



The Rattigan

The Newsletter of
The Terence Rattigan Society

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Version

Shavian anti-romance for Christmas

A *RMS and the Man* is one of those plays of which one has heard but which is so rarely performed these days that one may never have actually seen it. That was certainly the case for this audience member at the Society visit to the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond for the Christmas theatre outing.

Worse than that, I was under the misapprehension that I had at least seen a student performance when at drama school in 1969/70. Alas no. What I had taken to be the first act of this Shavian ‘anti-romance’ turned out to be much later on in the play: what I had remembered was obviously only a one-act performance by senior students, and not the whole thing. So this visit to the final production of Paul Miller’s tenure as Artistic Director of the Orange Tree was an eye-opener.

What to make, now, of Shaw’s classy farce that satirises the idealism of war, romance and heroism, as well as male superiority, social aspiration and class snobbery? It is a confection, certainly, but it asks real questions about leadership, the hollowness of rank and the stupidity of glorifying armed combat. Paul Miller’s direction has a mostly very light



Miranda Foster as Catherine and Alex Bhat as Sergius in ‘Arms and the Man’ at the Orange Tree, Richmond
Photo: Ellie Kurtz

touch, which is entirely in keeping with the tone of the play, but he wildly overplays it with the exaggerated posturings of Alex Bhat’s Sergius. Yes, the character is a mockery of the nobility and vaingloriousness of soldiering, who has far more bravado than common sense, and believes in presenting himself to the

world—and to his intended, Raina—as the picture of dashing, heroic manhood, but in the small confines of theatre-in-the-round his exaggerated posing, physical and vocal contortions, and general swaggering make him appear merely cartoonish, without any of the underlying humanity that all the other characters possess. It is very funny, but perhaps it would have been more so if more artfully conveyed as a demeanour he has adopted according to what he sees as necessary for his social position.

Alex Waldmann is the down-to-earth Swiss mercenary Bluntschli, who prefers to keep chocolates in his gunbelt rather than bullets. The chocolate creams he devours in Raina’s bedroom when she takes pity on him are clearly a symbol of his inner nature, **Cont. on page 7...**

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Editor's note: Any views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of The Terence Rattigan Society or its Committee.

AGM Report and introduction of our new Chairman

THE 2022 AGM was held on Sunday 20 November at the Koha Restaurant, handily just round the corner from the Duke of York's Theatre, where those attending the AGM were later to see a performance of the acclaimed production of *The Doctor*.

Secretary Martin Amherst Lock (*pictured*) extended a warm welcome to all those attending, and said that the main purpose of the AGM was to give members an opportunity to ensure that the Society is being managed properly and in accordance with their views. The Committee was re-elected unanimously.

Tribute was paid to the former Chairman, the late Denis Moriarty, praising him for his enormous enthusiasm and tirelessly supportive attitude. It had been decided to select his successor from within the Committee, and Martin had been duly nominated. This was immediately approved, and Martin said he was delighted and honoured to serve the Society in a double capacity.

"It will be very difficult indeed to emulate Denis's enormous enthusiasm, affability and kindness," he told us, "let alone his erudition, but I hope to follow Barbara's, and indeed Denis's, vision in ensuring that we continue to offer members a wide variety of events and activities, connected directly or indirectly with the work and life of Sir Terence Rattigan. I am particularly keen to sustain and enlarge the membership and hope that by having a presence on social media such as Facebook and TikTok we shall be able to make a wider and possibly younger audience aware of what we have to offer."



It was reported that the current membership stands at 130 - similar to this time last year - and the bank balance as of 30 September - not including funds raised for the Rattigan Memorial Fund Project - stood at around £8,000. There had been a small loss on the

Hurlingham Club Birthday Dinner and other events had covered their costs.

There had been a dearth of productions, both professional and amateur, of Rattigan plays in 2022, but luckily for us the Events Secretary had filled the gap by organising no fewer than five outings to plays by other playwrights, which he rightly thought members would enjoy: *The Forest, Folk* and *The Fever Syndrome* at Hampstead, *The Corn is Green* at the National, and *John Gabriel Borkman* at the Bridge, the last three all reported on in previous issues. Many thanks to Phill Ward, whose finger is always on the pulse of upcoming productions of interest. Then, after a tasty lunch and with all business concluded, members and guests adjourned to the Duke of York's for a Sunday matinee of high drama (*see page 5*).

