

## ★ HAPPY NEW YEAR ★

We would like to wish all of our Members a Happy New Year and best wishes for 2008. This promises to be an exciting year for Vic-Wells Association Members with the continuing improvements of the Broadsheet, professional rehearsals to watch, and visits and social events already planned.

## The Queen's New Year Honours List

Amongst the honours announced in early January were Janet Lewis, director of the English Youth Ballet, who received an MBE; Nicholas Kenyon, Barbican Centre Managing Director, received a knighthood; Rosemary Squire, joint Chief Executive of the Ambassador Theatre Group, was awarded an OBE.

Television presenter, Michael Parkinson was knighted, and Sir Ian McKellen joined the Order of the Companions of Honour, which is limited to just 65 members alongside the Queen. Fellow actor, Richard Griffiths received an OBE while Julie Walters, comic actress, was awarded the CBE, as was Leslie Phillips. Ian Talbot, former Director of the Open Air Theatre, Regents Park, received an OBE.

The children's author, Josephine Wilson became a DBE; actor, Roy Dotrice and pop singer, Kylie Minogue received OBEs, amongst many other honours.

Mary-Jane Burcher

## Visit to The Mansion House

We have arranged a visit to the impressive Mansion House on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 2.00pm. Tickets cost £5.00. Please send your application to myself together with an SAE. We are asked to arrive at the Mansion House at no later than 1.45pm. The entrance is in the side street on the right-hand side of the building. Please note that **no photography** is allowed.

Please reply to: T.J. Rooke, 314B Park Road, London N8 8LA, 0208 352 0492.

Tim Rooke

## Move It! 2008

Dance enthusiasts will be pleased to hear that the third annual dance festival, Move It!, returns on March 7<sup>th</sup>-March 9<sup>th</sup> at London Olympia. With performances, classes, seminars, and exhibitions, there is plenty to see at this fun event. With contributors including the Laban Centre, Ballet Black, Dance UK, and the Dancing Times, this year's festival promises to be even bigger than before. For more information and tickets, visit [www.dance-london.co.uk](http://www.dance-london.co.uk) or call 0207 736 1190. Please note that classes cannot be booked over the phone.

Imogen Walker

## Correction

Apologies for referring to Patricia Kern as Patricia Klein in 'Memories of the opera at Sadler's Wells....' - clearly I can't read my own handwriting ...

Liz Schafer

## Doreen Wells' talk at the A.G.M.

Our AGM commenced with mince pies and coffee and after the formal part of the evening was over, we welcomed our guest speaker for the evening: the ever delightful and much-loved ballerina Doreen Wells.

Doreen told us how she came from Walthamstow, London E17 (she made the leap from the East End to world stardom long before the pop band East 17 without the help of masses of electronic gimmickry), and that was how she was in the right place at the right time to secure her position. Doreen also touched on her private life and how she met her husband – but mainly she talked about her time with the Royal Ballet, the touring company under its many different names. She spoke with warmth of her colleagues in what I can only describe as a dream career – but who can forget some of the roles Doreen excelled in, her formidable technique masked by her elegant grace and poise.

All too soon this part of the evening concluded, far too quickly, and we all departed in a happy jolly mood, recalling in our minds some wonderful Doreen Wells performances.

**Tim Rooke**

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## Lilian Baylis Junior

I was very interested to hear recently from Gail Strever, whose father was the nephew of Katie Woodward, who married Lilian Baylis's beloved brother William, and whose daughter, born after William's tragically early death, was also named Lilian Baylis. For a brief period, Lilian Baylis senior considered grooming Lilian junior as a possible heir to the management of the Old and Sadler's Wells, but Lilian junior did not want to leave South Africa, and her mother, Katie. I was able to follow Lilian junior up to her marriage, on 20 April 1937, but after that knew nothing about her, so it was very interesting to hear Gail's memories of Lilian junior and Katie both of whom sound like very lively characters. Gail writes:

My father was born in South Africa and his mother's sister was Katie Baylis (nee Woodward), my great-auntie Katie, and of course, Lilian Baylis junior was dad's first cousin. I have vivid and humorous memories of both of them as they were both quite forthright, old fashioned and eccentric.

