

Time Out

London

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From bikes to booze, design to films — homegrown star **Hayley Atwell** leads our celebration of the capital's creative talent

MADE in LONDON



A close-up portrait of actress Hayley Atwell. She has long, dark, wavy hair and is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light grey t-shirt. The background is a textured, light grey wall.

TIME OUT
INTERVIEW

Hayley
Atwell

'I don't mind playing the bad girl'

Hayley Atwell had an unconventional upbringing between London childhood and Hollywood stardom. Now she's back on stage in a controversial play about gay relationships in the capital, 'The Pride'. She talks felching and firewalking with **Daisy Bowie-Sell**. Portrait **Ed Marshall**

London's theatreland has rarely been in better creative shape. It's not just the conveyor belt of exciting new work that runs from our small theatres to the West End, but the brilliant homegrown acting talent we can rely on. Ladbroke Grove-raised actress Hayley Atwell was educated at London Oratory School, studied philosophy and theology at King's College and graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2005. Almost immediately she was chosen by Woody Allen to star opposite Ewan McGregor and Colin Farrell in his 2007 thriller 'Cassandra's Dream'. In films as varied as 'The Duchess' (2008) and 'Captain America' (2011), the 31-year-old has proved herself an actress of inquiring intelligence – shaped possibly by the fact that her English mother is a motivational speaker and her father a Native American shaman. Now she opens in the London revival of Alexi Kaye Campbell's 2008 hit 'The Pride', an audacious play which contrasts the effect of repression and liberation on gay relationships in the capital from 1958 to the present day. With the recent changes in law to allow same sex couples to be married, this daring play is more relevant than ever. And as more and more people are noticing, so is Hayley Atwell...

You grew up in London and visited your dad in Kansas City in the summers. Are you a London girl, or more influenced by America?

'My dad has Native American Indian ancestry. He's a healer in some ways and he's very interested in shamanistic ritual. He also lives in California so it's kind of like this hippy existence. I firewalked six times when I was nine.'

You firewalked when you were nine?

'It's about trust and the power of your mind and challenging yourself to overcome obstacles. I'm sure there are specific scientific explanations as to why you don't burn your feet, but at the time it was like, "Woah!" The experience has served me well. My dad always brings it up when I ring about something I'm proud of. He's like [she puts on an American accent]: "It's because you always stared your fears in the face, because you firewalked, you're a superhero!"'

No firewalking when you were in London?

'Well, I did have quite a surreal life in London. I went to a slightly bohemian primary school



Being on stage is always terrifying

in Notting Hill. Then I went to a very diverse inner-city state school followed by an academic college. I had a real mix, but I don't come from money.'

For your first film role you were directed by Woody Allen. Presumably that was intimidating?

'"Cassandra's Dream" didn't feel like my break – "The Line of Beauty" [the 2006 TV mini-series] did. I came out of drama school wondering whether I could really make a living out of being an actor. So when I worked with Woody, those nerves made me feel isolated. A lot of film directors don't direct you, you just have to come in on day one with a performance, which I didn't have. I was too inexperienced to know what to do other than be the pretty girl who just said a line and fucked off. It's not until quite recently that I realised how unformed I was. I felt like a baby. I just wanted to please.'

Do you feel more comfortable with what you've been doing recently?

'I think my decades will be my thirties and forties. I'm meant to be an older actor rather than a teen or a twenties starlet, I didn't feel comfortable with the pursuit of that: I wanted to know who I was as a human being first. I have also done some horrendously embarrassing jobs that I regret.'

Any details?

'No! Mostly those projects were good, but as an actor, I just hated every moment. I can only do my

best work if I believe in what I'm doing. I don't want to work for the sake of working or for money or for raising my profile because any time I've had an inkling of going down that direction it ended in vanity, insecurity and a transient feeling of success.'

You have been pretty fearless though, and aren't afraid of sex scenes. Is there anything you wouldn't do?

'Reality TV. It's like modern public hangings. It mocks, and that's destructive. I don't mind doing something sexual, or playing the bad girl as long as it's not exploitative. I steer away from being oversexualised: just the hot girl who takes her clothes off. I'm driven by learning and taking myself less seriously and developing a sense of humour.'

Would you say that you haven't got much of a sense of humour now, then?

'[US actor] Stanley Tucci, who I'm now really good friends with, said that when he first met me on the set of "Captain America" he thought I had no sense of humour. I said, "Are you kidding? I was shitting myself!" I was so nervous I just became uptight.'

'The Pride' is the first play you've done since 2011. Is it good to be back on stage?

'I love it. I want to make sure that I do a play every two years or so, because the sooner I get back into the rehearsal rooms the sooner I feel I'm developing. It's terrifying. I arrive on day one with expectations that people are going to like it and then I'll have this wobble. Suddenly I've forgotten why I'm doing it, it's crazy and I don't want to do it eight times a week. But the cast is lovely, including Mathew Horne, who's very funny. On the first day, we were going through the script and felching is referred to. I asked what it is and Matt immediately launched into a description. It's so vulgar. I don't think you'll be able to print it.'

You're right. What's next then?

'I'm in a Jimi Hendrix biopic which is currently being edited, but I don't have a plan, I don't have a set of characters I want to play. I want to discover as I go along and take each step as it comes.'

'The Pride' is at Trafalgar Studios from Thu Aug 8. Book at www.timeout.com/tickets.

THE STAGE IS SET... Four more brilliant London actresses to look out for



CUSH JUMBO

The fabulously named Cush Jumbo recently put in an Olivier-nominated turn as Marc Antony in 'Julius Caesar'. You can currently catch the 27-year-old in her debut one-woman play, 'Josephine and I', at the Bush Theatre until August 17.



HATTIE MORAHAN

This week, Hattie Morahan reprises her powerhouse performance as Nora in a new adaptation of Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' in the West End. The Lambeth-born 36-year-old's portrayal beat Cate Blanchett to win an Evening Standard award last year.



CYNTHIA ERIVO

Despite only graduating from Rada in 2010, Stockwell-born Cynthia Erivo last month took on a big Whoopi Goldberg role: Celie in the musical adaptation of Alice Walker's novel 'The Color Purple'. She's astounding in the show's finale.



ANTONIA THOMAS

Antonia Thomas's first professional role was in E4's hit TV show 'Misfits', for which she auditioned fresh out of drama school. The charismatic Londoner has begun a stage career and will open in the National Theatre's new show 'Home' this week.

Theatre & Dance

Edited by
Andrzej Lukowski
timeout.com/theatre
@timeouttheatre



How to be a zombie

As new immersive show 'The Generation of Z' arrives in London, **Daisy Bowie-Sell** discovers what it takes to walk like the undead

'Must have excellent staggering skills' is what I imagine the advert for this acting job said. Whatever it was, it worked: I'm with a crowd learning how to play reanimated corpses for new zombie experience 'The Generation of Z: Apocalypse'. The show shoves audiences into a huge warehouse that's inhabited by a gang of infected bodies. And I'm discovering how to be one of those dead dudes.

1 IT'S ALL IN THE STARE

Director Michael Hurst assures me that once I've got that, the rest is easy. 'Fix on a point ahead of you,' he says. I furrow my brow and with all the concentration I'm worried my eyeballs may fall out. Not a bad look for a zombie, though.

2 WALK AS THOUGH YOU'RE A BIT PISSSED

I've had more than enough practice at this, so it should be easy. But who knew there are different levels of drunk walk? These zombies have a virus – à la '28 Days Later' – which means they are fast. I have to stumble only occasionally.

3 GET THE VOICE RIGHT

In 'Shaun of the Dead' there was a lot of moaning, in 'Dawn of the Dead' the shufflers are almost silent. The screeches coming from these walkers would freak the Hulk.

4 THE MAKE-UP NEEDS TO BE GOOD

In this show it really is. Make-up artist Kristyan Mallett has worked on Brad Pitt zombie flick 'World War Z', and his team are painting me in what's called a 'grunge palate'.

5 BE CREATIVE

'Be experimental with your zombie,' says a fellow trainee. Apparently one of the secrets is to find your own corpse groove.

With these simple steps you too can go zombie. And here's a tip, audiences for 'The Generation of Z' should avoid the undead: those guys may bite.

'The Generation of Z' is on at Dept W. ► Jul 5.
Tickets at timeout.com/generationofz

GETTING THE ZOMBIE LOOK



BEFORE
Look at that face! You couldn't even scare a little bunch of kittens with it.



DURING
Yowch! After an hour or so, that flesh is looking meltier than a cheese toastie.



AFTER
Ready to take a bite out of anyone. Michael Jackson eat your heart out.

Critic's choice



Daisy Bowie-Sell picks the shows to see this week



SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

★★★★

The tiny but punchy Union Theatre wins big with this musical tale of the rags-to-riches-to-rags again '60s lottery winner Viv Nicholson.
Union Theatre. ► Apr 18.

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

★★★★★

It'll be day seats only in the final week of this superb production of Arthur Miller's epic tragedy. But it's definitely worth the queue.
Wyndham's Theatre. ► Apr 11.

GRIMM TALES

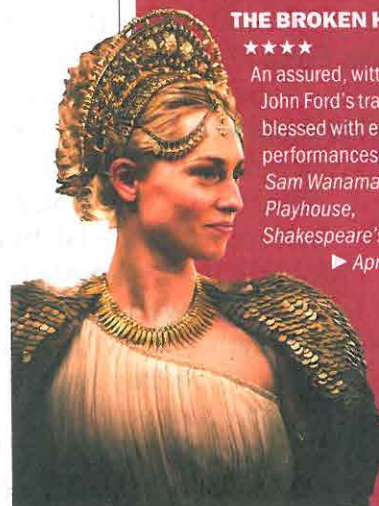
★★★★

Philip Pullman's dark fairy tales are given a ravishing, atmospheric stage adaptation.
Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf.
► Apr 11.

THE BROKEN HEART

★★★★

An assured, witty revival of John Ford's tragedy, blessed with excellent performances.
Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare's Globe.
► Apr 18.



For more reviews, features and all London theatre listings head to timeout.com/theatre

Arts



Confusing: 'The Concert' (top) and 'Nymphs by a Fountain'

The mysteries of flesh

Alastair Sooke is intrigued by this show of erotically charged scenes painted by Peter Lely while England was engulfed in civil war

EXHIBITION

PETER LEY: A LYRICAL VISION

COURTAULD GALLERY

Peter Lely plays a well-known role in the history of British art: appointed Principal Painter to King Charles II in 1661, he fashioned the image of the Restoration court. His pictures of bewigged aristocrats and breast-baring mistresses can be formulaic, but they define the era's debauched glamour.

It's easy to forget that for almost two decades before the reign of Charles II, Lely lived and worked in England. During this time, as a new exhibition of 12 mysterious oil paintings at the Courtauld Gallery reveals, he produced

very different pictures. *Peter Lely: A Lyrical Vision* takes a familiar artist and turns him into a stranger. There isn't a portrait of a perfumed nincompoop preening in extravagant silks in sight.

The exhibition centres on one of the oddest paintings in the Courtauld's collection: *The Concert*, of circa 1650. In a twilight, wooded landscape, a man with a moustache (a self-portrait?) plays a five-stringed bass viol. He is accompanied by a child playing a flute, as well as three figures apparently singing. One of them, a pretty girl with cherry lips, stares straight at the viewer. Another, a woman with a naked torso, her lower half swathed in sumptuous blue fabric, sits facing away from us, holding sheet music.

The musicians perform for two ladies placed in front

of a cascading curtain of red silk to the right of the composition. Wearing a large brooch in between bared breasts, one looks out at the viewer with a steady gaze halfway between haughtiness and coquetry, while reaching down to pet a spaniel by the side of her grand chair.

