

A Cause for Celebration at the Old Vic



Simon Chandler proposes the toast

Betrayal. Envy. Adultery. Deceit. Murder. Judgement. These are the themes of the Terence Rattigan play *Cause Celebre* currently on at the Old Vic Theatre. Fortunately, after their matinee performance on the 23rd April, all was jovial conviviality as the cast of *Cause Celebre* joined Vic-Wells members for their annual *Shakespeare's Birthday Party*.

Simon Chandler, raising a toast to the Bard, entertained the guests with a speech full of Shakespearean references. Also present were Freddie Fox and Lucy Robinson (Tony Davenport and Stella Morrison in *Cause Celebre*) and Vic-Wells Vice president Nickolas Grace.

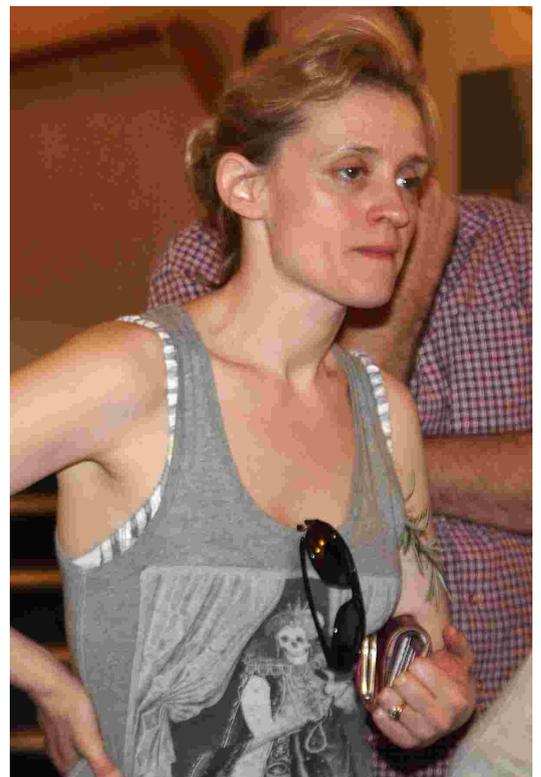
Ruth Jeayes excelled this year in her provision of an excellent buffet, much enjoyed by all. Everyone at the event wore a sprig of rosemary "for remembrance".



Niamh Cusack

Although Rattigan wrote *Cause Celebre* in 1977, he chose to set the play in the 1930's (when the sensational murder trial actually took place) thus writing a period piece through the lens of a different era.

Niamh Cusack, who plays the fictional character Edith Davenport commented, "Rattigan displays real, flesh and blood people who love, hate and feel jealous, who do and say terrible things they regret afterwards. We've all been there".



Anne-Marie Duff



Freddie Fox with Nickolas Grace



Lucy Robinson

Anne-Marie Duff's memorable, poignant performance as accused murderess Alma Rattenburry said, "This play is about a trial, yet you feel as though every character is on trial in some way".

Cause Celebre is on at the Old Vic until 11 June.

All party photos © Nick Panagakis



Broadsheet editor, Marjory Agha & daughter, Sarah



Vic-Wells members enjoying the party

Information Request

Janet Anderson is currently researching and writing the first biography of Rae Woodland and would like to hear from the distinguished soprano's former Sadler's Wells colleagues.

Rae Woodland's earliest contact with Sadler's Wells was in June 1954 when she auditioned for Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, with a further audition that October. She sang with the Company on quite a few occasions up to and around 1969. After her retirement from performing, Rae went on to become an internationally renowned voice coach. She is now 89 years of age.

If you have any memories of Rae you wish to share please contact:

Miss Janet Anderson, Staff Room 2, Blakeney Hotel, The Quay, Blakeney, HOLT NR25 7NE

REHEARSALS AT SADLER'S WELLS LATE SPRING 2011

The next possible opportunities are:

Hofesh Schechter
FELA!

Tuesday 12 July
Wednesday 20 July

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 arrive no later than 15mins before the rehearsal is due to start and pay £5 to the Committee member who will be present in the foyer before the rehearsal starts.