Lilian junior's first marriage was very short lived as her husband, I believe, was an alcoholic and a 'good for nothing'. She never had any children and didn't marry again until she was 61 years old, when she made up for lost time by taking up ballroom dancing (seriously) with her husband, Gordon Pigott. When they visited us in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia then) where I grew up, they had brought with them their entire dance record collection with a large record player and, shortly after arriving at our house, had cleared lounge to give us a show.

They frequently organised quite elaborate musical evenings at their home, where Gordon had the music synchronised with cine (the old 8mm) footage he had taken of waves crashing on the shore and other natural phenomena! It was a listen and watch kind of thing. At the time I must say we found them quite quaint and funny, but when I look back I realise the effort and interest with which they approached these things.

They were into esoteric spirituality, and both members of the Liberal Catholic Church and the Theosophical Society ... something I thought about when reading about Lilian senior's religious bent, visions and catholic leanings. Lilian junior had a fetish for Alice-bands and had a special stand made to hold her numerous collection which stood on her dressing table. If she was wearing a mauve outfit, the Alice-band, the shoes, the stockings, the bag, the earrings (often home made and garish) and necklace would all be the same colour. She was also constantly making codicils to her will, as people pleased or displeased her. **Liz Schafer**

*The advertisement enclosed with this Broadsheet is for the talk on Lilian Baylis on Thursday 24 April, which will highlight Lilian Baylis's north London connections, something which is sometimes forgotten when people think about her solely in relation to the Old Vic and south of the river.*

## A Whirlwind of Activity at Bristol Old Vic

The temperature of events at our beloved Bristol Old Vic has gone from very low to much higher in recent times, and I am pleased to say, from various reports sent to me from the theatre and our friend Ray Price, Chairman of the Theatre Goers Club, that everything is looking a lot better on several fronts.

Following the abrupt resignation of Rupert Rhymes, who was formerly Chairman of the BOV Board, Dick Penny has been confirmed to take his place as the new Chairman. He wasted no time and has drawn up a business plan for the future. He is obviously a very popular choice to take over as Chairman, with considerable experience in theatre, including running the Little Theatre in Bristol in the late 70s. While he has taken on a daunting task, he seems to be very well regarded by everyone involved.

It didn't start that way: before Mr Penny took over, the drastic cuts announced by the Arts Council in January included stopping funding to the BOV. Many eminent members of the theatrical profession were up in arms at these cuts, and organised a packed meeting at the New Vic Theatre in order to vent their feelings. Peter Hewitt, the then Chairman of the Arts Council, was completely overcome by the anger and almost abuse that was hurled at him, and went away saying these cuts would be reconsidered in due course.

The wonderful news is that the BOV, having greatly benefited from the lobbying powers of a legion of actresses and actors, now looks assured for the future. A statement from the Arts Council on 1 February read, "...one of our most challenging decisions has been how best to help Bristol Old Vic. We are pleased to say that since our initial decision to remove our funding, Bristol Old Vic has responded to our initial concerns with an energetic and practical explanation of how it intends to regain its former eminence as one of the country's most important theatres". The Report went on to say that the Council had been impressed by the overwhelming support

given to the new Chairman by all those who are involved in the re-emergence of the theatre as a producing house, funding stakeholders and members of the public.

The Report continues that there is still a lot of work to do: half the funds earmarked for next year (£578,000) are now available to help them with their ongoing work, and, if suitable progress has been made, the remaining funds will follow. The Arts Council have also confirmed that they will continue to reserve capital funds for the refurbishment of the Theatre Royal, and looked forward to receiving detailed plans about this in due course.

