

# RADA

THE  
MAGAZINE

Issue No 14



*Iain Glen &  
The Blue Room*

*Disability &  
the new RADA*

*A producer's tale*

PLUS:

- RADA in Business
- The genius of Guinness

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# RADA

## THE MAGAZINE

### Issue No 14

We are the magazine of the Friends of RADA. We aim to provide a forum for new writing about the performing arts, to reflect the opinions of artists, technicians and administrators, of students and critics. And we hope to demonstrate the excitement of RADA's own work. The Friends include both graduates and others who wish to support the work of the Academy. We hope we will help you keep in touch with RADA and with each other. Please renew your links – or make new ones – by visiting the Academy and seeing the work of the present students. Write to us with your comments and opinions, or if you would like to make contact again with your contemporaries. We look forward to hearing from you.

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COVER AND RADA PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
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Lord Attenborough, Chairman of RADA, on a busy year – and more to come

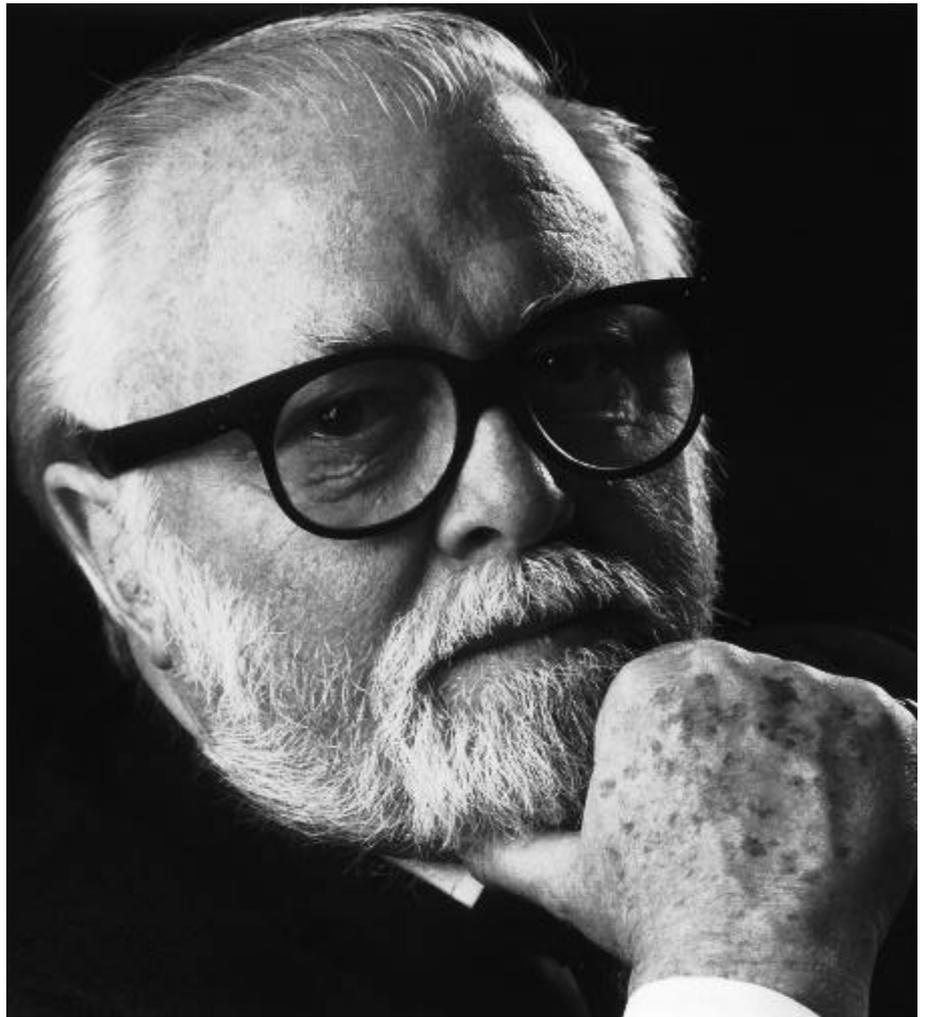
# *Now we're rada.org*

The Academy's staff had a particularly busy time last year. A great deal of the additional workload arose from the initiation of the Government's new Dance and Drama Award Scheme which applies to a number of the 820 students, throughout the UK, who embarked upon their courses in the autumn.

As with most new schemes, this one has presented us with some teething problems. Foremost is the extremely worrying lack of adequate maintenance provision for students from far afield who have to live in London during term-time. The financial crisis now facing such young people at RADA poses the very real threat that they may be forced to abandon their courses and return home.

As negotiations are still underway with the DFEE, the Academy remains optimistic that a more equitable form of provision may be forthcoming for the future. Meanwhile, although RADA has managed to raise very significant sums in new scholarship funding, we find ourselves obliged to launch a further campaign in order to support and retain the new intake of students who have come to us under the Dance and Drama Award Scheme in the current academic year.

On a brighter note, I am happy to report that construction work on the Gower/Malet Street site continued unabated throughout the second half of the year and the innovative shape and finer details of a very exciting new building are now part of the local landscape. It no longer seems hard to imagine that by this coming autumn, our student productions will be performed on the stages of three brand



Lord Attenborough

new, state-of-the-art, in-house theatres.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing the Council's gratitude to one of our most assiduous committee members who kindly volunteered to assume the further responsibility of setting up RADA's much needed website. Our sincere thanks go to Gordon Ashbee for all the time and effort he has invested in creating *www.rada.org* which, I am glad to say, is now up and running.

As part of its partnership funding pledge towards the Academy's Centenary Project, the BBC has undertaken to help us develop our website still further. This can only enhance a most useful and welcome initiative which, from the number of 'visits' and enquiries it has already elicited, will undoubtedly play an invaluable role in the worldwide marketing of all our activities as we embark upon the new millennium.

# View from *The Blue*

*LT: It was good to see you back on stage in **The Blue Room** (David Hare's new version of Arthur Schnitzler's **La Ronde** in which Nicole Kidman played all the female roles and Iain all the males) at the Donmar Warehouse. It was highly effective theatre and a glamorous event, not least because of your stunning execution of a full cartwheel in a state of complete dishabille!*

*Questions have been raised as to whether our largest stages like the RST at Stratford-upon-Avon will be operable in the future without microphones, or at all, although this season's **Othello** was a triumph. How did you find playing **Henry V** on that stage in 1994?*

IG: We were warned from the first day of rehearsal of the difficulties. Of course the play's language, summoning up huge armies requires a heightened force, and makes it suitable for a large house.

But generally I don't think larger spaces should encourage a lack of detail, because it is the ever-changing detail that keeps an audience watching and listening. There is a related problem: that we are losing the ability to adapt to a new space. The flexibility that came from extensive touring of large scale pieces is no longer a regular experience for most younger actors. I was excited by the prospect of transferring *The Blue Room* from the small Donmar Warehouse to New York's Court Theatre, a 1,000 seat turn of the century theatre. The space was very congenial, but despite what I have said, it was impossible to recreate the feeling at the Donmar of the audience being in the same room as us, hanging on our every flicker and sigh. This

meant that some of the nuances in the subtext were lost.

*Did things improve during the run? Could you have continued it?*

The pre-bookings broke records, so we could have run for a very long time, but I think we had both had enough. It had been a really special experience for Nic and I and we didn't want it to spoil. It's better leaving with a feeling of wishing you could do more.

*Especially if there was insufficient re-rehearsal. As I remember you had begun a professional career before coming to RADA, with at least one television play being broadcast during your training.*

I acted while at University in Edinburgh. Performing in *Bent* I was noticed by an agent who managed to get me an Equity card, but I craved the substantial training that RADA offered.

*What was the most significant component of your experience at RADA?*

The opportunity to perform in 15 to 20 Productions across the 2½ years, much much more than provided by other drama schools. You were being permanently employed as an actor and this made so much more sense of the other classes within the training. All class work could be specifically related to the play on which one was working.

*Is there anything you would have changed about your time at RADA?*

I wish there had been more training for working with cameras.

*We are planning much more – there is even a Media Working Party. You are maintaining a good balance between stage and screen, to what extent does the one inform the other?*

Film begs spontaneity, freshness and relaxation. Being comfortable with yourself. It's a different kind of concentration needed for close characterisation. Susie (Iain's wife, the actress Susannah Harker) says I am obsessed about it. It is true I fear distraction. Film gives you this reality: you don't have to imagine a lake, it is there in front of you.

This feeling grows with the intensity or abnormality of a role. For instance, when playing a prisoner (Larry Winters in *Silent Screams*) I had to be on my own when not filming through the day to maintain the appropriate level of isolation. It's obvious really. It just helps your imagination towards the right place.

The spontaneity and freshness are good things to take back into theatre, which can become stale through repetition. And theatre rehearsal, where you structure a role with a sense of the whole, is good to take to film, which often has no rehearsal and is always shot out of sequence.

*Has the combination of your RADA training and subsequent performing experiences made you director-proof?*

I've been lucky to work with really good directors. I shudder to think where some performances might have ended up without them. But I've worked with the odd crap one too. Nothing seems to provide an antidote to the depressing early days of rehearsal for a play when you lose faith in the director's taste,

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# Room

followed by the creeping sense that these doubts are shared by your fellow actors. Then you are on to survival tactics.

If the material is less than good – and a lot of TV writing is less than good – an actor often finds himself trying to compensate. A common fault in weaker writing is to highlight the subtext. Instead of leaving the actor to reveal buried exposition, it over-states it on the surface. Characters inhabiting a context will reveal that context early so the story moves forward. Unconfident writers feel the need to state the context early so the audience understands why the characters behave as they do. Chekhov was the master of buried exposition.

