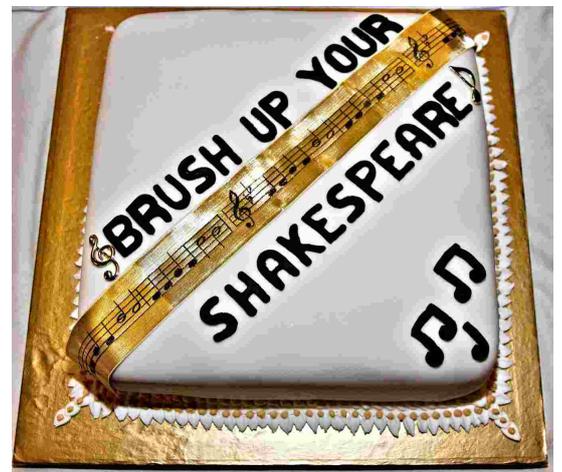




The Vic-Wells 12th Night Party

by Jim Ranger



SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Our annual party celebrating the birthday of The Bard will take place at the Old Vic on Saturday, 20th April 2013 from 5.00pm to 6.30pm in the second circle bar area

Tickets are £6 for Members and £7.50 for Non-Members

Please write for tickets, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to:
Ruth Jeays, 185 Honor Oak Road, London SE23 3RP, or call 0208 699 2376



The January 12th Night party was held between the matinee and evening performances of *Kiss Me Kate*, in the pleasant second floor bar area of the Old Vic Theatre. It was well supported by Vic-Wells members young and old. Clive Rowe, who played one of the gangsters in the production, performed the historic ceremony of cutting the cake and kept everyone amused with his answers to questions. He had previously spoken to many members at the party, was seen to be enjoying the party food and even signed a few autographs. The delicious cake, baked by Yvonne Hickman, was appropriately decorated with the words "*Brush up Your Shakespeare*", an amusing song sung by Clive in the show. The delicious food and drinks were provided by committee members to whom we extend our thanks. As usual, the party was expertly organised by Ruth Jeayes and our thanks also go to the helpful staff of the Old Vic. Everyone greatly enjoyed the party and we now look forward to *Shakespeare's Birthday Party* – our next unmissable event.

*'Brush up your Shakespeare, start quoting him now.
Brush up your Shakespeare, and the women you will wow.
Brush up your Shakespeare, and they'll all kowtow.'*



*Party photography
© Nick Panagakis*

Cinema Relays from the Theatre

by Richard Reavill

My local cinema has recently taken to showing relays of opera, ballet and drama from major theatres in the UK. Examples include the Royal Ballet's *Nutcracker*; *The Magistrate* from the National Theatre; *Maria Stuarda* from the Met, and *La Bayadere* from the Bolshoi. The productions are excellent, the picture quality superb, the direction generally good, the seats comfortable, and the prices modest. The companies can attract a huge international audience, and the publically subsidised UK companies can claim *brownie points* for attracting a new audience. Companies will relish the additional income to help with rising costs in these difficult times.



Joshua McGuire as Cis Farrington, John Lithgow as Posket -The Magistrate

Photo: Alastair Muir

So how do opera, ballet and drama play in relays to the cinema? On the few examples I have seen so far, it seems that the opera and the ballet fare quite well, but the drama less so. Perhaps as opera and ballet are more artificial art-forms, less realism is expected. Drama is closer to the cinema, and motion picture acting is different from stage acting. *The Magistrate* was a high quality production of a Victorian farce by Arthur Wing Pinero, with a superb performance in the title role by John Lithgow. It was played live to an audience in the Olivier Theatre, and this seemed strange in a cinema. Farce tends to be highly audience interactive, with the actors timing

their performance according to the reaction of the theatre audience. This leaves the remote cinema audience feeling somewhat disengaged. Perhaps a "straight play", or a Shakespeare classic, where audience participation is not required, would work better.

Tracking the "fast bits"

The camera director's ability to provide an acceptable mix of general shots intermingled with close-ups is critical. We have no choice but to accept this in the cinema, but in the theatre we are free to focus our attention as we wish. In a relayed performance, any disagreement with the director's selection of shots has the compensation of the ability to move, at the critical moment, from our modest seat at the rear of the theatre to a premium stalls seat. This generally worked well for both the opera and the ballet, with expanded views of the opera chorus, the crowd scenes and the corps-de-ballet items. Mid-range shots worked well for the opera quartet and the ballet pas-de-deux, and close-ups for the major aria or the ballerina's variation. My sympathies are with the camera operator, trying to track the principal male dancer in the fast bits of his solo. For the play, the direction was good, mixing closer shots for critical pieces of individual acting with more general shots of the more populated scenes, and the dialogue was clearly audible, which is not always the case in the theatre.

