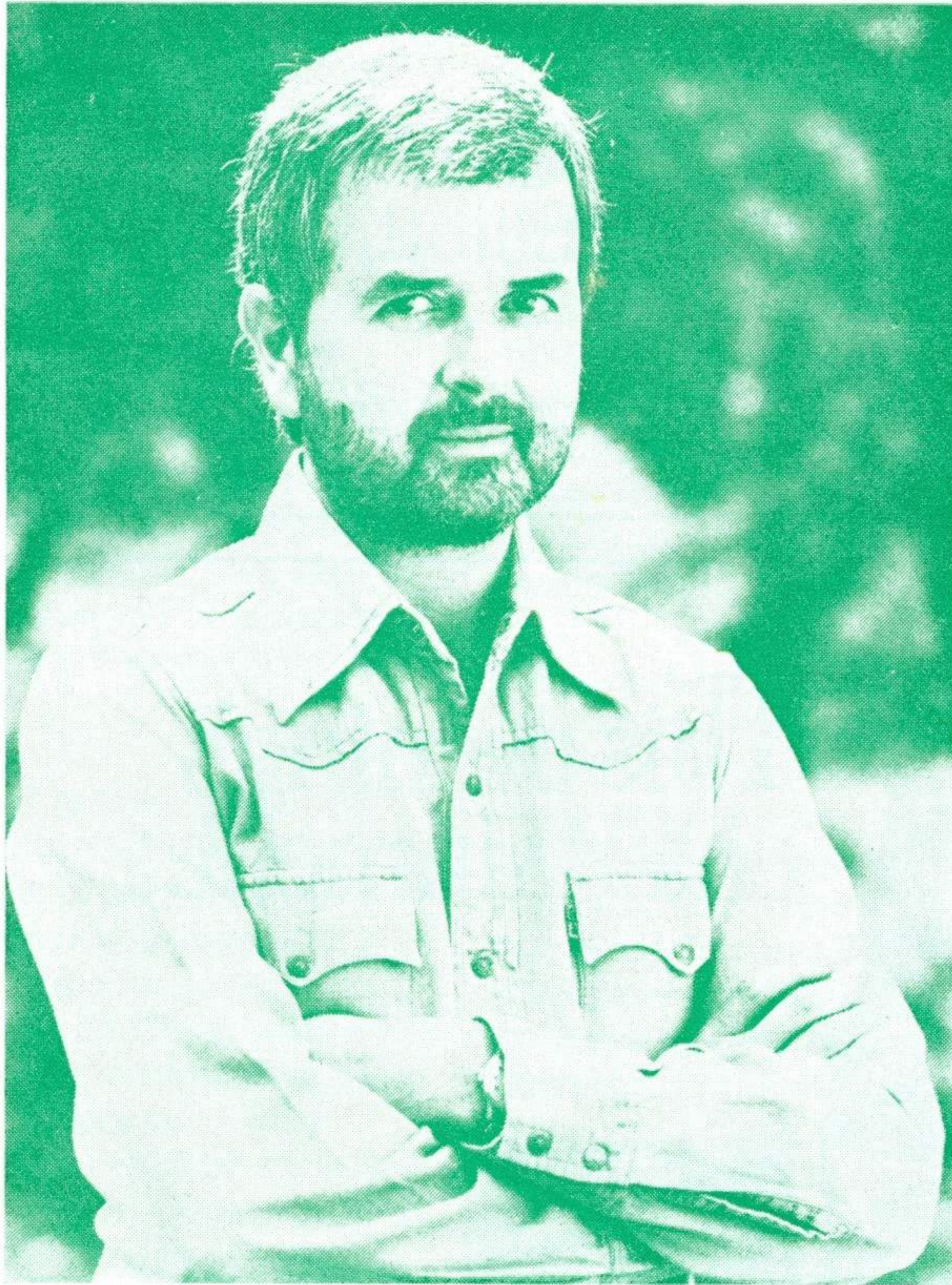


FORUM THEATRE BILLINGHAM CLEVELAND

27th September to 8th October, 1977



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IN TOWN**

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This evening's
entertainment...

Produced by
Arthur Guinness

Aristotle puts a Spoke in.

by Eric Shorter

Of all the advice which playgoers seek in attempting to keep their ends up in a world where little games of one-upmanship are apt to flourish, keeping mum at the sound of a theatrical conversation is not a bad maxim for beginners. The principle behind this recommendation is based on years of experience by thousands of playgoers who, having spoken, lived ever after to regret it.

