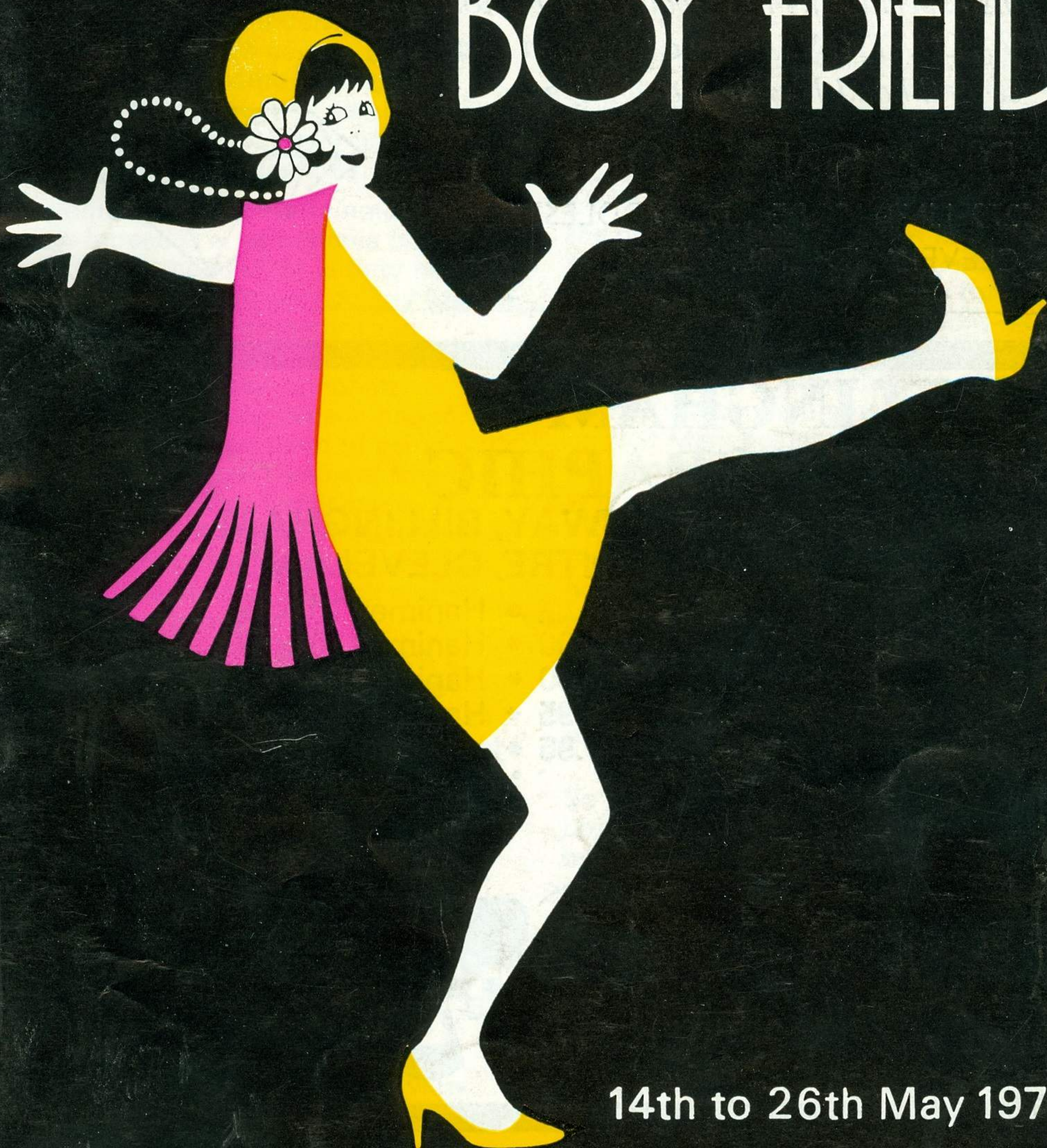


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BILLINGHAM

SANDY WILSON'S

THE BOY FRIEND



14th to 26th May 1979



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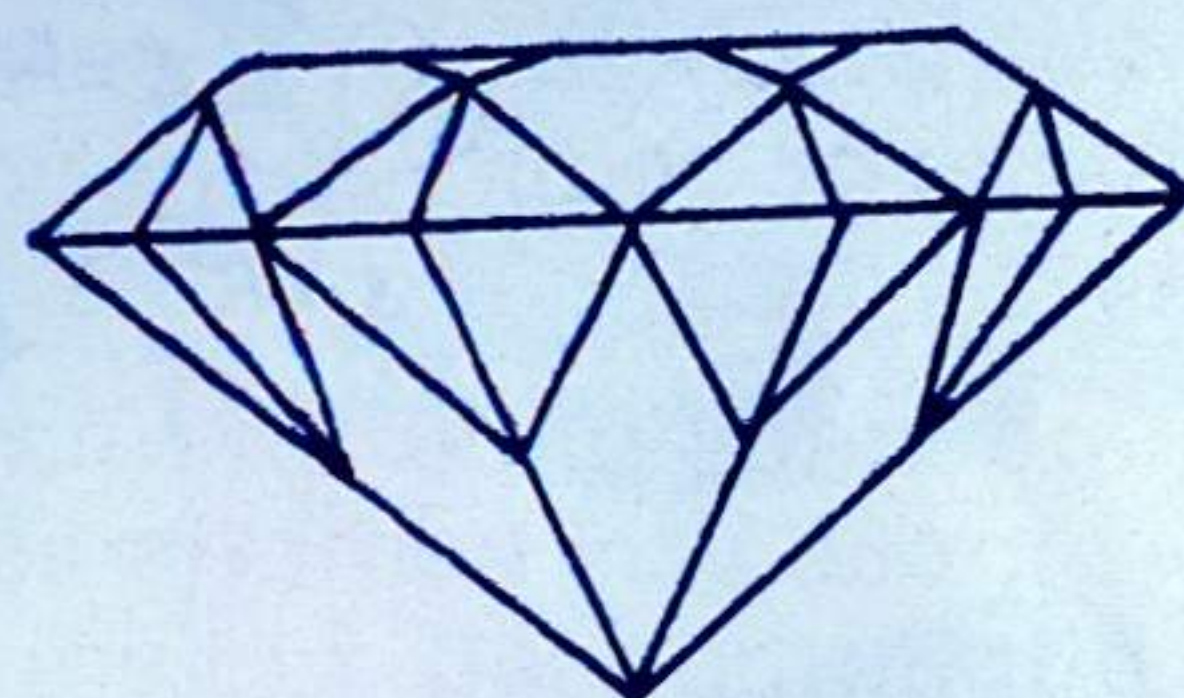
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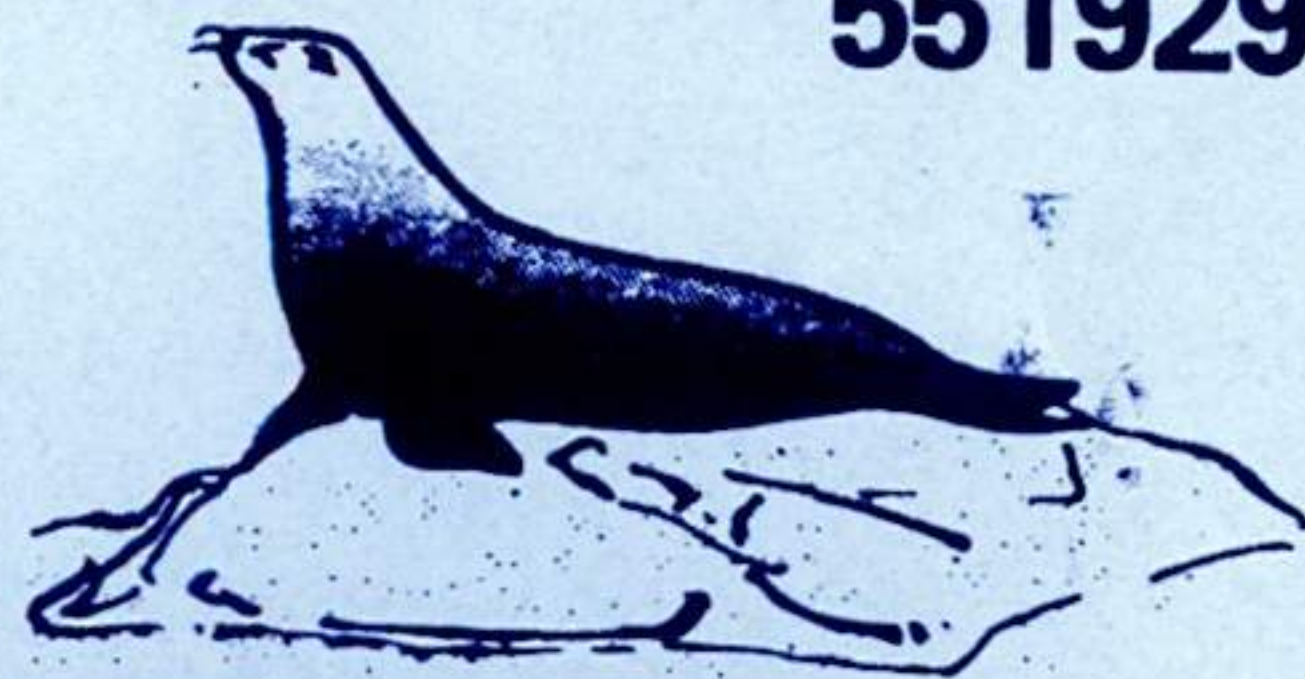
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THE CHARM OF THE TERRY'S

by Eric Shorter

When should the crinkling begin? Each of us has his sense of timing. Some of us start straight away, as soon as the curtain has gone up, if there's a curtain to go up. Others abide their time. What they are tactfully seeking is a safely inconspicuous moment. And with certain plays it never seems to come. I mean the moment when you may safely blow your nose or cough freely or plunge into that box of chocolates.

At some kinds of entertainment it is easy. Indeed it is sometimes not only easy but authorised. In variety halls for example or at a not particularly literate or subtle musical comedy (and musical comedies have an almost endearing way when Stephen Sondheim or Sandy Wilson happen not to have written them of being both illiterate and vulgar) you are free to fidget and at those fashionable run-throughs of a popular composer or jazz musician all you are required as spectator to do is to sit back and let the thing sweep over you.

So, as I say, on such occasions it is easy to discover the chance to do extra-theatrical things which most of us at some time or other feel the need of—such as blowing the nose or coughing or trying to penetrate a box of chocolates.

I know the feeling well since every night in the theatre something of such challenge occurs—the desire to attend to a physical fact of life affecting one's own person or the person next to you.

In this instance it was a person in front of me. There was a good view

of this lady's obvious need. Even the name of the temptation was visible. It was Terry's. For she had on her lap this tasty-looking box of chocolates. And for the life of her she couldn't get at them.

She could of course have got at them easily in the interval but she couldn't wait. Or before the performance had begun. But that's not a thing one thinks of doing even if one could. And besides, chocolates on ladies' laps at the play are as likely as not to have been a gift. For Aunt Edna, perhaps—or cousin Edna, come to that, for there's nothing exclusively aunt-like in a taste for chocolates. Most of us, if pressed, have it. And the box of Terry's which were so conspicuous on that Manchester night had been presumably pressed (in the kindest way) on that lady.

