house move. He had been working on some theatre project or other for 18 months before that project, and says he was finding it harder to stay focused. He will for some time be only a 'social' member. But, as he told us, "Theatre is an addictive drug. You can come off it for a while, but you can't stay off it forever. I'm sure I will return to it, very probably with BLTC, in time to come. For the moment however, having 'de-toxed' for a few months, I feel now is the time to pursue other courses and take a longer break. I have been involved with BLTC and theatre since I left school almost 20 years ago. I would like Club members to know that I have thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone at BLTC. I will still be coming to see productions and will be keeping in touch with all of you."

We, of course, wish him every success in his exciting career move.

## In Memoriam

Sadly, we record the death on 12 July last of Gilbert Clayton, a former member of BLTC who served the community with charm and distinction for many years. Older club members recall performing with him at the Palace Court Theatre as long ago as the mid 1950s. Gilbert knew what roles suited his talents. His deep mellifluous voice and his dignified appearance lent themselves to the portrayal of 'officers and gentleman', and indeed he conducted himself as such throughout his life. He is seen, left, in



the early 1960s, saluting his friends in Bournemouth Gilbert and Sullivan Society. That same mellifluous voice secured him leading singing roles with them, and he subsequently became chairman of that Society. He was also noted in the tennis world. From boyhood he was a member of the West Hants Lawn Tennis Club, of which he was President from 1979 to 1995. At the time of his death he was the Honorary President of Brownsea Open Air Theatre, by which company he was deeply mourned as it prepared to mount its late July production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Those present recall with pleasure Gilbert's urbane speech to the 1999 BOAT cast and crew last March, and now mourn his loss.

## A Spanish Theatre Has Survived since 1601



The show goes on, Spanish style



Miguel de Cervantes



Modern refurbishment: "We never closed!"

SPANISH architects have uncovered and restored the oldest surviving public theatre in Europe, the Corral de Zapateros, 35 miles from Madrid in the home town of the father of Spanish literature, Miguel de Cervantes.

The building in the university town of Alcalá de Henares, where Cervantes was writing *Don Quixote* while Shakespeare was writing his plays, dates back to 1601. Although not the earliest European theatre — it first opened its doors 14 years after the Rose Theatre in London and two years after the Globe—the original Corral has survived the centuries, unlike its British counterparts.

The building had been in continuous use as a theatre since it was built. It was converted into a cinema in 1945. The cinema closed its doors in 1971 and the building was abandoned until 1961, when three local architectural researchers, Miguel Angel Coso, Juan Sanz and Mercedes Higuera, began to investigate. Hacking through a 2 ft layer of bricks in the auditorium, they discovered the 17th-century adobe and wooden walls of the original open theatre.

Local archives were found to contain the building contract, in which a carpenter, Francisco Sanchez was hired to build a "corral de comedias" in what was then known as the Plaza del Mercado.

The researchers also discovered how the theatre was run when it put on

works by Spain's "Golden Age" playwrights, including Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca. The throwing of oranges, sweets, apples and chestnuts at the actors or members of the audience was banned. Commissionaires were employed to separate men and women. The women, up to 90 per performance, had their own entrance and were crushed in a 100 sq ft box known as the *cazuela*, or "stew pan". Other rules forbade armed soldiers from sitting, and closed the theatre during university terms in order not to distract students from their work. Cervantes, in his mid-twenties at the time, probably frequented the theatre when it first opened. In those days actors shared the courtyard with the neighbourhood well. The pit was made of pebbles set in baked mud and the scenery hung from an elaborate wooden structure known as the *peine*, or comb. The theatre was covered in the 17th century and remodelled several times.

Spanish authorities called on British experts, including Professor John Varey of London University, who died in April, and Andrew Gurr, the Globe's research director, to assist the £2 million project. The restored 300-seat theatre which retains features from each period, has been renamed *El Teatro Pequeño* —The Small Theatre. Now a backstage row between the architects and municipal authorities over its use is delaying the opening. Some things never change!

### ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS (price £6, with concessions)

1. WRITE enclosing cheque and S.A.E. to

Box Office, BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH9 2QD OR

2. CONTACT SUE at home **ONLY between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m.** Monday 23 August to Friday 27 August  
on her home number **424640** OR

3. BOX OFFICE OPENS Tuesday 31 August to Friday 3 September, **between 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m.**  
for personal callers OR by telephone on **513361**

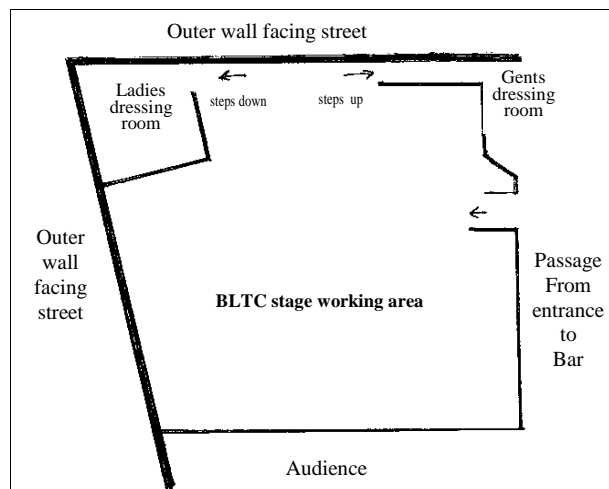
## Our weird environment



**M**any folk, members and non-members alike are totally unaware of the strange configuration of our stage working area. So we are grateful to our Secretary Hugh Norris, who has prepared a scale drawing of this space. He has also constructed, for the use of stage directors, a 3-D model, like a small doll's house, with miniature flats which will enable aspiring directors to lay out their required sets without having to do any construction. They can then move around small chess pieces to see where the actors will go.

But why is the area not built on the square? It is simply that the building we are in was built to fill up the space fronting to Jameson Road, and the lot lines are themselves not on the square. The whole building therefore lacks the usual right angles you would expect in such a construction. We imagine that as the building was never intended to be a thing of beauty, but merely to use up as much available space as possible for industrial purposes, the architects probably felt that the persons using the building wouldn't mind.

We have compounded the matter by building the ladies dressing room area, which means that the open area for sets, and for acting, is a nightmare to work with, and gives us vir-



tually no backstage availability. In any other theatre they can talk about 'the wings' and 'the flies'. Well, lucky old them.

## What did Eileen do next?

**S**o, Eileen, what do you do as a follow-up after being Mayoress of Bournemouth for the past year?

We asked her and found out that



she is not resting on her laurels. A former teacher of physical education, she has taken on the huge task of producing a show at the Royal Albert Hall. She was selected by the

Physical Education Association of the UK (PEAUK), a body consisting mainly of teachers and lecturers in the PE field, to produce an entertainment to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Association.

One assumes that any member of BLTC would take such a task in their stride, and Eileen does not seem the slightest bit worried about producing a show with 1,000 performers, with ages ranged from 7 to 70. This show is more than an exhibition of PE, although this, of course, has its place. There are all kinds of dances, from Greek to English, exhibitions of all manner of sports and games, including one item demonstrating PE as performed in 1899, and all welded by Eileen into a fast-moving two hour show.

So when is this happening? Well, it's a one-off performance on Saturday, 23 October, at the Royal Albert Hall, starting 6.30 pm. Tickets are obtainable at prices from £6 to £15, by phoning the RAH on 0171 589 8212.

There are special buses from Bournemouth direct to the RAH, either just for the show or for the day. These are being organised by David Hilliam. You can contact him by phoning

## To Act or Not to Act

**P**eter O'Toole recently attacked drama schools for training the next generation of performers with "non-actors" rather than the finest thespians with decades of experience.

If someone wants to become a dentist, the 67-year-old star said, they learn their trade from a dentist. If someone wants to become an actor, drama schools offer "non-actors".

He made some telling comments in speaking to reporters at one of his favourite drinking haunts, the Coach and Horses Pub in Soho, while promoting his current return to the West End Stage in a revival of *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*, about the life of the journalist renowned for an alcohol-fuelled lifestyle.