So, is all sweetness and light with the relays to cinemas? Well, not quite. I have a few niggles about the presentation, particularly when the show runs to three hours, which most operas and ballets do. I could do without the long introductions, and the profuse thanks to the sponsors, but that is ungrateful as they contribute shed-loads of money. In the live relays, interviews with singers, dancers, actors, directors and conductors may be interesting to some patrons, and are probably needed to accommodate an interval of unknown duration, but they do not bother me as I replicate my theatre behaviour, and nip outside to stretch my legs and get an ice-cream. My concern about the time-wasting extras is primarily due to worry that my car in the car-park adjacent to the cinema will get clamped when its three-hour limit is exceeded.

So, are cinema relays a good thing? Yes, they certainly are. How often would you see an opera at the Met? Once in a lifetime? Or the Bolshoi in London? Every few years? Yes - if you have the money. A relay does not give *quite* the thrill of a live performance in the theatre. But it is an excellent substitute for many people.

Nickolas Grace, our Vice President

talks to Sarah Agha

During the recent wintery weather, Nickolas Grace kindly welcomed me into his lovely home, and by the fire, we chatted about his recent experience in the highly acclaimed *Chariots of Fire* as the stiff-upper lip Master of Trinity. In the film released in 1981, this part was written for the legendary Sir John Gielgud. Nickolas Grace explained that he wanted to 'find' the character by striving to make it his own, albeit with "little echoes of Gielgud" - wanting, he said, to add another dynamic – "to make a tribute to him rather than do an impersonation".

It was fascinating to talk with Nickolas as he explained the process of finding a character - incorporating all the elements, including the text and any useful pieces of research one discovers as an actor. "I'm a very physical actor and (as Master of Trinity) it was very strange playing the *intellectual* who was criticizes young people for their physical, rather than academic achievement".

Nickolas described how this was, really, the first time in his career where he was considered one of the "oldies" and, throughout the rehearsal period, just wanted to "run and join in with the lads". On the closing night, during the final Olympic race, he felt he needed to prove he could still do it. "I worked out where I could jump in - I ripped off my Master of Trinity gown, jumped on the track and starting running with them!" The audience started cheering him on. With a broad grin on his face, Nickolas describes how the director simply quipped, "Typical you Grace!"

Ending on such an absolute high with good memories to share, Nickolas is pleased to be able to say, "Yep, I ran the Olympic race with the boys". Grace described what a "wonderful rehearsal period" it had been in the run up to the show - an overall "lovely experience" made more enjoyable by the cast members and, particularly, his director Ed Hall.

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Early Years

Nickolas Grace developed his passion for acting as a child. He was taken to Stratford upon Avon by his supportive parents who always encouraged his career choice, as long as he worked hard at his school, King's Chester. "I was taken to lots of shows... and my great grandfather built the first cinema in Liverpool so there was always a film link as well so my dad would take me to the cinema once a week". Nickolas first decided he wanted to be an actor at the tender age of 7. However, he maintains, "I *did* contemplate being an engine driver because I loved *Thomas the Tank Engine*", he jokes, "but it would have to have been a *blue* steam engine!"

When he moved to Forest School, Nickolas was dismayed to discover that only boarders were allowed to join the Drama Club – so he wrote "about 15 letters" to his hero Sir Michael Redgrave, with a proposal to set up *The Redgrave Society*. When Sir Michael eventually gave his permission the young Grace then immediately wrote to Vanessa Redgrave, inviting her to be patron of the group and she responded by saying she "couldn't wait" to start working with the Society at school. "Overnight we had 500 signatures" and it was mission accomplished, laughs Grace. And, the advice Vanessa Redgrave gave him back in the 60s was to, "get as much experience as you can get, and that includes life experience". He explains, "To an actor, life experience is everything. It's ammunition".

