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*Agatha Christie's
The Mousetrap*

*36th
year*

St. Martin's Theatre

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THEATREPRINT

VOLUME III

NUMBER 7

There are two splendid art exhibitions on view in London in July which deserve especial attention. They could not be more different in subject but both are unique in their own way and on no account should they be missed. *Treasures from the Royal Collection* is staged at The Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace; *Late Picasso* at The Tate Gallery.

EXHIBITIONS

Those responsible for promoting Royal enterprises are not noted for their use of superlatives, but even they say that the latest exhibition is the most important and the most beautiful yet mounted at The Queen's Gallery since it arose in 1962 from the rubble of the private chapel destroyed by a German bomb in October 1940. The exhibition also marks the culmination of the distinguished Royal service of Sir Oliver Millar, Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures, who retires this month.

Among the 131 exhibits are masterpieces from all parts of The Queen's Collection, chosen for their historical interest and for their beauty. Many of the exhibits have not previously been seen in public and the exhibition vividly illustrates the contributions made to The Royal Collection by such discerning connoisseurs as Charles I, Frederick Prince of Wales, George III, George IV and Prince Albert. Among the paintings are celebrated works by Raphael, Holbein, Bruegel, Lotto, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Vermeer, De Hooch, Claude, Rubens, Canaletto and Zoffany.

A number of the paintings have been specially cleaned and restored for the exhibition. The most important rehabilitations include the portrait of Erasmus by Metsys, now proven as the original work painted for Sir Thomas More, and the immensely moving panel by Pieter Bruegel, *The Massacre of the Innocents*.

There is also a spectacular group of miniatures from Holbein to Samuel Cooper. Furniture and works of art include Queen Charlotte's jewel cabinet by William Vile, a four-sided astronomical clock made for George III, George IV's roll-top

desk by Riesener, the finest Chelsea dinner service in existence, and a terracotta bust by Mazzoni which has recently been identified as a childhood portrait of Henry VIII.

Treasures from the Royal Collection exhibition will run until Summer 1989. Opening hours 10.30am-5.00pm daily, Sunday 2.00pm-5.00pm. Closed Monday (except Bank Holidays). Admission: Adults £1.20, reduced charge 60p.

The masterpiece illustrated here is the famous triple portrait of Charles I, painted by Anthony Van Dyck in 1635 to enable Bernini, who worked in Rome, to make a bust of the King. The painting was brought back from Italy in 1802 and bought for The Royal Collection by George IV 20 years later; the bust was destroyed in the fire at Whitehall Palace in 1698.



Now to The Tate for *Late Picasso*. The Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, the Musée Picasso, Paris, and The Tate Gallery have organised this major exhibition of the painting, sculptures, drawings and prints which Pablo Picasso produced in the last twenty years of his life.

Seventy-two oil paintings, three sculptures and forty-seven prints are included in the exhibition which was first seen at the Musée National d'Art Moderne earlier this year. Initially Picasso's late works aroused great controversy, even among his most faithful supporters but reaction to the exhibition in Paris indicates that the public now regard the final years as one of Picasso's greatest periods. However, there are many who still find his grotesque images and complicated compositions impossible to understand. These people may find the explanation of David Sylvester

EXHIBITIONS

ter, one of the organisers of the exhibition, enlightening. Writing of Picasso's late works in the sumptuous catalogue (paperback £14.95, hardback £19.95) he says, "... the glance of the figures resembles one of the ways in which caged animals look at us. Above all there is the over-life-size scale of the figures and the insistence placed on this by their confronting us so directly and challengingly - a scale made significant by the fact that the figures are not gods or demigods - pantocrators or madonnas, for instance - but people - some importunate, some indifferent - people we might find ourselves confronted by in a street market, a bar, a station, a brothel, a studio or a fancy-dress party, but who loom up over us here so that they bring us to a sudden and apprehensive stop."

Late Picasso, which is sponsored by Global Asset Management Limited, is on view until 18th September 1988. Hours: Monday-Saturday 10.00-5.30pm, Sunday 2.00-5.30pm.

R.E.W.



BOOKS

"Laurence Olivier is not merely the greatest actor of this century, but perhaps of all time." This statement is made on the dust jacket of Anthony Holden's *Olivier* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson £16.00). The

'perhaps' stops it short of being definitive, but it will no doubt have many of the theatrical giants of the past revolving in their ornate tombs. Some credence, however, can be given to the claim because of all the knights created since stage acting became a profession, Olivier, who was the youngest actor ever to receive a knighthood, was also the first to be elevated to the House of Lords. But it took Harold Wilson two years to persuade him to accept the peerage - Olivier himself did not fancy being a 'stuck-up' lord of the theatre.

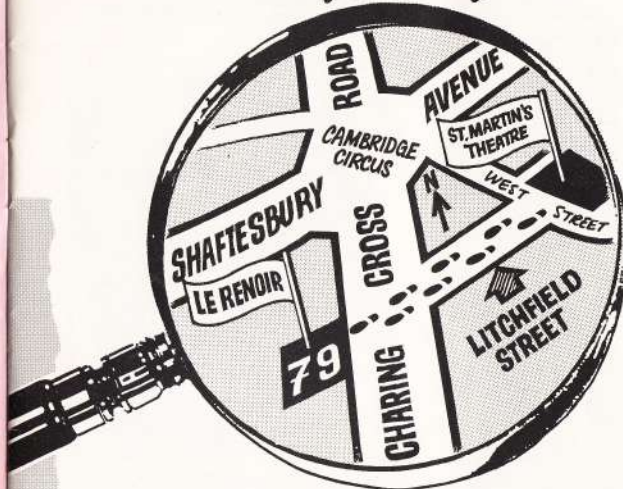
Anthony Holden has done a superb job with an exceedingly difficult and bewildering subject who in his astonishing 60-year-long career has soared to triumphant heights and known the depths of dismal failure. He has been stage and screen director, impresario and Oscar-winning Hollywood heart-throb. He has directed 38 stage productions, six TV plays and six films and was the founder of the National Theatre. His parts have ranged from Hamlet to Archie Rice, from Heathcliff to Rudolph Hess - 194 different stage, screen and TV identities, but his greatest role has undoubtedly been the impersonation of Laurence Olivier. His three wives, Jill Esmond, Vivien Leigh and Joan Plowright have all described him as a man always on stage, always acting. Throughout his long life, Olivier has played a complex character whom no-one, least of all himself, has ever really known.

