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D. Young.

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RELATIVELY SPEAKING



A SIMPLE PLAY TO MAKE YOU LAUGH

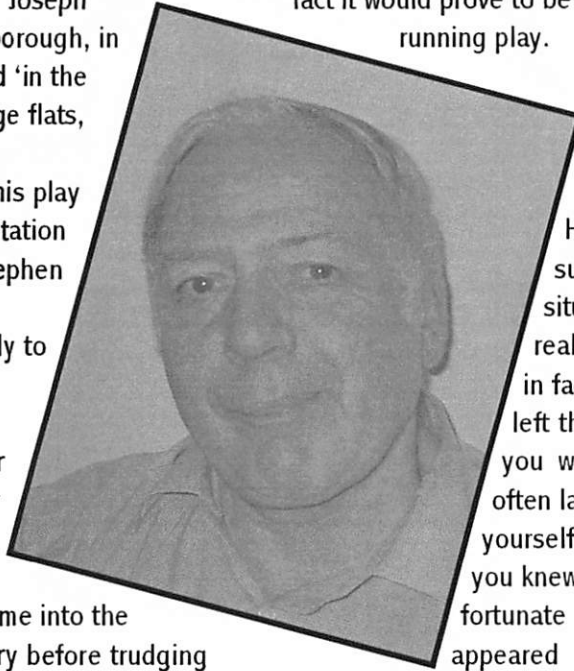
WELL KNOWN is the fact that all of Alan Ayckbourn's plays start their life at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, in fact all produced 'in the round' – no stage flats, how wonderful!

The rise of this play was after an invitation from the late Stephen Joseph for Ayckbourn simply to write a play "to make people laugh when their seaside summer holidays were spoiled by the rain and they came into the theatre to get dry before trudging back to their landladies."

This seemed to Ayckbourn as worthwhile a reason for writing a play as any, so he complied.

Relatively Speaking later transferred to the West End and opened in March 1967 with Michael Hordern, Celia Johnson, Jennifer Hilary and Richard Briers in the cast. It ran for 355 performances. It was the author's first entry into London and would establish him as the kind of

popular comic writer for whom the West End had long been ravenous. In fact it would prove to be his longest running play.



For me Ayckbourn's early writing is brilliant.

He developed such simple situations and real characters, in fact, when you left the theatre you were quite often laughing at yourself or someone you knew. I feel very fortunate to have appeared in and directed some of them.

I am very grateful to the cast and those good people who have given their time to help with this production. As a bonus for you I have added a little 'live music' and I am grateful to the young musicians for their contribution.

Thank you for your support and I trust you enjoy your evening with us.

Barry Baynton – Director

Gentle Hook. Other notable appearances include *The Amorous Prawn*, *George & Margaret*, *Charley's Aunt*, *An Evening with Gary Lineker*, *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime*, *The Madness of George III*, *David Copperfield*, *On the Razzle*, *The Hollow*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, *Loot* and *The Government Inspector*. 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*. In *Relatively Speaking* Simon plays Philip, a rather self-important, slightly pompous business man nearing retirement who is bored with his marriage and treats his wife rather like his car. "She costs me thirty quid a week to run and that doesn't include overheads." He knows she is a reliable old banger, but hankers for a younger, sportier model!

Jan Singfield previously played The Mayor's Wife in *The Government Inspector*, Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez in *Charley's Aunt*, Mrs Hurst in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and "delightfully drunken" Arabella Lazenby in Alan Ayckbourn's *RolePlay*. She also appeared in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Jan has also been seen at the Tivoli in many musical productions including *Oklahoma!*, *Showboat*, *Me and My Girl*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Brigadoon*, and in the pantomimes *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Little Miss Muffett* and *Cinderella*. Jan plays Sheila in this current production. "This is one of the most difficult scripts I've ever learned," says Jan. "One word answers to questions, talking at cross purposes for the most part and similar conversations in different

scenes have not made it easy to memorise. I confess to feeling as desperately vague as Sheila herself on more than one occasion during rehearsals! However, Sheila is a delight to portray - and well worth the sleepless nights to bring her to life in this beautifully written play."

