

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS:

FLESH & BLOOD

By Philip Osment

Set in the 1950s and 1980s, this powerful drama explores the tensions and jealousies of three siblings who inherit the family farm

Directed by Paul Hewitt
February 9-12, 2005
Tivoli Theatre

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

T.S. Eliot's evocative play about the martyrdom of Thomas a Becket

Directed by Enid Davies
May 25-28, 2005
In the Minster

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An Evening with Gary Lineker, Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, The Madness of George III, David Copperfield, On the Razzle and The Hollow. Simon has also appeared in several pantomimes and Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Simon is semi-retired.

Richard Neal
(Truscott)



Richard's previous credits include: Dennis in *One for the Road*, John Smith in *Run for Your*

Wife, Tempest in Forty Years On, Dan in An Evening with Gary Lineker, Mompesson in The Roses of Eyam, Canon Throbbing in Habeas Corpus, the title role in David Copperfield, Antipholus of Syracuse in The Comedy of Errors and Charley in Charley's Aunt. He has twice won Daily Echo Curtain Call Awards for directing *The Madness of George III* and *On the Razzle*. Richard is an online production manager for a publishing company.

David Nielsen
(Dennis)



David studied film and

television acting in Vancouver, Canada and appeared as an extra in several Canadian feature films. In the UK he was part of the production team for a short film *Consecration* for Channel Four. This is David's first role with Wimborne Drama, although he will be familiar to followers of Ferndown Drama Group for whom he has appeared in *Coarse Acting Show, Last Panto in Little Grimley, Uproar in the House, What's for Pudding?* and *The Odd Couple*. David is married with two young daughters and works as a CAD designer/manufacturer.

Barry Baynton
(Director)

Barry is a familiar figure

on the local theatre scene. His directing credits include *Forty Years On, Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, Habeas Corpus, Ten Times Table, Lion in Winter* and *Aladdin*. In 2002 his production of *Bent* (act 2) won the New Forest Drama Festival and was performed at the British All-Winners Festival in Hertford. Barry is also a versatile actor and his recent appearances include *The Madness of George III, David Copperfield* and *On the Razzle* for Wimborne Drama, and *Table Manners* for St Luke's Players. Barry is deputy manager of a Citizens' Advice Bureau.

PROGRAMME DESIGN Richard Neal

**Penny
Coulson
(Fay)**



Penny works for a printing company in Poole and lives with her partner, Steve, and their two-year-old daughter, Ellie. This is Penny's first appearance at the Tivoli. She was a member of St Luke's Players for several years and acted in many plays including *Edge of Darkness*, *Table Manners*, *A Letter from the General* and *Run for Your Wife*. However, her favourite roles were Sarat Carn in *Bonaventure* and Elvira in *Blithe Spirit*.

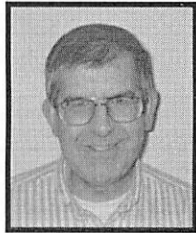
**Ryan
Gregg
(Hal)**



This is Ryan's first role at the Tivoli with Wimborne Drama. In the late '90s Ryan worked as a children's entertainer, played both Mad Hatter and White Rabbit at Alice in Wonderland Family Park and taught drama at Bournemouth Youth Theatre. On the local amateur scene he has appeared in *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* (Bournemouth Shakespeare Players), *Run for Your Wife* and *The Anniversary* (St Luke's and

Jack's Revenge (New Forest Players). In 2002 he appeared in Barry Baynton's festival-winning production of *Bent*. Ryan writes music and plays bass and vocals in a band.

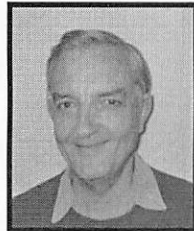
**Bob
Hucklesby
(Meadows)**



Bob last appeared at the Tivoli in Wimborne Drama's production of *David Copperfield*. He also appeared in *The Madness of George III*. Bob was a member of St Luke's Players in Bournemouth for more than ten years playing supporting roles

in many productions including *Run for your Wife*, *Table Manners* and *The Anniversary*. In real life, Bob works in the finance department of Bournemouth Borough Council.

**Simon
Jackson
(McCleavy)**



Simon has been a member of Wimborne Drama since 1977 when he took the part of a police detective in *The Gentle Hook*. Other notable appearances include *The Amorous Prawn*, *George & Margaret*, our 1990 production of *Charley's Aunt*,

WIMBORNE DRAMA

presents

100t

by Joe Orton

**DIRECTED BY
BARRY BAYNTON**

**13-16 OCTOBER 2004
TIVOLI THEATRE WIMBORNE**

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Dead funny

Both my parents have sadly passed away and both were, at their request, cremated. Myself, I have never been fond of fire so personally would much prefer a tree planted on top of me.