Dick Penny has announced that, provided the associated permissions are in place, reconstruction work should begin this summer. The scope of works will be governed by the final sums raised, and efforts will be renewed to raise the full sum required which is currently estimated at £9 million. The intention is to take a phased approach, so that the theatre can re-open to the public as soon as possible, firstly the Studio in the Spring of next year, with the Theatre Royal to follow in late 2009 or early 2010.

Ray Price tells me that our friend Chris Harris, who was so associated with the Theatre Royal for many years, and who some of us were glad to see in his pantomime in Bath in January, does have some reservations about the kind of theatre it will be when it re-opens. He does not want it to be turned into a "glorified arts centre", and there are many in the profession who feel the same way. However, better a community theatre than a closed one. It is hoped we may yet be pleasantly surprised and find all our hopes fulfilled, and that is the way we should be thinking at the moment. May the good work continue, and we wish Ray and all our friends connected with the theatre our warmest wishes for the future. I will keep you apprised of future action.

**Mary-Jane Burcher**



# REVIEWS

## **Amjad by La La La Human Steps, January 30th 2008**

Attending rehearsals is interesting in itself as a demonstration of the process of preparing a work for public performance, but it can be 'pot luck' as to which elements of the piece are rehearsed. Rehearsals can also be used as a means to guess if you will like the work, and whether to book for the performance if you have not already done so. I admit that on another occasion, when a choreographer had unwisely included an interval in a very modern work, this pause provided a convenient moment to escape. The season was completely sold-out, so I was able to dispose of my tickets for the following day's performance to the two young ladies who headed the 'returns' queue, which an hour before the performance was already half-way round the theatre. The proceeds from this transaction were converted to a rather pleasant meal at a nearby restaurant, which was made even more enjoyable by the thought that I did not need to endure the performance. Happening upon the dance critic of the *Financial Times* shortly after this non-event, I succumbed to temptation and enquired how much he had enjoyed the work. Immediately rumbling that his leg was being pulled, he growled, "You are rattling my cage!"

The rehearsal of *Amjad* by the Canadian dance company La La La Human Steps provoked a different reaction. Random elements of the work were rehearsed, some simultaneously in different parts of the stage, and without music, lighting, scenery or costumes. It was very difficult to tell what was going on, or to deduce how the various elements were connected. Intrigued, I booked tickets for the show that evening. Bad decision! Though the one and three quarter hour performance held my attention (just about), I was, like the judge in the F. E. Smith story, neither wiser nor better informed by the end. The notes in the programme were no great help. Even so, the show did provide a demonstration of what is

good and what is not so good about modern dance performances. The dancers were skilled, attractive, and committed. The costumes were simple. The scenery made no significant contribution to the work. The music was disconcerting, but fitted the choreography. The choreography had some interesting moments, but was over extended. The musicians were excellent. The lighting was dreadful. Sadly, this might be considered par for the contemporary dance course.



The music by the British composer Gavin Briers was "a thrilling reworking of Tchaikovsky" to quote the programme notes. Some of the most famous melodies from *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and one from *Nutcracker*, appeared in distorted form. It was as though Briers had discovered the contents of Tchaikovsky's waste paper basket, and reproduced the first and discarded sketches that were later refined to memorable music.

However, the score certainly fitted the concept of the choreography, by Human Steps founder, artistic director and choreographer, Edouard Lock, which muses on memories of the Tchaikovsky ballets, particularly *Swan Lake*. I was reminded of *Rose Variations* which embroidered on the Rose Adagio from *Sleeping Beauty*, and was danced by Maina Gielgud. I think that piece was by Maurice Bejart. Lock's CV suggests impressive choreographic credentials, and this example contained some interesting elements, but at an hour and three quarters was stretched way beyond its elastic limit. It would have worked better as a 'normal' one act work of about thirty to forty minutes duration. The over-extension of the material meant that constant repetition of swan-like arm



movements quickly became tedious. Movements were repeated many times with minor variations. Many of the classical steps were performed by the very talented dancers at double speed, giving a 'fast forward' effect. A 'life flashing before one's eyes' moment of memory, perhaps? The five female dancers had the bulk of the material. The four male dancers had more limited opportunities, though Dominic Santi danced on point, which was helpful to redeem a height deficit when he appeared alongside the impressive statuesque blond Zofia Tujaka.

