



The Twelfth Night Party

Report by Tim Rooke



Vic-Wells members and guests enjoy the party

The annual celebration by the Vic-Wells Association of 12th Night was held, as usual, at the Old Vic with the kind permission of the Artistic Director, Kevin Spacey. We thank him and also all the theatre staff who were there to lend a hand.

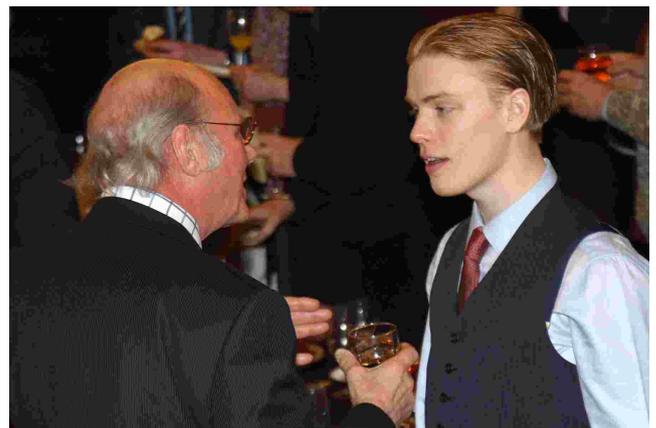
A substantial number of our members gathered, together with the cast of the current Old Vic production, *A Flea in her Ear*, who happily tucked into the food and drink provided by Ruth Jeayes and other Committee members. Our Vice-President, Nickolas Grace, introduced the cutting of the cake. We had expected that Tom Hollander

would perform this ceremony but, due to an elbow injury sustained during a performance of the play, his place was taken by his under-study. Freddie Fox - yes, another member of this acting family - was a most acceptable substitute. Mr Fox has only recently left drama school and



Freddie Fox cuts the cake!

is to remain at the Old Vic for the next production *Cause Célèbre*. Freddie told us that his father (Edward Fox) was rather envious of his son making his London stage debut in



Chairman, Jim Ranger with Freddie Fox

this most prestigious of theatres. His dad had made his stage debut in a provincial rep. playing, of all things, a bridesmaid! With the cake cut and distributed, Freddie and others from the cast mingled with our members and we chatted away so that our allotted time just flew past. What remained of the food and wine was pressed upon the cast for their post-performance refreshment, while we went off home or to see the show after another highly successful event.

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Don't forget! Our next celebration is on the Bard's Actual Birthday in 2011 - see back page!

A Tale of Two Portraits...

Report by Liz Schafer

Musician Valerie Langfield has been studying the portrait of Lilian Baylis by Cecil Mary Leslie (1900-1980) that hangs at the Old Vic on the stairs between the circle and the upper circle. This portrait is actually owned by the Vic-Wells Association and it is a copy of the portrait owned by the National Portrait Gallery. The National Portrait Gallery have a letter from the legatee explaining Leslie's notes on *both* versions of the portrait:

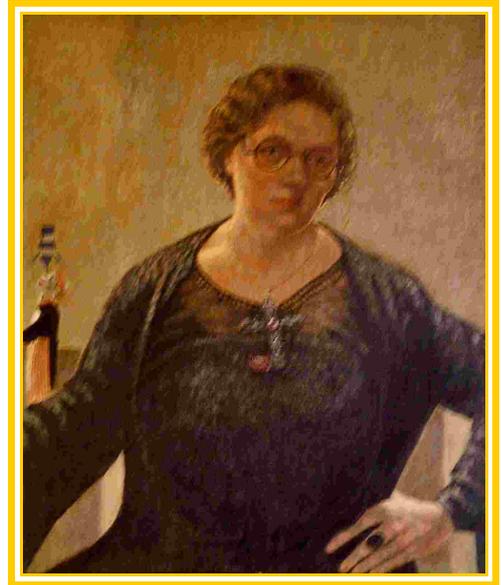
First Portrait

According to the legatee's notes Leslie "made a...study for a portrait of Lilian Baylis, painting while she worked at the Old Vic or Sadler's Wells". Since a *Daily Telegraph* press cutting of 16 January 1932 refers to this, the year must be 1931. This is the portrait [the NPG] have, signed and dated 1931. When Cecil Leslie gave me charge of her work towards the end of her life (we had lived and worked together for years before my marriage) I found this portrait and suggested it should be sold.

