



NEWS from The Old Vic

The start of our sixth season here at The Old Vic launches with Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's gripping courtroom drama *Inherit the Wind*. **Kevin Spacey's** eagerly awaited return to the Old Vic stage sees him play infamous defence lawyer Henry Drummond. Playing opposite him as prosecution attorney is **David Troughton** - a well known stage and screen actor. With a cast of over forty and the leadership of award-winning Director, Trevor Nunn, this promises to be a remarkable opening to our new season. Previews start on 18th September and, with no Monday performances, will run from Tuesdays to Sundays.



January 2010 brings John Guare's adrenalin-fuelled, Olivier award-winning play *Six Degrees of Separation*. Directed by David Grindley this is a sharp, vivacious take on two worlds colliding. Inspired by the real life story of a flamboyant con artist who managed to convince wealthy residents of Manhattan's Upper East Side he was the son of Sidney Poitier, the play originally debuted on Broadway in 1990. In 1993, it was adapted as a film starring Stockard Channing (reprising her Broadway role), Donald Sutherland and Will Smith. This production will be the first major London revival of the play in almost 18 years.

Summer 2010 brings the second season of The Bridge Project. Following a critically acclaimed inaugural year, **Sam Mendes** will once again direct a transatlantic company of actors for the second in a unique three-year series of co-productions between The Old Vic, Brooklyn

Academy of Music (BAM) and Neal Street Productions. Embarking on an international tour through Asia and Europe, The Bridge Project will be arriving in London at The Old Vic at the start of summer. The new cast is led by **Christian Camargo, Stephen Dillane, Anne-Marie Duff, and Juliet Rylance**



Sam Mendes with Kevin Spacey

who will perform a double-bill pairing of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*.

The 24 Hour Plays Gala returns to The Old Vic on Sunday 1 November for the sixth year running. 40 internationally renowned actors, directors and writers join forces to test their talents to the limit and create six short plays in just 24 hours. Past participants have included; Gael Garcia Bernal, Jim Broadbent, Josh Hartnett, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Joseph Fiennes, Rosamund Pike, Brooke Shields, Vince Vaughan and Catherine Tate. The 24 Hour Plays Celebrity Gala is the principal annual fund-raising event in support of Old Vic New Voices. This department is dedicated to working with young people, developing emerging talent and building new audiences. The Old Vic receives no government subsidy so the Gala and other fund-raising events are vital to ensure this ongoing work.

To keep up-to-date with news and information for all productions at The Old Vic you can join our e-subscribers list by visiting www.oldvictheatre.com or become a fan on our new **facebook page** by searching 'The Old Vic Theatre'.

Founded in 1923 by
LILIAN BAYLIS CH., M.A. (Oxon) Hon., LL.D. (Birm) Hon.
Incorporating The Old Vic Association,
The Old Vic Circle, The Old Vic Club,
Sadler's Wells Society, Sadler's Wells Circle

The Vic-Wells Association
The OLD VIC, Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB
SADLER'S WELLS, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN
(also at the PEACOCK THEATRE, Portugal Street,
Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT)

Welcome to our new President

SIMON RUSSELL BEALE CBE



Simon Russell Beale in *The Cherry Orchard*

Photo: Joan Marcus

We are honoured and delighted that Simon Russell Beale has agreed to become our President. He has been rightly described as “the greatest stage actor of his generation”.

Born in Malaysia on 19th January 1961 he was educated at St Paul’s Cathedral School, Clifton College and Gonville and Caius College Cambridge where he obtained a first in English. He graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 1983.

He has a most distinguished acting career starting when he acted the part of Desdemona in a school production aged 14. He acted in many roles at the Royal Shakespeare Company including Konstantin in Chekhov’s *The Seagull*, Edgar in *King Lear*, *Richard III* and as Ariel in Sam Mendes production of *The Tempest*. Sam Mendes also directed him as Iago in *Othello* at the National Theatre. He has been a regular at the National Theatre since 1995 appearing in roles such as Mosca in Ben Johnson’s *Volpone*, George in Tom Stoppard’s *Jumpers*, and the lead in *Humble Boy* by Charlotte Jones written especially for him. He became a key part in Trevor Nunn’s ensemble playing many roles including Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Andrew Undershaft in Hytner’s production of

Shaw’s *Major Barbara*. His Hamlet in September 2000 was a particularly memorable performance.

**“... rightly described as
the greatest stage actor
of his generation.”**

His versatility was shown when he played the role of King Arthur in the Monty Python Musical *Camelot*, both on Broadway and in London. He has appeared in many television productions and last year became a television presenter with BBC Four series *Sacred Music* about Western Church Music. He also was Smiley in BBC Radio 4 adaptation in all the John Le Carre novels where George Smiley appears. Recently you will have seen him in two contrasting roles in the Bridge productions at the Old Vic.

