

THE OLD VIC THEATRE

Waterloo Road, S.E.1

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN

The Old Vic Trust Ltd.

presents

THE OLD VIC COMPANY

in

KING HENRY VIII

William Shakespeare

Director of the Old Vic :
HUGH HUNT

Administrative Director :
ALFRED FRANCIS

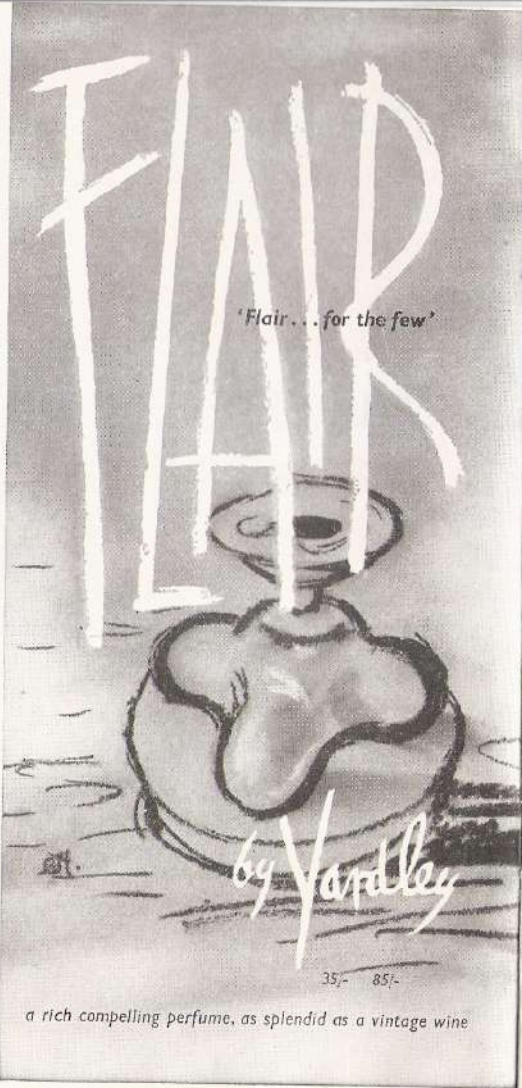
THE OLD VIC WORKS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JOINT COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE OLD VIC, AND IN FULL ASSOCIATION WITH THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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NEXT PRODUCTION

On Tuesday, the 30th June, the Bristol Old Vic Company makes a welcome return to this theatre for two weeks with Shakespeare's "Henry V" produced by Denis Carey. Considerable interest in this production is anticipated following the Company's successful visit last year with "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." Booking will open to the public on Monday, 8th June and to Club members only on Monday, 1st June.

Following the run of "Henry V," the Birmingham Repertory Company will commence a three weeks' visit on Monday, the 13th July, presenting parts I, II and III of Shakespeare's "Henry VI," produced by Douglas Seale. The Company will be substantially the same as presented part III last Season, and it is intended that the three parts shall be presented in repertory, details of which will be announced in due course.

1953-54 SEASON

After the conclusion of the Birmingham Repertory Company's visit on Saturday, the 1st August, the theatre will be closed until the new Season opens. Particulars of this Season will be announced shortly, and to obtain the earliest information patrons are advised to avail themselves of the services of the Old Vic Club, particulars of membership of which are given below.

THE CIRCLE BAR

The Circle Bar has been redecorated under the supervision of James Bailey. It is suggested that Stalls patrons may care to visit the Circle Bar, which is only one flight up from the main foyer, and which they will find less crowded than the somewhat restricted facilities available in the Stalls Bar.

OLD VIC CLUB

Members of the Old Vic Club receive regular information of all Old Vic activities and may take advantage of special booking facilities. Membership of the Old Vic Club is available either personally or to individuals on behalf of organisations, and the subscription is 2/6d. annually. It is only necessary to send your name and address together with 2/6d. for the first year's subscription to:—

The Secretary,

THE OLD VIC CLUB,

Old Vic Theatre,

Waterloo Road, S.E.1.

If desired, membership forms can be obtained from the Box Office. Personal contact with the public is the most valuable means of extending the work of the Old Vic Theatre, and if you are already a member of the Vic-Wells Association or the Old Vic Club, your co-operation in securing new members will be greatly appreciated.

