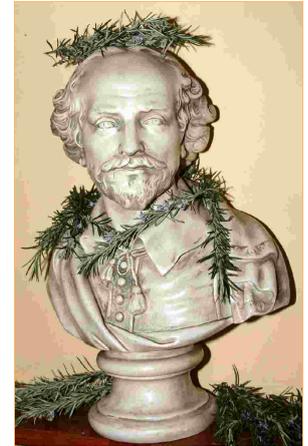


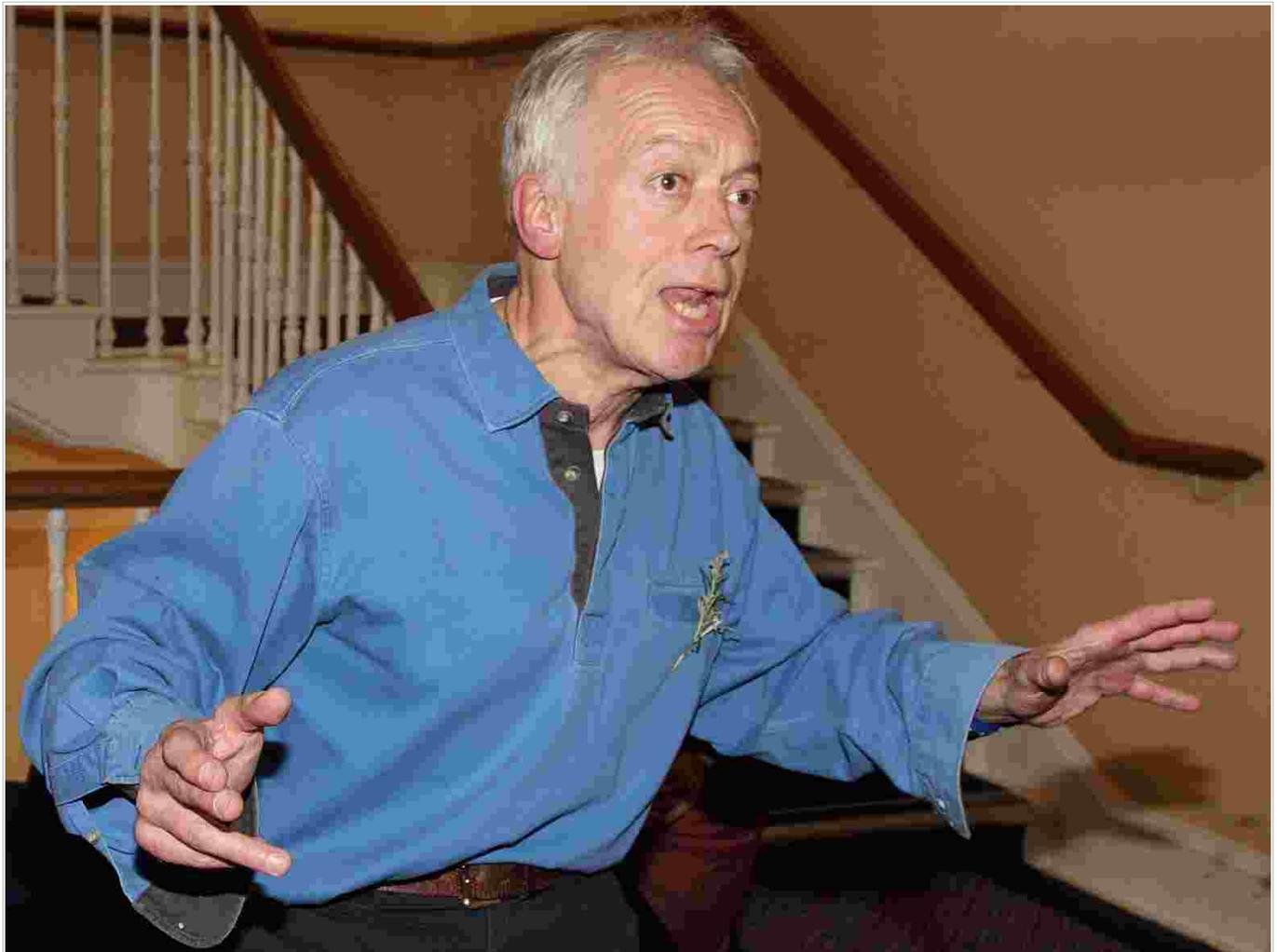
Head over heels!

