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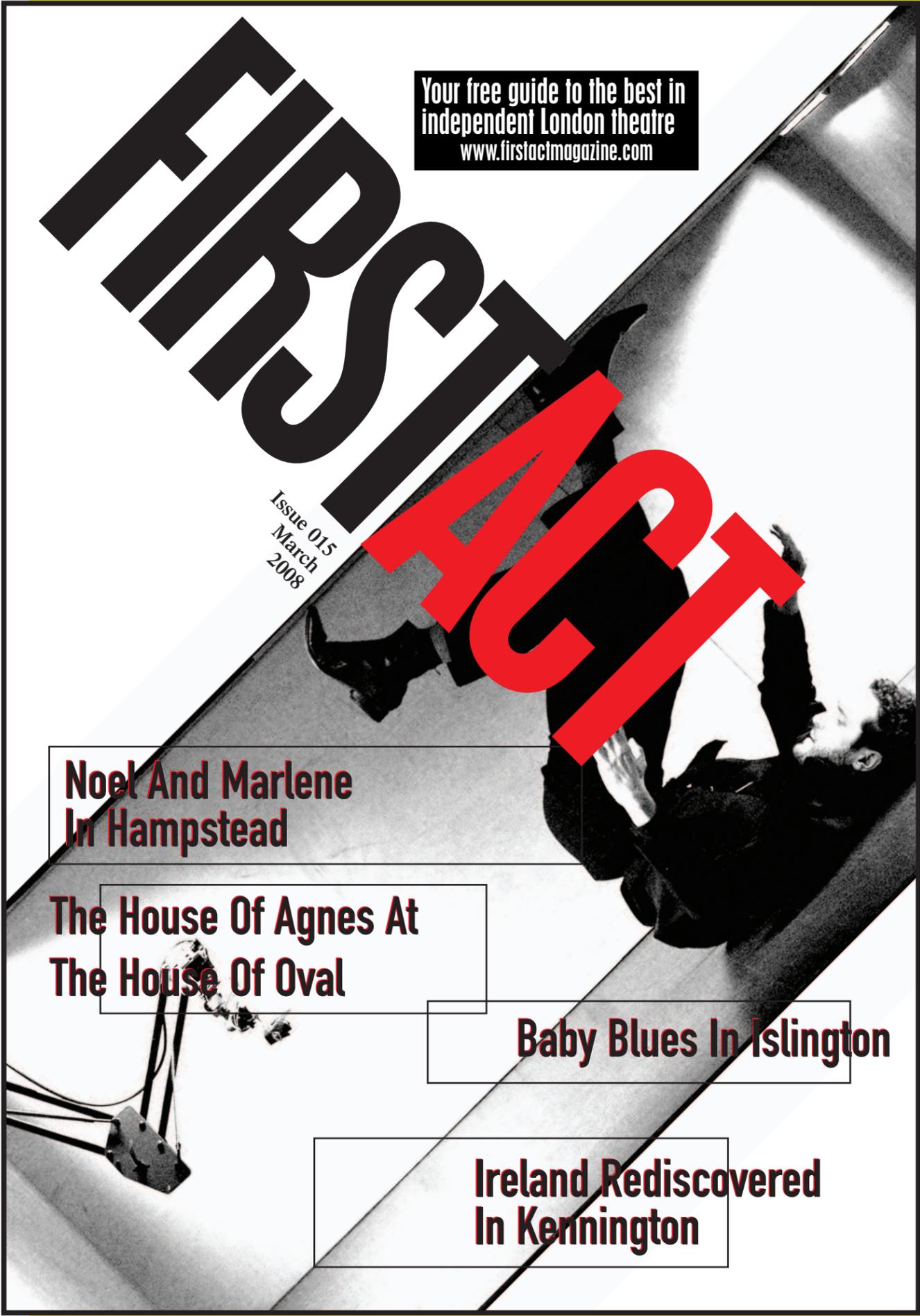
ACT

**Noel And Marlene
In Hampstead**

**The House Of Agnes At
The House Of Oval**

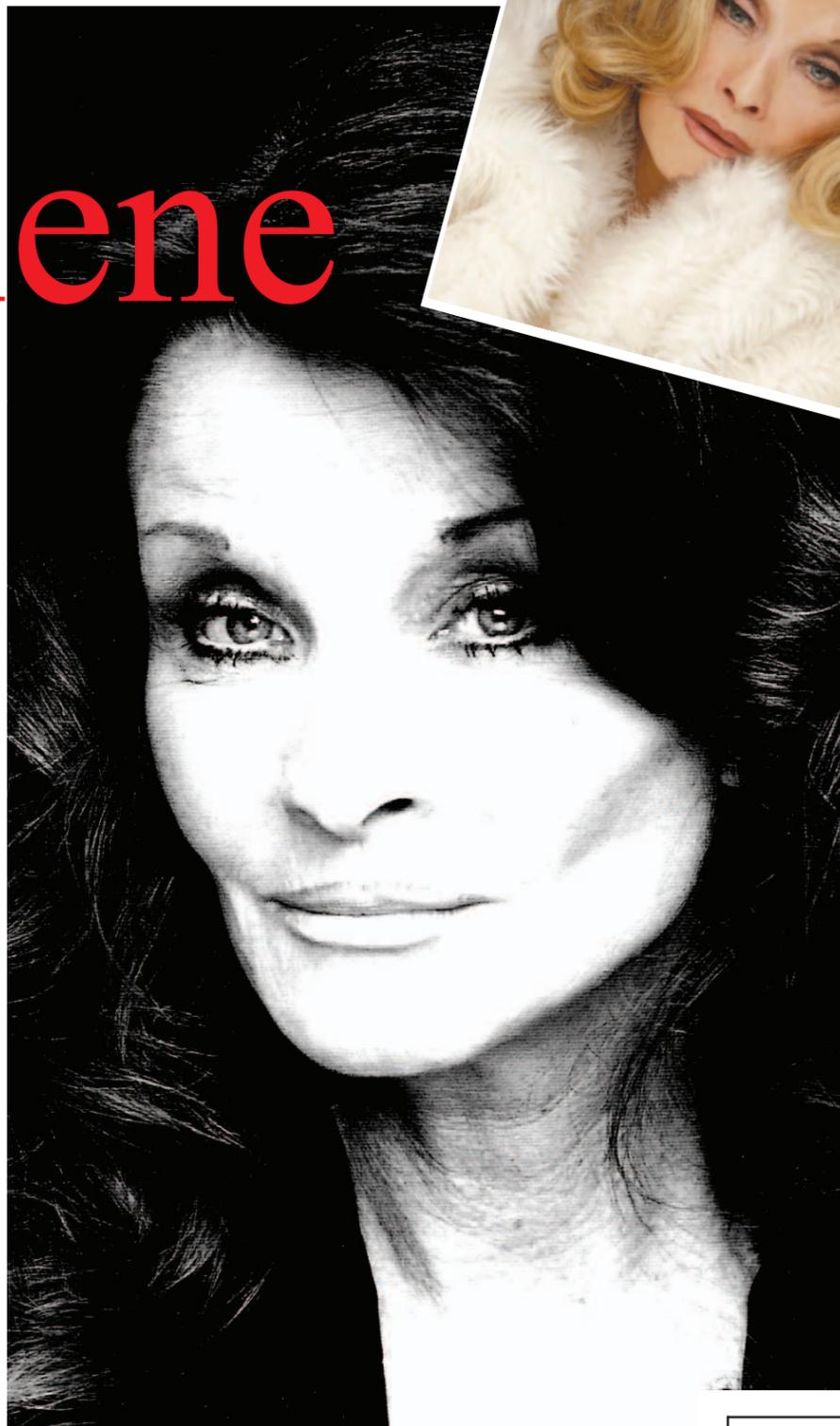
Baby Blues In Islington

**Ireland Rediscovered
In Kennington**



Unlocking The Mystery That Is Marlene

Kate O'Mara and Frank Barrie are taking on the roles of two of the most recognisable figures of the 20th Century, and two of the most distinctive voices of all time, writes Richard Hodgkinson



incredibly complex lyrics is quite a feat, and speaking as one who has done a number of Coward plays, I think it takes a particular kind of discipline to perform them.

"A lot of the scenes are made up of one-liners which go bang, bang, bang, bang, and you've got to be so on the ball to play them, with one ear on whether the audience are laughing in the right places and one ear on the other actors. There's a particular type of discipline required to do that.

"Marlene, being German, had her own particular type of discipline too, and strength of character, because she had to put up with a hell of a lot of ghastliness when she was touring during the war with the American forces."

Among the lesser-known facts about Kate O'Mara is that she once had a number one hit. In Finland. It's not a fact she seems particularly keen to dwell on, but how has she coped with the musical element of the role?

"I consider myself an actress who can sing when required – when required – rather than a singing actress," she says, "and like a lot of actresses who can sing, I've got a soprano and a basso profundo and not much in between.

"But singing is so traumatic, it really is. Which is fine in this case because Marlene wasn't really a singer, but she could put a song across. The singing in some of her early movies is quite dubious, to be honest, but she could always deliver the song to the audience."

"This is not the first time O'Mara has worked with her co-star Frank Barrie, and the relationship is one she obviously cherishes.

"We've been together twice before" she says, "once in, I think it was 1982, when we played Mirabell and Millament in *The Way Of The World* at the Nottingham Playhouse and we got on like a house on fire. I think Frank is just bliss, quite frankly. We were also together in *The Crucible Of Blood* at the Haymarket where I don't remember doing much really, just watching him from the wings and thinking how brilliant he was. So we're great chums, which makes things very much easier.

"He was always the person I thought would be ideal for this part, so when I was first sent the script he was right at the top of the list, but of course he wasn't available. So I thought, you know, 'oh bugger', but then suddenly his dates changed, so it was meant to be, you see."

The premise behind the play is a tempting one, especially for those nostalgic for the golden age of theatre and cinema, so although the New End Theatre is ideal for cabaret type performances, the cast of *Lunch With Marlene* must have one eye on an eventual transfer to a larger venue or a tour.

"Well, yes," says O'Mara, "but I hope if we do take the show somewhere else it will still be somewhere that has such an intimate atmosphere. I did Sheridan Morley's Noël and Gertie when we had to play some big venues and it's quite difficult because, for one thing, you have to be miked which works against the intimacy of the piece. And this is a very intimate piece. Very touching and very intimate."

Lunch With Marlene opens at the New End Theatre on 26 March and runs until 27 April. See listings for details.

Kate O'Mara has had no shortage of complex characters to get to grips with over the course of a colourful and varied career, but her current role would appear to be more challenging than most.

She plays Marlene Dietrich, a woman who could be justifiably described as a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma, and that phrase with its wartime associations would be particularly relevant to O'Mara's reading of the character. In wrestling to get to grips with a complex character, actors often focus their attention on the damascene moment or epiphinal experience that moulded that character's personality, and Marlene's character-moulding experiences came during the Second World War.

