



Bournemouth
Little Theatre News



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Member Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain Friday, 21 March 2003

We Present
At Jameson Road

Monday to Saturday
14 to 19 April 2003
at 7.45 pm

A Gentle Drama

Waters of the Moon

by N C Hunter

Directed by
Hugh Norris

For more about the show and booking arrangements, see page 2

The Director



Hugh Norris

We are in the early 1950s.

The dull routine of a modest and shabby private hotel in the West Country is broken by the arrival of unexpected and exciting guests whose car breaks down nearby. Helen Lancaster, a vivacious and attractive woman, together with her husband and 18 year old daughter are well and truly snowbound.

In this setting, the effect of these sophisticated newcomers on the household is both comic and tragic, as certain relationships develop and inevitable strains begin to show.

This is a subtle and gentle drama, about what happens when two very different groups of people are thrust together: the very rich and the very poor.

It is a period play, but it is about real people.

Waters of the Moon

The Performers



Tommy Egerton



Noel Davenport



Tess Hutton



Mike Satchell



Virginia Harrington



Don Gent



Debra Heyse



Jason Green



Joy Taylor

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 31 March to Friday 4 April
OR Monday 7 April to Friday 11 April

Please Note

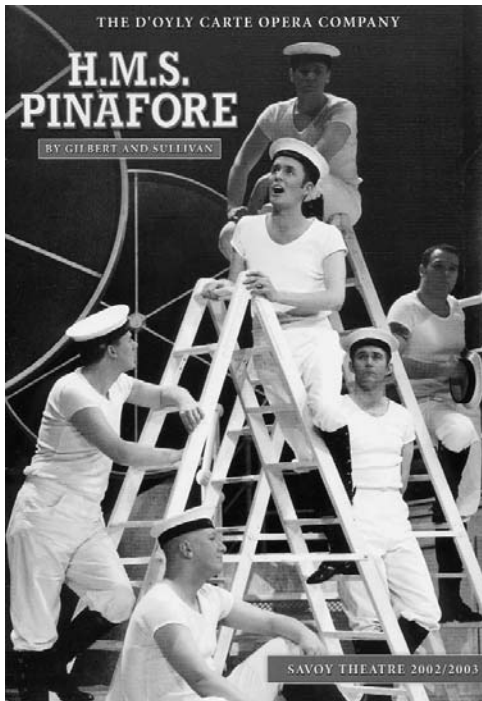
The Box Office is not open for callers in person or by phone at Jameson Road the week before any show. Tickets booked and paid for with S.A.E. will be issued two weeks before the show in the order the bookings were received. If you have a problem after receiving your tickets, phone Sue on the dates and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

More of the same

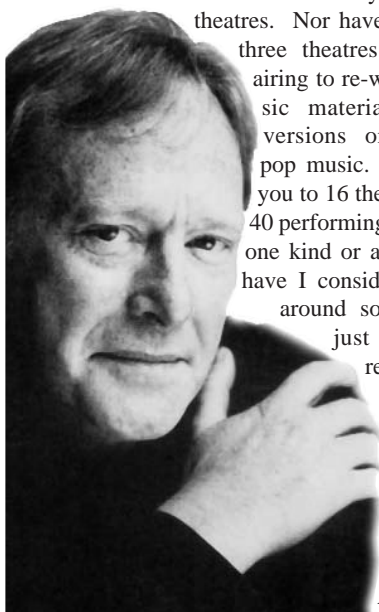
A Playgoer recently writing to us indicated that, like all amateurs, we do mostly revivals and don't encourage new talent.

So **Tony Orman** has taken a look at what the big boys in the West End of London were up to as of mid January 2003.

TIRED of the same old stuff, trotted out time and time again? Bored with seeing the same show done by one amateur company after another? Well, why not head up to the Great Wen — the City of Sin? Yes, take a look at the new delights of the nation's capital.



And be surprised — by the fact that out of about 40 West End Theatres, about seven are currently showing what I would strictly call “true” revivals. I do not include in the list approximately six theatres currently or very recently offering the classics. That takes you up to 13 theatres. Nor have I included three theatres giving an airing to re-worked classic material, musical versions or rehashed pop music. That takes you to 16 theatres out of 40 performing retreads of one kind or another. Nor have I considered shows around so long they just *feel* like revivals.



