

Lyceum Theatre Season Launch 2009/10

Following a successful season in 2008/09, this entertaining and ambitious line up for 2009/10, with its three world premières, celebrated playwrights and authors, sees the Lyceum re-affirm its commitment to celebrating exceptional drama and continue to position itself as Scotland's premier producing theatre company.

The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company is delighted to reveal yet another outstanding season under Artistic Director Mark Thomson for 2009/10. Associate Artists Tony Cownie, John Dove and Philip Pinsky continue their excellent work alongside Mark, including specially commissioned playwrights John Byrne, Jo Clifford and our collaboration with the acclaimed Vanishing Point Theatre Company.

Mark Thomson said: "I'm very pleased to present a season of work including three world premières that combine great contemporary writing and the re-invention of classic plays and stories to be your companion at this junction we find ourselves at, to keep you entertained and elevated by acts of original and passionate theatre."

We open this year with the Lyceum's collaboration between Vanishing Point Theatre Company and Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Director Matthew Lenton's unique storytelling style will re-imagine the great classic *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay to create a radical and contemporary new version of the 1728 ballad opera for the Lyceum. Featuring brand new live music, cutting edge projection design and a large cast of leading performers, this world première is sure to be a theatrical delight for 2009.

The Lyceum also celebrates two other world premières this season with specially commissioned works by Jo Clifford (*Faust Parts One & Two & Anna Karenina*) with *Everyone*, which takes its inspiration from the medieval morality play *Everyman*, and John Byrne's (*Uncle Varick*) new and updated version of Chekhov's masterpiece *The Cherry Orchard*.

John Dove returns to direct his fourth Arthur Miller play for the Lyceum, *The Price*, while Jemima Levick (*A Christmas Carol & The Glass Menagerie*) also returns to direct our Christmas show delight *Peter Pan*. Other highlights for the season include Mark Thomson's adaptation of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and BAFTA award winner Martin McDonagh's renowned *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*.

THE LYCEUM PRESS RELEASE

Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh

Tuesday, 04 August 2009

Last year's Lyceum Christmas production of CS Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* broke all box office records, and exceeded our wildest expectations. This year's world-class production from the Lyceum Theatre will take you to the most magical faraway land of all in JM Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

This autumn the Lyceum is also pleased to welcome Spike Milligan's *Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall* in which the Bristol Old Vic bring Spike Milligan's celebrated war memoirs to anarchic life in this hilarious new stage adaptation.

-Ends-

Notes to editors

Season 2009/10 The Plays

World Première

The Beggar's Opera

Based on the original by John Gay

In a new version created by Vanishing Point

A Royal Lyceum Theatre, Vanishing Point and Belgrade Theatre Coventry co-production

In association with Tramway, Glasgow

Directed by Matthew Lenton

12 September – 3 October 2009

Confessions of a Justified Sinner

By James Hogg

Adapted and directed by Mark Thomson

16 October – 7 November 2009

CHRISTMAS SHOW

Peter Pan

By J M Barrie

Directed by Jemima Levick

By arrangement with the Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and Samuel French Limited

27 November 2009 – 3 January 2010

The Price

By Arthur Miller

Directed by John Dove

By arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited

15 January – 13 February 2010

The Beauty Queen of Leenane

By Martin McDonagh
Directed by Tony Cownie
19 February – 13 March 2010

World Première

Everyone

By Jo Clifford
Directed by Mark Thomson
19 March – 10 April 2010

World Première

The Cherry Orchard

By Anton Chekhov in a new version by John Byrne
Directed by Tony Cownie
16 April – 8 May 2010

Visiting Production

Spike Milligan's

Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall

6-10 October 2009
A Bristol Old Vic Production

The Plays

World Première

The Beggar's Opera

Based on the original by John Gay
In a new version created by Vanishing Point
A Royal Lyceum Theatre, Vanishing Point and Belgrade Theatre Coventry co-production
In association with Tramway, Glasgow
Directed by Matthew Lenton

The future happened.

Some things went according to plan.

Others didn't.

Either way it doesn't look good.

Now we're living in a brave new world and there's a new system in place.

But when there's a system, there are people who screw it.

Take MacHeath - shadow of the night, superhero to some, villain to others. Where he goes, trouble is sure to follow. The thing about MacHeath, he's the real thing. In a world of imitators and wannabees, he's the genuine article.

Everyone wants to be him.

But some people don't like it.

Especially now MacHeath has got it together with young Polly.

Mr and Mrs Peachum, Polly's parents, don't like it for a start.

Nor does Lucy. She thought MacHeath was the one for her. She'll do everything she can to keep him.

Her dad Lockit doesn't like it either. MacHeath is trouble, you see, and trouble's better when it's on your side.

Ever watchful, ever elusive MacHeath... With so many enemies, it's hard to tell who your friends are.

The Beggar's Opera is re-imagined by leading company Vanishing Point in a dark, dirty, absurd, visually rich and cruelly comic production. Featuring brand new live music, cutting edge projection design and a large cast

of leading performers, The Beggar's Opera promises to be one of the most entertaining theatre events of 2009.

Confessions of a Justified Sinner

James Hogg
Adapted by Mark Thomson
Directed by Mark Thomson

Mark Thomson directs his own adaptation of James Hogg's 1824 Scots novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Hailed as an unclassifiable novel, Hogg's story probes the reaches of religious fanaticism, and in particular the brand of Calvinism which considers individuals to be predestined to reach either heaven or hell in the afterlife, regardless of their actions on Earth.

Being told by a shape-shifting devil that he's been chosen for salvation, anti-hero Robert Wringhim allows himself to be coerced into engaging in a blood-soaked life of criminal activity. Unfettered by any compunction to act morally, Robert's world becomes a whirlpool of unethical decisions, without any need for repentance, any expectation of punishment, or any question of eventual redemption.