"She has a reputation for being, well, a martinet really, but she'd been through a lot in her life," explains O'Mara. "One of the things that interested me most about playing her was that during the war, being a German, she chose to fight on the opposite side. That, to me, poses a huge moral dilemma, and it's something that's developed in the first half of the play.

"She knew Hitler and Hitler knew her – he was very keen on her in fact – so she was considered a huge traitor in Germany. When Berlin was being bombed she famously said 'Berlin deserves everything it gets'. This is her hometown. I think it must have taken tremendous strength of character to do that, but I think the trauma of the experience affected her deeply for the rest of her life, which is evident in this show."

Chris Burgess's *Lunch With Marlene* is a two-hander of two halves, as Marlene is joined in her reminiscences by Noël Coward, played by Frank Barrie.

"The play section of the show is a duologue between Noël and Marlene when they're both getting on a bit," purrs O'Mara, whose seductive feline qualities must have made her a shoe-in for the part. "They're past their best and wondering what the hell life is all about. The second half is like a dream cabaret by the two of them, performing their own famous numbers from when they were at their creative

peak, as it were. "So you see an older, disillusioned Marlene in the first half and a vibrant Marlene in the second, which is a very interesting contrast between the artist and the private person."

In addition to the obvious challenges faced by any actor playing a psychologically challenging role, playing Coward and Marlene must be doubly demanding given that the audience comes to the show with such a clear idea of how the characters should look, sound and move.

"It is a huge challenge, there's no doubt about it," says O'Mara, "and I've got videos and DVDs of her work here to study. And fortunately I did actually see her on stage, at one of her concerts. I think it was in 1974. I went up to Birmingham to see her and was promised a meeting with her afterwards. But, quite honestly, there were so many people in the dressing room I think I just managed to shout 'I think you're wonderful' and that was about it. But she got a standing ovation of course, which I think I started.

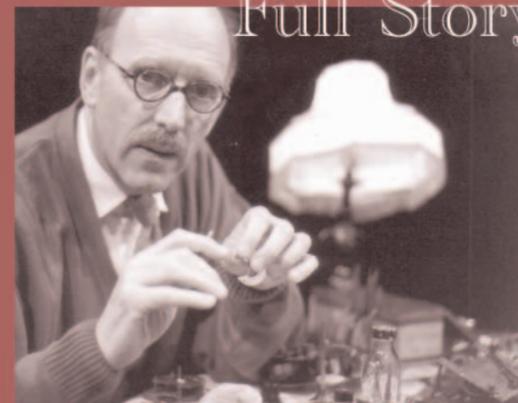
"But looking at her videos is quite frightening because, my God, she was absolutely wonderful. Riveting, charismatic and with such command – she had the audience in the palm of her hand. And, of course, half of the new show is essentially her in cabaret, so one has to try to reproduce that extraordinary charisma. Very challenging, but I'm determined to rise to that challenge.

The relationship between these two towering figures of stage and screen is not one that is universally known. Just how well did they know each other really?

"Oh, it was a tremendously strong friendship," she says. "He was her confidante and she adored him. From what I understand she approached him to congratulate him on a performance and the friendship started there. I think the friendship was based on the fact that they both clearly respected the other's genius.

"In a way, they're sort of similar because they were both very strict disciplinarians, strict with themselves I mean – they would have to be. To do a Noël Coward number, to manage those

Shot Actress - Full Story!



Graham Padden performs two tales by H.E. Bates in a meticulously detailed production

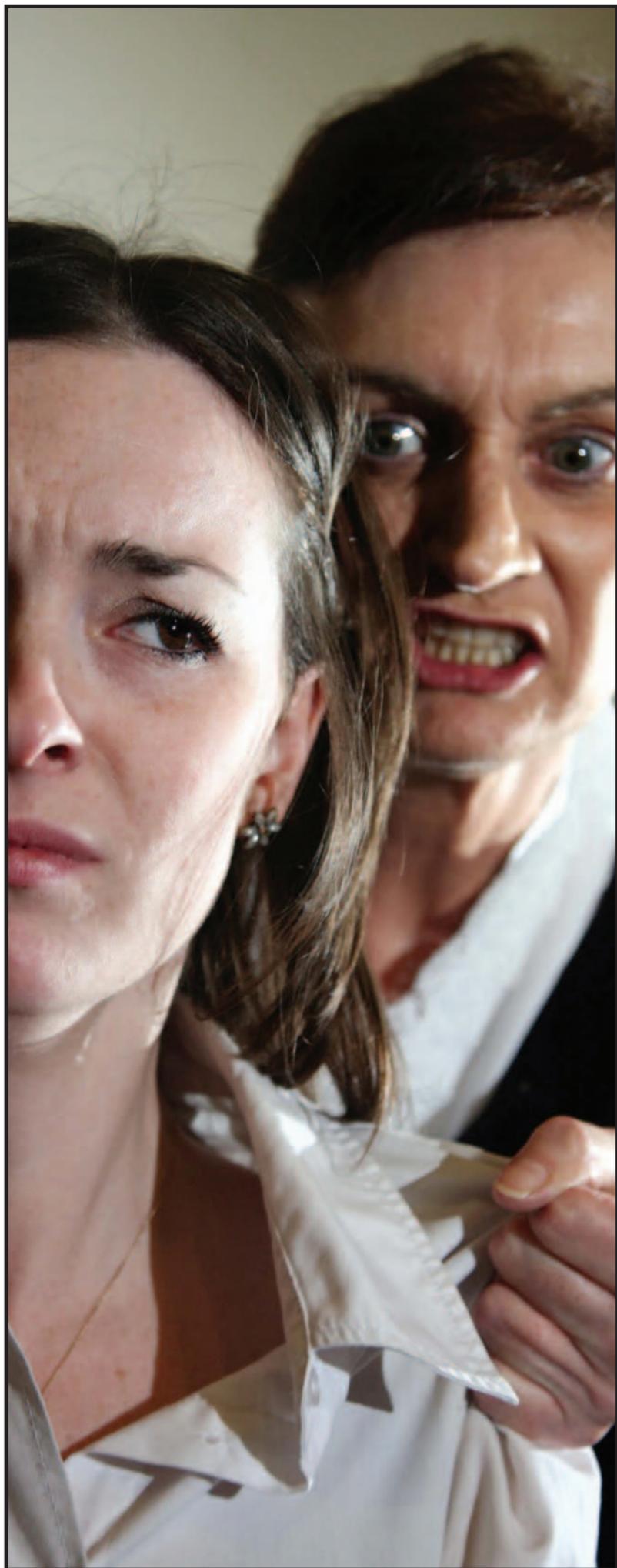
'A first-class example of single-handed acting.' *Newbury Weekly News*



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One young theatre company is prospecting for gold in the bogs of Ireland. In a half-century-old play from J B Keane, they might have unearthed a real gem

Tricycle for six weeks and got a very positive response – but I really don't know the answer to that question. "I just wish producers would come and see what he can do, because the writing is brilliant and very, very funny. There have been any number of Irish playwrights produced in the West End, but not John Keane, and I don't really understand why that should be." Sive, a story of a young woman promised in marriage to an older man set in the wilds of rural Kerry, was written in late 1950s. Is it of its time? "It's really interesting in that the play deals with that period of transition between the old Ireland and the new," says Begley. "The old Ireland is very evident – they had matchmakers back then – and it's amazing how in the country areas of Ireland some of these traditions almost made it into the 21st Century. But at the same time the play's all about land and money and family, so you could probably relate it to any time or any place in the world, because the themes are pretty universal, y'know. Does he feel there are legitimate parallels to the currently hot issue of arranged marriages in Asian societies? "Oh absolutely, yes. I think it's very easy to draw parallels with that, but the atmosphere is completely Irish, of course."

And Begley should know, of course, because Keane's landscape is Begley's also. "Y'know, I was brought up in a similar kind of environment," he says. We had a farm and a shop and an undertakers. You get them on the way in, you sell them drink the whole of their lives and then you carry 'em out in a wooden box at the end. Because I was brought up in a pub I saw all these characters as I was growing up - small town Ireland, pub, shop, church and graveyard across the road and that's life, y'know. That's what people's lives revolve around, this small world where everybody knows everybody else's business and nothing much changes. Except people probably have bigger mortgages now."

How did the grandly titled Irish Network of Dramatic Arts come about? "We founded it, really, Susan Cummins and myself, because we got fed up waiting for Irish plays to be put on. So for the last two or three years we've been touring every hall and venue in London, it feels like. "We'd like to be doing it full time, of course, but over here you have to work full time to be able to finance the theatre work, so we don't spend as much time on INDA as we'd like because we have to hold down jobs.

"But we've been pretty lucky and things have gone well for us, I think because we do what we do best. We're interested in new writers but while we're still getting established we're sticking to tried and tested stuff." And there's plenty of that in the locker back in the old country. Expect Begley and his INDA colleagues to be digging up earthy little gems for some years to come.

Sive opens at the White Bear Theatre on 11 March and runs until 30 March. See listings for details.

Cut Tom Begley and he will bleed green. Co-founder of IRDA, the Irish Network of Dramatic Arts, he not only spends every spare hour promoting neglected Irish plays, but he is the possessor of a lilting brogue that might be the model for the type. IRDA's latest project is to bring the work of John B Keane to a wider English audience. The company stages Sive, the author's 1958 play at Kennington's White Bear theatre this month, writes Richard Hodkinson. Don't feel guilty about not being more familiar with the work of Keane – he is rarely performed in the UK, but what's his status in Ireland? "Well, he's up there with the best of them," asserts Begley, "up there with (Frank) McGuinness and (Martin) McDonagh, although they're still knocking around and John died a couple of years ago." Keane wasn't just a playwright - he wrote novels and his play *The Field* was filmed with Richard Harris less than a

decade ago to great acclaim. Even so, as Begley admits, "but even though his status in Ireland is very high, it's completely true that he's not anything like as well-known over here." "We'd like to do a lot more of his stuff," he says. "We've already done his play *Big Maggie* a couple of years ago at the Tabard and at the Pentameters in Hampstead and we also did it at a couple of Irish Centres where people came up to us and suggested we play it in other places. This meant we were able to get the money together to do a tour of Ireland with the play which ended in Keane's hometown, Listowel, and some performances in front of his wife and family. "That was quite an emotional night for everyone – standing ovations, lumps in your throat, the whole thing." But that sounds a little like preaching to the converted. Why isn't he more widely produced on this side of the Irish Sea? "Well, he has been done – we went to see *The Field* which was on at The

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Baby Boom Time

A happy blonde-haired baby set amongst wooden alphabet cubes looks out from the poster advertising Old Red Lion Theatre's latest production, *The Baby Box*. It paints an image of a production promising light entertainment and a few laughs for the night. But in reality, *The Baby Box* is an emotionally charged play about two sisters whose paths cross after 12 years. Their pasts catch up with them, and uncomfortable and disturbing familial truths are revealed that same night. This is as much as we can reveal, as its writer, Chris Leicester, insists on not revealing too much about the story for fear of ruining it for those of you who go to see it.