And of course I and many an actor have fucked up a sweetly written script! In *The Blue Room*, where I desperately needed the guidance of both David Hare and Sam Mendes I would have been up shit creek within a week without it. Acting with Nicole was very comfortable. When rehearsals are going well, I can relax and go for indirectness and lose the safety net of bouncing off the surface of the text, if that means anything.

*David Hare has spoken recently of the importance of rhythm in plays, which he has been made all the more aware of in translating Brecht, Chekhov and Pirandello. Colleagues at RADA concur. Yet it seems to elude many contemporary directors, which is frightening when you consider it is the equivalent of a conductor forcing musicians to play out of tune. To what extent were you aware of the rhythm of *The Blue Room*?*

I was all the more aware of the play's musicology because the writing is so



Nicole Kidman, Iain Glen in *The Blue Room*

sparse. It was wonderful how open David was to changes that developed his intentions and Sam is never a director who settles early and rigidly, but goes on listening to the text through runs and rehearsals. Not a single sound cue that was in place for the opening night had been there in the previews.

Sam wrestled to find a concept that would reflect the quality of the sex that occurs between each new combination of man and woman in every scene of the play. Productions of *La Ronde* have usually either suspended the action or used a straight black out during the coitus. Sam hit upon the idea of projecting on the backdrop the running

time of each coupling. This stark device conveyed surprisingly a whole range of information, comedic and sad, about the quality of the love-making.

But Sam wanted to support this with sounds. Initially white noise was used but in the first previews this sounded cold. Sam replaced this with individual cues for each scene, so there was Indian music for the actor and the model, lapping water for the politician and his wife in Venice, and so on. This seemed too cute. The final choice of crackling electricity conveying both temporary interruption of the visible action and the excitement of sex was very insistent but did not push the audience away.

Were there any textual alterations at the same stage to accommodate audience reaction?

In *La Ronde* the successive sexual encounters seem to take place in a relatively short space of time, but in *The Blue Room* quite clearly a year has passed between the first and final episodes. I loved the fact that unlike *La Ronde*, where the characters only know the partner they encounter, some of *The Blue Room* characters know about or, as in the case of the student and the politician, have known each other for a very long time. This adds such resonance to the action.

What you are describing was developed further in previews. For instance the opening scene of perfunctory, grabbed sex between the girl and the cab driver, where he wants a quick lay but she is reaching out for more, used to end with her shouting after him “Fucking wanker”. Sensing the preview audiences immediately warming to Nicole’s portrayal, David thought the line too harsh and changed it to “I’ll be here tomorrow”, which has a forward energy, ultimately picked up in the final scene when she tells the aristocrat that she has been seeing the cabbie for a year.

*The exposure of The Blue Room in New York can only increase your visibility to film producers in America. How do you feel about this, especially if it led to more work there? How would it effect your family life?*

Susannah and I have pretty much got the measure of each other now, and our relationship withstands short separations. It is difficult for our son (Finlay, 5). I hate being away from him



The enigmatic Mr Preston, *Wives and Daughters*

for more than a week, and that is certainly a contributing factor to why I have never wanted to spend long speculative periods in L.A. However, I would like to make more movies.

*Well, you will have packed a healthy number of U.K. screen projects into 1999: a TV classic serial (Elizabeth Gaskell’s **Wives and Daughters**, screened by BBC1 last Autumn/Winter); **The Wyvern Mystery**, a BBC film co-starring with Derek Jacobi; a feature film, **Paranoia**; a Granada drama, **Anchor Me**, with you playing a family man; and finishing the year with a Scottish film, **Night of the Creatures**. Did you enjoy working with Derek Jacobi?*

Yes, he was a treat. Jack Davenport and I couldn’t resist being irreverent. I told him my autobiography was called *My Days with the Knight*. He’s very playful as an actor, but very focussed.

His speed of thought is phenomenal. Any actor who wants to see how you engage by swift-changing thought and emotion should have a look at Jacobi.

*I have caught you in London during a week’s rehearsal for **Anchor Me** in which you play a father with a nearly grown up son. Did the luxury of a week’s rehearsal for a TV piece help acclimatise you to this advanced parenting?*

Of course it’s a fine script by Ashley Pharoah and good writing demands rehearsal, it needs investigating. Sadly, it’s a mark of how barren some TV and film writing can be that no rehearsal time is scheduled. To be honest you would not know what to do with it because there’s bugger all to think about. If you have the luxury to pick work, make your first priority the writing, not the medium, the pay, or the venue.

# *Towards a new horizon...*

I have always had two loves. One is theatre and film, the other is science. I guess I was never sure which of these I loved more. Four years ago, my secondary education finished, my parents offered me the chance to come to England to take a degree in biology. They thought it would be good for me to gain an education which would be recognised almost world-wide and they wanted me to broaden my views by meeting people from all over the world with different cultures and experiences. I was accepted unconditionally by all the eight universities I applied to. My choice was the University of East Anglia. Two and a half years later, I was preparing the last four examinations and the research project for my degree in Molecular Biology and Genetics. At the same I was looking towards undertaking a Masters degree in London.

Then my friend, who knew of my great love for theatre and film, prompted me to apply to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art because he believed I would be accepted and that I had real potential in that direction. I also wanted to apply so that I would not have to say later “It’s something I’ve always wanted to do, but I never even gave it a try”.

So I sent in my application form, quite late, and I was called for interview. I can still recall my thoughts on the way to RADA. “What am I doing? I am just going to embarrass myself! I shouldn’t have done this!”

The first hurdle was the questionnaire on technical theatre which is completed before the interview. Reading the questions, I realised immediately that I had a problem with my lack of knowledge of English theatre terms. Urged to take my time and say something(!), I tried my best to answer every question from general knowledge.



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*“Reading the questions, I realised immediately that I had a problem with my lack of knowledge of English theatre terms”*

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It was very gratifying to read that I had been more than modest regarding my level of technical knowledge and skill, but that I had “approached (my) subject with such a level of observation, flair, common sense and commitment that (I) was actually able to hand in a more skilfully handled technical questionnaire than many... who could claim more practical experience”!

I only mention this as an encouragement to other overseas applicants who may share my predicament!! Never for a moment did I think at the time I would be accepted for the Stage Management and Theatre Production course at such a prestigious school as RADA. Then I was offered a place and my life changed “dramatically”.

My lack of involvement in theatre or film at home was due more to the structure of our education system, rather than any lack of interest on my part. In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where I was born, the school system is very different from that in the United Kingdom. Children start school at the age of seven and, until the end of their secondary education (A-levels in the United Kingdom) they study between five and sixteen subject each academic year. Obviously, the older you are the more subjects you take on each year. None of these subjects is theatre or film orientated, though we study Literature, History of Art and History of Music in great depth, so that we have a very broad level of general knowledge and will be aware of the work of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Mozart or Van Gogh, for example.

There are some private schools that teach children acting, but they are hard to get into since they take only a very few of the most talented applicants. When they get older, most of these children will make their way to the Belgrade and Novi Sad Academies of Dramatic Art. Unfortunately, for those interested in the technical side of theatre and film, there is no such school until they have finished their secondary education. They can then apply to the Belgrade or Novi Sad Academies for an equivalent Degree.

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***“Belgrade is home to about two million people and has over ten large theatres and each of the larger towns has its own theatre. The programme changes every night and some plays might be staged just once a month”***

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Both Academies offer a wide range of degrees: acting, script writing, directing for film and television, directing for theatre and radio, editing, sound, camera, television and film production and radio and theatre production. Unfortunately, television and film production and theatre and radio production degrees are mostly theoretically based, rather than practically as is the course at RADA. Each degree at the Belgrade and Novi Sad Academies lasts four years. Every year has a number of compulsory subjects. Subjects can last one or more semesters and students take compulsory tests in each, that is, they must pass these tests before they may sit an examination. Exams are either written, or oral, or both. Each student must pass each part of examination in order to get a final mark.

Each semester theatre productions are mounted and short films made. Students on the television and film production or theatre and radio production courses will organise the production process, find props and furniture and bring in designers, scenic porters, costume designers, etc. It is quite similar to the second year of the RADA course, except that the Academies in Belgrade and Novi Sad do not have their own workshops.

Just as over here, it is very hard to get into an Academy at home, since they take a very small number of students, around ten each academic year. To win a place, each student must pass a number of tests. There are three rounds of these. The first round covers general knowledge of literature, film and theatre history, events, etc. You must pass this round in order to try for the second round. The second round is group work. Here you are given a job,

and you are watched to see how you interact with the team and what initiative you show. You must pass this round, too, to get on to the next round. The third and final round (if you ever get there!) is an interview, after which it is decided who will be accepted. That is why, just as here, there is very great competition to get into one of the Academies at home and the people who are successful are very proud of their special achievement.

Belgrade is home to about two million people and, like every metropolitan city in the world, it has over ten large theatres and many, many cinemas. Throughout the country, each of the larger towns has its own theatre. The theatre is run quite differently from here. The programme changes every night and some plays might be staged just once a month. The number of new productions depends on the subsidy the government gives to each theatre. Over the last ten years, these subsidies have been smaller, resulting in fewer new productions, around six

per year. This is due to the political situation my country is in.

Some productions are staged for some years, some for a few months, even weeks in some cases. This depends on their popularity with the public. Some plays may be taken off the programme for a few years and then revived. Some will never be played again. So every theatre must have very large storage rooms!

Actors are attached to the “house”. This means that they are employed by one theatre as a resident company. As employees of the theatre they receive monthly salaries whether or not they have played that month. So long as an engagement does not interfere with their work for the “house”, they are free to perform in other theatres. There are also a great number of actors, those who are well established in the profession, who are freelancers.

