



Backstage

The Magazine of SLTC Ltd & the SLTC Members' Club - April 2011

backstage@southlondontheatre.co.uk



The Blue Room

by David Hare (freely adapted from Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*)

Tues 5th - Sat 9th April, Bell Theatre

The Blue Room is based on a series of vignettes written by Dr Arthur Schnitzler in 1896. It explores various themes including the seemingly pointless nature of sexual connections, love, longing and the fickleness of human behaviour that is based largely on who we are interacting with at any given moment.

In Hare's retelling, the story remains the same, ten characters fall in and out of bed with each other, never quite finding fulfillment but the setting and some of the ideas have changed.

The backdrop for *The Blue Room* is described ambiguously as 'one of the great cities of the world, in the present day'. This is indicative of how the landscape and characters can transcend time and place. Perhaps attitudes have changed but the basic feelings associated with these interactions and relationships have not.

Whether we speak about the original version of the play that caused police action to ensue or the media hyped more recent production that saw Nicole Kidman in the lead role, it has had the same effect....audiences flocked to both productions.

Cast

Alan Brown - Politician

David Clements - Student

Natalie Askey - Model

Matt Hudson - Taxi driver

Patricia Duarte - Au Pair and Dancer

Richard Bennison - Aristocrat

Rosa Suddards - Girl and Dancer

Imelda Maguire - Girl and Dancer

Sean Garratt - Playwright and Principal Dancer

Tracie Laurinaitis - Married Woman

Jenny Gammon - Actress

Vanessa Colls - Dancer / Ensemble

Maria Bates, director

The Dog In The Manger

by Lope de Vega
in a translation by David Johnston



19 - 23 April 2011 at 8pm

Box Office: 020 8670 3474
South London Theatre, The Old Fire Station,
2A Norwood High Street, London, SE27 9NG
www.southlondontheatre.co.uk



The Dog In The Manger

by Lope de Vega in a translation
by David Johnston

Tues 19th - Sat 23rd April, Prompt Corner

Boss falls for secretary. Secretary is interested, but is already involved with someone else. But going with the boss would be a huge step up socially, or might bring everything crashing down around their heads. How little things change: ever fallen in love with someone you shouldn't have?

Diana, the independent, headstrong and beautiful Countess of Belflor, is a woman in the habit of seeing off the various men in pursuit of her hand, until she finds herself becoming increasingly attracted to her personal secretary, Teodoro. This is not a union that the rigid society they inhabit would readily permit, and things are complicated further by Teodoro's existing relationship with Marcela, one of Diana's ladies in waiting.

Suspecting Diana's feelings for him, Teodoro is quick to cast aside Marcela, who is not best pleased. Nor are Diana's current suitors, the pompous Federico and Ricardo; when they discover where Diana's affections really lie, they soon hatch a scheme to dispose of Teodoro.

We have a fine cast for David Johnston's fast paced translation Lope de Vega's bittersweet satire of lust, class, jealousy and love, described by Michael Billington of *The Guardian* as "like *The Duchess of Malfi* played for laughs". With a mixture of familiar and new faces in a splendid array of period costumes, backed up by a very experienced production team including Charlotte Vaight, Graham Clements and Mike Elliott, this should be a grand evening out.

And for those of you who quake at the idea of the language in a play from a contemporary of Shakespeare, fear not; there isn't a thee or thou in sight.

Cast

Diana, Countess of Belflor • Victoria Arter-Furlong	The Marquis Ricardo • David Blatcher
Teodoro, her secretary • Erik Smith	Celio, his servant • Anita Onwuegbuzie
Tristan, Teodoro's lackey • Michael Wilson	Count Federico, Diana's cousin • Adam Crook
Octavio, her old steward • Peter Medd	Leonido, his servant • Kerry Perkins
Fabio, her servant • Barry Heselden	Count Ludovico • Peter Medd
Anarda, her lady in waiting • Emma Kerby-Evans	Camilo, his advisor • Induja Bandara
Dorotea, her lady in waiting • Emma Baxter	Furio, a lackey • Kerry Perkins
Marcela, her lady in waiting • Roberta Zuric	Lirano, a lackey • Induja Bandara

Murder and mayhem from an entertaining Mr Orton

“A ROOM. Evening.” This is the only description Joe Orton gives to the setting of his best-known play, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*.

Stevie Hughes, directing at West Norwood’s South London Theatre (SLT) last week, filled it with a weird assortment of detritus suitable for a house built “in the midst of a rubbish dump”.