Biographical note: Our new Chairman read English at Cambridge, has been Head of English at both Repton and Harrow, and more recently Queens College, London. He has directed plays and musicals at all of these, including *Separate Tables, Amadeus, Another Country, Cabaret* and *The Real Inspector Hound*. Apart from theatre and opera, his other interests include singing in choirs and walking the caminos to Santiago. A man of great energy—just what we need for someone with two key roles to fulfil on our behalf! ☞

The poetry of the distressed

**James Heyworth-Dunne
discovers a link between Rattigan,
Chekhov and Tennessee Williams**

Penetrating understanding of the loneliness and torment of the characters in their dramas does not lead Chekhov, Rattigan and Tennessee Williams to offer happier futures. Happier futures would be inconsistent with these playwrights' highly personalised understanding of the human condition. "We are all of us sentenced to solitary confinement within our own skins, for life", states one of Williams' characters in *Orpheus Descending*. He could have added that it is a tormented confinement.

Brian Friel, immersed in Chekhov, and often described as the Irish Chekhov, imagines in *Afterplay* the after-lives of two of Chekhov's characters, Sonya in *Uncle Vanya* and Andrey in *Three Sisters*. Friel takes us forward to a chance meeting between Sonya and Andrey as strangers in a Moscow café twenty years later.

In *Uncle Vanya*, Sonya and her uncle struggle to keep afloat the estate Sonya inherited from her mother. Since she can remember, Sonya has been utterly in love with the visiting doctor. In the play, dramas of family conflict and of misplaced or unrequited love take place around her. Sonya, in her early 20s when the play ends, is left alone with Vanya, dealing with estate business.

In *Three Sisters* there are at first high hopes for Andrey. He is expected to secure a professorship in Moscow or to follow a brilliant career in music. Instead, he is a squandering wastrel. He marries an uncultivated girl, Natasha, whose strident ways cow him and the sisters. Natasha takes up with the equally uncultivated Chairman of the local Council, not before having produced two children, Bobik and Sophie. During the play, each of the sisters is afflicted and reduced by their own misfortunes. Andrey is in his mid 20s when the play ends.

Afterplay's description of the meeting between Sonya and Andrey could itself be an entire Chekhovian drama. The protagonists move from

false representation of well-being to admission of destitution and despair. Sonya's creditors have just denuded her of the bulk of her estate. Andrey is in the city to visit Bobik, now a criminal in prison, and is paying his way by busking, playing his violin in public places. Shared admissions – and vodka – bring a moment of intimacy and of hope for prolonged companionship but this is destroyed by Sonya, determined to return home, in case the doctor visits and, if he does visit, notices her, as occasionally happens.

Finally, Sonya and Andrey are left in an even sadder situation than 20 years before. Friel, magically invoking the Chekhovian aura, prolongs the agony and extinguishes hope.

The possible connection between Williams' "Belle Reve" and Rattigan's "Beauregard" intrigues. Williams and Rattigan knew each other's work. Rattigan may well have intended a connection between these names. Belle Reve is the house on the plantation where Blanche Dubois grew up. Blanche is a central character in Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). Beauregard is the residential hotel in Bournemouth in Rattigan's *Separate Tables* (1954). Major Pollock is one of the principal characters and residents. Rattigan would certainly have known that grammatically "Belle Reve" should have been written as masculine, "Beau Reve". Rattigan chose the name "Beauregard" for his Bournemouth hotel, the name of a prominent Confederate General from Louisiana. He could have chosen "Belle Vue" but opted instead for a name evoking the steamy southern states.

The streetcar in his play is Williams' symbol for the unstoppable force of desire. Williams depicts explicitly in this play and in others the power and consequences of chronic sexual lust and depravity. Rattigan deals with these same forces but indirectly and with understatement. After Major Pollock's transgressions in the local cinema are discovered, he is challenged by Sybil, the meek and insecure daughter of a fearsome resident. Sybil, distraught, is deeply fond of the Major.

"Why did you do it?"

"Because I can't stop it. I suppose I am made in such a way ... I don't like myself the way I am, everyone has his daydreams, mine just go further than others".

Cont on back page...

The Birth of Aunt Edna

Professor Dan Rebellato gives us an intriguing glimpse into the origins of Rattigan's infamous 'Aunt'

WE ARE all, I'm sure, familiar with Aunt Edna, one of Terence Rattigan's most famous creations, though one he would come to regret. Originally simply a personification of an ordinary, reasonably well-informed theatregoer, with a taste for the popular but a keen eye for the genuinely original, she became, in other people's hands, a crude stereotype of a prudish, banal, conservative, unthinking philistine. In this new guise, she was retrofitted to Rattigan's work as proof that, if this was the person he had in mind when he wrote, his work must be equally banal, conservative and middlebrow.