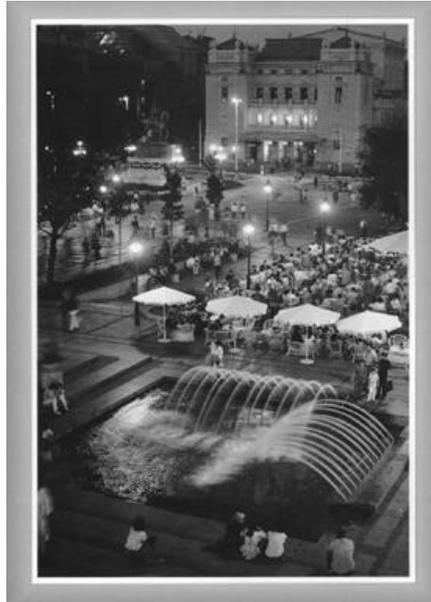
Directors and lighting designers work freelance. The stage management team, however, is permanently employed by the house. Our stage management structure reflects the European pattern and we call the stage manager the *inspient*. We also have assistant stage managers and a full range of technical heads of department, chief electrician, head of sound, property master, head of costume and so forth. Each member of this team will also have their own assistant. Each theatre will have its own workshops and costume store. Usually everything is made within the theatre.

Some of the more established actors combine their professional work with teaching acting technique at the Belgrade or Novi Sad Academies. The technical degrees are also taught by well-known people in the business in

addition to their professional engagements.

Theatre is quite affordable for everyone of whatever status at home. Tickets are not so expensive as here, so people go to the theatre much more often. Even now theatres are working every night. The price of all tickets is one *dinar*, which is the equivalent of 5p. Theatre is a special place for people at home. Actors and people from the theatre mix with ordinary people and make their voices heard, reflecting public opinion on many issues. That is one of the reasons why I love theatre, because of its warmth and the feeling of being at home it gives to me.

Belgrade is host to two very big international Festivals, as well as national festivals. The first one is a theatre Festival called BITEF (Belgrade International Theatre Festival). BITEF was founded in 1967 by Mrs Mira Trailovic (a famous Yugoslav actress) and Mr Jovan Cirilov (writer and for the last ten years Artistic Director of *Jugoslovensko Dramsko Pozoriste*; Yugoslav Drama Theatre). This festival is organised every year in September-October. Theatre companies come from all over the world to perform in this festival. The programme will include all kinds of plays from pantomime and Shakespeare to very modern, experimental work. The festival takes place in the theatre called BITEF Teatar, which, during the rest of the year, will have its own theatre programme. The number of artists who have attended this festival in the last 32 years is enormous, including Jerzy Grotowski, Living Theatre, Alwin Nikolais, Luca Roconi, Peter



Belgrade

Stein, Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Theatre de Complicité and many others.

The second festival is the International Film Festival called FEST. FEST is the Festival of all Festivals. The winning films from Festivals around the world get shown there. The government of the City of Belgrade founded this festival in 1970. FEST takes place every year in January-February. All kinds of films are presented from small independent productions to big American blockbusters. It is mounted in a big cinema theatre called *Sava Centar* and is highly popular. Famous people from the entertainment industry from home and overseas always visit this festival.

Both these two International festivals as well as many national ones, attract huge audiences and are referred to as *institutions*.

So now I am at RADA and half way towards where I want to be. So far every day has been a fantastic experience. I love being here, I love being involved in the process of mounting plays and learning all the "tricks". I am looking forward to the second year even more, learning from personal experience what stage managing is all about. So far I have no regrets and I am very happy, not least in the interesting people I have met and friends I have made from the technical

courses, the acting course, the staff, designers and directors.

Of course I may grumble sometimes... but I know very well that it is so important to learn every step of the production process, even if that involvement sometimes includes sweeping the floor! RADA has given me the chance and I am going to grasp every opportunity the course offers to achieve my goals in theatre.

I went to Belgrade in August. I was very emotional to see my parents, sister, friends and town again after seven months, part of which they had lived through an exceptional experience of war. The thing that struck me was that everything looked normal at first sight, but buildings were destroyed and the economy ruined, yet people were in quite good spirit and talked about past months as about something that happens every day.

The interesting thing is that BITEF happened again in September. There were few countries presenting their work: Italy, Israel, Croatia. I had a chance to see how one of our plays, *A Midsummer Night Nightmare*, was prepared for BITEF. It was such an extraordinary experience to see with what kind of enthusiasm people work and how art has no boundaries.

I came back to UK in mid-September with lots of positive energy and an even bigger desire to work. I also realised how blessed I am to have the chance to live in London and study at RADA.

*Mina was the Stage Manager for **The Jew of Malta** and the DSM for **The School for Scandal**. In the New Year her professional attachment is at the Almeida Theatre where she will work on their production of **Richard II**.*

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In a two-part series, **Catherine Bailey** traces her globetrotting path from emergency wardrobe aide to success as an independent producer

# *A lot of luck and a bit*

I was a child of the 60s and planning a career was not an important priority in my life. I did everything I could think of to delay my destiny. It has taken me 20 years to realise what was going to give me the satisfaction and fulfilment I needed and how to make it happen for myself.

My first piece of good fortune was that I was expelled at the age of fifteen from my Roman Catholic Secondary Modern school. I was then persuaded by my mother to take O levels at the new local comprehensive, and later managed to fit in a couple of A levels (although I did not actually get around to taking the English one until I was 27). My sister was working as an airline stewardess at the time and I managed to hitch a lift to New York while I was still only 16. In America I discovered Greyhound buses, free love and 50 flavours of ice-cream. The following year, as I had been working every day in a petrol station, before going to school, I managed to save some money. I paid my own fare and worked my way all over the States, teaching swimming, collecting artefacts on an archaeological dig and ultimately, delivering cars. By this time I had also been chucked out of the “go-ahead-we-don’t-need rules” comprehensive for going AWOL (they finally noticed).

A succession of jobs included answering telephones for a cinema chain. The woman who sat next to me worked as a stage manager when she wasn’t answering phones, and suggested that I visit all the stage doors in the West End and ask for a job. Such glib suggestions can of course change a life. I left my phone number with master carpenters, wardrobe mistresses, chief electricians – anyone, in fact, who would write it down. Nobody called. So I went back to my beloved America and

this time took in Canada, the Caribbean and the whole of Central America, including the Nicaraguan/Honduras war. After over a year of being on the road there was still no career plan and I was completely without money.

This coincided with an uncle dying and leaving me £200. It took a couple of weeks to reach me in the murky depths of Panama City but paid for the cheapest cabin on the SS Arcadia which took me as far as Miami. From there I flew home.

Two days after my return I was sitting in my parent’s kitchen wondering what

theatre which has continued ever since. The supposedly fickle and volatile theatre has, without doubt, been the most stabilising influence in my life. Immediately I stepped inside I felt I had come home. I had found the very thing I had travelled the world for and all it had taken was one fortunate piece of timing and the desire to try something new. It didn’t stop me from travelling either: later I was able to incorporate travel into my new career.

I applied only to RADA, for the stage management course. I knew of no other drama school, but my experience overseas helped in my interview. Looking back, the transition from rat-infested hotels in Central America to the Vanbrugh seemed to take place during some kind of dream.

I was not prepared for the amount of discipline that I was to encounter there, but I came to understand how discipline is a key to making things work for yourself. I learned how to be organised and how to apply common sense to problem-solving, skills I have found useful in all walks of life. I also met a diverse group of characters who had only one thing in common – putting on a production. There were five stage management students taken on each term and we became inseparable. One of them was Charlie Chaplin’s son. At the end of the year we all attended his wedding in Switzerland and I was lucky enough to meet the great man himself.

I served my apprenticeship at Farnham repertory company, became an SM on various out-of-town shows and did a stint on a cruise ship. I had to go back to being an ASM to work at the National Theatre, where for three years I observed many good directors from my corner of the rehearsal room. The experience was invaluable but

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*“The transition from rat-infested hotels in Central America to the Vanbrugh seemed to take place during some kind of dream”*

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the hell to do next when the wardrobe mistress called from the Prince of Wales Theatre. Somebody had dropped out and they had a dress rehearsal that night for Anthony Newley’s new show. Clearly she was reaching the bottom of the list when she arrived at my number, now well over a year old.

That day turned out to be the beginning of my love affair with the

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# *of bravado*

ultimately not enough. I became frustrated by the lack of creative contribution you could make to productions in those days.

I applied for a job at the BBC but didn't get it. I left the National and did some directing on the fringe for no money at all. Then I went to Australia to look for a job, which turned out to be easier than I imagined. My qualification from RADA and experience at the National Theatre seemed to do the trick and I toured all over the continent as an SM before returning home via the South Pacific and China.

Later, I travelled throughout Europe, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Middle East with the actress Geraldine McEwan. The British Council sponsored her show, derived from the novels of Jane Austen, which I lit and managed. The experiences we had playing in these countries would fill a book in itself. In remote jungle village halls we learned how to overcome noisy overhead fans, babies crying and bats swooping down on us during performances, while outside we encountered cyclones and curfews.

Inside an arts centre in Calcutta the audience quoted vast chunks of Jane Austen to us while outside our hotel window we saw a beggar give birth on the street. Between venues we found time to appreciate and reflect on this great land of contrasts as we travelled from the coral islands of the Maldives all the way to the Himalayas. After spending time in the Indian sub-continent your life is never quite the same again.

With so many turning points in my career it is hard to pin-point the next important one, but it has to be Hampstead Theatre. I went as an SM



Catherine Bailey

but somehow managed to create my own position there as a production manager, which the theatre desperately needed. Later I became involved in the administration of the theatre as well. Remembering my own experience at the National I was able to encourage the stage management teams to take a more active part in the productions. Thankfully, today, an SM's self-perception is so much more positive than it used to be. SMs expect to be involved creatively, which is how it should be.