She may, of course, have bought them herself as a gesture of women's independence or whatever you call the movement for which 65 years ago advocates chained themselves to Whitehall walls. But chocolates are not part of the average feminist's fancy.

So we may presume that this particular box was safe and flatteringly presented by the lady's male escort in what seems now a defunct flourish of gallantry. It was given (I surmise) in the spirit of an infrequent playgoer. And here was his presumably grateful recipient trying to unfasten the thing.

It had on every side a diaphanous plastic wrapping so that the whole of it

continued overleaf

was visible but inaccessible without a deafening crinkle. And the play going forward was not the kind that invites crinkling.

Why chocolate manufacturers should take such trouble to wrap their products so resolutely is a mystery to regular playgoers for whom chocolates symbolise an approach to the theatre of old-fashioned and faintly philistine luxury. But there they are still, loudly advertised in programmes and usually on sale in the foyer.

So, who can wonder if from time to time those who wish to devour them face up tactfully to the challenge and the temptation?

As I say, it doesn't matter with a noisy entertainment. The crinkling won't be heard.

But at a play like T. S. Eliot's "The Family Reunion" it assuredly will if the person in charge of the box does not discover the ideal moment to let the nails rip into the Cellophane and strip that slimy cover clean off. The lady on this occasion didn't. All through the solemn, stately and portentous opening passages of this deeply thoughtful play about a young peer who returns from abroad to run his stately English family's home, the lady's hands roamed discreetly round the box for an entrance, in search of the almost indiscernible join where, once the finger nails were brought correctly to bear, all would give way in a neat rip off.

It sounds perhaps faintly erotic. For there was the play, plodding gravely forward, with intimations of Greek tragedy amid the aristocratic teacups, and there was this lady with those sealed goodies on her lap, politely groping.