The National Portrait Gallery version of the portrait can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/4z4ph97>

Second Portrait

This portrait is done from the study. The legatee's notes continue: "She [Lilian] died before [Leslie] painted the actual portrait." Portrait II then, must have been done some time after November 1937 (the year Miss Baylis died). It was offered to the NPG in the mid or late fifties, but no price was agreed upon. It was not exhibited until 1969 at the Augustine Gallery in Holt, Norfolk, and sold there 3 Oct 1969. A Mr Jack Gordon from Colchester bought it and presented it to the Vic-Wells Association.



Lilian Baylis portrait at the Old Vic

A small personal detail which Cecil Leslie always used to tell about the painting was that Lilian's large amethyst cross (which she habitually wore) hung crookedly on account of her large amethyst brooch, and despite her protestations Celia painted it thus.

Critics Circle

National Dance Awards

Members will be delighted to hear that Liam Scarlett won the Critics Circle Best Classical Choreography Award for his *Asphodel Meadows*, shown at Covent Garden, at the ceremony held at Sadler's Wells in January. Many congratulations to him. Liam's career is developing well since being awarded our *Ninette de Valois Choreographic Award* in his last year at the Royal Ballet School.



Liam Scarlett with the Award © John Ross

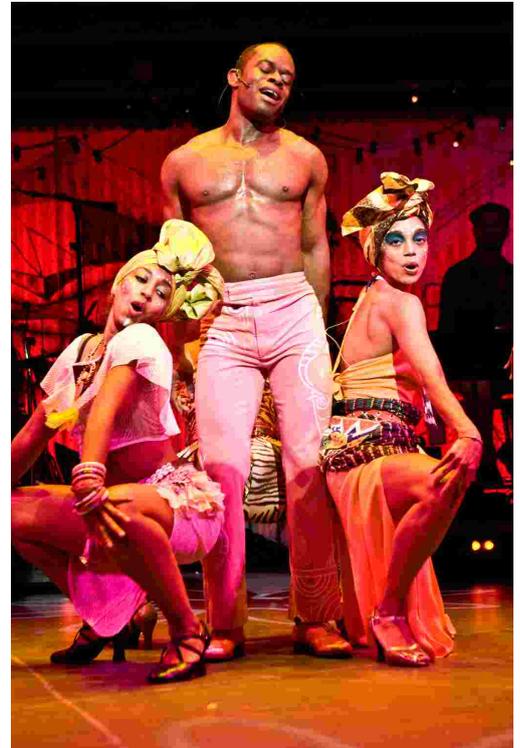
HIT MUSICAL TRANSFERS TO SADLER'S WELLS

Report by Lisa-Marie Bowler

Looking at the Sadler's Wells Spring brochure, you might have noticed that something is missing - the summer show! This gap has now been filled: Following its sell-out run at the National Theatre, the hit musical *FELA!* transfers to Sadler's Wells this summer for a six week run. It is a provocative hybrid of dance, theatre and music, exploring the extravagant, decadent and rebellious world of Afrobeat legend Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. Featuring many of Fela Kuti's most captivating songs and Tony Award-winning choreographer Bill T Jones's visionary staging, *FELA!* reveals Kuti's controversial life as an artist and political activist and celebrates his pioneering music (a blend of jazz, funk and African rhythm and harmonies).

FELA! received its world premiere Off-Broadway in September 2008, where it won the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, before transferring to Broadway's Eugene O'Neill Theatre in November 2009 where its accolades included three 2010 Tony Awards®, for Best Choreography, Best Costume Design, Best Sound Design, and an Astaire Award for Bill T. Jones' choreography.