Nevertheless, good SMs outgrow their position within a matter of years and are forever seeking an alternative

career. There is a family atmosphere at Hampstead Theatre and it was there that I gained the confidence and self-belief to make the leap into the unknown. The people working there, in particular Jenny Topper, Leila Campbell and Dallas Smith were incredibly supportive when I decided, after six years at the theatre, to form my own production company. From the busy backstage at Hampstead I moved to a tiny office in Camden where I was confronted with four bare walls and a non-ringing telephone. It was the loneliest six months of **my** life.

*Next issue: the independent producer*

# *Giving business that*

Few of us, it's a fair bet, think about an actor's performance in the theatre or on television in the same way as we do a politician's in the House of Commons or on the electronic hustings. Nor do we file a new production in the West End in the same mental folder as an event mounted by some blue chip company keen to sell itself to its clients or its staff.

Yet the skills needed are, in each case, very similar. The essence of the public speech, or the corporation's conference, is effective communication with an audience – and that is no more likely to be achieved by the MP or CEO standing up and gabbling the first words that come to mind than a would-be acting student's first audition speech is to win an Oscar. Getting the right message across takes more than mere words; it takes care, forethought, experience.

The notion that the actor's training can be put to help those in other walks of life is not new. It is, for certain, 30 years that RADA itself has had a quiet, occasional role in passing on skills to politicians and others who have sought one-to-one help from its teachers. And in that time the business world too has become increasingly aware of the role professional communication skills can play, in giving a company a competitive edge over its rivals or freeing individuals to be more effective at their jobs.

But, quietly, over the past two or three years, RADA has been exploring ways in which the great resource that is the knowledge and

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*“The organiser wrote to pass on the whole group's thanks for providing a life-changing experience to us all”*

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experience of its teaching staff can be made available, on a more organised footing, to a much wider range of potential trainees, be they, say, individual managers who feel themselves less than adequate when rallying their staff or marketing directors seeking for fresh production values for that big event.

Already, seminars, or group courses lasting a day or two, have been held, with enthusiastic feedback translated into repeat bookings. The organiser of one group, drawn from senior public service managers, wrote to pass on the whole group's thanks to the course leaders “for providing a life-changing experience to us all” and to propose a follow-up session a few months later.

Now, with that experience behind them, the moving spirits behind the project are readying themselves for

a new, wider phase of growth for the initiative: RADA In Business.

Only three people are at the heart of the operation, but they neatly encompass the necessary skills: Brenda Stevens is RADA's commercial development director, appointed to the new post three years ago; William Richards teaches voice to the Academy's acting students; and Michael Reed is both a marketing consultant, with the contacts and experience gleaned from 30 years in the marketing side of business, and himself a graduate of RADA.

All, of course, have substantial activities away from the time they can devote to RADA In Business, but they can look back on 1999, their first full year's operation, with understandable satisfaction, and forward to a business that is beginning to build.

The learning curve has not been without its surprises. One of the first was to find, in following up an initial mailshot to companies, a very mixed awareness of what, literally, RADA stands for – “Regional Amateur Dramatic Association” is how William Richards characterises one level of ignorance. But that having been straightened out, and among those who knew better, they have found a high level of impact.

“RADA's unique selling proposition,” says Michael Reed, “is RADA itself.” In an environment where there are many other specialist training organisations – and indeed other drama schools with similar aspirations – this is a clear advantage in distinguishing the RADA In Business offering from the field.

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# *touch of drama*

That offering already includes eight different approaches, as well as possibilities for tailor-made coaching and courses. The list ranges from a half-day exploring the Alexander Technique to a day on Self-Presentation to Crossing The Space, a two-day course in communication skills for business executives – including the skills of listening.

But in a real sense every course, like every event, is bespoke, its approach varied according to the wants of the participants and in consultation with whichever members of RADA's teaching staff are bringing their skills to it – from two to five may be involved, depending on the project.

One of last year's most ambitious exercises, provocatively titled 'How to be an actor in a day', was sponsored by a leading creative advertising agency for its clients and culminated in a dozen of them appearing that evening as extras in a West End production, a bonus that even RADA, for all its contacts, does not promise as a regular part of the programme – though who knows what the company's needs, together with RADA's creative skills and contacts, could produce in the future!

Although the teachers are of course rewarded financially, as well as in the new challenges they are offered, the primary purpose of RADA In Business is to bring a further source of revenue to the Academy itself, much needed at a time when the students, picked from the most talented young people in the country, face an ever tougher time in meeting their fees

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*“The clients sometimes want to come and do their courses here, in Chenies Street. They draw from the energy of the Academy”*

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and living costs. That is where the income goes.

With performing arts students still undervalued by the educational grants system, the Academy must find ways of helping, if the talent is not to be lost, and this is one that offers a two-way benefit, as RADA In Business's clients gain personal skills and satisfaction and in turn support the coming generation of professionals.

And the signs are that the relationship can be even closer than that financial one. “There is a sense of the participants having a relationship with RADA itself,” William Richards feels. “The clients sometimes want to come and do their courses here, in Chenies Street, rather than on their own premises. They draw from the energy of the Academy. And the important element, we have learnt,

is that they should feel it is useful.”

That, in turn, can lead to them coming back again, to see the student productions. And it must be reasonable to hope that the new RADA, with its state of the art spaces and improved openness to the outsider, will add to that attraction, further encouraging longer loyalties.

So now the RADA In Business team are turning their attention to the next phase of their strategy, building on the lessons learnt so far. As Michael Reed outlines, there are three strands to this: to identify the prime target markets, to step up promotion and to take a fresh look at the existing material, particularly in the conference and corporate entertainment areas.

These will include the continuation of the successful “getting-to-know-us” evenings marketed last year to potential client companies and the introduction of lunchtime and evening presentations aimed at promoting the role of drama training in business. The first in this year's programme, presented by William Richards to a group of some 60 representatives from the Institute of Public Relations, was held early in January.

“One senses now that it's beginning to move,” says Reed. “We have an expanding programme of courses which, over the past year, have been increasingly endorsed by the business community. We know where we're going very clearly and we'll develop it.”

*For further information call Brenda Stevens on 0207 323 6773.*

# *Autumn Term 1*



LYRIC THEATRE  
HAMMERSMITH

## ARCADIA

**By Tom Stoppard**

**Directed by  
John Gardyne**

**Designed by  
Alison Cartledge**



THE STUDIO

## DANCING AT LUGHNASA

**By Brian Friel**

**Directed by  
Caroline Eves**

**Designed by  
Ruari Murchison**



THE GBS

## THE JEW OF MALTA

**By Christopher Marlowe**

**Directed by  
Roland Rees**

**Designed by  
Sue Mayes**

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# 999 Productions



THE STUDIO  
LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES

By Christopher Hampton

Directed by  
John Adams

Designed by  
Janet Bird



THE STUDIO  
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

By Richard Brinsley  
Sheridan

Directed by  
Geoff Bullen

Designed by  
Janet Bird



THE GBS  
THARK

By Ben Travers

Directed by  
Ellis Jones

Designed by  
Alexander McPherson

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Tom Foster offers his personal view on training disabled actors when the new RADA opens

# Access all areas

When the doors to Gower Street reopen, RADA will for the first time be accessible to accommodate people with disabilities, previously – access was very limited. Almost all areas associated with teaching, production and administration will have facilities aimed at providing access and communication for those with visual, hearing, and/or physical disabilities; for example, the signage around the buildings will be decipherable by touch as well as by sight. This means that RADA will for the first time be capable of training any student who passes the extremely competitive audition process, regardless of their physical disabilities.

However, just putting in lifts, disabled toilets and wide doors for wheelchairs is not all RADA needs to become a drama school that will no longer discriminate talented actors from entry just because of a disability.

Before the building is complete and ready for use, the Academy needs to find out what adjustments will have to be made in the preparation of courses. How integrated can disabled and non-disabled students and staff be? What new learning techniques do the RADA teaching staff need to discover to get around the hurdle of a particular student's disability?

To address these and many other questions arising from this issue, RADA formed a Disability Working Party involving RADA tutors, outside disabled actors, and disability access consultants. This working party, since re-named the Equal Opportunities Working Party, will go on to address access issues (including gender, race and social background) involved with all artistic, teaching or administrative activities.

Meanwhile, to address matters directly concerned with disability and the teaching of acting, RADA has formed a close working relationship with GRÆAE, Britain's leading disabled theatre company. Initially a set of workshops including GRÆAE actors and RADA tutors took place at RADA. Then, second year acting students and GRÆAE actors worked on a collaborative workshop production of *The Tempest*, directed by Jenny Sealey, artistic director of GRÆAE, with support from several of

integrated drama. It also, as a guinea-pig project, allowed the RADA tutors to discover what (often very minor) adjustments had to be made for disabled actors to fulfil their potential.

For me, one of the second year students involved, what also came out of the project was the benefit of having disabled actors within a class. Acting is about listening, responding, communicating and being completely in touch with your fellow performers and this was heightened when on *and off* stage you had to be completely aware and responsive to what a disabled actor requires and where you may need to assist them. You have to focus in a way which makes the overall production more connected, company-based and, in my opinion, more truthful and vibrant.

In *The Tempest* project, we were all mixed together, RADA students and GRÆAE actors, with many parts being shared and performed together as 'double' characters. For example, Melisande Cook (from RADA) and Mark Beer (from GRÆAE) worked together to create a snake-like Caliban who slipped around the stage or, in weird, fantastic monster shapes, charged about on a wheelchair. The performance brought out the extraordinary physicality of Caliban; grotesque yet seductive, and was discovered by confronting the challenge of working with Mark's chair and benefiting from his disability, which meant that he was light enough to be carried by Melisande. Mary Docker (RADA) and Ally Briggs (GRÆAE) played the Trinculo and Stephano double-act and seemed to be so connected that many of the audience never realised that Ally is deaf.