Simon has received many awards including Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Musical – *Candide* in 2000, Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actor – *Uncle Vanya* in 2003 and he was appointed CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List in 2003.

Lilian Baylis Theatrical Excellence Awards

Honor Blackman, Lynda Bellingham and Joy Ranger were our panel who attended the 2009 Old Vic New Voices 24 hour Play Cycle at the Old Vic on Sunday 25th July. Also on the Panel was Steve Winter from the Old Vic who master-minded the whole event, lasting some three months and involving auditions for hundreds of 18-25 year old hopefuls embarking on a career in the theatre. His role on the panel was to choose the best Producer. On the day, seven plays were written over night and following the selection of the Actors and seven Directors, the plays were rehearsed during the day prior to their evening presentation to a very full house at the Old Vic.

The panel were unanimous in their choices and recommended the following:

Writer of the third play *This is not the end*
Ella Hickman

Director of *This is not the end*
Natalie Ibu

Actor in *This is not the end*
James Baldwin

Actor in the fourth play *Mothers ruin*
Rebecca Whitehead

Producer
Morwenna Johnson

The Awards in the form of a cheque for £250 and a certificate were presented by the well known Director of plays and films, Anthony Page, at a ceremony at the Old Vic on the 16th September.

James Ranger

Are you on our e-mail list?

If you are on our e-mail list, you should have received, early in September, details of the possible rehearsals at Sadler's Wells for the first part of the Autumn Season. If you did not do so, and would like to be included, or are on the list and would like to withdraw, contact **Richard Reavill** at vicwells@tiscali.co.uk

Greetings.... from your new Social Secretary

My name is Kirsten Sheridan, I live in Kent and I am an avid theatre-goer. I try to go to the theatre at least twice a month and I already have tickets booked for four plays in the next two months!

I write reviews of plays at the Old Vic for an American website. My favourite playwrights include Shakespeare (naturally) Acykourn, Tom Stoppard and Eugene O'Neill.

I am a supporter of the Old Vic, which is how I discovered the Vic-Wells Association - a wonderful Association full of people passionate about theatre. I was delighted when the committee elected me as the new Social Secretary at the last meeting.

Regular readers will already know that the *Twelfth Night Party* and *Shakespeare's Birthday Party* are constants in our social diary, but we also try to organise other events during the year. Together with my fellow committee members, I will be thinking of interesting outings/events for us to attend, but I would also like YOUR input. Is there somewhere in London you've always wanted to visit? A building you've passed by and wondered what goes on behind the closed doors? Please feel free to contact me at isishestia@yahoo.com with your suggestions and I will do my best to organise an interesting social calendar.

Kirsten Sheridan

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Vic-Wells Association will take place on Monday, November 23rd 2009 promptly at 7pm. in the Cable and Wireless Room at Sadler's Wells.

The Vic-Wells Association Website

Our website at www.vic-wells.co.uk has recently been given a complete make-over by a new designer. If you have access to the internet, please do have a look at it and send in any useful comments or suggestions. In particular, let us know if you experience any difficulty with any aspect of using parts of the site or links from it.

NEWS from Sadler's Wells

In the Spirit of Diaghilev

A hundred years after *Les Ballets Russes'* sensational first season in Paris, Sadler's Wells evokes the spirit of this groundbreaking company –not by trying to reconstruct the ballets of the time, but by embracing the artists' pioneering spirit, keen sense of modernity, and willingness to work across boundaries of genre and convention. Alistair Spalding, Artistic Director of Sadler's Wells, explains the idea behind the new commission *In the Spirit of Diaghilev*, which premieres at Sadler's Wells in October, "*With the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev altered the perceptions of who and what ballet could attract. It became a multi-dimensional art form and Diaghilev's approach forged the way for generations of artists and producers to come. For this centenary I felt it was important for Sadler's Wells to create new work, and to ask the question, if Diaghilev were alive today, what would he do? So I've asked Wayne McGregor, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Russell Maliphant and Javier de Frutos, to each create pieces inspired by some aspect of that period and most importantly Les Ballets Russes' spirit of collaboration.*" Each artist, working with all or part of his own company, gives their own original response to the famous challenge that Diaghilev once issued to Jean Cocteau, "Surprise me!"