James Ranger reports on *Shakespeare's Birthday Party*

Over 40 members and guests attended the party held at the Old Vic. We were joined by Ned Seagrove, the Stage Door Keeper, who had conducted a large number of members on a backstage tour of the Old Vic earlier in the year and entertained us with his stories of the theatre. In the last *Broadsheet* we published a picture of the bust of Shakespeare that we use at the party. The bust is now on loan for six months to adorn the stage set of *Long Days Journey into Night* at the Apollo Theatre where David Suchet is in the lead role. Members will recall David Suchet cut the cake at the *Twelfth Night Party* in 2009. When the bust returned for one day to the Old Vic for our party a much smaller understudy stood in for him!



Nickolas Grace, our Vice-President, gave a most spirited talk before proposing the toast to the Bard. His reminiscences of the Shakespeare roles he has appeared in kept us very amused. He began by doing an athletic cartwheel before giving Puck's opening speech from a *Midsummer Nights Dream*. As you can

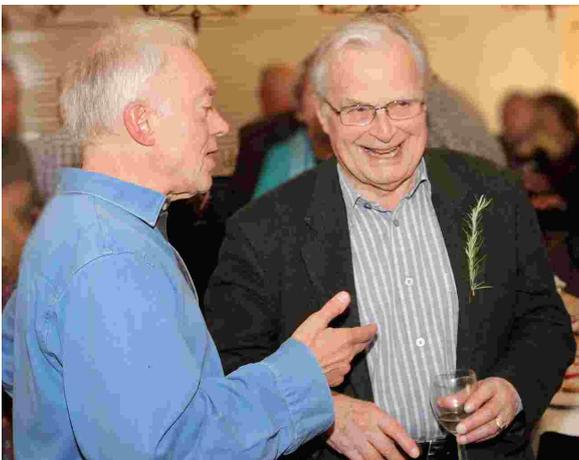


Nickolas Grace, Vice-President of the Vic-Wells Association - after his cart-wheel!

see from the photo he was acting splendidly. What a trouper! As usual Ruth Jeayes and committee members organised the party superbly, providing appetising refreshments, wines and soft drinks. In all, the event was a wonderful success! Nickolas Grace plays the Master of Trinity in *Chariots of Fire* at the Hampstead Theatre – which transfers to the West End’s Gielgud Theatre on 22nd June.



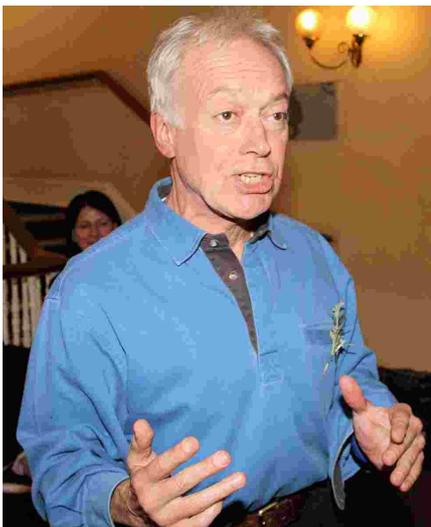
Ned Seagrove, Stage Door Keeper at the Old Vic, Maggie Willis, Joyce Parsons and other Vic-Wells Association members enjoying the party



Nickolas Grace amusing Sir Peter Wright



Vice-Chairman, Tim Rooke talking to Chairman, Jim Ranger and Sir Peter Wright



Party photography by Nick Panagakis ©



Joyce - What are you drinking?

Who Guards the Guardians?

Report by Richard Reavill

Readers of these pages will know me as Secretary of the Vic-Wells Association, but my day-job is University Lecturer. I teach management to students at Cass Business School (City University) and supervise student projects in business studies at The School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London). A subject which continues to exercise business school academics is 'corporate governance', which generally means the way organizations are managed and controlled.

In an article in the previous edition of *The Broadsheet* I made a brief comment on the case of Ashley Page, the Artistic Director of Scottish Ballet. Page has enhanced the repertory of Scottish Ballet by adding existing highly regarded works, for example *Song of the Earth* seen this Autumn at Sadler's Wells. He has choreographed new ballets, and commissioned new work from other choreographers. While not finding new masterpieces, the works have been interesting, and have provided innovation for the dancers and the audience. He has recruited new dancers and presided over a very significant improvement to the

"Many feel that Ashley Page has been shoddily treated by SBB"

standards of dancing in the company. He has held the post for nearly a decade. However, when his contract came up for renewal next year, the Scottish Ballet Board offered Ashley Page a contract extension of only one year. Page rejected this, justifiably in my view, as it implied a lack of commitment to him. It seemed to say, "we do not want you any more, but please hold the fort for another year while we find a new Artistic Director". The consensus in the ballet world is that Page has done an excellent job, and at this stage in his career might have sought a similar post in a larger company. Many feel that he has been shoddily treated by the Scottish Ballet Board.



