

Move Over Kate Moss



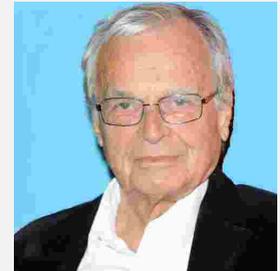
Daphne Selfe – our own VWA's Supermodel – is celebrating the success of her recently published book *The Way We Wore – A Life in Clothes*. She is busy doing interviews for press and radio and talks at book festivals about her experiences in the fashion industry. Her response to this (unexpected super-model status at 87 years of age!) is, as she puts it, "Such fun!"

She has travelled up and down the country and, by and large, her book has been very favourably received. Her next booking is at Lewes in Sussex on December 6th. She was recently in Paris for a Japanese beauty campaign which comes out in Spring 2016. Daphne comments, "I have had some nice reviews, such as 'very readable - can't put it down' and 'a vivid and inspiring memoir'. I could never have imagined this interest and fame at my time of life".

Daphne, undoubtedly, is a woman who has always embraced life and continues to do so well into her ninth decade. She is an inspiration to us all.

Sir Peter Wright

The Vic-Wells Association sends congratulations to Sir Peter Wright on his 89th birthday. It was not a rest-day for him, as he spent it late into the evening supervising a dress rehearsal of his Birmingham Royal Ballet production of *The Nutcracker*. However, the full cast, and others involved in the show, sang "Happy Birthday to You", accompanied by an "extra chorus" of BRB Friends who were attending the rehearsal.



Richard Reavill

THANK YOU, RICHARD

Richard Reavill has announced that he is to stand down as Secretary of the Association at the end of the year. For many years, Richard has carried out this role with efficiency and enthusiasm. His hard work and service to the Vic-Wells Association is greatly appreciated. He will remain on the Vic-Wells Committee and will continue to write articles for the Broadsheet.



BOOK NOW !

The Annual 12th Night Party will be held on Saturday, 9th January from 5.00pm to 6.30pm in the second circle bar area of the Old Vic

Tickets are £6.00 for Members and £7.50 for Non-Members

Please write for tickets with your cheque payable to the Vic-Wells Association and a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to:

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

Birmingham Royal Ballet at Sadler's Wells, Autumn 2015

Reviewed by Richard Reavill

As part of its autumn tour BRB brought its highly regarded production of *Swan Lake* to Sadler's Wells, and a triple bill presented under the title of *Variations*. For *Swan Lake*, BRB gave five performances, and showed five of the eight casts it has deployed in the principal roles on the tour. Reports were that all five pairs gave excellent performances, but my attention was focused on the very interesting *Variations* triple bill.

The title of the triple bill was justified as two of the ballets were danced to music based on a theme and variations. Indeed, the opening work was Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*, danced to that part of the Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3 of the same name, and played with great style by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia. I saw the Saturday evening performance, led by Nao Sakuma and Cesar Morales. Both gave excellent interpretations of the very tricky choreography, which was Balanchine's tribute to his Russian heritage. The soloists and corps were immaculate. At other performances on the tour, Momoko Hirata, Joseph Caley, and Matthias Dingman also performed very well. All three men coped with the stylish demands of their role, including the fiendishly difficult second solo, with its coda of eight successive double tours.

Ashton's ballet, *Enigma Variations*, to Elgar's music of the same name, could not be more different to the plotless Balanchine work. Ashton's ballet tells the simple story of the event that launched Elgar's career as a composer, and introduces the characters portrayed in the music ("My Friends Pictured Within") as danced characters. The ballet is a masterly creation, but elusive, and despite being carefully mounted and sensitively danced, somehow did not quite work for me. Perhaps it was the memory, still bright after decades, of the original cast which included Svetlana Beriosova, Derek Rencher, Desmond Doyle, Antoinette Sibley, Anthony Dowell, Alexander Grant, and Wayne Sleep. Something of the dancers who create balletic roles becomes embodied in the role.