As for the title, it came about after some research which revealed the origins of the term 'baby box'. In some countries like Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, mothers who cannot - or will not - look after their child can abandon their child safely in a baby box. "It's like a safe deposit box," explains Leicester, who was shocked at this discovery, himself father to two children. "That's where the title came from."

Where Leicester got the inspiration for the story is also unexpected. The beginnings of *The Baby Box* were conceived in a general fertility clinic in Chester. Leicester was sitting in a big waiting room, waiting his turn to see the doctor, when what he saw struck him as a paradox. On one side of the room were people who were desperate to have children. On the other were people who have got children and did not want them. "It's an interesting dilemma - why you want to give [children] away," remarks Leicester. This experience gave

Chris Leicester is not about to deliver a fluffy feel-good baby-based rom-com. Karen Leong hears that the Old Red Lion should brace itself for a case of the baby blues

Leicester the impetus for his latest play: "the power and influence of the emotional force of children".

For this production, Leicester teamed up with director Stephen Henry. Although he normally works with a regular crew based in Liverpool, he had heard about Henry through a friend and was keen to work with him. They met up a year ago, at a private event in the West End, discussed the play and the rest, as they say, is history. Henry's directorial credentials include the con-

troversial gay Jesus play *Corpus Christi* and the 1998 revival of Frank Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*, which sold out at Jermyn Street Theatre and was transferred for a further successful season at Tristan Bates Theatre.

In *The Baby Box*, the sets are minimal, which Henry also likes. "There's no escape. It's down to the actors and their performance," says Leicester. "You can go back and forth in time, like in *Fourth Wall*." *Fourth Wall* was Leicester's last production which was also staged at Old Red Lion Theatre which then went on to the Edinburgh Festival in 2005. The play, about how real life can intrude into performance, transform and ultimately ruin it, drew critical acclaims. *The Baby Box* seems to possess the emotions and intensity of his last production, all qualities that are quickly becoming hallmarks of Leicester's writing. "The motive has to be very strong from the writer's point of view. It has to be very plausible, otherwise you get Disney," Leicester says. *The Baby Box* is the fifth production from Too Write, a company that comprises one man - Leicester himself. It all came about one fateful evening eight years ago in a bar in Liverpool with friends. Leicester, who was then running writing workshops, complained to his friends about how difficult it was to get his play produced. Then he decided to hell with it all and took charge of his own destiny. "Rather than sit and complain, I'll do something about it," he explains about how Too Write started - Too Write a word play on 'too right'. In that same year, Leicester had his first production with five other writers. Formally trained in screenwriting, Leicester came to playwrighting accidentally. "I wrote to improve my dialogues, to improve my style for novels. It was more of a training tool," says Leicester, who has a novel out in a few months. *When The Wolves Come* comprises of three stories, all about people who escape their troubles through their imagination. Perhaps Leicester is one of those people in his novel, where writing is his escape route. He is, after all, a civil servant by day. Hardly the job for someone with creative impulses. His former professional lives also included turns at property development, credit management and developing resorts in Australia. Experience which, he says, has provided a great research ground for writing material. "You need the blandness," Leicester says, joking about his day-time professional life, "and it also pays the bills."

The Baby Box opens at the Old Red Lion Theatre on 26 February and runs until 22 March. See listings for details.

New American voiced will be heard for the first time at the Greenwich Playhouse this month when the Grey Light company brings a series of readings and semi-staged premieres across the pond. The five works by five different American writers are the product of a year-long collaboration between Grey Light and New York's Metropolitan Playhouse, an organisation that has worked for the best part of the last two decades to promote new American writing while unearthing neglected plays

from the the US's frontier period. Plays by Kevin Crowley, Matthew Freeman, Jeni Mahoney and Trav S D (crazy name so, one assumes, crazy guy) are an eclectic bunch, featuring exploding apartments, a wartime meal delivery service, ghostly family relations and comedy divorce. The season kicks off on 11 March and runs until 23 March at a venue ideally suited for such bold leaps into the unknown.

See listings for details



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Vesturport Theatre's adaptation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* was as successful as it was genuinely creepy when it first ran at the Lyric Hammersmith back in 2006.

Now David Farr and Gisli Orn Gardarsson's production, with music by Nick Cave (as successful as he is genuinely creepy) returns to the same theatre for a two-week run prior to an international tour.

The stunning split set and the almost unnatural athleticism of Bjorn Thors as Gregor return, as do a fantastic cast drawn largely from Iceland - a country that is, need we mention, as successful as it is

genuinely creepy.

Metamorphosis opens at the Lyric Hammersmith on 25 March and runs until 5 April. See listings for details

Re-Metamorphosis



By arrangement with Samuel French Limited



Levi David Addai has been making life difficult. For himself mainly.

"I sort of set myself a challenge to write a play about a family that featured a living room and a sofa," he says, "because when you're a young writer you're always told not to fall into the trap of writing about families sitting around their living rooms arguing. I enjoyed challenging that way of thinking."

His approach may have directors of creative writing courses tutting into their institutional teacups, but Addai's approach is bearing fruit. His latest play and first full commission, *House Of Agnes*, is about to open at the Oval House Theatre and his first play, *92.3FM* has played at the Royal Court, been revived at the Royal Court and has toured Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool and Brighton.

House Of Agnes is a story of cultural conflict and ambition in an Anglo / Ghanaian household. Does it share any thematic DNA with his earlier play?

"I suppose they're both about a kind of family," he says. "In *92.3* the characters worked together so closely that they sort of had this family dynamic, and *House Of Agnes* is about an actual family, so both plays share some themes, but I don't think that was intentional."

So what was his starting point for this new piece?

"The characters have been in my mind for about five years, and it's just taken me that long to get myself together and write the piece," he says.

"I suppose I did set out to make things difficult for myself. For me it's all about the characters and the drama they produce. But that's just me – I jump out of bed and think 'right, I'm gonna prove you wrong, you can write a piece set around a sofa'."

The Royal Court Theatre's Young Writers programme is, of course, rightly praised as perhaps the most productive course of its type in the country. How did Addai get involved in the project?

"I was at university doing drama," he says, "and decided to write a play as my dissertation, which became *92.3 FM*. So I did some research on new writing theatres and places that were working with young writers and the Royal Court came up top of that list."

"I got involved there in doing something called *Critical Mass* at the Royal Court which is a free programme for black and ethnic minority writers – and the 'free' bit was important because this was after university – and that gave me the tools, as it were."

Did the Royal Court open doors that might have otherwise remained closed to him?

"Oh definitely. And of course it broke down any stigmas I might have attached to theatre myself, coming from where I was coming from. Just having work performed in Sloane Square when you're from Lewisham was something that, probably just a year before, I wouldn't have thought possible. Being encouraged to tell the stories you want to tell the way you want to tell them is what makes the Royal Court so great, and that definitely changed my view of theatre."

"It's not even as though they programme your work and then that's it. They continue to foster you, to pass you on to other companies so you can continue to develop your work."

Addai's involvement in Paines Plough – the dynamic company that promotes new writing and which commissioned *House Of Agnes* – came directly through his association with the Royal Court.

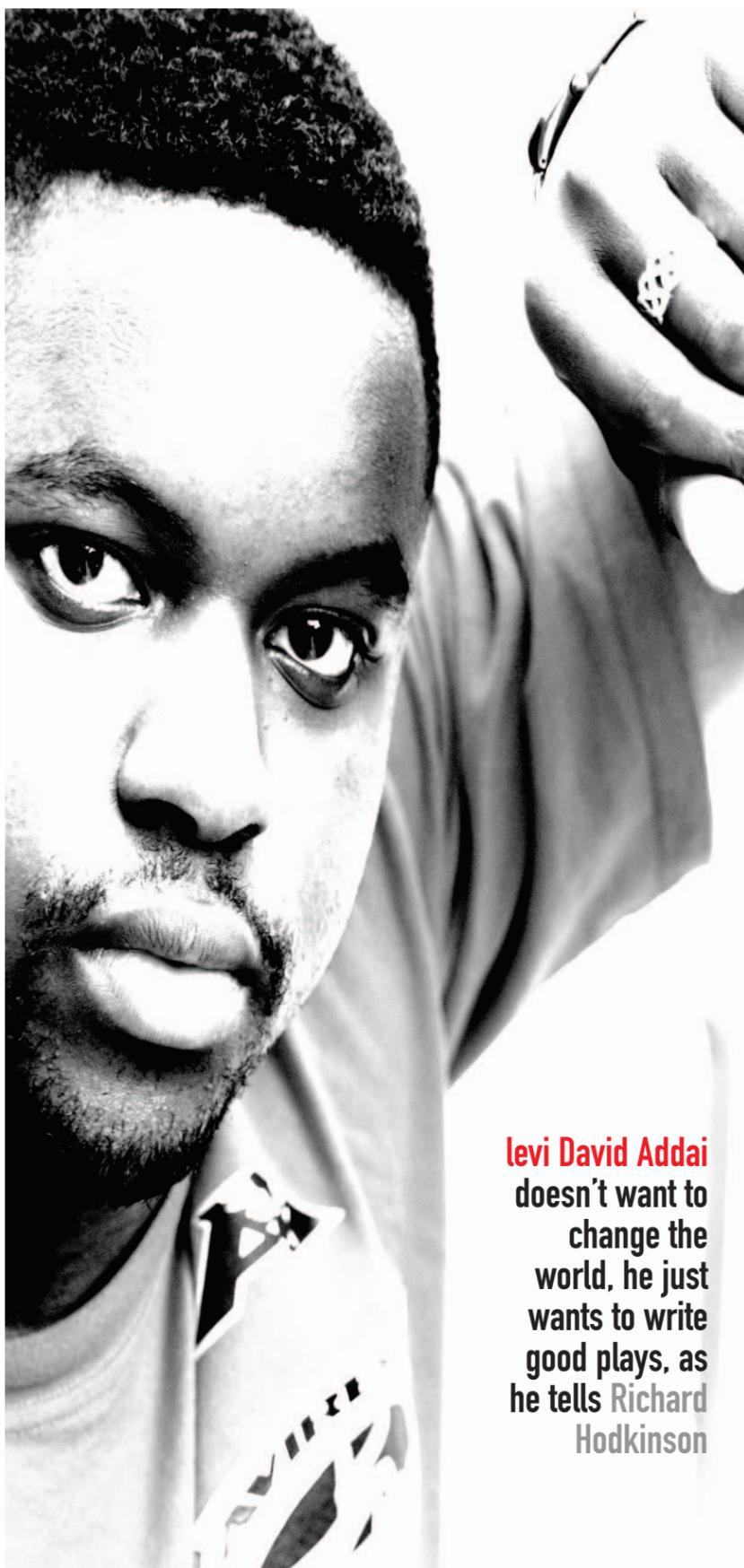
"I was introduced to Roxana Silbert [Artistic Director of Paines Plough] who, I think, saw a dress rehearsal for *92.3*, must have liked it and kept me in mind. They got me involved in their Wild Lunch events where they basically lock a load of writers up over the weekend and tell them to write and then see what happens. Through that I met the rest of the team and George Perrin who is directing *House Of Agnes*."