The exercise was agreed to be very

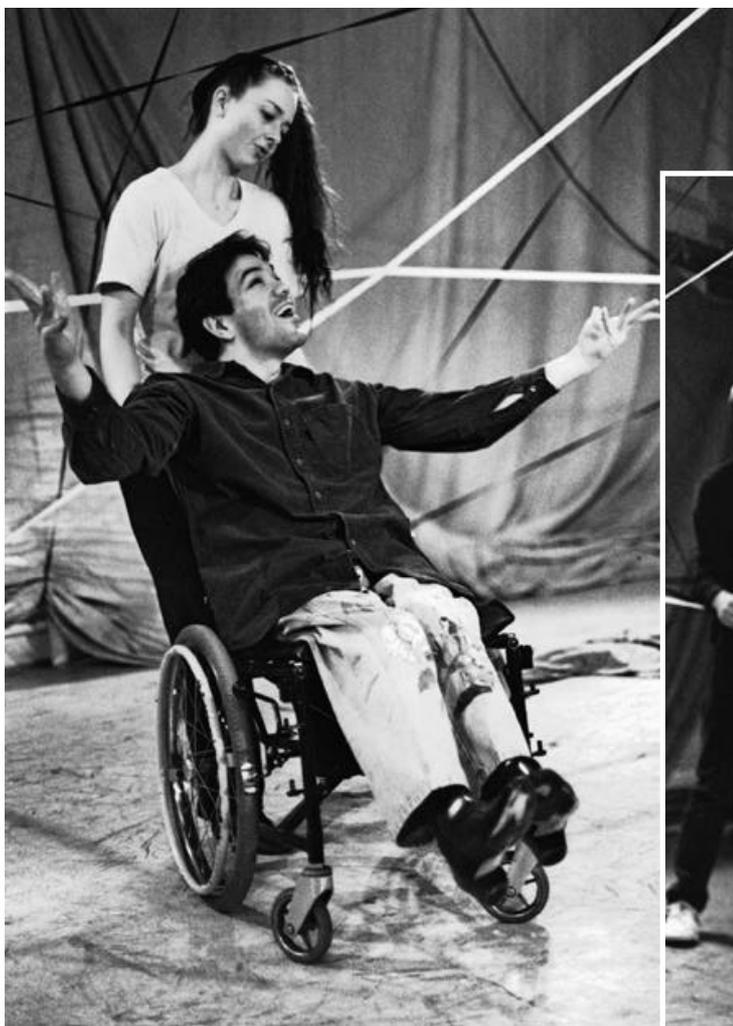
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***“The Equal Opportunities Working Party will go on to address access issues including gender, race and social background”***

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the RADA teaching staff, who offered their expertise in voice, music, text, improvisation, dance and movement. Jennie Buckman and Bill Gaskill also contributed to the actors' exploration of the text, as experienced directors.

At the end of the term-long project a workshop production was presented at Kennington showing what could be achieved with disabled/non-disabled



successful, even so much that from the mistakes made lessons can be learnt for the future. GRÆAE and RADA plan to work together to develop RADA's agenda for greater integration of opportunities for all members of society who display appropriate talent.

The Working Party rejected outright the idea of separate courses just for the disabled, as the target is integration not separation. However, there are still many practical problems that have to be worked out. How, for example, do you include a wheelchair user in a period dance or armed stage-combat class? Where does "sight-reading" fit for an actor who is visually impaired?

Some answers to some of these sorts of questions are already becoming clear as a result of GRÆAE's work at RADA and elsewhere. For example, providing visually impaired students with audio-recordings in advance of a text-based class is a reasonably simple

exercise. To communicate with the deaf, sign language interpreters would be needed – and maybe Sign could be taught to all students at RADA? After all, what better way is there to learn how your physicality and movement is interpreted than through Sign? Who knows, this could be a change that benefits everyone.

As RADA is widely respected in its field, I feel it has a certain duty in leading the way forward in accommodating disabled actors who have a natural talent for the art, not just at drama schools but within the whole dramatic industry.

If RADA can train disabled actors to a high standard and showcase them well, directors and producers may well

be more open minded about offering work within the industry and writers may feel more confident about writing substantial disabled characters into their dramas, giving more exposure of disability, affecting the public's view and hopefully taking it out of some segregated under-world.

However, there is a long way to go and this is a part of a much bigger picture of working towards a more aware and open minded society, where opportunity should be open to all. At least RADA will be ready and able to do that. After all it is your ability as an actor that matters, not your disability, and GRÆAE has shown that there is no lack of acting ability amongst the disabled.

Martin Jenkins celebrates the joys of touring in Austria – where the audience throws money...

# *Pennies in heaven*

I first visited Austria with my parents when I was eleven years old and now, having enjoyed a wonderful ten months there with Vienna's English theatre, I like to think that the land of pine trees and cable cars, Frauleins and boys in leather trousers was, in the interim, keenly anticipating my return.

As I left the airport and the tram rolled me through Vienna's city centre, all those half buried memories began to emerge. Doorways where the ghost of Harry Lime lingers still (I listened carefully for the zither!), a golden statue of Mozart resplendent in the Burggarten, effigies of Johann Strauss, and tall middle-aged women in expensive furs walking peculiar canine pedigrees the likes of which I'd never seen before. And there's that opera house where James Bond took potshots at the KGB in *The Living Daylights*. Oh, Vienna! Now I know how Midge Ure felt. It's the city of dreams. The city of spies. The city of expensive chocolate. I felt instantly at home.

Vienna's English Theatre itself, tucked away in quiet Josefgasse, is run by Julia Schafranek who inherited it from her parents, Franz Schafranek and the American actress Ruth Brinkmann. The auditorium, with its painted ceiling and gilded stucco must rank as one of Vienna's finest examples of the Austrian Neo-Baroque. Any actor who finds his lines (or character!) have done a runner need only look skywards at the 'Triumphal Entry of Helios' fresco for divine inspiration.

For this is the theatre which recently hosted productions of *Pygmalion*, *Skylight*, *Deathtrap*, *Kvetch*, highlights from the Edinburgh festival and a one man show by Leslie Nielsen. I saw all of these and loved them. I can't tell you

satisfying it was to be immersed in theatre and in the heart of Eastern Europe too. With Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy for neighbours, Austria is a wonderful melting pot of influences, nationalities and faces and after a busy morning of two or perhaps three performances, I'd sit in one of Vienna's many cafes and let all of these unfold before me. I made some good friends. Eva, Jurgen, Wolfgang, Horst, Petra, Oskar and Gottfried. Gunter and

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*“On one blizzardy  
February afternoon,  
as the van stalled  
on a mountain pass,  
its wheels clawing  
at the ice, I'll admit  
to having thought  
'at least I can say  
I've lived' ”*

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Margit, too. Strangers who talked to me and welcomed me like we'd fallen out of the womb together.

I now think it strange that I'd never previously thought about working in Europe when, in fact, it offers so many opportunities. I saw colours I'd never seen before, learnt words I never knew existed and my imagination, surely an

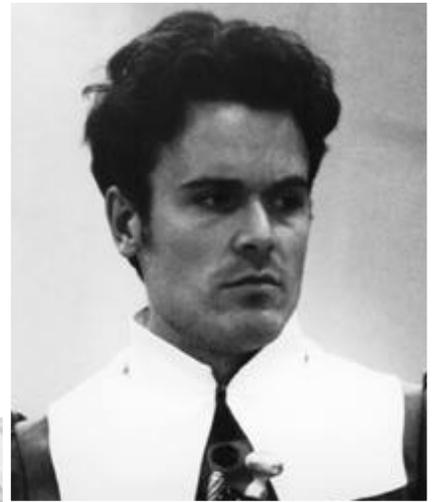
actor's greatest weapon, went, suddenly, lurchingly, into overdrive.

I spent afternoons rummaging in bookshops, printshops and flea markets or perhaps taking in a sauna or thermal spring bath (when in Austria ... ) and then I'd join the queues for standing room at a play, opera or musical. Wonderful productions of Berkoff's *Greek*, Durrenmatt's *Die Physiker*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Roman Polanski's *Tanz der Vampyr*, the musical stage version of his film *The Fearless Vampire Killers*. Hordes of pale vampires singing with sad and moving majesty and dancing so gracefully and languidly they stayed in my mind as I walked Vienna's smoky blue streets, sometimes peering through her doorways into courtyards and dimly lit rooms beyond.

What have I done to deserve such a job, such a wonderful adventure? I'd think to myself, pulling the collar of my overcoat just a little further up. I had only to look to Julie Andrews for my answer. Julie, who also seemed to enjoy her time in Austria. "Somewhere in my youth and childhood, I must have done something good." I must have.

The play itself, Sean Aita's *The Sword and the Crown*, was a fast-paced little piece of English history which neatly squeezed the English Civil War into one hour and sixteen minutes. I played Thomas Jordan, a young Roundhead soldier tom between his Puritan upbringing and love for his Royalist girlfriend Verity. Good casting for a Belfast boy!

I sang "It was a Lover and his Lass", duelled with King Charles II, who'd disguised himself as a woman, kissed Verity, married her and got a knighthood into the bargain. Thousands of Austrian schoolchildren



witnessed these events for, as well as Vienna, we toured at least three hundred different towns and villages, not just in Austria but in Germany and Italy too.

“Italy!” I exclaimed. “No one told me we were going to Italy”. “Oh yes, we always do Italy” said David Taylor, our tour leader and veteran of the job. I must admit that, due to sheer excitement, “It was a Lover and his Lass” reached particularly high octaves in Italy, the country I’d only ever seen in Fellini films.