Dancers moved from place to place on the stage, followed by sudden changes of angled lighting which made them only partially visible in the puddles of flat illumination. Again this was to give the impression of the incomplete recall of remembered events, but I have grave doubts about partial disclosure of choreography due to intermittent illumination. For a convinced conspiracy theorist like me, could it be that what cannot be seen has no value? If it has value, is the audience not being short-changed by its invisibility? For an art-form based entirely on visible communication and music, what are we expected to make of what we do not see? Perverse productions of opera (Peter Sellar's *Magic Flute* for example) can be enjoyed by closing one's eyes and listening to the words and the music. Attending a performance of dance with eyes shut is a non-starter. Even so, I was left with the feeling that another look at the choreography might reveal more, or show details lost in the strange lighting. I might in the future get the hang of Lock's approach, so will be back for the next appearance of LaLaLa Human Steps, hoping for more enlightenment, and better lighting.

The dance critic of the *Financial Times* was also present at the first night. As soon as the curtain fell, he was the first to clear the exit, showing both acceleration and a turn of speed remarkable for someone of his age and size. I was therefore not able to yield to temptation and enquire whether he had enjoyed the performance.

**Richard Reavill**

## ***The Rite of Spring* at Sadler's Wells and Covent Garden**

Academics are likely to get enmeshed in the clichés of their work, and I am no exception. Being exposed to two productions of *The Rite of Spring* in mid-February causes an immediate run for the cover of the 'compare and contrast' formula beloved by examination question setters in need of an originality transplant. It does not work too well in this instance, as will become apparent. However, it will do for a start when considering the production by the Tanztheater Wuppertal of Pina Bausch at Sadler's Wells Theatre, and the version choreographed by the late Kenneth MacMillan staged by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden.

The standard advice to students tackling the 'compare and contrast' question is to list all the things which are similar, and those which are rather different. Let's try that. Firstly there is the primacy of the music, recorded at the Wells, but live at Covent Garden, where the orchestra appeared enthusiastic with having a major score to interpret. Secondly, the lighting of both productions was good, indeed bright! Hooray, I could actually see what was happening, so a quick positive comment on this aspect of both productions, before readers grow impatient with my paranoia about dimly lit, bordering on invisible, dance productions.

And thirdly? There seems to be no 'thirdly', because the contrast element now comes into play. At Covent Garden, a painted floor-cloth covered the stage. At the Wells, Pina Bausch opted for earth, about three inches deep. Those who have seen some of her other work will not find this surprising, perhaps even a mite disappointing compared to the thousands of paper carnations which covered the stage in Nelken, or the random builders rubble which obstructed the dancers after the collapse of the proscenium wall at the start of Palermo Palermo. The scenery at the Opera House featured primeval rock surfaces and a distant sun, painted by Sidney Nolan, and all-over body-tights in yellow, orange and red

with white hand-prints. Bausch favoured a simpler setting, without scenery but with a black void at the back of the stage, and simple costumes: cream shift dresses for the women and dark track-suit bottoms for the bare-chested men.

And last, but of greatest importance, is the choreography. Is it fair to compare a first impression of the Pina Bausch version with the very familiar MacMillan choreography? Maybe not, but it is at this point that 'compare' begins to reassert itself. Both pieces strongly invoke the pagan nature of this prehistoric fertility rite. Both follow closely the sequence of events implicit in the music, but the Bausch is tightly related to every nuance of the score. In both a woman is chosen as the sacrificial victim, and dances to her death. The body of the 'Chosen One' is thrown triumphantly in the air on the final chord of the score at Covent Garden; at the

Wells, she collapses dead on the earth. The MacMillan choreography is more balletic, more ritualistic and more complex; the Bausch more naturalistic, more intense and more brutal. Bausch uses tight groupings of her sixteen men and sixteen women, the men often watchful and predatory, the women clustering fearful but resigned, mixed with streams of movement encompassing the whole stage. When the red dress which has to be worn by the sacrificial victim is passed in terror from one woman to another, the reactions of the individuals differ: fear, numb horror, resignation. The man who makes the choice moves the victim with a mixture of tenderness and brutality. The Bausch choreography is fierce and frantic, and her dancers give it total commitment. The outcome is an outstanding performance.