Barry Baynton (Director)

Barry is a familiar figure on the local theatre scene. He has directed *Forty Years On*, *Habeas Corpus*, *Ten Times Table*, *Lion in Winter*, *Loot* and *Aladdin* - all at the Tivoli. 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 more recent credits include *The Madness of George III*, *David Copperfield*, *On the Razzle* and *The Government Inspector* for Wimborne Drama, *Table Manners* for St Lukes Players and *Habeas Corpus* for Poole & Parkstone Productions.

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CAST NOTES



Andy Cragg, Carey Fern, Simon Jackson and Jan Singfield

Andy Cragg was previously a member of the Zenith Theatre Company performing in *Cabaret* and *Hay Fever*. For Wimborne Drama Andy has played the Postmaster in *The Government Inspector*. He also appeared in *Dial M for Murder* and *Stepping Out*. Andy sees Greg, his character in *Relatively Speaking*, as “a shy, naive, inexperienced young man who is also suspicious, and impulsive. He doesn't quite get what is going on around him – a bit like me! It's one of the most challenging parts that I've played and I hope I can give some sense of the confusion and turmoil that Greg is experiencing in this great Alan Ayckbourn play.”

Ginny is the first ever stage role for **Carey Fern**. “Ginny is not a bad person by nature,” says Carey, “but she has fallen foul to some bad decisions in her time. But now she seems to have been given the opportunity to start over with someone new and her own age for a change. The trouble is, instead of being up front about everything, she would rather not hurt people or suffer their disapproval and in doing so, she has spun a web of lies!” Carey joined Wimborne Drama in 2006 and is the group's Secretary.

Simon Jackson has been a member of Wimborne Drama since 1977 when he took the part of a police detective in *The*

MASTER OF COMEDY

ALAN AYCKBOURN is one of the world's most popular and prolific professional playwrights. He has written 70 full length plays and more than 20 other revues and plays for children. He is also an internationally acclaimed director.

Ayckbourn was born in Hampstead, London, on 12 April, 1939. His mother was the novelist Mary ‘Lolly’ James and his father Horace Ayckbourn, lead violinist with the London Symphony Orchestra. He was educated at Haileybury public school in Hertford. At 17, he left school and joined the theatre impresario Sir Donald Wolfitt's acting company for three weeks, working as an acting assistant stage manager for the production *The Strong Are Lonely*.

From there he went on to a stage management job at the Connaught Theatre, Worthing, before moving to the Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead. He would also act at both theatres. In Leatherhead, he met Rodney Wood who took Ayckbourn to see a production of *Huis Clos* in London, performed in the round by Stephen Joseph's Studio Theatre Company. Wood asked Ayckbourn to join him stage-managing for this company at their summer base at the Library Theatre, Scarborough – actually the converted concert room on the first floor of Scarborough's Public Library.

Stephen Joseph got on well with Ayckbourn and became a mentor to the young man with Ayckbourn both stage-managing and acting with the company. His acting inadvertently led to his first professional

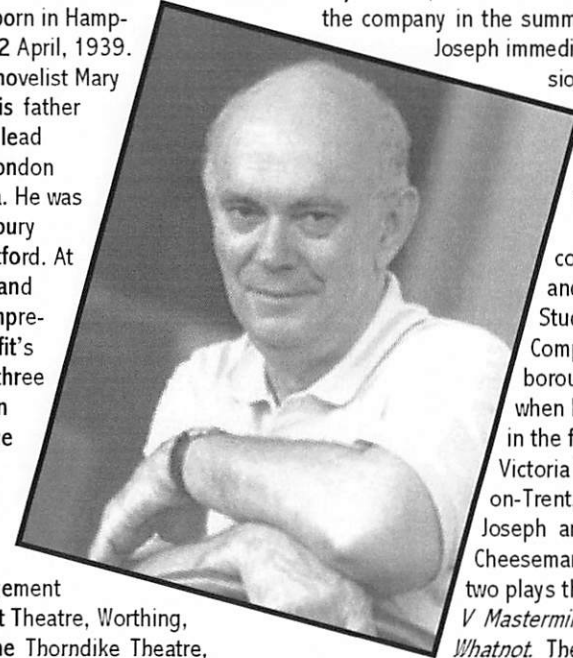
commission as a writer when in 1958, Ayckbourn complained to Stephen Joseph about the roles he was playing. Joseph threw down the gauntlet if Ayckbourn wanted better roles, he should write one himself. Ayckbourn wrote *The Square Cat*, which was a big success for the company in the summer of 1959.