Four hundred performances to almost two hundred thousand school children. Sometimes they’d listen, intrigued, and sometimes, bored senseless, they’d chuck coins at us.

Groschen, the lowest unit of Austrian currency. Hurlled in this manner, presumably as a sign of disapproval. Still, we didn’t mind. Amid barrages of tiny silver coins, *The Sword and the Crown* relentlessly kept going. The more Groschen we collected (10 Groschen = 5p), the more beer and Wienerschnitzel we’d have at lunchtime. Such is the life of a travelling player.

Sometimes we’d perform for children in wheelchairs or with physical or mental disabilities. I’ll never forget their smiles and laughter.

The months passed and our Mercedes tour bus wound its way through Graz, Linz, Salzburg, Kufstein and Munich, through rain,

snow and sunshine. Occasionally we’d argue about which café to play, but that’s about it as far as disagreement went. Ensnared in the back seat between Steve and Marianne I thought about my previous acting jobs in Glasgow and Belfast and the faces and experiences that came with them. And, on one blizzardy February afternoon, as the van stalled on a mountain pass, its wheels clawing at the ice, I’ll admit to having thought to myself, “at least I can say I’ve lived”.

Acting has been good to me – I have already been back to Vienna’s English Theatre, to play Frank Hunter in Terence Rattigan’s *The Browning Version*.

# *The retiring genius*

Alec Guinness has given us all so much enjoyment over the years with his many performances on stage and film, his acute observation, attention to detail, his wit, humour and insights into the characters he has portrayed, that it is infinitely pleasing to find these qualities very much alive in *A Postively Final Appearance*, his third book of memoirs.

His own description of this volume is: "It is a journal and yet it doesn't aspire to that and it isn't a diary. It is, I suppose like a sort of sluggish river meandering hopefully towards the open sea but diverted by various eddies, pools or tangential tributaries".

The book spans the years between 1996 and 1998 and is set against the backdrop of national and world events. The advent of the Labour victory at the General Election, the death of Princess Diana, the appearance of Hale-Bopp, all these are touched on.

In his previous journal, *My Name Escapes Me*, he is still a working actor. Here he has made the decision to retire and there seems to be a sense of relief, he appears to be more at peace with himself. There is evidence of the dark side of the moon, the death of friends, illness, irritations, but these are attributable to anno domini and are often touched on with humour. He is, after all, a man who has a deep religious faith.

The book opens with a visit to hospital for an eye operation. His room overlooks the Thames.

"A voice behind me said, 'I'm your sister' I turned round rather sharply to be confronted by a stalwart young man fluttering sheets of paper. 'Would

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*“There is evidence  
of the dark side  
of the moon,  
the death of  
friends, illness,  
irritations, but  
these are often  
touched on  
with humour”*

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you please fill in these forms?’ he said. ‘And Accounts would like a cheque. Oh, and the TV isn’t working’

One is continually struck by his open-mindedness to new interpretations of Shakespeare, notably his obvious enjoyment of Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet*, although he concedes that the verse and diction go out of the window – Shakespeare survives.

This leads on to an hilarious description of his own performance as Romeo sporting a ginger moustache, in 1939 in Perth. His description of the disasters on the first night and the wardrobe mistress prettifying his costume by adding glittering sequins all over his rather elegant red velvet doublet, his revenge with its somewhat uncanny aftermath, had me laughing out loud.

In discussing *Hamlet*, a part he played twice, once in 1938 and subsequently in 1951, he says: “Now I think that in a production presented in contemporary clothes there could be a justification for the insertion of a line or two of current English when the need was felt.”

Ham: Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in the shape of a camel?

Pol: By th’ mass and tis like a camel indeed.

Ham: Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol: It is backed like a weasel.

Ham: Or like a whale?

Pol: Very like a whale.

Ham: Perchance it is a UFO.

Pol: My lord it is a UFO.

Alec Guinness shares with us his love of poetry – the books he enjoys, the writers he admires, Montaigne, Trollope, Dickens to mention but a few. His taste is wide ranging. His great love for his home in Sussex is very apparent. The descriptions of his garden, the birds with their comings and goings, his beloved dogs Flora, Dido, Japheth and Michaelmas the cat, not to mention his dislike of rabbits and the moles who ruin his lawn. Above all this is his obvious devotion to his son and wife Merula to whom he has been married since 1938. All these are a delight.

In a chapter headed ‘The Clang of Dropped Names’ he tells of encounters with Elsa Maxwell, Lady Diana Duff Cooper and Greta Garbo. There are two somewhat chilling encounters with the Duchess of Windsor and Princess Diana. Both relating to food!

His time in the Navy during the Second World War is touched on. He

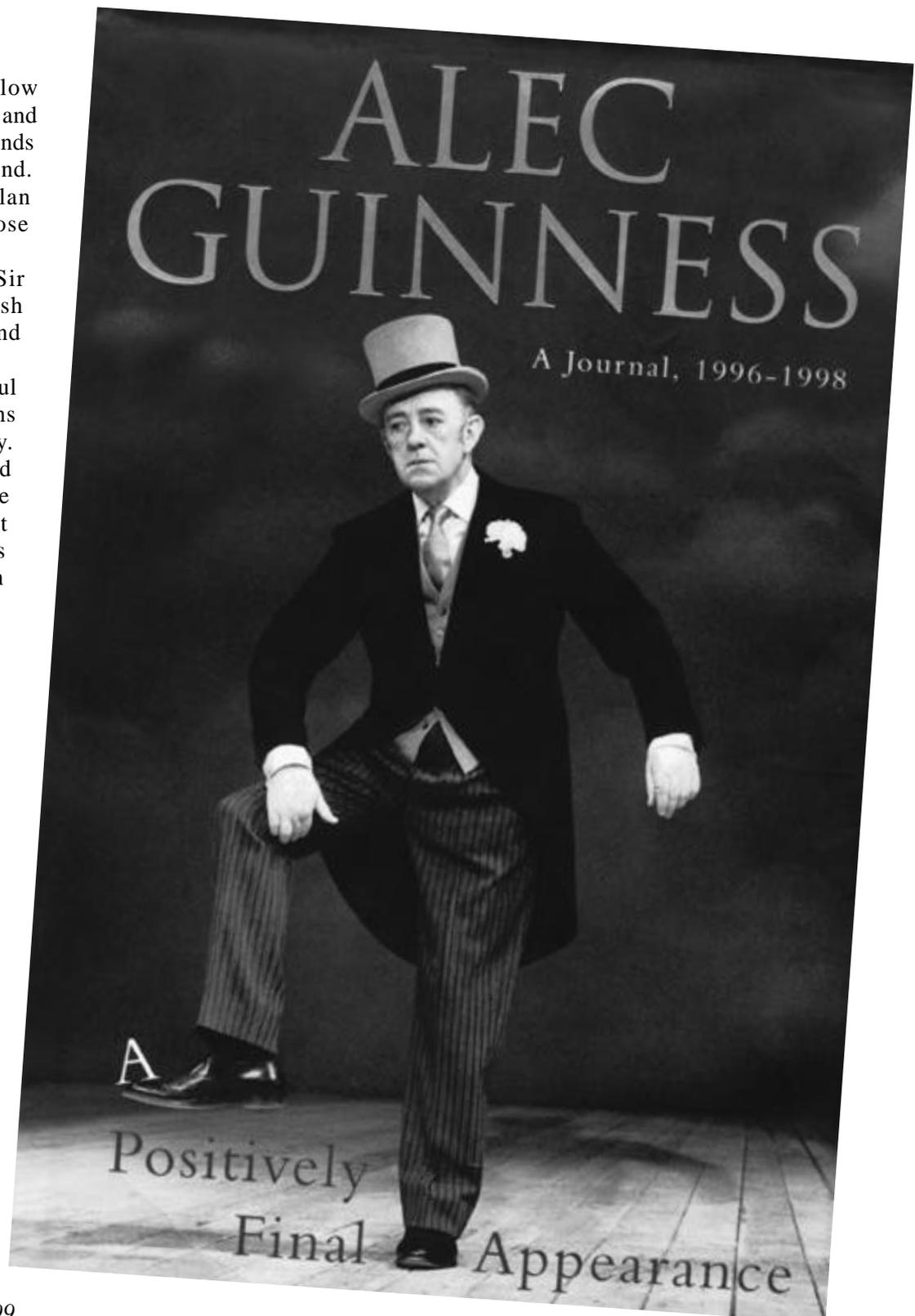
is generous about his fellow actors, is clearly hospitable and enjoys the camaraderie he finds among thespians of like mind. It is no surprise that Alan Bennett is among his close friends.

Throughout this book Sir Alec's love of the English language shines through and his use of it is exemplary.

One of his most successful Television characterisations was that of George Smiley. John le Carré, author and friend, writes in his preface to *My Name Escapes Me*: "It is no coincidence that Alec's career is studded with brilliant and unlikely roles. The talent that chose them was as inspired as the talent that performed them. What joins us then, those of us who have been lucky enough to share a mile or two of Alec's long life? I suspect a constant bewilderment about who to be for him. So we become like the rest of his great audience – frustrated givers, never able to express our gratitude, reconciled to being the beneficiaries of the genius he so resolutely refuses to acknowledge".

I can't find better words to end on than that.