If the play had been sufficiently compelling of course I wouldn't have been tempted to look sideways at the challenge of the Terry's when so

much eloquent, intellectual, poetic and metaphysical challenge was dramatically afoot a few feet away.

In the event the effort to open the chocolates was as subtle, graceful, thoughtful, patient, and considerate as the writing. Yet "The Family Reunion", highest-browed perhaps of all 20th century plays, is not a work to take chocolates to. Or if taken they should be pre-wrapped.

It the man who decrees how Terry's chocolates are wrapped perhaps himself a serious playgoer who can't bear to hear crinkles, especially the nervous, diffident, polite and shameful crinkler who doesn't want to disturb us but also can't get at what she's got?

If so, his scheme has failed. Let the unwrapping be made easier. And once the contents are discovered let them not be individually wrapped, or the current revival of T. S. Eliot stands small chance of beng properly heard.

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KEITH NEWTON

Your complete entertainment guide
from Monday to Saturday

Evening
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*A Member of
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Management Association*

Vol. 3 No. 17

Monday 14th May to Saturday 26th May 1979

A Sparkling New Production

of

SANDY WILSON'S

THE BOY FRIEND

Musical Director ED COLEMAN

Choreographer MICHELE HARDY

Lighting by ERIC DENNING

Designer TERRY PARSONS

Directed by ROGER REDFARN

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FROM THE THEATRE DIRECTOR

We welcome our company to Billingham for this fortnight's production of *The Boy Friend*, and hope all members have a happy and successful run. There are several old friends among the company, and we are particularly pleased to see them here again. Some bring memories of other musicals produced at Billingham — *The King and I* and *Me and My Girl*. Often in these notes we have reflected on our liking for producing musicals, so the present production has been a pleasure to put on. We hope you like it.

From one musical to another, as we step from a British 20's production to a bold, brash American West musical in *Calamity Jane*. This is a big production which will follow Billingham with a major national tour of twelve weeks. All the characters are there — Calamity, Wild Bill Hickock, Lieut. Danny Gilmartin, Katie Brown, 'Doc' Pierce, Rattlesnake and the rest. Musical numbers include real chart-busters like 'The Deadwood Stage', 'Adelaide', 'Windy City', 'A Woman's Touch', 'Careless with the Truth', 'Higher than a Hawk', 'The Black Hills of Dakota' and 'My Secret Love'. To play Calamity we have Barbara Windsor, and Norman Vaughan comes in on comedy. Casting the remainder of the show is now in progress. We open 31st August. Gorgeous costumes, splendid sets, full chorus and orchestra add to another great FIRST for Billingham audiences.

Immediately following the current production, opening 28th May, we have a complete contrast when we present the famous Jacobean tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi*. This has a very strong and distinguished cast headed by Janet Suzman, an actress whose work over the past few years has been highly acclaimed. This play was written by John Webster and produced in 1612. It is a powerful study of virtue, suffering and revenge ; a study of evil, darkness, perversion and corruption ; in other words a mighty theatrical event.

Perhaps you might also like to watch out for other June productions — *Misalliance*, a Bernard Shaw comedy dating from 1910, and *The Elder Statesman*, a T. S. Eliot play commissioned for the Edinburgh Festival in 1958. The latter is a realistic drama, which adds further to the variety of work presented here this year.

Our final offering before the summer closure, and the Folklore Festival, is Restoration comedy, *She Would If She Could* by Sir George Etherege, directed by Jonathan Miller, and with a fine cast headed by Paul Eddington — a far cry from *The Good Life*. Until my notes for *The Duchess of Malfi* programme, happy theatregoing.

LES JOBSON

Hazel Bainbridge

Hazel Bainbridge was born in Yorkshire of theatrical parents and was last here in the national tour of *Pygmalion* with Paul Daneman. Many West End plays include *The Jockey Club Stakes*, *The Gentle Hook* and the long-running *Salad Days* in which she played for three years at the Vaudeville. She appeared in *Man and Superman* and *Hobson's Choice* at Guildford, followed by a tour of *I Am a Camera*. Many TV appearances range from BBC classical series *David Copperfield*, *Cranford*, *Anne of Avon Lea* to *Some Mothers Do Have 'Em* with Michael Crawford, and is also in his latest series *Chalk and Cheese* for Thames TV.

Moyna Cope

Moyna was born in the Potteries of musical parentage. Her father, at one time a conductor with the Carl Rosa Opera Company, was also a founder conductor of the North Staffordshire Symphony Orchestra and City Organist for Stoke-on-Trent. Her mother was a singer. Moyna studied music at school and gained distinctions in the art.

In October 1973 she was highly praised for her sensitive interpretation and superb singing in the role of Lady Thiang in *The King and I* at the London Adelphi Theatre. Moyna's experience in the theatre has been in musical comedy, summer revues, pantomime and in operatic roles. These have included Mercedes in *Carmen*, Flora in *Traviata*, Siebel in *Faust*, and Marcellenia in *Figaro*. Among the moderns, she has played the lead in Vaughan Williams' *Riders to the Sea*, the Old Maid in Menotti's *Old Maid and the Thief*, and Desideria in his *Saint of Bleecker Street*.

Linda Rusby

Linda Rusby started her career at an early age, appearing in the West End in *Blitz* and *The Sound of Music*. She has played in many repertory companies throughout the country including Guildford, Leatherhead and Windsor.

This is Linda's third production of *The Boy Friend*, the others being in York and Chelmsford. Other West End shows include *Strike a Light*, *Jack the Ripper* and playing opposite Michael Crawford in *Billy* at Drury Lane.

Her most recent television appearance has been in BBC's *Jackanory*. Linda was in pantomime last Christmas with Terry Scott, playing The Princess in *Aladdin* at the Congress Theatre, Eastbourne.

Petra Siniawski

Petra Siniawski has just completed two years as leading lady in *A Chorus Line* at Drury Lane Theatre, winning national acclaim for her role as Cassie. She also played Anita in the revival of *West Side Story* at the Shaftesbury Theatre, and has had notable parts in the musicals *Phil the Fluter*, *Gone With The Wind* and *The Pajama Game* at Coventry. She also appeared with John Inman in the stage version of *Are You Being Served?*

Petra has appeared in numerous television productions including *On The Buses*, *The Stanley Baxter Shows*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Ann-Margaret Specials*. Her film credits include *Fiddler on the Roof*, *200 Motels*, *Women in Love*, *The Music Lovers* and assisted on *The Boyfriend* as well as appearing in it; also *Quilp* and *The Slipper and the Rose*.