Ashley Page

A pre-occupation with corporate governance, and the situation of Ashley Page, made me wonder a little about the way dance companies are governed. The usual arrangement is that a dance company will have a Board, often recruited from a group known colloquially as 'the great and the good', and much less often from those with any knowledge of dance. The duties of these boards are sometimes rather vague, but usually they are to provide general policy guidelines. Perhaps their only significant decision is to appoint an Artistic Director. They should also monitor the performance of the Director, to see that all is going well in line with the established policy. They may also appoint an Administrative Director to look after the money and administration, thereby freeing the Artistic Director to concentrate on the repertory, performance, dancing standards, etc. The UK differs from the USA in this respect, as there the duties of the Board include raising money, much of it from their own pockets, as readers of Michael Kaiser's book, *The Art of the Turnaround* will be aware.

From this brief analysis, it might appear that the most important function of a dance company board is the hiring (or firing) of the Artistic Director. Since this happens a couple of times per decade it could be regarded as a modest work-load, but it is a major decision and critical for the future of the company concerned. Despite this, the record of such decisions in the UK is inconsistent. At the Royal Opera House, a decision was made to appoint Ross Stretton to direct the Royal Ballet. When it became apparent to the authorities that he was a disaster, (rather later than it was obvious to everyone else), he was dismissed. Appointment of Monica Mason as Acting Director was a 'quick fix', and her subsequent permanent appointment and re-appointment required no great skill as she was obviously the best person for the job. Her performance in the role has been widely praised. However, looking back at the past record of the administration at Covent Garden, there was the almost catastrophic performance by the Opera House Board at the time of the Redevelopment Project in the last 1990s. The ROH is now very well managed, but is this because the Board has more competent members, or is it

because the Board is now a Board of Trustees, and more remote from day-to-day operations than previously, or is it because they have appointed very able senior staff, for example Michael Kaiser, Tony Hall, Monica Mason, and Antonio Pappano?

“Conspiracy theorists abound”

Birmingham Royal Ballet Board has made no mistakes, but they only had one such decision to make in nearly three decades. The company arrived in Birmingham from Sadler’s Wells with Sir Peter Wright at the helm. When he retired, appointing David Bintley was something of a ‘no-brainer’. Like Monica Mason, he was the obvious choice, and has done an excellent job. Stability has been provided by the Rambert Board, with two directors in the past two decades, Christopher Bruce followed by Mark Baldwin. At Northern Ballet, the current director David Nixon has been in post for ten years. There have been many changes at English National Ballet: Peter Shaufuss was fired, and allegedly escorted from the building on the orders of the Chairman. The next incumbent was Derek Deane, who departed rather suddenly. He was followed by Matts Skoog, who also left suddenly. Credible explanations were not available in either case. The current incumbent is Wayne Eagling, who experienced an unexpected departure from his previous job directing the Dutch National Ballet, although his performance in that role was well regarded. It was announced in March that Eagling was leaving at the end of the season, another sudden and unexplained departure. A new Artistic Director, (Tamara Rojo from the Royal Ballet), has been recruited in a hurry. The short time-scale and minimal advertising for the vacant post has caused concern, and conspiracy theorists have suggested that the ENB Board had already decided on a preferred candidate.



Tamara Rojo

So we have something of a mixed bag of results in terms of the performance of the boards of dance companies, with perhaps more incidence of poor or precipitate selection and directors falling out with their boards than seems desirable. Of course, it takes two to quarrel, so it is difficult for outsiders to determine who is to blame when a falling-out occurs. Page has made it clear that he wanted to stay with Scottish Ballet, and would accept a 3 or 5 year extension of his contract. The Scottish Ballet Board offered only a one year extension. When this was rejected, the Board issued a weasel-worded statement saying that it had been unable to agree terms with him. Peter Mandelson would have been proud of that piece of ‘spin’, but it does the Board no credit. Maybe the boards believe that an Artistic Director should serve only a limited term, and that a new person at the helm can stimulate a company. Certainly there will be little support for the idea that the job should be a life-time appointment. If a Board does not wish to extend the contract of a successful Director who is willing to continue in the post, it should have the courage and the courtesy to publish a justification. Not to do so looks mean and underhand.



Christopher Hampson

Who are the members of the Boards of UK dance companies? How are they appointed and by whom? To what extent are they representative of the stakeholders of dance in the UK? I will suggest some possible answers to those questions in the next *Broadsheet*.