More thoughts on the imprint of dancers on whom a new piece is created was generated by the final ballet, *The King Dances*. This is a fascinating new work by David Bintley to a commissioned score by Stephen Montague, and "freely based" on one of the world's earliest ballets, *Le Ballet de la Nuit* of 1653. Although the original music does, surprisingly, still exist, Bintley preferred to work to a new score. As a court entertainment, it is thought to have been 12 hours long, so the original score would have needed ruthless editing. A triptych of three full-length works springs to mind, to be performed in repertory, and also morning, afternoon, and evening on Saturdays in the manner of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Wars of the Roses*. Perhaps not, a vision of a sated audience and totally exhausted dancers also springs to mind.

The King Dances features the boy king, Louis XIV, who at 14 was already an accomplished and enthusiastic dancer, and his chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin. As "Le Roi Soleil", William Bracewell had all the role required: youth, beautiful movement, and charisma. As Mazarin, (also "La Nuit" and "Le Diable" in the divertissement of the Four Watches of the night) Tyrone Singleton gave an exciting performance in a role which requires strong stage presence. Despite this quality performance, I kept getting flashes of memory of Iain Mackay, on whom the role was created, and who danced the first performances in Birmingham. More support for my theory of dancer characteristics embedded in a role? Mackay, also a dancer with strong stage presence, was a more sinister Mazarin.

The young and very talented Yijing Zhang was delicate in the role of "La Lune", and was the only woman in the cast. The four "Mesdames" were performed by men of the company, in travesti roles which could not have been further from those of *The Trocks*. The designs were by Katrina Lindsay; a simple but very effective set and sumptuous period-inspired costumes, and the very effective lighting was by Peter Mumford. This is a superb ballet, original and mesmerising, and David Bintley deserves many congratulations.



The King Dances: William Bracewell as Le Roi Soleil
photo Bill Cooper



Theme and Variations: Momoko Hirata and César Morales
Photo: Bill Cooper

Is the Vic-Wells Association under threat?

Liz Schafer reports on the results of the questionnaire into the future of the Vic-Wells Association



“How viable - long term - is the Vic-Wells Association?”

Earlier this year the Vic-Wells membership was asked what they thought of the Association and about possible ways forward. 47 responses were received which, proportionately, is a good response rate. The responses will be discussed at the next AGM but the initial analysis indicates the following: *Most respondents were female, mature, very positive about the Association but unwilling or unable to join the committee or organise events.* Although lots of useful suggestions were made about places to visit – and I was especially won over by the suggestion we visit the Musical Museum in Brentford - the reality is that the Association has been without a Social Secretary for some time now and trips are currently organised on a very ad hoc basis. Without a Social Secretary, visits are likely to continue to be few and far between.

“We desperately need a Social Secretary to organise events”

There was great enthusiasm for the idea of master classes. This was discussed in detail by the Vic-Wells committee. It was felt that such events take a great deal of careful organisation and marketing, plus they often cost a lot to run. Venues can also be expensive to hire. No one on the committee felt able to organise this kind of event. An interest was also expressed in lectures - but the committee felt that there were similar challenges associated with lectures and did not feel confident that large audiences would turn up. Last year’s AGM, for example, did not drum up

a particularly large audience even though the guest speaker was the witty, entertaining and charismatic star actor Terence Stamp!

There was enthusiasm for the *Twelfth Night* and *Shakespeare’s Birthday* parties and appreciation of the work involved in organising them. There was also great enthusiasm for the *Broadsheet* although several people wanted performances at the Old Vic and Sadler’s Wells covered more.

“There was great enthusiasm for the Broadsheet”

Many felt the website needed improving and that without an online presence the Association would struggle to recruit younger members, especially so-called digital natives. The Vic-Wells Association was in part originally formed to promote connections “Across the Footlights” - that is between theatre, dance and opera practitioners and their audiences. These connections are often made nowadays via social media but the Association does not have a presence in social media.