**Richard Reavill**

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## Lilian Baylis Talk, ROH

On Monday 17 December 2007 Sarah Lenton and Liz Schafer presented a Lilian Baylis evening at the Clore Studio, Royal Opera House. The talk was a sellout and included a wide range of illustrations including some film footage of Margot Fonteyn dancing in the early years of Baylis's beloved ballet company. The audience had lots of questions to ask about Lilian Baylis – but the biggest questions is always, 'just how *did* she do it all?'

For me, however, the highlight of the evening was provided when Suzy Arnold, who currently lives in what was Lilian Baylis's house in Stockwell Park Road, came up to talk to me afterwards and invited me round for lunch to see Baylis's house, garden, and her beloved summerhouse which is still in the garden - although apparently in rather a dilapidated state. In addition, Ingrid Firminger was in the audience – Ingrid works at the Royal Opera House and her interest in Lilian Baylis is partly because of the fact that her grandmother, Mrs Mary Gwendoline Firminger, was Lilian Baylis's housekeeper and, of course, used to live in Suzy's house!

**Liz Schafer**



Liz at the event in an original 1920's frock

# Inner Spacey

As he prepares to star 'in a new play the Old Vic's artistic director tells the Times theatre critic  
**BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE**  
that when he's learning his lines you could mistake him for madman.

Just conceivably you saw a familiar-looking man walking through Oxford recently, muttering to himself in an American accent and, by his own admission, looking "absolutely mad". Should you have dialled 999? No, because it was Kevin Spacey rehearsing his lines for his performance in David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow*, which is about to open at the theatre he runs, the Old Vic in London. The Oscar-winning star of *American Beauty* was in Oxford because he likes to hop in a car or on a train and explore what's now his adoptive country. And he was babbling away earnestly because, he just can't get lines into his head if he's sitting in his Waterloo flat.

"But if I go to a noisy train station or noisy café or noisy bar with my script it forces me to focus. Plates are falling, babies are crying, phones are ringing, people are ordering, and I can retain things that I can't if it's too quiet. I may look like a crazy bum, but I'm learning, learning, learning, then closing the script and mumbling away."

Perhaps he was also looking frantic and, driven in Oxford, for he's playing an independent Hollywood producer horrified to discover that his sure-fire project may be scuppered by Jeff Goldblum, as the studio executive, who has fallen for an idealistic secretary. It's the sort of darkly comic situation he has encountered in film and theatre. The play, says Spacey, shows the conflict of art and culture with commerce and money-making — and is much, concerned with the terrors that he felt as a young, aspiring actor and has observed in others.

"I went through a period early on when I was afraid of not being good enough to play in the leagues that I wanted to play in. There was a period when I became arrogant and self-inflated in reaction to my fear. Yes, I can recognise the desperation of wanting to make a mark. And I certainly recognise that there are scars, there are compromises, there are things

you have to give up as a result of that level of ambition: meaning you can f\*\*\* up friendships if you are as driven as that."

It's largely because he understands the frustration of would-be theatre people that much of his energy at the Vic has gone into its educational and outreach programmes, principally the New Voices Club. That's a network of 3,000 young actors, writers and directors that creates an annual 50 productions, gives help to theatres up and down the country and last year made a contribution to 54 offerings at the Edinburgh Festival: "When they told me, I was stunned. I said you're kidding, you mean five. But, no, 54 were born out of New Voices." But it's as the Vic's artistic director that Spacey has attracted the publicity, the plaudits and the brickbats. Some suggested that he took the job because his film career was faltering, not knowing that the initial decision was made when *American Beauty* was having its London premiere in 1999.