Who is she? A queen in fancy dress for a court masque? Or maybe a goddess – though nobody has ever identified a mythological source. Perhaps she is connected with the musical and literary circles in which Lely moved in London. It used to be believed that the figures to the left of the painting were a group portrait of Lely's family, though in the catalogue Caroline Campbell, the exhibition's curator, scotches this "appealing idea".

To confuse matters further, the painting is unfinished: reddish-brown outlines are still visible in several places. In other words, if this large and ambitious painting were a commission, it seems to have been abandoned. The exhibition cannot resolve the painting's ambiguity, but, by placing it in the context of similar work made by Lely in the 1640s and '50s, it proves that *The Concert* wasn't a freak occurrence.

Born Pieter van der Faes to Dutch parents in 1618 (his name alludes to a lily carved on the house in The Hague where his father was born), Lely arrived in England in 1641 or 1643. To begin with, he didn't paint portraits at all. Instead, he worked as an art dealer, and produced "subject pictures" – erotically charged scenes with pastoral, musical and religious themes inspired by mythology, literature and the Bible.

Today, art historians are aware of around 30 subject pictures by Lely, including *The Concert*. Stylistically, they are a hotchpotch of Dutch painting (no surprise, given Lely's origins – he trained in Haarlem) and Venetian Old Masters such as Titian, whose work he would have seen in the great private collections of 17th-century England.

Lely was also indebted to Van Dyck. When the collection of Charles I was offered for sale following the king's execution, Lely bought Van Dyck's mythological masterpiece *Cupid and Psyche* (he swiftly returned it following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660). Yet if truth be told, his handling of paint cannot compare with the bravura brushwork of his illustrious predecessor.

The Old Testament scene of Reuben presenting mandrakes to Leah is full of awkwardness. According to the Book of Genesis, Jacob's

wife Leah was no looker, but surely she didn't have the thick neck of a rugby prop. To the right, the spatial relationship between the cumbersome toddler and the dog is confusing and implausible. And what are we to make of the shadowy child lurking like a wallflower behind Leah's shoulder?

Even an ostensibly "successful" painting such as *The Rape of Europa* contains infelicities: Europa's legs are out of proportion to her torso, while their grey pallor jars with her rosy complexion above. The misshapen outstretched arm of an attendant in the background is also unfortunate. *A Boy as a Shepherd* – an exquisite transitional painting of around 1660 that heralds Lely's move into portraiture – contains a breezy background that looks as if it was painted in a rush.

In a painting such as Dulwich Picture Gallery's *Nymphs by a Fountain*, though, Lely draws deeply upon his predecessors to create something new. Five naked or semi-naked figures sleep beside a fountain sculpted with podgy putti cavorting above a monstrous dolphin. Unlike pictures by Titian or Van Dyck, this is a painting with no narrative content whatsoever.

Instead, we are confronted with a pile-up of naked flesh, seen from every angle.

Yes, this half-lit, spellbound scene is titillating – the picture's phwoar-factor wasn't lost on the schoolmasters of Dulwich College, who used to lock it out of sight. But it is more than a Peeping Tom's paradise: it's subtle as well as sexy. The reclining naked figure whose back is turned to us in the foreground is modelled upon the famous Sleeping Hermaphrodite statue from antiquity. Ogling viewers might be in for a surprise.

Like *The Concert*, *Nymphs by a Fountain* is powerful in part because it's so perplexing. Today, it seems baffling that Lely painted pastoral scenes during the Civil War. It is tempting to say that artists of the period dreamed up bucolic fantasies to escape the brutality of their times. But that's too pat. Perhaps Lely's elegant subject pictures have such a strong sense of sophistication and poetry precisely because they withhold their meaning.

Ultimately, that's also why they never caught on in England, characterised by Lely's friend, the poet Richard Lovelace, as "this un-understanding land". Around 1660, Lely left behind subject pictures altogether, concentrating on high-society

portraiture until his death in 1680. In short, he sold out. From Thurs until Jan 13. Details: 020 7848 2526

CRATING ★★★★★

Artworks under the hammer – and knife

After a Rothko painting was scribbled on at Tate Modern, Daisy Bowie-Sell looks at other notorious attacks on art

The defacing of Mark Rothko's *Black on Maroon* (1958) in the name of "Yellowism" at the weekend follows in a long tradition of people damaging artworks in protest and to gain publicity. But works of art have also been vandalised by accident, for love and for no apparent reason at all.

1 'Mona Lisa' by Leonardo da Vinci (painted 1503-6)

Leonardo's masterpiece has been the subject of many attacks by vandals. One of the worst was in 1956, when the lower part of the painting was doused in acid. It wasn't a good year for the *Mona Lisa*: a few months later a Bolivian man, Ugo Ungaza Villegas, threw a rock at the painting, chipping some of its pigment. It now sits behind bullet-proof glass.

2 'The Night Watch' by Rembrandt (1642)

The Dutch painter's depiction of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and his company about to go to war has a troubled history. While on show at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1975, William de Rijk, an unemployed teacher, cut through it several times with a knife. The painting was restored, though traces of the cuts remain.

3 'Gorilla in a Pink Mask' by Banksy (2000)

The Bristol-based street artist is famed for choosing the walls he paints on indiscriminately. In 2011, unsuspecting wall-owner Saeed Ahmed whitewashed over this painting, one of Banksy's early artworks, of a gorilla wearing a pink eye mask. It turned out Ahmed had never heard of Banksy. The artwork has now been partially restored.

4 'Guernica' by Pablo Picasso (1937)

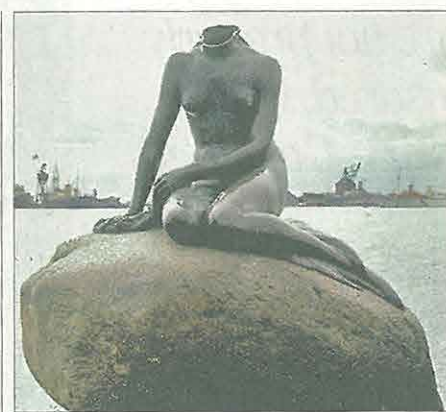
In 1974 Tony Shafrazi wrote "Kill Lies All" in red paint on Picasso's depiction of the bombing of the Basque village in 1937. The painting was hanging in New York's Museum of Modern Art, and it is thought that Shafrazi, an art dealer, was protesting against the release on bail of US Lieutenant William Calley, a man who had taken part in the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. The paint was easily removed.

5 'The Rokeby Venus' by Diego Velázquez (1647-51)

At the height of the London Suffragette movement in 1914, Mary Richardson walked into the National Gallery and swung a cleaver several times through the image of the goddess Venus, a scene recently re-created in the TV adaptation of Ford Madox Ford's novel *Parade's End*. Richardson said her actions were provoked by the arrest of Emmeline Pankhurst a day earlier. She was given a six-month prison sentence.

6 'The Portland Vase', creator unknown (AD5-25)

This Roman glass vase, depicting scenes of love and marriage, was shattered at the



The Little Mermaid was vandalised in 1964

British Museum by a drunken William Lloyd in 1845. The work was pieced together and Lloyd was given the option of a fine of three pounds or two months in prison. He chose prison but was released when the fine was paid by a well-wisher.

7 'Phaedrus' by Cy Twombly (1977)

The white triptych by American painter Cy Twombly was vandalised in 2007 while being exhibited in Avignon, France, by Rindy Sam, who claimed she was so overcome by the painting she had to kiss it. Initial attempts to remove the lipstick left by the kiss were unsuccessful. Sam was ordered to pay £1,500 damage.

8 'Myra' by Marcus Harvey (1995)

This image of the notorious serial killer Myra Hindley appeared at the Royal Academy's *Sensation* exhibition in 1997. It is made up of copies of a child's handprint which combine to create a mosaic of the famous photograph taken of Hindley after her arrest in 1965. The painting was vandalised twice during the exhibition: the first time, blue and red ink was thrown at it; the second, eggs.

9 'La Pietà' by Michelangelo (1498 to 1499)

Housed in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City, Michelangelo's sculpture depicts Jesus lying on his mother Mary's lap after he had been crucified. In 1972 Laszlo Toth, a 33-year-old mentally unbalanced geologist, attacked the statue with a hammer, shouting: "I am Jesus." Most of the pieces he chipped off were collected and used to repair the artwork, which, like the "Mona Lisa", now sits behind bullet-proof glass.

10 'The Little Mermaid' by Edvard Eriksen (unveiled 1913)

Copenhagen's iconic statue of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale character has been vandalised many times since it first appeared on the city's pier. Jørgen Nash was one of a group of artists from the Situationist movement responsible for sawing off the mermaid's head in 1964. The head was never found and a replacement was created.

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AUCTIONEERS AND VALUERS

The Welsh Sale

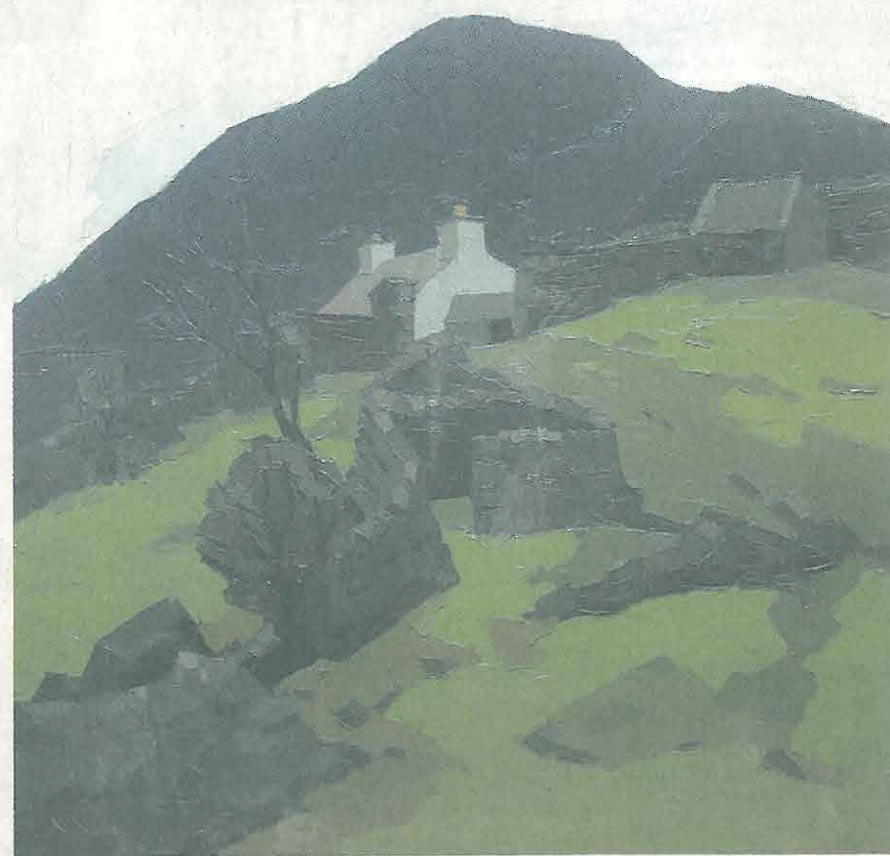
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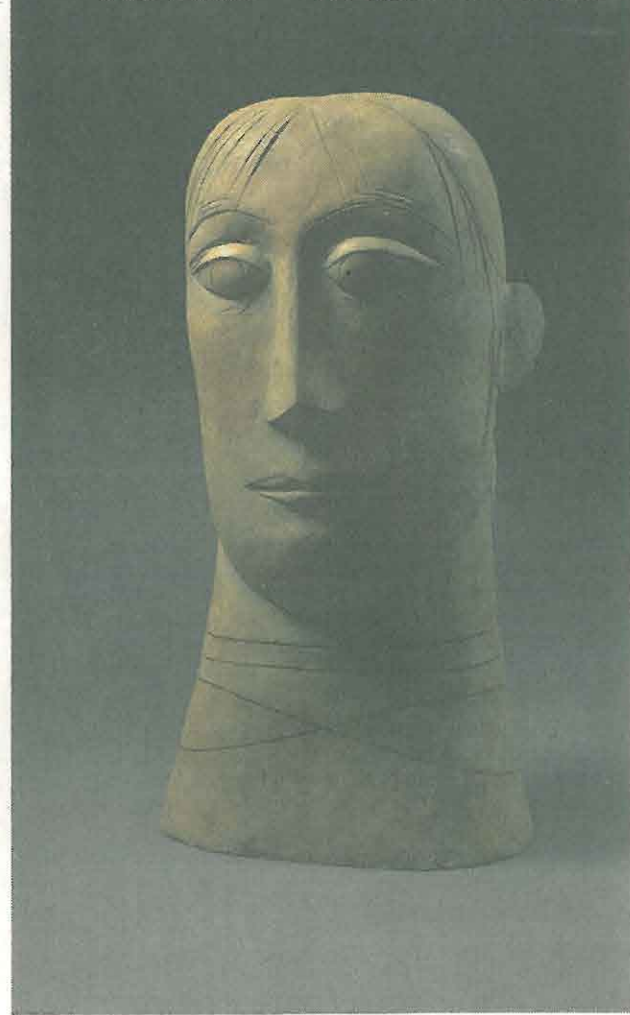
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I'm getting married in a campsite