The author, who had scant encouragement from his subject emphasises that the biography is neither official or authorised, but Lord Olivier did give his own friends, colleagues and acquaintances permission to talk to him. Holden approached more than 200 of them and many spoke with revealing frankness and at considerable depth. As a result *Olivier* is a penetrating, witty portrait, rich in anecdote, often flattering, frequently unflattering, of the son of an eccentric priest who brought him up to believe that acting was not an acceptable profession for a boy of his class, who nonetheless succeeded to the throne of the British theatre; and who proudly believes that one of his greatest achievements was learning to fly in order to conquer his fear of flying. That he wrote off three aeroplanes before he received his pilot's licence only adds to that remarkable achievement.

One's overall impression from the book is that on this earth there has never been, nor ever will be, anyone the equal of 'Larrie'. One has to look on a higher plane. Sir Peter Hall's comment on this particular aspect is probably the most apposite yet made, "I suspect," he said, "that God is rather like Olivier."

R.E.W.

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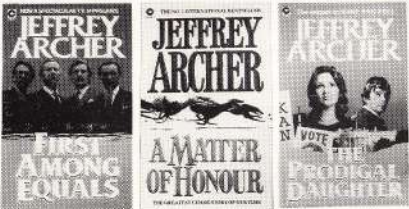
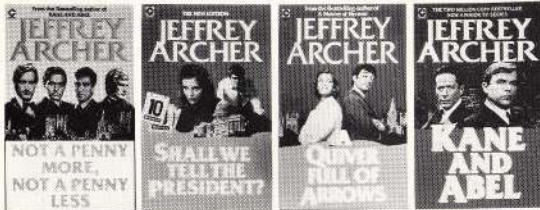
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ST MARTIN'S THEATRE

The St Martins Theatre was planned as a companion to the Ambassadors next door by the same Architect – W. G. R. Sprague. However, whereas the Ambassadors opened in 1913, the outbreak of war held up building on the St Martin's and prevented it from opening until 1916.

The Theatre was built for the 19th Baron Willoughby de Broke by the late B. A. Meyer and was under the control of his son Richard Meyer for many years. It is now managed by Maybox Group PLC on behalf of the present Lord Willoughby de Broke who is now the proprietor.

The Theatre opened on 23rd November 1916 with a 'comedy with music' called *Hoop La!* which starred Gertie Millar and George Graves, under the management of C. B. Cochran who was also lessee of the Theatre. This was replaced after one hundred and eight performances by a very different type of entertainment in *Damaged Goods* – the first public performances in this country of the play. Several other productions followed until, in 1920 the management of the Theatre was taken over by Alec Rea who with Basil Dean formed the company "ReandeaN" – "always printed with capital letters at either end" as Basil Dean points out in his autobiography *Seven Ages*. During the next five years a number of notable productions were seen, among them three plays by John Galsworthy – *The Skin Game*, *Loyalties* and *The Forest* – and Clemence Dane's *A Bill of Divorcement*. This play established not only Miss Dane as a playwright of note but also the young actress Meggie Albanesi who was to die in 1923 at the age of twenty-four. A plaque in her memory commissioned by Basil Dean from Eric Gill hangs in the foyer of the Theatre. Among other successes during this period were Capek's *R.U.R.*, *The Likes of Her* and Frederick Lonsdale's *Spring Cleaning*.

In 1925 "ReandeaN" was succeeded by "ReandeaO" with Alec Rea remaining as lessee of the Theatre. He continued in this capacity until 1937 and some of the plays presented during this tenure were: Arnold Ridley's *The Ghost Train* (which subsequently transferred and in all ran for six hundred and fifty-five performances), *Scotch Mist* by Patrick Hastings, Sidney Howard's *They Knew What They Wanted*, *The Queen Was in the ParLOUR* by Noël Coward, *Berkeley Square*, *The White Chateau*, *The Silver Cord*, *Sorry You've Been Troubled*, *Petticoat Influence* and Rodney Ackland's *Strange Orchestra*. Early in 1933 *The Green Bay Tree* played for one hundred and sixty-

three performances and in October of that year *The Wind and the Rain* started a West End run of one thousand and one performances (it transferred from the St Martin's first to Queen's and then to the Savoy). *Man of Yesterday*, *The Two Mrs Carrolls* and *Heroes Don't Care* were some of the subsequent productions in the mid-thirties.

In 1937 Gerald Bright Enterprises Ltd acquired the lease and Basil Dean returned to the St Martin's to direct both *Autumn* with Flora Robson and J. B. Priestley's *When We Are Married* which in 1938 began a run of one hundred and seventy-five performances.

In 1942 Gerald Bright Enterprises Ltd passed their lease on to J. W. Pemberton and the early years of the Second World War saw the staging of various productions. The most successful of these were Kenneth Horne's *Love in a Mist* and Rose Franken's *Claudia*. In 1943 J. W. Pemberton gave up his lease to Bernard Delfont who retained his interest until 1945 when the Theatre came under the control of J. M. Cook. This last changeover took place when the Theatre housed a resounding success – Edward Percy's *The Shop at Sly Corner* which starred Keneth Kent, Ada Reeve and Cathleen Nesbitt and ran for eight hundred and sixty-three performances.