Although I like the idea of Mr or Ms Vic-Wells blogging, Facebook-ing or Tweet-ing etc., someone would have to take this on and commit to producing regular contributions.

“Do we have a blogger in our midst?”

There were also suggestions that the Association embrace its historical reach and develop an oral history project. This would be a worthwhile project but is unlikely to bring many new members. The maturity of the membership does not seem to me an issue per se –

SAGA seems to do well with a mature demographic – however, the Association is currently held together by the efforts of a very small group of people and so we have to ask how viable this is long term.

If you would like to help the Vic-Wells Association – in any way – please contact Jim Ranger: jim@ranger.com

AN IMPORTANT COMMITTEE VACANCY

Richard Reavill, Secretary of the Vic-Wells Association will shortly retire from the role and, although he intends to continue as a ordinary member of the Committee, a new person to undertake the work of Secretary is urgently required.

The work will not be arduous but does, in the course of each year, require attendance at about five meetings of the Committee and also at the Association’s AGM, in order record notes for the minutes of the meeting.

The latter, together with an Agenda, are typed up for distribution to Committee members in advance of the next meeting.

Other correspondence may be required when necessary.

Access to e-mail would be advantageous but is not essential.

Further information may be obtained from Richard or the Chairman - contact details for both are on the back page of this issue of the Broadsheet.

Peter O'Toole: The Definitive Biography by Robert Sellers reviewed by Roger Lewis

Peter O'Toole was born in Leeds in 1932. He was a sickly infant - a burst appendix kept him away from school and he left early to become a copyboy in a newspaper office, a steeplejack and a hopeless sailor in the Royal Navy. He was discharged for seasickness.

O'Toole drifted to London and washed dishes at Lyons Corner House. He applied to RADA and was offered a scholarship. Upon graduating in 1955 he was given a season at the Bristol Old Vic. This was followed by his *Shylock* and *Petruchio* at Stratford, for Sir Peter Hall, and *Hamlet* at the National Theatre, for Laurence Olivier. The film *Lawrence of Arabia* made him a world star.

But Sellers isn't interested in the career. He is mesmerised by the way O'Toole went on 'one mighty bender' after another, days and days of 'legendary boozing'. Here is where I quarrel with Sellers, whose previous biography was about Oliver Reed. Sellers seems to think getting drunk and disorderly makes a person interesting. He is admiring of what is basically a lot of boring boorishness. Look what happened to O'Toole - he'd never take direction. He'd turn up for rehearsal late, having been in trouble with the police. He expected to be indulged ("no car, no me" - a Rolls had to ferry him about).

Eventually, he doubled over with stomach pains: chronic pancreatic and ulcers. Denied booze, he started on cocaine. This may account for his *Macbeth* at the Old Vic - a performance which has gone down in history as a disaster. O'Toole redeemed himself a decade later in *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*, a near-the-knuckle portrait of a dying drunkard.

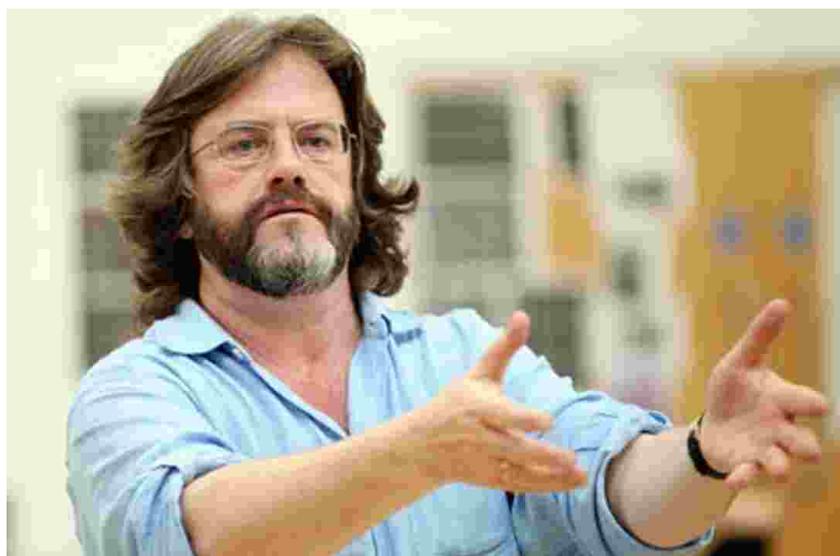
His last big part was in *Venus*, in 2006. *Venus* contains one scene that makes me want to forgive O'Toole every excess: his recital of the sonnet 'shall I compare thee to a summer's day' is breathtakingly beautiful and time stands still.