Joseph immediately commissioned a second play, *Love After All*, for the winter of 1959.

Ayckbourn continued to act and write for the Studio Theatre Company in Scarborough until 1962 when he was involved in the formation of the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, with Stephen Joseph and Peter Cheeseman. He premiered two plays there, *Christmas V Mastermind* and *Mr Whatnot*. The latter was

produced in London in 1964 and received such a critical mauling that Ayckbourn joined the BBC in Leeds as a radio drama producer.

Ayckbourn directed his first play in 1961, *Gaslight*, at the Library Theatre and continued writing, producing *Meet My Father* for Scarborough in 1965. This would be a turning point in his life. In 1967, the play – retitled *Relatively Speaking* – opened in the West End and was a phenomenal hit. In the same year Stephen Joseph died but Ayckbourn continued to work closely with the Studio Theatre Company eventually becoming Artistic Director in 1972, a position he has retained ever since. In 1996 he found the company a new



permanent home, in an old cinema, and it became known simply as the Stephen Joseph Theatre.

Since 1977, he has directed all the West End premieres of his plays and is internationally renowned for his writing. Plays such as *The Norman Conquests* trilogy are now regarded as classics of 20th century British theatre. His early plays are often described as being middle-class and suburban, although since the 1980s Ayckbourn's work has become ever more expansive, dealing with wider social issues and often utilizing more fantastic ideas and settings to explore his themes. He has also become a passionate advocate of writing for families and young people.

More than half his plays have gone on to be produced in the West End or at the National Theatre. His work has been translated into more than 35 languages and his plays are regularly performed throughout the world.

He has received more than 25 awards and honours including an Olivier, the Variety Club of Great Britain Playwright of the Year and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain Lifetime Achievement Award. He was appointed a CBE in 1987 and in 1997 was knighted for services to the theatre.

In February 2006, Ayckbourn suffered a stroke but later that year was directing his latest play *If I Were You* at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough.

RELATIVELY SPEAKING marks a watershed for Alan Ayckbourn as a dramatist. The play was his first West End success and practically

made him a household name as a result. To this day it stands as one of his most popular and most produced plays.

When commissioned to write the play by Stephen Joseph, Ayckbourn was working as a radio drama producer at the BBC in Leeds. Stephen Joseph asked for a play that would appeal to the



The 1965 production of *Relatively Speaking*, Scarborough

holiday-makers in Scarborough — particularly on a rainy day.

He also suggested Ayckbourn write a 'well-made' play, suggesting that before a writer breaks conventions, they must understand them. This suggestion may have been as a result of Ayckbourn's experiences at the hands of the London critics for his last play, *Mr Whatnot*, which broke as many theatrical rules as it could find.

The result is what we can term the first recognisable Ayckbourn play. It is set in a recognisable situation and concentrates on the relationship of two couples. The Ayckbourn theme of man and woman's inability to get on with each other is adroitly presented and sets the foundations for many plays to follow.

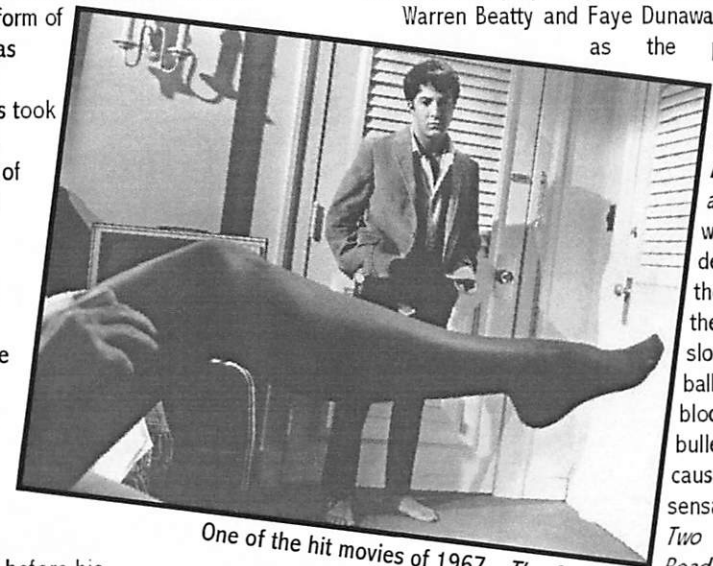
summer, you could be forgiven for thinking that all of England was swathed in paisley.