Brideshead Revisited

Having left drama school, Nickolas worked in theatre but longed to go into film and TV. Ten years after graduating from the *Central School of Speech and Drama* he was cast in the renowned ITV drama *Brideshead Revisited*. This was ground breaking in terms of the production as it was the first time



Nickolas Grace as Anthony Blanche in *Brideshead Revisited*

a TV programme had been made on film. “It was all done on 35 mm”, Grace explains, “which is why the quality of *Brideshead* is so wonderful. It was just like making a movie!” He believes he landed this role by daring to be absolutely outrageous in the screen test.

It was at this point in his career that Nickolas discovered his love for camera. When asked which he prefers screen work or theatre, Grace replies, without hesitation, “I love all of them but, of course, the danger is theatre. It’s live, so it’s unpredictable. You never quite know what’s going to happen. Someone can fall or jump off the stage. Things happen - and you can never take away that unique experience”. In comparing and contrasting theatre and camera work Nickolas says that, on set, actors have more time to focus on nuances that the camera can pick up, concentrating on more subtly of movement and action, whereas on stage one has to magnify everything so that the audience seated in the upper circle can see your expressions. “The great thing about film”, he says, “is that the camera can take you absolutely anywhere. But, in theatre, you have to get the audience to go with you on that journey and describe it – and I do *love* the fact that we’re sharing a performance together, the audience and the actors..... It’s like a communion.”

Grace passionately believes that, as an actor, you have to keep as fit as possible both physically and mentally. He recalls Laurence Olivier’s advice on the set of *Brideshead Revisited*. “Actors”, said Olivier, “should be athletes”. With this in mind, Grace still practises voice and body warm ups every single day, regularly meditates and sometimes teaches at Central to keep as active and productive as possible. Grace illustrates this point perfectly with the comment, “The painter has his brush. The musician has his instrument - but the actor only has him or herself. *We are our instruments*”. He feels he was lucky to have trained at Central where other renowned actors such as Laurence Olivier, Peggy Ashcroft, Judi Dench and Vanessa Redgrave stepped before him. “The vision of these people and these actors is passed down the line.” Grace furthered his training by working alongside legendary performers such as Judi Dench and Ian McKellen during what is known as the RSC’s “golden period” in the late 70s. He describes these fulfilling years as the happiest time of his life, working with the most wonderful ensemble and combination of people.



Nickolas Grace as the Sheriff of Nottingham in *Robin of Sherwood*

‘I could still play Puck’

What kind of role would Nickolas Grace, in the future, find most fulfilling and exciting? After a careful pause for thought he replies, “anything slightly off the beaten track, anything slightly odd-ball”. He points out that nothing shocks him anymore because he wants to try everything, insisting that it is the *challenge* that thrills him. Challenges are another reason why he feels actors should keep as fit as possible as, he says, you can never predict what you will be asked to do. “I still think I could play Puck”, he muses. “Actually I *know* I could get away with it but I wouldn’t be as agile as I was in the production I did all those years ago at the Old Vic. I just wouldn’t be able to do all those cartwheels!”... “Well, I could do a couple!” he adds with a chuckle.

At the end of our thoroughly pleasant chat I ask what he has in mind to do next – to which he replies, with confidence, “I truly have no idea what’s coming next... but I’m an animal and acting is the drug. Acting gives me the highs which my body and mind craves”.

The Broadsheet looks forward to hearing about the *next* chapter in his varied acting career.

News from the Old Vic

by Sophie Andrews



Kim Cattrall

Lindsay Posner returns to The Old Vic to direct Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* - based on the true story of a father's fight to clear his son's name - which will preview from 8th March. First staged in 1946, the battle between personal principles and conscience plus an impenetrable establishment under the media spotlight makes *The Winslow Boy* as relevant today as it was then. It stars award-winning actor Henry Goodman.

In June 2013, Kim Cattrall will star in Tennessee Williams' passionate and poetic *Sweet Bird of Youth* directed by Marianne Elliott. And in September, Mark Rylance directs James Earl Jones and Vanessa Redgrave in William Shakespeare's timeless comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*.