This is a new version of the text first staged in an acclaimed production at the Brunton Theatre in 1998, again envisaging a place where neither angels or demons are exactly what they seem, and reflecting on contemporary attitudes to religious belief and concepts of morality and ethics. Cited as a major influence on the writing of another great Scottish novel, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, we're delighted to be bringing this classic tale to the Lyceum's stage.

Christmas Show

Peter Pan

JM Barrie
Directed by Jemima Levick
By arrangement with the Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and Samuel French Limited

This year we're visiting the most magical faraway land of all, with the greatest Scottish children's hero ever created! Neverland is just around the corner - well, second to the right and straight on til morning! So close your eyes, spread your arms and wait for that all-important sprinkling of magic fairy dust that will let you soar into the night sky...

Join us on an awfully big adventure with Peter, Wendy, John and Michael – and not forgetting Tinker Bell and the Lost Boys! - as they do battle with the wicked Captain Hook and his pirate crew, in a world where crocodiles go tick-tock and little boys never have to grow up. If you believe in fairies then you mustn't miss this world-class Christmas production from the Lyceum Theatre – we guarantee you'll be *hooked*!

The Price

Arthur Miller
Directed by John Dove
By arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited

In a dilapidated Manhattan brownstone, scheduled to be torn down, two brothers confront each other and their past conflicts for the first time in years.

Forced by the impending demolition into finally selling off their long-since-deceased father's belongings, at first Victor and Walter quarrel merely over the value of the goods. But as the afternoon wears on, mutual resentments, hidden truths and painful secrets are brought to the surface bringing both to the edge of madness and despair.

With Victor's disappointed and pushy wife Esther circling and goading them and wise old furniture dealer Solomon acting as would-be peacemaker, the scene is set for a tense and powerful drama, once described by the New York Times as ranking alongside, "if not above, *Death of a Salesman*".

Arthur Miller specialist John Dove (*The Man Who Had All the Luck, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman*) will direct this acclaimed later work from the greatest American playwright of the twentieth century.

The Beauty Queen of Leenane

Martin McDonagh
Directed by Tony Cownie

Set in the remote Irish village of Leenane in the late 1980's, lonely spinster Maureen Folan lives with her selfish, self-pitying seventy-year-old mother Mag, trapped and tending to her every need. Together they spend their days in rounds of petty insults and abuse until at last a chance of love and escape comes in the form of Pato, a handsome forty-year-old returning from England and off to Boston, hoping to take Maureen with him.

With this newly discovered romance things get horribly out of hand and Mag interferes once too often. A modern classic that is full of twists, bitter tragedy and scathing black comedy lending itself to its surprising conclusion.

Martin McDonagh has taken the modern theatre by storm over the last decade with a style that is brutal and uncompromising in its exploration of the human condition. An award winning playwright and film director, he has had recent success and acclaim for Best Original Screenplay *In Bruges*.

World Première

Everyone

Jo Clifford
Directed by Mark Thomson

Jo Clifford took the medieval morality tale, Everyman as the inspiration for this beautiful new play for the Lyceum next spring. We meet a family - Joe, Mary, Kevin and Mazz - who seem rather bemused about why they are the focus of attention. They seem like a fairly typical contemporary family with all the mundane concerns, issues and pleasures that most of us encounter as we go about our business of living, bringing up children, of growing up, of growing old. However when Death comes calling everyone must consider their position in the world.

The play explores human grace, mortality and love with great warmth, the poetry and laughter. It promises a special evening of rare theatricality and exploration of the human spirit.

World Première

The Cherry Orchard

By Anton Chekhov in a new version by John Byrne
Directed by Tony Cownie

John Byrne is one of Scotland's most precious national treasures: a fine artist and creator of seminal TV such as *Tutti Frutti* and *Yer Cheatin' Heart* but it was through *The Slab Boys* that he handed Scottish theatre one of its most significant pieces of post-war theatre. We produced John's *Uncle Varick* (after Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*) a number of years ago and he has now placed the same playwright's *The Cherry Orchard* in Scotland during the turbulent early 1980's.

Byrne's version is faithful to the characters (taking one or two liberties) and their painful and comic lives as the extraordinary Mrs Ramsay-Mackay (Madam Ranyevskaya) struggles to adapt to the changing times, pursued by the rapacious Malky McCracken (Lopakhin) who sees the opportunity to unshackle himself from his humble beginnings and land Mackay's fabled cherry orchard - whilst at the same time harbouring a fondness for her. It will be an evening of laughter, reflection and moving portraits of faltering humanity set in a period that changed our society.

VISITING THE LYCEUM THIS AUTUMN

Spike Milligan's

Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall

Adapted for the stage by Ben Power and Tim Carroll

Directed by Tim Carroll

A Bristol Old Vic Production

Spike Milligan's celebrated war memoirs are brought to anarchic life in this hilarious new stage adaptation. This epic Everyman's odyssey through World War Two, with a cast of extraordinary characters, charts Gunner Milligan's progress from joining the Royal Artillery through the North African and Italian campaigns. And with Spike's sense of lunacy, anything can happen along the way! High comedy and tragedy collide, as we follow him and his *ad hoc* jazz quartet – complete with their famed comedy routines – adrift on the tide of great historic events. Using Milligan's own words, the story is told through a joyous fusion of comedy, jazz, song and dance – showing how humour, music and comradeship enabled a hapless and disparate bunch of young men to prevail against the might of the Nazi War Machine.

Warning: Contains barrack room humour.

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Sponsors & Funding



Co-producers



VANISHING POINT