What they learned is that theatrical conversations are better overheard than engaged in. It is all part of the non-participatory principle which certain actors and authors and directors would like to break while we sit in the theatre; and which may also be applied to playgoers who find themselves within earshot of such talk—on buses or trains, in restaurants or pubs, or at cocktail parties where such talk is apt to thrive as nowhere else.

Of course it wouldn't do if we all kept mum. But we never do. There is always something that someone cannot resist saying or someone who can never stop talking anyhow; and sometimes there are people who engage in

theatrical conversations and have something worth saying. This is where the shrewder sort of playgoer sidles up, looks away, and takes care to give the chatter "an understanding but no tongue". It isn't easy. The din is sometimes deafening. And in order not to get embroiled, which would mean risking exposure through ignorance, it is necessary not to seem to listen. But this method does at least allow the mind to concentrate on what is actually being said about Shakespeare, Shaw, Brecht, Peter Hall, Peter Brook, Harold Hobson, Edward Bond, Bob Wilson, Trevor Nunn, Bernard Levin, Ben Jonson, or whoever else happens to be in fashion. One can pick up a good deal not only of gossip but also of critical interest. And the silent beginner on such occasions may also take heart from the little howlers which are committed; and may feel tempted then to speak. Let him abstain. For these are the occasions when people are apt to sum up situations, dramatists, performances and policies.

And as these loud knots of playgoers hold forth on what they've seen or heard or read (and a lot of them get their experiences by reading) the tactful eavesdropper will probably hear not only how hard it is to get into the National Theatre from its car park but also how unreliable the critics have become ("One of them said that Dorothy Tutin was marvellous, the other said her Cleopatra misfired") and what a worry it is that there's a threat to close some theatres and why on earth aren't there subsidies to save them . . . ?

Amid all this chatter, sometimes high-toned, sometimes low, you will hear about new plays and sometimes even Greek plays ("Such a pity Merlina Mercouri couldn't give us her Medea, my dear"). But of all the names you will hear bandied the name which to

continued overleaf —

ARISTOTLE PUTS A SPOKE IN —continued

my mind needs more bandying than most is the one on nobody's lips.

This is Aristotle. Not, I know, a cocktail party favourite. Not a name that many playgoers any longer conjure with. Not in fact a name that anybody not being deliberately academic would dream of bringing up on such occasions—or indeed any occasion outside a formal lecture or contribution to a tome on the drama ancient and modern. And to be reminded that Aristotle was not only a Greek scientist and philosopher who died in 22 B.C. but also the most effective of the early dramatic critics will probably induce a yawn of embarrassing proportions, especially when I add that he is (or rather was) famous for his ideas on tragedy. Who cares about tragedy any more?

Well, the conclusions he drew from watching it are still surprisingly valid when applied to drama today—or so, if I had the nerve to butt into one of those cocktail conversations, I might be tempted to assert. And I don't just mean the unities. Remember them? There were three. They were the unities of time, place and action. In fact, as far as scholars can tell, he never advocated three such unities at all. It was tidy-minded Frenchmen in the 17th century when Racine and Corneille went back to the Greeks for their Gallic imitation of classical tragedy who took the unities as Aristotle's doctrine. What he did advocate for certain in "The Poetics" was unity of action. He thought the action of a play should be single, without diversification or sub-plot.

And though it would be silly to insist on it now when we are used to action being broken up into tiny episodes—the cinema and television have taught us to accept such fragmentation—it is a good thing not to break it up too

much or it may fracture our powers of concentration. In some plays a continuous action creates by its very continuity an atmosphere of cumulative excitement. We are gripped more and more by a story which moves forward without a pause. So let's grant Aristotle that one unity; and wish that more playwrights would bear it in mind as a means of pleasing the playgoer.

But Aristotle also spoke about the effect of tragedy—and many plays today are tragic in the sense that the hero conforms to Aristotle's belief that he should be a mixture of good and bad and should come to grief through some error of his own (exemplified of course in *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles). The error can be a false step, knowingly taken. But the main point for Aristotle about witnessing tragedy is that it is morally good for us.