*A Positively Final Appearance* is published by Hamish Hamilton Ltd, £16.99



# Stage Moves

## RADA GRADUATES: 1999

**EVE BEST** has won Most Promising Newcomer in the Evening Standard Theatre awards for playing Annabella in *Tis Pity She's a Whore* at the Young Vic with Jude Law. **CHRISTIAN BRADLEY**, **DAMIAN KEARNEY**, **DREW MULLIGAN** and **RICHARD STACEY** in *Antigone* at the Old Vic Theatre until January 2000. **IMOGEN BUTLER-COLE** in the film *Roof Jumping* for the NFTS; an independent short film *From Three Feet to Infinity*. Touring in the South of France in November/December 1999 in *Private Lives*. **BEN CASEY** in *The Changeling*, with **IRENE RAMBOTA**, and *Beautiful Thing* at Salisbury Playhouse. **LUCY DAVENPORT** in *The Secret Garden* at Salisbury Playhouse. **KEITH DUNPHY** played Feste in *Twelfth Night* at the Belfast Lyric. **DANIELLE KING** in an episode of *Bad Girls* for ITV. Also, in the Almeida Company's productions of *Richard II* and *Coriolanus* with Ralph Fiennes, filming at the Gainsborough Studios in 2000. **WENDY KWEH** in *The Oresteia* at the Royal National Theatre, also starring **SEBASTIAN HARCOMBE** (1993). **ALEX LAGAREJOS** filming a short, *When Morning was Broken*, to be made into a feature. Also touring Britain with *Sinking the Titanic*, a two-hander with **MATTHEW WILSON**. **BRENDAN MACKEY** in a BBC Radio 4 play *Dead Meat*, also at the Royal Court from January to March in a new play, *Force of Change*, by Guy Mitchell. **LISA MCNAUGHT** in an ITV drama, *Blind Date*, and in *Worthless Thing* at the Etcetera Theatre, September 1999. **GRAEME MEARNS** in *Inspector Rebus*, a feature-length drama for John Hannah's production

company. **SARAH MILLER** in an episode of *Grafters* for Granada TV. **PATRICK MOY** has adapted Brendan Behan's *New York* for a production in Ireland this year. **SARAH QUIST** in *Five Buddies in a Box*, a children's play at the Savoy Theatre in November. **MATTHEW RAYSON** in a tour of *Scenes from an Execution* by Howard Barker. **FENELLA WOOLGAR** in *The Cherry Orchard* at Theatre Royal, York. Also in *Charley's Aunt* at the Sheffield Crucible.

## RADA GRADUATES: 1998

**CANDIDA BENSON** at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, in *Pygmalion*, *Clavigo* and *Cavalcade*. **SOPHIE BOLD** in a production of *Oleanna* with Birmingham Stage Company. Also in a Royal National Theatre tour of *As You Like It* playing Rosalind. **GARY CARGILL** playing the Masked Man in the feature film, *Killing Time*. **STEPHANIE GERMONPRE** touring with the Vienna Touring Company in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Musichal Tyl Ulenspreghel* until August 2000. **AMANDA HABERLAND** in *Casualty* for the BBC and *A Touch of Frost* for ITV. **JAMES HILLIER** in *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married* on ITV. **POLLY MABERLY** in *3x3 Pirandello* at the New End Theatre. **TOBIAS MENZIES** in *Longitude* for Granada films with **EMMA KAY** (1997). **JOANNA PAGE** playing Vilette for Radio 4, in the film of *Miss Julie*, directed by Mike Figgis, in the film *Pavarotti in Dad's Room* by Sara Sugarman, playing Dora Spenlow in BBC production of *David Copperfield*, at the RNT in *The Mysteries* playing Eve and Mary Salome. **SIRINE SABA** playing First

Fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the RSC, transferred to London in December 1999. Also in *Tales of Ovid*, in London in June 2000. **VISSEY SAFAVI** touring in a one-woman show. **PHIL SHEPPARD** in *The Factory* in Northampton. **SARAH WALTON** also appearing in *Tales of Ovid* for the RSC. Also in *Fever*, a one-woman play by Wallace Shawn for the RSC Fringe Festival.

## RADA GRADUATES: 1997

**DIANE BECK** in *Macbeth* for the RSC. **TIM DEENIHAN** now a permanent member of the *Brookside* cast. **LISA DULSON** in *The Birthday Party* at the Piccadilly Theatre in the summer. **JOSHUA HENDERSON** in *The Real Thing* at the Donmar Warehouse. **ISABEL POLLEN** in *Arcadia* at the Manchester Library, November 1999. **CLARE WILLE** in *Dario Fo* and Franca Rame's play *Rise and Shine* at the Etcetera Theatre, October 1999.

## RADA GRADUATES: 1996

**AIDAN MCARDLE** playing Puck in the RSC's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also Roderigo in *Othello*, transferring to London. **MATTHEW RHYS** in the films *Whatever Happened to Harold Smith* with Tom Courtenay and Lulu, and *Titus*. Also playing the lead role in the West End stage version of *The Graduate*. **AMY ROBBINS** in *EastEnders* on BBC1. **AMANDA PERRY-SMITH** in *Brookside*. **PETER VICKERS** completed a short film. Is a reader for the London New Play Festival. Begins a six month touring contract with Vienna English Touring Theatre. Hoping to film another short in Summer 2000. **ZOE WAITES** in *The*

*Family Reunion* by TS Eliot for the RSC. **ROBERT WHITELOCK** in *Macbeth* for the RSC opposite Anthony Sher.

#### **RADA GRADUATES: 1995**

**JOSIE D'ARBY** presenting her own chat show on Channel 5. **IOAN GRUFFUDD** in the Disney film, *102 Dalmations*, with Glenn Close and Gerard Depardieu. Filming two more feature-length episodes of *Hornblower*. Playing the lead in *Pavarotti in Dad's Room* with **JONATHAN PRYCE** and **MATTHEW RHYS**, written by RADA graduate **SARA SUGARMAN** (1989). **MATTHEW MACFADYEN** in *Battle Royal* at the Royal National Theatre from December 1999. **BOHDAN PORAJ** playing Laertes and **ADRIAN IRVINE** (1992) as Horatio in *Hamlet* at the Bristol Old Vic, November 1999.

#### **STAGE MANAGEMENT GRADUATES: 1999**

**LEANNE ARCHBOLD**, ASM on *Once On This Island* at Mountview Theatre School. Co-designer for *The Children's Hour* at Mountview Theatre School, with **LORNA SEYMOUR** as co-designer, and **JENNY VILA** as lighting designer. **PAUL BAMFORD**, ASM at Birmingham Rep. **KATIE CRAGGS**, working for fashion production company, including work on London Fashion Week in September. **NICOLA EVANS**, dressing and wardrobe maintenance at the RSC, Stratford-Upon-Avon. **ALEXIA MACLAURIN**, sound and stage management on *Hay Fever* at the Savoy Theatre. **KEN MADDEN**, left Victor Mara as deputy head of production at Christmas to return to Ireland to work on *New York*,

adapted by Patrick Moy. **LOUISE MANSFIELD**, stage manager of *Worthless Thing* at the Etcetera Theatre, featuring **LISA MCNAUGHT** (Acting Graduate 1999). **CATE MAXWELL-HOLLAND**, stage manager of *The Liar* at Mountview Theatre School, and of the Mountview Showcase, with **BRIGITTE STIPHOUT** as ASM. **LORNA SEYMOUR**, DSM of *Shorts* at BAC Opera '99 festival, and of *Freebird* at The Cockpit. **JENNY VILA**, technician and stage manager on six month tour of *Like Candyfloss* with Jade Theatre Company. **LINDA WISE**, ASM on Jim Cartwright's new play, *Prize Night*, at Manchester Royal Exchange.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**MARK BENTON** (1990) in *Eureka Street* on BBC2. **KENNETH BRANAGH** (1981) narrating *Walking with Dinosaurs* for BBC. **SIMON CHADWICK** (1992) in *Brookside*. **MATTHEW COTTLE** (1990) in *Comic Potential* at the Lyric Theatre. **TOM COURTENAY** (1960) playing the title role in *King Lear* at the Royal Exchange, Manchester. **SUSANNA ELLIOTT-KNIGHT** (1993) in *Volpone* and *Tales from Ovid* for the RSC. **MARK HADFIELD** (1981) in the RSC production of *The Seagull*. **RALPH FIENNES** (1985) in *Onegin* and due to film *Richard II* and *Coriolanus* in the new year. **SASHA HAILS** (1994) in the film *Regarde La Mer* with her baby, to be shown at the ICA. **LOUIS HILYER** (1985) in the RSC production of *Taming of the Shrew*. **KATHRYN HUNTER** (1981) in *Scenes from an Execution* at the Barbican. To be in *Spoonface Steinberg*. **LLOYD HUTCHINSON** (1989) and **JANE**

**ROBBINS** (1991) in *The Bill* on ITV. **ADAM LEVY** (1994) playing Ithamore in *The Jew of Malta* at the Almeida. **GARY MAVERS** (1984) in *Peak Practice* for ITV. **MAIREAD MCKINLEY** (1993) *Lady Macbeth* in *Macbeth* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, directed by Jude Kelly, October - November 1999. **NEIL MCKINVEN** (1986) in *Riddance* at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, October 1999. **TANYA MOODIE** (1993) *Phoebe* in *The Darkness of the Earth* by Rita Dove at the Cottesloe Theatre to October 1999. **DAVID MORRISSEY** (1985) in the series *Pure Wickedness* on BBC1, and at the Donmar Warehouse for a further run of *Three Days of Rain*. **SHAUN PARKES** (1994) in the feature film, *Rage*, opening at the London Film Festival, November 1999. **REBECCA PIDGEON** (1986) in the film *The Winslow Boy*. **NIGEL PIVARO** (1981) in *Coronation Street* on ITV. **JOELY RICHARDSON** (1985) in Ben Elton's film *Maybe Baby*. **JANE ROBBINS** (1991) in *Sweet Dreams* at the Chelsea Centre in October 1999. **SIMON ROBSON** (1992) taking over from the authors/performers in *2 Pianos 4 Hands* at the Comedy Theatre in December 1999. **MICHAEL SHEEN** (1991) playing Mozart in the Broadway transfer of *Amadeus*. Also *Hamlet* for BBC Radio 3, available on CD. **LIZA TARBUCK** (1986) is the new *Big Breakfast* presenter. **ABIGAIL THAW** (1988) in *Wolfboy* at the Finborough Theatre, October 1999. **JASON WATKINS** (1985) in the RSC production of *A Servant of Two Masters* in Stratford from December, at the Young Vic from February 2000. **MARK WOMACK** (1987) in *Liverpool One*.