Dad was taken past his bowling club, where the club flag flew at half-mast and some of his team mates stood and bowed their heads. That was nice.

For mum - no such planned route. However by chance we drove past one of her favourite shops. Forever my mum had been one of the nation's great knitters, and for many years she had frequented a wool shop in Moordown. So here we were driving past, the owner sadly not aware. I like to believe mum gave a little final wave as the shop passed by.

Actually mum would have been dead bored with her funeral service. She was not into the church, so apart from a couple of 'middle of the road' tapes, the service was soon completed.

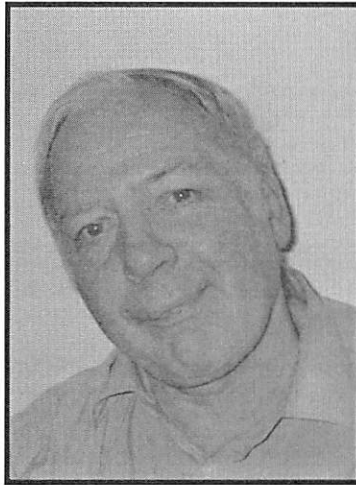
Which now leads me to tonight's play. My mum would have loved the adventure set upon the late Mrs McLeavy. In fact I do believe mum saw the play in Bournemouth with Kenneth Williams during the sixties. She was, like myself, a great fan of *Beyond Our Ken*.

So I welcome you to the Tivoli Theatre. Here is a play, written during the sixties, but with dialogue and characters that would not be too far out of place today.

I am very lucky to have collected a talented cast and team who have worked extremely hard for me and I am grateful. I should also like to extend my sincere thanks to our sponsors BEC Group whose support is much appreciated.

For the first time ever with one of my plays, I am using the front tabs (curtains). Why? Well, when installed and due to their speed and mechanical sound, I remarked that they reminded me of the crematorium curtains. You see the Tivoli, unlike other theatres, cannot provide for a quick curtain! So it seems very appropriate to use them.

Have an enjoyable time with us.



Barry Baynton, Director

The show attacked all sorts of targets that the BBC guidelines had hitherto deemed out of bounds, such as religion - their *Which?* style guide to comparative religion concluded that the Church of England was "a jolly good little faith for a very moderate outlay" and made it their 'best buy' - the royal family and Members of Parliament.

Not even *Dixon of Dock Green* was safe. He was shown entering a room, beating the stuffing out of a suspect and saying "just a routine enquiry, sir", as he raised his hand in salute, stepped over the bleeding victim and departed.

Mary Whitehouse hated it. She described it as: "The epitome of what's wrong with the BBC - anti-authority, anti-religious, anti-patriotism, pro-dirt and poorly produced, yet having the support of the Corporation and

apparently impervious to discipline from within or disapproval from without."

Despite the fact that it was attracting viewing figures of twelve million, the show was dropped in 1964 because a general election was looming and the BBC's charter was due for renewal.

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1960s police recruitment ad. Even the police couldn't escape the satirists

The sixties satire boom

Satire enjoyed one of its periodic revivals in the 1960s, following the success of *Beyond the Fringe* in the 1961 Edinburgh Festival. In the same year Peter Cook opened his Establishment Club and *Private Eye* was founded.

But arguably the greatest impact was made when Hugh Greene set up the television satire show *That Was The Week That Was* (generally shortened to *TW3*) at the BBC. Greene gave it to the Current Affairs department, rather than Light Entertainment, in an effort to “sharpen it up”. Ned Sherrin was made the director. The show enjoyed an influence and notoriety that belied its relatively short life.

TW3 was presented by a youthful David Frost. Also featured were Roy Kinnear, Lance Percival, Willie Rushton and Bernard Levin, with Millicent Martin providing the songs. One of its contributors was a graduate of the ‘university of life’, rather than of Oxbridge. This was Frankie Howerd, who said of the programme: “These days, you can't be filthy unless you've got a degree.”

No less distinguished was the list of writers and researchers who contributed, including Gerald Kaufmann, Peter Schaffer, Keith Waterhouse, Willis Hall, Kenneth Tynan and Dennis Potter.