Wayne McGregor: Dyad 1909

Inspired by Shackleton's Nimrod expedition to the South Pole in 1909, the year that Les Ballets Russes was founded, **Wayne McGregor** creates *Dyad 1909*. **Wayne McGregor | Random Dance** collaborates with acclaimed artists and filmmakers **Jane** and **Louise Wilson**, lighting designer **Lucy Carter** and costume designer **Moritz Junge**. Icelandic composer **Ólafur Arnalds** will provide a newly commissioned score combining piano, strings and electronics.

**"Diaghilev's approach
forged the way for
generations of artists to
come."**

Alistair Spalding

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui: Faun

Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui examines the animalistic nature of human movement and the power of mythology in *Faun*. This brand new duet, created for two of his company dancers, takes an alternative look at the eponymous creature from Stéphane Mallarmé's poem, Claude Debussy's music and Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography. With additional music by **Nitin Sawhney** costumes by leading fashion designer **Hussein Chalayan** and lighting design by **Adam Carrée**.

Russell Maliphant: AfterLight

Using Vaslav Nijinsky's geometric drawings and paintings as a starting point, **Russell Maliphant** will create a brand new solo entitled *AfterLight*. It is performed by a dancer from the **Russell Maliphant Company** with lighting and sound design from regular collaborators **Michael Hulls** and **Andy Cowton**.

Javier De Frutos: Eternal Damnation to Sancho and Sanchez

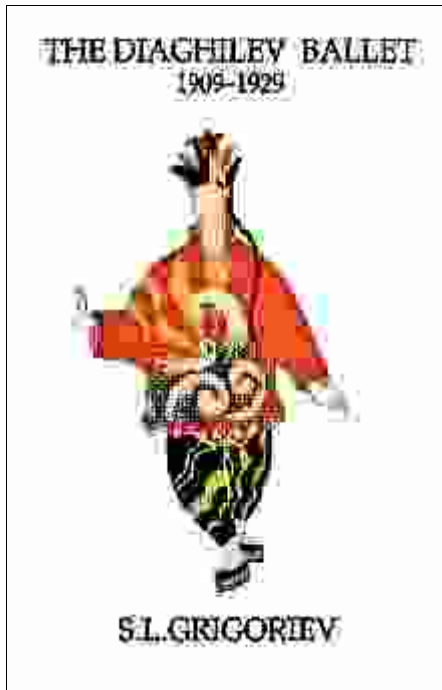
Olivier Award-winner **Javier De Frutos's** *Eternal Damnation to Sancho and Sanchez* is a cautionary fable inspired by Cocteau's scenarios and designs for Les Ballets Russes and set to Maurice Ravel's *La Valse*. **De Frutos** joins forces with theatre designer **Katrina Lindsay** and lighting designer **Michael Hulls**.

In the Spirit of Diaghilev will open at Sadler's Wells on 13th October 2009 and after its week-long run in London will tour to the following venues:

12 – 15 November	Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona
19 – 21 November	Salle Jean Villard, Chaillot, Paris
28/29 November	Opera de Dijon
16/17 December	Monaco Dance Forum
29/30 January 2010	Grand Theatre, Luxembourg



Book Review



The Diaghilev Ballet 1909 – 1929 **by S.L. Grigoriev**

Paperback 304pp. RRP £15.00 ISBN: 978-1852731328

This year, many ballet companies are presenting performances to honour the centenary of the foundation of the 'Ballets Russes'. Indeed, by the time you receive this edition of *The Broadsheet*, English National Ballet will have presented a special programme at Sadler's Wells "celebrating the 100th anniversary of the legendary troupe" and containing such works as *Les Sylphides*; *Scheherazade*; *Le Spectre de la Rose* and *Sacre du Printemps*.

The Ballets Russes was the creation of Serge Diaghilev who presented Russian Ballet in Paris in 1909. This was the first time the Russian Ballet had performed outside Russia, but previously Diaghilev had taken to Paris an exhibition of Russian paintings in 1906, promoted a series of concerts of Russian music in 1907, and presented the opera *Boris Godounov* in 1908, with the famous Russian bass, Chaliapine, singing the role of Boris.

The history of the Ballet Russes of Serge Diaghilev is told by Serge Leonidovitch Grigoriev, who was the *regisseur* of the company for all of the twenty years of its existence. This was a remarkable achievement in itself, as most of Diaghilev's collaborators: dancers, choreographers, composers and

designers; came and went, their departure usually following a quarrel with Diaghilev. Dancers included Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, and Lifar, who all subsequently served as choreographers, and Pavlova, Karsavina, and Kchessinska. The composers included Delibes, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky, the designers Benois, Bakst, and Golovine.