I've recently been writing a chapter on Aunt Edna for a collection of essays, *Terence Rattigan: New Critical Approaches*, that I'm coediting with Dr Alex Feldman at the University of Haifa. I've been looking at how the cultural profile of Edna changes over the years, how control of his creation was seized from Rattigan and turned into what we might now call a 'meme', a free-floating semantic fragment, being reproduced and exchanged socially, acquiring new and unexpected cultural associations.

Because Edna turns up in the most unexpected places. I've found her used to criticise the BBC, promote the plays of Joe Orton, offer advice to small investors, and sell everything from sweet sherry and crime novels to package holidays and washing detergent. In an unusually early visual representation of Terry's fictional aunt, published in *The Sketch* in 1957, she is shown driving a motor scooter at some speed, hat pinned firmly to her head, pearls swaying in the wind, with a worried looking young man on the pillion, who is, we are told, 'one of the younger playwrights' (but this fledgling John Osborne is not to worry, because he is protected from the elements by his anorak 'manufactured by Haythornthwaite in



Grenfell cloth' and available from Lillywhites at the cost of £9 14s 6d).

I've also been interested in the origins of Aunt Edna. Given the ubiquity of Edna in the 1960s, I wondered if she might pre-exist Rattigan's invention of her. The name seems, after all, archetypal of a fussy old spinster. The joy of digitised newspaper libraries is one can conduct in-depth searches for Aunt Edna in an instant.

What becomes clear is that Aunt Edna really was Rattigan's invention. What also becomes clear is that the spinsterish associations of her name come much later. In fact, Edna was, for much of the early part of the twentieth century a young woman's name. It was in the top 20 girls' names in the 1910s and 1920s and in the top 40 in the decade before the war. As a result, Aunt Ednas in the 75 years before Rattigan's preface tended to be rather invigorating, even racy characters. In Butter Rayne's *The Mystery of Linley Parsonage* (1893), she is a young woman dealing with her growing suspicions that a young girl visitor to the house is her husband's illegitimate daughter. In *Lonely Hollow* by K. Perry (1934), Aunt Edna is a young woman whose own niece is a rival for the affections of local man. These are far from the frumpy image she would acquire in the sixties and further supports the thought that Terry did not intend to disparage Edna.

That said, she very nearly wasn't Edna. An examination of Rattigan's handwritten draft of the preface (where his sainted aunt made her debut) shows that she was, for a while, 'Aunt Gladys'! One wonders what effect that might have had: might Gladys have sustained a certain glamour and sex appeal of a kind 'Edna' lacked?

So where did Edna come from? I don't know, though I have discovered one intriguing lead. Searching the newspaper libraries, I was startled to discover that the years with the highest number of 'Aunt Edna' mentions are 1951 and 1952 – the two years *before* Rattigan's creation came into being! Who is this Aunt Edna?

She turns out to be a horse. She was trained by W Stephenson, whose first recorded outing is at Birmingham in the Norton Fillies' Plate on Tuesday 27 March 1951. She wins a race in July and starts to be noticed. *The Sporting Express* (Liverpool) on 30 July 1951 describes her as 'a newcomer who may be useful [...] and any market move for this one must be given full consideration' (p. 3). We also know that she came in third at Catterick Bridge (*Star Green 'Un*, 4 August 1951, p. 8); she was a bay filly, weighing 8st 8lb, whose parents were Ballyogan and Solidify (*The Sporting Express* [Liverpool], 8 August 1951, p. 6). Her riders include 'T Mahon' and 'C Spares' and at one point she is bought by Mrs H O Williams (*Sporting Express* [Liverpool], 12 November 1952, p. 3). But, after another third place at Liverpool in November (*Herald & Express* [Torbay], 10 November 1951, p. 6), it's downhill for Edna and she isn't placed, as far as I can see, in any race in 1953; I've found no reference to her running 1954 onwards.