Recognised as an icon in the international world of rock and roll, soul, jazz and hip-hop, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was born in Abeokuta, Nigeria, north of Lagos in 1938. His father was a Christian schoolmaster, minister and master pianist and his mother was a world-recognised feminist leader, who was very active in the anti-colonial Nigerian women's movement during the struggle for independence. Educated in Nigeria, and later in London where he studied music, Fela Kuti found his authentic musical voice adding elements of traditional Yoruba, high life and jazz, giving rise to "Afrobeat". Through his music he condemned military regimes in Nigeria for their mismanagement, and marginalization of the underprivileged. He was subsequently arrested more than 200 times and beaten savagely on many occasions. Despite this he continued to live in Nigeria and produced in excess of 70 albums of music during his career. He toured the United States and Europe, with an entourage of 80 people, to public and critical acclaim. One million people attended his funeral in Nigeria when he died in 1997 at the age of 58.



FELA! is at Sadler's Wells from 20 July to 28 August 2011. Tickets are on sale now.

BRISTOL OLD VIC - AN UPDATE

Report by Tim Rooke

When the current production of *Swallows and Amazons* closed on January 15th this year, with the exception of the Bristol Old Vic Ball in early February, the theatre will go dark until early April in 2012. The organisation will continue to produce work in other venues across Bristol.

The 517 seat theatre, which began life in 1766, will undergo a much-needed eleven million pound refurbishment. The studio theatre will not be affected by this massive work.

Hopefully, plans will include an open-air production of the beloved favourite, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. This is planned to be staged near one of RLS's watering holes in the city, The Llandoger Trow. Strangely I must confess to having sunk the odd noggin or two over the years in this very pub! For next Christmas, Bristol Old Vic will offer a semi-staged version of *Coram Boy* at the city's concert venue, Colston Hall. Meanwhile the studio will continue to run a full programme of productions.

We wish the Bristol Old Vic every success and look forward to resuming our annual visits if not in 2012 then in 2013.

New Year at Sadler's Wells

Richard Reavill reviews the American Ballet Theatre

The first major overseas company to visit the Wells this year was American Ballet Theatre, and the company was in fine form. Eschewing the major classics, ABT settled for two programmes of multiple bills, and squeezed eight performances of some ten works, (five single act ballets and five pas-de-deux), into the six days of their stay. There were many changes of cast, and all the principals and most of the soloists who toured were to be seen in major roles, often in more than one.

There were two UK premieres to top and tail the first programme, which opened with *Seven Sonatas*.

This work by the Bolshoi's Alexei Ratmansky now ABT's resident choreographer, featured three white-clad couples who danced a mix of classical solos, pas-de-deux, and more complex ensembles to piano music played on-stage. The choreography was subtle and nuanced, and the dancing smooth, relaxed and gentle, by a very attractive cast of younger soloists at the second performance. ABT



Seven Sonatas

has strength in depth! However, the music made little contribution, and seemed insipid.

Two contrasting pas-de-deux by Twyla Tharp and George Balanchine formed the centre of the programme. Tharp's *Known by Heart Duet* is called the 'Junk' duet after its aptly named recorded music. Its street-wise style was well interpreted by Maria Riccetto and particularly by Marcelo Gomes, who was not quite as in thrall to his partner as he pretended. The Tharp work was an interesting example of her mix of modern and classical, but no match for Balanchine, even in such a cerebral work as *Duo Concertant*. The Stravinsky piece was played by Ronald Oakland (violin) and David Lamarche (piano) on stage, and danced with precision by Misty Copeland and Alexandre Hammoudi, who managed to bring out more clearly than usual the interpersonal relationships of the dancers.

For the second premiere and the final item, ABT had sent a raiding party across Lincoln Center to the home of their rivals, New York City Ballet, and kidnapped one of their principal dancers, Benjamin

Millepied, to choreograph *Everything Doesn't Happen at Once*. The score was by David Lang and the six musicians were placed at the back of the stage. On-stage musicians allow the erstwhile area of the orchestra pit to be replaced by extra rows of premier seating, but in this case they also provided the scenery, as did the opened-out Wells stage. In the interval, the audience was allowed to see the stage being set, and the dancers getting ready to perform; it was just like the Dress Rehearsal! The choreography incorporated large ensemble numbers and smaller group items. There was one very effective pas-de-deux with Leann Underwood and Corey Stearns. At best the choreography was interesting and original, but could at times appear rather busy. Though not well regarded by some critics, I felt it had a lot to commend it, and ABT are to be praised for their willingness to commission new work.