Famously, he took a cab to the South Bank, walked along the Thames and ended outside the Vic, where his Anglophile parents had taken him to see Laurence Olivier in the 1970s and he had enjoyed enormous success playing the lead in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*.

He knew the stately old place had struggled for years to find an identity. He had also been drama-mad virtually from the moment he emerged from the womb and had wanted to run a theatre since he was 13: "And I just didn't want to spend another ten years being on film locations and living in hotel rooms. I wanted a company and consistency and something beyond my own career. After all, things couldn't get better after *American Beauty*. I thought: "what am I supposed to do, spend the next ten years trying to top myself?"

Spacey, who is now 48, still expects to spend ten years at the Vic; but there was a time when that seemed unlikely. His debut offering in 2004 was a Dutch play called *Cloaca*, which means "sewer" and was seen by some critics as just that, and, after Ian McKellen had frolicked through the role of Widow Twankey in a Christmas *Aladdin*, Spacey appeared in an American comedy called *National Anthems*, which suggested to me that he hadn't yet got his finger on the British pulse. A year later he had a serious flop with Arthur Miller's satiric *Resurrection Blues* — though here I remain

convinced that a worthwhile play was ruined by Robert Altman's inept staging.

But there have been successes: Trevor Nunn's staging of *Richard II*, with Spacey winning awards as the King; a revival of *Moon for the Misbegotten* which reinforced his reputation as the O'Neill actor; *The Entertainer* with Robert Lindsay as Osborne's seedy comedian; Diana Rigg in a stage version of the film *All About My Mother*.

The future looks bright, too, with Peter Hall's production of *Pygmalion* en route, a revival of Alan Ayckbourn's three-play *Norman Conquests* promised, and the launch next year of the "Bridge Project".

This will bring Simon Russell Beale to the Vic and to Brooklyn's Academy of Music in Sam Mendes's productions of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Cherry Orchard*. And Spacey wants to tackle more O'Neill, and some Shaw, Ibsen and Chekhov: "I feel ready to try the unexpected and challenge myself, even if I fall, on my face."

Sitting in his brown corduroy suit in the Vic's bar, Spacey seems at ease. He fends off inquiries about his private life, saying only that it's "very, very stable and quiet", that he doesn't frequent parties or film premieres, that he tries to carve out time when he can visit art galleries or the English countryside: "I know we live in a world where a person's life is used for entertainment or gossip, and I suppose it's understandable that people are curious about how you live. But I was brought up to believe that there's a professional life and a personal life, and that's why they're called that. So they'll remain that way."

But when he turns to professional topics, you can hear the ringing articulacy he perhaps inherited from his Welsh forebears and see the American energy that prefers to look optimistically forward than ruefully back. Certainly, he's unapologetic about the Vic's offerings to date admitting that *Cloaca* and *Resurrection Blues* didn't fulfil his hopes but declaring that, if he's to make the theatre a necessary destination again, he can't stage only classics. He can't try to please an elite that, he says, wouldn't have been happy "unless I'd come riding down Waterloo Road on a white horse with Olivier standing on my shoulders".

"I wouldn't change anything we've done because we've done everything honestly," he goes on. "Every decision we've made has been in the spirit of wanting to be entertaining and

different from what some critics expect on the Old Vic stage.

"The ordinary punter doesn't come here knowing this theatre's great history, and we are not programming for anyone's narrow vision. We're programming for a 1,000-seat theatre and we're trying to build a new, younger, more diverse, broader audience.

"People have written, asking, how dare we do pantos? But that is going back to its traditions. It's been a music hall and it did *Aladdin* in 1860. And at the final performance of Stephen Fry's *Cinderella* the other night, the place was packed to the rafters." And, yes, a policy that consists of attracting top talent to the very varied shows that Spacey finds interesting — he cites the National's former supremo, Richard Eyre, who told him "I did the work I liked" — seems to be proving effective.