"And they called me back last year in February for a week's lock-in when I produced the first draft of *House Of Agnes*, so it's been a solid year of writing and working on the play, draft after redraft after redraft... But really enjoyable of course."

Despite being what he describes as 'a normal Lewisham boy' Addai had developed a theatrical CV based around acting before becoming involved in the Royal Court.

"I'd been part of the National Youth Theatre and I went to university to study drama, but I wasn't from a theatrical background at all, just a normal working class family."

"Even today I find it quite hard to explain exactly what I'm doing, because it's so



Levi David Addai doesn't want to change the world, he just wants to write good plays, as he tells Richard Hodkinson

different from what people probably expected me to be doing."

Modest and engaging, Addai has clearly not fallen into the trap of believing his own press, despite the fulsome praise attracted by *92.3FM*, and he remains refreshingly 'grounded' about his growing reputation.

"It helps that I'm not from some big theatre family, I think, I mean, when *92.3* was first on, my mum came with a friend and then came back the next night with more friends. My brother came on the last night because it was, y'know 'my little brother's doing a play, big deal,' but he got to the theatre and I think it hit him, so even today he's a bit apologetic about leaving it so late. He makes sure he comes to see everything I do now."

"My family are very proud of me, but it can be hard because, unless you're in the industry, no-one really knows what's involved in writing and staging a play – they just see the finished production which looks quite straight-forward. So it is sometimes difficult for people to understand what I spend my time doing." Has he had time in his young career to develop a clear idea of the role of the playwright in the 21st Century? He is characteristically, and disarmingly, honest on the matter.

"No, I haven't really got a clear idea of what I'm doing this for, other than I really want to be telling stories on the stage, to create characters that can take the audience on a journey. That's why I do it, but that's not really answering your question."

"I think some people have a very clear idea of what a young playwright should be

writing about and should be trying to achieve politically. But I'm not a politician or a school teacher, I'm a playwright, and if people take something away with them from the theatre that helps them make sense of society, then I'm happy with that. But it's not why I write plays."

"I think often when you read reviews of new plays, critics sometimes want to see them as state of the nation pieces or try to impose a political agenda on them."

Do people do the same to his plays?

"Yes, I think they probably do."

Addai is also hosting other events as part of the Paines Plough residency at the Oval House, including one titled 'Why do the British love West African Playwrights?' Addai laughs. "Yeah, I'm quite interested in that one myself. Do the British love West African playwrights? I dunno."

He is in a stronger position to add to the debate than most – both his parents were born in Ghana, which simplified the research process for *House Of Agnes* considerably. But does he consider himself a black playwright or a playwright who happens to be black?

"There's always that kind of question about black playwrights and actors," he says, "but I always feel that, y'know, if I was a bin man, you wouldn't describe me as a black bin man – I'd just be a bin man. I just see myself as a writer, and if I have to categorise myself, then it's as a young writer."

House Of Agnes opens at the Oval House Theatre on 4 March and runs until 29 March. See listings for details

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THE LIST

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Arcola Street, E8
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The Living Unknown Soldier
Based on Le Soldat Incoou Vivant by Jean-Yves Vivant
Directed by: Sebastian Armesto
Presented by: Strawberry Vale Productions
Created by: Simple8
From: 26 Feb To: 15 Mar
Mon - Sat 8.00pm
Wed (excluding 13 Feb) 3.00pm
France, 1918. A soldier is found wandering a station platform. With no knowledge of his identity, or the country he has been defending, he is saved from death but exiled from life. What follows is a war story, a ghost story, an absurd comedy and a chilling tragedy in which the ensemble rise from a no-man's land of mud to imagine and remember the life of the living unknown soldier.
Double Portrait
By: Tom Shkolnik
Directed by: Tom Shkolnik
From: 4 Mar To: 29 Mar
Mon - Sat 8:15pm
Two sisters. One running away from her demons, the other hiding in a dark room afraid of the world. The impossible distance between those who ought to be closest of all. Award-winning filmmaker Tom Shkolnik brings his first devised play to Arcola.

THE ARTS THEATRE

6-7 Great Newport Street, WC2
0870 060 1742
Tube: Leicester Square
The Viewing Room
By: Daniel J Rubin
Directed by: AC Wilson
Presented by: Practicum Theatre
From: 4 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Thu & Sat 3.00pm
The near future: a white suburban couple enlist as in house prison officers to host a black inmate. Complete with cage, instruction manual, cameras and tracking devices, their new guest is installed in the living room.

BARBICAN

Silk Street, EC2
0845 120 7550
Tube: Barbican
Tough Time, Nice Time
Presented by: Ridiculusmus
From: 29 Feb To: 15 Mar
Mon - Sat 8.15pm
A secret, a spa in Bangkok and two naked Germans... Martin, an ex-rent boy drug-dealing lawyer, shares his tales of misfortune with Stefan, a jaded hack writer. Together they weave through stories about sex, celebrity and genocide.
The Harder They Come
By: Perry Henzell
Directed by: Kerry Michael and Dawn Reid
Presented by: Theatre Royal Stratford East
From: 6 Mar To: 5 Apr
Mon - Sat 7.45pm
8, 15, 22, 29 Mar and 2, 5 Apr 2.30pm
Following two sell-out runs at Theatre Royal Stratford East, the musical magic of *The Harder They Come* hits the Barbican. This exhilarating production is based on the film of the same name, which launched reggae onto a world stage. The cast perform all the classic songs from the film soundtrack, including *You Can Get It If You Really Want*.

BARONS COURT THEATRE

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020 8932 4747
Tube: Barons Court
The Crimson Conquest
By: Ally James
Presented by: Act First Glance Theatre
From: 29 Feb To: 8 Mar
Tue - Sun 7.30 p.m.
Fri 7 Mar 3.00 pm
World Premiere of a new adaptation of *Dangerous Liaisons*. The story of 5 individuals trapped in a complex web of sex, romance, deceit and power.
My Name Is Bill
By: Phil Fox
Presented by: Outside Edge Theatre Company

From: 11 Mar To: 30 Mar
Tue - Sun 7.30 pm
An inspiring dramatisation of a true story, movingly depicting the trials, trauma and triumph of people and loved ones coping and recovering from substance abuse.

BLUE ELEPHANT THEATRE

59a Bethwin Road, SE5
020 7701 0100
Tube: Oval
The Harbour
Devised by the Company
Directed by: Ben Samuels
Presented by: Limbik
From: 5 Mar To: 7 Mar
Wed - Fri 8.00pm
"We know more about the surface of the moon than the bottom of the sea..." Exploring loss, risk and renewal, brought to life through visual storytelling and haunting live music.
Closed Circuit
By: Sara Pascoe
Directed by: Katie Lewis
19 March 8.00pm
Rehearsed reading dealing with the macrocosmic issues of city life through the microcosm of a Central London sex-shop, told through theatrical naturalism and stylised montages.
Strange Land of Stars
By: Emily Hunka
Directed by: Emma Hewitt
20 Mar 8.00pm
A family celebrates. A stranger arrives at the door... This rehearsed reading of *Strange Land of Stars* asks: when do a country's laws stop protecting citizens and start persecuting them?

The Dada Suicides
By: Afsaneh Gray
Directed by: James Kernack
26 Mar 8.00pm
Rehearsed reading. Jacques Vaché acquired notoriety after he killed himself and a friend in Paris in 1919. Waking up on stage, he finds himself the unlikely subject for a play.
Golden Lads & Lasses Must
By: Peter Lindley
Directed by: Rebecca Tortora
27 Mar 8.00pm
Rehearsed reading. Ted Hughes is dying of cancer. He slips in and out of consciousness, dreaming of Sylvia Plath and the fateful weekend in 1963 when she committed suicide.

The Americans
By: Matthew Freeman
Directed by:
Presented by: Grey Light in conjunction with the New York Metropolitan Playhouse.
28 March 8.00pm
Rehearsed reading. One young man sitting alone in his room writes a poem that in a moment of unexplainable magic causes his apartment to explode...
Written by one of nytheatre.com's 'People of the Year 2004'.

BRIDEWELL THEATRE

Bride Lane, Fleet Street, EC4
020 7353 3331
Tube: Blackfriars
August
An adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* by Julian Mitchell
Directed by: Wyn Jones
Presented by: Guildhall School of Music & Drama
From: 26 Feb To: 1 Mar
26 - 29 Feb 7.30pm
28 Feb & 1 Mar 2.00pm
On a farm estate in Wales over a hundred years ago, the quiet domestic routine of the Davies family is dislocated by the arrival of distinguished relatives from London.
Contact Barbican Box Office 020 7638 8891
A Programme Of Opera Scenes
Directed by Stephen Medcalf
Musical preparation by Elizabeth Rowe
Presented by: Guildhall School of Music & Drama
12 & 14 Mar 7.30pm
11 Mar 2.00pm
Singers from the Guildhall School's award-winning Opera Course perform scenes from both well-known and rarely-performed operas. Don't miss this chance to catch opera stars in the making.
Contact Barbican Box Office 020 7638 8891
Shot Actress - Full Story!
By: H E Bates
Directed by: Ann Casson
Presented by: Graham Padden
From: 16 Mar To: 20 Mar
Mon - Thu 7.30pm Sun 5.00pm
Graham Padden performs two tales by H E Bates. In *Shot Actress*, Full Story! a watch-

maker's life is turned upside-down by rumour and innuendo. In *The Great Opportunity*, Bates recalls the joy and pain of first love.
Contact 07874 394953
shotactress@live.co.uk
Lunchbox Theatre - The Tempest
By: William Shakespeare
Directed by: Joanna Turner
Presented by: Baseless Fabric
From: 25 Mar To: 11 Apr
Tue - Fri 1.00pm (for approximately 45 minutes)
Shipwrecked on a magical island and surrounded by strange spirits, the Italian kings and princes must face the scheming magician Prospero.
Waiting For Godot
By: Samuel Beckett
Directed by: Robert Pennant Jones
Presented by: The Tower Theatre Company
From: 25 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.45 pm Sat 3.00 pm
Waiting for Godot is both brilliantly funny and profound. Two flawed specimens of humankind wrestle with such absolutes as action and thought, grief and happiness, good and evil. Conclusions seem to depend on the promised arrival of Godot...
Contact 020 7353 1700 / www.towertheatre.org.uk/boxo.htm

BROADWAY STUDIO THEATRE

Catford Broadway, SE6
020 8690 0002
Rail: Catford / Catford Broadway
Money From America
By: Tom O'Brien
Directed by: Jillian Wallis
Presented by: Croft Productions
From: 11 Mar To: 20 March
Tue - Sat 8.00pm
15 & 19 Mar 2.00pm
Jack Carey returns to his home farm in Ireland after thirty years in America determined to stake his rightful claim on the farm. However his younger brother, Lardy, has different ideas. A play about land, jealousy, greed and murder!