For the second programme, ABT's back catalogue was revisited, starting with a work that has been theirs since 1947, Balanchine's tribute to Russian classicism; *Theme and Variations*. Completists would be able to compare this production with recent presentations by the Royal Ballet and by Birmingham Royal Ballet, and a future presentation this summer by the Mariinsky. The first performance was led by Gillian Murphy and David Hallberg, and the last by Sarah Lane and Herman Cornejo. All were on top of the technical challenges, Murphy and Hallberg particularly so. Murphy's style was brisk, her turns immaculate, and Hallberg is a refined classicist, but I rather preferred Lane's more measured approach. The ensemble was excellent, with an almost complete change of dancers between the two performances, but somehow the grandeur of the piece did not come through. The over-decorated costumes did not appeal, either in style or colour, particularly the salmon-pink confections wished upon the lead dancers.

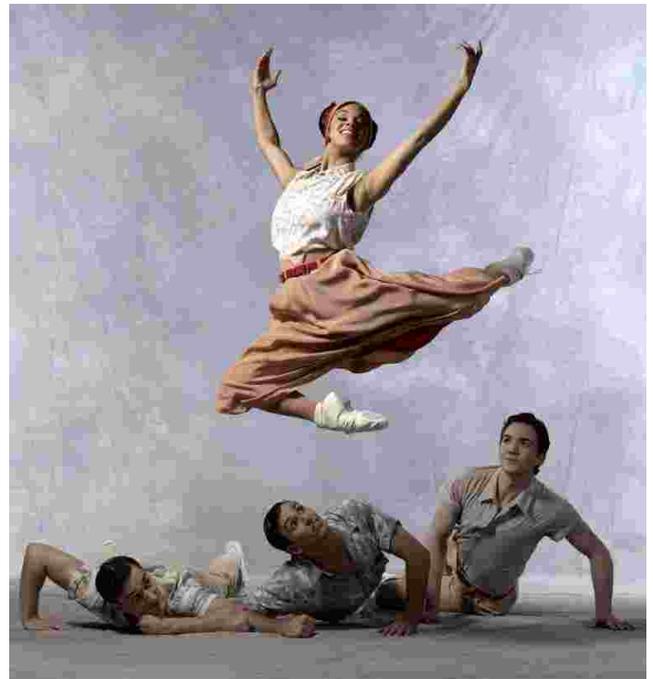
Jardin aux Lilas was premiered by Rambert in 1936, and is well known in the UK from its more recent performances by that company. It entered the ABT repertory soon after its formation when the choreographer Anthony Tudor went to the USA, and has been regularly performed since. The first cast had the advantage of the sensitive and experienced Julie Kent as Caroline, who is forced into an arranged marriage with a man she does not love. The boyish Corey Stearns, recently promoted to principal dancer, was well suited to the role of the lover with whom she tries to snatch a few moments of farewell in the Lilac Garden. In the other cast, Xiomara Reyes and Grant DeLong did not quite achieve the same level of angst. The

music, Chausson's 'Poeme', usually provides a background of hothouse romanticism, but on this occasion the accompaniment was rather tepid.

Reyes as much more at home tearing strips off the *Tchaikovsky pas de deux*, an extra item in the early performance, partnered by a very bouncy Herman Cornejo. Michele Wiles bravely assayed the *Grand pas Classique* of Victor Gsovsky at the last performance, smoothly partnered by Corey Stearns.

Continuing the policy of showcasing American (or American adopted) choreographers, Paul Taylor was represented by *Company B*, excellently performed by the younger members of the company. This work is set in the WW2 era and to songs by the Andrews Sisters. Is it a classic of its era? No matter, it is pleasant and enjoyable and a fun piece to end a multiple bill.

So, a short season by ABT, but one packed with a very representative sample of their wide ranging repertoire and excellent dancers.