Meanwhile, Christopher Hampson has been appointed as Artistic Director designate for Scottish Ballet, and takes over in the autumn of 2012. Let us hope, for the good of the company, the dancers, and their audience, that he is successful. Let us hope also, that he is better treated by the Scottish Ballet board than was Ashley Page. Perhaps Tamara Rojo will stay for a full term at ENB, and will not become the fifth incumbent in succession to make a premature exit.

The Duchess of Malfi

Review by Tim Rooke

Kevin Spacey has once again given the Old Vic cause to celebrate with this revival of John Webster's play – but I cannot subscribe to a faction who view Spacey as second to God and Shakespeare! However, undoubtedly, the Old Vic is going through a purple patch.

Jamie Lloyd's production looks good and makes for a thought provoking evening – a Jacobean tragedy is not the easiest thing to get through. He makes the Bard seem like a Haymarket drawing room comedy.

The cast, as we have come to expect at the Old Vic, is outstanding and it was a treat to see Eve Best back on the boards and she did not disappoint. It was easy to see why she falls for Tom Bateman's *Antonio* - to the chagrin of her two brothers, played by Harry Lloyd and Finbar Lynch - and this leads to murder most horrifying.



Eve Best as
The Duchess of Malfi



In the second week of the run it appeared that this piece could be inheriting the Scottish play's curse – the bed, on which the duchess is ravished 16 times a week, collapsed and a few nights later a mouse appeared on stage!

***“Kevin Spacey is good
- but not second to
God or Shakespeare!”***

While I greatly enjoyed the evening the, duchess gets periodical outings. It would be interesting to see other plays from this era such as Christopher Marlowe, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher and Ben Jonson. Kevin Spacey take note!

Out and About with the Vic-Wells

A report by Tim Rooke

On a beautiful English summers day a group of Vic-Wells members made their way to *Angels Costumiers*, founded, so Mark our guide told us, by Morris Angel in the 1750's, and the head of the organisation still has the same name.

Our tour started in the cutting room where they were making costumes for companies worldwide including the Met Opera New York. As our guide said they have the same type of organisation but, if you want the best “come to us”. On display in the *ladies department* were costumes from recent films including *The Iron Lady*.

As we went from section to section, we saw walls covered in signed photographs of every name in film and theatre as well as from the great and the good including one from Charles Dickens for garments for a reading tour of the USA.

We also had a glimpse of the *uniform section* with clothing from every period of history as well as an impressive fur store... kept very cold! All this time our guide entertained us with lots of background facts and figures in a most amusing way and - seemingly suddenly - we were back where we started and two hours had gone in a flash!



Meryl Streep in *The Iron Lady*

Sadler's Wells enters *The Space*

Sadler's Wells has been chosen as one of the first companies to broadcast on *The Space*, a new online channel dedicated to the arts, managed by Arts Council England and developed in partnership with the BBC.

Launched in May, *The Space's* 53 successful applicants – including Bristol Old Vic, Shakespeare's Globe and the Southbank Centre – have created hours of original commissions to run until October this year. The new service gives arts and culture organisations the opportunity to experiment and engage with new and existing audiences in an innovative digital environment.

Sadler's Wells had two successful applications to the fund: *Breakin' Convention* recently appeared live on the channel, and songs from Sadler's Wells' forthcoming new musical *Wah! Wah! Girls* will be filmed on location around London for screening. Sadler's Wells Associate Artist Russell Maliphant also received funding to create a film interpretation of his latest work, *The Rodin Project*.



Vagabond Crew – the French B Boys in action – one of the highlights of BC12

Photo: BELINDA LAWLEY

The Space has been timed to coincide with 2012's exciting activities within the arts, and around the London Olympic Games and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. *The Space* is now live and available via computers, smartphones, tablets and internet-connected televisions.

To catch the live screening of the Sadler's Wells production, tune in on www.thespace.org

The footage will also be available on the theatre's website www.sadlerswells.com



News from the Old Vic

by Liz Moon

Following on from the successful *Duchess of Malfi*, The Old Vic's next production is Michael Frayn's *Democracy* directed by rising star Paul Miller. *Democracy* was described as, "one of the great plays of the decade," by *The Sunday Times* when it received its premier in 2003 and the Old Vic say they are, "delighted to give this excellent production a well-deserved London run".