BROCKLEY JACK THEATRE

410 Brockley Road, SE4
020 8291 6354
Rail: Crofton Park
Moll Flanders
By: Daniel Defoe, adapted by Brute Farce
Directed by: Rob Crouch
Presented by: Brute Farce
From: 13 Mar To: 15 Mar
Thu - Sat 8.00pm
In an hilariously inventive new version of this well-loved literary classic, Brute Farce's versatile cast of five breathe life into a rambunctious rabble of prostitutes and pickpockets, perverts and peers. Armed with a simple set and a few props (along with serious amounts of cross-dressing) they bring Daniel Defoe's England garishly to life.

BUSH THEATRE

2 Shepherd's Bush Green, W12
020 7610 4224
Tube: Shepherd's Bush
Artefacts
By: Mike Bartlett
Directed by: James Grieve
Presented by: nabokov
From: 29 Feb To: 22 March
Mon - Sat 8.00pm Sat 3.00pm
A regular 16-year old from London discovers that she is half-Iraqi. This takes Kelly on an unexpected journey, far from Starbucks and Oxford Street, into the heart of Baghdad. Artefacts is an eventful and thought-provoking drama exploring family, cultural identity and the West's failure to comprehend the complexities of the Middle East.

CAMDEN PEOPLE'S THEATRE

58-60 Hampstead Road, NW1
08700 600 100
Tube: Euston
Leaving
By: Sarah O'Hanlon
Directed by: Rose Lewenstein
Presented by: Split Soul Dance Theatre
From: 29 Feb To: 1 Mar
Fri - Sat 8.00pm
Leaving follows the lives of four women - a dancer, a chess player, an asylum seeker and a mad woman - combining physical theatre and animated scenography to illustrate its poetic text.

CANAL CAFE THEATRE

Delamere Terrace, W2
020 7289 6054
Tube: Warwick Avenue
NewsRevue
Presented by: Canal Cafe Theatre
From: 29 Feb To: 28 Mar
Thu - Sat 9.30pm Sun 9.00pm
Topical satire updated every week with songs and sketches about the latest news and current affairs.
The Institute
By: The Institute
Presented by: Canal Cafe Theatre
5 & 19 Mar 9.30pm
The Canal Cafe's resident improv group, comedy games and sketches all at the audience's suggestion.
Limehouse
By: Sally Eyl
Presented by: The Eyl Group
From: 4 Mar To: 22 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Limehouse is a new comedy play about an actor who sees a counsellor to get analysed out of the theatre.
Creme Anglaise
Presented by: Compagnie Carreau
From: 25 Mar To: 5 Apr
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
A new play about the French in London, performed in French.

COCHRANE THEATRE

Southampton Row, WC1
020 7269 1606
Tube: Holborn
Love's Labours Lost
By: William Shakespeare
Presented by: Drama Centre London
From: 12 Mar To: 14 Mar
Wed - Fri 7.30pm
Thu & Fri 2.00pm
Shakespeare's delightful comedy takes us into a world of gilded youth, delight in flirtation and the game of love - but it may come at a price!
Twelfth Night
By: William Shakespeare
Presented by: Drama Centre London
From: 18 Mar To: 20 Mar
Tue - Thur 7.30pm
Wed & Thu 2.00pm
One of Shakespeare's best-loved plays 'Twelfth Night' is a bittersweet examination of the human heart.

Frankenstein

Presented by: Youth Music Theatre UK
From: 26 Mar To: 29 Mar
Wed - Sat 7.30pm
Thu 2.00pm Sat 3.00pm
Murder, horror, loss of innocence and an unstoppable voyage into the darkest recesses of the human soul. A very different kind of 'monster' from that normally associated with the book.
Frankenstein
By: Mary Shelley, adapted by Nick Stimson, Music by Jimmy Jewel
Directed by: Nick Stimson
Presented by: National Youth Music Theatre UK
From: 26 Mar To: 29 Mar
Wed - Sat 7.30pm
Thu 2.00pm Sat 3.00pm
A full-length gothic horror musical, loosely adapted from the famous novel of the same name by Mary Shelley.

COURTYARD THEATRE

40 Pitfield St, N1
0870 163 0717
Tube: Old Street
The Death of Margaret Thatcher
By: Tom Green
Directed by: June Abbott
Presented by: The Courtyard Theatre
From: 26 Feb To: 2 Mar
Tue - Sat 8.00pm
With devastating, hugely enjoyable precision the writer Tom Green asks us "where will we be?...how will we react?...will we be the same?"
The Provoked Wife
By: John Vanbrugh
Presented by: Courtyard
From: 4 Mar To: 30 Mar
Tue - Sun 7.30pm
Restoration frolics meet contemporary cool in this stylish revival of Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Wife*. Camarilla replace 17th Century dandies with highly paid footballers, and beautiful ladies desperate to be their WAGS. With its gallery of vivaciously imagined characters brought to life with Camarilla's vibrant mix of movement and text "The Provoked Wife" is sure to delight traditional theatre audiences and the MTV generation alike.

FINBOROUGH THEATRE

118 Finborough Road, SW10
0870 400 0838
Tube: Earl's Court
Plague Over England
By: Nicholas De Jongh
Directed by: Tamara Harvey
Presented by: Chantelle Staynings and Neil McPherson
From: 29 Feb To: 22 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
In 1953, Sir John Gielgud was arrested in a Chelsea public lavatory for persistently importing men for immoral purposes. Gielgud's conviction caused a sensation, threatened the continuation of his career and helped break the great taboo upon general discussion in the

265 Camden High Street, NW1
020 7482 4857
Tube: Camden Town
Tatters
By: Heather Taylor
Directed by: Goo Birks
Presented by: King and Queen Productions
From: 4 Mar To: 6 Mar
Tue - Thu 9.30pm
Using Cinderella stories from around the world, Tatters weaves a tale of modern slavery set in the UK and beyond.

The Vagina Monologues

By: Eve Ensler
Directed by:
Presented by: Shams Development Organization (SDO)
7 & 8 Mar 9.30pm
Charity performance as part of the 2008 International V-Day Campaign to end violence against women and girls.
Sum
By: Myung il Lee and Ozlem Ozhables
Directed by: Myung il Lee and Ozlem Ozhables
Presented by:
From: 11 Mar To: 16 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sun 6.30pm
Double bill of:
Shut up! directed by Myung il Lee (Korea)
Sinir directed by Ozlem Ozhables (Turkey)
Scott Capurro: Laughtershock
By: Scott Capurro
13 & 14 Mar 9.30pm
Leave it to comic Scott Capurro to ask the tough questions that the Labour Party wants us to ignore.
The Moops
By: Sam Michell, Ollie Rance and Simon Yadoo
25 - 26 Mar 7.30 & 9.30pm
New writing.
Donahue Sisters
By: Geraldine Aron
Presented by: Solas Theatre Company
12 Mar 9.30pm
Set in 1990's Ireland, three sisters reunite in their attic playroom of their youth, on hearing of their Father's ill health.

FINBOROUGH THEATRE

118 Finborough Road, SW10
0870 400 0838
Tube: Earl's Court
Plague Over England
By: Nicholas De Jongh
Directed by: Tamara Harvey
Presented by: Chantelle Staynings and Neil McPherson
From: 29 Feb To: 22 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
In 1953, Sir John Gielgud was arrested in a Chelsea public lavatory for persistently importing men for immoral purposes. Gielgud's conviction caused a sensation, threatened the continuation of his career and helped break the great taboo upon general discussion in the

national press of homosexuality. Jingo

By: Charles Wood
Directed by: Tom Littler
Presented by: Primavera
From: 26 Mar To: 19 Apr
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
Jingo is a hilarious exploration of relationships and patriotism, set among the privileged expatriate community of Malaya in the days before the largest British surrender of the Second World War.

GATE THEATRE

11 Pembroke Road, W11
020 7229 5387
Tube: Notting Hill Gate
Press
Created and performed by Pierre Rigal
Presented by: The Gate Theatre, Compagnie dernière minute, Théâtre Garonne - Toulouise and Rencontres chorégraphiques internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis.
From: 29 Feb To: 8 Mar
Mon, Tue, Thu - Sat 7.30pm
Pierre Rigal, is renowned for his physical prowess as performer and agile inventiveness as choreographer. In *Press*, Rigal sets himself a Houdini-esque challenge that makes even the Gate look spacious.

GREENWICH PLAYHOUSE

Greenwich Station Forecourt
189 Greenwich High Road, SE10
020 8858 9256
Rail/DLR: Greenwich
America Voices
Directed by: Georgina Guy
Presented by: Grey Light in association with New York Metropolitan Playhouse and Greenwich Playhouse
From: 11 Mar To: 23 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sun 4.00pm
The Monkey's Paw
By: Kevin Crowley - 16, 19 & 21 Mar
The Most Wonderful Love by Matthew Freeman - 12 & 18 Mar
The Feast of the Flying Cow...and Other Stories of War by Jeni Mahoney 13 & 20 Mar
The Americans by Matthew Freeman - 15 & 23 Mar
Ezekiel's Wheelchair by Trav S. D. - 11, 14 & 22 Mar
Following a year-long collaboration with the New York Metropolitan Playhouse, Grey Light presents a series of readings and semi-staged productions allowing British audiences to engage with scripts never before presented outside of the USA.

HACKNEY EMPIRE STUDIO

291 Mare Street, E8
020 8985 2424
Rail: Hackney Central

The Sister Wendy Musical

By: Marcus Reeves
Directed by: Omar F Okai
Presented by: Simon James Collier, Mr Theatre and Hackney Empire Ltd
From: 3 Mar To: 23 Mar
Tue - Sun 7.30pm
A vibrant and enchanting musical of the world's best known 'art nun'. The show follows the story of this media phenomenon, who became a household name spreading her philosophy that 'art is meant for everyone'.

HALF MOON YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

43 White Horse Road, E1
020 7709 8900
DLR: Limehouse
Icicle Bicycle
By: Chris Elwell
Directed by: Chris Elwell
Presented by: Half Moon
1 March 11.00am & 2.00pm
All zipped up against the winter wind, Spike and Bella huddle together on their back doorstep just thinking. What does Nanna Baaba get up to when she goes beyond the garden gate? This play will be performed in fully integrated British Sign Language and English.
InsideOut
Presented by: Fraser Hooper
8 Mar 11.00am & 2.00pm
Fraser Hooper, one of the UK's finest contemporary clowns brings us a spectacular show featuring original music, live percussion, sound effects and a whole lot of clowning.