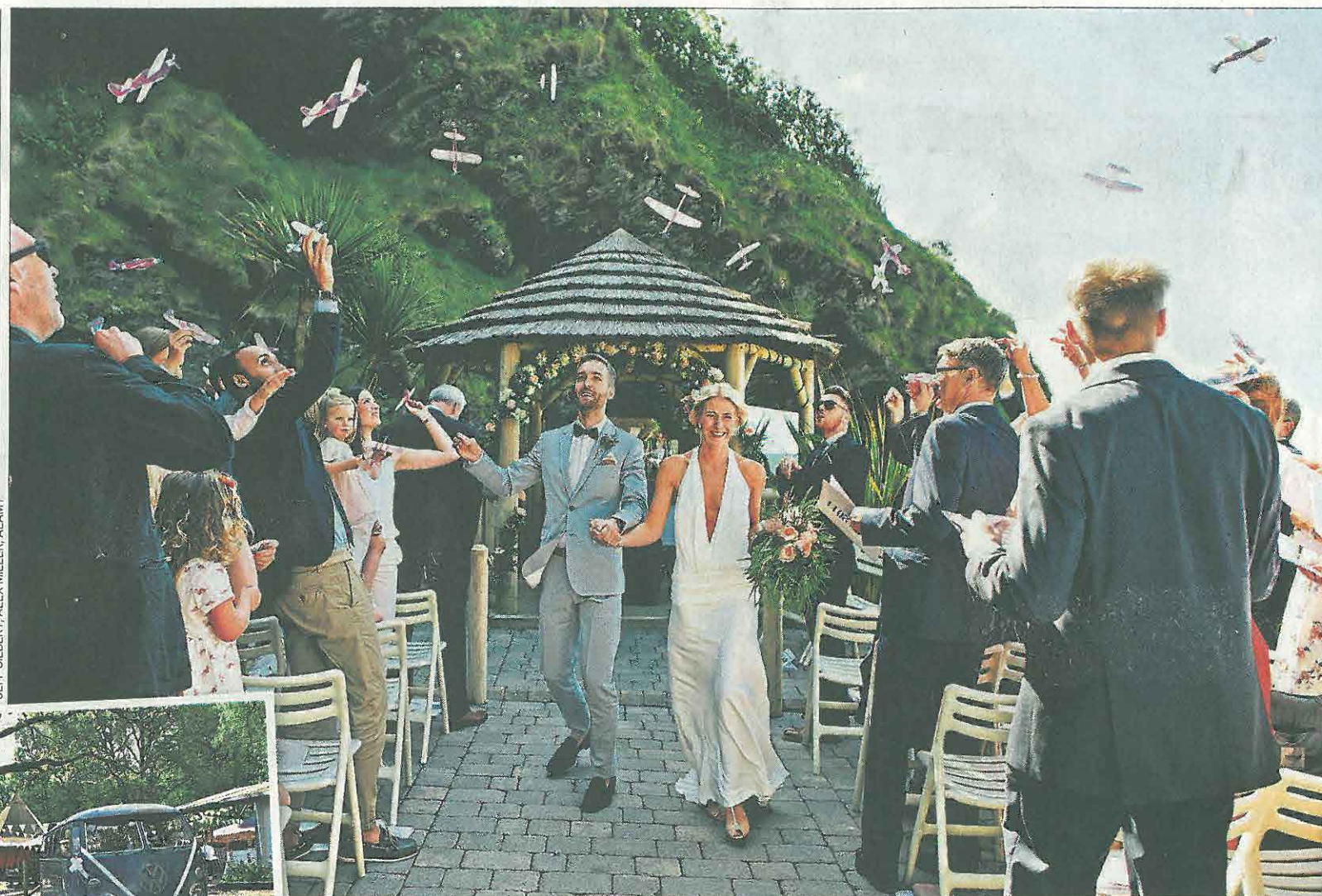
There will be no wedding bells on Daisy Bowie-Sell's Big Day. Instead, her guests will get to enjoy her nuptials inside a yurt

You're getting married in a what?" With eyes rounded and brows raised, this is what my aunt exclaimed when I first told her where my fiancé and I were planning to have our wedding. Suffice to say, it wasn't the most encouraging of responses. But it's a response that I am now, three months before the Big Day, familiar with. I even have a stock reply ready just for those moments: "It's like a campsite, but instead of normal tents, it's filled with Mongolian tents." Every time I say it, I sound wearier.

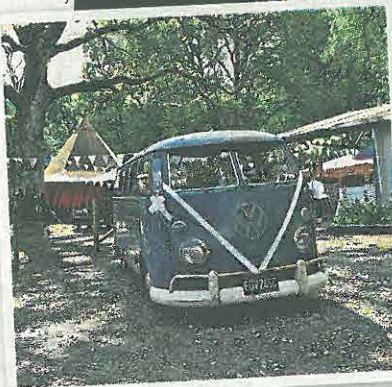
I never thought I'd get married. At 16, when some girls were choosing who would be their bridesmaids, I was planning which order I'd visit the countries of the world, with or without a man. And if there did happen to be one, marriage wouldn't be part of the equation. My attitude to matrimony probably stemmed from the fact that, in my family, the likelihood of divorce was fairly high.

Things have that tricky habit of changing, though, and that 16-year-old is now a practical (and very much in love) 30-year-old. And when my boyfriend of seven years popped the question on a beach in Norfolk, I said yes.

Maybe it was an echo from my free-spirited teenage years, but as I began to think about the wedding I realised I wanted something other than your usual doused-in-white, church-and-hotel day. And, as it turned out, so did my fiancé. Don't get me wrong, we love going to traditional weddings. But that type of day wasn't for us. We wanted something that didn't conform to expectation. And we weren't alone. The most recent report from the Office for National Statistics says that in 2012, 60 per cent of all marriages took place in "approved premises" – stately homes or historic landmarks, or any other place that has applied for a licence. Our yurt camp is one of those. But no



JEFF GILBERT; ALEX MILLER; ALAMY



matter how many statistics you throw out, it won't be enough to quell the rising panic in your great-aunt's face when you explain there won't be a church involved. "What about the weather?" demanded my mother when she saw how open-air the place was. Something we hadn't actually considered. My future brother-in-law (a lifelong camper) looked dubiously at the tents – "Are they waterproof?" When we tentatively pointed out the shared lavatory block there was a collective shudder.

But we were determined.

You only get married once (or so we're hoping) and our wedding will be in June, a month that, surely, is more than likely to be sunny. And yes, the yurts are waterproof. And the loos are perfectly clean. So we went ahead and booked it.

We saw the day as not just a day, but a whole weekend. It would be a great opportunity to spend some proper time with our newly united family on a fun mini-break. But we hadn't entirely considered exactly who you invited to see you get married. My fiancé's grandparents are aged between 80 and 90 and the idea of them staggering around outside in the middle of the night to find the loo quickly became a worry. Needless to say, a few

relations have politely declined a tent and booked into a nearby hotel. Surprisingly, though, one 90-year-old grandfather, after someone explained to him what a yurt actually was, said he'd love to stay. One very deaf family member still insists on calling it "a yogurt camp".

In our search for a unique place, we discovered you could get married pretty much anywhere. The brilliant alternative wedding blog and magazine *Rock 'n' Roll Bride*, founded by blogger

Kat Williams in 2007, has featured a wedding in a bowling alley in London, a host of weddings in crematoriums and a zombie-themed wedding. Williams's view is that if you're paying for it yourself, then you should do whatever makes you happy.

But a lot of people don't realise that there's a lot more out there than your average wedding fair offers. Williams explains why: "Most people haven't planned a wedding before, so often when they get married they pick up a regular magazine and go, 'Oh OK, we need

a big venue, we need a big white dress and we need to tick all the boxes.'" That doesn't just go for the soon-to-be-weds either. Most of the family will believe, incorrectly, that there is a "right" way to do things in the quest for a successful day.

The idea that we are dispensing with tradition has been confusing for lots of our family. "So you'll go to the church first, and then have the party at the campsite?" inquired one of our grandmothers, hopefully. A couple I met, Steven Shapland and Marie Tay, had their ceremony on a floating pontoon in a lake and a reception in a tepee camp: "Some people did find it hard to comprehend what



Tying the knot: Daisy, below, is opting for a yurt, above; but many other quirky venues and transport solutions are available

was actually going to happen on the day," Steve told me. "One person actually asked if there was going to be any food." Another uncle of ours suggested that I would soon grow out of the idea of not getting married in white: "See how you feel when you get closer to the day," he said, condescendingly.

But as the day approaches, my fiancé and I have not adjusted our ideas. What's more, what we want actually works out cheaper, too.

A recent study suggested people spent, on average, £21,000 on their wedding day. While some people may think that is a perfectly acceptable amount to spend, we didn't. And through thinking outside the box just a little, we're having the big party we want (130 invitees), without the insane price tag. We don't need matching cutlery, beautifully crafted place names or even table cloths (another thing that has proved highly controversial in my mother's eyes). We are planning it our own way and mostly, after an initial wariness, people have begun to get as excited as we are.

Over the past year we've been surprised, disheartened and delighted by people's reactions to our plans. But the main thing we've learnt is that regardless of how you decide to get married, there's only one thing that really matters. And it's not matching your shoes to your eye shadow. It's marrying the right person.

Alternative wedding venues

Wookey Hole

Rough cost for 100 people
£5,700

Get married in a network of underground palaeolithic caves in this Site of Special Scientific Interest in Somerset.

• wookey.co.uk

Tunnels Beaches

Rough cost for 100 people
£10,000-£12,000

The swishing sound of the sea will be the idyllic soundtrack on this absolutely beautiful beach wedding venue in Cornwall.

• tunnelsbeaches.co.uk

The Tree House

Rough cost for 24 people
£13,500

For an intimate, but no less luxurious ceremony for 24 people, head to Scotland and the only tree house in the world to be licensed for a wedding, overlooking a magnificent loch.

• thelodge-scotland.com

Yurtcamp (Daisy's venue)

Rough cost for 100 people
£7,000

Go Mongolian with these yurts in the middle of Devon woodland for a full weekend festival wedding vibe.

• yurtcamp.co.uk

Now read on...