Good to watch disaster, people doomed? Doesn't that make us callous, indifferent to other people's suffering? Accidents are one thing, tragedy another. Not every playwright knows the difference. By watching and imaginatively taking part in an artificially tragic action we undergo (if it is a good tragedy) a sort of purification of the emotions. We get our bad feelings out of our systems. Catharsis, Aristotle called it. Try saying that or even advocating Aristotle if you can't resist saying something at the next theatrical conversation. It is bound to stick in someone's throat.

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KEITH NEWTON

Your complete entertainment guide
from Monday to Saturday

Evening
Gazette

FORUM THEATRE

BILLINGHAM - CLEVELAND

Theatre Director and Licensee : LES JOBSON

Theatre Administrator : JEAN RANSOME

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Box Office : Stockton-on-Tees 552663

*A Member of
The Theatrical
Management Association*

Vol. 2 No. 3

Rodney Bewes

Adrienne Posta Mark Kingston

in

THE LOUDEST TEARS IN TOWN

by

JOHN MUIR

with

Gail Grainger

Peter Barnes

Elaine Norbett

Directed by

ROGER REDFARN

Designed by

COLIN WINSLOW

A FORUM THEATRE, BILLINGHAM, PRODUCTION

FROM THE THEATRE DIRECTOR

First, news of Forum Theatre productions which left here for playing in other theatres. *Separate Tables* and *Hedda Gabler* finished their West End runs in September. *Hedda Gabler*, with Janet Suzman, went on to play four performances at the Edinburgh Festival. *Maggie* played Edinburgh the week after leaving here and plays the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, during week commencing 26th September before heading for the London opening at the Shaftesbury Theatre on 12th October. The Forum Theatre grows busier by the day. We have more requests to produce shows than there is ever the time to produce them in. Our workshops, in addition to building and painting sets for five home productions this Autumn, are also preparing the sets for Opera Nova's season and sections of a new pantomime for another management.

Our next presentation is another tour ; a return for Wilfrid Hyde White in *A Perfect Gentleman*. This is a very stylish new work which should really suit our patrons. Beautifully staged and dressed, this is a period piece written with great wit and charm.

Meanwhile we rehearse and prepare the next Forum Theatre production *High Infidelity*, a comedy by Jack Popplewell. Leslie Crowther makes a first appearance at Billingham in a play which has all the hallmarks of a popular laugh raiser. Sally Harrison, last seen here in *Fringe Benefits*, plays the very amusing character Susan whose exploits as Herbert's (Leslie Crowther) wife add greatly to the general fun — and Herbert's rise to the top.

The Theatre has made a major capture in securing the incomparable Dave Allen for his own inimitable *Evening With Dave Allen*. This plays one week from 23rd January, following the musical *Carrots*.

The latter, a charming work from Peter Canwell, the Stokesley Headmaster with a great musical gift, has now been cast. The majority of the cast are children, but there are several adult character parts, the main ones being Dr. Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury. The composite set has been designed by the Forum's scenic artist, Richard Marks, and we can promise another fine piece of work from our craftsmen and artists.

Continuing our introductions of staff — on Electrics we have Eric Dunning, Chief Electrician. Eric was here from mid-1970 until August 1972 as Assistant Electrician, and returned to us as Chief in March of this year. Robin Johnson, Electrician, came to us as an apprentice in 1973, and is now a fully-fledged Theatre Electrician with a long list of shows behind him. In Eric's absence, Robin acts as Chief.

And that's it for this issue. Happy theatre-going.

LES JOBSON

RODNEY BEWES

Rodney Bewes made his acting debut on television at the age of 12 and in the theatre in the provinces at 15. After training at RADA he starred in *Billy Liar* with Tom Courtenay and *Spring and Port Wine* with James Mason. His great success in the long-running television series *The Likely Lads* followed and this led to writing, starring in and producing his own series *Dear Mother . . . Love Albert*. He then did the sequel to *The Likely Lads*, *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads*, which was followed by the recent feature film of the same name.

ADRIENNE POSTA

Adrienne was born in London, and at the age of seven appeared in her first film *No Time for Tears* with Dame Anna Neagle. She trained as a classical dancer and singer and turned to acting seriously in the film *To Sir With Love*. Some of her many other films include *Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush*, *Up The Junction*, *Spring and Port Wine* with James Mason and Rodney Bewes.

Her West End appearances include the role of Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*, *Saved* at the Royal Court, Panto with Edward Woodward at the London Palladium and *Lionel* at the New London Theatre. She has also toured with productions of *The Seven Year Itch* and *The Edge of Darkness*.