Petra was brought up in Liverpool and trained at the Shelagh Elliott-Clarke School of Dance and Drama. Whilst there she appeared at the Liverpool Playhouse in many leading juvenile parts. She then won a place at the Royal Ballet School, later joining the Ballet Company before appearing in musicals.

Marc Urquhart

Marc was born in Australia and trained as a classical dancer but quickly turned to musical comedy.

Among the nine West End shows he has appeared in are the original cast of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Canterbury Tales* as the Squire, Sam in *Belle Starr* with Betty Grable, and Prince Charming opposite Twiggy at the Casino.

Television and films — three of each — *Cabaret* at the Savoy to *Le Reims* (where ?). He appeared in four of the five plays in the 1977 Chichester season which included playing Henry VIII with no padding. Marc has been at ten repertory theatres around the UK which means playing parts from 18 to 80 years of age. Marc has a tough time keeping his $\frac{1}{2}$ acre garden in control, but he does have the help of two dogs and two cats.

Liz Bagley

Liz Bagley has recently been playing Connie in *A Chorus Line* at Drury Lane Theatre and was previously at the National Theatre where she appeared in *The Lady from Maxim's* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Started her career as a dancer and worked in several television shows and West End musicals. While appearing in the Bristol Old Vic production of *The Card* at the Queen's Theatre she took over the leading role of Nellie. There soon followed a European tour with Stomu Yamashta's Red Buddha Theatre and a season at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. She has also played at the Little Theatre and the Unicorn Theatre for Young People. Television appearances include a co-starring role in the BBC 2 series *Maidens' Trip*.

Michael Blaise

Michael Blaise's theatrical career began in South Africa, where he did a national tour of a *Follies Spectacular Show*, and his own cabaret — a fire eating and adagio act. In this country he has done a tour of *The Desert Song* with John Hanson, *Star Nite '76* in Hastings, *Irma La Douce* at Derby, *Let My People Come* at the Regent Theatre in London, *Kiss Me Kate* at Birmingham, and a production of *Royal Hunt of the Sun* with the English National Opera. His film and television credits are *The Life of Galileo* with Joseph Losey, *Jesus of Nazareth* with Franco Zeffirelli, *The Horse in the House* for Thames, *General Hospital* and *Bonkers* for ATV and *Shoestring* for the BBC. He also does a certain amount of stunt work, and because his namesake is Modesty, he feels that to list any more credits would be against his nature.

Zoe Bright

Zoe Bright has recently finished appearing in *Cowardy Custard* with Jacquie Chappell and Marc Urquhart at East Grinstead. Previous to that she spent Christmas playing Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* at Liverpool Playhouse. Repertory seasons include several appearances at the Thorndike, Leatherhead, Birmingham, Swindon and Liverpool, notably as Nicola in Stephen Poliakoff's *Hitting Town*. West End appearances include *Godspell* which she subsequently toured with in the original National production, *Happy as a Sandbag* at the Ambassadors and *The Good Companions* at Her Majesty's with John Mills and Judi Dench in which she took over the lead role of Susie Dean. Last year she played Jenny in *The Magic Cabbage and Jenny* with the Unicorn Company at the London Arts Theatre, Leicester Square. Recent television appearances include the BBC Horizon documentary *The Black Pool* and two episodes of *Thomas and Sarah*, in which she plays Dolly Harper. Her hobbies include cooking and homeopathy.

Jacquey Chappell

After training at the Bush Davies School, Jacquey's first work was with such artistes as Arthur Askey, The Bachelors and Mike Yarwood. She made her West End debut by taking over the leading role in *Cinderella* from Twiggy — at two hours notice ! This was followed by a long run in *A Little Night Music* playing Mrs. Segstrom. Her repertory seasons include Northampton, Birmingham and Perth, playing such roles as Sandy in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and Belle in *A Christmas Carol*. Over the past two years, she has been very much involved with 'nostalgic' music, having appeared in two productions of *Cole* (one in Scotland, one in Canada), the premiere of a new British musical about wartime ENSA activities, and most recently in *Cowardy Custard* with Marc Urquhart and Zoe Bright. Last year, she was also to be seen as the heroine Zigiana in the BBC serial *Sexton Blake and the Demon God*, and she is making her first film in July.

John Hewer

John Hewer started in the profession immediately after the war as Stage Manager at the Players Theatre, where he soon started performing, and then became regular "Chairman". His first West End show was *Strings and Arrows* with Hermione Gingold, and he also became a regular performer on TV and in children's shows. After *The Two Bouquets* in the West End he went to Australia for *The Boy Friend* (as Tony) and to Broadway. On returning to England he appeared in *When in Rome* with Dickie Henderson and many TV shows. This was followed by Noel Coward's *Sail Away*, and then he started a production company for industrial and commercial shows. He was associate producer of *Gypsy*, and produced *Norman is that You ?* For the last 10 years he has been host of Canadian TV show *Pig and Whistle*. Recently he played Ned Cheeryble in BBC's *Nicholas Nickleby*, but is probably best known as "Cap'n Birdseye".

John Markham

John Markham trained at E.15, and worked for three years touring the Pennines with Theatre Mobile, and also on tours to Bulgaria and Germany. He has done seasons at Lancaster and has just finished a season at York Theatre Royal.

Christopher Marx

Christopher Marx started life as a hairdresser in Portsmouth, his home town. There he appeared in over 30 musicals with leading amateur companies in the south. He then developed his own cabaret act and toured the south's clubland circuit. He has recently finished a tour with the New Scottish Children's Theatre in a new production of *Pinocchio* and *Peter and the Wolf*. His TV appearances include *Softly, Softly*, *Spytrap*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Spearhead*, *Dick Barton* and *Malice Aforethought*. Christopher now lives in London and enjoys horse riding and swimming.

Susan-Jane Tanner

Susan-Jane Tanner has been dancing since five years old and trained professionally till 18 years. Also trained as an actress and singer in London. For several years she worked with the Gino Thompson 4, singing and dancing, travelling the world and to America. Became involved there with Theatre at Sea Company, playing such parts as Irene in *Irene*, Nicky in *Sweet Charity*, Flora in *No No Nanette* and Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*. Since returning to England, has done a five-month season with Birmingham Repertory Theatre, performing in *Kiss Me Kate* and *Babes in the Wood* 1978-79.