The show was launched to rapturous acclaim and violent abuse in equal proportions, sometimes from the same newspaper. *The Daily Telegraph*, for example, spoke of it as raising “questions of fairness, propriety and even libel” and saying that it “enabled its script-writers to disseminate personal abuse, and bitter attacks upon authority of every kind”. The same paper also concluded: “Without reservations, *TW3*, the BBC's first late night satirical show, is brilliant ... for the first time it seems reasonable that one should need a licence for a television set - it can be as lethal as a gun.”

Within three weeks of its launch, the Postmaster General was calling for prior sight of its scripts. He was very firmly warned off by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, in a memorandum which only became public during the 1990s, under the Thirty Year Rule: “I hope that you will not, repeat not, take any action about *That Was The Week That Was* without consulting me. It is a good thing to be laughed over - it is better than to be ignored.”

Outrageous Orton

In Joe Orton's short but brilliant career from 1964 until his death in 1967 he shocked, outraged and amused audiences with his scandalous black comedies. Ortonesque became a recognised term for “macabre outrageousness”.

Born John Kingsley Orton on January 1, 1933 in Leicester, Orton grew up in an abusive, working-class family. An aspiring asthmatic actor who couldn't hold down a job, he gained entry to RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts), much to the annoyance of his teacher, who thought he was awful. “She had no taste”, said Orton in a 1967 interview. He found himself stagnating at RADA, however, and left after two years.

After joining repertory theatre, and embarking on a short-lived, unhappy, marriage, Orton returned to London. At the age of 18, Orton had met Kenneth Halliwell at RADA, and they became lovers, living together in Islington.

They lived on Halliwell's money and the dole, working occasionally. They collaborated on a number of unpublished novels. Lack of substantial work led them to curious acts. In one bizarre episode Orton and Halliwell borrowed books from the local library and would subtly modify the cover art. A volume of poems by John Betjeman, for example, was returned to the library with a new dustjacket featuring a photograph of a nearly naked, heavily tattooed middle-aged man. They were eventually discovered, and prosecuted in May 1962. They were sentenced to six months.

In the early 1960s Orton found a solo talent as a playwright. In 1964 the BBC broadcast *The Ruffian on the Stair*. Soon after, Peggy Ramsey, one of London's sassiest and shrewdest agents, took on Orton. To avoid confusion with playwright John Osborne, Ramsey suggested a change of names. John became Joe. Within three years, Joe became London's most promising playwright. His lover, however, remained a struggling, unpublished writer.

Entertaining Mr Sloane won the London Critics' Variety Award as the best play of 1964, and in 1966 Orton picked up the Evening Standard's best play award for *Loot*. Two further television plays followed - *The Good and Faithful Servant* (1967) and *Funeral Games* (1968). *What the Butler Saw*, his last play, was staged in 1969 and won a 1970 'Obie' Award for the best off-Broadway foreign play in New York. Both *Entertaining Mr Sloane* and *Loot* have been filmed. Orton also wrote a screenplay for the Beatles which was never filmed, but was subsequently published as *Up Against It*. The novels, *Head to Toe*, *Between Us Girls*, *The Boy Hairdresser* and *Lord Cucumber*, and the plays, *Fred and Madge* and *The Visitors*, were published posthumously.



Joe Orton

At Peggy Ramsey's suggestion, Orton began writing diaries in 1966. He kept the journals for the last eight months of his life and he recorded in dramatic detail his clandestine sexual escapades and transcripts of conversations he overheard.

"I'm keeping a diary," Orton wrote to Peggy Ramsey from Tangier on May 26, 1967, "to be published long after my death." But the diaries, edited and published by Orton's biographer John Lahr in 1986, were actually read before Orton's death.

Orton constantly encouraged his increasingly insipid partner, Halliwell, to read them. Left alone in their small one-bedroom apartment while Orton accepted awards at banquets and wandered through London's anonymous homosexual underworld, Halliwell became increasingly jealous and unhinged. On August 8, 1967, Halliwell crushed Orton's skull with nine frenzied, fatal hammer blows. He then took his own life by overdosing on anti-depressants. When police broke down their door the next morning, they found Orton's journals on a desk between the two blood-splattered bodies. Atop the diaries, Halliwell had left a note: "If you read his diary all will be explained. K.H. P.S. Especially the latter part."

Orton might have scripted such a grotesque death for one of his plays. This final scene shocked audiences into silence. The laughter stopped. Life, for Orton, turned out as gruesome and absurd as his plays. In *Loot*, Orton had made an uncanny prediction of his mother's funeral.

In his diaries, he recorded a conversation with TV producer Peter Willes: "I told him about [my mother's] funeral. And the frenzied way my family behave. He seemed shocked. But then he thinks my plays are fantasies. He suddenly caught a glimpse of the fact that I write the truth."