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Representatives of the Association are on duty in this Theatre, in the Circle Bar and in the Library (near the Gallery) from 6.30 to 7.15 p.m., and during the first Interval. Hon. Sec. c/o Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, E.C.1

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Let me speak, sir,

*For Heaven now bids me ; and the words I utter
Let none think flattery, for they'll find them truth.
This royal infant,—Heaven still move about her!—
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,
Which time shall bring to ripeness. She shall be
(But few now living can behold that goodness)
A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that shall succeed : truth shall nurse her ;
Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her :
She shall be lov'd, and fear'd : her own shall bless her ;
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow good grows with her.
In her days, every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants : and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
God shall be truly known ; and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
Nor shall this peace sleep with her : but as when
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself :
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,
(When Heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness),
Who, from the sacred ashes of her honour,
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
And so stand fix'd. Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,
That were the servants to this chosen infant,
Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him :
Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be, and make new nations : he shall flourish,
And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches
To all the plains about him. Our children's children
Shall see this, and bless Heaven.*

Spoken by Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.
Shakespeare's "King Henry VIII" : Act V, Scene IV.

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THE OLD VIC IN 1826

SOME NOTES ON THE HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE OLD VIC THEATRE

The Old Vic Theatre was opened in 1818 as the Royal Coburg under the direction of William Barrymore with a melodramatic spectacle called "Trial by Battle." Many famous performers played here, including Edmund Kean who is recorded as having said that of all the audiences to which he had played "I never acted to such a set of ignorant unmitigated brutes as I now see before me."

In 1833 the name of the theatre was changed to The Royal Victoria Theatre in honour of the heiress to the throne and in 1834 it was the scene of Paganini's farewell concert but as the century grew so the fortunes of the theatre declined until it had become one of the lowest types of Music Hall. Crossthwaite in Kingsley's "Aton Locke" says of it: "They say the Queen's a good woman and I don't doubt it. I often wonder if she knows what her precious namesake here is like."

In 1879 Emma Cons a social worker took over the theatre and reopened it as "The Royal Victoria Coffee Music Hall," offering "a purified entertainment and no intoxicating drinks."

In 1886 sufficient funds were gathered to buy the freehold of the theatre and vest it in a Trust under the Charity Commissioners on behalf of the people of London. In 1898 Lillian Baylis, niece of Emma Cons, joined her as Manager of the theatre, and there began a period of 39 years, the effect of which on the Drama, Opera and Ballet of this country is still incalculable.

In 1914 the first complete season of Shakespeare's plays was presented, and between that date and 1923 the Old Vic became the first theatre in the world to present the entire cycle of Shakespeare's plays. In 1926 Ninette de Valois joined the theatre and laid the foundations of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Companies, and in 1931 the new theatre at Sadler's Wells was opened under the same management, to become eventually the home of Opera and Ballet.

In 1937 Miss Baylis died. She had lived to see her work become famous throughout the world.

During the war years the Old Vic, although damaged by enemy action, continued to be the scene of theatrical enterprise. Productions for the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells Companies were constructed on its stage, and ultimately sufficient repairs were carried out to enable the Old Vic Theatre Centre to be established. This Organisation was responsible for the formation of the Young Vic Company and the Old Vic School, which later moved to Dulwich.

The Young Vic Company toured extensively in England and abroad for several years, and by economic and imaginative direction was able to bring to many of the smaller towns in this Country opportunities to see the plays of Shakespeare and other classics which they could not otherwise have enjoyed. Meanwhile, the Old Vic Company continued its work with the Victoria Theatre, Burnley, in Lancashire, as its base. In 1943 the Company returned to London where for six years successful Seasons were given at the New Theatre.

In 1946 the Governors of the Old Vic were invited to form a Company to perform at the historic Theatre Royal, Bristol, Britain's oldest surviving playhouse. This invitation resulted in the formation of the Bristol Old Vic Company which is now in its eighth Season and has successfully established itself as a permanent part of the cultural life of Bristol.

In 1950 the repair and reconstruction of the Old Vic reached a stage at which it was possible once more to open to the public; since then more than twenty new productions have been presented and nearly half a million patrons have passed through the doors. Every year now sees more progress towards the complete restoration and redecoration of the theatre.

The Old Vic is a "subsidised" theatre in the sense that it receives an annual grant from the Arts Council of Great Britain, but the work of this theatre is also subsidised by the acting profession, whose members come cheerfully to work in the Waterloo Road for much less reward than they might often obtain elsewhere. It is also subsidised by the untiring efforts of those who work for its direction and maintenance, and last, but by no means least, it is subsidised by the support of the theatregoers who regularly attend its performances, sometimes to praise, sometimes to blame, but always to encourage by their enthusiasm the work of this characteristically British institution.

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THE OLD VIC COMPANY

Director	HUGH HUNT
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