



Bournemouth  
Little Theatre News



Issue #38

[www.theatreclub.plus.com](http://www.theatreclub.plus.com)

2002/2003 Season

Friday, 9 August 2002

We Present  
at Jameson Road

A Comedy in Three Kitchens

**Absurd  
Person  
Singulor**

by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Andrew Whyatt

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**MONDAY 2 TO SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2002**  
**AT 7.45 PM**

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To read more about the show and booking details, turn to page 2

# Absurd Person Singular

## The Actors



Jane Wright



David Weeks



Tess Hutton



Lee Tilson



Mike Satchell

## The Play

Alan Ayckbourn is England's most popular and prolific dramatist since Noël Coward. He has won numerous awards and his plays, translated into 26 languages, have delighted audiences with their gentle humour at the expense of the English middle classes and their marital power games.

Written in the early 1970s, *Absurd Person Singular* is no exception. We visit three couples in their kitchens on the Christmas Eves of three successive years. You will

be aware of the class differences of each couple and the way that they live their lives intertwined accidentally (but deliberately). However, running through the wilder comedy of behind-the-scenes disasters is the darker thread of advancement and decline.

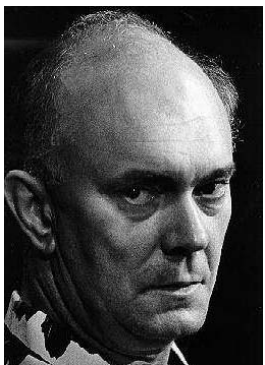
So come and see our powerful cast perform this Ayckbourn classic — to laugh and marvel at the author's observation and, who knows, squirm a little at the home truths.

Don't miss it.



Angela Whyatt

## The Author



Alan Ayckbourn

## The Director



Andrew Whyatt

## Bookings

### Advance ticket bookings

Tickets £6 (with concessions) Members £2

1. **WRITE** enclosing cheque and S.A.E. to Box Office, BLTC, 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth BH9 2 QD  
OR

2. **PHONE** to book by calling Sue **ONLY between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm** on her home number  
**01202 424640**

EITHER Monday 19 August to Friday 23 August  
OR Tuesday 27 August to Friday 30 August

### Please Note

The Box Office is **not open** for callers in person or by phone at Jameson Road the week before any show. Tickets booked and paid for with S.A.E. will be issued two weeks before the show in the order the bookings were received. If you have a problem after receiving your tickets, phone Sue on the dates and times set out in 2 above.

The headlines read "Season slump adds to largest deficit in years", "Much ado as nomadic Bard hurts RSC", "RSC has never been in such disarray, or so endangered". Readers of *Little Theatre News* will not be surprised. We have been following the Royal Shakespeare Company's own epic tragedy under the artistically gifted but increasingly financially challenged direction of newly departed director Adrian Noble with the same intensity as any other soap opera. So what is the heart of the problem?

The fact is that the Royal Shakespeare Company's box office sales in London have plummeted since it moved out of its permanent (and heavily subsidised) home in London's Barbican.

The gamble to take Shakespeare to a wider audience with *A Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Pericles* at the Roundhouse in North London has failed to draw the crowds.

Anyone will tell you that the Roundhouse is ill-suited to nuanced ensemble playing. On average, only 45 per cent of the 680 seats have been filled. Actors have played to houses less than one quarter full. BLTC actors will understand how that felt before we

# Decline and fall

Poor business plan causes a slump in ticket sales at the London end of the Royal Shakespeare Company: *Pericles* and Ray Fearon are an artistic success with rave reviews in a box-office flop at The Roundhouse.



**Ray Fearon leads the way in the title role of the RSC's *Pericles*** here, big and unsustainable financial losses are coming up over the horizon. Barbican sales had averaged 60 per cent. Without going into the figures

The "on the road" plan was conceived by Mr Noble, the artistic director of the RSC who quit after his controversial plans to raze the 1930s Art Deco Stratford Theatre and replace it with a theatre village provoked outrage. He abandoned the Barbican, the RSC's other home in London, to show plays in venues across London after making clear his dislike of the Barbican, despite being heavily subsidised there by the Corporation of London.