Company B

News from The Old Vic

Report by Sophie Andrews

The end of the "blissfully funny" French farce *A Flea in Her Ear* on 5th March brings the opening of *Cause Célèbre* (Terence Rattigan's final play) to mark his centenary year. Thea Sharrock will direct Niamh Cusack and Anne-Marie Duff. Based on the true story of Alma Rattenbury who went on trial with her 18-year-old lover for the murder of her husband, *Cause Célèbre* is an intriguing tale of love, betrayal, loyalty and obsession. *Cause Célèbre* opens at The Old Vic on the 17th March and closes on Rattigan's birthday – 11th June.

The preparation for this Summer's third and final season of The Bridge Project is well under way with Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Directed by Academy-Award Winner Sam Mendes, it stars Old Vic Artistic Director Kevin Spacey in the title role. *Richard III* opens on the 18th June.

Do you Remember ?...

Valerie Langfield is currently engaged in editing some of the letters of the Cambridge musicologist Professor Edward Dent. Dent, of course, also did a lot of work at the Vic-Wells especially during the 1920s-30s. Valerie is particularly interested in Dent's letters to J.B.(Jack) Gordon who was staff producer at Sadler's Wells for several years. From the letters Valerie has gained the impression that Jack Gordon was always putting the singers and Sadler's Wells productions before his own interests.

Does anyone in the Vic-Wells Association have memories of Jack Gordon or Edward Dent that they would be willing to share? If so please contact Liz Schafer at the address on the back page.

Rehearsals – Do we have your e-mail?

Lists held on computers tend to get out-of-date and the one for those interested in rehearsals (and information on other Vic-Wells activities) is no exception. People tend to change their e-address, for example to avoid an avalanche of 'spam', and for many other reasons. Richard Reavill will be doing a bit of pruning and generally tidying-up the list this month. Members whose messages have been returned as 'undeliverable', and also those who have not renewed their membership, will be early in the cull.

However, if you find after you have read this note in the *Broadsheet* that you have been incorrectly consigned to communication limbo, please e-mail Richard at vicwells@tiscali.co.uk, and he will reinstate you forthwith, hopefully with an e-address that works!

Ninette de Valois and the Story of the Royal Ballet

Reviewed by Professor Liz Schafer

This Lowry Centre exhibition is quite extraordinary. I was particularly impressed by the *range* of exhibits - costumes, designs, newspaper cuttings, posters, film, interviews, photographs, programmes and choreographic notebooks are on display. But a real highlight of the exhibition was the set of photographs lent by Alexander Stannus; these really situate de Valois in terms of her Irish heritage and the very particular culture she was brought up in.



Another highlight was the Lowry's own, rather challenging, contribution to the exhibition, paintings by Lowry himself which reflect on *the Story of the Royal Ballet*. L.S. Lowry's images of mannequin figures with bows (images that have never been exhibited before) were, I have to say, rather disturbing. There was definitely something dancer-like about these mannequins with their tutu style skirts and tight bodices; even their high heeled shoes make them look as if they are dancing en pointe. These paintings were juxtaposed with Lowry's paintings of Anne Hilder, a young woman who looks as if she could well be a ballet dancer, and who has been connected with Lowry's obsession with *Coppélia* (as "Anne Hilder" has never been identified and the name sounds not entirely unlike "Swanilda").

Lowry was a member of the Manchester ballet club and often saw the Royal Ballet perform but his fame as the painter of matchstick men, matchstick cats and dogs, was quite challenging alongside the images of ballet dancer presented here. The repetition suggested in Lowry's industrial scenes as people trudge to and from repetitive work, seemed to offer an implied commentary on the repetition of ballet performance and training.