Paul Toothill

After leaving drama school, Paul joined the Cambridge Theatre Company touring England with *Hamlet* and *The School for Scandal*. Has worked extensively in rep at Worcester, Hull, Harrogate, Ipswich and Canterbury. Played Robinson in the West End production of *The Dame of Sark* with Anna Neagle which played Billingham before touring to Canada. Was seen in *Rolls-Hyphen-Royce* which enjoyed a very short run at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London. TV credits include *Ubo Roi*, *Doctor on the Go*, *Spy* and *Blakes 7*, plus the film *Carry On England*. Last year wrote a short comedy script for Westward TV which was shown at Christmas. Most recently he was in Kurt Weill's *Happy End*, the final production at the old Ipswich rep.

Geoffrey Wright

Geoffrey Wright trained at the Bristol Old Vic and first appeared in London in revue at the Fortune Theatre. Other West End credits include the waiter in John Osborne's *Hotel in Amsterdam* at the Albery Theatre, *Council of Love* at the Criterion and as the Fat Boy in *Pickwick* at the Saville. He has appeared in repertory at Leicester, Guildford, Manchester, Windsor, and spent a year at the Donovan Maule Theatre in Nairobi, Kenya. He played the supporting role of Wainwright in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* starring Kirk Douglas and appeared with Lauren Bacall in *Applause* (both for American TV), and has recently been seen in *Edward VII* and *Jennie* on TV in this country. He has recently toured with Hayley Mills in *Rebecca* in England and Canada.

Roger Redfarn (Director)

Roger Redfarn has been responsible for a number of productions at the Forum, including the highly acclaimed *The King and I*, which was seen in the West End, as well as *Underground*, *Murder in a Bad Light*, *A Bedfull of Foreigners*, *I Am a Camera* and *Dad's Army*. After training in Birmingham and a short spell in repertory, he started directing with the Welsh Theatre Company and then spent five years as Associate Director of the Belgrade Theatre where he was responsible for over 50 major productions. In 1974 he was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship and spent three months visiting theatres around the U.S.A. Roger has received special acclaim for his pantomime productions, particularly at Richmond and Birmingham. In Jubilee year he devised a programme based on twenty-five years of world new and popular music which starred a friend and neighbour Dame Vera Lynn. He has worked in America, Canada, South Africa and Hong Kong as well as two British Council European tours, *The Knack* and *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*. He recently directed *Happy Birthday* which is at present at the Apollo Theatre, London. Roger lives in the delightful Sussex village of Ditchling and wishes he could spend every moment of every day there.

Ed Coleman (Musical Director)

American-born conductor, composer and arranger Ed Coleman has been resident in London for 19 years. Arriving in this country in 1960 he stayed on to become increasingly involved in the musical theatre. His numerous credits as Musical Director in this field include many West End productions such as *Little Me*, *On the Level*, *Joey, Joey*, *Lady be Good*, *West Side Story*, *Dad's Army* and *Kings and Clowns*. He has also made many appearances as guest conductor with Festival Ballet, and at the Edinburgh Festival, conducting for the American harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler. As composer he was commissioned by BBC TV for a TV opera based on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and has composed many film and television background scores. He is married to actress Eileen Gourlay ; they have two children.

THE BOY FRIEND

Hortense

Maisie

Dulcie

Fay

Nancy

Polly

Marcel

Pierre

Alphonse

Mme. Dubonnet

Bobby Van Heusen

Percival Browne

Tony

Lord Brockhurst

Lady Brockhurst

Pepe

Gendarme }

Waiter }

Lolita

PETRA SINIAWSKI

JACQUEY CHAPPELL

ZOE BRIGHT

LIZ BAGLEY

SUSAN-JANE TANNER

LINDA RUSBY

PAUL TOOTHILL

JOHN MARKHAM

MICHAEL BLAISE

MOYNA COPE

CHRISTOPHER MARX

GEOFFREY WRIGHT

MARC URQUHART

JOHN HEWER

HAZEL BAINBRIDGE

PAUL TOOTHILL

JON DEERY

LIZ BAGLEY

Directed by **Roger Redfarn**

Musical Director **Ed Coleman**

Choreographer **Michele Hardy**

Designed by **Terry Parsons**

Synopsis of Scenes

Act 1 The Drawing-room of the Villa Caprice, Madam Dubonnet's finishing school, near Nice. A morning in the year 1926.

Act 2 The Plage. The afternoon of the same day.

Act 3 The Terrasse of the Cafe Pataplon. The same night.

Credits

Moet and Chandon Champagne Company.

Sets built and painted in the Forum Theatre, Billingham, Workshops.

Costume Designs by Clive Lavagna.

MUSICAL NUMBERS FOR THE BOY FRIEND

Act One

1. *Overture* ORCHESTRA
2. *Perfect Young Ladies* HORTENSE, MAISIE, FAY, DULCIE, NANCY
3. *The Boy Friend* POLLY, MAISIE, DULCIE, FAY, NANCY, MARCEL,
PIERRE, ALPHONSE
4. *Won't You Charleston With Me* BOBBY, MAISIE
5. *Fancy Forgetting* MME. DUBONNET, PERCIVAL
6. *I Could Be Happy With You* TONY, POLLY
7. *Finale Act One : The Boy Friend (Reprise)* ENSEMBLE

INTERVAL

Act Two

8. *Sur Le Plage* FAY, DULCIE, NANCY, MAISIE, MARCEL, PIERRE,
ALPHONSE, BOBBY
9. *A Room In Bloomsbury* TONY, POLLY
10. *It's Nicer In Nice* HORTENSE, DULCIE, ALPHONSE, MARCEL,
FAY, NANCY, PIERRE
11. *The "You Don't Want To Play With Me" Blues* MME. DUBONNET,
PERCIVAL & GIRLS
12. *Safety In Numbers* MAISIE & BOYS
13. *Finale Act Two : I Could Be Happy With You (Reprise)* ENSEMBLE

INTERVAL

Act Three

14. *The Riviera* BOBBY, MAISIE, BOYS & GIRLS
15. *Tony's Dance* ORCHESTRA
16. *It's Never Too Late To Fall In Love* LORD BROCKHURST & DULCIE
17. *Carnival Tango* PEPE & LOLITA
18. *Poor Little Pierrette* MME. DUBONNET & POLLY
19. *Finale Act Three :*
The Boy Friend ENSEMBLE
I Could Be Happy With You ENSEMBLE

Michele Hardy (Choreographer)

Michele's career spans choreography, dancing, acting and, more recently, directing. She made her debut as a director at Colchester with a much-praised production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and her work received unanimously excellent press from critics who spoke of her work as "inventive, superbly disciplined and delightful to watch". She has since directed the same show at Canterbury, *Traditional Music Hall* at York and co-directed Trevor Peacock's new version of *Cinderella* at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. Born in Essex, Michele emigrated with her family to America when she was 13 and won a Ford Foundation Scholarship to George Balanchine's New York City Ballet. Her dancing experience ranges from soloist with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet to principal dancer with The Folies Bergeres, whilst her Broadway musical and summer stock credits include performances in *Gypsy*, *West Side Story* and *Half a Sixpence*. Michele returned to England several years ago and has contributed to the success of many ventures on stage, screen and television.