The slump is set to continue. As we go to press we hear that, at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, advance bookings for *Much Ado About Nothing*, which opened on July 27, were less than 5 per cent.

Benedict Nightingale, the Times theatre critic, referring to Adrian Noble as the English theatre's Darth Vader, and "Osama bin Noble", opines that the situation is so serious "that the RSC managing director and the board should resign ... the Arts Council, closely followed by the Culture Secretary, should step in". He suggests there should be a public enquiry into the company "with full public scrutiny of its financial and other affairs".

Well, that may not happen, but in these bear-market days we may be looking at a theatrical Enron or Worldcom in the making. ☐

## Bums on seats: the eternal worry

Comment by editor **Tony Orman**

IT IS a vulgar phrase, Bums on Seats — vulgar but expressive. However, I saw it again recently while trawling through Ray Smith's admirable East Dorset amateur theatre website, [www.on-cue.org.uk/](http://www.on-cue.org.uk/) There I found an article by the *Daily Echo's* theatre critic, Linda Kirkman, on the perennial subject of how to maximise audiences for amateur shows.

She made a number of valid points. She said that the area she covers, from Swanage in the West, Fordingbridge in the North, to Burley in the East, contained about 50 different companies: even more if you count the small church groups who do not seek reviews for shows. The standards vary considerably. But she thinks they share two difficulties: a shortage of members, especially men, and at times pitifully small audiences. This can cause late changes of show, or even cancellations, when something has proved impossible to cast.

In an effort to draw in those elusive bums on seats, desperation creeps in and many so-called comedies are mounted that should have never seen the light of day. Linda thinks that the people who

choose the plays sometimes forget that tastes change, and what was funny thirty years ago no longer appeals to today's more sophisticated audiences.

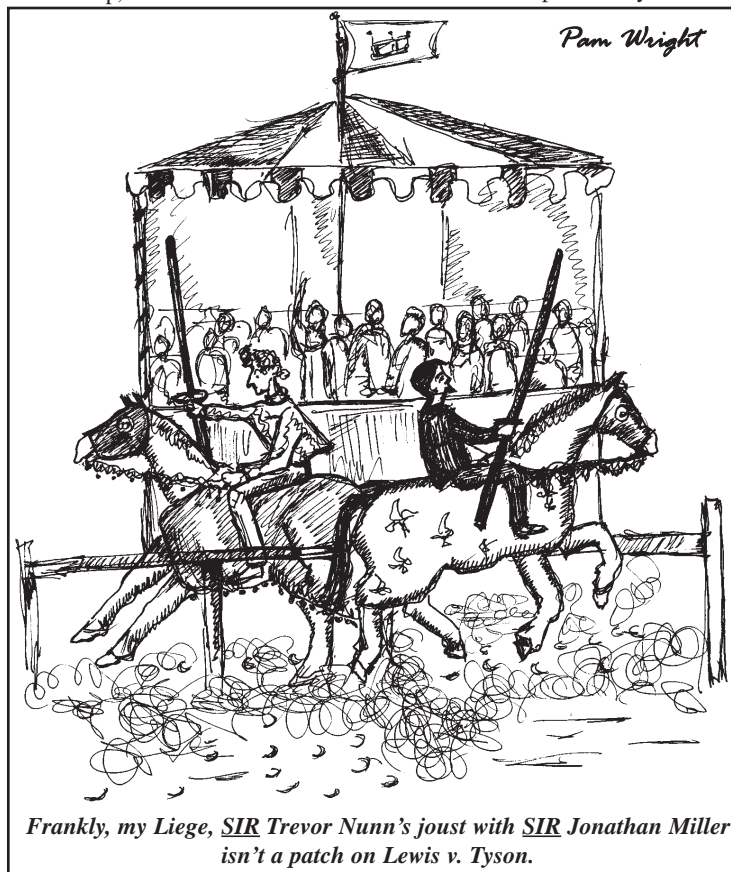
On the question of declining membership, she believes that one of the reasons why few young people now join amateur societies is the proliferation of local drama schools — Big Little Theatre School, Swish of the Curtain, Stagecoach, Bournemouth Youth Theatre and MAD, to name but a few.