To keep up to date with the latest news and announcements from *The Old Vic* you can join our list of e-subscribers by visiting www.oldvictheatre.com and signing up to our newsletter. Alternatively, search for 'The Old Vic' on facebook or follow us on [twitter@oldvictheatre](https://twitter.com/oldvictheatre)



Sheffield Theatres' critically acclaimed production of Michael Frayn's *Democracy* will transfer to the Old Vic theatre this summer

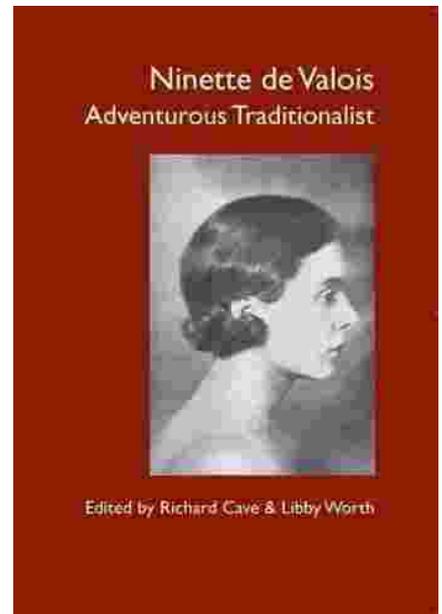
Ninette de Valois

Vic-Wells members may be particularly interested in this book as the Association helped to sponsor the performance of the Yeats' play *King of the Great Clock Tower* – choreography by Ninette de Valois – which will be available on a DVD of more than four hours of filmed material of archival value that accompanies the book.

Ninette de Valois was gifted with myriad talents. The essays in this study offer a substantial resource to assist future exploration of de Valois' life and work. It is without question that de Valois' unparalleled success derived from her unshaken faith that ballet's training methods and repertoire must be both fearlessly adventurous and confidently traditionalist.

Ninette De Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist

Paperback: 300 pages. Dance Books Ltd. Publication date: 30 June 2012



Old Vic and Sadler's Wells Brooches

Readers will recall in the previous *Broadsheet* a picture and some comments about a brooch given to Vic-Wells Association members in 1938. The brooch was sent to us by Virginia Surtees, who has written to me explaining that the rather pretty pill-box in which the brooch arrived was not part of the original gift, but merely a suitable receptacle to keep it safe for many years.

Following the publication of the photograph of the Vic-Wells brooch, we have received two more brooches from another of our senior members, Jan Golding. Both are for the Old Vic Association. One is small, simple, and triangular in shape, but the other is to the same design as the Vic-Wells brooch, albeit with different lettering. Our thanks go to the donors of these items, which will be kept with other Vic-Wells memorabilia.

Richard Reavill



The Vic-Wells Association
Is looking for a

Social Secretary

to organise our parties and visits.

If you have an outgoing personality with a few hours each month to spare and think you could be of help please contact Vic-Wells Chairman,

Jim Ranger, on 0143 886 1318 or jim@ranger.com

VIC-WELLS
ASSOCIATION



www.vic-wells.co.uk

REHEARSALS AT SADLER'S WELLS - AUTUMN 2012

Sadler's Wells staff rarely know more than a few days in advance whether companies will be holding a dress rehearsal at all and whether they would welcome our Members to attend. Please check nearer the time with Richard Reavill (Phone 01491 872574) who will confirm date and time if the rehearsal is going ahead. He will inform automatically all those Members who are on the email list but it would be helpful if you would reply if you are coming. If you have an email address but are not on Richard's list please register on vic-wells@tiscali.co.uk.

Here are their best guesses for possible rehearsals:

Friday 13th September - San Francisco Ballet
Friday 19th October - Rambert Dance Company

What's on



Sadler's Wells
Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

www.sadlerswells.com
0844 871 0090

Main Theatre

6 June - 9 July Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch

- World Cities 2012

(10 productions, each for 2 days at either Sadler's Wells or the Barbican - see Sadler's Wells programme for full details)

12 July - 5 Aug. Matthew Bourne's *Play without Words*

2 Sep. National Youth Ballet

14 - 23 Sep. San Francisco Ballet (3 programmes)



San Francisco Ballet

Lilian Baylis Studio

18 July - 5 Aug. Attic Theatre Company *1936*

9&26 Aug., 1&2 Sep. Lost Musicals 2012 - *Aladdin*

13-14 Sep. *Kassys - Cadavre Exquise*



National Youth Ballet

Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, Kingsway,
London WC2A 2HT

24 May - 23 Jun *Wah! Wah! Girls* - A British Bollywood Musical

4 - 8 July New English Ballet Theatre - *Synergies*

8 - 15 Sept. British Youth Opera *The Bartered Bride/A
Night at the Chinese Opera*

20 Sep - 13 Oct Zoo Nation Dance Company



New English Ballet Theatre

Old Vic Theatre www.oldvictheatre.com
Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB 0870 060 6628

15 June - 14 July Michael Frayn's *Democracy*

The Vic-Wells Association

Founded in 1923 by Lilian Baylis CH

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