Shadow Play

Presented by: Travelling Light
15 Mar 11.00am & 2.00pm
Travelling Light return after the success of *Papa, Please Get The Moon For Me* with a vibrant mix of music, dance and mime in a show, which celebrates the natural creativity of children.
Rags To Witches
Presented by: Josh Elwell Theatre
22 Mar 11.00am & 2.00pm
In the forest lives Billy who likes playing video games. When an abandoned baby jackdaw is left on his doorstep his life is transformed. Billy and his grandmother, set out on a journey filled with ancient traditions, spells and puppet paparazzi!

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE

Eton Avenue, NW3
020 7722 9301
Tube: Swiss Cottage
3 Sisters On Hope Street
By: Diane Samuels and Tracy-Ann Oberman, after Chekhov
Directed by: Lindsay Posner
From: 26 Feb To: 29 Mar
Please call box office for performance dates and times.
Liverpool, 1946: A year after the sudden death of their father,

THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK
in London

They're back for an amazing
five weeks!

From 29 February - 15 March
Karen Akers, Simon Green, Steve
Ross, Jessica Martin & Jeff Harnar

NEW THIS YEAR! A WEST END CABARET SEASON
THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK IN LONDON
SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Jermyn Street Theatre
16b Jermyn Street, W1
020 7287 2875

sisters Gertie, May and Rita Lasky share their once grand home on Hope Street with their asthmatic brother Arnold, Auntie Beil (who still keeps her packed suitcase under the spare bed) and old family friend Dr Nate Weinberg (who claims, hand on heart, to be on the wagon). Combining warmth, poignancy and comedy, this vibrant new take on Chekhov's classic unites the talents of Diane Samuels (Kindertransport), and well-known television and theatre actress Tracy-Ann Oberman to create a powerful and witty new work.

HEN & CHICKENS THEATRE

109 St Paul's Road, N1
020 7704 2001
Tube: Highbury & Islington
Ladies in Waiting
By: Carolina Giammetta & Charlotte Palmer
Directed by: Gareth Corke
2 & 3 Mar 7.30pm
Ladies in Waiting is a new character driven comedy show. It features the lives of a group of brownies who were selected for a very special event in the 80's and catches up with them 25 years later to see if they really did 'keep their promise.'
The Beau Defeated
By: Mary Pix
Directed by: Marianne Paul
Presented by: Debbie Edler Management
From: 4 Mar To: 15 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.00pm Sat 3.00pm
London 1700-2008: The coolest city in the world? You decide in this wanton, sexy and debauched tale of love, lies and all things kinky. "The Beau Defeated" follows London elite (and not so elite) in their quest for love, fortune and most importantly, celebrity. In an age where rehab and horse tranquilisers dominate the media. "The Beau Defeated" is certainly front page news.
Slap, Tickle & Squeak
By: Slap in the Face Theatre
9 Mar 7.30pm
An improvised vaudeville spectacular. Slap, Tickle & Squeak bring you a magnificently freakish comedy improv extravaganza! Featuring freaks, daredevils, and the latest wonders from the modern world including the Amazing Furniture Man, the Reversible Family and new theories from the young Dr Freud.
Jimmy Carr
Presented by: Chambers Management
From: 10 & 17 March 7.30pm & 9.30pm
Jimmy Carr tries out his new material in this wonderfully intimate venue. Fast, furious and very funny.
Johnny Candon
Presented by: Noel Gay

Management
10 Mar 9.30pm
Matt Green - Grow up Green
Presented by: RBM
13 Mar 9.30pm
Hilarious debut solo show from star of Comedy Showcase, Comedy Lab, Inspector Steine etc. "Definitely one to watch" (Guardian) "Going to be a big name sooner or later" (Evening Standard) "A young comic to keep an eye on" (Chortle)
Pete Firman
14 Mar 9.30pm
Pete Firman previews his 2008 Edinburgh show. "A gob-smackingly talented magician...equally good at stand-up and boasts immaculate timing" Mickey Noonan, Metro "The MySpace generation's Tommy Cooper" The Scotsman "If you are partial to a bit of magic with your comedy, Firman is the best of the bunch." Bruce Dessau, Evening Standard "The audience is caught between guffawing laughter and amazed gasps" The Guardian
Isy Suttie & Bridget Christie
16 Mar 9.30pm
A work in progress night from two fantastic character comics who took Edinburgh by storm last year. Christie: "A revolutionary redefining of character comedy" ***** The Herald
Suttie: "Comedy with heart and soul" ***** Chortle
Umbrage Swain & The Magical Diamond of Ramtuti
By: James Wren & Alan Freestone
Presented by: Alan Freestone
From: 25 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
It is the 1980s and the world once more is in peril. An evil entity known only as 'The Darkness' has plans for global domination and needs to find the magical diamond of Ramtuti to fulfil his dastardly design. There is but one hope for mankind, a New Romantic hope...
Dave & Dave
By: Dave Skinner & Dave Bell
27 Mar 9.30pm
Audience Wanted: Roguishly charming comedy duo seek attractive, vivacious, open-minded crowd, aged 16 - 160. Must have GSOH, and access to eyes and ears. "Hip, cool, seriously funny" - New! Magazine 'Imaginative, inventive, and very funny' - Comedylounge.co.uk :
Two Left Hands
By: Charlotte Hudson & Leila Hackett
30 & 31 Mar 7.30pm
Charlotte Hudson and Leila Hackett are Two Left Hands, whose most recent show was a sell-out at the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe. Come and see them try

out a host of new material about animals and death, amongst other more traditionally comedic topics. "Best sketch show on the fringe" (Observer), "Well-observed characters... the most accomplished sketch comedy I have seen in years" (Sunday Telegraph *****).

JERMYN STREET THEATRE

16b Jermyn Street, W1
020 7287 2875
Tube: Piccadilly Circus
The American Songbook in London
Presented by: Jeff Harnar
From: 29 Feb To: 15 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
Karen Akers until Sun 2 March
Simon Green 2 & 3 March
Steve Ross 4 - 9th March
Jessica Martin 9 & 10 March
Jeff Harnar 11 - 15 March
The History of London Until It Got Burnt Down
By: Richard Roques
Directed by: Richard Roques
Presented by: A & R Theatre Company
From: 25 Mar To: 19 Apr
Mon - Sat 7.30pm
Wed 9 & 16 April 3.30pm
Sat 3.30pm
Romans invade, Saxons shop, Vikings pillage, Norman conquers the Lionheart tries to sell London. 3 actors play nuns, peasants, kings, butchers, bakers, & candlestick makers. Plus lots more to make you laugh.

KING'S HEAD THEATRE

115 Upper Street, N1
020 7226 1916
Tube: Angel / Highbury
Fat Christ
By: Gavin Davis
From: 26 Feb To: 23 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.30pm
Jack Taylor is always hopeful that the next idea will be his big break in life. His attempts have left him and his pregnant wife with next to nothing and he has to clean windows just to put food on the table. Never one to admit defeat, he sells himself into another insanely ambitious scheme with a top London art dealer. Jack crucifies himself to his ambitions for a better life in this hilarious comedy full of sharp one liners, sustained humour and a gloriously uplifting twist in the tale.

LANDOR THEATRE

70 Landor Road, SW9
020 7737 7276
Tube: Clapham North
Red Hot & Cole
By: Cole Porter, James Bianchi, Muriel McAuley & Randy Strawderman
Directed by: Robert McWhir
Presented by: The Landor Theatre

From: 5 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Red Hot & Cole celebrates the life of one of the great song-writing masters of this century - Cole Porter, and features over 25 Porter standards.
Sit Down Sunday (Boys!)
Presented by: The Landor Theatre
9 Mar 8.00pm
The Petrie brothers host as sketch comedy spectacular with special guests.
Sit Down Sunday (Girls!)
Presented by: The Landor Theatre
16 Mar 8.00pm
Roll up! Roll up! Slow Country present a sketch comedy extravaganza.

LION & UNICORN THEATRE

42-44 Gaisford Street, NW5
020 7485 9897
Tube: Kentish Town
The Cherry Orchard
By: Anton Chekhov
Directed by: Victor Sobchak
Presented by: Act provocateur Int.
From: 26 Feb To: 16 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sun 6.00pm
A new adaptation of Chekhov's masterpiece. As a part of the 'Chekhov's Season' at the Lion & Unicorn Theatre.
The Witch
By: Anton Chekhov
Directed by: Victor Sobchak & Victoria Appleton
Presented by: Act Provocateur Int.
From: 15 Mar To: 6 Apr
Sat - Sun 3.00pm
A low rank priest is blaming his young wife in doing witchcraft...one night, during a snowstorm a young postman arrives...An adaptation of Chekhov's short story. 'Highly recommended' (What's On)
Mad Girl
By: Yukio Mishima
Directed by: Victor Sobchak
Presented by: Act Provocateur Int.
From: 15 Mar To: 6 Apr
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
A young girl was abandoned by her lover. Every day she is waiting for him on the train station bench. She is living in the house of a Lady Artist. One day her unfaithful lover comes back...

LITTLE ANGEL THEATRE

14 Dagmar Passage, Cross St, N1
020 7226 1787
Tube: Angel / Highbury
Hanging By A Thread
By: The Ding Foundation
Presented by: The Ding Foundation
From: 26 Feb To: 16 Mar
Tue - Sun 8.00pm
The Ding Foundation presents this story of two women. A daughter cares for her mother who is ill in bed and slipping towards death. A story about the duties that bind people together, and voyages of the imagination to transcend those duties. Sound, puppetry and physicality conjure up a strange and compelling visual language.
Jellybean Jack
By: Peter Glanville
Directed by: Peter Glanville
Presented by: The Little Angel Theatre
From: 29 Feb To: 27 Apr
This exciting new version of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' combines table-top and shadow-puppetry, bringing to life the well-known story of the brave little boy who climbs a magic beanstalk and overcomes a fearful giant. Set in a wild desert world, it wonderfully weaves a traditional tale with a modern setting.

LYRIC HAMMERSMITH

King Street, W6
0870 050 0511
Tube: Hammersmith
The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui
By: Bertolt Brecht
Directed by: David Farr
Presented by: Lyric Hammersmith
From: 26 Feb - To: 15 Mar
Mon - Sat 7.30pm
8, 15 Mar 2.30pm
12 Mar 1.30pm
Lyric Artistic Director David Farr and acclaimed Zimbabwean actor Lucian Msamati combine to reinvent Brecht's hilarious and terrifying gangster play for modern Africa. Lucian Msamati will play the title role, inspired by Robert Mugabe and other

African dictators.
Sarajevo Story
By: Lightwork
Directed by: Lightwork
Presented by: Lightwork and the Lyric Hammersmith
From: 26 Feb To: 15 Mar
Mon - Sat 8.00pm
Inspired by actual circumstances, Sarajevo Story tells a contemporary tale of a couple who get caught in a moral dilemma that will push the boundaries of their relationship.
Beachy Head
By: Analogue
Directed by: Analogue
Presented by: Lyric Hammersmith
From: 20 Mar To: 22 Mar
Thu - Sat 8.00pm
From the company behind the award winning Mile End, comes a sneak preview of their fresh project Beachy Head. At the top of the cliffs stands a telephone box, at the foot is a lighthouse. They come from across the world to this spot. It takes eight seconds to fall.
Metamorphosis
By: Franz Kafka
Directed by: David Farr and Gisli Örn Gardarsson
Presented by: Lyric Hammersmith and Vesturport Theatre
From: 25 Mar To: 5 Apr
Mon - Sat 7.30pm
29 Mar & 5 Apr 2.30pm
Due to unprecedented demand this phenomenally successful collaboration between Vesturport Theatre's Gisli Örn Gardarsson and the Lyric's Artistic Director David Farr, returns to the Lyric for a final two week run prior to its international tour.
Contains Violence
By: David Rosenberg
Directed by: David Rosenberg
Presented by: Lyric Hammersmith
From: 27 Mar To: 26 Apr
Mon - Sat 8.00pm in Mar, 8.30pm in Apr
After sundown on the Lyric terrace, London voyeurs bear witness to the peculiar private lives of others. Part mystery and part peep show, Contains Violence invites you to don binoculars and headphones for a live, site-specific thriller taking place along the west-London skyline.