Dennis Waterman

Prominent not because of advertising and the like, but because of its intrinsic appeal. How could one not warm to the thought of all that sparkly music, charming and comical lyrics and scatty plot by the famous collaborators Gilbert and Sullivan, mounted by a newly reconstructed D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and performed at the actual Savoy The-

atre (well, the *rebuilt* theatre on the site of the one that burned down)? So much history and theatre legend, all encapsulated in one show!

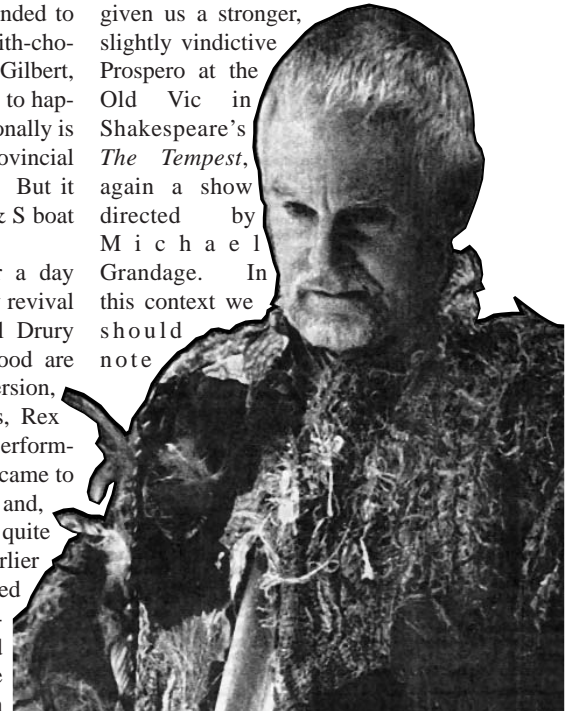
Unfortunately, when I saw it on Christmas Eve, the house was only a quarter full, and this may have affected the cast. Or maybe it was the fault of the director. But the show, for all the attempted choreographic movement, intended to break up the static presentation of solo-with-chorus numbers originally designed by WS Gilbert, was largely flat and lifeless. I expect this to happen in amateur G & S, which I think personally is a form of torture inflicted upon us by provincial (and well-meaning) amateur companies. But it seemed sad in the West End. Has the G & S boat finally sailed into the sunset?

The G & S damp squib came after a day when I was truly thrilled to witness a new revival of *My Fair Lady* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. My late teens and early adulthood are redolent with memories of the original version, in the same theatre with Julie Andrews, Rex Harrison and Stanley Holloway. Their performances are indelibly etched in my brain. I came to the revival expecting to be unimpressed and, to be fair, none of the new performances quite matched the *elan* and originality of the earlier starring roles, although I was impressed with the all-round acting and singing abilities of Dennis Waterman in the Alfred Doolittle role. But what was new to me was an appreciation that this was more an ensemble production in which the work of the leading actors blended seamlessly with the splendidly choreographed, danced and sung choruses. The set design, enhanced by the most modern techniques of stage furniture and properties movement I have ever seen, was outstanding. Since I know every musical note of the original show, I was particularly entranced by the subtle and clever additional scoring to take account of new dance routines worked into the old show. I was genuinely moved, close to tears by the end, to see such a perfectly splendid and truly professional theatrical work of art. I know it is sometimes said that amateurs can be as good as pros. But not on this scale. I hope Alan Jay Lerner, Frederick Loewe and, above all, George Bernard Shaw are resting in peace. They should.

Unfortunately, I haven't had the time or the money to see the other true revivals. But I see that *Grease* is gracing the Victoria Palace, *Blood Brothers* is at the Phoenix and *Abigail's Party*, which was an outstanding success for BLTC a couple of seasons ago, is back at the New Ambassadors. And Anthony Shaffer, whose comedy *Whodunnit* we put on in December, is blessed by a new revival of his most famous play, *Sleuth*, at the Apollo. It is particularly interesting to see a revival of Noël Coward's drama *The Vortex*, playing at the Donmar Warehouse, directed by the new Great Man of the theatre, Michael Grandage. This was Coward's first hit, in 1924. Coward is noted today for comedy, but *The Vortex* was a serious drama dealing with drug addiction, and the hint of homosexuality, which was fairly revo-