Her wide variety of TV roles have ranged from playing Marie Lloyd in *Edward VII* to series including *Budgie*, *Moody and Peg*, *Dear Mother . . . Love Albert*, to drama playing opposite Anthony Hopkins in *Black and Blue*, Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard*, and in the recent award-winning BBC *Barmitzvah Boy*.

MARK KINGSTON

Mark started his career working for several years in repertory, culminating in a three-year stay at Birmingham Rep. This was followed by an eighteen-month world tour with the Old Vic Company playing a variety of parts including Feste in *Twelfth Night*. He made his West End debut in 1962 playing the lead in *The Mousetrap*. His next West End appearances were in *The Subtopians* at the Arts and *Twelve Angry Men* at the Queens. In the 1968 Chichester Season he played Sebastian in *The Tempest* and the Sergeant in Peter Ustinov's *The Unknown Soldier and His Wife*, which subsequently opened the New London Theatre. His other West End performances include Peter Quilp in *The Cocktail Party* at Wyndhams, *Voyage Round My Father* at the Haymarket and Reg in *The Norman Conquests* by Alan Ayckbourn at the Globe. Most recently has has been in *Yahoo* with Sir Alec Guinness at the Queens.

His television appearances are numerous and include Tom, Beryl's husband, in the first two series of *Beryl's Lot*, the award-winning play *Sarah*, and he has just completed episodes of *The Avengers* and *Law Centre*.

In the film *Hitler, The Last Ten Days* he played Martin Bormann.

The Loudest Tears in Town

by JOHN MUIR

Douglas Le Quesne

Dirk Le Quesne

Shelley Jones

Delivery Man

Meatball Jones

Virginia Churchill

RODNEY BEWES

MARK KINGSTON

ADRIENNE POSTA

PETER BARNES

ELAINE NORBETT

GAIL GRAINGER

The action of the play takes place in Douglas Le Quesne's Hampstead flat

Act One

Scene 1 A morning sometime in late summer

Scene 2 A half-hour or so later that day

INTERVAL

Act Two

Scene 1 Early evening the same day

Scene 2 Later in the same evening

Scene 3 The following morning

**For FORUM THEATRE BILLINGHAM
CLEVELAND**

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Theatre Administrator	JEAN RANSOME
Young People's Theatre Organiser	TOM SPENCER
House Manager	ERNEST JOBSON
Box Office Manageress	DOROTHY WILSON
Box Office Assistants	AUDREY ROBERTS CORA ROBINSON MARY WOMPHREY

Production Staff

Production Supervisor and Foreman Carpenter	LES ROBINSON
Stage Manager	SYLVIA CARTER
Deputy Stage Manager	TIMOTHY WELSH
Assistant Stage Manager	EDWARD BRETT
Stage Dayman	PETER ROSS
Chief Electrician	ERIC DUNNING
Electrician	ROBIN JOHNSON
Carpenters	PAUL EASON RICHARD RAWLING LES DONALDSON
Scenic Artist	RICHARD MARKS
Assistant Scenic Artists	JACQUELINE PAPAIL PETER FAIRCHILD
Props Assistant	ANN TROTTER
Wardrobe Assistant	EILEEN SOUTHALL

CREDITS

Aquariums supplied by Keithlands Pets of Stockton and fitted and dressed by Mr. Keith Garbutt, Mr. Alan Porritt, Mr. Kevin Monaghan.

Please no smoking or photography in the auditorium.

The Management reserves the right to refuse admission to the theatre and to change, vary or omit, without previous notice, any item of the programme.

Coffee is available during the interval in the restaurant area.

Drinks for the interval may be ordered before the show commences.

For quick and convenient exit after the performance theatre patrons are advised to leave by the emergency exits.

ELAINE NORBETT

Elaine Norbett has show business in her blood being the daughter of American TV and night club comedian Jack Norbett. She made her first stage appearance at the age of six. Since then she has made innumerable appearances in the States on top-rating TV shows and has also acted in a wide variety of shows on Broadway, Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway. She has been living in this country since 1974 when she married an English antique dealer. She is just back from fulfilling extensive filming commitments in Denmark and Italy. She lists her interests as working and travelling, and her favourite playwrights are Edward Albee and Tennessee Williams.