As a performer, Michele has been seen most recently as Ruth in a production of *Two and Two Make Sex* in 1978. She has also been in more than a dozen films, among them : *The Music Lovers*, *Oliver*, *Scrooge*, *Goodbye Mr. Chips* and *The Savage Messiah*. She has appeared in many stage productions too including *Guys and Dolls* at the Leeds Playhouse, and in the part of 'Anybody's' in a recent London revival of *West Side Story*. In the field of mime, Michele won praise from international audiences in the key role of The Mute in a special Festival production of *The Fantasticks* in Portugal ; whilst on television her varied roles have included the part of — appropriately ! — a choreographer in an episode of *Z Cars*, and the contrasting roles of a witch and a spinning top in the BBC production of *Hansel and Gretel*.

As a choreographer, Michele's West End credits include *Oh, Kay !* at the Westminster and two numbers for *Cockie !* which brought her special praise from the critics. She has staged major cabarets on the Continent, whilst her television work ranges from Granada's *Dancing in the Dark*, BBC's *Trinity Tales*, *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* and *Are You Being Served ?* to staging television commercials. Michele also receives many invitations to choreograph musicals at leading repertory theatres, and amongst those she has accepted are the spectacular *Leaping Ginger* at Manchester's Royal Exchange Theatre — where she has also arranged the movement for productions of *A Winter's Tale* and *The Dybbuk*, and where in mid-1979 she will choreograph a new musical based on *The Three Musketeers* — *The Boy Friend* at Colchester, Canterbury and — during Spring 1979 — Billingham ; *Trinity Tales* at Birmingham ; *Me and My Girl* at Billingham ; *Guys and Dolls* at Leeds and Colchester ; *Cabaret* at Canterbury ; *Salad Days* at Coventry ; and *Oh, Coward !* at Worcester. She also choreographed the world premiere of Sandy Wilson's musical *The Clapham Wonder*, and has staged pantomimes in Richmond, Leatherhead, Coventry, Bradford and Birmingham.

Terry Parsons (Designer)

Designer Terry Parsons' West End productions include *A Bedfull of Foreigners*, *The Pleasure of His Company*, *The Travelling Music Show*, *Dean*, *Dad's Army*, *Bunny*, *Dead Easy* and *The King and I*.

In the last couple of years Terry has also designed the new comedy thriller *Murder in a Bad Light* starring Terry Scott, *George and Mildred* for stage presentation, a *Singalong* summer show for Max Bygraves and revivals of *Quadrille*, *I Am a Camera*, *The Sleeping Prince* and *Pygmalion* for major national tours. In addition he has designed pantomimes and Christmas shows for Birmingham, Bromley, Coventry, Croydon, Guildford, Leicester, Lincoln and also for Richmond where his annual pantomimes over recent years have attracted enormous critical praise. Terry's designs for *An Ideal Husband*, *The Pleasure of His Company*, *The Two of Us* and *George and Mildred* have been seen in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. Terry has just completed work on a major revival of *Charley's Aunt* starring John Inman which will tour during Spring 1979 prior to West End presentation, and he did the designs for *There's a Small Hotel* starring Patrick Cargill which is also currently on tour. A new comedy called *One of Our Howls is Missing* which Terry has designed opened in April at the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester, prior to a tour, and he is also working on the designs of a new play called *All Together Now* for presentation at Leicester in June.

Terry's forthcoming projects include a brand new production of *The Boy Friend* at Billingham, the stage version of *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* and a new production of *Calamity Jane* to be seen later in 1979.

Born in Cardiff, Terry trained at Cardiff Art College and then at the Central School of Art where he won an Arts Council scholarship to the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. Within a few months he was appointed Head of Design there and spent some six years designing well over 100 productions of every type before deciding on a free-lance career. Terry met his wife Biddy when she was the Wardrobe Mistress at the Belgrade Theatre, and they now live in Watford with their two young children Sadie and Toby, and they are expecting another baby in the middle of 1979.

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Membership of the Forum Theatre Club is open to anyone who enjoys theatre and who wishes to learn more about it. People who are prepared to work as ambassadors of the Forum Theatre, in making it widely known in the area are particularly welcome. They could also help to build up a regular, informed and interested audience for the theatre.

Subscriptions for the Club have been fixed at £1.25.