We do know that Rattigan was a keen racegoer. Though Ascot was more his end of things, it is quite possible that he kept an eye on the form book and noticed a promising young filly with a rising reputation. Who's to say that, a year later, as he wrote his prefaces, that young horse didn't suggest the name 'Aunt Edna' to him? Of course, later on, Rattigan would have rather his limping creation had been taken back to the stables and put down, but, all these years later, it does seem like an intriguing little glimpse into the origins of Rattigan's infamous Aunt. ☞

Pic credit: Haythornthwaite. 'Joy Ride.' *The Sketch*. 30 January 1957. © British Newspaper Archive, under license from Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library

A play for debate

Phill Ward reviews
'The Doctor' at the Duke of York's

OVER the course of the original Almeida run and this much-postponed West End transfer to the Duke of York's, it's not too fanciful to surmise that the total audience percentage who might have previously seen Arthur Schnitzler's original play would be in single figures. Robert Icke's brilliant re-imagining of *Professor Bernardi* is a work of such mercurial invention it leaves the viewer mentally

breathless, grappling with thoughts of just what an early 20th century audience would have made of the original, much less of what was presented here.

Whilst the basic premise of Schnitzler's original idea remains, Icke takes it through a contemporary workout addressing many issues of the social tensions of our own time. The more you try to unpick the themes of racism, anti-Semitism, trans-phobia and bullying in the workplace, the more you may be confronting your own inherent prejudices, however submerged you may have thought they were. Icke sets up so many provocations, one can take the view he might have been better off creating an entirely new play from scratch. But as seen from Icke's impressive back-catalogue, his calling card has been re-imagining classic plays in a modern world. A 'marmite' issue for some for sure, but isn't theatre big enough to accommodate many, and opposing, views?



Photo: Manuel Harlan

In this staging of *The Doctor* there were matters of deliberate obfuscation in casting – who is representing who, and why? Confusing? Well, yes – but also no. The actor, white, playing the Catholic Priest whom Dr Ruth Woolf prevents from administering the Last Rites to a terminally ill teenage patient, is only in Act 2 revealed to be a black man. We're never party to the gender of Ruth's partner, Charlie – does that make Ruth gay or straight. Is Icke saying "So what? That's your problem"? These levels of ambiguity throughout the cast and the plot send the audience away in vigorous debate – gloriously or infuriatingly? You decide.

Regardless of where one stands in response to Icke's provocations, he handed Juliet Stevenson the opportunity to continue their already strong artistic partnership – as anyone who witnessed their collaboration on Schiller's *Mary Stuart* will attest – and to give a career defining performance. Stevenson rightly dominated this production: a character portrayal of blazing conviction. By the end of the run, my colleagues and I will have taken over 100 American theatre-goers to this production and without exception this was the show provoking the most heated debate in years. ☞

Watch on the Rhine

Barbara Longford
reports from the Donmar

This is a riveting, enthralling, nuanced and unforgettable play. Although it premiered in New York over 80 years ago, it remains timelessly relevant because of the universality of its theme. With the ongoing war in Ukraine, its immediate relevance is inescapable.

Lillian Hellman (1905–1984) was a Jewish American who grew up in New Orleans and New York. Her first play, *The Children's Hour*, opened on Broadway when she was 29 and she continued to enjoy acclaim as a playwright, with Broadway hits and film adaptations. But, most importantly, informing all this talent were Hellman's intense political and social convictions. She had an acute understanding of human evil and how to expose it and make it theatrically effective.

It can't have been easy for Hellman, being Jewish and competing in a 'man's world', but she had strength, courage and a firm grasp of the terror of the injustices inflicted by man upon his fellows. In the Emmeline Pankhurst mould, she used her pen as a weapon.

Watch on the Rhine (title taken from the German patriotic song *Die Wacht am Rhein*) first appeared on Broadway in April 1941, winning the American Critics' Drama Award, and ran for 378 performances. America entered the war eight months later on 7 December. The first British production, starring Diana Wynyard and Anton Walbrook, ran for 673 performances in 1942, and I had the good fortune of seeing it at the Lyttleton in 1980 with Peggy Ashcroft in the leading role.

The play is Hellman's personal call to arms. Through it, she attempts to rally the American public and reveal to them the grossness of the Nazi regime in Germany. The following quotation is taken from *Pentimento*, the second volume of her memoirs, when Hellman is writing of the early 1930's:

"We were disturbed by the anti-Semitism that was an old story in Germany and some of us had sense enough to see it as more than that. Many people thought of it as not much more than the ignorant rantings of a house painter and his low-down friends, who would certainly be rejected by the Germans, who were for my generation an 'advanced' and 'cultivated' people. But by 1935 or 1936 what had been only half understood, unsettling, distant stories turned horror-tragic and new assessments had to be made fast of what one believed and what one was going to do about it."

The Donmar Warehouse production, directed by Ellen McDougall, comes close to theatrical perfection.