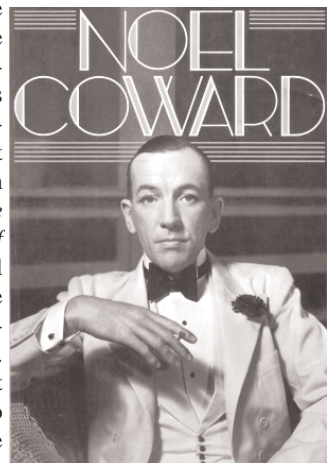
lutionary in its day. The present version is, if not revolutionary, definitely ground-breaking, with a Nigerian actor cast as the son of two white parents.

In the area of classics, Sean Bean has been starring in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* at the Albery, while Derek Jacobi has given us a stronger, slightly vindictive Prospero at the Old Vic in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, again a show directed by Michael Grandage. In this context we should note



Derek Jacobi

the continuing success of the Reduced Shakespeare Company, Americans who are able to reduce the entire works of the Bard to a ninety-minute farce. Okay if you like college humour: they are still at the Criterion, and they do go on tour from time to time. The Royal National Theatre has been including in its latest repertory John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* as well as Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*. And I don't have room to mention the rest of the classics now on show in Town.



So it is not just amateurs who rely on old material. Is there anyone out there who would like to write us an original play? Is some local playwright itching to get a new piece on the stage? Well, bring it to our Play Directors Meeting at the Theatre next Friday, 28 March at 7.30 pm and show it to us.

If not, then we'll be forced to put on revivals — just like the West End.

Theatre Quiz

by
Sheridan Morley

Most hit stage musicals, and not a few flops, have been based on plays that were originally songless: some have been derived from films (although the traffic is usually of course in the other direction) and many more owe their origins to major 'legit' classics.

1. *My Fair Lady* (1956) is based on Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Name another of his plays that became a stage musical.
2. *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Comedy of Errors* have all been made into Broadway and/or London musicals: what were they called?
3. What musical did Alan Ayckbourn write with Andrew Lloyd Webber, and on what was it based?
4. What started out as *Green Grow The Lilacs*, opened as *Away We Go* and reached Broadway to become one of the greatest of all musical triumphs under another title change?
5. What musical only reached the stage for the first time in 1983, fully thirty years after it had first been seen on the screen?
6. 'More naval than military,' was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's famous verdict on the costumes for one of the most popular of all English musical comedies. What was it and who wrote it?
7. Name stage musicals (as opposed to operas and operettas) with music composed by

- a. Bizet, b. Borodin, c. Chopin, d. Dvorak, e. Grieg, f. Schubert, g. Johann Strauss, h. Verdi

Answers below

1. The *Chocolate Soldier* (1909) by Oscar Straus and Stanislaus Stranz was a pirated adaptation of Shaw's *Arms and the Man*.
2. *Othello* became *Catch My Soul in the Shrew* in 1957; *Twelfth Night* became *Your Own Thing* in 1968; *The Taming of the Shrew* became *Kiss Me Kate* in 1948; *The Merchant of Venice* became *The Angel in 1977*; *The Comedy of Errors* became *The Boys From Syracuse* in 1938.
3. *Jeeves* (1975); it was based on the stories of P G Wodehouse.
4. *Okkhotom!* (1943) by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.
5. *Singin' in the Rain* in 1983 at the London Palladium.
6. *Chu-Chin-Chow* (1916); music by Fred-eric Norton, book and lyrics by Oscar Asche.
7. (a) *Carmen Jones* (1943); (b) *Kismet* (1953); (c) *White Lilacs* (1928); (d) *Sun-mer Song* (1956); (e) *Song of Norway* (1944); (f) *Lilac Time* (1922); *The Great Waltz* (1937); (h) *My Darling Aida* (1952); all were musicals which set new lyrics (and sometimes plots) to classic scores.

Review

LINDA KIRKMAN of the Daily Echo reviewed our February two-evening show *Four One-act Plays*. Linda wrote:

"THE CLUB is really on a roll at the moment, and this evening of plays about marriage was marked by strong, naturalistic performances all round and, as ever, spot-on direction from Jack Snell.