ALL VIC-WELLS ANNUAL MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE FOR PAYMENT ON 1ST JULY

Cleopatra

Sadler's Wells review by Laura Dodge



Martha Leebolt and Javier Torres

Photo: Helen Maybanks

Based in Leeds, Northern Ballet is best-known for its creation of innovative story ballets which are toured around the UK. Its vision is highly commendable; producing a regular stream of new and colourful ballets from *Wuthering Heights* to *Madame Butterfly* and *Hamlet* and bringing them to mass audiences is no small accomplishment.

Passionate

Their latest offering, the tale of Ancient Egyptian queen Cleopatra, is flashy but enjoyable. The complicated story of love, sex and murder is told succinctly and effectively. From Cleopatra's marriage to her brother, through to her romances with Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony, the unremitting and dramatic action flows smoothly. Martha Leebolt was passionate and emblematic as the lead. Fresh from her award for Outstanding Classical Female Performance, she danced radiantly and was enticing to watch. Kenneth Tindall as Wadjet, the serpent-like god of pharaohs who guides Cleopatra through her destiny, sinuously and captivatingly slithered about the

stage. The rest of the company also performed well – the army men were particularly unified and striking.

Symbolic

Choreographer and company director David Nixon uses a multiplicity of dance techniques – classical ballet and contemporary dance merge seamlessly into more surprising musical theatre style. His vision for the ballet is artistic and well-executed. Cleopatra and Caesar roll erotically in a length of white fabric, which when bundled, becomes a baby. Every gesture is imbued with meaning and dancers repeatedly strike powerful symbolic poses. Focus is on hands and wrists, which constantly meander and twine to make beautiful patterns.

*“This latest offering is flashy
but enjoyable - not groundbreaking
but well-danced”*

The brand new score by Claude-Michel Schönberg, composer of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*, was a joy to listen to. Its grandeur and boldness contrasted with moments of quiet lyricism and perfectly suited the ballet's dancing and story. Costumes by Christopher Giles were equally praiseworthy, evoking the Egyptian setting with glamour and style but still allowing dancers freedom of movement.

All in all, *Cleopatra* is a lovely ballet, suitable for both seasoned ballet-goers as well as newcomers. It's not groundbreaking, but it is well-danced, uncomplicated and fun – and certainly worth a pleasant evening's viewing.

Out and about with Mary Jane Burcher

LOVE NEVER DIES at the Adelphi Theatre



Sierra Boggess & Ramin Karimloo

Photo: Ian Gavan

Since I saw this spectacular Lloyd Webber musical, there have, thankfully, been a few changes made to the plot line. The script has been altered in that the character of the phantom does not appear at the beginning, as he does in the version I saw, and a different ending to the show has been written, much to its advantage. When I first saw this show, whilst greatly admiring the final score, the wonderful singing and the breathtaking scenes, the poor script was evident throughout.

The Phantom himself is played by Ramin Karimloo, another fine singer, but in my view, not nearly creepy or dangerous enough for the role. The show has, undoubtedly, a bit of spectacle, a good story and beautiful singing. I have no doubt that Andrew Lloyd Webber will sort out the rest.

THE WIZARD OF OZ at the London Palladium

Faultlessly in keeping to the original storyline, all characters are beautifully and skilfully portrayed. The tiny characters in Munchkinland are played by children and small dancers (no dwarves are used).

Andrew Lloyd-Webber has made the part of the Wicked Witch of the West into a more significant character, thus emphasising the good versus evil elements of the story.

Michael Crawford appears as the Wizard and seemingly has too little to do but, being Michael Crawford, works like the star he is and plays other small parts in the show. Danielle Hope was outstandingly good as Dorothy – the part means she hardly leaves the stage – and for a comparatively inexperienced actor she brings realism and warmth to the role.

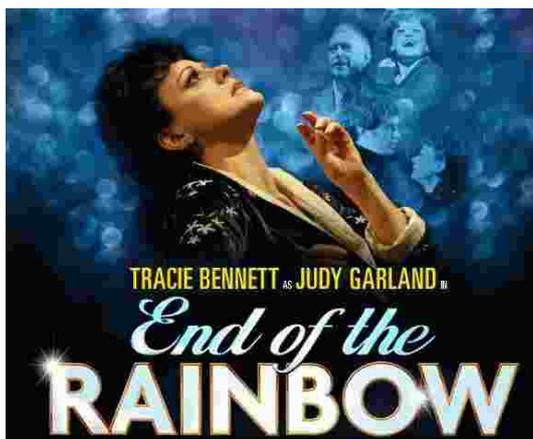
Hannah Waddingham brilliantly plays the Wicked Witch of the West with a show stealing song in the second half.