But the summer of love did not last forever. For within months a more aggressive form of rebellion was brewing as student riots took hold across major cities of Europe and America.

LOVE was a common theme in the movies released in 1967. Spencer Tracey, in his last role shortly before his death, enjoyed a charming swan song with off-screen partner Katharine Hepburn in the romantic comedy *Guess Who's Coming to*

Dinner. *The Graduate* marked the screen debut of Dustin Hoffman as a 21-year-old lured into a relationship with the predatory Mrs Robinson played by Anne Bancroft.

Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway starred as the publicity-hungry bank robbers *Bonnie and Clyde* whose death at the end of the film, a slow motion ballet of blood and bullets, caused a sensation. *Two for the Road* was a chic, witty and starring Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney.



One of the hit movies of 1967 - *The Graduate*

40 YEARS AGO...

- 8 April - Sandie Shaw wins the Eurovision Song Contest with *Puppet on a String*
- 25 May - Celtic are the first British football club to win the European Cup
- 10 June - the Six Day War ends with Israel capturing the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan
- 29 June - Barclays launches the first automatic cash machine in Enfield
- 1 July - BBC2 broadcasts the first colour television pictures from the Wimbledon tennis championships
- 8 August - playwright Joe Orton is bludgeoned to death by his lover Kenneth Halliwell
- 20 September - the QE2 is launched from Clydebank by the Queen
- 30 September - Radio 1 goes on air for the first time
- 3 December - Dr Christian Barnard performs the first heart transplant in South Africa

A pint of beer costs two bob and a brand new Ford Cortina sets you back the princely sum of £485

1967 SUMMER OF LOVE

1967 – the year *Relatively Speaking* first appeared in the West End – was also the year of the Summer of Love – of hippies, hash, satins, velvets, Afghan jackets, body paint, flower power, and peace and love, man.

The Small Faces went to Itchycoo Park and got "hi-igh". Scott McKenzie urged all those going to San Francisco to wear some flowers in their hair.

Timothy Leary begged us to turn on, tune in and drop out. And The Beatles topped the charts with *All You Need Is Love*.

It all began on 17 January, in San Francisco, with The Gathering of the Tribes – the first

"be-in". By February, the *News of the World* was writing about what it called "the heaven and hell" drug, LSD; later that month, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were arrested, though the raid didn't take place until George Harrison and his wife had left Richards's house – which was significant, because in 1967 the Stones were seen as radicals while the Beatles were the ones even your parents liked.

A few months later *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was released. The world learnt that the Beatles would "love to turn you on"; millions embraced the tangerine trees and marmalade skies of *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*.

Then on 25 June, the whole hippie shebang received what seemed the official seal of approval. *Our World*, the first-ever live, global TV link was broadcast to 26 countries and watched by 350 million people. Most countries did the obvious thing and showed babies being born or stolid, traditional activities. From

Britain and the BBC, though, came the Beatles, live, singing *All you need is Love*. Paul McCartney wore a rose in his hair; the studio was crammed with flamboyantly dressed beautiful people.