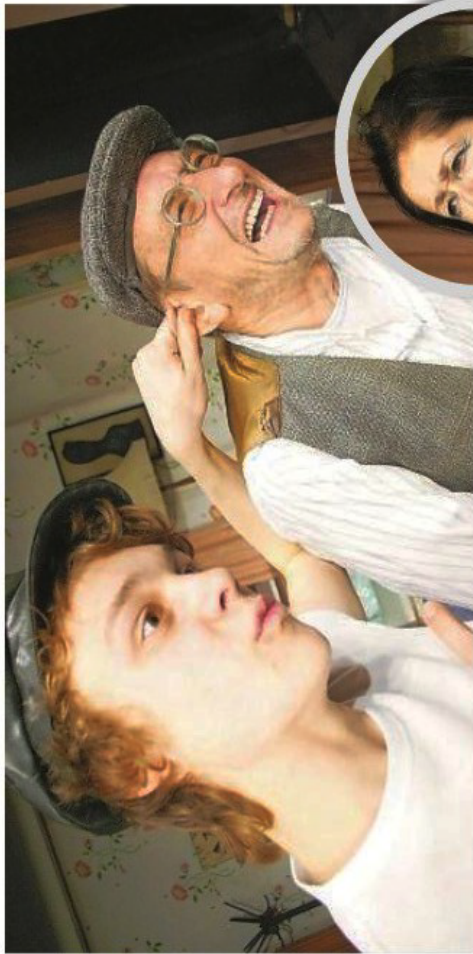
Orton’s black comedy sees fresh-faced young Mr Sloane (first name not mentioned) renting a room from an infantile, middle-aged woman called Kath. She’s clearly after more than just his rent money. In next to no time, she’s got him lying on her couch and stripped down to his Y-fronts.

Moments later, her brother Ed arrives, a chain-smoking entrepreneur whose idea of the highlife is a quiet drink in an Aylesbury hotel in the company of his male friends. He likes to see young men exercising in the nude, and he clearly likes Sloane.

Kath’s old man Dadda is the fly in the ointment. Wizened like a prune and squinting from milk-bottle glasses, he is suspicious of Sloane from the outset. He feels sure the young man is a murderer, a prophecy that is soon to be fulfilled.

Entertaining Mr Sloane is a wickedly funny exercise in the blackest of black comedy, and the SLT production boasted two fabulous performances.

Pat Brown’s flat-capped Dadda was a little caricatured, but then it’s a clichéd



WICKED: Mr Sloane (Ted Riley) pulls the ear of Dadda (Pat Brown) inset, Kath (Lorraine Spenceley).

part – Albert Sleetoe in all but name – so it’s hard not to play it that way.

In the title role, tangle-haired Ted Riley was perfect as Sloane. With a perpetual wrinkle in his eye and a smile playing round the corners of his mouth – usually at the bleakest of moments – he really caught the nuances of the character. And he looked great in tight leather trousers and cap.

Lorraine Spenceley’s Kath certainly looked the part too. There were flashes of brilliance in her performance. But the

actress’s hesitancy over lines prevented most of her scenes from truly taking flight. Her brother Ed, on the other hand, was played by Tim Witcomb in a manner I can only describe as a force of nature. Tall, gangling, veins throbbing in his temple, Witcomb was the star attraction of the piece. He breathed comic timing and utilised his body and facial expressions to squeeze every last drop of humour from the dialogue.

He may have occasionally overplayed the part, but that’s a minor gripe

considering the sheer entertainment value he provided.

● The next production at the South London Theatre is *4 Play* by Eddie Coleman, from February 15-19. Tickets: 020 8670 3474.

Mark Campbell

Breaking the Code

by Hugh Whitemore (based on the book Alan Turing the Enigma by Andrew Hodges)

Auditions

Sun 10th April, 6pm, Mon 11th & Tues 12th April, 8pm,

Performances

Tues 16th - Sat 20th August, Prompt Corner

Alan Turing was a brilliant mathematician, who became an obvious choice to join the code breaking team at Bletchley Park at the height of WWII, when the German U-boats were placing a strangle-hold on the seas around Britain. Turing made a major contribution the the breaking of the Enigma codes which, among other tactical advantages, allowed our navy to track and destroy the U-boats before Britain could be starved into submission. This and his work on artificial intelligence and computing machinery led him to be considered one of the fathers of modern computing.

Unfortunately he never got to see the technological revolutions that his work helped to kick-start. Following a routine police investigation into a burglary to his house in 1952 Turing let slip that Arnold Murray, who he suspected of being involved in the crime, had been a sexual partner of his. Homosexuality was still illegal in Britain and Turing broke the code of modern society by not only indulging in but not being ashamed of his true nature.

His treatment following this transgression is a particularly shameful event in recent British history for which our government finally offered a posthumous apology in 2009.

But it's not all doom and gloom! This play is much lighter and funnier than might be expected. Turing had a wicked, whimsical sense of humour which is very well reflected and a knack of speaking about his subject in a very entertaining and engaging way. He was also known to have a slight stutter which can be worked on in rehearsals.