# Sponsorship Opportunities

The Academy welcomes the opportunity of entering into partnership with companies to support a wide range of its activities including student productions, short courses, special projects and *RADA The Magazine*.

Charitable Trusts, Foundations and philanthropic individuals are playing an increasing part in ensuring that the Academy can continue to provide Scholarship and Bursary support to those students in genuine financial need. It is only with this support that the Academy can maintain its broad selection policy and continue to offer places on the basis of an individual's ability to act and not their ability to pay. For this we are extremely grateful.

Throughout its history the Academy has been fortunate in benefiting from the support of individual donors, both named and anonymous, who have made substantial contributions to the Student Scholarship and Bursary Funds. As we approach the millennium the need for financial support for our students has never been

greater. Should you wish to make a contribution to the Student Scholarship/Bursary Fund there are various opportunities available:

**Life Membership of the Friends of RADA** – All Life and Corporate Membership subscriptions are held on deposit and the interest is used annually to provide a Friends of RADA Scholarship to a third year acting student.

**Gift Aid** – As a registered charity, the Academy is eligible for a donation through the Gift Aid scheme for sums of £250 and over. Donations can be directed towards the support of individual students towards their fees or maintenance costs and the Academy can claim Tax Relief from the Inland Revenue.

**Bequests** – See page 26.

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# *Legacies and Bequests*

The demise in Local Education Authority funding for drama training and the uncertainty of the Department of Education and Employment's new Dance and Drama awards has increased the need for the Academy to offer Scholarships/Bursaries to students in genuine financial need who are unable to raise sufficient funds either through their family or sponsorship. The Academy is therefore becoming increasingly dependent on raising new funds each year through its own fundraising

activities. Legacies are an important means of the Academy ensuring that it can maintain the required level of Scholarship support required by the students in the future. A bequest to the Academy, as a registered charity, is free from Inheritance Tax as the gift is deducted from the total net value of your estate when assessing tax liability. For further information regarding arranging a bequest in the favour of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, please contact the Registrar.

*Our thanks to our supporters:*

## **BEQUESTS**

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# The RADA Back Page

## MILLENNIUM THRILLENIUM

BMX bandit Lloyd Trott has revealed his unique plans for global domination in the year 2000. Lloyd exclusively told us that he intended to construct a second millennium wheel, in front of the current one, and then ingeniously fashion an enormous “millennium bicycle” several hundred feet high, to replace the penny farthing he currently rides into college of a morning. Quite how the elfin Trott’s feet will reach the pedals is unclear. Its time to make those platform heels public, Lloyd!

## WE ARE A GRANDMOTHER

Congratulations to Val Maxwell whose daughter Lisa, star of stage, screen and Chenies Street reception, gave birth to a bouncing baby girl last week. Apparently she arrived ten minutes late, but Val winked and let her off. Unfortunately Judy Coster then caught her, and put a late mark on the birth certificate. Boo.

## THE YEAR WHO HAD NOTHING

The current third year is shaping up to be the most deprived in RADA’s history. Whilst still reeling from the “Read my lips: You’ll be in the Vanbrugh” debacle, it was then revealed that the cash-strapped third years would not only have to share one theatre between two shows; but that on several occasions performances of *School for Scandal* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* would actually take place *simultaneously*, at opposite ends of the vast Kennington Studio. Described as “the kind of thing Bill Gaskill would think up after a really rough night”, it promised to offer us the novel spectacle of “tag-team restoration”. Meanwhile, rumours that this year’s Tree will actually be staged in a tree, in Russell Square, were discovered to have been made up by us...

## NEW LIBRARIAN – NEW DANGER

A belated “Hallo!” to new hand, Sarah – “Reading Spice” – Palmer. Charming and biddable, she brings an air of cool insouciance to those tense moments of high bibliographic drama. Like when she can’t find a book for you, that you’ve probably nicked already anyway.

## IT’S... FACILE ANAGRAMS!

The RADA Memorial Theatre Company will shortly be publishing the programme for their forthcoming production of *It’ll All Be Fine Next Year*, but here is a sneak preview of some those all-telling programme notes.

### **Cat Nik-Beer (playing Nick Barter)**

Having just completed recording his new album, “I gotta grit and grin and bare (sic) it”, Cat returns to his first love, the stage. Best known for his naked Hamlet, which shocked and impressed audiences all over Ilfracombe, Cat is happy to be playing a less demanding role this season.

### **Jon S. Leslie (playing Ellis Jones)**

Jon S. has been too long living in the shadow of his cocaine-endorsing former Blue Peter presenting grandfather, John Leslie, the tall, Scottish, Catherine Zeta Jones reject. He has however recently emerged in his own right, following his Music-Hall revival of “I was only a-knockin’ at the upstairs window pane, but you wouldn’t believe what hit me in the eyes”.

### **Benjamin Cunek (playing Jennie Buckman)**

Tough talking transvestite Ben is greatly looking forward to the challenge of playing Ms. Buckman. He said he has never before had to investigate his dark regions in such depth. A relative newcomer to the British stage, Benjamin defected from Slovakia in a daring and arduous escape from Communism, only to find that it had been quite happily democratic for the last decade. The dolt.

## DEL BOY BARTER

In reception Judy is now selling a collectors’ set of hand crafted Russian dolls, featuring actual RADA luminaries. The first doll is, naturally, Bill Gaskill. But open up his capacious middle, and – look! it’s the only marginally-smaller Roland Rees! Inside Roland you’ll find Ellis Jones, and inside Ellis you’ll find well, a wealth of fascinating anecdotage and a hernia, but also Lloyd Trott! Lordy! And finally, right inside Lloyd is Ilan Reichel, naturally. Hand crafted to scale by our resident experts in unjust satire, just imagine being able to get your hands around Bill Gaskill’s waist. Almost unbelievable isn’t it?

## NEXT TIME

After the success of *Arcadia*, we review “Stoppard in Love (with himself)” by William Shakespeare, an hilarious comedy in which an ageing plagiarist runs around London nicking everyone else’s ideas, and trying to get Felicity Kendall to return his phone calls...

# ROYAL ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC ART

## *BECOME A FRIEND OF RADA TODAY AND SUPPORT THE STARS OF TOMORROW*

Each RADA Production Season, Autumn, Spring and Summer, offers a unique range of productions performed by young, talented students on the thresholds of their careers, frequently also providing a rare opportunity to see plays seldom performed in the commercial theatre.

The renovation and rebuilding programme to refurbish the existing Gower Street/Malet Street premises, made possible by an Arts Council Lottery Award, will be completed by September 2000. The award has provided a state of the art base from which the Academy can operate and will ensure RADA maintains its position at the forefront of drama training in the new Millennium.

## *WHY DOES RADA NEED FRIENDS?*

Despite the fact that the entertainment industry makes a major contribution to the British economy, it has become increasingly difficult for young people to receive funding for vocational drama training for actors, stage managers and theatre technicians. A new Dance and Drama funding scheme was introduced in 1999. However, although this is a huge step forward, there is insufficient funding available to provide awards for all students offered places on dance and drama training courses. Regrettably therefore, both the Academy and the majority of our students must maintain fund raising campaigns. It is only by this means that we can ensure that all students, who have won their place at the Academy following a rigorous audition process, can take up their place here and be adequately funded for both fees and maintenance either through sponsorship or the RADA Scholarship/Bursary Funds.

Our Research indicates that most non-graduate members of the Friends of RADA are avid, discerning theatre goers who regularly attend other main stream and fringe theatre in the capital. Through the subscription fees, the Friends Of RADA aim to raise money to provide student Scholarships for RADA Students in genuine need of financial support. The target is to raise £150,000, the interest from which will provide a full student scholarship annually in perpetuity. For the past four years a part-fees Scholarship has been awarded annually to a student in their final year.

## *FRIENDS 2000 – THE CHALLENGE AHEAD*

In September 2000, RADA will return to the newly refurbished premises. The termly student productions will be staged in the three in-house theatres including the new Vanbrugh Theatre which will seat 200. As in the past, we hope that the Friends of RADA will continue to provide the core of the audience each season in addition to the agents and casting directors and members of the general public.

The support of the Friends in attending the student productions is an essential, unique and valuable feature of this stage of the training for the finals students. The new bar and Malet Street foyer area will provide a congenial meeting place for Friends, both RADA graduates and non graduates, to meet on a regular basis with other members and the Academy staff and students. It is our aim to substantially increase The Friends membership and for this organisation to continue to provide a major source of support for the Academy's activities.

## *WILL YOU BE A FRIEND OF RADA?*

Types of membership:

RADA Graduate	£12.00 per year
Non-RADA graduate	£20.00 per year
Life Membership	£100.00
Corporate Life Membership	£250.00 per year

## *AS A FRIEND IN 1999/2000 YOU WILL RECEIVE*

- Guest tickets to attend the Kennington Park Studio productions each term
- Advance booking facilities and concessionary rate tickets for productions at other London venues
- Invitations to attend post show talks by the director and students
- RADA The Magazine published each term
- Concessionary rate tickets to attend performances by RADA graduates at other London venues

*BUT MOST OF ALL, THE THANKS OF  
THE STAFF & STUDENTS FOR PLAYING  
AN ACTIVE ROLE IN NURTURING THE  
ACTORS AND THEATRE TECHNICIANS  
OF THE FUTURE*

Contact the Registrar, Patricia Myers for further details.