In Spacey's two-and-a-half seasons as its director, the Vic has sold 950,000 seats and is keeping financially afloat, all without subsidy. Which isn't to say Spacey is against subsidy for others. Quite the contrary. Any one who doubts that he's become a committed member of our theatre community should hear him on the Arts Council and its proposed cuts. He went to a recent meeting of objectors at the Young Vic and was left thinking the council's behaviour "outrageous" and its arguments "evasive, stone walling, incomplete and nonsensical". In his view, the Government should intervene, ordering a national theatre review before bad decisions get finalised.

Not that he's renounced America. He keeps an apartment in New York. He's a friend of the Clintons and, though unwilling to endorse Hillary, is finding the race for the White House the most enthralling he can recall. He also brought *Moon for the Misbegotten* from the Vic to Broadway and has taken time out for the occasional film, recently *21*, about how six university students stung Las Vegas for millions, and an HBO docudrama about the aftermath of George W. Bush's victory over Al Gore. I got the feeling that one day he might run a New York playhouse — though he says that America's powerful theatre unions would make any such endeavour a misery.

But meanwhile, he's rehearsing *Speed-the-Plow* and finding that it's largely about the language below language: "Masks, codes, shorthand, double meanings, triple meanings, what people are actually saying and not



saying." He's also working hard to put and keep the Vic on the theatrical map, whether that means giving it a cultural identity or renewing its Victorian plumbing and leaky roof: "I want to build somewhere that will continue to produce for 50 years. I want to leave the next artistic director a war chest so

he won't have to go out fundraising. I want to ensure there'll be an actor's theatre, here that will survive long after I've gone." Well, maybe he's the man to do it.

© The Times 28 Jan 2008

## Sadler's Wells: The Mayor's Charity 2007-2008

The Mayor of Islington, Councillor Barbara Smith, has chosen Sadler's Wells Connect as her charity.

Connect is responsible for all Sadler's Wells' education, access and community work. It



upholds the tradition of the great Lilian Baylis, who believed that the arts should be accessible to everyone.

Sadler's Wells recognises that dance connects people, and promotes confidence and

physical wellbeing. Connect's programme prioritises community involvement and challenges perceptions of who can dance. Activities are carefully designed to suit all ages, tastes and experiences, drawing on the diversity of Sadler's Wells dance programming. Much of its work is with schools and young people, including those with disabilities.

- \* Baby Growers workshops (27th February); Sadler's Wells Associates including Jonzi D Productions; Rambert; Matthew Bourne's New Adventures work with London Secondary Schools; Russell Maliphant with Ballet Central; Wayne McGregor and Random Dance (28th February 7.15pm, tickets £5).
- \* Performances of Angelmoth, a fairytale by balletLorent are on in February on Saturday 23rd (7.15pm); Sunday 24th

(4.00pm); Monday 25th (1.00pm and 7.15pm); and Tuesday 26th 11.00am. Tickets are £9 (£6 for concessions and schools).

- \* Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th March are devoted to Youth Dance of all types.
- \* Sadler's Wells Company of Elders, several of whom are Vic-Wells members, prove, as Alistair Spalding points out in the brochure, that it's never too late to start dancing. They present a triple bill on Thursday 13th March at 7.15pm and Friday 14th March at 2.30pm and 7.15pm (Tickets £5)

Other activities range from post-show talks to large-scale community events such as the Brazilian Carnival in summer 2006. The highlight of the Connect calendar is the annual Connect Festival, which provides a showcase for many of the projects and offers up to 2,000 members of the local Islington community a chance to perform. The money raised by the Mayor's charity will be directed to Connect's work with Islington Schools, many of whose pupils have high levels of social deprivation.

Visit the website for further information about Connect and its work:

[www.sadlerswells.com/page/education](http://www.sadlerswells.com/page/education).