"It's grotesque," he said, recalling his own days at RADA. His teachers included Ernest Milton, who was "a great Hamlet", and Dame Sybil Thorndyke, who played the title role in the English premiere of Shaw's *St Joan*. "We went to them for wisdom and their endless experience. They were all still in work."

The star of *Lawrence of Arabia*, who insists that he is just a "jobbing actor", said there were "dangers" of drama being taught as an academic subject, with non-actors becoming actors and directors.

"Drama isn't an academic subject," he said, but added: "Bureaucracy has taken over the theatre." With the demise of the repertory theatre system, where actors learned their trade — "where some poor sod from RADA could make blunders in Pitlochry for two or three years" — performances were suffering. "The mediocre has become the norm."

O'Toole, who, with his larger-than-life contemporaries Richard Harris and Richard Burton, exuded fiery passion both on and off the screen and stage, said that today's generation have a "bland approach".

He lamented the descent into "a kind of sameness, a kind of homogeneity". But, he stressed, these things were cyclical, and it was only a matter of time before that changed.

His comments lead one to consider another related issue, the plethora of acting schools and acting courses of one kind or another offered at universities and colleges of all kind and quality



all over the country today.

Consider this one overriding fact: that whereas there will have been, in O'Toole's youth, about 80% of actors unemployed at any one time, today the figure must be nearer 99%.

The one benefit of the old closed shop, practised by the actors' union Equity, was that it prevented too many actors getting the right to paid work in their chosen craft at any one time. The closed shop meant that you couldn't get an equity card to act on stage unless you could show a body of work. Which, of course, you couldn't do unless you had an Equity card. The system was unjust and rightly fell foul of anti-union reform legislation in the 1980s. But the vast increase of colleges touting for students means that today there are more and more "doubtful" actors being sucked, and suckered, into chasing ever fewer opportunities for employment. The question arises "Should we encourage them?"

**Member of BLTC, are you? Haven't paid your sub for the new season? Well subs are due now, so send yours in to the Club. We need the money to put on the shows. We hope this**

## Film Quiz by David Hinton

1. Which actor killed Sam Spade's partner in *The Maltese Falcon*?
2. Which film ends with "It was beauty killed the beast"?
3. Which star was pilloried for the line "And now for a crack at those Japs!"?
4. What day is it if Sonny and Cher are still singing?
5. "Who you gonna call?"
6. Which doctor exclaimed "My Fuhrer, I can walk!"?
7. For which Disney film was Robin Williams paid with a Picasso?
8. Who was the big screen's first feature film Batman?
9. In the film *Chaplin*, who played her own grandmother?
10. Which comedy crime series starred Nick and Nora and their dog, Asta?

## Curtain Call Awards

The Curtain Call Awards Evening will be held at the Pavilion Ballroom, on Sept 18. There is still time to nominate people or categories, but you need a form contained in the Daily Echo of Friday, 23 July, and Monday, 2 August is the closing date.

Hugh Norris (phone 761400) has booked a table in the name of BLTC. Tickets are £17 per head, and they include dinner, cabaret, disco dancing and, of course, the Awards event, as well as one or two surprises. So call Hugh if you want to go. But remember, all tickets have to be paid for by 27 August, so please book now.

## Audition Reminder

Tony Orman reminds you all that his audition for *Don't Dress For Dinner* will be held at the Club at 7.30 pm on Friday, 3 September 1999.

There are roles for two men who are, or can act 40s to 50s, and a third man who is somewhat younger. There are three female roles, one 40s/50s, the second early 30s, and the third should be younger.

Further details are on the board in the Green Room, and other details can be obtained from Tony Orman on 554291.

## Review

David Ross of the Daily Echo reviewed BLTC's July Studio one-acters *After Midnight, Before Dawn* and *Cup Final*. He said:

"It's every society's worst nightmare — to come a cropper at an important drama festival.

Mind you, it must be great fun to eavesdrop in the changing room afterwards, as we're allowed to do in the comedy *Cup Final*.

Steve Cox is everybody's idea of the "luvvie" director as he agonises over his humiliation while Jack Snell's "actorly" tones soon crumble away into Sarf London as he clashes with his fellow thespians.