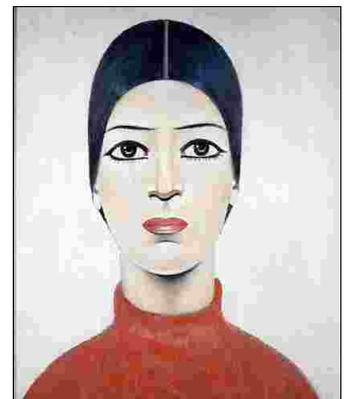
On a personal note, I really appreciated the *kid's corner*; a clothes rail full of costumes for children, plus large mirrors and

a barre. The result was that my daughter was so entertained I could take as long as I liked looking at exhibits and watching the film footage. Unfortunately the clip of film from the Vic-Wells archives featured in the exhibition, a brief glimpse of de Valois dancing the role of Webster in *The Wedding Bouquet*, is so short that if you blink you miss it. However, I would strongly recommend this exhibition when it opens in London on 1 April as part of the *Adventurous Traditionalist* celebration of/conference on de Valois.

Which leads me into a reminder about this conference and the fact that, at the Margot Fonteyn Theatre at White Lodge on Sunday 3 April, there will be a full production of the last of the great W.B. Yeats/de Valois dance-dramas, *The King of the Great Clock Tower* (1934). The production is directed by Professor Richard Cave, whose book on the Yeats/de Valois collaborations is being published by Dance Books, and will be launched after the performance. Will Tuckett is 're-imagining' de Valois' choreography, which she originally danced, and her role will be performed by a dancer from The Royal Ballet. The original score, by Arthur Duff (an important Irish composer of the period) only exists in piano reduction, and the score is being re-orchestrated for a small ensemble by Craig Fortnam.

A section of the exhibition focussing on Ninette de Valois can be seen at the Royal Opera House from 1 April to 1 August 2011. Further sections of the exhibition focussing on Frederick Ashton can also be seen from June to October 2011 in Ipswich in the Town Hall Galleries, the Jerwood DanceHouse and Christchurch Mansions.

For information on *Adventurous Traditionalist* visit www.royalballetschool.co.uk/dvconference



Portrait of Ann, 1957, LS Lowry, The Lowry Collection, Salford

WHAT'S ON



Sadler's Wells 0844 871 0090
Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

www.sadlerswells.com

17 - 27 March Pet Shop Boys & Javier De Frutos
- *The Most Incredible Thing*

29 Mar. - 2 Apr. Balletboyz - *The Talent*



4 - 5 April Russell Maliphant Company -
AfterLight

10 - 16 Apr. Rosas - *Early Works*

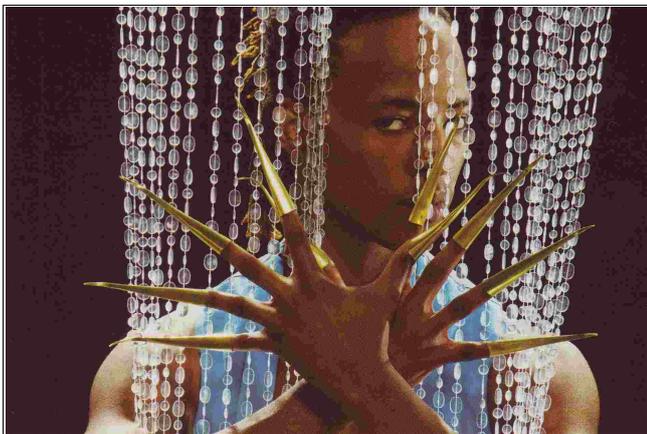
30 Apr. - 2 May Breakin' Convention '11 -
*International Festival of Hip Hop
Dance Theatre*