Between this play and 1959 productions of note included: *Penny Plain* with Joyce Grenfell, *The Rainmaker* and two comedies by Hugh and Margaret Williams – *Plaintiff in a Pretty Hat* and *The Grass is Greener*. The latter starred Celia Johnson, Joan Greenwood, Moray Watson and Hugh Williams and it was during its long run that the Theatre once again returned to the direct control of the de Broke family with B. A. Meyer as administrator and licensee.

A double bill by Hugh and Margaret Williams called *Double York*, *Inherit the Wind* and transfers of John Mortimer's *The Wrong Side of the Park* and Sygne's *The Playboys of the Western World* all followed together with the successful thriller *Guilty Party* produced by Peter Bridge, who also held the lease for several years. Since 1968 the lessee has been Peter Saunders and during this time the thriller *Sleuth* was produced and before transferring had broken all records for the Theatre. Since *The Mousetrap* transferred here on 25th March 1974 these records have again been broken. MT

We gratefully acknowledge help given in the preparation of this article from Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchem's *The Theatres of London* published by The New English Library.

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The Theatre's own generator provides electricity in the event of a power cut and air cooling during very hot weather

The Mousetrap was first presented on 25th November 1952 at the Ambassadors Theatre where it ran until Saturday 23rd March 1974. It was transferred the following Monday 25th March 1974 to the St Martin's Theatre.



THE MOUSETRAP and AGATHA CHRISTIE

When the late Queen Mary was approaching her eightieth birthday she was asked by the BBC what she would like to celebrate the event – anything from Shakespeare to Opera. Queen Mary said she would like an 'Agatha Christie play' and Mrs Christie promptly wrote a thirty minute radio production called *Three Blind Mice*. This was eventually to become *The Mousetrap*.

It was some years later when Agatha Christie asked me to lunch with her. Over the coffee she handed me a brown paper parcel and said, 'this is a little present for you'. The present was the script of The Mousetrap and the one person who made no money out of it was the authoress herself. She had left it in trust for her seven-year-old grandson and all her royalties went to him.

When *The Mousetrap* opened on the 25th November 1952, Sir Winston Churchill was Prime Minister, Harry S. Truman was President of the USA and Stalin was Head of Russia. Meat, bacon, sugar, cheese, butter and margarine were still rationed. And every man and woman in the country had to have an Identity Card.

In its thirty-five years in the West End of London *The Mousetrap* has been seen by seven million people and if all these people stood in a line the queue would reach the Highlands of Scotland. The play has been performed in forty-four other countries throughout the world and has been translated into twenty-four languages and in the West End of London alone takings have exceeded thirteen million pounds.

In the West End two hundred and twenty-two actors and actresses have appeared in the play and one hundred and seven understudies. Sixty-four miles of shirts have been ironed and more than two hundred and sixty-two tons of ice creams sold.

It would be easy to write a statistical biography of Agatha Christie. She wrote fourteen plays; her eightieth book was published on her eightieth birthday in September 1970; more than four hundred million of her books have been sold in virtually every country in the world. In fact, in March 1962, UNESCO announced that Agatha Christie was the most widely read British writer in the world, with Shakespeare coming a poor second.

In 1956, she was awarded the CBE and in The New Year's Honours List of 1971, she was made a Dame of the Order of the British Empire.

But after an association and friendship with her lasting more than twenty-five years and halted only by her death on 12th January 1976, I would like to write a little more personally about her. Agatha Christie was very shy although this shyness extended only to strangers. Among her friends she was both extremely talkative yet a wonderful listener and was extremely knowledgeable on a vast range of subjects. A great Royalist, she nevertheless disliked pomp. Until a few years before her death she played tennis and could be seen with her family bathing on the beach at Paignton in Devon.

She went to the races (an annual event at Exeter was named "The Mousetrap Stakes") and was known occasionally to have five shillings on a horse! Her pride and joy was her great-granddaughter (middle name Agatha) and she very much favoured large hats.

She took failure as imperturbably as she accepted success. When, on the London first night of *Witness for the Prosecution* she received the greatest ovation I have ever heard in any theatre, she whispered to me, 'It's rather fun, isn't it?' When her next play was not acclaimed by the critics and I telephoned to console her, she merely said, 'At least I'm glad *The Times* liked it.'

One year she took all the major awards at a local flower and vegetable show, and when asked the secret of her success, she replied, 'My gardener'. She was as English as Buckingham Palace, the House of Commons and the Tower of London, and was certainly the most unforgettable character I have ever met.

Peter Saunders

36th Year

On 25th November, 1987 *The Mousetrap* celebrated its thirty-fifth birthday and on 30th November a completely new cast joined the production to mark the start of its thirty-sixth year. The eight current

actors and actresses bring the total number who have appeared in the London production up to two hundred and twenty-two. The seventeenth director has now taken over.



ROBIN MURPHY
Detective Sergeant Trotter



HELEN CHRISTIE
Mrs Boyle



PAUL BACON
Mr Paravicini



HAZEL McBRIDE
Mollie Ralston

ROBIN MURPHY

Robin Murphy was born and brought up in Mevagissey, Cornwall. Schooling in Kent was followed by a year on the streets of London busking with a guitar to earn the money for drama school auditions. Then came three fondly remembered years at The Drama Centre in Chalk Farm. At Drama Centre Robin met his wife-to-be, the actress Carol Frazer, and they went on to become founder members of The Major Road Theatre Company which toured the length and breadth of Britain, with occasional forays into Europe, playing a variety of shows in an even greater variety of venues! TV, radio and repertory followed with a personal highlight being a number of thoroughly enjoyable seasons at Alan Ayckbourn's Theatre-in-the-Round in Scarborough. Here Robin played a variety of parts, as diverse as Clive in *Rookery Nook* and Konstantin in *The Seagull* and he enjoyed another European tour and the filming by the BBC of an Ayckbourn musical *Men On Women on Men*. Robin and Carol have two children, James and Madeleine, who luckily share their parents' twin passions – motor racing and travel! Having played a range of outcasts – from Richard III to Wilson in Orton's *Ruffian On The Stair*, Robin is relishing playing the part of Detective Sergeant Trotter.