The play pivots around Fanny Farrelly, a member of a rich liberal family living near Washington. She's commanding, self-assured, bitchy, difficult and well aware of her social standing, but she's also witty and self-aware. She is a tricky lady, but is regarded with affection. This is a heaven-sent role for a mature and accomplished actress and one that Patricia Hodge was born to play. She does so magnificently.



When the play opens, Fanny is nervously awaiting the return of her daughter Sara (Caitlin Fitzgerald), who has been living in Germany for many years and is married to a German-born engineer, Karl Mueller (Mark Waschke). They have been living modestly in Europe raising three children. The children are unusually drawn and are aware, intelligent and witty, and Hellman has written engaging dialogue for them.

What at first seems a light drawing-room comedy of manners—with cracking and witty lines flowing throughout—turns into an exciting and tense thriller, which is also a sharp and engaging commentary intended to instigate a national call to action.

Fanny's son-in-law is more than a German engineer and has been deeply involved in anti-Fascist activities in Spain and Germany. He has brought his wife and children back to her family home for their safety. However, there are two other house guests – the Count and Countess, Marthe and Teck de Brancovis. Teck, the villain of the piece, is superbly played by John Light, with polished manners and an air of suave menace. Teck is Rumanian and has become a Fascist agent, with blood on his hands. He knows exactly who Karl is and is intent on blackmailing him in return for silence about Karl's true identity. The drama becomes increasingly gripping and involving and culminates in Kurt attacking Teck on stage and killing him offstage.

Kurt has learned that a colleague and fellow traveller, who saved his life, is now imprisoned in Germany so he intends to return in the hope of saving him. It is a very dangerous thing to embark upon and the crux of the play is Kurt's decision to leave his loving wife and children to obey his conscience. Sara, his wife, puts fire

in his belly and encourages him to do what his heart and soul instruct him to do. Fanny and her son David (Geoffrey Streatfeild) learn about the murder but they both agree to be silent for two days and let Kurt use their car to get away, taking Teck's body with him.

The culmination of the play is deeply moving on many levels. There were many audience tears. It made one search one's own soul and conscience and think deeply about the lives of others. That Hellman achieved this at the same time as giving us much humour and wit makes her, to my mind, an outstanding woman. The entire cast is superb and the production flawless. If you missed this at the Donmar, look out for a transfer! ☞

Erratum

In Dan Rebellato's piece in the last issue, 'Audio Rattigan', two paragraphs were omitted in error and are printed here now, with apologies:

Audible has also released *Terence Rattigan: A BBC Radio Drama Collection* gathering thirteen full-cast radio production of his plays, with wonderful casts from John Gielgud as Andrew Crocker-Harris in 1957 to Adrian Scarborough as Major Pollock in 2022, via Simon Callow, Margaret Lockwood, Alan Bates, Michael Bryant, Anthony Quayle and Sian Phillips. I'm still working my way through them but there are no duds so far and much to enjoy. It is a reminder of how well BBC Radio has served Rattigan – some of these productions derive from separate Rattigan Festivals on BBC Radio from 1957, 1969, 1981, 1998 and 2011! And these productions are just the tip of the iceberg; I don't know what still exists in the archive but BBC radio has broadcast around a dozen separate productions of *The Winslow Boy* and almost as many of *The Browning Version* with several *Deep Blue Seas*, *French Without Tears*, *Separate Tablesets*, and more.

That said, Audible's slapdash approach strikes again. The online blurb promises two bonus documentaries which are missing. *Variation on a Theme* is mis-titled *Variations*; there are no indications of when these productions date from and, worse, Audible have made mistakes in trying to find out. The production of *Variation on a Theme* is, I think, the one with Margaret Lockwood from 1969 but they have added credits for the 1961 production with Margaret Leighton (and there are even mistakes in those); I'm fairly sure the production of *Ross* is the one from 1965, starring Paul Daneman, but they have listed the cast from the 1981 production starring Michael Williams. As an Audible playwright myself I know how poorly they pay, but I wonder if even those minimal payments can be going to the right place. ☞

Arms and the Man

Continued from front page

which Raina (Rebecca Collingwood) has the wit to detect under his war-weary and unheroic exterior. She learns that her admiration for Sergius does not lead to the love match she thought it should be, and she comes to regard Bluntschli as a far more suitable husband, with his intellect and his pragmatism and his subtler sense of romance.

Similarly, Sergius's dalliance with the maid Louka (Kemi Awoderu) becomes something more meaningful when the social barriers are down and human nature is allowed to operate without the restrictions of rank and class. Thus, Shaw's socialism is neatly at play here as well as his pacifism.