Michael Odell's wedding bells: P13



Too cold and odd to nod off in a pod

THEATRE

AIRHOTEL

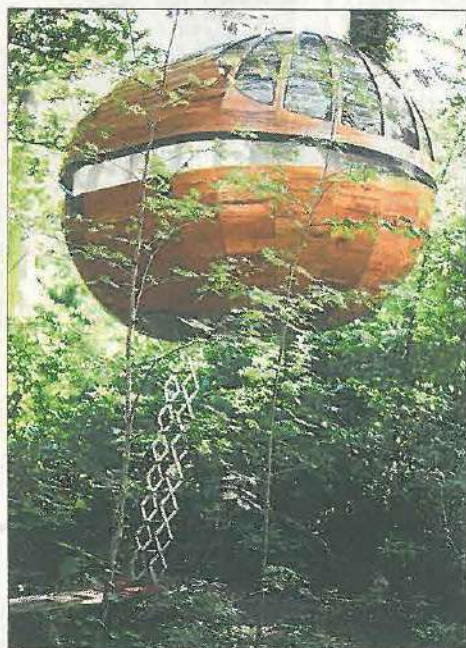
NORFOLK AND NORWICH FESTIVAL

LAST year, thanks to the theatre group Duckie's *Lullaby*, audiences found themselves spending the night in a theatre. You brought your pyjamas and toothbrush, and were sung to sleep by a group of actors.

The AirHotel is a little like that, but colder, wetter and weirder. Brought over by Belgian theatre company Time Circus for the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, the production-cum-art installation has you staying in one of seven pods suspended from the trees in the grounds of Holt Hall in Norfolk.

Check-in consists of being escorted slowly through the forest by three blissed-out hosts in light-blue, *Star Trek*-style uniforms. They rub their faces on leaves and hum, smiling at you as they explain that there are professors in the hall nearby who will analyse the dreams you have in the strange "rooms" where you are about to sleep.

These include the Drop, built in the shape of a tear,



which sleeps two, and allows you to adjust how high you hang from the ground; the Ambassador, a big bubble of wood half way up a tree; and my cabin, the Lotus, a canvas circle with four hollow, bed-sized petals that stretch out from its main body.

These are extraordinary, beautiful structures.

Raised expectations: sleep was hard to come by in the suspended pods erected in the grounds of Holt Hall in Norfolk

Meticulously designed, they look like huge, levitating cocoons about to release swarms of exotic insects.

But once you find yourself obliged to climb slippery metal ladders into these pods – several of which are suspended 20 feet up in the air and jerk around with every on-board movement – and try

to sleep with only a thin canvas separating you from the night air, the novelty quickly wears thin.

I must have been a disappointment to those professors, because it was so cold I didn't get a wink, let alone start dreaming. The one time I came close to nodding off, around 4am, I was shaken to my senses by my roommate's struggle to get out of the pod in order to use the toilet (a hut constructed over an earth pit on the ground).

AirHotel isn't, therefore, an experience for anyone who suffers from vertigo or motion sickness. It's also worth avoiding if you don't like camping, because that's essentially what it is, just up in the air.

It is questionable, too, if this can really be called a performance – the theatrical elements were few.

But if you covet adventure and don't mind roughing it for a night, being among the birds as they sing the dawn chorus is certainly a rare and thrilling experience.

Until June 2. Details and tickets: 01603 622777

TC RATING ★★★★★

Daisy Bowie-Sell

Leaving the boy wonder behind

CLASSICAL

GEORGE BENJAMIN

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

HOW DOES one recover from being a wunderkind, and grow into a fully-rounded composer? That's been the conundrum of George Benjamin's life. Back in 1980 he became the youngest composer ever performed at the Proms, when his glittering orchestral piece *Ringed by the Flat Horizon* was given its premiere. Since then his creative life has been slow and painstaking, marked by self-dissatisfaction and long silences.

This two-day survey of his music actually magnified Benjamin's essential elusiveness. How could we join up the photo

in the programme of the cherubic figure of 1978 with the prematurely white-haired, but still boyish figure on the podium? One felt an absence, a missing middle chapter.

Also the choice of pieces wasn't the most helpful. *Jubilation*, a piece written for the Inner London Education Authority back in 1985, brings together a vast body of young choirs, recorder players and brass players with a professional orchestra. One admired Benjamin's boldness in breaking the mould of sub-pop "educational" pieces, and the brilliance and confidence of the young performers, joined by the Philharmonia Orchestra. But it's hardly a major piece.

In the London Sinfonietta's concert the previous evening, we heard

another rarity: *Antara*, for sampled pan-pipes (played on a keyboard) and chamber orchestra. The problem here was that the samples, made in the 1980s, are showing their age, and the piece felt uncertain in form and gesture. One felt the struggles of a young man trying to break out of his own mould.

Duel, a piano concerto from 2008 performed by Tamara Stefanovich, had the opposite problem. It had some utterly bewitching inventions (which Benjamin piece doesn't?) but shied away from its own potential, ending far too soon.

There were three pieces that really satisfied. Two of them were wunderkind pieces: *Flight*, a solo flute piece from 1979, was a

poetic evocation of birds in flight, brilliantly played by Michael Cox. *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, played by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Benjamin's incisive direction, left one simply amazed that a 20-year-old could muster such skill, and capture the poetic as well as pictorial possibilities of a thunderstorm in the New Mexico desert.

Most rewarding was *Palimpsests*, from 2002, performed in that same concert. Here you felt Benjamin turning his back on "brilliance" to create something darkly ambiguous. Like all really fine music it seized the ear, but didn't give up its secrets.

TC RATING ★★★★★

Ivan Hewett

Theatre & Dance

Edited by
Andrzej Lukowski
timeout.com/theatre
@timeouttheatre

Very odd couple Mr and Mrs Twit
(Jason Watkins and Monica Dolan).
Insert: James Clyde in 'Matilda'



Dahlings of the West End

Roald Dahl's stage adaptors share their love with **Daisy Bowie-Sell**

Roald Dahl is *owning* the London stage at the moment. Two West End musical versions of the late writer's books 'Matilda' and 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' gleefully embrace his fantastical imagination and grotesque characters, and have proved huge hits as a result. Dahl's extraordinary stories – about

everything from a snozzcumber-scoffing giant to a unnaturally large flying peach – appeal to both children and adults. And there's no sating our hunger: a brand new version of his book 'The Twits' is about to open at the Royal Court. Three playwrights tasked with adapting his works for the stage explain Dahl's unending appeal.

Dennis Kelly

Adaptor of 'Matilda', in which a schoolgirl outwits her abusive headmistress and learns magic powers.

'I am a fan of Dahl's writing, which is dirty and messy, and I knew adapting it was going to be fun. Dahl has a great dark side and I didn't restrict that, but we wanted to make sure kids wouldn't burst into tears. With Dahl you need to enjoy the darkness. He works on stage because he's naughty and playful, which is what great theatre is.'



David Greig

Adaptor of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', where a slum child wins a tour of a factory run by a sociopath.

'I loved the book but on one level, it could be about a factory owner who kills kids, so I did think it could be problematic to get it on stage. There's a Dahl-ian world that goes across all books and he's a real master of the smaller character, like Veruca Salt. Probably outside of Shakespeare and the Bible "Charlie" and "Peter Pan" are the two books that we just quote every day. It's in our subconscious.'

Enda Walsh

Adaptor of 'The Twits', about a mutually dependent couple who abuse animals and each other for entertainment.

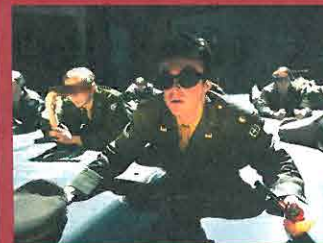
'I didn't think twice when I was asked to adapt "The Twits". Mr and Mrs Twit are two of the best villains. They are Dahl's most ridiculous creations. We wanted to make the play hugely edgy and dangerous and we needed the characters to be very real. It's such a tiny book, so we had to create a new part to the story – we've added three new characters who contend with Mr and Mrs Twit – but we have still done justice to the story and characters.'

'The Twits' is at the Royal Court ► May 31. 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' is at Theatre Royal Drury Lane ► Jun 4 2016. 'Matilda' is at Cambridge Theatre ► Dec 20.

Critic's choice



Daisy Bowie-Sell picks the shows to see this week



OPPENHEIMER

★★★★★

The RSC's production of Tom Morton-Smith's new play about the man behind the atomic bomb is an absolute blast and features a brilliant performance from John Heffernan as J Robert Oppenheimer.
Vaudeville Theatre. ► May 23.

PIONEER

★★★★★

A hit at last year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, this audacious sci-fi show is an epic tale of love and space, told by theatre company Curious Directive with lots of imagination.
Shoreditch Town Hall. ► Apr 22.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

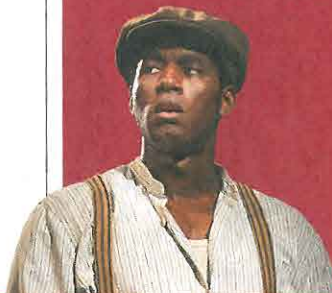
★★★★★

The 'South Park' creators' cheeky musical rips the piss out of pretty much everyone and is a total hoot into the bargain.
Prince of Wales Theatre. ► Jul 25.

THE ROYALE

★★★★★

A thrilling show about the rise of the first African-American heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Jack Johnson.
Bush Theatre. ► Apr 18.



For complete listings, reviews, features and more head to
timeout.com/theatre

Planner

Arts agenda: from now until spring

Jeff Bridges in the new 'True Grit'; Danny Boyle at the National Theatre; Damien Hirst at the Royal Academy. **Daisy Bowie-Sell** presents your essential cultural diary for the coming months

January

7th

FILM

127 Hours

Danny Boyle's film based on the true story of a mountain climber who gets trapped under a boulder.

FILM

The King's Speech

Colin Firth is already an Oscar front-runner for his performance as a stuttering King George VI in Tom Hooper's rousing movie.

8th

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Polar

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra provides a live soundtrack to a cinematic journey through the polar ice caps. *Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool* (0151 709 3789)

9th

ART

A masterpiece a month

To celebrate its 200th birthday, the UK's oldest purpose-built gallery shows a magnificent painting a month from collections around the world. *Dulwich Picture Gallery* (020 8693 5254)

11th

DANCE

Giselle

Carlos Acosta and Marianela Nuñez are among the stars in the Royal Ballet's production of the classic story of love and betrayal. *Royal Opera House* (020 7304 4000) until Feb 19

THEATRE

Twelfth Night

Rebecca Hall plays Viola, directed by her father Sir Peter Hall. *National Theatre, London* (020 7452 3000) until March 2

14th

FILM

The Green Hornet

Seth Rogen and Cameron Diaz star in a hectic reimagining of the cult comic superhero. Directed by Michel Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*).

15th

DANCE

London International Mime Festival

A mixture of visual theatre, circus and dance take over the capital –

all without a word. Assorted locations around London (www.mimefest.co.uk) until Jan 30

19th

EXHIBITIONS

Gabriel Orozco

The first major UK retrospective dedicated to the playful Mexican artist. *Tate Modern* (020 7887 8888) until April 11

THEATRE

The Comedy of Errors and Richard III

Propeller, Edward Hall's all-male troupe, brings two new Shakespearean interpretations to the stage. *Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield* (0114 249 6060) until Jan 29

22nd

ART

Modern British Sculpture.

This survey of British sculpture since 1900 includes Anthony Caro, Sarah Lucas, Damien Hirst and others. *Royal Academy* (0844 209 0051) until April 7

THEATRE

The Children's Hour

Keira Knightley and *Mad Men*'s Elisabeth Moss star in Lillian Hellman's 1934 drama set in a girls' boarding school *Comedy Theatre* (0844 871 7627) until April 2

24th

MUSIC

Bruno Mars, Doo-Wops and Hooligans

Debut album from the Hawaiian co-writer of international hits for the likes of Cee Lo Green (*Forget You*) and Flo Rida (*Right Round*).

MUSIC

Adele, 21

Highly anticipated, Rick Rubin-produced second album from the Grammy-winning London songbird.