Shocking start

The first production of *Loot*, featuring Kenneth Williams as Inspector Truscott, fell foul of pressurised re-writes, petty infighting, irate audiences and the censor. It opened at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge on February 1, 1965 and Orton's desire was to shock - and he did so successfully.

The Cambridgeshire News described *Loot* as "a comedy that brought so few laughs" and sniffed at "Mr Orton's repetitive and nasty sense of humour". Indeed so hostile was the reception that *Loot* closed after six weeks. One of the main problems was the overly-mannered production and caricatured performances, not least by Kenneth Williams for whom Orton had specifically written the role of Truscott. (Ironically, Kenneth Williams went on to direct a successful revival of *Loot* at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith in 1980.)

Orton's reputation and energy were severely dented but the play was thrown a lifeline in Manchester. The Century Theatre was to re-stage the play. Director Braham Murray worked with Orton on re-writes and reinstated the cuts imposed by the Lord Chamberlain. Under the watchful eye of the police stationed in the stalls, the new production opened in Manchester on April 11, 1966. Second time

had not even bothered to insure its share of the shipment. However, victimless it was not. Jack Mills, the 58-year-old train driver, was permanently disabled by the blow he received, and died in 1970. A collection for him was only belatedly started in 1969, and did not even raise as much as two of the gang members' wives had received for selling their stories to the newspapers.

A second reason was that the public was in an anarchic mood, welcoming anything that appeared to be anti-authority, for their faith in the establishment had been sorely tested. Britain had just failed - courtesy of General de Gaulle - to get into the Common Market; the sordid web of deceit and ineptitude that was the Philby spy saga had just come to light; and the public entertainment of the Profumo affair was still fresh in the memory. The public loved the Great Train Robbery, as it came to be called, especially when overseas papers were forced to acknowledge that Britain could still lead the world in something.

Seventeen people were said to have taken part in the robbery, although three of them were never even named, let alone caught. But despite the assistance of deeply unhelpful press speculation as to their identity - the job was variously said to have been masterminded by a miser from Brighton, a dubious baronet and the IRA - the police were soon on the gang's trail. Their hideaway at the farm was found and members of the gang started abandoning large sums of money that had become too hot to handle.

Biggs's capture was - for him - particularly unfortunate. His brother had died on the night he left home and his wife had unwittingly sent the Wiltshire Constabulary to the woodcutting site where he had told her - not entirely accurately - that he was working, to inform him of his bereavement. They could not find him there, nor on any other woodcutting site in the county. Biggs was not only bereaved, his alibi was blown - and then his fingerprints turned up on a tomato sauce bottle at Leatherslade Farm. Ronnie's fingerprints were well known to the authorities.

Within two weeks Biggs had been arrested and in April 1964 twelve members of the gang were found guilty of taking part in the robbery. They were given heavy jail sentences. Biggs was given thirty years. But he did not find it too difficult to get out again. On July 8, 1965 a hired gang used the well-tried removals van and rope ladder technique to secure the release of Biggs and a number of other long-sentence prisoners from Wandsworth.

Biggs hid out in Bognor Regis, while some plastic surgery was carried out, and then he and his family made their way to Australia. But such was the enduring press interest in the robbery that Biggs's new identity had been exposed by 1969. He was forced to flee again, this time to Brazil, the escape funded by the sale of his story to an Australian newspaper.

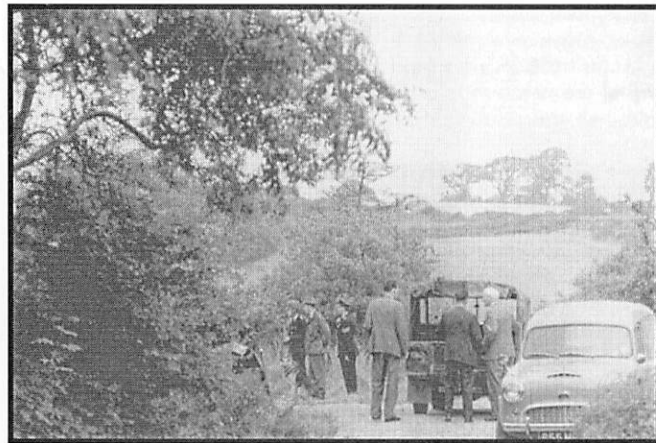
The complex and often hilarious tale of the government's attempts to extradite Biggs from Brazil continued until 2001.