The first Paris season of 1909 was a mixture of opera and ballet, and was a huge success. Diaghilev initially employed dancers and choreographers contracted to the Russian Imperial Theatres, particularly the Mariinsky, during their annual holidays. Soon the company became semi-permanent, and Diaghilev concentrated his activities primarily on ballet. Performances were given in major European capitals, and later in the USA and South America. The book tells year by year of the triumphs and disasters, both artistic and financial, of the company. The catalogue of the 68 ballets produced for the company, from Fokine's *Le Pavillon de Armide* in 1908 to Balanchine's *Le Fils Prodigue* in 1929 contains more than 30 works which are still performed, though some with revised choreography, by major ballet companies worldwide today. Marie Rambert appears briefly, helping Nijinsky and the dancers to unravel the complexities of Stravinsky's music for *Sacre du Printemps*. A "charming young Irish girl, who never-the-less went by the resounding French name of Ninette de Valois" joins the company in 1923. Another Irish dancer, Anton Dolin, joins and leaves the company three times. In 1924, the fourteen-year old Alice Marks is somewhat reluctantly accepted by Diaghilev. "We will give her a chance to grow and study", he said, quickly changing her name to Alicia Markova.

The book, which is a republication this year by Dance Books (Alton) to celebrate the centenary, was originally published in 1953. It is a tremendous portrait of Diaghilev himself, a man of wide-ranging abilities, and not a few faults, but with a formidable capacity for welding a wide range of different talents into a creative enterprise. It is clear that Grigoriev remained in awe of Diaghilev long after his death in 1929, at which point the company folded. It was reformed in various fragments under different managements, but never again reached the extraordinary creativity which it achieved under Diaghilev.

Richard Reavill

Theatre Review

The Pitmen Painters

The Pitmen Painters, written by Lee Hall (*Billy Elliot*), is based on the true story of a group of miners in 1930's Ashington, near Newcastle. They hire a professor to teach them art appreciation but he rapidly realises that the only way they can begin to appreciate art is if they create it themselves. They begin to paint, creating pictures of their lives and those around them. Scenes of life down the pit, their neighbours battling the ferocious winds that swirl down the High Street and racing their dogs. As the men grow in confidence, so their art grows and they begin to see the world that lies outside their small town.

The cast remains unchanged since the play's premiere in 2007 and they have created wonderfully complete characters, who are struggling to cope with a changing world and with their own desires to be more than they are. With such a great cast it is inappropriate to name just two as stand-outs, but in my purely personal opinion, **Deka Walmsley** as George Brown and **Christopher Connel** as Oliver Kilbourn are excellent. George Brown is a Union man, a stickler for rules and regulations, unwilling to accept that change is inevitable; Walmsley brings warmth and sympathy to all the bluff and bluster. Oliver Kilbourn became one of the most successful of The Ashington Group, as they came to be known and Christopher Connel brings to life a man with a thirst for knowledge and a longing to change his circumstances but, when he is given the opportunity, he lacks the courage.

The play is sad, comic, full of intense discourse on art and politics. It vividly portrays the class system and the struggle to adapt to a world that was changed utterly by the First World War. It is a beautiful piece of art in itself and I urge you to see it if you can.

The Pitmen Painters remains at the National Theatre until September 22nd when it embarks on a tour of UK and Ireland, before returning to the NT in December.

For full details see the National Theatre's website, www.nationaltheatre.org.uk or telephone the Box Office on 020 7452 3000.

Kirsten Sheridan

Obituary

DOUGLAS CRAIG OBE

1916 – 2009

(Sadler's Wells Director 1970-1978)

Douglas Craig died aged 93 on 26th July. He was a strong supporter of the Association and regularly attended our functions.

He won a choral scholarship to St Catherine's College, Cambridge and performed in the Footlights. His time in the army was spent at Bletchley Park in Hut Three where he analysed and translated intercepted German messages. In 1949 he began his career as an opera singer as a baritone but soon changed to directing and teaching and for a while ran the Arts Council's *Opera for all*. He moved to Glyndebourne as Stage Director and later became Assistant General Manager and from 1966-1970 was General Administrator of the Welsh National Opera.

He joined Sadler's Wells in 1970 at a difficult time as the Opera Company had just moved to the Coliseum. Despite no Arts Council support he regularly filled the theatre with international companies such as the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Slovak Opera, Merce Cunningham and Paco Pena claiming his arts policy was one of "adventure". On one occasion the Netherlands Dance Theatre appeared in the nude leading to 'House Full' notices. He still enjoyed production and with Anthony Page restored and presented *Delius's Koanga*, an opera written in 1897 which tackled the issue of the slave trade. In 1978 he became Head of the BCM's Opera and Drama School.