HELEN CHRISTIE

Helen Christie was born in India of Scottish parents and is a licentiate of the Guildhall School of Music, in London. She has appeared in the West End on numerous occasions and among her best known appearances have been in the revival of *Spring 1600* which was written and directed by Emyl Williams, Amanda in Noel Coward's *Private Lives* at the Apollo and Fortune Theatres, which is one of her favourite roles, *Anthony and Cleopatra* at the Piccadilly, *Traveller's Joy* at the Criterion, *A Clean Kill* with Rachel Roberts, also at the Criterion, *The Bargain* with Alastair Sim at the St Martin's, *Ivanov*, another favourite production with Sir John Gielgud and Vivienne Leigh, which also played a most successful season in New York, *Cat Among The Pigeons* at the Prince of Wales, *The Constant Wife* at the Albery with Ingrid Bergman, directed by Sir John Gielgud, two and a half successful and happy years at the Strand in *No Sex Please, We're British*, and most recently Helen starred in a very successful overseas tour of *Fallen Angels* and in a UK tour of *Present Laughter*. She was in the first television series from Granada *My Wife's Sister*. Her other appearances include *Cranford*, *Wives And Daughters*, *The Pallisers* and more recently *Hilary and Don't Wait Up*.

PAUL BACON

Paul Bacon trained at RADA, won the International Theatre Institute Scholarship, and was appointed Artist-in-Residence at the University of Georgia, USA. He then went to Australia with a seven year contract as actor/director for Hector Crawford Productions and had his own TV show *Bacon For Dinner* and directed for the Australian National Theatre. In the West End his credits include the Chief Whip in *Number Ten* at the Strand, Caesar Rodney in the musical *1776* at the Albery, Owl in *Winnie The Pooh* at the Phoenix, Professor Manchu Phoo in the musical *Magic Of The Young Houdini* also at the Phoenix, Mr Pompanance in *The Magic Man* at the Mayfair, Omar Khyam in *Kismet* at the Shaftesbury. He starred as God opposite Anthony Newley in the hit musical *The Good Old Bad Old Days* at the Prince of Wales and as Dr Dionisio Genoni in Pirandello's *Henry IV* with Rex Harrison at Her Majesty's. Last year he played Sir Cautious Fullbank in *The Lucky Chance* at The Royal Court. Recent favourite roles outside London include Sir in *The Dresser*, Don Quixote in *Man Of La Mancha*, Soames in *Getting Married*, Dame in *Mother Goose*, Howard in a new musical *The Comeback* and the seven roles in the daily TV AM serial *The World Of Melanie Parker*. Paul has a thriving career in the Voice-Over world providing the voices for TV and radio commercials, narrating documentary films, current events programmes and Audio Visual productions.

HAZEL McBRIDE

Hazel McBride after graduating from Bristol University and performing at the Edinburgh Festival, began her career in Repertory Theatre. She has played a wide range of parts in theatre seasons including Hull, Bolton, Billingham, Sheffield and Windsor. A season at Bristol Old Vic was followed by a West End run of the musical *Tarantara*. Tours include 'Meg' in *Little Women* (Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon) and a tour with the Cambridge Theatre Company. Her most recent theatre work was in Stockholm in the thriller *Who Killed Santa Claus?*. Hazel's favourite theatre roles include 'Honey' in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, 'Mrs Elvsted' in *Hedda Gabler* and 'Yelena' in *Uncle Vanya*. On television Hazel played the part of 'Madelaine' in the BBC's *Secret Army* series, and was also in many episodes of STV's *Take The High Road*. Being partly Scottish she has also been in *Sutherland's Law*, *Mackinnons* and *House On The Hill*. Other TV appearances have been in *Edward VII*, *Within These Walls*, *Dickens Of London*, *Tales Of The Unexpected*, *Van Der Valk*, *The Professionals* and *Rumpole*. For American Television she played a leading role in *Hart To Hart*, in which she was quite often filmed on horseback. Hazel enjoys riding and also rode in the BBC trilogy of Molly Keane's novel *Good Behaviour*. Hazel is married to Jim Mason who is artistic director of All Change Arts. They have two children, Julia aged six and Emily aged two.



RUPERT BATES
Giles Ralston



DAVID BEALE
Major Metcalf



KINNY GARDNER
Christopher Wren



DEIRDRE EDWARDS
Miss Casewell

From the Guinness Book of Records

Longest Runs

The longest continuous run of any show in the world is *The Mousetrap* by Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, D.B.E. (nee Miller, later Lady Mallowan) (1890-1976). This thriller opened on 25th Nov. 1952, at the Ambassadors Theatre (capacity 453) and moved after 8862 performances 'down the road' to the St Martin's Theatre on 25th Mar. 1974. The Silver Jubilee performance on 25th Nov. 1977 was the 10,390th.

RUPERT BATES

Rupert Bates started off his career as an Assistant Stage Manager and covered all aspects of Stage Management before getting the acting bug. He is best known to the general public for his numerous television appearances, particularly with Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson on *The Young Ones* and *Catflap And Filthy Rich*. He has also appeared on *The Lenny Henry Show*, *Three Of A Kind*, *Groove Us A Break*, *Happy Families*, *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum*, all for BBC TV. *Girls On Top* for Central TV and a number of *Saturday Live* shows for LWT. Rupert was also a member of Noel Edmonds' Hit Squad on *The Late Late Breakfast Show*. He played the lead role in the film *The Original Dream* and on stage has played roles as diverse as Sub Lieutenant Grainger in the National Tour of *Seagulls Over Sorrento* to *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. This will be his third appearance in the West End, the others being in *Laburnum Grove* and *The Last Of Mrs Cheyney*. His late father was Michael Bates star of *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum* and *Last Of The Summer Wine*. Rupert married in 1984 and has a daughter Angharad. He is a very family orientated man. His hobbies are photography (he always has a camera around his neck) and travelling, which he doesn't have much time for.