27th

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Gustavo Dudamel

The charismatic conductor leads the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Bernstein and Beethoven. *Barbican* (020 7638 8891) until Jan 28

BOOKS

The Telegraph Hay Festival, Cartagena

Nobel Prize-winner Mario Vargas Llosa, Germaine Greer, Gary Shteyngart and Philip Glass are

among the guests of the literary knees-up in this Colombian city on the Caribbean Sea. (01497 822 629) until Jan 30

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Infernal Dance

Finnish maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts two of Bartók's most extraordinary works. *Royal Festival Hall* (0844 875 0073)

28th

FILM

Barney's Version

Golden Globe-nominated Paul Giamatti plays a man on the verge of a nervous breakdown in Richard J

Lewis's charming adaptation of a 1997 novel by Canadian author Mordecai Richler.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

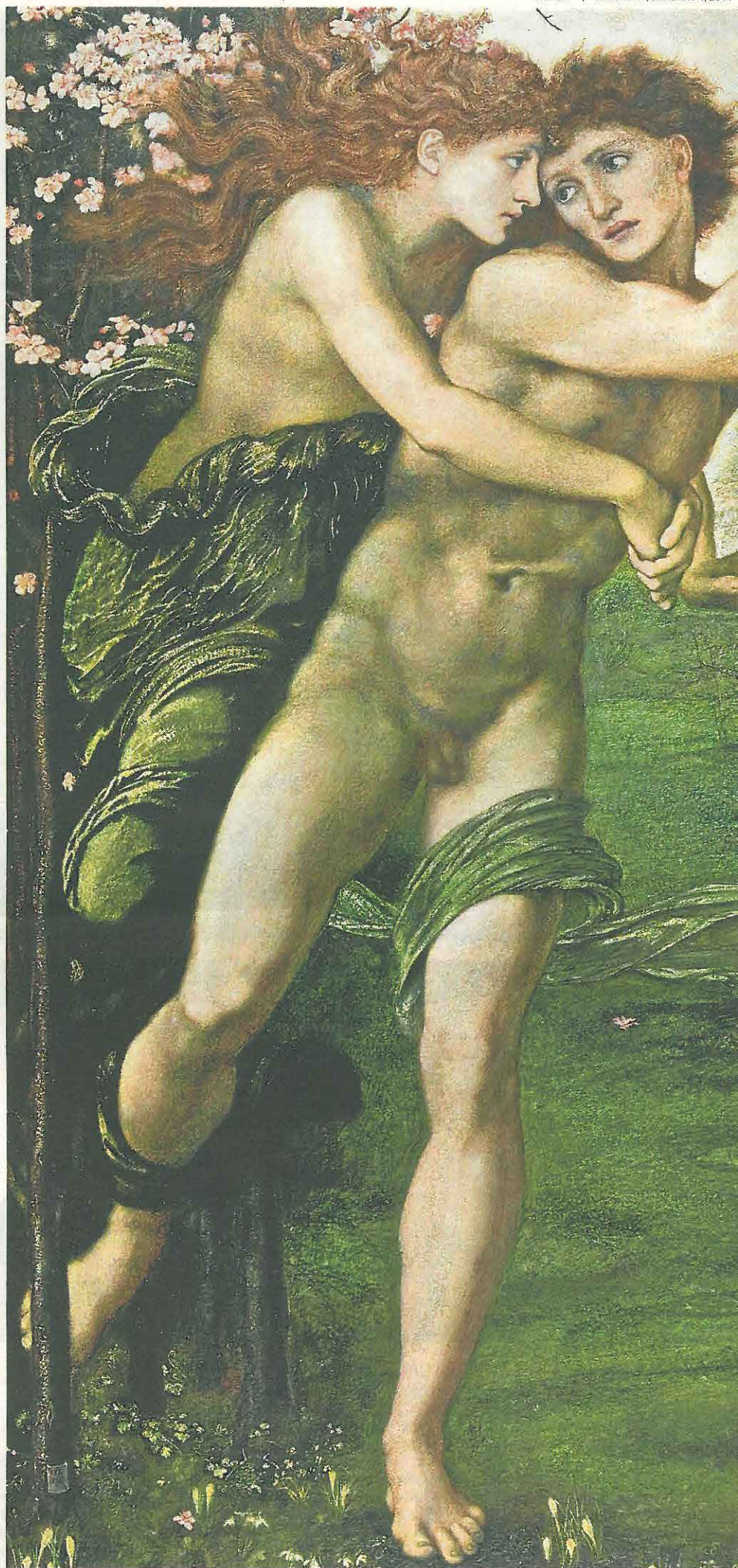
Maurizio Pollini

The celebrated pianist performs five recitals of pieces from Bach to Boulez. *Royal Festival Hall* (0844 875 0073) until May 25

THEATRE

Clybourne Park

Bruce Norris's Royal Court hit starring Sophie Thompson transfers to the West End. *Wyndham's Theatre* (020 7565 5000) until May 7



Tickets through the Telegraph Concerts, plays and shows telegraph.co.uk/boxoffice

Planner

February

1st

ART Susan Hiller

A rare retrospective of the work for the American artist who is a pioneer of video art and mixed-media art. Tate Britain (020 7887 8888) until May 15

2nd

THEATRE Goodnight Mister Tom

A new adaptation of the classic wartime children's novel. Chichester Festival Theatre (01243 781312) until Feb 5, then touring

OPERA The Portrait

Opera North presents the British premiere of the rediscovered Soviet composer Weinberg's opera about a cursed portrait. Grand Theatre, Leeds (0844 848 2706) until Feb 12

3rd

THEATRE Plenty

Thea Sharrock directs David Hare's play about Nazi-occupied France in a season that features *Racing Demon* and *The Breath of Life*. Sheffield Crucible (0114 249 6000) until Feb 26

4th

FILM Brighton Rock

Graham Greene's thrilling 1939 novel is updated to the era of the Mods, starring Andrea Riseborough.

FILM The Fighter

Based on the true story of Irish boxer Mickey Ward and starring Mark Wahlberg and Christian Bale.

THEATRE The Heretic

Richard Bean's new play about climate change opens at the Royal Court. (020 7565 5000) until March 19

5th

THEATRE Frankenstein

Danny Boyle returns to the stage with Jonny Lee Miller and Benedict Cumberbatch alternating as the scientist and his monster. National Theatre (020 7452 3000) until April 17

7th

THEATRE The Wizard of Oz

This revival is the latest Andrew Lloyd Webber extravaganza, cast via reality television series *Over the Rainbow*. London Palladium (0844 412 2957) until Sept 17

8th

THEATRE The Million Dollar Quartet

A rock'n'roll jukebox show inspired by a recording session between Elvis, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis. Noël Coward Theatre (0844 482 5141) until Oct 1

10th

THEATRE Guys and Dolls

A welcome revival of the great American musical about gamblers and their Salvation Army saviours. Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Mold, North Wales (0845 330 3565) until March 5

11th

FILM Never Let Me Go

Keira Knightley, Carey Mulligan and Andrew Garfield star in the film adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's science-fiction fantasy.

FILM True Grit

The Coen brothers remake a John Wayne western. Jeff Bridges leads a stellar cast (including Matt Damon and Josh Brolin) as a US marshal who helps a young woman track her father's murderer.

THEATRE

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

A Tony Award-winning American musical about the drama surrounding a spelling competition. Donmar Warehouse (0844 871 7624) until April 2

FILM

The Debt

Directed by John Madden, this film follows three Mossad agents on their mission to capture a Nazi criminal.

14th

MUSIC

PJ Harvey

Let England Shake is her first album for two years, and she follows it with two live dates in London at the end of the month.

16th

ART

Watercolour

An exhibition looking at the history of this popular medium. Tate Britain (020 7887 8888) until August 21

17th

THEATRE

The Blue Dragon

Robert Lepage presents his sequel to the famous Dragon's Trilogy. Barbican (020 7638 8891) until Feb 26

23rd THEATRE

King Lear

The first production at the RSC's new theatre is directed by David Farr and stars Greg Hicks. Stratford Upon Avon (0844 800 1110) until April 2

ART

Jan Gossaert's Northern Renaissance

Fifty paintings by the Flemish artist noted for his sensuous nudes. National Gallery (0844 847 2409) until May 30

25th

MUSIC

Stormtroopers in Stilettos

An exhibition charting Queen's rise to success. Old Truman Brewery, London (www.queenonline.com) until March 12

26th

OPERA

The Mikado

A 25th anniversary revival of Jonathan Miller's classic production of this G&S favourite. London Coliseum (0871 911 0200) until March 11

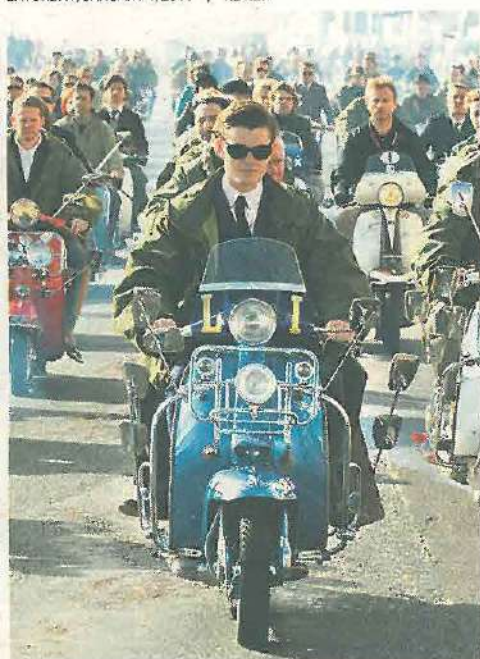
26th

CLASSICAL MUSIC

BBC Symphony Orchestra

A *Total Immersion* in the work of contemporary composer Brian Ferneyhough. Barbican (020 7638 8891)

Continued on page 9



Inspirational: from left, 'Phyllis and Demophon', by Edward Burne-Jones in Tate Britain's 'Watercolour'; Sam Riley in 'Brighton Rock'; Rebecca Hall in 'Twelfth Night'; and Sarah Lucas's 'Portable Smoking Area' at 'Modern British Sculpture' at the Royal Academy



BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY; SADI COLES HQ, LONDON

29th

ART The Poetry of Drawing

The largest survey of Pre-Raphaelite drawings and watercolours ever staged, which will include key loans from both public and private lenders. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (0121 303 1966) until May 15

31st

OPERA Lucrezia Borgia

English National Opera gives the premiere of Mike Figgis's production of Donizetti's opera, starring soprano Claire Rutter. London Coliseum (0871 911 0200) until March 3

EXTRA WEDNESDAY MATINEES ADDED

'GALES OF LAUGHTER'
THE TIMES

★★★★★

DAILY TELEGRAPH • THE TIMES • DAILY EXPRESS • DAILY MAIL • FINANCIAL TIMES • INDEPENDENT • SUNDAY EXPRESS • MAIL ON SUNDAY

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Continued from page 7

March

2nd

DANCE

Lord of the Flies

William Golding's story of teenage boys marooned on an island gets the Matthew Bourne treatment. *Glasgow Theatre Royal* (0844 871 7647) until March 5

THEATRE

Blithe Spirit

Alison Steadman and Ruthie Henshall star in Noël Coward's enduring 1941 play. *Apollo Theatre* (0844 412 4658) until June 18

3rd

MUSIC

Beady Eye

Liam Gallagher's much-praised new band set off on their first ever tour. *Glasgow Barrowlands* (0141 204 5151)

3rd

ART

Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World

Surviving treasures from Afghanistan's ancient culture. *British Museum* (020 7323 8181) until July 3

4th

MUSIC

Justin Bieber

The teen-wonder's 2011 tour. *National Indoor Arena Birmingham* (0844 388 8000)

FILM

Rango

In an animated Western, Johnny Depp provides the voice of a chameleon who wants to be a hero.

FILM

The Tempest

Julie Taymor's version of Shakespeare, starring Helen Mirren.