On retirement he continued to be active visiting Hong Kong and Australia giving master classes.

We send our sincere condolences to his widow, Dorothy Dixon.

Do YOU have an opinion on a production you have seen recently? Please send your review to: marjory_gha@hotmail.co.uk

WHAT'S ON

Sadler's Wells 0870 737 7737

www.sadlerswells.com

- 1 - 3 Oct Scottish Ballet 40th Anniversary Tour
13 - 17 Oct Cherkaoui / De Frutos / Maliphant /
Mc Gregor: *In the Spirit of Diaghilev*
21 - 24 Oct Morphoses / The Wheeldon Company
27 - 31 Oct Mark Morris Dance Company
3 - 7 Nov Rambert Dance Company: *featuring*
Comedy of Change
10 - 14 Nov Birmingham Royal Ballet: *Quantum*
Leaps / Cyrano
16 - 28 Nov Svapnagata - Indian Music & Dance
1 - 5 Dec Carlos Acosta: *Apollo* & other works
10 Dec - 24 Jan 2010
Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*

Peacock Theatre 0870 737 0337

- 15 Sept - 3 Oct Bounce: *Insane in the Brain*
10 - 11 Oct Family Weekend
14 - 31 Oct Cirkus Cirkör: *Inside Out*
3 - 21 Nov Ye Gam Theatre: *Jump*
2 Dec - 10 Jan 2010 *The Snowman*

Old Vic Theatre 0870 060 6628

www.oldvictheatre.com

- 18 Sept - 20 Dec *Inherit the Wind*
7 Jan - 3 Apr 2010 *Six Degrees of Separation*
To book tickets for all productions at The Old Vic: 0844 871 7642

REHEARSALS at SADLER'S WELLS

AUTUMN 2009

Listed below are the potential rehearsal opportunities for the next few months which will all be in the afternoon. Not all of these may be open to Members so please check with Richard Reavill on 0149187 2574 nearer the time or e-mail vic-wells@tiscali.co.uk. If you are on his email list you will be informed automatically. Please arrive 15 minutes before the rehearsal time and pay £5 to the Committee Member present.

Bahok (Akram Kahn) 25 September

Scottish Ballet

1 October



In the spirit of Diaghilev

13 October



Rambert Dance Company

6 November



Birmingham Royal Ballet

10 November



Illustrations from the Sadler's Wells website are used with permission

The First English Actress.

By ERNEST WEEKS.

The honour of being the first woman to perform on the English stage is generally attributed to a Mistress Saunderson, who joined the "King's Company of Players," when they opened their new theatre in Drury Lane, in the Year 1663.

This record was discovered among the papers of the 'Master of the Revels' (Sir Henry Herbert) of that period.

The first play performed by that company was "Othello," so apparently Desdemona was the first part enacted in England by a woman. Hitherto, boys or men took the parts of female characters.

Those of you who have seen a great actress interpret Lady Macbeth or Portia, will understand what a tremendous difference this made. Probably that was why Shakespeare portrayed some of his heroines in the guise of youths. Viola in the "Twelfth Night," Rosalind in "As You Like It," Portia in the "Merchant of Venice" are all seen in the guise of young men. Can you imagine a big gawky youth as the love-sick Juliet, hiding her maiden blushes in the night—to us it would seem ludicrous.

To commemorate this innovation of the theatre,

Thomas Jordan—an actor and poet of that time, wrote a prologue to explain matters to the audience. It gives a good illustration of the depraved condition of the stage in those days, and in some parts summarizes the attitude of the public towards the players. It might be a useful appendage to many a modern play.

A prologue to introduce the first woman that came to act on the stage, in the tragedy called—"The Moor of Venice," by Thomas Jordan:—

- "I come, unknown to all the rest,
- "To tell you news; I saw the lady dressed.
- "The woman plays to-day: mistake me not,
- "No man in gown, or page in petticoat.
- "A woman to my knowledge; yet I can't,
- "If I should die, make affidavit on't.
- "Do you not twitter, gentlemen? I know
- "You will be censoring: do it fairly though.
- "Tis possible a virtuous woman may
- "Abhor all sorts of looseness, and yet play;
- "Play on the stage,—where all eyes are upon her;—
- "Shall we count that a crime, France counts as honour?"

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 yet done so, please send your payment to the Hon. Registrar:

Professor Liz Schafer, 372 Stroude Road, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4DB

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your membership card (no SAE, no card!)

The copy deadline for the next issue of

The Broadsheet is

Saturday, 7th November 2009.

Please send items or letters for publication to the Editor (details above) to arrive before this date.