The play moves backwards and forwards in time and Turing is depicted by the same actor as a schoolboy, during the war in his early thirties and at the end of his life in his early forties so I am very flexible with ages.

Cast (all ages are approximate)

Alan Turing, male 30 - 45

Mick Ross, male 30 - 45, a persistant detective.

Sara Turing, female 40-50, Turings mother.

Ron Miller, male 20-30, north-country working class.

Dillwyn Knox, male 55-65 Turing's supervisor.

Pat Green, female 25 - 36, a fellow mathematician at Bletchley.

Christopher Morcom male 15 - 19 a school friend of Turing's when he was a boy.

John Smith, male - 50, and upper class government representative.

Nikos, male 18 - 24 a good looking young Greek lad. Dialect coaching will be provided. Some partial nudity.

Auditions will involve group and individual readings from the play.

Audition pieces will be available in the bar shortly.

I look forward to seeing new and established members at the auditions.

Anton Krause, director

'SLTC 200 CLUB? What is it?'

It is a sporting way to raise money for our theatre, with the bonus of an occasional cash dividend.

It is evidence to any potential benefactor that SLT is making serious efforts off stage as well as onstage to help itself.

One share in the 200 Club costs only £12 per annum*

More shareholders would mean more and bigger prizes.

To join you will only need to fill in the Banker's Order Form which you will find in the bar. GOOD LUCK!

*Less than the price of half a pint or a glass of wine per month.'

SOCIAL SCENE

The royal wedding may be in April, but the SLTC Members' Club provides you with lots of reasons to turn off the television and get away from the hype. The first social of the month is the latest Sunday Night Session on 3rd April from 8pm, brought to you by Janet Low and Si Holland, with opportunities a-plenty for musicians, comedians, poets and other performers to strut their stuff in front of a friendly and welcoming audience. In particular, singers are encouraged to come along that afternoon to learn how to sing Bohemian Rhapsody (avoiding the style of BBC Political Correspondent Nick Robinson) in The Park pub (56 Elder Road, West Norwood) from 1 - 4pm before performing in the evening.

The Film Club continues its excellent 2011 season with a showing of Alfred Hitchcock's 1948 film 'Rope', from 8pm on Saturday 16th April.

The month ends with the return of one of last year's favourite events - the Cake Off, orchestrated again by Catherine Ellis! All are welcome to attend on Saturday 30th April, whether you're into competitive baking or just like to eat quite a lot of cake.

Review from “Sardines” Magazine

Entertaining Mr Sloane
by Joe Orton

Society: South London Theatre

Performance: 02 Feb 2011 | South London Theatre, West Norwood

Reviewed by: Paul Campion

In many ways, Joe Orton is the John Lennon of theatre.

Like Lennon, dying early saved Orton from decline. He will always be preserved in the memory as a mould-breaker, a rebel, a bad boy.

But what if he had lived? Would he have continued as an enfant terrible way past enfanthood? Would he have matured into a ‘Grand Old Man of the Theatre’? Or become an irrelevant, faintly embarrassing figure trading on past glories?

It’s an intriguing question and one that struck me as I watched SLT’s production of his debut play.

Terrence Rattigan called it “the best first play I have seen in thirty years”: high praise indeed as he was no fan of 1960s ‘New Wave’ writers. So does ‘Mr. Sloane’ (if you’ll forgive the Ortonian double entendre) still stand up?

Let me put my cards on the table: I am not particularly fond of Orton. I know he was groundbreaking, fearless, lethally witty, etc, etc. My problem is that like some early Monty Python, much of his work now seems a bit self-consciously ‘shocking’. A little – dare I say it – quaint?

At times his plays seem like early exercises in the Comedy of Cringe, sneering ‘Oh look how ghastly these people are, isn’t it hilarious?’ He doesn’t seem to like his characters very much. Which makes it hard to get involved with them.

This play contains some of the most ghastly characters Orton ever created: childlike Kath who lives with her seedy bisexual brother Ed and her decrepit nearly-blind father - or ‘Dadda’ - who takes in a young attractive thug as a lodger (the eponymous ‘hero’), setting in motion a battle for sexual possession, with the sly Mr. Sloane playing off sister against brother.

I have heard the character Mr. Sloane described as ‘an angel with the morals of an alley cat’. For me, Ted Riley was too much of the former and not enough of the latter, although perhaps this was more to do with his looks than performance. He certainly injected a greater degree of nastiness into later scenes, but I could have done with a touch more manipulative evil overall.

As Kath, Lorraine Spenceley was frustrating. She had the character’s look, voice, dreadful dress sense and wide-eyed childishness. Sadly, she didn’t quite have the lines, which blunted the comic edge of some dialogue. This may have been down to nerves (it was only the second night) but was a shame as in all other respects it was a nicely-judged performance.