JOHN MUIR (Author)

John Muir regards himself as 'one of the better, cheaper comedy writers'. He has written for most of this country's top comedians and many of America's, including Tommy Cooper, Tony Hancock, Liberace, Jack Benny, Des O'Connor, Shirley Maclaine and Phyllis Diller. One of his most interesting assignments was a television series with the Bob Hope team of writers. He is thirty-four years old, and this is his first stage play.

ROGER REDFARN (Director)

Roger Redfarn trained at Birmingham and worked in repertory theatres, radio and TV as an actor. He started directing at the Welsh National Theatre where he was production assistant for five years, and went on to the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, to direct over fifty major productions and many studio experimental works as well as large-scale musicals such as *West Side Story* and *The Pajama Game*. Roger has worked in Canada, America and South Africa; he has two British Council overseas tours to his credit — *The Knack* and *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* — and in 1973 was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship and spent three months visiting theatres in the USA. West End productions include *The King and I*, *Dad's Army* and *A Bedfull of Foreigners*. He recently directed *Absurd Person Singular* at the Thorndike Theatre, *The Cabinet Minister* and *I Am A Camera*, both highly successful tours for Triumph Theatre Productions. Roger has just returned from South Africa where he directed a new comedy-thriller *Murder Among Friends* starring Moira Lister and Nigel Davenport, which will be seen in London next year.

COLIN WINSLOW (Designer)

Colin Winslow has designed for most branches of the theatre from 'straight' plays to opera. In recent years he has done a considerable amount of work on the Continent, and was, for some time, Head of Design for a Dutch company in Amsterdam. He is probably the only theatre designer ever to design a military tattoo — this was in Washington last year, when the Edinburgh Tattoo visited America for the Bicentennial celebrations. He is at present Head of Design for the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh. In addition to his theatre work, Colin Winslow also works as an illustrator, and his work in this field includes illustrations for twelve of the Shakespeare plays.

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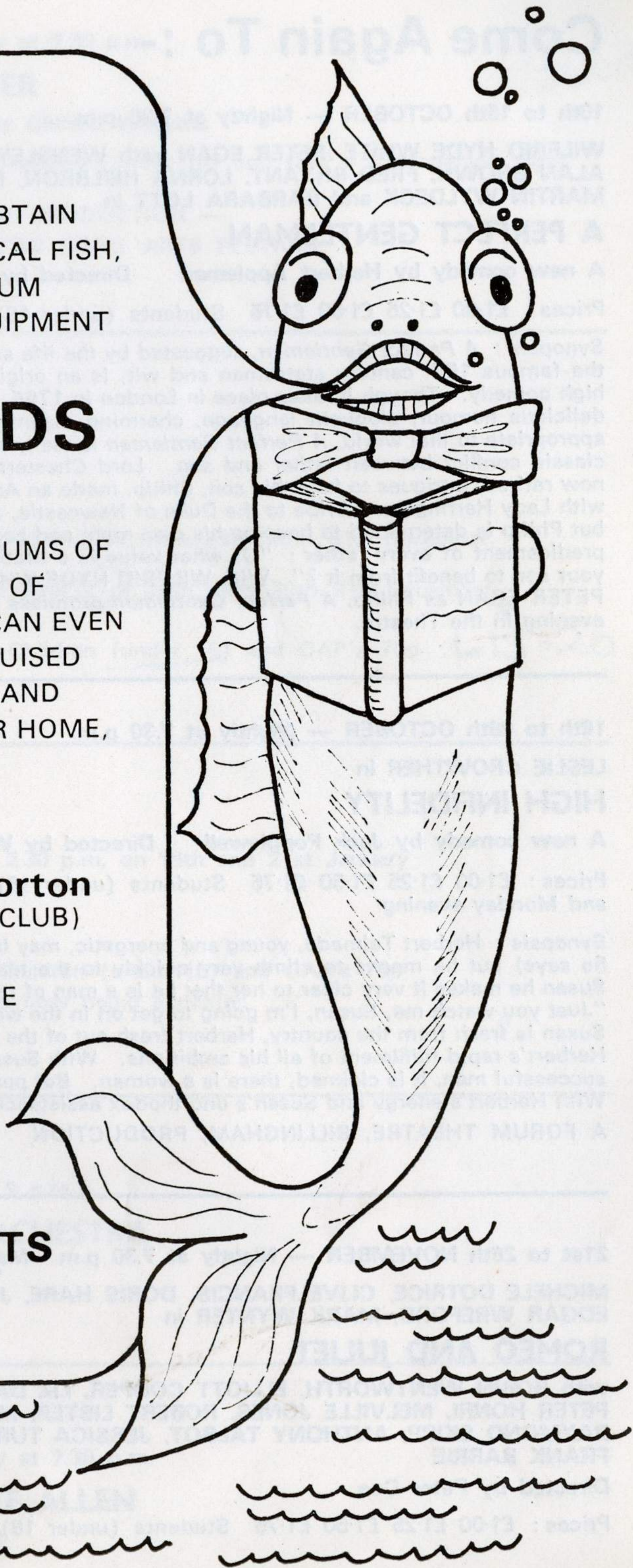
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10th to 15th OCTOBER — Nightly at 7.30 p.m.