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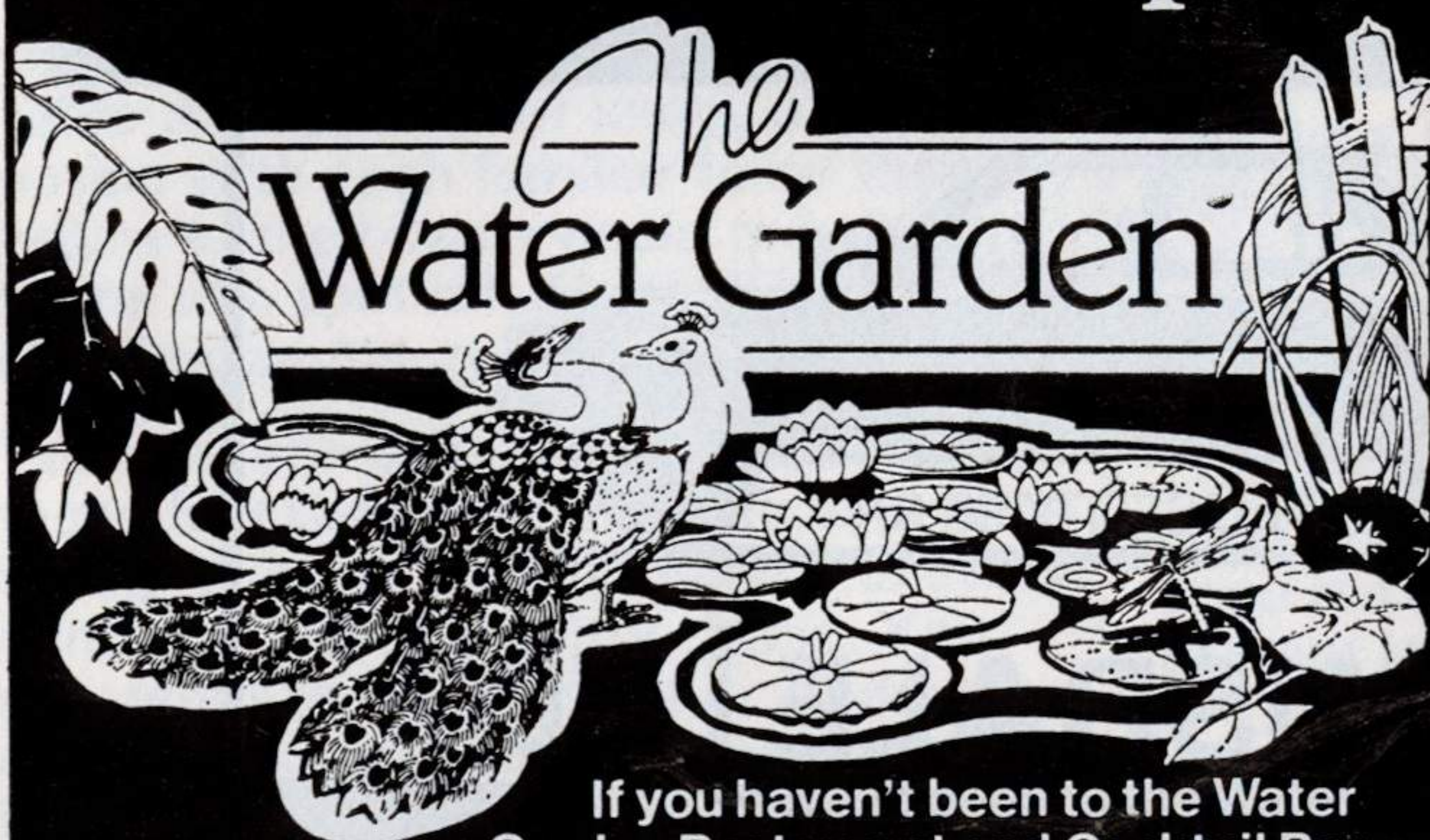
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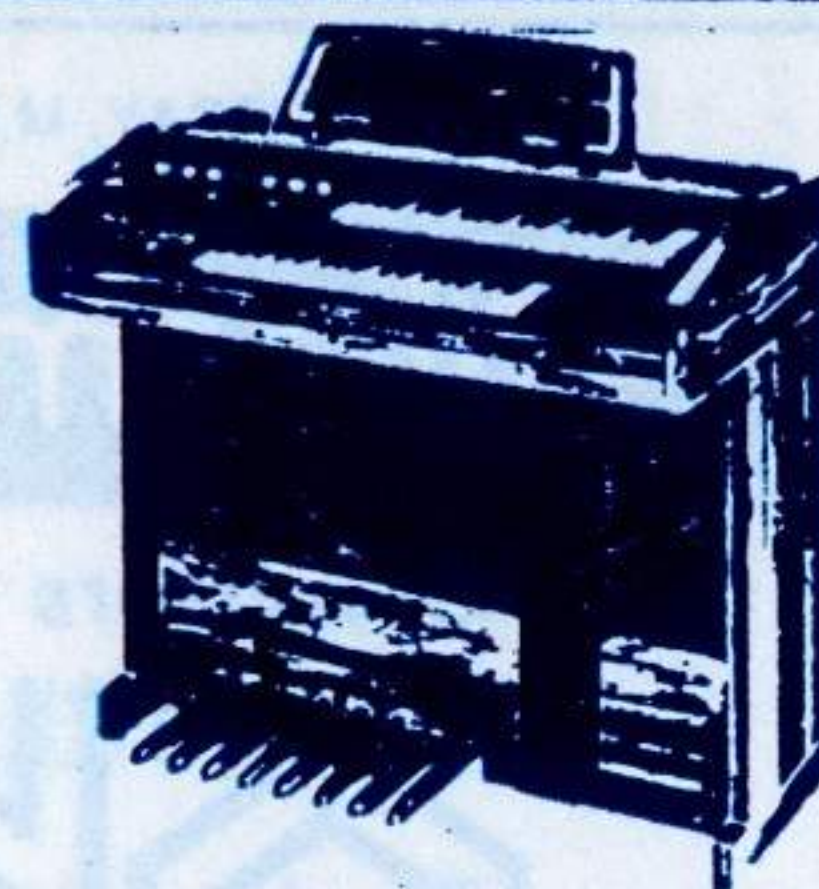
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THE BEST OF LIGHT TOUCHES

by Adam Benedict

Ronnie Barker who is now a half of the Two Ronnies who beguile us on the box was not always a source of steady laughter. When he started out it was authors like Eugene O'Neill and Anton Chekhov and Jean-Paul Sartre and Tennessee Williams for whom he acted on the stage.

He acted on the stage a great deal before he clicked on the television screen. And great, of course, has been the clicking. Indeed it now seems impossible that Ronnie Barker should come back to the stage. Not that he wouldn't help the box-office takings. Nor would he be rusty in the way that certain film stars, when they judge it right to return to the stage, have a way of seeming rusty.

It is hard however to imagine him returning (except as a Ronnie) to the stage because he has made such a name on television. And when you make your name on television you are liable to impose your image on the nation with such familiar force that any return to the boards could only be in terms of a spin-off. There is small hope of doing anything original.

You are type-cast and are stuck with those few famous characters who have brought you into every home and every mind as a friendly, witty comic. You may want to play Hamlet or Andrew Aguecheek, Oedipus, Bottom or Charles Surface. It is no longer any good. The world has chosen to enjoy you as an old lag who broadcasts his grumbles on Sundays, or as the other half of a well-loved double act in which the tall and the short of it are the

comic point. And however much you try to escape that image you cannot break it without breaking a few million hearts, not to mention contracts.

So Ronnie Barker, for all his fame and brilliance as a comedian, isn't as free as you may think. He has always to consider his television reputation. And yet he knows as well as you or I that the stage is the only true test of any actor. It is to the stage that he will leave the ultimate judge of his talent.

But whether he feels fettered by his fame on the box, by his duet with the other Ronnie (Corbett), he is reaching more people with a single appearance than his artistic ancestors could hope to reach in a lifetime of playing the halls.

He finds on television precise opportunities to perform as for a revue (and younger playgoers may be forgiven for asking what a revue is). He appears in a variety of sketches and gags (with Corbett as the comic alternative) of the kind which might have formed the staple of revue if revue hadn't been more or less defunct for so long.

True there are sporadic and spasmodic efforts to revive it. But basically it is gone out of fashion. No one is judged to want it. And so no one writes for it. They write instead for television. Sometimes brilliantly. Yet it is so ephemeral. The small screen hungers and thirsts not after righteousness so much as after new material every night.