MENIER CHOCOLATE FACTORY
51-53 Southwark Street, SE1
0871 230 2616
Tube: London Bridge
La Cage aux Folles
By: Jerry Herman and Harvey Fierstein
Directed by: Terry Johnson
Presented by: Chocolate Factory Productions
Final perfs: 26 Feb To: 8 Mar
Tue - Sat 8.00pm
Sat & Sun 3.30pm
Welcome to the pride of St Tropez, La Cage aux Folles! Douglas Hodge and Philip Quast lead a fantastic cast in this musical spectacular - prepare for a little guts and lots of glitter!

NEW END THEATRE
27 New End, NW3
0870 033 2733
Tube: Hampstead
Lunch With Marlene
By: Chris Burgess
Directed by: Stewart Nicholls
Presented by: New End Theatre
From: 26 Mar To: 27 Apr
Tue - Sat 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.30pm
A play and a revue celebrating Marlene Dietrich's thirty-eight year long friendship with Noel Coward. Renowned actress, Kate O'Mara makes her New End Theatre debut with co-star Frank Barrie as Noel Coward.

NEW PLAYERS THEATRE
The Arches, Villiers Street, WC2
020 7930 6601
Tube: Charing Cross
Make Me A Song
By: Rob Ruggiero
Directed by: Andrew McBean
Presented by: Junkyard Dog Productions
From: 3 Mar To: 6 Apr
Tue - Sun 7.30pm
Sat & Sun 3.00pm
A cast of major West End singers including Frances Ruffelle and Ian H Watkins are to star in this British premiere of the Off-Broadway hit, celebrating the songs of William Finn.

OLD RED LION THEATRE
418 St John Street, EC1
020 7837 7816
Tube: Angel

The Baby Box

By: Chris Leicester
Directed by: Stephen Henry
Presented by: Too Write Productions
From: Feb 29 To: Mar 22
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sun 6.00pm
There's a police search on the streets and a media crusade on the television the night Glenda comes home to find an intruder in her house. It's Yvonne, the sister she hates who spent 12 years in prison for murder. Why is she here and what does she want? As Yvonne seeks refuge in the family home the sisters confront their past. The evening will change their lives forever.
In My Name
By: Steven Hevey
Directed by: John Howlett
Presented by: Yaller Skunk Theatre
From: Mar 25 To: Apr 12
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sun 3.30pm
It's not easy being optimistic in London. You've just been dumped, your landlord won't fix the boiler, the city's going up in smoke and to top it all off your new flatmate may or may not have taken the deliveryman hostage.

OLD VIC

103 The Cut, Waterloo Rd, SE1
0870 060 6628
Tube: Waterloo
Speed-the-Plow
By: David Mamet
Directed by: Matthew Warchus
Presented by: The Old Vic Theatre Company
From: 29 Feb To: 26 April
Mon-Sat 7.30pm Sat 2.30pm
Mamet's witty, caustic play - filled with his trademark rapid-fire dialogue satirises the deal making that goes on behind-the-scenes in the movie business.

ORANGE TREE THEATRE

1 Clarence Street, Richmond, Surrey, TW9
020 8940 3633
Tube: Richmond
Chains of Dew
By: Susan Glaspell
Directed by: Kate Saxon
Presented by:
From: 12 Mar To: 26 Apr
Mon - Sat 7.45 pm
Thu & Sat 2.30 pm
A 1920s tale of poetry, birth control and bobbed hair by one of America's finest writers. Will the liberal intelligentsia of New York lure Seymore Standish, poet, away from his boring banking life?

OVAL HOUSE THEATRE

52-54 Kennington Oval, SE11
020 7582 0800
Tube: Oval
House of Agnes
By: Levi David Addai
Directed by: George Perrin
Presented by: Paines Plough
From: 4 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 7.45pm
This new play by the acclaimed and coming young writer Levi David Addai is a tender, astute and humorous portrait of clashing traditional and cultural values in modern family life.
Paines Plough in residence at Oval House Theatre: Tuesday Late Night with Levi David Addai
Presented by: Paines Plough
11 Mar 10.00pm
Hosted by playwright Levi David Addai, Paines Plough kick off their residency with an evening of brand new work. An eclectic mid-week mix-up of evening entertainment.
Paines Plough in residence at Oval House Theatre: Why do the British love West African playwrights?
Presented by: Paines Plough
12 Mar 9.45pm
Stay after this evening's House of Agnes performance for a crackling debate about West African playwriting with a panel including Dipo Agboluaje and Levi David Addai.
Paines Plough in residence at Oval House Theatre: Tuesday Late Night with Levi David Addai
By: Paines Plough
Presented by: Paines Plough
18 Mar 10.00pm
The boldest new talent sought out and commissioned by Levi David Addai to write and perform their own work: a rare late night opportunity to see the best emerging playwrights on stage. Paines Plough in residence at Oval House Theatre: Around the House with Future Perfect 3
25 Mar 6.45pm
Seven premieres of short plays

commissioned for Oval House and performed in every nook and cranny of the building. The playwrights are Future Perfect 3 - Paines Plough's hothouse of young talent.
Confessions of a Dancewhore
By: Michael Twaits
Presented by: Michael Twaits
26 & 27 Mar 8.00pm and
From: 28 Mar To: 3 May
Thurs & Fridays 9.00pm
Politics and pop culture meet in this foul-mouthed theatrical cabaret - an accomplished and vivid queer solo performance for everyone who has ever felt like an 'other'.

QUEEN'S THEATRE

Billet Lane, Hornchurch RM11
1QT
01708 443 333
Tube: Hornchurch
Relatively Speaking
By: Alan Ayckbourn
Directed by: Matt Devitt
Presented by: cut to the chase...
From: 7 Mar To: 29 Mar
Tue - Sat 8.00pm
20 Mar & 29 Mar 2.30pm
In this sparkling comedy of misunderstandings and mislaid slippers, Greg follows girlfriend Ginny back to the in-laws, but gets more than he bargained for!

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

Crisp Road, W6
020 8237 1111
Tube: Hammersmith
Frankenstein
A new adaptation by Catriona Craig
Directed by: Neil Sheppeck
Presented by: Love & Madness Ensemble
From: 11 Mar To: 27 Mar
11, 14, 15, 20, 25, 27 Mar
7.45pm 16, 22 Mar 2.00pm
Mary Shelley's classic tale is brought to life in this stunning new adaptation. Victor Frankenstein is an ambitious young student who discovers the secret of giving life to inanimate material. He assembles a creature from dead body parts and succeeds in giving it life. Horrified by the result he abandons his creation, leaving it to fend for itself, learn the cruelty of mankind and ultimately exact its terrible revenge. 'Innovative & hard punching ... adaptation at its very best' Western Mail
The Tempest
By: By William Shakespeare
Directed by: Directed by Jack Shepherd
Presented by: Love & Madness Ensemble
From: 12 Mar To: 22 Mar
12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22 Mar
7.45pm 19 Mar 2.00pm
Prospero, a potent magician lives in exile with his daughter Miranda on an island. Aided by the spirit Ariel he conjures a storm to wreck the ship carrying his enemies who are washed up on the island. Prospero wants justice, Miranda wants a husband, Ariel wants freedom. Jack Shepherd (one of the UK's best known character actors and star of TV's Wycliffe) directed the opening production at Shakespeare's Globe and has subsequently worked there many times. 'Reinventing Shakespeare while remaining faithful to the original text' The Independent
La Festa (The Party)
By: By Spiro Scimone
Presented by :Italian Theatre Season
10 Mar 8.00pm
The play shows a day in the life of a family marked by cruel games of retaliated disdain. The family has gathered to celebrate the couple's 30th wedding anniversary. In the confines of a kitchen, the three characters cause grave upset to the family's microcosm. This is the first work Scimone wrote in Italian; it is preceded by two previous works, Nunzio and Bar, written in the Messinese dialect.

ROSEMARY BRANCH THEATRE

2 Shepperton Road, N1
020 7704 6665
Tube: Old Street
The Tempest
By: William Shakespeare
Directed by: Helen Tennison
Presented by: Darker Arts
From: 20 Feb To: 20 March
Tue - Sat 7.30pm Sat 7.00pm
Sun 5.00pm
Dark Victorian fairy tale with original soundscore. Slightly cut original text. Suitable for students.

ROYAL COURT THEATRE

Sloane Square, SW1

FIRSTACT

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Letters to the editor to:
FirstAct,
Unit 3Q, Leroy House,
436 Essex Road, London
N1 3QP

All enquiries:
Richard Hodgkinson
020 7226 6525
richard@firstactmagazine.com



Everyone Says Awww At The Drill Hall

Parents and carers living in the Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury neighbourhoods have a secret. Every Tuesday at The Drill Hall, the theatre throws its doors open to under-fives. The children get to take part in creative play sessions, storytelling, theatre performances, arts and crafts, movement dance, and music. Next up in its programme is Dreamspinners, a workshop designed for Early Years and Reception children. Dream up a fantastical night-time world, talk with a mermaid, feast at the teddy's picnic and find out just what Professor Bubbly-Quick is up to. The weekly sessions are free, and it can get very busy. So make sure you book your tickets early.

Booking is essential. Please call the Box Office on 020 7307 5060 to book your tickets.

Weekly activity schedule on the Sure Start section of the Drill Hall's website www.drillhall.co.uk

Arts Cut Victims Fight Back

And staying with the Drill Hall, although on a less happy note...

The recent Arts Council decision to remove the hall's funding lead not only to a fully justified howl of outrage from right minded theatre-goers but to a determined fund-raising effort.

The very, very funny and prodigiously talented Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain play a benefit concert on 4 April and no less a figure than Michael Nyman will perform his I Sonetti Lussuriosi with soprano and long-time collaborator Marie Angel on 6 April.