WILFRID HYDE WHITE, PETER EGAN with WENSLEY PITHEY, JUDITH ARTHY, ALAN BROWN, FRED BRYANT, LORNA HEILBRON, ELIZABETH POWER, MARTIN WYLDECK and BARBARA LOTT in

A PERFECT GENTLEMAN

A new comedy by Herbert Appleman Directed by Clive Perry

Prices: £1.00 £1.25 £1.50 £1.75 Students (under 18) and OAP's 75p Monday evening

Synopsis: *A Perfect Gentleman*, suggested by the life and letters of Lord Chesterfield, the famous 18th century statesman and wit, is an original play in the tradition of English high comedy. Though it takes place in London in 1755, and though it is graced with the delicious humour, eloquent language, charming manners, and beautiful sets and costumes appropriate to that world, *A Perfect Gentleman* is really a contemporary play about the classic conflict between father and son. Lord Chesterfield, a former Secretary of State, now retired, intrigues to have his son, Philip, made an Ambassador — arranging a liaison with Lady Harrington, a bribe to the Duke of Newcastle, a marriage to Lady Maxwell — but Philip is determined to become his own man, and Lord Chesterfield faces the inevitable predicament of every father: "Of what value is a lifetime of experience, if you can't force your son to benefit from it?" With WILFRID HYDE WHITE as Lord Chesterfield, and PETER EGAN as Philip, *A Perfect Gentleman* promises to be a delightful and memorable evening in the Theatre.

18th to 29th OCTOBER — Nightly at 7.30 p.m.

LESLIE CROWTHER in HIGH INFIDELITY

A new comedy by Jack Popplewell Directed by Wally Douglas

Prices: £1.00 £1.25 £1.50 £1.75 Students (under 18) and OAP's 75p opening night and Monday evening

Synopsis: Herbert Talmade, young and energetic, may be at the bottom of the ladder (as he says) but he means to climb very quickly to the top. When he meets the enchanting Susan he makes it very clear to her that he is a man of talent and determination and "Just you watch me, Susan, I'm going to get on in the world".

Susan is fresh from the country, Herbert fresh out of the Army. The play illustrates Herbert's rapid fulfilment of all his ambitions. With Susan's help, that is. Behind every successful man, it is claimed, there is a woman. But perhaps never one like Susan. With Herbert's energy and Susan's unorthodox assistance he couldn't fail. Nor does he.

A FORUM THEATRE, BILLINGHAM, PRODUCTION

21st to 26th NOVEMBER — Nightly at 7.30 p.m. Mats. at 2.30 p.m. Tues. & Thurs.

MICHELE DOTRICE, CLIVE FRANCIS, DORIS HARE, JOHN STONE, EDGAR WREFORD, MARK WYNTER in

ROMEO AND JULIET

with ROBIN WENTWORTH, ELLIOTT COOPER, LIZ DANIELS, ANTHONY DUNSTON, PETER HONRI, MELVILLE JONES, ROBERT LISTER, MICHAEL LOGAN, RAYMOND SKIPP, ANTHONY TALBOT, JESSICA TURNER, WENDY WILLIAMS and FRANK BARRIE

Directed by Peter Coe

Prices: £1.00 £1.25 £1.50 £1.75 Students (under 18) and OAP's 75p opening night

2nd to 17th DECEMBER — Nightly at 7.30 p.m.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

by Oliver Goldsmith Directed by Clifford Williams

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2.10

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CARROTS

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Power Range & Readiness.

by Adam Benedick

COLIN BLAKELY is an actor we can always count on. Sturdy, sane, sensitive and clear-headed, he gives an impression of knowing what he is saying and why he is saying it. Not all actors can do that. They may do one or the other. They may make sense of a role, yet leave you wondering why they took it; or, failing to make sense of it, they leave you to conclude that they took it because they couldn't say no.