FILM

The Adjustment Bureau

Thriller, based on a Philip K Dick short story, about a love affair between a ballerina and a politician. Matt Damon and Emily Blunt star.

10th

THEATRE

The Knot of the Heart

David Eldridge's new play

about privileged Lucy (Lisa Dillon), whose social drug problem makes her life spiral out of control. *Almeida Theatre, London* (020 7359 4404) until April 30

11th

ART

Watteau's Drawings: Virtuosity and Delight

First UK retrospective of the drawings of the charming 17th-century French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau. *Royal Academy* (0844 209 0051) until June 5

17th

DANCE

The Most Incredible Thing

The Pet Shop Boys team up with choreographer Javier de Frutos. *Sadler's Wells* (0844 412 4300) until March 26

THEATRE

Cause Célèbre

A revival of Terrence Rattigan's final play based on a true story, starring Anne-Marie Duff. *Old Vic* (0844 871 7628) until June 11

18th

FILM

Route Irish

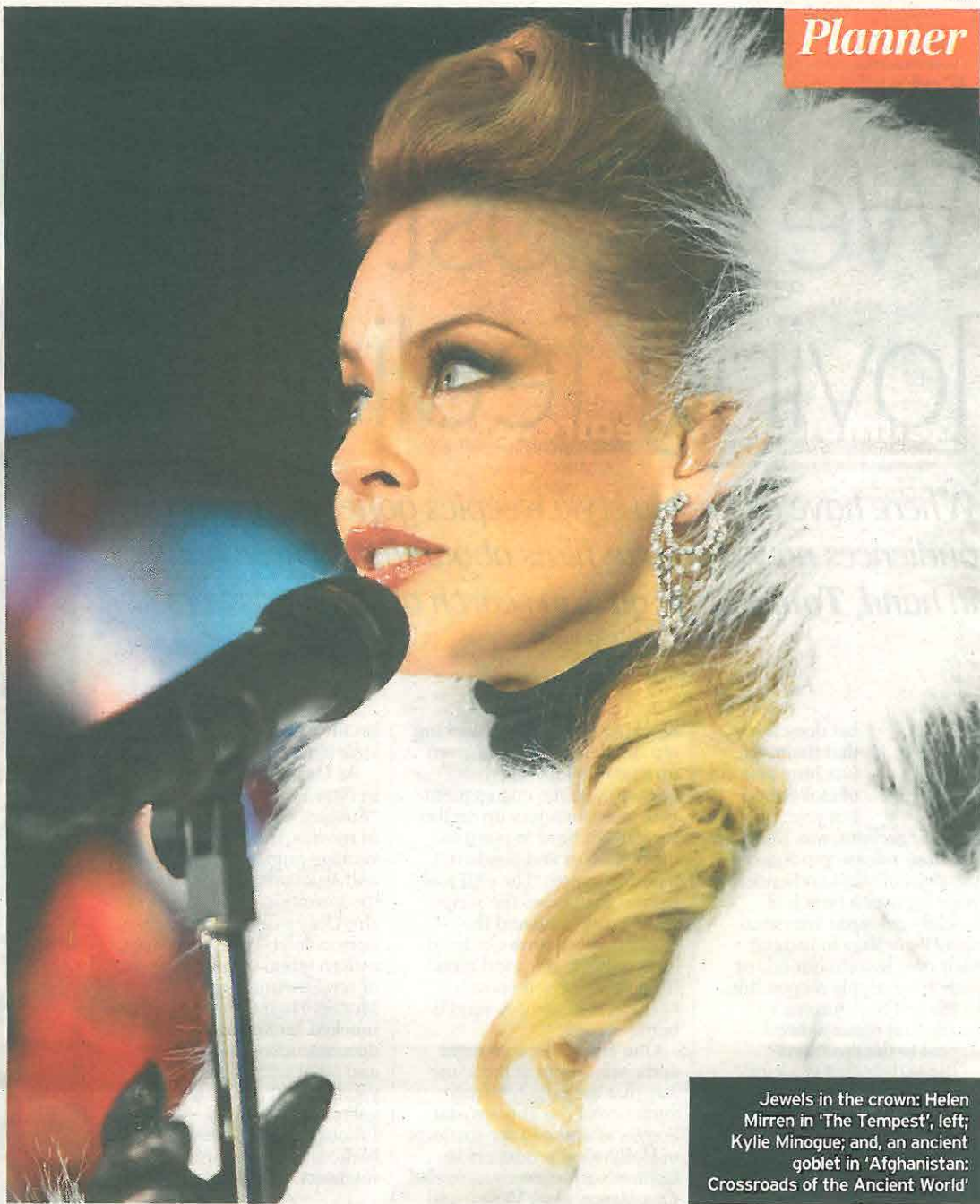
Ken Loach's latest is about a private security contractor who rejects official explanations of his friend's death.

22nd

MUSIC

Kylie Minogue

Everybody's favourite



Jewels in the crown: Helen Mirren in 'The Tempest', left; Kylie Minogue; and, an ancient goblet in 'Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World'

Australian embarks on her Aphrodite Les Folies tour. *Dublin O2* (www.kylie.com), also March 23

23rd

CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Torturer's Horse

Simon Holt's new composition is premiered by the Nash Ensemble. *Wigmore Hall* (020 7935 2141)

OPERA

A Magic Flute

The UK premiere of Peter Brook's version of Mozart. *Barbican Theatre* (020 7638 8891) until March 27

THEATRE

Rocket to the Moon

Clifford Odets's play is revived in a version directed by Angus Jackson. *National Theatre* (020 7452 3000) until April 10

24th

ART

Dirt: The Filthy Reality of Everyday Life

An exhibition devoted to dirt. *Wellcome Collection, London* (020 7611 2222) until Aug 31

25th

JAZZ

Gateshead Jazz Festival

The international festival provides an eclectic mix for jazz lovers. *Sage Gateshead* (0191 443 4661) until March 27

28th

THEATRE

Ghost

Musical based on the 1990 film opens in Manchester before its London run. *Manchester Opera House* (0844 847 2277) until May 14

HAMPSTEAD
THEATRE

14 January – 5 February 2011

World Premiere production

TIGER COUNTRY
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Theatre & Dance

Golden Graham

In just two months he's released a film, opened a musical on Broadway, had two plays on in London and a TV show on Channel 4. **Daisy Bowie-Sell** meets rising star writer James Graham

You may not know the name James Graham, but you've probably seen his work. The 32-year-old has the magic touch when it comes to distilling stuffy political events – from the Winter of Discontent to the coalition government – into sparklingly funny dramas. So how, exactly, does he do it?

Your breakthrough play 'This House' was about the 1974 minority Labour parliament. Were you worried it wouldn't get the audiences?

'I was terrified, because it was about politicians no one had heard of in a parliament where nothing happened. But if you can tell a good story with humanity, it will be engaging. The '70s were one big enthralling identity crisis for Britain.'

Mark Gatiss starred in your recent TV drama 'Coalition'. Do you find it easy to dramatise our politicians?

'I love Mark. He was my Peter Mandelson. I've always felt the freedom to catch the essence rather than the specifics of a person. With "Coalition" I hope I was fair, I never feel like it's my job to judge the characters or their motivations. It was really about how the British system coped, not about sending up Gordon Brown, Nick Clegg or David Cameron.'

Who was the '70s terrorist group at the heart of your new play?

'The Angry Brigade was a group of young people who were part of the 1970s counterculture revolution. They set off 100 bombs in London. The police enforced a press blackout on them and Time Out was one of the few to break it.'

You wrote a Broadway musical, 'Finding Neverland', with Gary Barlow. Did the muted response put you off showbusiness?

'Absolutely not. It was my first musical and we knew "Finding Neverland" might meet with some cynicism, partly because of the size of the project [Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein is behind it]. But in rehearsals it just felt like I was working with some of the most talented people I've ever worked with. I love that show.'

How important was London's network of new writing theatres to your career?

'I wouldn't be a writer if it wasn't for the likes of the Finborough or Bush theatres. No one else would have commissioned a play about Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis from a 21-year-old boy. They gave me the freedom to learn what I'm good and bad at.'

You're known for even-handedness in your plays. Do you ever get angry at politicians?

'I've always cared, I've always been passionate but I think I am starting to become angrier. I never feel like it is my job to project my own agenda on to the audience, though, which is so boring. But I am meeting more lawyers, which is surely a good thing: if a political playwright isn't getting a phone call from a lawyer, they're probably doing something wrong.'

'The Angry Brigade' is at the Bush Theatre until Jun 13.

A political playwright should be getting phone calls from lawyers

GRAHAM'S GOODIES *The shows that made the man*



THIS HOUSE

His breakthrough success was this improbably exciting National Theatre thriller about the minority Labour government of 1974.



X+Y

Graham eschewed politics for his first film, released in March, which told of a teenage maths prodigy who learns to love.



COALITION

The recent C4 TV drama threw crisply entertaining light on the murky wrangling following the 2010 general election.



FINDING NEVERLAND

Starring Kelsey Grammer and written with Gary Barlow, his first-ever musical went straight to Broadway in March.



THE VOTE

This all-star polling-station farce was an audacious hit: running at the Donmar and broadcast on TV on election night last week.

Danny Boyle wins the wonder award for his Olympic opener

Theatre's heavyweights pay tribute to a dramatic tour de force that encapsulated modern Britain

By Daisy Bowie-Sell

IT WAS the spectacle of the year that projected an astonishing feat of British theatrical endeavour into the living rooms of one billion people around the world.

It was credited with defining the essence of contemporary Britain in a way that has eluded legions of artists, and was met with a chorus of voices demanding that its director, Danny Boyle, be granted a knighthood on the spot.

So few could argue last night when the creators of the London 2012 Olympics opening ceremony were honoured with the Beyond Theatre prize at this year's London Evening Standard Theatre Awards.

The vast work, which was so popular that the BBC re-broadcast it in full at the request of viewers, was named "Isles of Wonder", after Prospero's speech in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Around 15 million people volunteered to be a part of the performance, which cost £27million and took six months to rehearse.

Participants included the actor Daniel Craig and Her Majesty the Queen, who played herself for the first time on film, in a pastiche of the James Bond movies; and David Beckham, the footballer. Sir Kenneth Branagh, who played the engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, memorably told the



At the awards ceremony were Danny Boyle, left, Dame Judi Dench and her daughter Finty Williams, right, and Colin Firth with his wife Livia, far right

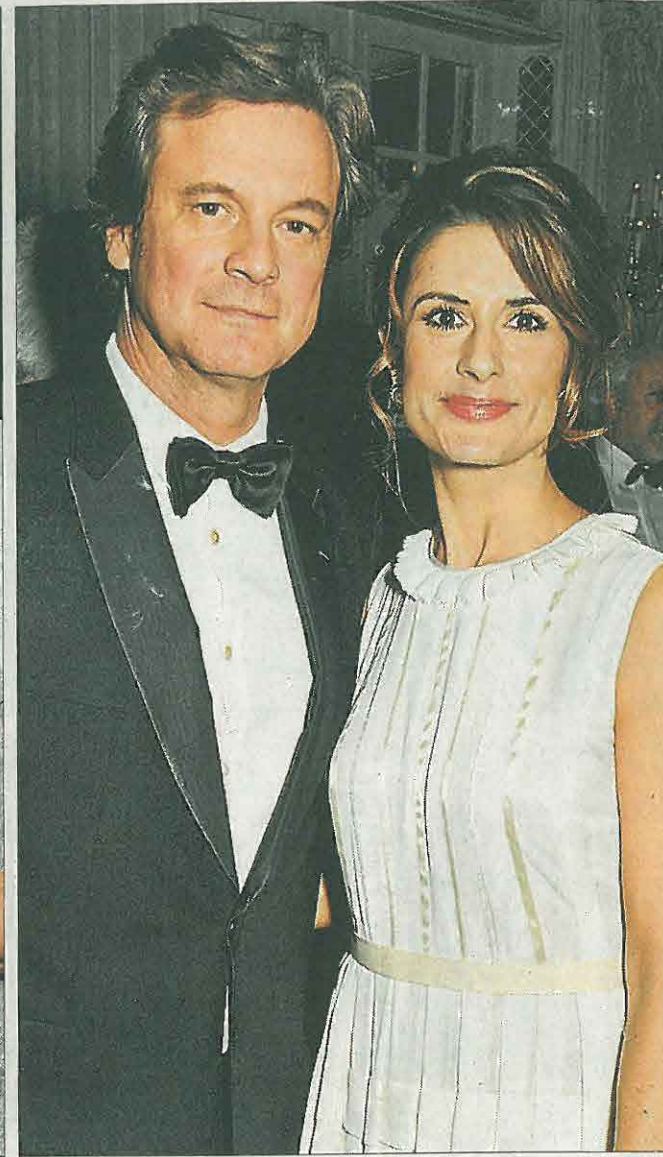
audience: "Be not afraid, the isle is full of strange noises."