Speaking to Michael Crawford after the show, he said he was easing himself gradually back into the West End theatre after his experience in playing the evil Count Foscoe in *The Woman in White*. During that show he had to wear an enormous, stifling, rubber suit for every performance and, as a result he collapsed and has been of action for a while. So it's great to see him back!

Do take your young friends to see *The Wizard of Oz*. They will always remember it.



END OF THE RAINBOW at Trafalgar Studios



Continuing the inadvertent 'Lloyd Webber' theme, *The End of the Rainbow* portrays the final weeks in the life of the legendary Judy Garland movingly played by Tracie Bennett. Her poignant performance captures Judy at her lowest, after a lifetime of drugs and alcohol - yet still her happy go lucky and relentlessly cheerful personality shines through.

The show is set in the suite of a London hotel where Judy was staying whilst appearing at the famous Talk of the Town cabaret and, at times, shows a clever backcloth of a full orchestra taking us to the cabaret where she is belting out those so familiar songs she made her own. Her questionable fifth husband wasn't helping matters as she veered from happiness to despair. I actually witnessed tears in the eyes of many in the audience, a testament to Tracie Bennett's fine performance.

Richard III at the Old Vic

Sam Mendes returns to the London stage to direct Old Vic Artistic Director Kevin Spacey in the title role of Richard III in the final season of "The Bridge Project". This transatlantic endeavour reunites them for the first time since *American Beauty*, for which they both won BAFTA and ACADEMY Awards. Annabel Scholey will play the part of Lady Anne.

Following its London run, Richard III will then embark on an international tour and play at BAM's Harvey Theatre in New York from January to March 2012.

Also, don't forget The Old Vic Tunnels, recently described in *Time Out* as "London's hottest venue". The full season line-up can be found on-line at the Tunnels website www.oldvictunnels.com



Annabel Scholey

Nothing like a Dame.....

A recent meeting of the *Society for Theatre Research* was presented by Kate Newey, Professor of Drama and Theatre Arts at Birmingham University, under the title *There is nothing like a Dame*. After a brief outline of how the pantomime dame came into being two well-known panto Dames - Clive Rowe (who has played Dame at the Hackney Empire for the past 11 years) and Vic-Well's friend Chris Harris (substituting for Christopher Biggins) entertained us with hilarious stories and anecdotes from their careers. Chris is now playing Dame annually at the Bath Theatre Royal. A group of Vic-Wells members always go to this most beautiful of English cities to enjoy lunch, the panto and (after the performance) tea with Chris which is always (to put it mildly!) very entertaining.

At another *Society for Theatre Research* meeting, our guest speaker was Sir Ronald Harewood. *Society for Theatre Research* meetings are held at the Swedenborg Hall and are usually free.

Please contact Tim Rooke on 020 8352 0482 for further information or check out www.str.org.uk



Chris Harris

Summer at Sadler's Wells

Report by Emily Jameson

At the end of June, Catalan choreographer Sol Picó will be performing at Sadler's Wells with *El Llac de les Mosques*, a performance that is as much rock concert as it is dance show. Turner Prize-winning artist Martin Creed returns with *Work No. 1020* and Sadler's Wells regulars les ballets C de la B perform *Gardenia*, a show set in a transvestite cabaret club. And in July, Hofesh Shechter returns with *Political Mother - The Choreographer's Cut*, newly re-developed for 16 dancers and 24 musicians.

British Youth Opera, in association with Southbank Sinfonia, returns to the Peacock Theatre in September for the eighth year with two contrasting new productions - Mozart's masterly comedy of class, cross-dressing, mistaken identities and marriage, *Le nozze di Figaro* and Benjamin Britten's chamber opera *The Rape of Lucretia*, the iconic tale of the last Prince of Rome's assault on the virtuous Lucretia.

In September *Havana Rakatan* will be at the Peacock Theatre. Jazz, mambo, bolero, son, cha-cha-cha, rumba and salsa all come alive in a dazzling dance display of Cuban passion.

Sadler's Wells is back on the lake at Latitude with performances on the Water Front Stage from Saturday 16th to Sunday 17th July. Companies confirmed include Rambert, Tommi Kitti and ZooNation with extracts from their brand new work, *Some Like It Hip Hop*.