Gilhooly Came, the Club's 2003 One-Act Play Festival entry, is a highly original and amusing play, albeit with decidedly sinister undertones, that might well be sub-titled 'Games People Play'.

The plot is simple enough — man returns home after 9 months at sea to find wife in bed with another

man. But as the married couple (Jane Wright and Jack Snell) talk, question and explain, the other man (Stephen Watton) begins to look more and more like a victim of them both.

Mixed Doubles consisted of three amusing short plays — *A Man's Best Friend* (Tess Hutton & Peter Beebee), *Score* (Nicola King & Don Gent) and *Silver Wedding* (Pat Gray & Mick Wright) — that, although viewing marriage with a slightly jaundiced eye, had more than an element of reality about them. And it was good to see that the cast shared the non-acting tasks too, even coming off stage after one play to immediately be the prompter (unfortunately needed on a few occasions) in the next."

New Honorary Life Members

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE has granted Honorary Life Membership to the following, in recognition of the many years of invaluable service that they have given to BLTC, for which we thank them. They are:

Paul Caton
Alastair Griffith
Valerie Griffith
Norah Heathcote



Paul Caton and Alastair Griffith

Play directors' meeting

AT THE RISK of boring readers looking for exciting nuggets of information or titillating titbits, we have to remind aspiring play directors that there will be a meeting at the theatre at 7.30 pm next Friday, 28 March, whereat the People's Praesidium will convene to receive scripts and ideas from those wishing to direct one of our plays next season. We advertised the meeting in our last edition, so if you do so aspire, but want to have more information, please contact Chairman Don on 01202 389725: and — hey, here's a new idea — why not come to the meeting and present your play?

Brownsea Open Air Theatre

Don't forget to book early to see the 2003 BOAT production of *Romeo and Juliet* on Brownsea Island running from July 23 to August 9 on alternate nights. You can get full particulars by writing to The Box Office, Dept HB BOAT, P O Box 338, Poole, BH17 7ZT. Tickets are priced at £15 each. Remember this show sells out early every year.

Review

LINDA KIRKMAN saw our February 2003 production of *Death of a Salesman*. She wrote in the Daily Echo:

"ARTHUR Miller's play is, for good reason, a classic, but its subject matter and way of connecting present miseries with past traumas can make it a harrowing one to watch.

BLTC's minimalist set, use of projected back-screen images and what were at times rather strange lighting effects to depict flashbacks took a little getting used to, but, that apart, it will remain in my memory as nothing short of a brilliant production. And that is mainly due to David Weeks, who conceived this adaptation, directed — the latter with Mike Satchell's assistance —



Director Don Cherrett

In Memoriam

IT IS WITH REGRET that we have to tell you of the recent deaths of a life member and of some former members of BLTC.

First we heard of the passing of **Philip Mutton**, who died in late January 2003. As an active member until his death at age 94 (and as a Life Member) there is a full two-page insert about him with this newsletter.

We then heard of the passing of **Eileen Waters** who died early in February 2003. She had worked backstage on shows for the Club, mainly helping her brother Bill Waters who died more than a decade ago.

Then we heard of the passing of **Lilian Colley**, at the end of February 2003, still well known to our older active members. She acted in productions and later worked backstage. She is survived by her husband Don, a stalwart active member until ill health prevented him, and to whom we offer our condolences.

We also wish to record the passing of **Dennis Bowden**. He died in early March 2003. He was a singer. He performed for BLTC in two versions of *Dark of the Moon* a decade apart.

and through force of circumstances belatedly took on the lead role of Willy Loman.

This is his finest hour yet, and he absolutely lives to his fingertips every emotion of a man fighting all but the right battles and going to the grave without ever really learning who he is. His final scenes with enlightened son Biff, played outstandingly by Paul Mole, are intensely moving and almost worth the ticket price alone.

Virginia Harrington also excels as his wife, Linda, as does Dan Almond, although occasionally inaudible, as elder son Happy, and there are strong performances too from the supporting cast.

If you have a ticket — it's sold out — you're in for a wonderful evening."

Reminders

Fri.28 March 2003.

Open Meeting of Play Selection Sub Committee at the Club at 7.30 pm. Directors are welcome

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