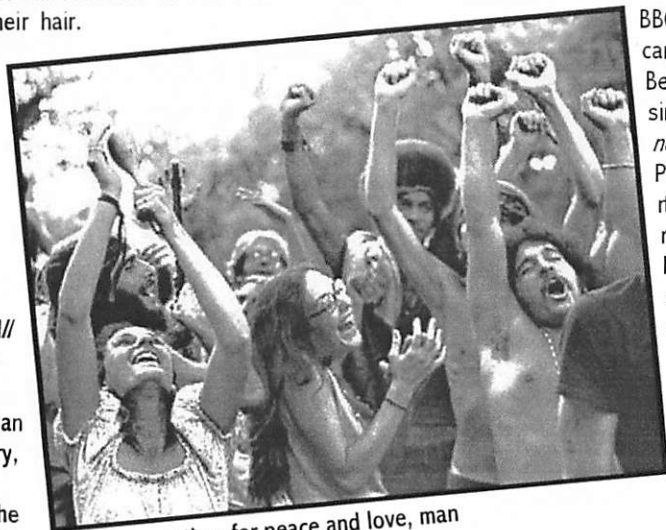
One of the biggest

events of the summer was the "Festival of Flower Children", held in the grounds of the stately home of the Duchess of Bedford, Woburn Abbey, and which attracted over 25,000 hippies from all over Europe.

The flower was the symbol of the summer and came to represent the younger generation's rebellion against their parents' values, against authority, and against the Vietnam war.

Hippies spoke of "flower power" – a reference to the benefits of the cannabis flower, as well as to the flowery garb they wore.

1967 was the year of the high street hippy. On Carnaby Street mod fashions were out, and in their place came brocade velvet, Afghan coats and flowery shirts. By the



1967 was a time for peace and love, man

The play was originally entitled *Meet My Mother* and was written over the course of two nights, just as rehearsals were due to begin. Stephen Joseph would change the title to *Meet My Father* and direct the piece at the Library Theatre, Scarborough opening in July 1965.

The play is notable for being the first play to mention Ayckbourn's fictional town of Pendon – in this case Lower Pendon – where many of his plays are set.

The play transferred to the Duke of York's theatre in London in March 1967, directed by Nigel Patrick, and was a phenomenal success critically and commercially and was also the first of many of Ayckbourn's

Alan Ayckbourn on *Relatively Speaking*:

"The first big hit. Written whilst I was at the BBC, it wiped out my overdraft virtually overnight. Stephen Joseph had suggested that I try to write a "well made" play (as opposed to all this experimental nonsense I'd been indulging in). I tried to achieve this. It's not *that* well made but it was the best I'd managed up till then. Stephen directed the first production. When he found it was over-running, characteristically he just tore the middle pages out at random. Despite this, it seemed to work."

Hilary. It was the first Ayckbourn play to be seen by the Queen. *Relatively Speaking* was also seen by Noël Coward who sent a telegram to Ayckbourn to congratulate him on the success of the play:

"Dear Alan Ayckbourn all my congratulations on a beautifully constructed and very very funny comedy I enjoyed every moment of it."

Since its West End triumph, the play has been performed throughout the world and has been twice adapted for television by the BBC in 1969 and 1989.

This year Ayckbourn revived *Relatively Speaking* at the Stephen Joseph Theatre to mark the 40th anniversary of its West End premiere.

The Daily Telegraph said: "*Relatively Speaking* is probably the most preposterous and certainly the most brilliant comedy of misunderstanding



Richard Briers, Celia Johnson and Michael Hordern in 1967

plays to feature a young actor called Richard Briers. The cast was completed by Celia Johnson, Michael Hordern and Jennifer

standings to have been written in the past 40 years."

WIMBORNE DRAMA

presents

RELATIVELY SPEAKING

by Alan Ayckbourn

CAST

**GREG
GINNY
PHILIP
SHEILA**

**ANDY CRAGG
CAREY FERN
SIMON JACKSON
JAN SINGFIELD**

THE COMPANY & DIRECTOR WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

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THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (WIMBORNE)

RIVERSIDE FLOWERS

ADRIAN STRICKLAND

and

SIMON MURGATROYD

STEPHEN JOSEPH THEATRE ARCHIVIST

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BARRY BAYNTON

Assistant Stage Managers

**CAROLYN HEWITT
TRACEY NICHOLLS
MICHAELA SLATFORD**

Musicians

**HUGO PULLEN
JESSAMY PULLEN**

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RICHARD NEAL

FOR THE TIVOLI THEATRE

Stage Manager

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◆
TIVOLI Theatre
20-22 September 2007
◆

The action of the play passes between a bed-sitting
room close to Marylebone Station and the garden of a
home in Bucks. Set during the 1960s