Alistair Spalding, Sadler's Wells Artistic Director, has chosen to focus on the exciting artistic work happening in Asia. The *Out of Asia* series brings together artists from China (Beijing Dance Theater, TAO Dance Theatre), Vietnam (Ea Sola), Bangladesh (Akram Khan's *DESH*), Japan (Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *TeZuka*) and Taiwan (Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan).

Widely hailed as the 'God of Manga', visionary Japanese animator Osamu Tezuka provides the inspiration for internationally renowned choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's brand new work - *TeZuka*. Famed for his manga creations including Astro Boy and Buddha, Tezuka's work has become a vital part of Japanese cultural identity.

Working with a cast of nine dancers, two musicians, an actor and a calligrapher, all drawn from Europe and Asia, Cherkaoui explores Tezuka's fascinating world and features projections of Tezuka's original illustrations alongside work by video artist Taki Ueda.

Book tickets on 0844 871 0090 or www.sadlerswells.com

Ninette de Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist

Reviewed by Professor Liz Schafer



David Bintley

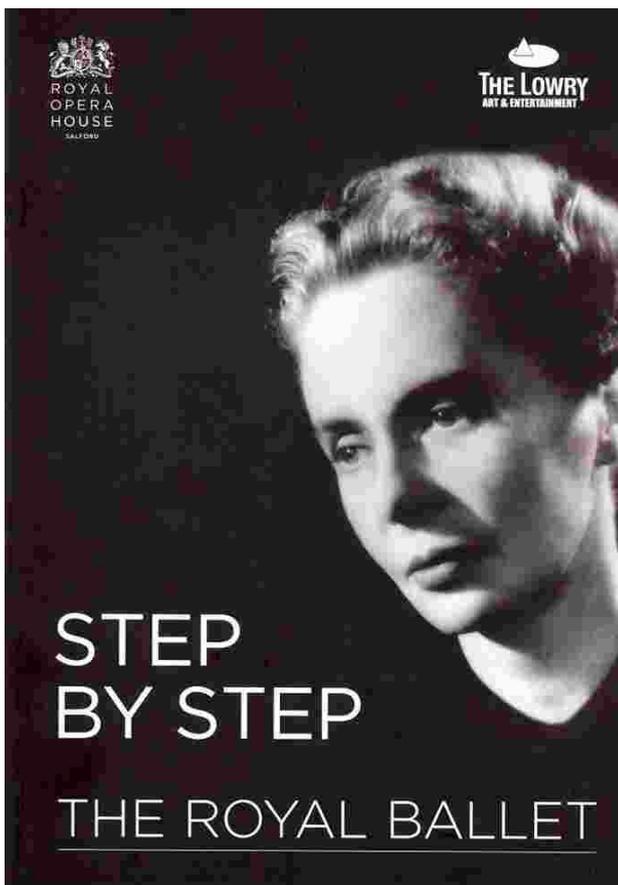
This was an extraordinary event, a real feast, but, as the papers given at the conference will be published next year, I will only report on the performance work. After a (filmed) introduction to the conference by David Bintley, Patricia Linton talked about de Valois' poetry, and played recordings that Dame Eileen Atkins had made of some of the poems. Then came *Step by Step, or Theatre by Theatre*, an enjoyable and illuminating performance which included the White Lodge Choir, dancers from the Royal Ballet Upper and Lower Schools; dancers from the Royal Ballet, and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. There were several examples of de Valois' choreography but a highlight, for me, was Hikaru Kobayashi's *Aurora Act III* solo, not just because of the exquisite dancing but because in the Linbury Studio the dancer was so close that all the details of dancing, costume, facial expression, were wonderfully clear.