DAVID BEALE

David Beale, after National Service in the RAF, trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and made his professional debut at the Bristol Old Vic in Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. He has had extensive repertory experience including seasons at York, Northampton, Birmingham and Harrogate and he made his West End debut in *Mary, Mary* at the Queens Theatre, other West End appearances have been in *Poor Bitos*, *Hide-Out* and at the Greenwich Theatre, *Six Characters In Search Of An Author*. He has appeared on television in *Bread*, *Bergerac*, *Call Me Mister*, *Flip-Side Of Dominic Hide*, *No Place Like Home* and his film credits include *Minder On The Orient Express*, *Secret Ceremony* and *Dance With A Stranger*. David's favourite role was as Andy Tracey in *Lovers* and the part he would like to play more than anything is the psychiatrist in *Equus*. He enjoys gardening, bird watching and walking and his main ambition is to keep working in plays he wants to do.

KINNY GARDNER

Kinny Gardner first hit the professional boards at the age of thirteen and this year celebrated fifteen years in the business. A talented singer and dancer, Kinny spent three years in the cast of *Godspell*, both in the West End and on National tour. He played Columbia in the Kings Road production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and recently joined the UK tour to play the very different role of Riff Raff for eight months. Other major roles includes MC in *Cabaret*, Jenny in *The Threepenny Opera*, Rossingol in *Maret/Sade*, the Punk Pirate in *Pirates Of Penzance*, Barry Kent in *The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole Aged 13¾*, Pistol in *Falstaffs Revenge* and a dazzling Mary Sunshine in *Chicago*. Kinny also created the role of Rudolpho the dancing master in Perth Theatre's Edinburgh International Festival hit *A Wee Touch Of Class*. He has toured nationally and internationally with the Scottish Mime Theatre, Kaboodle Theatre and the Crazy Kat Theatre Company for whom he is also co-artistic director. He trained in mime and dance with Lindsay Kemp and at the Martha Graham School in New York. Kinny has two solo shows under his belt, *Identity* and most recently *Lancelot* which was premiered in March 1987. He is a versatile Pantomime Dame, one of the youngest in the business, and last year was seen as Agnes The Cook in *Dick Whittington*. He puts his energy and vitality down to a healthy diet and clean living . . .

DEIRDRE EDWARDS

Deirdre Edwards, after training at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, lived in France where she taught English and worked as a Courier. On returning to England she then, with two friends, set up Platypus Theatre and performed in schools and art centres. Since then, Deirdre has toured extensively throughout Britain and in Europe with various companies and was a member of Cheek By Jowl when they won the Laurence Olivier Award as the most promising newcomers. Roles played include Alison in *Look Back In Anger*, Elizabeth-Jane in *The Mayor Of Casterbridge*, all the women in *Frankenstein*, Cleone in Racine's *Andromache* and most recently Masha in Chekov's *The Seagull* at the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff. Deirdre has played a number of parts on radio and is also a professional storyteller - having recorded several Morning Stories for the BBC and also romantic novels and children's stories for cassette. Her television work includes *The Nation's Health* for Channel 4 and the role of Kath in *Ballroom* for HTV. Deirdre lives in Shepherd's Bush and embraces the "new age" approach to life and is a keen supporter of the Friends Of The Earth. One of her many interests is learning about different countries and their cultures and she hopes that her acting work may take her around the world.



Robin Murphy and Hazel McBride in Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" at the St Martin's Theatre. (1987/88)



And in the original 1952 production Richard Attenborough and Sheila Sim

THE MOUSETRAP

by

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Characters in order of appearance

HAZEL McBRIDE appears as Mollie Ralston

RUPERT BATES appears as Giles Ralston

KINNY GARDNER appears as Christopher Wren

HELEN CHRISTIE appears as Mrs Boyle

DAVID BEALE appears as Major Metcalf

DEIRDRE EDWARDS appears as Miss Casewell

PAUL BACON appears as Mr Paravicini

ROBIN MURPHY appears as Detective Sergeant Trotter

TIME: Agatha Christie time

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

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Scene 1 The Great Hall of Monkswell Manor

Scene 2 The same. The following day after lunch

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

The same. A quarter of an hour later

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| Deputy Stage Manager | Claire Mason | |
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| Understudy for Christopher Wren | Richard Self | |
| Understudy for Mollie Ralston and Miss Casewell | Beverley Seymour | |
| Understudy for Mrs Boyle | Nancy Seabrooke | |
| Understudy for Mr Paravincini and Major Metcalf | Alex Blyth | |
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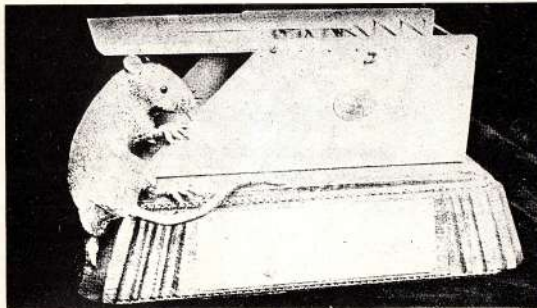
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London Theatres co-ordinate up-to-the-minute information about current and future performances in the following newspapers: The Observer, Sunday Telegraph, Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Times, The Standard, The Independent.



Photograph by George Besser

On 12th April 1958, *The Mousetrap* became the longest running production of any kind in the history of the British Theatre, beating the five-and-a-half years run of *Chu Chin Chou*. On that day, Agatha Christie presented to the Ambassadors Theatre this mousetrap (designed by Stanley G Morris) bearing the words: "Presented to the Ambassadors Theatre by Agatha Christie, in grateful commemoration of the run of *The Mousetrap* 25th November 1952 ———". This is on show in the foyer of that theatre.