A lot of loot

At ten to seven on the evening of August 7, 1963 a post office mail train left Glasgow station for London. The second of its coaches was stuffed full with 128 bags of English banknotes being transferred back to England. By the early hours of the following day, it was passing through Sears Cross in Buckinghamshire when a red signal caused it to stop. Driver Jack Mills sent his assistant out to see what was going on, but the man who got back into the cab a few moments later was not his colleague.

Mills fought bravely with the intruder until he was knocked down by a blow to the head with an iron bar. Other members of the gang then started breaking into the high value coach. The GPO employees inside thought about resistance, until one of the gang shouted something that sounded like "get the guns". The GPO staff thereafter wisely decided to lie down in the corner and avert their gaze as the robbers removed the bags. The robber who guarded them made friendly conversation, asked their names and allowed them to smoke. He even said that he would take their addresses and send them a few pounds when it was all over. He did not go so far as divulging his own identity, but those involved would soon become familiar enough with the name of Ronald Biggs, whose subsequent history made him the best known of the robbers.

When the gang got back to their hideaway at Leatherslade Farm, it took them an entire day to share out the proceeds. In those days the largest note in circulation was worth £5 and their total haul amounted to £2,631,784. Biggs himself came away with between £120,000 and £158,000, depending on whether you believe him or his former wife.



Police search for clues at the scene of the Great Train Robbery

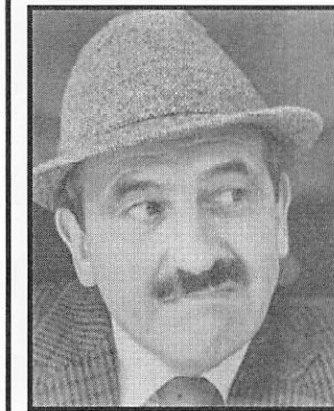
For some reason the 'Great British Public' took these criminals to their hearts and regarded them as some kind of heroes. One reason for this might have been that it was seen - wrongly - as a victimless crime. The money was taken from excessively rich banks, one of which - it turned out, to additional public glee -

around, *Loot* was a triumph: it went on to a successful London run, winning the Evening Standard Play of the Year.

The experience helped Orton articulate his new style. Although not written naturalistically, he wanted his plays directed and acted with absolute realism.

Loot takes place behind a looking glass that turns values, institutions, and beliefs inside out. The tricksters win and law-abiding citizens go to prison. Characters contradict assumptions about their roles.

For Orton, everyday reality was an absurd show. "Most people think it's a fantasy," he said when receiving the Evening Standard award for *Loot*, "but Scotland Yard know it's true". He had, in fact, modelled Truscott of the Yard after Detective Sergeant Harold Challenor, a real-life London policeman whose obsession with catching criminals led him to plant incriminating evidence on innocent victims.



Leonard Rossiter played Truscott in a hugely successful run of *Loot* at the Lyric Theatre in London in 1984. It was to be his final acting role. During the performance of October 4, 1984

he suffered a heart attack and died in his dressing room. He was 57. How ironic that whilst performing in a black comedy about death, one of our greatest comic actors should leave the stage in this way.

Biting comedy

One week after his mother's funeral, Joe Orton brought a surprise to Kenneth Cranham, the actor who played Hal in the acclaimed 1966 West End production of *Loot*. Feigning a routine inspection of the rehearsal, Orton nonchalantly handed Cranham a pair of false teeth - a prop Hal takes from his mother's corpse and clicks like castanets. Dancing his own irreverent flamenco, Orton demonstrated that life imitates art. The dentures belonged to his dead mother.

Even Cranham, whose working-class defiance rivaled Orton's own truculence, jumped at the chattering remains of the late Mrs. Orton. The gag typifies Orton's jokes - an impertinent mix of absurd farce and reality.

For the Company:

Director
BARRY BAYNTON

Assistant Stage Managers
CHRISSIE NEAL
LAURA THOMAS

Set Construction
MEMBERS OF
THE COMPANY

Wardrobe
CAROLYN HEWITT

Properties
JAN SINGFIELD

For the Theatre:

Production Manager
RUSSELL PARKER

Stage Manager
STEVE CHARTERS

Lighting & Sound
DON SHERRY

Assistant Stage Manager
MEZ TYSON-BROWN

100t

by Joe Orton

McLeavy SIMON JACKSON

Fay PENNY COULSON

Hal RYAN GREGG

Dennis DAVID NEILSEN

Truscott RICHARD NEAL

Meadows BOB HUCKLESBY

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