**Liz Schafer and Jeanette White**

**Sadler's Wells Connect**  
Community & Education



## Twelfth Night Party



The traditional party was held at the Old Vic on Saturday the 5th of January 2008. Some 40 members enjoyed the party and the delicious food provided by our usual volunteers. The cutting the cake ceremony was performed by Sandi Toksvig, who was performing in the pantomime *Cinderella* at the

theatre. Our thanks to Sandi, Yvonne Hickman who made the wonderful cake, the volunteers and the Management of The Old Vic for permission to hold the party in the second floor bar area.

*Colour photography © Nick Panagakis*



This brilliant picture shows Lilian Baylis cutting the cake at an early ceremony.



## REHEARSALS

Members have enjoyed several rehearsals at Sadler's Wells in the last few months and I am pleased to report there are several more in the pipe line, see list below. These have not been confirmed so please check for final details.

**NDT1: Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April**



**Random Dance: 10th April**



**Phoenix Dance Theatre: 28th April**



**Rambert Dance Company: 20th May**



**Akram Khan Company: 11th June**



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## WHAT'S ON at Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic

### Sadler's Wells

0870 737 7737

[www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com)

- 3-16 Mar: Flamenco Festival London 2008  
2-5 April: Nederlands Dans Theater 1  
10-12 April: Wayne McGregor/Random Dance  
16-19 April: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan  
22-26 April: Northern Ballet Theatre  
28-29 April: Phoenix Dance Theatre

### Lilian Baylis Theatre

0870 737 7737

- 23 Feb-16 Mar: Connect Festival  
7 March: Dance Club  
30 Mar-13 July: Lost Musicals 2008  
8-9 April: Mulleras  
11 April: Live Screen  
25 April: Dance Club

### Peacock Theatre

0870 737 0337

- 27 Feb - 16 Mar: Bounce  
19-30 March: Yamato Drummers of Japan  
2-13 April: English National Ballet  
15 April-10 May: Jump

### London Coliseum

**(book via Sadler's Wells)**

- 12-22 March: New York City Ballet  
25-30 March: Stuttgart Ballet  
31 Mar-3 Apr: Carlos Acosta and Friends from the Royal Ballet  
4-7 April: Sylvie Guillem and Russell Maliphant  
9-12 April: Carlos Acosta

### Old Vic Theatre

0870 060 6628

[www.oldvictheatre.com](http://www.oldvictheatre.com)

- 1 Feb - 26 Apr: Speed-the-Plow  
From 7 May: Pygmalion

#### Attendance at Rehearsals

We attend rehearsals by kind permission of Sadler's Wells and the Management of visiting companies and dancers may not always be in full costume and may walk through part of their roles. For final details of timing and date, please check with the Secretary, Richard Reavill, tel: 01491 872574, or e-mail [nunsacre@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:nunsacre@tiscali.co.uk). If you have registered your email address with Richard he will send you this information automatically. Please come to the foyer of Sadler's Wells 15 minutes before the start of the rehearsal and pay the £5 admission fee to the Committee member present.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to all of you who have already renewed your subscriptions and especially those who pay by standing order or direct debit as that entails a lot less work for me!

Subscriptions run from **July 1<sup>st</sup>** each year.

The annual rate is £7.50

(reduced to £6.00 for OAP's).

Life membership is available for a single payment of £75.00.

If you have not already done so, please send your payment to the Hon. Registrar at the address below, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your membership card.

Please note that Emma Cons rules apply – no SAE, no acknowledgement.

Any queries should be sent to same address, preferably by e-mail.

*Please also note that members of the London Ballet Circle who joined in February 2007 do not need to renew until July 2008.*

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## WHO's WHO in the Vic-Wells Association

### **Chairman:**

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### **Hon. Treasurer:**

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### **Acting Social Secretary:**

- position vacant -

### **Hon. Registrar:**

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Virginia Water  
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### **Hon. Editor:**

Miss Imogen Walker  
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[jen.walker@westherts.ac.uk](mailto:jen.walker@westherts.ac.uk)