The performance also included 10,000 ordinary Londoners, playing peasants, industrial workers, nightclub dancers and NHS nurses.

As well as Boyle, the creative team included designer Mark Tildesley, writer Frank Cottrell Boyce and the band Underworld's Rick Smith, who oversaw the music. Their prize was presented last night by Victoria Pendleton, the Olympic cyclist.

Comedy writer and actor James Corden hosted the awards ceremony at the Savoy Hotel.

In the best play category, relative newcomer Nick Payne triumphed over one of British playwriting's most established names, Caryl Churchill, for his play *Constellations*, currently showing in the West End. Starring Rafe Spall and Sally Hawkins,



Roles of honour London Evening Standard 58th theatre awards

Best play *Constellations* by Nick Payne (Royal Court Upstairs)

Best director Sir Nicholas Hytner for *Timon of Athens* (National's Olivier)

Best actor Simon Russell Beale in *Collaborators* (National's Cottesloe)

Natasha Richardson award for best actress Hattie Morahan in *A Doll's House* (Young Vic)

Ned Sherrin award for best musical *Sweeney Todd* at Chichester Festival and Adelphi

Best design Soutra Gilmour for *Inadmissible Evidence* (Donmar Warehouse) and *Antigone* (National's Olivier)

Charles Wintour award for most promising playwright Lolita Chakrabarti for *Red Velvet* (Tricycle)

Milton Shulman award for outstanding newcomer Matthew Tennyson for *Making Noise Quietly* (Donmar Warehouse)

Lebedev special award Sir Nicholas Hytner for his dynamic directorship of the National Theatre

Editor's award Sir David Hare for his contribution to theatre

Beyond theatre Danny Boyle and his team for the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics

Burberry award for emerging director Simon Godwin

Moscow Art Theatre's Golden Seagull for contribution to world theatre Dame Judi Dench

Payne's play opened at the Royal Court earlier this year and transferred to the Duke of York's Theatre after much commercial and critical success. At 29, Payne is the youngest person to win the award.

Dame Judi Dench, one of Britain's most celebrated actresses, was honoured with the Moscow Art Theatre's Golden Seagull award for her contribution to world theatre. Dench, who played M in the successful new James Bond film *Skyfall*, was presented with the award in recognition of her work raising the profile of London theatre. Sir Nicholas Hytner won two awards, best

director for *Timon of Athens* and the Lebedev Special Award for his directorship of the National Theatre.

Hytner took over leadership of the National in 2003 and has presided over one of its most successful periods. The recent hits *One Man, Two Guvnors* and *War Horse* played to sell-out crowds before transferring to the West End and Broadway. In the best actress category, Cate Blanchett was beaten by Hattie Morahan. Blanchett had been nominated for her first performance on the London stage in 13 years in the avant-garde German play *Big and Small*. She, as well as Laurie

Metcalf and Dame Eileen Atkins were beaten to the award by Morahan's performance as the trapped housewife Nora, in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* at the Young Vic.

Best actor was awarded to Simon Russell Beale for his performance as Stalin in the National Theatre's production of *Collaborators*. Russell Beale beat Adrian Lester, nominated for his performance in *Red Velvet* at the Tricycle Theatre.

But it was not all disappointment for Lester, whose wife Lolita Chakrabarti won the Charles Wintour Award for the most promising playwright.

Deconstructing the Doctor

On the fiftieth anniversary of 'Doctor Who', **Daisy Bowie-Sell** asks writer and fanboy Mark Gatiss to describe the five essential elements that make a legendary episode

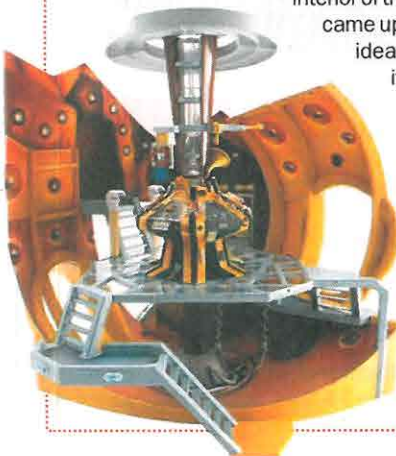
After 798 episodes, nine different Doctors, a myriad of monsters from weeping angels to merciless Cybermen and several million traumatised British youngsters left hiding behind the sofa, Doctor Who has finally arrived at the big one – his fiftieth anniversary (though, as a Time Lord, you'd think he could have got there sooner).

But how did a low-budget TV show with cardboard sets and alien planets that all look suspiciously like a quarry in Berkshire become the most successful sci-fi series in the universe? Who better to ask than Mark Gatiss, who after scaring himself silly watching the third Doctor (Jon Pertwee) as an eight-year-old in 1974, went from fanboy to revered writer of classic episodes like 2011's 'Night Terrors' in which the Doctor faces an army of huge dolls and 2006's 'Idiot's Lantern' in which an evil being – well, Maureen Lipman – sucks people's faces off. Gatiss first established himself with the surreal farce 'The League of Gentlemen' but getting the Doctor right requires more than grotesque gags. Here he reveals the what, where and why of 'Who'.

1 'SPECIAL' EFFECTS



Mark Gatiss 'One of the things I love about the show is that the effects were born of lack of money and time, and created with a brilliant spirit of invention: that's why they work. The makers spent all the money on the interior of the Tardis, so someone came up with the excellent idea that it can disguise itself. They got around the fact that it would have to change every week by saying the Tardis is an old spaceship that gets stuck in a police box shape. They invented the sound of the Tardis with a pair of house keys and a piano wire.'



'I'm an action figure now. Action figures are cool.' A fully poseable Matt Smith and his Tardis

2 A BALLSY ASSISTANT



'The cliché about the Doctor's assistants is that they just need the ability to ask the question "What's going on, Doctor?" and to scream. One of the great revolutionary changes that happened when Russell T Davies revived the show in 2005 was that Billie Piper's character was really a co-lead: it brought a whole new audience to the show. But back in the 1970s, Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah Jane Smith was very much a co-lead and it's not an accident that people loved her.'

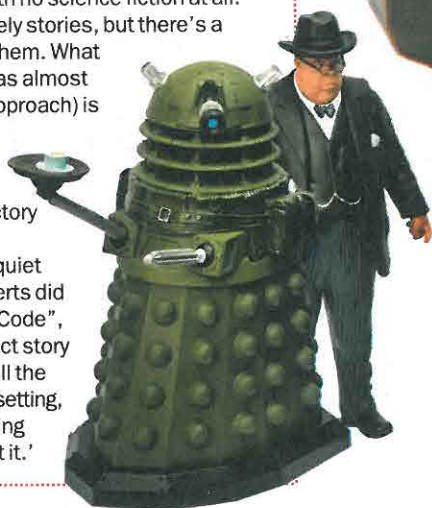
3 A SUPERHUMAN HERO



'I think of the Doctor as a bit like a lord who occasionally comes over at Christmas and mucks in with his tenants. Even though he can make a good facsimile of being like us, he's not like us. The best Doctor is one that can seem human, then suddenly give you a chill where you realise he's about a thousand years old. The second Doctor, Patrick Troughton, has a brilliant ability to be funny and charming and delightful... and then very grave. He has an incredible voice and face, he's very impish – and when he wants to be, he's quite scary.'

4 A REBOOT OF HISTORY

'Originally, "Doctor Who" was all about historical stories with no science fiction at all. These were very lovely stories, but there's a different flavour to them. What works better (and has almost become a default approach) is a historical setting with an alien present. So we've had Churchill in "Victory of the Daleks" and Dickens in "The Unquiet Dead". Gareth Roberts did "The Shakespeare Code", and that's the perfect story because you have all the fun of that historical setting, but there's something not quite right about it.'



Exfoliate!
Behold the rather shrivelled, but humanoid, face of Davros, creator of the Daleks



5 A BADDIE WITH A HUMAN FACE

'Really, what you want as a baddie is a humanoid one. They work best because you get a mouthpiece. A lot of the monsters are inherently frightening, but actually they lose something when they speak. There's a reason why Davros was brought in to be the voice of the Daleks: if you give them too much to say, the noise gets relentless. "Genesis of the Daleks" was where he first appeared in 1975 – played by Michael Wisher – it was an astonishing moment.'

'The Day of the Doctor', the 'Doctor Who' fiftieth anniversary special, airs in 3D in cinemas around London and on BBC1, Sat Nov 23, 9pm. Mark Gatiss's episode, **'An Adventure in Space and Time'**, is on BBC2, Thu Nov 21, 9pm.



REVIEWS

Review: *Network* (National Theatre)

Bryan Cranston stars as news anchor Howard Beale in Ivo van Hove's production of the hit '70s film

Daisy Bowie-Sell • London, West End • 13 Nov 2017

WOS Rating:

Reader Reviews: [Be the first to review this show](#)



Bryan Cranston in *Network*

© Jan Versweyveld

"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore": the rallying cry made famous by Paddy Chayefsky's 1976 film *Network* was emblazoned on placards at women's marches throughout the world earlier this year. And the refrain is back, as loud and as provocative as ever, onstage at the National Theatre. This time it's in Lee Hall's stage adaptation of the movie, spoken by [Bryan Cranston](#) as the prophetic news anchor Howard Beale who urges his newly burgeoning TV audience to shout it from the rooftops.

Such is the film's enduring relevance. Belgian director [Ivo van Hove](#) sticks with the original Oscar-winning film's '70s setting and yet still manages to underscore everything on stage with a sense of just how much this is a piece about now – and about us. The plot revolves around 'old man of the news' Beale, whose career as a news anchor is about to be cut short due to a slow decline in viewing figures of his regular slot.

During one of his final broadcasts, Beale announces he's going to kill himself live on air and all hell breaks loose. But not in the way you might expect: the television executives – new, business-minded stooges, only recently in charge of the station – decide the ratings spike caused by Beale's revelation may be the entire network's saving grace. Howard Beale stays, and the nation watches, enthralled, as he is allowed free rein on air to call bulls**t on the world, and finally tell the truth, convincing the masses to take action against injustice, against capitalism, against corporations and ultimately against the men who own the television channels. Is this a very public breakdown, or actually the work of a genius?



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This slick, beautifully paced production is a non-stop, fluid roller coaster that segues easily between the worlds of news studio, restaurant (audience members chomp through a three course meal onstage as the action unfolds around them) and production room. Everything is onstage all at once, enhanced by huge screens that surround the action which offer second, third, fourth perspectives on everything that happens. When Howard Beale makes his declaration of suicide, we are watching it from the screen, we are watching him onstage and we also see how the producers - oblivious in their sound proofed glass box – initially don't hear a word of it.

It's an intense, riveting way of viewing that never allows the audience to turn off. So much happens on stage at the same time, your attention is constantly focused on the next thing. There are moment of immense beauty in Tal Yarden's video design too, especially when he makes shots echo each other so we see five versions of Cranston's confused, lost face, distorted and pixelated.