Charles Mander's short play, directed by Pat Gray, lacks the comic engineering to get into top gear, but it certainly fires on enough cylinders here to keep us chuckling.

And the developing romance between crestfallen Sharon and upbeat Joe is appealing played by Hilary Naylor and Gareth Buxton.

In contrast, this BLTC double-bill is opened by David Campton's *After Midnight, Before Dawn*, in which six prisoners await execution for witchcraft.

The overwrought atmosphere is a little over-egged at times but director Jack Snell builds the tension artfully as we sense time running out for the characters.

Michelle Newton is weirdly seductive as the witch who urges her

## Annual General Meeting

The Committee advises that the date of the AGM has been moved datewise to **Sunday, 19 September 1999 at 7.30 pm at the Club** to avoid a possible clash with the dress rehearsal of the September production of Ira Levin's *Death-trap*.

Anyone who would like to stand for the Committee must be a paid-up member and should notify our Secretary, Hugh Norris that they intend to stand. They should submit their nomination to him in writing, countersigned by their proposer and seconder who must also be paid-up members.

Every member of the Committee is expected to have a specific function, and we are still looking for Committee members willing to undertake control of the Bar, or become our Stage Director.

## Voucher books

vouchers, BLTC, as a one-off conces-

sion, will honour vouchers already sold for the 1998/1999 season, during the 1999/2000 season.

But anyone buying voucher books during the new 1999/2000 season will be deemed to be aware that vouchers will henceforth be redeemable only against tickets for shows during the same season. Any vouchers unused at the end of the 1999/2000 season will not be redeemable thereafter and the holder will be deemed to have made a donation to club funds.

However, we have discovered that some holders of current books of vouchers have not used up all of them during the current season. Because we may have been at fault in not explaining the system fully to purchasers of

## Audition

Andrew Whyatt announces an audition of the Drama

**The Three Sisters**  
by Anton Chekhov

to be held on  
**Friday, 5 November 1999**  
at Jameson Road  
at 7.30 pm

There are 9 male and 5 female roles.

Production dates are 14 to 19 February, 2000.

For further details please call Andrew Whyatt on 01202 624221.

## Audition

Don Cherrett announces an audition of the Comedy

**Intimate Exchanges**  
by Alan Ayckbourn

to be held on  
**Friday, 14 January 2000**  
at Jameson Road  
at 7.30 pm

There is one male and one female role.

Production dates are 3 to 8 April, 2000.

For further details please call Don Cherrett on 01202 690952.  
**(BOAT Box Office, will take a message for Don)**

## Reminders

**Fri. 3 September 1999, Audition, *Don't Dress For Dinner*, Tony Orman Director, at 7.30 pm.**

**Mon. 6 – Sat. 11 September 1999, Performances of *Ira Levin's Deathtrap* at 7.45 pm.**

**Sun. 19 September 1999, Annual General Meeting, 7.30 pm.**

**Mon. 18 – Sat. 23 October 1999, Performances of *The Birthday Party*, at 7.45 pm.**

**Wed. 27 October 1999, First session of the Studio.**

**Fri. 5 November 1999, Audition for *The Three Sisters* at 7.30 pm**

**Mon. 6 – Sat. 11 December 1999, Performances of *Don't Dress For Dinner*, at 7.45 pm.**

**Fri. 14 January 2000, Audition for *Intimate Exchanges* at 7.30**

**Mon. 14 – Sat. 19 February 2000, Performances of *The Three Sisters*, at 7.45 pm.**

**Mon. 3 – Sat. 8 April 2000, Performances of *Intimate Exchanges*, at 7.45 pm.**

**Mon. 22 – Sat. 27 May 2000, Performances of *Move Over Mrs Markham*, at 7.45 pm.**

**Mon. 26 June – Sat. 1 July 2000, Performances of *Chakra* at 7.45 pm.**

**Fri./Sat. 21/22 July 2000, Per-**

## Answers to Quiz

1. Mary Astor.
2. King Kong.
3. Errol Flynn.
4. *Groundhog Day*.
5. Ghostbusters.
6. Dr Strangelove.
7. *Maddin*.
8. Adam West.
9. Geraldine Chaplin.
10. *The Thin Man*.