A version of this review was originally published in The Mail on Sunday.



Royal Shakespeare Company's 2016 Celebration

William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, friends and rivals in life, both have 400th anniversaries next year. For Shakespeare, it is the anniversary of his death on April 23, 1616, aged 52, following a bout of hard drinking and merry making in Jonson's company. For Jonson, it is the anniversary of the 1616 folio edition of his work, the first time a playwright ever published his collected plays for reading in the library alongside enjoyment on the stage. Greg Doran, Artistic Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company, argues that if Jonson had not asserted the literary merit of his plays in this way, there might never have been a folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623, seven years after his death. Jonson wrote a prefatory poem to that folio: "*To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr William Shakespeare.*"



Greg Doran

Photo: Graeme Robertson

Greg Doran says, "In the Swan Theatre, we want to place Shakespeare's genius firmly in the context of his peers". Shakespeare did not "spring like the Athena from the brow of Zeus", but was part of a stable of writers, writing for the same or rival companies of actors, watching each other and prompted by one another's innovations.

My Journey by Jane Salemson

The December 2014 Broadsheet published an article about my mother May Powell, who, in 1923 at a very young age joined the chorus of the Old Vic. She rose to become a soloist, but sadly her career was shortened due to illness. The smoke and fog of London in those days was very hard on the chest and lungs and after a few years Lilian Baylis arranged for her to go to South Africa to recuperate from her many bouts of chest infections. My mother stayed in South Africa, marrying and bringing up a family, performing recitals and church music with her organist husband. Then, during the 2nd World War she was a pillar of Capetown society and a member of the SAWAS (the South African Women's Auxiliary Service).

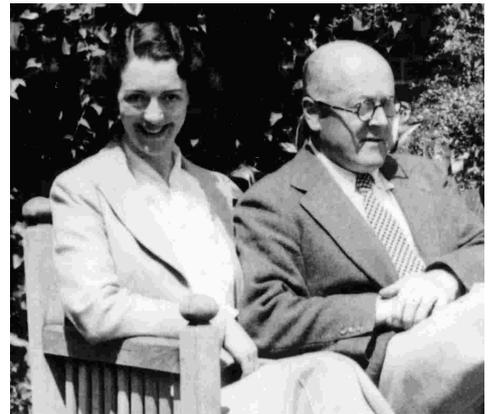
Her life changed completely when she met a handsome wounded soldier from the Coldstream Guards, who had been sent from the North Africa campaign to convalesce in Capetown, as so many of them were. There was a divorce, a new marriage and I was born. My mother was determined that I should have what my siblings had been given, and, in spite of unstable home situations, I received a good overall education. Her *modus operandi* (embedded in her genes) was, "Travel is the only thing you pay for which makes you richer". That combination of love of travel and having to find cheap places to live in, took us on Union Castle and Lloyd Triestino ships along the west coast of Africa and Madeira to Britain, and on the East Coast to Italy through the Suez Canal, Brindisi and on to Venice. What could be more exciting? We moved many times, often to different countries so I could learn languages – but, to me, it all seemed quite natural and I had an interesting and happy childhood.