As I say, I'm no Orton aficionado but Tim Whitcomb treated us to what I suspect could be the definitive 'Ed'. From his first perfectly-executed double-take when confronted with the alluring Mr Sloane to his nervy, incessant fag-smoking and constant thrusting of thumbs into his waistcoat pockets, this was a fine portrayal of an uptight man struggling (and failing) to control repressed homosexual hunger.

But for me the daddy (or rather 'Dad-da') of them all was Patrick Brown as Kath's father. The arthritic gait, the steady 'tap-tap-tap' of his walking stick, the toothless delivery, the slippers that had more hole than slipper... this was a superb performance and characterisation. My only quibble is, surely he would have emerged a little bloodier from the kicking he received behind the sofa?

Also excellent was Graham Clements and Stevie Hughes' set which - in keeping with Kath's 'taste' - was stuffed with tat and fittingly topped off with a view of a rubbish dump through the window. One criticism though: having gone to such care dressing the living room, why was there no suggestion of the hall through the door? And though the costumes were largely spot-on, I wasn't convinced by Mr. Sloane's low-slung jeans and sweater ensemble in Act 1. More Noughties than Sixties, I thought.

So did I come away converted to Orton? Not really. I still find him rather dated and his characters too one-dimensional. But for fans of 'Mr. Sloane' I'd say this production was definitely entertaining.

WEST NORWOOD FEAST LAUNCH PARTY 26th MARCH

The West Norwood Feast will be a monthly market event - with several small outdoor marketplace hubs around Norwood Road and Knights Hill, as well as events, performances and activities going on around the area on the first Sunday of the month starting on 3rd April. Those of you who went to the Norwood Expo will know all about it as they had a stall opposite ours. The main areas will be an Artisans' Market, Gardners' Corner (in Norwood Road) a Food Fair in St Luke's Gardens and a "Retro" Village outside Roseberry's Auction Rooms. Their web site is available through the URL www.westnorwoodfeast.com

They are intending to hold a launch party at the SLT on that evening, of course we cannot close the Bar to Members' so it will be open, but may be crowded and numbers restricted. The scheduled Quiz therefore will either be postponed or incorporated into the launch party, see web site message board for updates.

April Diary

Sun 3rd

Members' Club Bar

Sunday Night Sessions

Tues 5th - Sat 9th

Bell Theatre

The Blue Room

Sun 10th, Mon 11th & Tues 12th

Auditions for

Breaking The Code

Sat 16th

Members' Club Bar

Film Club Night:- Rope

Tues 19th - Sat 23rd

Prompt Corner

The Dog In The Manger

Sat 30th

Members' Club Bar

Cake Off 2

Backstage is published by the South London Theatre, 2a, Norwood High St., West Norwood, London, S.E.27 9NS. Box Office 020-8670-3474; Clubroom 020-8670-4661. www.southlondontheatre.co.uk. Please send copy for publication to backstage@southlondontheatre.co.uk, or by post to the address above marked "Backstage".

SLTC Ltd Annual General Meeting

NOMINATION FORM

Elections to the General Council - AGM Thursday 26th May 2011

I intend to propose: _____

for election to the office as indicated*

Signed.....

Dated.....

*tick or cross in the relevant box

I am willing to be elected

Signed.....

Dated.....

ALL NOMINATION FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOX OFFICE BY
THURSDAY 12th May 2009

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deputy Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | General Secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | General Stage Manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Theatre Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Membership Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Relations Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Training Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Representative Without Portfolio |

PROXY FORM

I, _____ [Name in block letters], being a fully paid-up member of SLTC Ltd,
hereby appoint: _____

to be my general proxy to vote at the AGM of the
above company to be held on 26th May 2011.

Signed.....

Dated.....

A proxy must be a fully paid-up member of the company
COMPLETED PROXY FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOX OFFICE
AT LEAST 48 HOURS BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF THE AGM

Extra copies of the nomination and proxy forms will be available from the notice board in the Members' Club bar.

SLTC Members' Club Annual General Meeting

NOMINATION FORM

Elections to the Members' Club Committee - AGM Thursday 27th May 2010

I intend to propose: _____

for election to the office as indicated*

Signed.....

Dated.....

*tick or cross in the relevant box

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deputy Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Treasurer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bar Manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Social Administrator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Committee Member |

I am willing to be elected

Signed.....

Dated.....

SLTC MEMBERS' CLUB PROXY FORM

I, _____ [Name in block letters],

being a fully paid-up member of SLTC Ltd,

hereby appoint: _____ as my proxy to vote at the AGM to be held on 27th May 2010, for the following nominees or, if not specified, at his or her discretion.

Name	Office
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signed.....

Dated.....