CHARLTON HESTON

answers



1. *Which is your favourite theatre?*
At the moment, the Savoy.
2. *What are your favourite plays?*
Aside from *A Man For All Seasons*, *Macbeth*, *Anthony & Cleopatra* and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.
3. *What are your favourite films?*
Citizen Kane, *Henry V* and *Bridge Over The River Kwai*.
4. *Which film in which you have appeared is your favourite?*
Will Penny or *Khartoum*.
5. *What is your earliest recollection?*
Picking up firewood.
6. *What is your favourite sport?*
Tennis.
7. *What would you do to make London brighter?*
Put on more plays.
8. *What is your ideal holiday?*
I don't take many.
9. *Where do you like buying your clothes?*
I don't like buying clothes.
10. *Which are your favourite restaurants?*
Here in London, The White Elephant, Gavroche and the Dorchester Grill.
11. *What is your favourite dish?*
Grilled steak.
12. *What is your greatest ambition?*
To get it right . . . one time.
13. *What are your favourite hobbies?*
Drawing.
14. *What is your favourite quotation?*
'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, therefore do it with all thy might'.
15. *What would you do if you were Prime Minister for a day?*
I've been an English King, and English General and an English Saint. They wouldn't let me be Prime Minister. Besides, I like the one you've got.
16. *What is your pet aversion?*
Tardiness and smoking.
17. *What, if you were not an actor, would you most like to be?*
A world class tennis player or a set designer.



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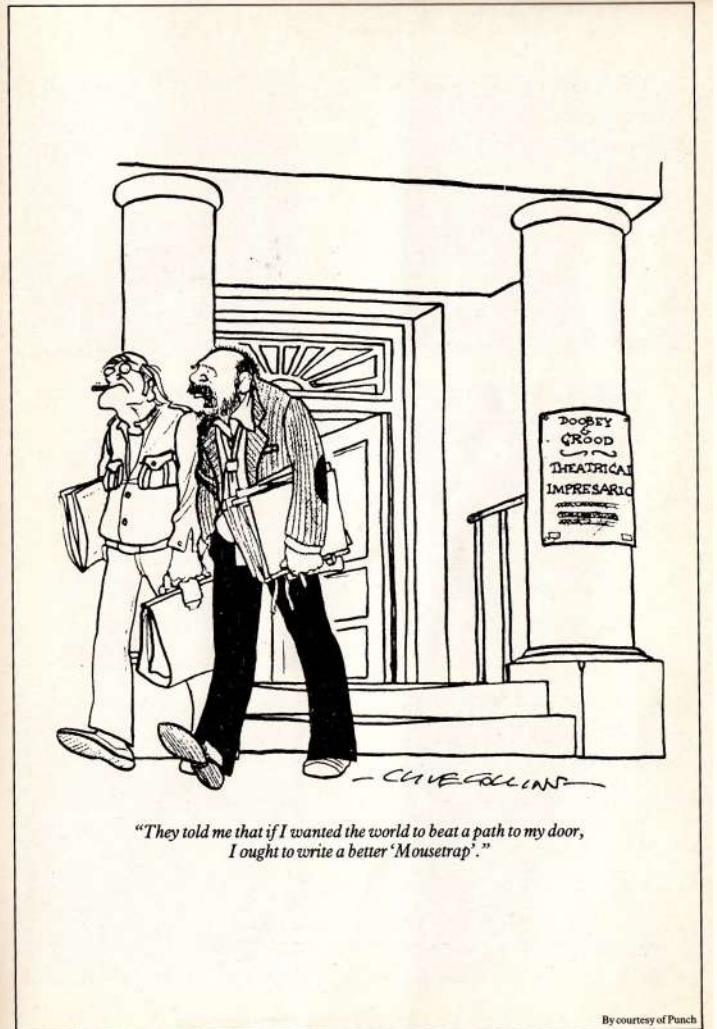
'THE MOUSETRAP'

4,575 PERFORMANCES

22 JUL 1957 - 23 NOV 1968

Alan Russell

ALAN RUSSELL
Editor



By courtesy of Punch

AGATHA CHRISTIE PLAYS



1



2



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4



5



6

PRESENTED BY PETER SAUNDERS



7



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9



10

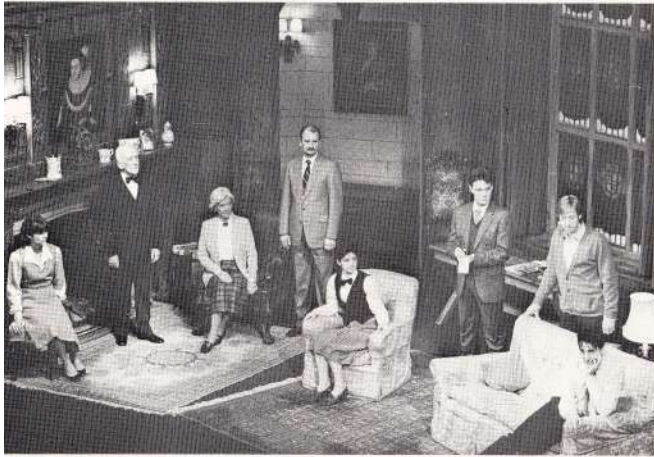


11

- 1 Beryl Baxter and Joan Newell in *The Hollow*, Fortune Theatre 1951.
- 2 Richard Attenborough and Sheila Sim in the original production of *The Minotaur*, Ambassadors Theatre 1952.
- 3 Percy Marmont and Patricia Jessel in *Witness for the Prosecution*, Winter Garden Theatre 1953.
- 4 Margaret Lockwood, Myles Eason, Harold Scott and Felix Aylmer in *Spider's Web*, Savoy Theatre 1954.
- 5 Gwen Chacrell and George Baker in *Towards Zero*, St James's Theatre 1956.
- 6 Moira Redmond and Gerard Heinz in *Vorlest*, Strand Theatre 1958.
- 7 Renee Asherov and Nigel Stock in *The Unexpected Guest*, Duchess Theatre 1958.
- 8 Lisa Daniely, Margot Boyd, Anthony Marlowe and Ann Firbank in *Go Back For Murder*, Duchess Theatre 1960.
- 9 Raymond Bowers, Betty McDowell and David Langton, in *Dale of Three*, Duchess Theatre 1962.
- 10 Patricia Brake, Mia Nodari, Barbara Flynn, Christopher Scollay, Eleanore Summerfield, Dinah Sheridan and Dulcie Gray in *A Murder is Announced*, Vaudeville Theatre 1977.
- 11 Gordon Jackson and Margaret Courtenay in Agatha Christie's *Cards On The Table* at the Vaudeville Theatre 1981.