One can also note another 'ism' very typical of Shaw—his feminism. His female characters have a strength of purpose and a cleverness that can run rings round their men, and this adds another delicious layer to his confection. Miranda Foster's Catherine is more than a match for her blinkered husband, Major Petkoff (Jonathan Tafler), Louka has a very sharp, forward-thinking mind which outpaces her supposed fiancé, Nicola (Jonah Russell), and Raina is finally revealed as much more than a sweet little heroine—she seems to embody the steeliness and the resolve of Shaw's 'modern woman'.

This all makes for a very satisfying piece of theatre, its themes a pertinent comment on the very real war now raging in Eastern Europe, in which lives are gambled and lost for questionable causes as easily as was ever the case.

Nothing changes. GBS was a very wise old bird. And this was a very enjoyable pre-Christmas treat for Society members, followed by an early supper at a restaurant across the road. A return visit to the Orange Tree is planned for *The Circle* in June. Ed. ☞

Reminder: the title of the play comes from the opening words of Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'Arma virumque cano' - 'Of arms and the man I sing'

The poetry of the distressed

Continued from page 3

So, is the Major referring to his transgressions or to his absurd pretences, revelation of both of which devastate poor Sybil?

Rattigan does not, on the other hand, hesitate to confront directly and deal explicitly with matters he considers less sensitive. For example, and, in particular, in *Separate Tables*, he highlights the perversity of social convention and intolerance.

“The trouble with being on the side of the right,” says a resident of Hotel Beauregard, dealing with these same revelations, “is that one finds oneself in such questionable company”.

Rattigan continues to treat subtly the Major’s sexual bent; allusion replaces the explicit. The Major is permitted, and is brave enough, to remain in the Hotel Beauregard. Miss Cooper, the manageress, suggests that the Major wishes to remain near Sybil, who, Miss Cooper thinks, might be his salvation. But, no, the Major tells Miss Cooper, “not a hope in the whole blinking world, I know myself, you see”.

There is no salvation for the Major, just survival.

Summer and Smoke depicts Williams’ preoccupation with inner turmoil, failed redemption and lapse into degeneracy. Alma Winemiller’s father is an uncompromising preacher; her mother is deranged, acting as if she has the mental age of a child. Alma grows up neurotic and tremulous, reliant on her tranquilisers, her ‘little mercies’. She falls in love with John Buchanan, the boy next door, now a doctor. John tries to soothe her. He tries to make love to her. He fails in both. Alma endures the suffering of knowing that John has full relationships with other women. Too late, she explodes out of her repression. “Now I have changed my mind, the girl who said ‘no’ - she died last summer - suffocated in smoke from something on fire inside her”.

But John rejects Alma. He has settled down, he is about to be married.

Alma consoles herself by picking up a man in

Dates for your diary

Thursday 27 April 2023

Royal Albert Hall

Our Events Secretary is arranging a visit of a slightly different kind, which takes the form of an afternoon tour of the Royal Albert Hall, followed by dinner and a performance of Mahler’s 3rd Symphony. There are three options: members may book 1) the tour plus dinner, 2) the concert only, or 3) all three.

Saturday 13 May 2023

Separate Tables

A visit to the Little Theatre, in Bromley, to see a local production of Rattigan’s *Separate Tables* featuring our Treasurer Alison Du Cane. Bromley is easily reached by train from London Victoria.

Thursday 25 May 2023

Private Lives

A visit to a matinee performance of the new production of *Private Lives* at the Donmar is being arranged. It stars Stephen Mangan and Rachael Stirling.

Friday 9 June 2023

Annual Birthday Dinner

Please reserve this date for the **Annual Birthday Dinner**, which returns this year to the hallowed portals of the Garrick Club. The cost will be partially subsidised by the Society.

Details and booking forms for all the above will follow in due course.

In the pipeline:

Another visit to the Orange Tree in June to see *The Circle* by Somerset Maugham.

PS — Brighton Festival Fringe

After All These Years, a new comedy by your editor, will be playing in the Brighton Fringe from 28 May to 2 June, if anyone fancies a trip to Brighton! More info: [After All These Years at The Lantern Theatre Brighton event tickets from TicketSource](#)

the park, the first of many, we are led to assume. Williams’ brutal treatment does not mean that the relatively softly exposed sufferings of Sonya and Andrey and the Major are any the less painful than Alma’s. Chekhov, Rattigan and Williams express differently their poetry of the distressed.

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