Mr Blakely is probably no sincerer in his choice of parts to act than any other actor. They cannot in this profession stand often on ceremony. Most actors have to take what they can find. It leads them up the garden, or leads us up the garden, who is to blame? Our acting system rarely allows them much choice in shaping their careers—unless and until they get to the top. Only a handful ever manage to do that.

Is Mr Blakely at the top? Well, not at the peak perhaps. It does not seem at the moment as if he will be asked to play all the great roles in a row. He isn't, in that narrow sense, a star. He is—perhaps more desirably—a first-

rate actor—classical or modern, tragic or comic.

As actors go he started late. Most of them get going in their late teens or early twenties. Mr Blakely was nearly thirty before he turned up in plays at the Royal Court Theatre during the reign of George Devine. One says reign because Devine really ruled that theatre as its artistic director for the English Stage Company which was founded in 1956 to discover and stage new English authors.

As everybody knows it yielded lots of new names. And a surprising number of them turned up trumps. Apart from John Osborne there was John Arden, N. F. Simpson, Donald Howarth, Ann Jellicoe and Willis Hall; and though in recent years the Royal Court's former lustre has faded (some people say it faded with the death of Devine) it is still known as a breeding ground for younger playwrights; and it has done a great deal to promote such dramatists as Arnold Wesker, Harold Pinter, Henry Livings, Edward Bond and Gwyn Thomas. In doing so it has also promoted actors.

This is the advantage of a more or less permanent company. It brings so many talents together—actors, writers, designers, directors. They are bound to form a team spirit. Such a team may not be always ready to see eye to eye on every subject. But in its vexations, ambitions, achievements, failures and recriminations it is likely to forge new talents. Colin Blakely was one such.

He was born at Bangor in County Down. There isn't much doubt about that. You can nearly always catch the Ulster tones in his voice. He worked as a young man in a family sports shop. Having played as an amateur with the local operatic society, he made his first professional appearance with the Ulster Group in Belfast. Then he

continued overleaf

POWER RANGE & READINESS — *continued*

moved to Edinburgh. And so to Sloane Square where in quick succession he played the Second Rough Fellow in Sean O'Casey's *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy*, a Pugnacious Collier in *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden, and Thomas Noon (alias Kelly) in *The Naming of Murderer's Rock*.

Mr Blakely seems to have been type-cast from the beginning. Second rough fellows and pugnacious colliers and men with double identities in plays with titles like *The Naming of Murderer's Rock* are just what you would expect to find as evidence of the early work of such an actor. Stocky, gruff, tough-looking and steely-voiced, he would be a good choice for some of O'Neill's characters, and in fact made a good impression as Phil Hogan in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*.

Then, after a brief spell at Coventry (which, like the Royal Court, was also going through a fruitful spell in the late Fifties), Mr Blakely joined the Royal Shakespeare Company which was then based solely at Stratford-on-Avon with one theatre (today it has four: two at Stratford, two in London, and it is also occupying two West End theatres, the Savoy and the Piccadilly).

I remember Mr Blakely as the Duke of Venice to John Gielgud's *Othello*. The duke was unforgettable because of his accent. Then he went back to the Royal Court to play Bottom in an otherwise bad production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and thence to Laurence Olivier's newly-formed National Theatre Company.

He has never looked back. As Captain Kite in *The Recruiting Officer*, as Philoctetes, as Pizarro in *The Royal*

Hunt of the Sun and as Hobson in *Hobson's Choice* this most distinctive of actors distinguished himself by being, as we say, himself. He never seems to try to disguise his personality. It speaks through every role. Sometimes he is miscast. His Jack Boyle in *Juno and the Paycock* came too clearly from the wrong part of Ireland to suit O'Casey's fascinating character. And his Ben in *Love for Love* was not entirely satisfactory.

Indeed, Mr Blakely's ability to be not entirely satisfactory but magnetically watchable is part of his exceptional appeal. He has a surprising range. Or rather he is surprisingly ready to stretch his range, to take chances as an actor. Not all actors are ready to do that once they have established themselves. They get known for one thing and go on doing it forever—not because they want to but because it pays.