Paul Bacon, Helen Christie, Rupert Bates, Robin Murphy, Deirdre Edwards and David Beale in Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" at the St Martin's Theatre. (1987/88)



Hazel McBride, Paul Bacon, Helen Christie, David Beale, Deirdre Edwards, Robin Murphy, Rupert Bates and Kinny Gardner in Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" at the St Martin's Theatre. (1987/88)



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Ruth LEONS **NEW YORK NOTES**

Now that the artificial fog has cleared from the stage of the Minskoff Theatre two emotions have surfaced. One is relief.

Last year, in a nadir for the indigenous American theatre, nearly two-thirds of the Antoinette Perry Awards (the Tonys) went to British imported shows. This year, of nineteen competitive awards the British took only eight, seven going to that international phenomenon, *The Phantom of the Opera*. Even better news for America is that the competition was so strong in the Best Play category that the four nominees, all homegrown, edged out another four equally deserving possibilities only one of which, *Breaking the Code*, was imported.

This is all important because, without sufficient first-rate new what we have come to call 'product' the Broadway and, not so incidentally, the West End would wither. No theatrical community - producers or consumers - can survive on an unvarying indigestible diet of old musicals, safe revivals, mindless farces and imports. But a year ago that seemed to be where Broadway was heading and, except for the subsidised theatres, where London's West End seems to be heading now.

So the temporary occupation of Broadway, which was in any event mostly an invasion by the massed armies of Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Cameron Macintosh (yes, yes, I remember *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Les Misérables* but they were both the children of subsidised, not commercial managements) is over. What this year's Tonys prove is that Broadway has rediscovered itself.

But has it? The Tonys, remember, are awarded for achievements 'in one of 38 eligible Broadway theatres' and nominated by a committee of venerable, if a touch elderly, actors, writers, producers and designers. The 76 nominations, (four per category, nineteen categories) are then voted on by 730 theatre professionals all regularly employed (when there is work to be had) in the Broadway theatre.

And now, the democratic process having worked yet again, there is much well deserved celebration and congratulation to be heard in the land, for an artistic and commercial season of quality unparalleled in recent years. But amid the post-Tony euphorics you will find pockets of the second emotion.

Hal Prince has now won sixteen Tonys, more than any other individual. His first, for *The Pyjama Game*, was 34 years ago. The latest, for his direction of *The Phantom of the Opera*, was on June 5th. So, when Hal Prince talks about the American theatre, everybody seriously interested in its past and future had better listen. And his message, after the Tonys, was a sober one. He pointed out that this year's winners were drawn from a tiny field, a total of 32 openings in a 52 week year. "When I was young," he said, "there were five or ten a week". Where, he wanted to know, are the opportunities for today's young directors, writers, composers? If present trends continue, not on Broadway.

All his listeners know that, in today's Broadway or West End commercial theatre, where the economics militate against anything small-scale or uninternational or slow to find its audience, the limitless horizon of live theatre has been reduced to a few blockbusters.

So the second emotion floating around the New York theatre right now is . . . fear of obsolescence.

The signal that the British invasion of Broadway is over was underlined by the fact that all four plays nominated in the Best Play category for the Tonys were written by Americans and, in the wake of the *Carrie* and *Chess* disasters, *Phantom* was the only British entry in the Best Musical stakes.

Nominated for the Best Book of the Musical, *The Gospel at Colonus* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre is a holy marriage between the sacred and the profane, between Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and a black Pentecostal church service.

The story of *Oedipus'* old age and death is acted out in song and story by a stageful of gospel singers from a dozen different groups. It is unified by a preacher/narrator (Morgan Freeman) and directed by Lee Breuer who wrote both book and lyrics.

Many of the singers are, like *Oedipus*, blind, and once the connection has been established (at one point an entire choir of blind singers repre-



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sents Oedipus) they each need a minder to ensure they don't fall off an overcrowded stage fraught with obstacles. This awkward leading around, not surprisingly, does put a crimp in the spontaneous exuberance. While one is, of course, in favour of hiring the handicapped and while their disability certainly doesn't disqualify them from singing, directing them to dance is clearly a hazard to their health and all a bit off-putting to the rest of us who can see the dangers.

There's one group in blinding white and another in bright blue complete with matching gloves. Then there's a set in hot pink and one in mustard and that's only the men. The women wear an eclectic collection of Greco-Roman African-inspired togas decorated with sequins and lamé.

The evening lurches from majesty to vulgarity as quickly as it turns from profundity to triviality. Some of it is awkward and absurd. Some of it is overblown and risible. But there are moments of great power.

And what a way to teach children the classics. If Breuer wants to make fairly obscure points by drawing parallels between the pagan and Christian traditions, good luck to him. All I could think of was that a whole audience gets exposed to Sophocles, every good gospel singer in America gets work and whoever had the lamé concession for this production gets to be a millionaire.



Although Derek Jacobi was nominated for Best Actor, the play in which he gave his brilliant performance, *Breaking the Code*, was not. But, like *Breaking the Code*, one of the nominated plays is based on a true story.