Perfectly pitched concert for the Drill Hall, that last one, because the lyrical content of Nyman's settings are, well, rather more than saucy and in the true close-to-the-knuckle, oo-err Missus nature of several shows FirstAct has witnessed in the venue over the years.

Call the box office on 020 7307 5060

CHERRY ORCHARD

Feb 26 - March 16

THREE SISTERS

March 18 - April 6



**Lion & Unicorn Theatre
&
ACT PROVOCATEUR INT.**

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Sundays: 18 00

Tickets: £10/8

Box-office: 0207 485 9897

www.actprovocateur.net

THELIST

020 7565 5000

Tube: Sloane Square

The Vertical Hour

By: David Hare

Directed by: Jeremy Herrin

Presented by: Royal Court Theatre

From: 29 Feb To: 1 Mar

Mon - Sat 7.30pm

Thu & Sat 3.30pm

David Hare's play pits personal philosophies against global politics.

Scarborough

By: Fiona Evans

Directed by: Deborah Bruce

Presented by: Northern Firebrand

From: 29 Feb To: 15 Mar

Mon - Wed & Fri - Sat 7.45pm

Thu 5.30pm & 8.30pm

Sat 4.00pm

A dangerously charged romance is played out amidst bittersweet love songs in this award-winning new play.

random

By: debbie tucker green

Directed by: Sacha Wares

Presented by: Royal Court Theatre

From: 7 Mar To: 12 Apr

Mon - Sat 7.30pm Sat 3.30pm

An urgent new play by debbie tucker green.

SOHO THEATRE

21 Dean Street, W1

0870 429 6883

Tube: Tottenham Court Road

A Couple of Poor, Polish-Speaking Romanians

By: Dorota Maslowska, translated by Lisa Goldman and Paul Sirett

Directed by: Lisa Goldman

Presented by: Soho Theatre in association with the Polish Cultural Institute

From: 29 Feb To: 29 Mar

Mon - Sat 7.30pm

Sat 3.00pm

A fast-paced road trip on black ice, laced with dark ironic humour. This is the debut play from award-winning Polish writer Dorota Maslowska.

THE SPACE

269 Westferry Road, E14

020 7515 7799

DLR: Mudchute

Resurrected

By: Daniel Teafoe

Directed by: Daniel Teafoe

Presented by: Daniel Teafoe

From: 1 & 2 Mar 8.00 pm

From out of nowhere comes the Resurrected. Take a meandering journey into the afterlife as

Edward Carpenter's eloquent narration about the hereafter is brought to life by Daniel Teafoe as the Resurrected.

Attraction To Atrocity

By: Brian Astbury

Directed by: Brian Astbury

Presented by: East 15

From: 5 Mar To: 8 Mar

Wed - Sat 8.00 pm Sat 2.00 pm

The battlefields of the world resonate with atrocities committed by ordinary people. Attraction to Atrocity looks inside the dark recesses of these ordinary minds to try and understand our impulse to hurt and humiliate others.

SeaSuite: UltraViolet (Enterprise 08)

By: SeaSuite

Directed by: SeaSuite

Presented by: SeaSuite

9 Mar 7.30 pm

A meditative, sensual journey into the inner recesses of human experience. SeaSuite: UltraViolet fuses spoken word, film, dance, Indian classical vocal and an electronic soundscape, exploring the subconscious, shadows and, ultimately, love.

Round Round

By: Adam Hemming

Directed by: Adam Hemming

Presented by: East 15

From: 12 Mar To: 15 Mar

Wed - Sat 8.00 pm Sat 2.00 pm

Whore, Politician, Husband, Wife, Lover, Cheat - linked by their sexual misadventures.

Patients in a sexual health clinic force each other to re-enact the scenes that led them there.

Round, Round is a modern retelling of Arthur Schnitzler's cautionary drama, La Ronde.

Restless Tides (Enterprise 08)

By: Left Luggage Theatre

Directed by: Left Luggage Theatre

Presented by: Left Luggage Theatre

From: 18 Mar To: 20 Mar

Tue - Thu 7.30 pm & 9.00 pm

Left Luggage respond to the remembered and the forgotten; the historical and imagined; the wish and dreamt; and the stories whispered by objects and spaces.

Bridge of Leaps (Enterprise 08)

By: Maggie Grace & Emer O'Connor

Directed by: Maggie Grace and Emer O'Connor

Presented by: Siren Stories Theatre Company

From: 21 Mar To: 23 Mar

Fri - Sun 8.00 pm

What does Emer get up to while her man is astray and what does the warrior woman make of yet another young pup? Songs and stories of connection, destruction and lust.

Princess (Enterprise 08)

By: Debbie Kent, Francesca Dale

Directed by: Debbie Kent, Francesca Dale

Presented by: Dirty Market Theatre

From: 21 Mar To: 23 Mar

Fri - Sun 8.00 pm

Louise's tower is a gleaming glass block in Docklands with a state-of-the-art security system, and her hair isn't long enough to weave into a ladder... The story of a woman who begins to question whether life is really a fairy tale.

The Invisible Skin Between Us (Enterprise 08)

By: Kim Dexter

Directed by: Kim Dexter

Presented by: Kim Dexter

25 & 26 Mar 6.00 pm

A one to one performance encounter that explores scars as testaments to human fragility and questions the possibility of empathy between strangers.

Never Heard That One Before (Enterprise 08)

25 & 26 Mar 8.15 pm

An experiment created as a backlash to the mass production of bookies and over-hyped authors looking at the lost art of writing, trying to reconnect with the roots of story telling:

The Revenger's Tragedy (Enterprise 08)

By: Metra Theatre

Directed by: Metra Theatre

Presented by: Metra Theatre

From: 27 Mar To: 30 Mar

Thu - Sun 8.00 pm

Metra Theatre explore the classic tale of treachery, with an eclectic mix of performance skills and philosophical foresight, applying sumptuous colour to this dark tragedy and allowing it to resonate with a contemporary audience.

THEATRE 503

503 Battersea Park Road, SW11

020 7978 7040

Rail: Clapham Junction

Shadow Language

By: Kelly Stuart

Directed by: Tim Stark

Presented by: Theatre503 & B29 Productions

From: 29 Feb To: 15 Mar

Tue - Sat 8.00pm Sun 5.00pm

An American woman searches Turkey for a deported Kurdish man who has disappeared. A darkly comic journey through a land where a language is illegal and history is drowned.

Writers Ensemble

Presented by: Weaver Hughes Ensemble

3 Mar 8.00pm

Weaver Hughes Ensemble is a new writing theatre company about the here and now.

Sound Dust

By: Jamie Harper & Sasha Yevtushenko

Directed by: Jamie Harper & Sasha Yevtushenko

Presented by: Theatre503

From: 18 Mar To: 22 Mar

Tue - Sat 8.00pm

An improvised play that responds to current events and deals with the interaction between the 'exterior' world and the 'interior' world of our imagination.

THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD EAST

Gerry Raffles Square, E15

020 8534 7374

Tube: Stratford

Marilyn and Ella

By: Bonnie Greer

Directed by: Colin McFarlane

Presented by: Theatre Royal Stratford East

From: 29 Feb To: 15th Mar

Tue - Sat 7.30pm

8 & 15 Mar 3.00pm

Marilyn Monroe and Ella Fitzgerald, two of the 20th Century's greatest icons, come together in this true story of friendship, prejudice and determination in this new musical drama.

TRICYCLE THEATRE

269 Kilburn High Road, NW6

020 7328 1000

Tube: Kilburn

I'll Be The Devil

By: Leo Butler

Directed by: Ramin Gray

Presented by: Royal Shakespeare Company

From: 26 Feb To: 8 Mar

Mon - Sat 8.00pm

5 Mar 2.00pm 1 & 8 Mar 4.00pm

An epic and brutal journey into

the dark heart of occupied Ireland during the 18th century.

Cast: Gerard Murphy, JD Kelleher, Edward Macklin, Andrew Macklin, Billy Carter, Samantha Young, and Derbhle Crotty.

Days of Significance

By: Roy Williams

Directed by: Maria Aberg

Presented by: Royal Shakespeare Company

From: 12 Mar To: 29 Mar

Mon - Sat 8.00pm

19 & 26 Mar 2.00pm 22 & 29 Mar 4.00pm

2pm (mid-week) & 4pm (Sats)

Two young soldiers make the most of a drunken night out with their friends before they leave for active service in Iraq. Once there, their personal lives and insecurities directly impact on their tour of duty.

UPSTAIRS AT THE GATEHOUSE

Junction of Hampstead Lane / North Road, N6

020 8340 3488

Tube: Highgate

Talent

By: Victoria Wood

Directed by: John Plews

Presented by: Ovation

From: 8 Mar To: 6 Apr

Tue - Sat 8.00pm Sun 4.00pm

Talent was Victoria Wood's first play written in 1978 and set in the seedy backstage dressing room of a northern cabaret club. It premiered at The Crucible Theatre in Sheffield and was seen the following year at the ICA in London. Talent examines the pitfalls of entering a competition designed to humiliate its participants as they are presented to a jeering audience between the beer break and the bingo.

On the Stage and Off

By: Jerome K Jerome

Presented by: Elsewhere Theatre

2 March 4.00pm

Rodney Bewes plays Jerome K Jerome himself as well as the characters he encounters: theatre managers, landladies, stage door keepers, agents and, of course, actors - from stars to extras, playing parts from high tragedy to low comedy. Slowly he comes to see the glamorous world of showbiz for what it is.

WAREHOUSE THEATRE

Dingwall Road, Croydon CR0 2NF

020 8680 4060

Rail: East Croydon

Stan Laurel, Please Stand Up

By: Bob Kingdom

Presented by: Richard Jordan Productions Ltd in association with Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and Warehouse Theatre

Croydon presents

From: 12 Mar To: 30 Mar

Wed - Sat 8.00pm (Tuesday 18 at 6.30pm) Sun 5.00pm

Fringe-First winner and Edinburgh Festival legend Bob Kingdom (Dylan Thomas - Return Journey, The Truman Capote Talk Show) begins a national tour at the Warehouse

ances, but times vary so please call the box office for more information.

A galactic adventure about two stars by one of Japan's foremost children's writers, Kenji Miyazawa, is intertwined with the story of how he first became a writer.

WATFORD PALACE THEATRE

Clarendon Road

Watford, WD17

01923 225 671

Rail: Watford Junction

The Doubtful Guest

Directed by: Shön Dale-Jones

Presented by: Hoipolloi and the Theatre Royal Plymouth in association with English Touring Theatre and Watford Palace Theatre

From: 13 Mar To: 22 Mar

Mon - Sat 7.30pm (no show 14 & 21 Mar)

Sat 2.30 Fri & Tue 1.30

When a seemingly normal

TOO WRITE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT



By Chris Leicester

THE YEAR TO HAVE
THE YEARNING TO GIVE AWAY

OLD RED LION THEATRE,
418 St. John's Street, London, EC1V 4NJ
26 Feb - 22 March 2008.
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