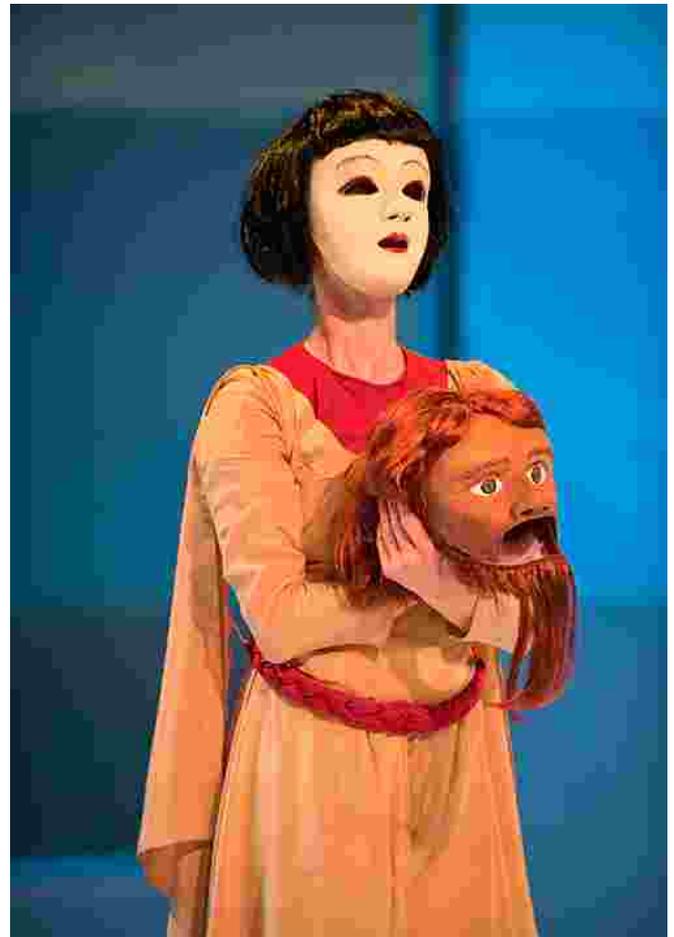
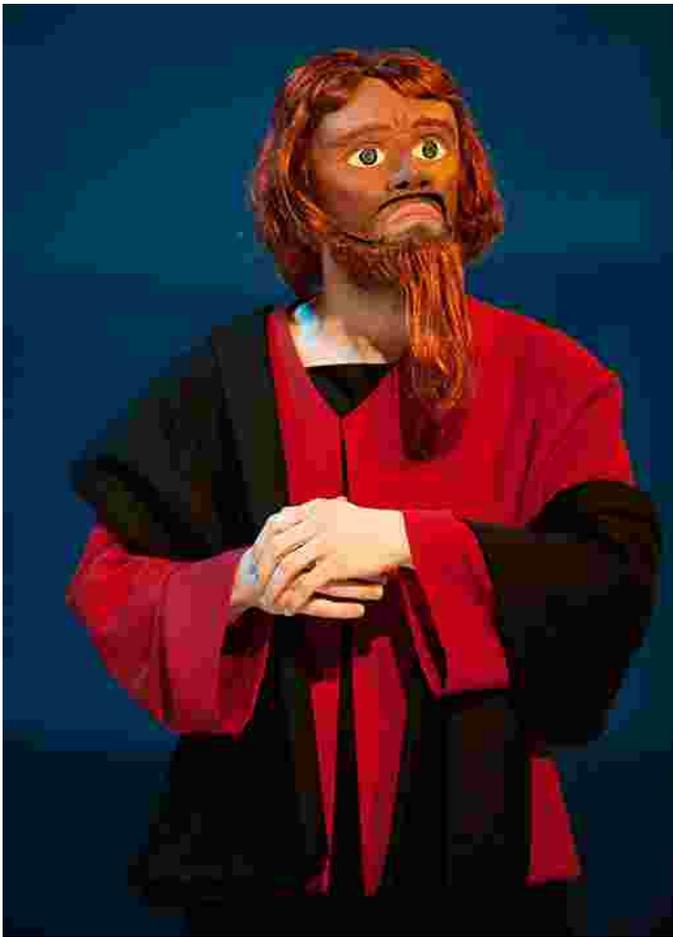
Respectful disagreement