5 - 7 May Maria Pagé & Sidi Larbi
Cherkaoui - *Dunas*

12 - 14 May Dutch National Ballet - *Hans van
Manen - Master of Dance*

17 - 21 May Northern Ballet - *Cleopatra*

24 - 28 May Rambert Dance Company -
featuring *Roses* by Paul Taylor



31 May *Sum of Parts*

2 - 4 June Dave St-Pierre Company - *Un peu
de tendresse bordel de merde!*

9 - 10 June Jasmin Vardimon Company -
Yesterday

15 - 16 June Saburo Teshigawara / KARAS -
Mirror and Music

21 June Martin Creed - *Work No.1020*

Lilian Baylis Studio 0844 871 0090

6 - 7 Apr. Daniel Linehan - *Montage for
Three & Not About Everything*

5 - 7 May les ballets C de la B - *Pénombre*

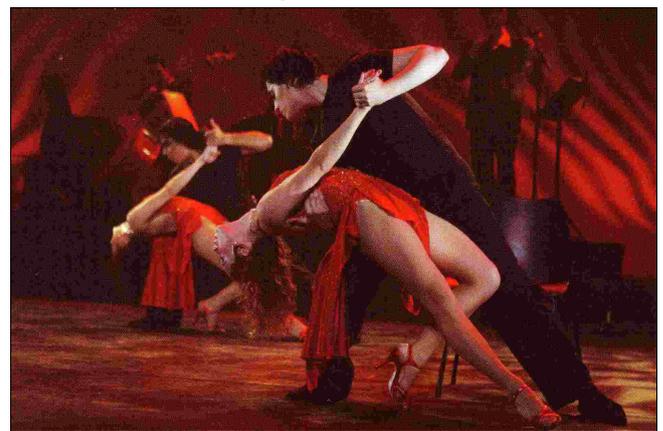
4 June Nats Nus Dansa - *Momentari*

Peacock Theatre 0844 871 0090

Portugal Street, Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT

8 Feb - 3 Apr. Richard Thomas & Stephen Mear
- *Shoes*

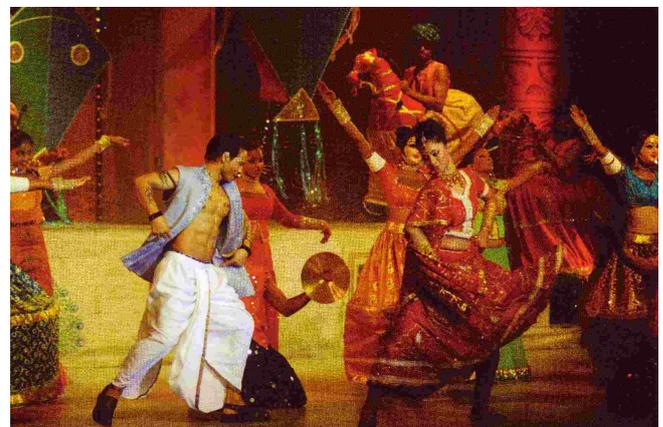
12 - 23 April Tango Fire - *Flames of Desire*



28 Apr - 1 May London Children's Ballet -
Rumpelstiltskin

3 - 7 May Tap Olé

31 May - 3 July *The Merchants of Bollywood*



Old Vic Theatre www.oldvictheatre.com

Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB

17 Mar. - 11 June Terence Rattigan - *Cause Célèbre*

18 June - 11 Sep. The Bridge Project - *Richard III*

To book tickets for all productions at The Old Vic: 0844 871 7642

Shakespeare's Birthday Party

Saturday, 23rd April

at The Old Vic from 5pm to 7pm

We hope that the toast to the Bard will be proposed by a member of the cast of the Old Vic's production of *Cause Célèbre*.



Refreshments will be served in the second upper circle bar of the theatre.

We look forward to seeing many of you on what is always a very enjoyable occasion. Come and celebrate Shakespeare's Birthday, St George's Day and Easter Saturday all at one event!

£6 for members and £7.50 for guests.

Please write for tickets, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to:

Ruth Jeays, 185 Honor Oak Road, London SE23 3RP

or call 0208 699 2376

REHEARSALS AT SADLER'S WELLS

SPRING 2011

Some 30 lucky Members saw the American Ballet Theatre rehearsal on 1st February. The next opportunities are:

Dutch National Ballet

Thursday 12 May at 2.00 pm

Northern Ballet

Tuesday 17 May

Rambert Dance Company

Friday 27 May

Jasmin Vardimon

Thursday 9 June

Please confirm rehearsal times nearer the date with Richard Reavill, tel: 0149187 2574. He will inform automatically all those Members who are on the email list. If you have an email address and are not on Richard's list please register with him at vic-wells@tiscali.co.uk

Please pay £5 to the Committee member present and arrive no later than 15mins before the rehearsal is due to start.

The Vic-Wells Association

Founded in 1923 by Lilian Baylis CH

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Please send items or letters for publication to
The Editor
to arrive before this date.