When US chief arms negotiator, Paul Nitze, and his Soviet opposite number were at an impasse in the 1983 Geneva arms talks, they decided to clear their heads by taking a walk in the woods without their aides or entourages. It would become an historic event.

During that stroll, the two envoys worked through the sticking points and returned to the conference table having agreed on concessions far more radical than their respective governments had been willing to offer. Eventually, their conclusions would form the basis for the Intermediate Nuclear Forces agreement signed last year in Washington by President Reagan and First Secretary Gorbachev.

But what did they actually say to one another? How did the great outdoors effect such monumental changes? Clearly Lee Blessing has wondered

too and his fictionalized musings on this precedent-breaking outing are on view at the Booth Theatre in his thoughtful play, *A Walk In The Woods*, scheduled for a London production at the end of this year. In it the two thinly disguised officials take not one but four walks over a long series of negotiations, stretching into several seasons, beautifully evoked by Bill Clarke's understated forest set.

On one level the relationship between the cool, formal and academic American (Sam Waterston) and the experienced, funny and aphoristic Russian (Robert Prosky) is another *Odd Couple* or *I'm Not Rappaport*, another study in comparisons between two very different but ordinary men forced to get along together. The difference here is that the future survival of the planet may depend on how well they succeed.

A Walk In The Woods is literate and funny, full of lines you wish you'd thought of first. "Formality is simply anger with its hair combed" is just one that stays in the consciousness.

The play is weakened by its unwillingness to explore the real issues of nuclear weapons just as *Breaking The Code* was strengthened by its painstaking explanations of cryptography. It focusses instead on the development of the relationship between the two men. It discusses friendship, the process of negotiation, frustration, public relations versus substantive progress and the yawning gulf of cultural differences which makes real understanding impossible.

Robert Prosky (nominated for Best Actor) gives a superb performance as the cheerful cherub with the right Russian mixture of puckish humour and sharp edginess born of justifying too many unjustifiable positions. He has seen too many meetings and fought the same battles too many times to believe that this time will be different.

Sam Waterston as the idealistic but humourless American has by far the less rewarding role and succeeds often in looking merely pained by the Russian's more adventurous excesses. The American, in the endearing manner of many Americans, believes instinctively that solutions are not just possible but inevitable. The Russian remains cynical. To him goes the play's central questions. "If we do agree" he asks, "do you think it will matter?"

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ON THE RECORD

Well in advance of the arrival of *Candide* at Jonathan Miller's Old Vic towards the end of this year, John Yap's TER Records have rush-released the cast album recorded during the production's debut at the Theatre Royal Glasgow a few weeks ago and prior to its current provincial tour. That dazzling Bernstein score is back in full force, and for those of us who have been making do these last thirty years with a somewhat scratched LP of the original Broadway cast, this new Scottish Opera recording is more than welcome.

Candide itself has a curious history: Bernstein began writing it in the early 1950s, broke off to write *West Side Story* (for which some of the *Candide* music was eventually destined and vice versa: *Officer Krupke* was meant as a song for *Candide* called *Where Does it Get You in the End?* while *O Happy We* was originally written for the bridal shop in *West Side Story* but finished up in *Candide*) and then returned to complete the score only to have it flop on Broadway despite a Tyrone Guthrie production, and Max Adrian as Pangloss, and an overture which is in my unhumble opinion the best written for any American musical in this century.

Candide lived on however thanks to the first recording, and became like *Sondheim's Anyone*

Can Whistle one of those flops that everyone always wants to see revived; *Sondheim* had indeed been asked to work by Bernstein on the first production while they were together on *West Side Story*, but it wasn't until twenty years later that the two men went back to the show, abandoned Lillian Hellman's libretto and came up with a revised version that is only now being seen for the first time in Britain in a production by Jonathan Miller and John Wells.

To judge it purely by the recording, with the orchestra and chorus of Scottish Opera directed by Justin Brown, we are in for a treat at the Vic: true, Nickolas Grace's Pangloss seems to lack some of the inimitable warmth and resonance of Max Adrian on that first classic disc, but Marilyn Hill Smith is a lyrical Cunegonde and Mark Beudert sounds like an amiable hero. This may not be the best of all possible worlds, and we may never get a *Candide* on the musical stage to suit all the complexities of Voltaire's masterpiece, but as the only Bernstein/Sondheim collaboration outside of *West Side Story* this is a score of considerable fascination, not least because it has an increasing castlist of collaborators: the Bernstein/Hellman original has now been variously worked over by *Sondheim*, Hugh Wheeler, Richard Wilbur (who wrote many of the surviving lyrics from the original) John La Touche, John Wells and John Mauceri: if they haven't got it right by now, I guess they never will.

Sheridan Morley

Sheridan MORLEY'S THEATRE QUIZ

46

A Summer Special: ten quotations, all from classic plays and most should therefore be reasonably familiar; award yourself a bonus if you can identify the author AND the play.

- 1 If only I could get down to Sidcup: I've been waiting for the weather to break.
- 2 Elle a des idées que ne-dessus de sa gare.
- 3 Kiss me Kate: we will be married o' Sunday.
- 4 Extraordinary how potent cheap music is.
- 5 Well, sir, you never can tell: that's a principle in life with me.
- 6 There will be days and days and days like this.
- 7 A circulating library in a town is an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge.
- 8 If I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

- 9 I can resist everything except temptation.
- 10 Mother, give me the sun.

ANSWERS

- 1 Harold Pinter: *The Caretaker*
- 2 Terence Rattigan: *French Without Tears*
- 3 William Shakespeare: *The Taming of the Shrew*
- 4 Noel Coward: *Private Lives*
- 5 George Bernard Shaw: *You Never Can Tell*
- 6 David Hare: *Plenty*
- 7 Richard Brinsley Sheridan: *The Rivals*
- 8 William Congreve: *The Way of the World*
- 9 Oscar Wilde: *Lady Windermere's Fan*
- 10 Henrik Ibsen: *Ghosts*