During the summer of 2014, when my teaching days at a local private school ended, and my grandchildren were growing up and not needing me as much, I decided to give myself the gift of a 10 month personal sabbatical to Britain and the continent. Within 2 weeks of wanting to leave I found the perfect tenants for my townhouse and was ready to go. It was an amazing 10 months. I am now in the throes of finishing up a book of my experiences during that time. I met friendly and interesting people, played good music with orchestras in Salisbury, and had wonderful trips around Italy while staying with my family in Rome. That sabbatical made me richer in understanding, seeing and enjoyment. Heartily, I encourage people, if they can, to travel and explore. Who know what tomorrow brings. Don't put it off.

The Moderate Soprano reviewed by Joyce Parsons

Visiting the Hampstead Theatre at Swiss Cottage is always a pleasure and in particular when the play you have booked for is of special significance for those who love opera. *The Moderate Soprano* is the latest of David Hare's several plays such as *The Judas Kiss* (starring Rupert Everett) which transferred to the West End.

Directed by Jeremy Herrin, *The Moderate Soprano* tells the story of John Christie's indomitable will to construct an Opera House on his estate at Glyndebourne in Sussex. As an old Etonian who won the Military Cross, one can sense his determination and passion. A remarkable set of a typical, elegant country house sets the scene in which we first discover Christies' wife in a wheelchair. She had been an opera singer and Christie's show of love for her is touchingly conveyed.



Audrey and John Christie



Roger Allam as John Christie

It is only when a famous violinist is accidentally fogged in overnight in Eastbourne that Christie first hears word of a group of refugee musicians for whom life in Germany is becoming impossible. It is they who succeed in making Christie's vision become reality whilst Christie's (initially reluctant) wife is cast in the lead role.

The verve with which the play revels in is truly remarkable and thoroughly rewarding. Roger Allam is John Christie personified and Nancy Carroll portrays a tender and loving wife.

Lilian Baylis and Religion

by Liz Schafer

One of the most famous anecdotes told about Lilian Baylis concerns pay rises. Whenever an actor, singer, musician, dancer etc. asked for a pay rise she would reply "I'll have to ask God, dear." After praying she would deliver the verdict, "Sorry, dear, God says NO." God is not on record as ever giving a pay rise. While Baylis saw herself on a mission from God in her work at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells, she was also canny enough to know the business case for claiming God was in

"Sorry, dear, favour of low wages.

God says NO"

With this in mind, I was startled to see that a book published this year puts Baylis in the company of those who advocate 'fair wages'. John Neville Greaves' book *Eminent Tractarians* is based on his PhD, written after retirement, and it provides an informative context for Baylis's particular brand of Christianity. She is seen as part of the nineteenth century Oxford Revival and the high Anglican, even theatrical, movement that embraced fine music. Greaves quotes extensively from Baylis's own accounts of her faith but 'fair wages'? Really? I think part of the answer lies in what you consider 'wages' to be. For Baylis, salary was only one part of the 'wages' on offer at the Vic-Wells - alongside community, opportunity, experimentation, risk-taking and adventure.



The Hairy Ape

reviewed by Richard Allen Cave

If Richard Jones's production of Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, which ran at the Old Vic this autumn, offered a foretaste of the quality of theatre that we can expect under the new artistic directorship of Matthew Warchus, then the future is very bright. Every aspect of the production - acting, direction, movement, design, lighting, sound - was precisely judged.

O'Neill's play was once highly popular: a regular favourite for revival within the Little Theatre Movement, those *alternative* companies of the inter-war years that Norman Marshall termed "The Other Theatre", in which he firmly placed Baylis's Old Vic. London's last encounter with O'Neill's expressionist drama was a lavish, near-cinematic treatment by Peter Stein with the Berlin Schaubühne at the Lyttleton Theatre in May 1987: the technology was astonishing; but, constantly upstaged by machinery, O'Neill's vision was completely lost.