There is also the problem of changes to the working day with the 9 to 5 routine almost a thing of the past: people's free time is now more restricted. Finally, there are just too many societies vying for the attention of what is inevitably a fairly small number of people. There have been some recent mergers and closures of groups, and this trend will continue if amateur theatre is to survive locally.

On the question of declining audiences, there seems to be no rhyme or reason as to why they vary as much as they do. Some great shows are seen by less than 20 to 30 people, and some very mediocre shows have been full to capacity, so quality is not necessarily a factor.

BLTC is succeeding with the public where others are failing, for 6 reasons — we have our own theatre, we try to supply shows that our perceived audience would like to see, we actively solicit membership, we seek the names and

addresses of regular patrons and we try to keep them interested and informed about our future projects. To this end, this newsletter is an invaluable tool. Additionally, we work through our Committee to keep constantly focussed.



**Frankly, my Liege, SIR Trevor Nunn's joust with SIR Jonathan Miller isn't a patch on Lewis v. Tyson.**

# Quotes Quiz

by  
Tony Orman

I don't expect you to know the answers. I got these quotes out of *Familiar Quotations* by John Bartlett, and I hadn't heard of many of them. So if you don't know the answers then you're in good company — mine! But I think the answers are interesting. Okay, who wrote the following:

1. To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.
2. He did not see any reason why the devil should have all the good tunes.
3. The right to trial by jury shall be preserved.
4. Wonders will never cease.
5. All is well that ends well.
6. Extraordinary how potent cheap music is.
7. Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.
8. Sometime they'll give a war and nobody will come.
9. I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky.
10. Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out.

Answers at bottom of page.

# AGM

We wish to remind you once again that the next Annual General Meeting of BLTC will take place at the Club on Sunday, 15 September at 7.30 pm. After the skirmishing that calls itself a meeting, drinks will be served in the bar, the first of which will be free to all paid-up members attending the meeting.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) in *Virginibus Puerisque*.
2. Rev. Rowland Hill (1744-1833)
3. Seventh Amendment to the US Constitution (1791)
4. Sir Henry Dudley (1745-1824) in a letter to David Garrick, Sept. 13, 1776.
5. John Heywood (1497-1580) in *Proverbs* (1546).
6. Noel Coward (1899-1973) in *Private Lives*. The music playing is his own hit song 'I'll See You Again'.
7. Muhammad Ali (1942- )
8. Carl Sandberg (1878-1967) in *The People, Yes* (1936).
9. John Massfield (1878-1967) in *Sea Fever* (1902).
10. Timothy Leary (1920-1997) in the title to a lecture in 1967.



# Summer beckons

THIS delightful 1920s ad for the old LNER Railway reminds us that the huge Edinburgh Festival is now upon us. Are you going? Did you ever go? Today the Festival presents a vast panoply of events in what has become the Olympic Games of Art. Supported by the Festival Committee there is Theatre Music, Dance, and Film — to say nothing of the world's most extensive Festival Fringe of hopeful wannabe's and struggling artistes of all stripes. Everyone should go at least once in their life, if you can get a room to sleep in. Any reader who does go is welcome to share their experiences with us.

## Audition: Second call

### Whodunnit

Directed by Don Cherrett.

The reading of this play will take place at the Club on Friday 13 September at 7.30 pm. The auditions will be held at the Club on Friday 20 September at 7.30 pm.

If you are interested and want to know more (or if you can't make the audition date) you can call Don on 01202 690952.

*Whodunnit* is a Comedy Thriller by Anthony Shaffer (author of *Sleuth* and *The Wicker Man*). Don is presenting this show at the Club from Monday 9 to Saturday 14 December,

2002. This witty, wickedly funny satire, a long-running success on Broadway, is firmly in Agatha Christie country of the 1930s, complete with her stock of characters and situations. A group of strangers have gathered for dinner at Orchas Champflower Manor. One of the guests informs each of his fellow guests that he has the means to get blackmail them. Not surprisingly he gets murdered — but whodunnit?