We must be grateful therefore if Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett can remind

continued overleaf

us now and then of what revue was like and the importance it placed on personalites. The presenters had to have enough force and charm and presence of mind to play at each performance a whole host of characters. And that is something that Mr. Barker (like Dick Emery) is good at. He can slip instantly into a new character, sometimes unreognisably. Must we attribute this gift to his six or seven years of hard training in the provinces?

Born at Bedford and educated at the City High School, Oxford, he was a bank clerk before he went on the stage. He made his first professional appearance aged 19 as Lieut Spicer in "Quality Street" at Aylesbury.

At the Phoenix he landed three (small) parts in "Camino Real" by Tennessee Williams, followed by Sartre's "Nekrassov" and Aristophanes' "Lysistrata" at the Royal Court.

Then perhaps came the hint of change. He got a part in a French musical comedy, and though nobody ever seriously supposed that the French had such a thing as musical comedy save in the time-honoured, costumed romantic tradition that borders on operetta, "Irma La Douce" (which Peter Brook directed) proved a big hit in London as well as Paris.

It had a long run with Mr. Barker in a role I can't remember; and then he went back to the Court to join Rex Harrison in a previously unacted play by Chekhov called "Platonov" and then back to the "illegitimate" stage in the successful revue "On The Brighter Side". This show was the turning point.

Mr. Barker's roles thereafter leaned on the lighter side.

But you will notice that 13 years after

he chose the theatre as a profession he was still more or less unknown. Nor did he make any startling overnight success as Quince in a pretty disastrous revival of Shakespeare's "The Dream" at the Royal Court (again) though he kept goodish company (his fellow players including Robert Lang, Colin Blakely, Nicol Williamson, David Warner and Rita Tushingham, directed by Tony Richardson).

A musical version of Sheridan's "The Rivals" called "All In Love" at the May Fair brought him forward as Bob Acres to add to his reputation for comedy; and he confirmed his promise in Alan Ayckbourn's early play "Mr. Whatnot" at the Arts later the same year. But it was really as Birdboot, one of the two theatre critics in Tom Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound", that Mr. Barker created his most obvious stir. Indeed he and Richard Briers (as the other critic) enjoyed a special success as two professional spectators drawn all too literally into the action of a stage thriller as they watch it.

That was eleven years' ago. Three years' later Mr. Barker had a lot of fun in a ramshackle musical comedy at the new Birmingham Repertory Theatre called "Good Time Johnny". And since then the playgoer has rather lost track of this highly accomplished comedian. So the next time you see him on the box (where he is more easily tracked down in tandem with Ronnie Corbett or in the old-lag series called "Porridge") remember that the theatre trained him in the first place.

His hobby by the way is listed as deltiology. What's that? The study and collection of picture postcards. Another characteristically light touch.



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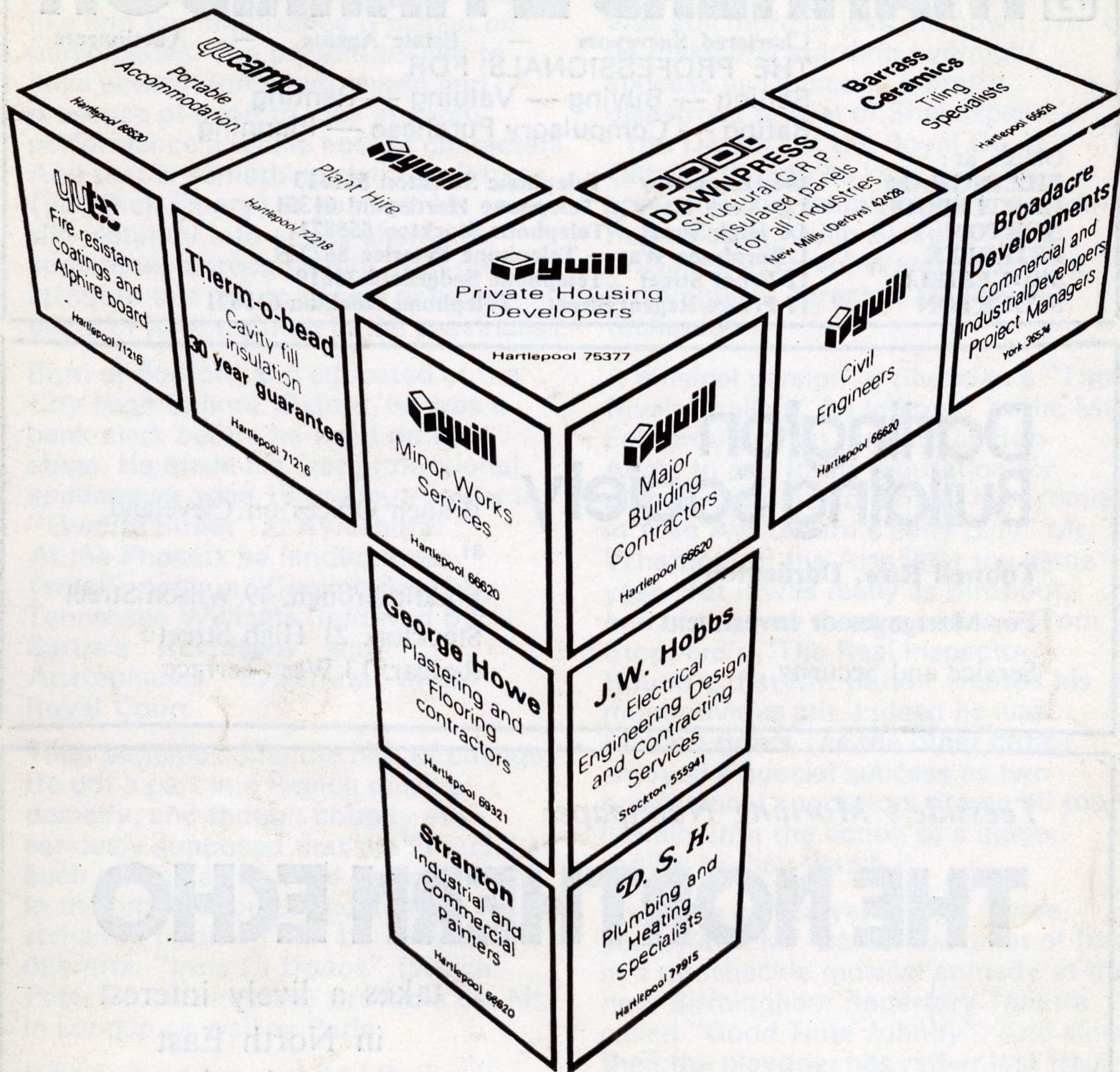
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