News from Sadler's Wells

by Jemma Robinson

A new series of illustrated "*body language*" books, commissioned by Sadler's Wells, as part of their Jerwood Studio research programme of illustrated publications, features a series of public conversations in which choreographers and artists consider the role of the body in their work. Curated by Sadler's Wells Artistic Programmer and Producer Emma Gladstone with writer and dramaturge Guy Cools, the discussions focus not only on the human form in dance and live performance, but also on how the artists' understanding of it as it relates to other fields, such as philosophy, science, medicine, anthropology and other arts. The publications are available to buy online at www.sadlerswells.com

Kevin Spacey in Netflix's *House of Cards*

In February the download site Netflix released the first 13 episodes of its new original series *House of Cards*. It is 23 years since the first *House of Cards* featured the scheming Tory politician, played by Ian Richardson. "You might say that. I couldn't *possibly* comment", was a memorable line from that series. Now, with David Fincher



Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright in *House of Cards*

Netflix

as Executive Producer, a re-invented version of the political drama has been relocated to Washington and Kevin Spacey plays the ruthless and cunning Congressman Francis Underwood. Underwood is a smooth talking southern politician with an equally conniving wife Clare (played seductively coldly by Robin Wright). Exuding a lust for power, this couple will stop at nothing to conquer everything, "in the shadowy world of greed, sex and corruption in modern DC". The series is the most expensive original web series ever produced and initial reaction is that the drama translates well in its new setting.

Netflix's chief executive Reed Hastings said the launch of *House of Cards* was, "a defining moment in the development of internet TV. It's the first time anyone has done something like this, taking a big-scale production that costs millions of dollars per episode and released it all at once".

Grace Dent, writing in *The Independent* commented, "This is a whole new, distinctly thrilling way of watching television - one which changes TV forever. Netflix finished making *House of Cards* and *KERPOW*, it was yours... right now, right here (If you have a spare 15 hours!). This form of TV bingeing makes following normal television seem, by comparison, a massive, drawn out hassle".

For more information about Netflix, go to: <https://signup.netflix.com/HowItWorks>

“Your” Reviews...

Recently seen a production you love or hate? Send your review to the Broadsheet Editor.

A “DISAPPOINTING” *SLEEPING BEAUTY*

At Sadler’s Wells, Matthew Bourne’s “new take” on *Sleeping Beauty* is another smash hit for his “New Adventures” company. It completes his trilogy of revisionist Tchaikovsky classics which started with the hugely successful *Swan Lake* and continued with an update of *Nutcracker*.



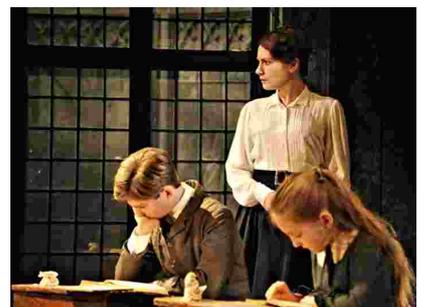
With attractive sets by Les Brotherston, it was well danced by a small company of energetic and talented young dancers, who contrived to appear more numerous than they were. The theatre was packed with an enthusiastic audience, many not the usual ballet crowd, thus continuing Bourne’s skill for attracting a new audience for dance.

I was disappointed. Was the use of a recorded and truncated score in a rather muddy recording a downer? No, but the music was the problem. Tchaikovsky lovers consider that *Sleeping Beauty* is, probably, his greatest ballet score and that is the crunch. The music is so grand and so capable of creating magnificent images – conjuring up opulent sets based on the Palace of Versailles with costumes and choreography to match. For me, the scale of this new version could not match the music. *But*, the audience loved it!

Reviewed by Richard Reavill

MORE CONTRIVED THAN CREEPY

The *Turn of the Screw* at the Almeida Theatre is based on the Henry James novella of the same name. It is produced by Lindsay Posner and adapted for the stage by Rebecca Lenkiewicz. The space of the theatre is supposed to give an atmospheric and intimate feel to maximise, to greatest effect, the suggestion of creepiness and horror. However, in the main, I found the special effects rather contrived.



The adults brought an immediacy and spontaneity with Gemma Jones, as the Housekeeper, giving her part a quiet dignity. The children, Flora 10 and Miles 12 years old, are quite believable as children. However, Miles, played by a 17 year old, did not quite convey the innocence of youth. Nevertheless, their characters did bring an emotional intensity, in turn disturbing and frightening when, supposedly, they did not see the ghosts of the former Nanny and her lover, who were clearly visible to the new Governess, performed with quiet sincerity by Isabella Blake.