Mr Blakely seems ready to do anything he is asked; and the result is never less than stimulating. He is a player of considerable power and more intelligence than his burly, proletarian manner might suggest. No one would think of casting him as an intellectual. One hesitates to think of him as Hamlet. But when it comes to reflective and imaginative characters, men of precise thought and emotional understanding—when it comes to men of integrity and compassion—Mr Blakely can be safely counted on.

You had only to see him as that survivor of horrors in a two-and-a-half hour monologue called *Judgement* to realise what a valuable instinct he possesses for drawing an audience's sympathy without stooping to sentimentality.



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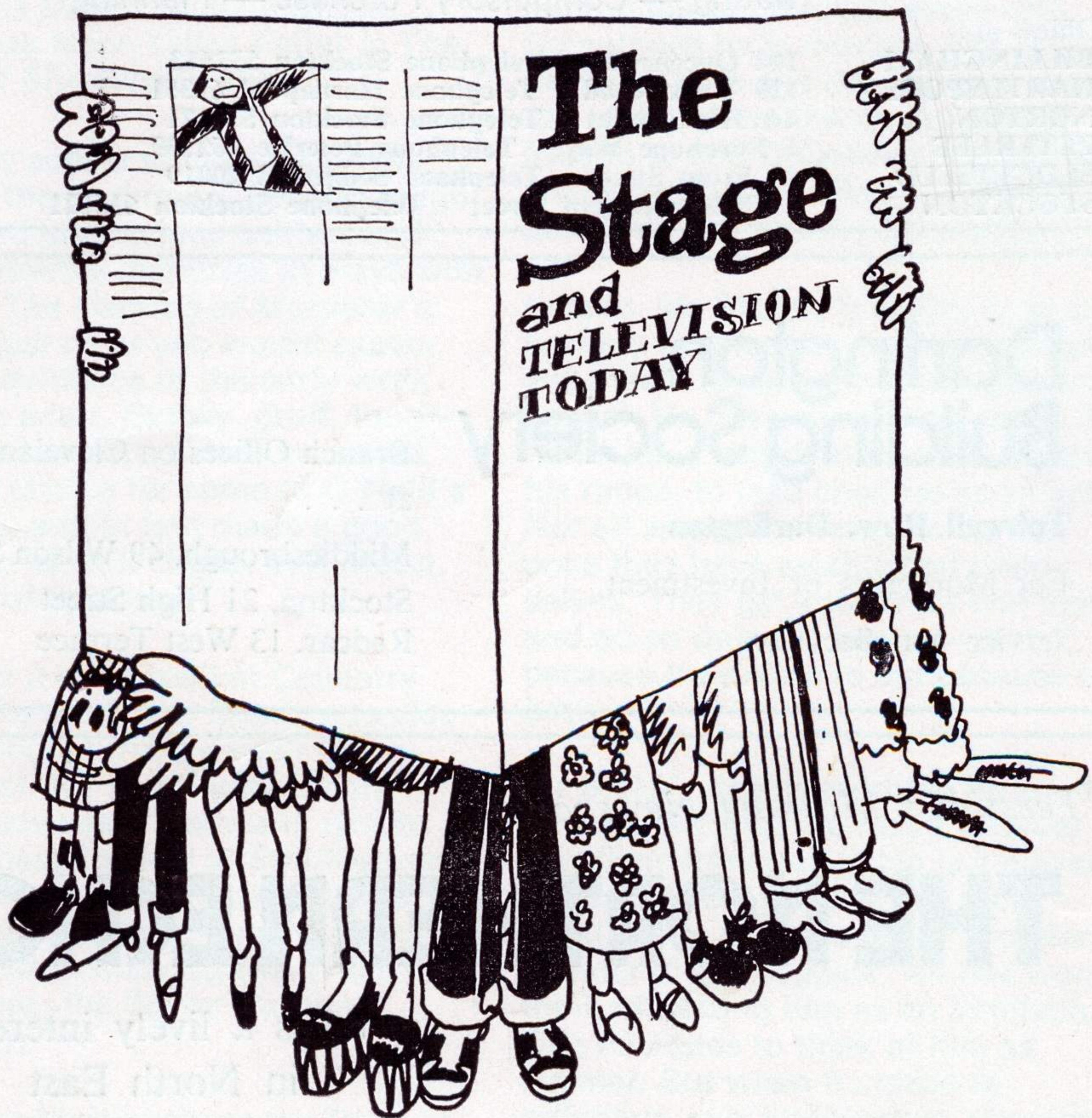
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