This play offers a variety of sizeable parts for 7 men and 3 women over a range of ages (from early 20s to late 80s) — so everyone is eligible to audition!

## Another thought

VISITING Shakespeare's Globe, this summer? Well, you can, at a price, sleep in the replica Golden Hind, moored a short walk away from the theatre. It is one of Southwark's better kept secrets.



# Reminders

### Mon./Sat. 2-7 September 2002

Performances of Absurd *Person Singular* at the Club at 7.45 pm.

### Friday 13 September 2002.

Reading of *Whodunnit* at the Club at 7.30 pm.

### Sunday 15 September 2002

Annual General Meeting of BLTC at the Club at 7.30 pm.

### Friday 20 September 2002.

Auditions for *Whodunnit* at the Club at 7.30 pm.

### Mon./Sat. 21-26 October 2002

Performances of *Donny Boy* at the Club at 7.45 pm

### Mon./Sat. 9-14 December 2002

Performances of *Whodunnit* at the Club at 7.45 pm

### Mon./Sat. 17-22 February 2003

Performances of *Death of a Salesman* at the Club at 7.45 pm

### Mon./Sat. 14-19 April 2003

Performances of *Waters of the Moon* at the Club at 7.45 pm

### Mon./Sat. 2-7 June 2003

Performances of *Boeing-Boeing* at the Club at 7.45 pm

# Your Committee

Chairman	Don Gent 389725
Secretary	Hugh Norris 761400
Treasurer/	
Bar Manager	Noel Davenport 766690
Membership Secretary/	
Newsletter	Tony Orman 554291
Advertising Manager	Derek Hyder 424640
Wardrobe	Hilary Jefferys 298356
House Director	Clifford Page 874795
Properties	Ginnie Waters 718290

## Deb's Cookery Corner

BLTC Member Mrs Alix Norris (seen right) offers a great classic vegetarian recipe — **Curry Nut Roast**



### Ingredients

- ½ lb hazel/brazil/walnuts finely chopped
- ½ lb fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium red pepper, de-seeded and finely chopped.
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 3 oz brown breadcrumbs
- 1 clove garlic, finely crushed
- 2 tpsps fresh mixed herbs
- 1 tbsps mild (or hot!) curry powder
- 1 egg, well beaten
- salt and pepper.

Oven 425 F or 220 C

### To prepare

#### Grease one large baking tin.

Gently fry the onion and chopped pepper in a little oil until soft, add garlic. Meanwhile, mix the nuts, breadcrumbs, herbs and curry powder. Stir in the onions, pepper garlic, and tomatoes, mix thoroughly and season with salt and pepper.

Add beaten egg.

Pour mixture on to pre-prepared tin and bake 30-40 minutes.

The flavour is best if the roast develops a crust before serving.

Serve with a spicy tomato sauce.

# Limericks competition results

RESPONSE to our limericks competition was outstanding, the biggest we have ever had, in fact. Thanks go to Hugh Norris who came up with the idea. We are all very gratified by the general high standard achieved by our Members and Playgoers alike. The standard was very high, but, in the nature of such things, there has to be a winner.

I judged the limericks for scan-sion, for general content and finally for quality of *double entendre*. I preferred the two limericks provided by Ms Monica Dorey, one of our Playgoers. I am only sorry we don't have room for all of the entries.

Ms Dorey's entry reads as follows:

*A pretty young actress from Bude*

*Whose hobby was savouring*

*food,*

*One day, in her bath,*

*Ate beans for a laugh,*

*And what happened next was quite rude!*

*An actor who came from Skegness*

*Was given the part of Queen Bess.*

*He took to this role*

*With body and soul,*

*And his sexlife was not a success.*

Ms Dorey wins the four free tickets and our thanks. Well done!