Bertie Carvel in *The Hairy Ape*

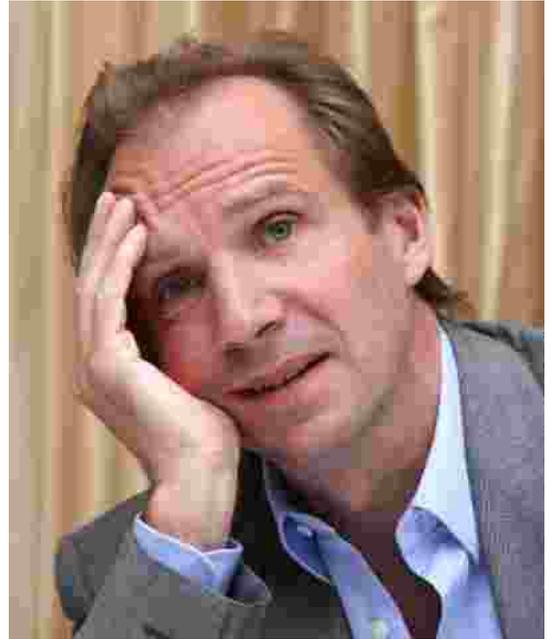
Photo: Tristram Kenton

Jones's stagecraft here was more akin to those earlier productions in America and Europe, relying on simple but powerfully suggestive settings, evocative lighting and a first-rate ensemble of actors, whose expertise embraced a disciplined physicality, especially exemplified by Bertie Carvel in the role of Hank, the embittered stoker seeking political enlightenment and redress. By referencing the play's performance-history in this way, Jones gave O'Neill's politics (his fervent disgust at the outrageous divide between rich and poor) an unnerving relevance to social circumstance in Britain today. Carvel apart, this was a sustained ensemble piece: a cast of fifteen took on myriad roles, often appearing faceless (stockings covered their features) so that clothes and possessions defined their status. Hank's

fellow-stokers alone had independent personalities but only when working aboard ship. Upper-class Mildred (Hank's *nemesis*) and her aunt were cartoons by comparison: the one brainlessly flighty; the other a soured matron. Unlike Stein, Jones honoured O'Neill's dramaturgy absolutely; the result was a brilliant revival.

News from the Old Vic

Henrik Ibsen's late masterpiece *The Master Builder*, a searing and mesmeric exploration of power, control, death and life, comes to the Old Vic in a new adaptation by David Hare. Halward Solness, a master architect, has spent his lifetime building the tallest spires in the land. But when Hilde, a radiant country girl descends into his world, age is confronted by youth, and a series of revelations builds into a vertiginous climax. Ralph Fiennes plays Halward Solness. *The Master Builder* will run from 25 January until 19 March 2016.



Ralph Fiennes

Jekyll and Hyde is a new dance thriller devised, directed and choreographed by Drew Mc Onie who re-imagines Robert Louis Stevenson's sinister drama in an excitingly physical new dance production. Music is by Grant Olding. *Jekyll and Hyde* is on at the Old Vic from 20 to 28 May 2016.



Jekyll and Hyde

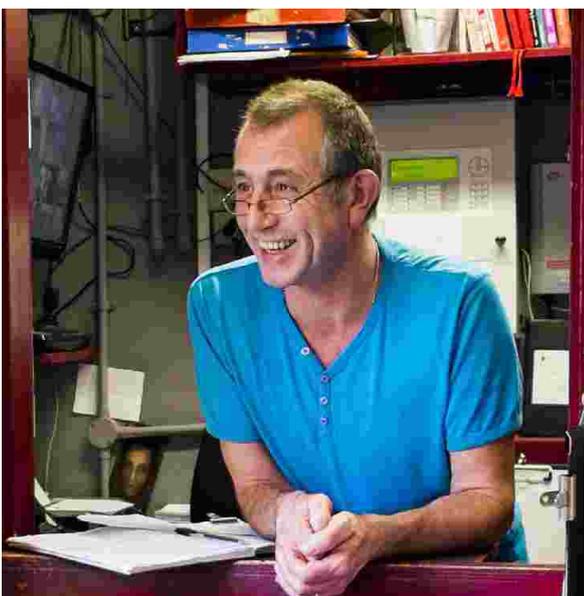
Harold Pinter's ground-breaking classic *The Caretaker* comes to the Old Vic in a new production directed by Matthew Warchus. Disturbed handyman Aston has invited an irascible tramp to stay with him at his brother's jumbled London flat. At first it seems that the manipulative guest will take advantage of his vulnerable host. But when Aston's brother Mick arrives, an enigmatic power struggle emerges between the three men that is in equal parts menacing, touching and darkly comic. One of Britain's best loved and most talented character actors, Timothy Spall, makes a rare return to the stage to star. *The Caretaker* runs from 26 March to 14 May 2016.