Cranston himself - and the rest of the excellent cast - is magnetic. There's very little of his most famous TV role Walter White from *Breaking Bad* here. He entirely embodies the slightly wearied news man whose life begins and ends in the studio and who seems to strengthen visibly as he continues to spout his truths to a beguiled audience. It is a layered, subtle turn, which sits amid an entire ensemble of them. Michelle Dockery is a spiky, taut figure who holds her own as Diana Christensen, the young soulless TV exec. Douglas Henshall feels very real as Beale's long-serving producer and friend, tormented by Christensen's inability to care deeply about anything but her work.

For all its smooth seamlessness, however, the whole set up of *Network* is a little distancing. Perhaps that's the point, but it ultimately means this show is a piece that's easy to admire but hard to really love. Still, Hall's superb adaptation is one of the shining lights of the entire night. He manages to keep deftly and succinctly to the entire central thread throughout - that it is people who matter, not screens, not big business and not ratings. He makes sure every line lands, leading us through the madness to some semblance of hope at the piece's end. Hell isn't other people, says *Network*, other people are the only thing that will save us. If that's not a message for today, then I don't know what is.

Network runs at the National Theatre until 24 March.

[National Theatre](#) | [Bryan Cranston](#) | [Ivo Van Hove](#) | [Michelle Dockery](#) | [Douglas Henshall](#)

[Network](#)





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BLOGS

Theatres must be more than just a space for performances

Two stories from rising stars about how they came to the industry prompts Daisy Bowie-Sell to reflect on the importance of opening theatres' doors

Daisy Bowie-Sell • London • 14 Jun 2017



The Arcola Theatre
© Lidia Crisafulli

When I interviewed rising star director [Roy Alexander Weise](#) recently, he said something which clicked in my mind. At first, however, I couldn't work out exactly why. He was talking about how he first got into theatre. What he said was this:

"My first trip was after school and walking home. I needed to pee so I popped into a building that was open, which happened to be the Ovalhouse."

That moment, as a 13 year-old school kid, was the first time Roy had ever been into a theatre. And his visit wasn't with the intention of doing anything theatre-related. It was instead to answer an urgent call of nature. It's a great story, but that's not the reason it clicked in my head. The reason for that was that I had heard it before.

It took a tweet from [Matt Trueman](#), highlighting the two stories together, to jog my horrendous memory. It was [Arinze Kene](#), who I interviewed last year. The theatre was different – it was the Arcola this time – but his words were remarkably similar.

"I was 13 and on my way to basketball training in the summer and it started to pour down. I ducked into the nearest place, which happened to be a theatre - the Arcola Theatre in east London."

In both instances, after entering through the doors of the theatre out of necessity, and not even really knowing what sort of building it was, they were approached by the youth theatre. The rest, as they say, is history. Weise won the [JMK directing award in 2016](#) and subsequently directed a hit production of *The Mountaintop*, he was assistant director on *Hangmen, X* and *Escaped Alone* at the Royal Court and is directing two of his own shows this year. Kene won best supporting actor at the Evening Standard Awards last year and has starred in *EastEnders*, *One Night in Miami* at the Donmar and has written a host of plays. These guys are two of our brightest young British acting, writing and directing talents, and they first stumbled through a theatre's doors entirely by accident.

It's more and more vital that theatres are buildings which bring people in, act as community centres and places of connection


I don't think Arinze and Roy's stories are in any way isolated. I expect there are hundreds of stories like that out there. And it demonstrates a vital, important thing for theatre buildings today. That as well as being a theatre, they need to be an open, accessible space within their community.

I interviewed [Ellen McDougall](#) the other day, ahead of her first announcement of shows at the Gate Theatre, and one of the most important things for her, was trying to open up the theatre. For anyone who hasn't been, the Gate Theatre is tiny. You enter through a small unassuming door, up a steep flight of stairs, and round a corner into a tiny, 75-seater theatre. It's not open before 6pm when the box office opens and there's very little foyer space.

Following the terrible Grenfell Tower fire, there will be a real need for the community to come together

But that hasn't deterred Ellen. She's intent on connecting with her wider community and trying to open the theatre's doors to them. Her first event, before any of her shows start, is this weekend, where the venue itself will be open between 12 and 6pm on Sunday for anyone who wants to pop down for a visit. The theatre is also taking over the Portobello Pavilion in Powis Square on Saturday as part of InTransit Festival, and will offer free food, events and talks from names such as Ben Okri and Paterson Joseph. It's safe to say that following the terrible Grenfell Tower fire, there will be a real need for the community to come together.

This is no new idea, of course. Last year [Rufus Norris expressed a desire to see the National Theatre as space for the community both day and night](#). Stella Duffy, heading up the excellent Fun Palaces initiative - founded by Joan Littlewood, no less - knows the power of theatres as buildings which bring people in and act as community centres and places of connection. That, in our current world, is becoming more and more vital. And if Roy and Arinze are anything to go by, out of these palaces could come the theatre heroes and heroines

National Theatre |  Gate Theatre |  Arcola Theatre |  Joan Littlewood |  Stella Duffy | 
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INTERVIEWS

Rufus Norris: 'Now is not a time to be polite'

We talk to the National Theatre's artistic director as he announces his latest season at the theatre

Daisy Bowie-Sell | [London, West End](#) | 27 January 2017



Rufus Norris in rehearsal for *wonder.land*
© Brinkhoff and Mogenburg

"A theatre is a community centre," the artistic director of the National Theatre [Rufus Norris](#) tells me as we meet ahead of his latest season launch.

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I must admit, I'd be pretty surprised if the likes of Walter White strolled through the doors of my local community centre, but he certainly will be coming to Norris'. *Breaking Bad* actor Bryan Cranston, it has been announced today, is the latest addition to the illustrious line up of actors to tread the boards at the NT under Norris' tenure. He will be making his UK theatre debut in Lee Hall's adaptation of the '70s drama film *Network* in November this year.

As Norris explains, youth clubs are closing, bingo halls have shut, church congregations are getting smaller. Theatres, goes Norris' argument, should be – and are – filling the gaps these community spaces are leaving. And if you spend any time during the day at the National Theatre, it certainly feels like a welcoming, local space. The new café is open plan and the foyer is easier to navigate after a redesign. During the day, groups of school children, young adults, old adults and young professionals wander past its concrete walls.

“ 'Bryan Cranston isn't an idiot. He's not going to turn up just to be at the National. It's the whole package'

Throw into that mix some of the most exciting acting, directing, writing and creative talent around and you have what I would describe as the best community centre in the entire world. Cranston is the latest in a roster of big, big names to arrive at stage door: by the end of this year we will have seen Oscar-nominee Andrew Garfield, American legend Nathan Lane, Denise Gough, Russell Tovey, musical stars Imelda Staunton and Janie Dee, Ruth Wilson and Lucian Msamati. Not to mention Rory Kinnear returning with Anne-Marie Duff in *Macbeth*. Is Norris subtly turning the NT into an actor's theatre?

The answer to that, according to Norris himself, is no. "If you look at the famous actors who have worked here recently, they are all fantastic theatre actors. That's the point.

"Of course actors like Bryan or Nathan are going to draw the headlines, but they aren't going to come unless there is an idea. Lee Hall is a brilliant writer, *Network* is a brilliant story, Ivo [van Hove, who is directing] and Jan [Verseyveld, his designer] are an amazing team. Bryan's not an idiot, he's

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not going to turn up just to be at the National Theatre. It's the whole package."

“ 'I haven't focussed on Shakespeare partly because there have been so many great directors who have done it'

He has a point: most of us may know Cranston for the hit TV series where he played a cancer sufferer who turns to meth manufacturing, but let's not forget that he's also a Tony Award-winner. "It's about breadth," explains Rufus. "If I have one word which describes what we are trying to do here it's that. Breadth of audience, breadth of programme, breadth of national reach, diversity and the artists we're inviting to make work."

And if you look at the new season, his words ring true. Yes he has acting magnets, but he's also got star writers and directors too. There's the European premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Annie Baker's new play *John* – directed by James Macdonald; there's a new play in the Olivier by Rory Mullarkey about Saint George (that makes three new plays running in the Olivier this year, which is unheard of); *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* director [John Tiffany](#) is staging Disney's *Pinocchio* over Christmas; Polly Findlay directs David Eldridge's new play *Beginning* in the Dorfman and Rob Drummond will bring a new one-man show about democracy called *The Majority* to the theatre too.

And within all that mad hubbub, Norris himself will be directing. He's taking on *Macbeth* and it will be the first time he's directed a Shakespeare play in over 25 years. He last directed a play by the Bard in 1992, in a tiny fringe theatre in London. Why has it taken him this long to get to another one?

“ 'I hope we can really start to engage more with European drama'

"I haven't focused on his work or on classics generally partly because there have been so many great directors who have done it and I am drawn to the new, to the great writers of the future." But, funnily enough, he floated the idea of *Macbeth* at the Roundabout theatre in New York with Kinnear and Duff "years ago" but it never came to anything. "Now we're building the team and I'm thinking 'Oh shit, what am I going to do?'" he laughs.

Does he have a plan? A radical reworking (shock horror – not another

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.#Ricegate) of the text? It sounds not. He says he wants to "sit down in the room with the two of them [Duff and Kinnear] and with an expert who really understands, in all the ways that I don't, what that play is, so we can just go line by line."

Line by line, step by step is something Norris is familiar with in his programming work. *Network*, for example, has been a while coming. Initially it was van Hove who said he wanted to work with Cranston and getting Cranston on board was a long process. Norris hasn't watched much of *Breaking Bad* ("I am Billy No Mates. I have no life, I go to work. I never watch TV") but his youngest son is a fan. "Though it has obviously been a secret, all the way down the line, as we've been trying to make it happen, he is the person I have been talking to about it," Norris says, "And every week he's been saying – have you got him?"

“ 'There are certain parts of what we do that we won't be able to sustain if we have to shrink our budgets'

Given the length of negotiations, it is surprising how relevant a programming decision *Network* feels. Cranston will play anchor man Howard Beale, in the adaptation of Paddy Chayefsky's 1976 film. One of the things the film is most famous for is the character's rant about the state of America. "It is timely," says Norris, "somebody sent me a photo the other day of an image from the march in Washington DC and it had a huge placard of a still of *Network*."

It's fair to say that America has loomed large both in his and in his predecessor Nick Hytner's seasons. But though Norris wants that to "deepen" and continue, he also wants to work on their European programming. "I hope that over the next few years we can really start to follow the lead that's been set by the Young Vic and the Barbican in engaging more with European drama," he explains. He also has his sights set on Canada, New Zealand and Australia. So many places, in fact, that he's occasionally been - in his words - "smacked down". "We are already at full tilt, so we have to do things one step at a time."

In fact, it seems Norris has settled into his stride. After a rocky beginning "it was a tough first year" - where he faced criticism from reviewers and the

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press as well as the sudden departure of his chief executive Tessa Ross, he looks relaxed. Box office takings are good, the many tours (including a new one of *People, Places and Things* just announced) are bringing in money. "It feels like the organisation is more and more mission led. We all know what we are doing and why we are doing it."

More than ever, it seems, Norris is also aware of the importance of being a cultural organisation that can stand up for itself in a troubling, unstable arts climate. Funding-wise, of course the National Theatre is better off than most, but it's not that simple, says Norris. "There are certain parts of what we do that we won't be able to sustain if we have to shrink our budgets. We've got to make the best argument for the fact that the cultural industries in this country are massively important," he explains.

"It's not a time to be polite and quiet about it," he adds. Indeed, and in a place like the National Theatre, it's not hard to see the way theatre can connect, engage, galvanise and delight a vast number of people. It's one hell of a community centre.

[Click here for the full story on the National Theatre's new announcement](#)

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