Reviewed by Joyce Parsons

A VISIT TO *SNOW WHITE*

Along with several other friends from the Vic-Wells, I recently travelled to Bath’s Theatre Royal to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* directed by Chris Harris, who also plays Snow White’s Nurse. Chris is undoubtedly one of the country’s finest *Dames*. He has his own brand of warmth, charm, cheekiness, and an innate sense of fun.



Seldom off the stage, and making the young audience cringe in horror, was Nichola McAuliffe playing a very convincing *Wicked Queen*. Laura Clement was a charming Snow White and the somewhat thankless role of the Prince was played by Ben Harlow, who combined the usual dashing character with a nice, welcome glimpse of comedy. And the dwarves were a joy, all playing their differing characters to perfection. It was a delightful afternoon’s entertainment upholding the finest traditions of pantomime.

Reviewed by Mary-Jane Burcher

THE JUDAS KISS

Rupert Everett was made for this role. He plays Oscar Wilde at two pivotal moments towards the end of his life – the day Wilde faces imprisonment and the night, after his release two years later, when the lover for whom he risked everything betrays him. Everett gives such a stunning, skilful and measured performance that we sometimes think we are in the presence of Wilde himself. This is the, normally preening Everett, as we have never seen him before – slack jawed, paunchy, jaded and spent, seemingly aware of his lover’s limitations and betrayal, but stubbornly rejecting the good council of his old friend and ex-lover Robbie Ross (played by Cal Macaninch).



Apart from the unnecessary sex scene at the beginning, we quickly become accustomed to the male nudity. Freddie Fox holds his own as the irritatingly, petulant and lightweight Bosie. Everett, post his self-obsessed Hollywood years, has now, as an actor, come into his own. The play is on at the Duke of York’s Theatre until April.

Reviewed by Theresa Doyle

What's on

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



Main Theatre ** UK Premieres

- 15 - 27 Mar. Flamenco Festival London - 10th Anniversary ➔
- 29 - 30 Mar. Sadler's Wells Family Weekend - balletLORENT *Rapunzel*
- 03 - 06 Apr. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui & Antony Gormley with monks from the Shaolin Temple *Sutra*
- 11 - 13 Apr. Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre - *The Rite of Spring & Petrushka*
- 17 - 21 Apr. The National Ballet of Canada *Romeo and Juliet* **
- 24 - 25 Apr. Eastman - Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui - *Puz/zle* **
- 27 - 29 Apr. Hofesh Schechter Co. - *Uprising & The Art of Not Looking Back*
- 04 - 06 May Breakin' Convention 10th Anniversary
- 14 - 18 May Northern Ballet - *The Great Gatsby* ➔
- 20 - 25 May Sylvie Guillem - *6000 miles away*
- 28 May - 1 June Akram Khan Company - *iTMOi*
- 04 - 05 June Clod Ensemble - *Zero*
- 11 - 15 June Akram Khan Company - *DESH*



Lilian Baylis Studio

- 24 - 24 Mar. Flamenco Festival London - Beyond Flamenco
- 17 - 18 May Sally Cookson & Wilkie Branson - *Varmints* **
- 21 - 22 May Daniel Linehan - *Gaze is a Gap is a Ghost* **

Peacock Theatre,

Portugal Street, Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT

- 06 Mar - 23 Mar. Ballet Revolución
- 27 Mar - 07 Apr. English National Ballet 2 *My First Cinderella*
- 25 Apr - 28 Apr. London Children's Ballet - *The Secret Garden* ➔
- 03 May - 30 June ZooNation Dance Company - *Some Like It Hip Hop*



Old Vic Theatre

www.oldvictheatre.com

Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB

0844 871 2628

- 8 March - 25 May 2013 Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* with Henry Goodman ➔
- 1 June - 31 August 2013 Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth*
- 7 September - 16 November 2013 Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*



The Society for Theatre Research's lectures are free and open to the public:

21st March 2013 (SH): Catherine Hindson - *Bristol Old Vic Theatre*

16th April 2013 (SH): Sarah McCleave - *Terpsichore in London*

Lectures are at 7.30pm at either the Art Workers Guild (AWG), 6 Queens Square, London WC1N 3AT or at the Swedenborg Hall (SH), 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH

Copy deadline for the next issue of *The Broadsheet* is **Saturday, 18th May 2013**. Items or letters for publication should be sent to **The Editor** by this date.

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Don't forget your tickets for our SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY Saturday, 20th April 2013 5.00pm to 6.30pm in the Old Vic's second circle bar. Ordering details on the front page.