Matthew Warchus with his wife, Lauren Ward

Who are some of the Old Vic's most famous patrons? What happened to the fourth level of the theatre? Are there any ghosts lurking backstage? A multitude of acting legends have trodden the boards at the Old Vic - for a chance to follow in their footsteps, hear about The Old Vic's fascinating past and a lot more, you can book a tour with Stage Door Manager, Ned Seago.

Ned's Tours will explore behind-the-scenes Old Vic and reveal nearly 200 years of theatrical history. To join Ned on one of his famous 75 minute tours call 0844 871 7628. Or email: historytours@oldvictheatre.com



Ned Seago at the Stage Door of the Old Vic

COMING SOON



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

www.sadlerswells.com

Main Theatre

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- 1 Dec-24 Jan. New Adventures - *Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty* ①
18 Jan. 2016 *Mr Wonderful* - A Celebration of Jonathan Ollivier's Life in Dance
29 - 30 Jan. Sadler's Wells Sampled ②
11 - 14 Feb. Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch - *...como el mosquito en la piedra, ay si, si, si...* (Like moss on a stone)
16 - 20 Feb. Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras ③
25 Feb. Gala Bienal de Sevilla
26 Feb. Compañía Olga Pericet - *Pisadas*
27 Feb. Marco Flores & Olga Pericet - *Paso a Dos*
28 Feb. Esperanza Fernández - *De lo Jondo y Verdadero*
3 - 5 March Akram Khan Company - *Kaash*
8 - 9 March Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker / Rosas - *Golden Hours (As You Like It)*
14 - 21 March Bartabas - *Golgota*

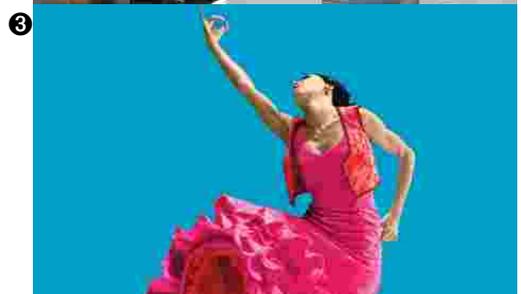
Lilian Baylis Studio

- 12 Dec.-03 Jan. Arthur Pita - *The Little Match Girl*
3 - 4 March Wild Card invites - *The Palest Light*
8 March Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker & Bojana Cveji :
Book Presentation: Drumming & Rain - A Choreographer's Score
10 - 11 March Marc Brew Company - *For Now, I am...*

Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT

- 25 Nov-03 Jan Birmingham Repertory Theatre - *The Snowman™*
25 - 26 Jan. Jakop Ahlbom Company - *Horror*
28 - 30 Jan. Familie Flöz - *Infinita*
3 - 4 Feb. Music Theatre Wales - *The Devil Inside*
8 - 24 Feb. Zippos Presents Cirque Berserk!
1 - 19 March Immortal Tango
24 Mar-2 Apr English National Ballet and English National Ballet School - *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty* ④



Old Vic Theatre
Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB

www.oldvictheatre.com
0844 871 7628

02 December - 16 January: Dr Seuss's *The Lorax*

22 January - 19 March: Ibsen's *The Master Builder*

26 March - 14 May: Pinter's *The Caretaker*

URGENTLY
NEEDED

Social Secretary
to organise
VWA's outings
If you would like to
volunteer for this
role, please contact
James Ranger

The Vic-Wells Association

Founded in 1923 by Lilian Baylis CH

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