On the Saturday a discussion of de Valois' training style was followed by a demonstration lesson with RBS Upper School students, taught by Valerie Adams. A panel on de Valois' training methods included Julia Farron, Henry Danton, Michael Boulton and Michael Hogan; it was excellent that the panellists were able respectfully to disagree with each other; for some de Valois' methods worked well and for others they did not. There was a filmed discussion of the role of *The Betrayed Girl*; Nicola Katrak interviewed Elizabeth Anderton, Marion Tait, Alfreda Thorogood and Belinda Hatley, who each saw the role very differently, particularly in terms of to what extent they saw *The Betrayed Girl* as simply a victim. The next panel, on de Valois as a collaborator and colleague, featured Dame Beryl Grey, Sir Peter Wright, Dame Antoinette Sibley, David Wall and Clement Crisp. Gerald Dowler chaired this session during which the audience were regaled with many very entertaining anecdotes. Then Simon Rice (RBS) and Ronald Smedley (formerly RBS) discussed the teaching of folk and Morris dancing at the RBS, a discussion that was illustrated by an energetic and exuberant demonstration by current students, accompanied by accordionist John Graham. On the Sunday there was a panel on de Valois as a woman of the theatre with Gillian Lynne, Sir John Tooley, Maina Gilegud, Anya Linden (Lady Sainsbury) and John Copley.

Family input

Lynn Wake's very fine film, made especially for the Lowry *Invitation to the Ballet* exhibition was shown, and can be seen, in sections, in the current ROH exhibition on de Valois. De Valois herself 'appeared' at the conference in several filmed interviews and Levent Kurumlu's new film *Dancing Across the Bosphorus*, a documentary about de Valois' relationship with Turkey, included a discussion of the Connell family's interest in whirling dervishes with





David Connell, de Valois' stepson. Another de Valois relative, great niece Louise Verity, reminded the conference that de Valois maintained that there was a great connection between ballet and the army, and that the Stannus family's military background helped her run her company as well as choreographing ballet.

Electrifying performance

The King of the Great Clock Tower by W.B. Yeats is an extraordinary play and it received an extraordinary production in the Margot Fonteyn Theatre, White Lodge. First performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in 1934, *The King* requires actors, a dancer and two singers. Ninette de Valois' choreography for the character of the

*“The masks made a crucial
and visible contribution
to a unique piece of theatre”*

Queen, which de Valois herself originally performed, was re-imagined by choreographer Will Tucket working with Yeats expert and the director of the production, Richard Cave. The original music by Arthur Duff was orchestrated by Craig Fortnam for violin, cello, piano and percussion.

Framed by the singing of the two Attendants, the action of the play has an unmasked and speaking King, a masked and speaking Stroller, or Stranger, and a masked, silent Queen who, at the end of the play, dances or 'speaks' with her body. The stillness of Deidre Chapman as the Queen during the opening sections, and the power of the held silences were electrifying.

Vic-Wells contribution

The masks, which were made especially for the performance by Vicki Hallam, powerfully linked the two masked characters, the Stroller and the Queen, visually, and made the King look almost fragile by comparison, despite his blustering and threats. These masks were the Vic-Wells Association's contribution to the conference and it was very satisfying that the Association had made such a crucial and visible contribution to a unique piece of theatre. Fortunately a DVD of this production will be available with the book of the conference next year.

WHAT'S ON

Sadler's Wells 0844 871 0090
Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN
www.sadlerswells.com

Main Theatre

29 June- 2 July les ballets C de la B / Alain Platel / Frank Van Laecke - *Gardenia*
12 - 16 July Hofesh Schechter - *Political Mother - the Choreographer's Cut*
20 July - 28 Aug. *FELA!*
6 - 10 Sept. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui - *TeKukA*
13 - 16 Sept. Grupo Corpo - *Ímã & Onqotô*
19 - 20 Sept. Ea Sola - *Drought and Rain*
22 - 25 Sept. Sylvie Guillem Evening
28 Sept. - 1 Oct. La La La Human Steps - *New Work by Édouard Lock*
4 - 8 October Akram Khan Company - *DESH*
10 - 11 Oct. Emanuel Gat Dance - *Brilliant Corners*
13 - 15 October Beijing Dance Theater - *Haze*

Lilian Baylis Studio

27 Sept. - 1 Oct. Quarantine - *Entitled*

Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT
3 - 10 Sept. British Youth Opera - *Le nozze de Figaro / The Rape of Lucretia*
13 Sept. - 9 Oct. Havana Rakatan
14 - 15 October Shaun Parker & Company - *Happy as Larry*

Old Vic Theatre

Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB
www.oldvictheatre.com

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



Tezuka illustration



Havana Rakatan

Photo: Alistair Muir

The Vic-Wells Association

Founded in 1923 by Lilian Baylis CH

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The copy deadline for the next issue of *The Broadsheet* is **Saturday, 26th August 2011**. Please send items or letters for publication to **The Editor** to arrive before this date.