

Southport Dramatic Club

Terence Rattigan's classic drama



The Deep Blue Sea

directed by David Davies

25th November -
3rd December 2011

7.45pm



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Southport Dramatic Club

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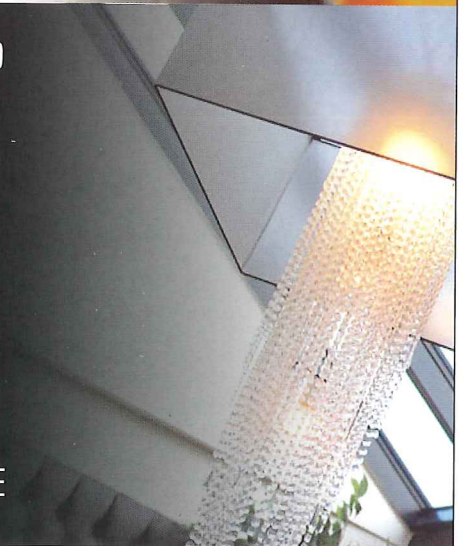
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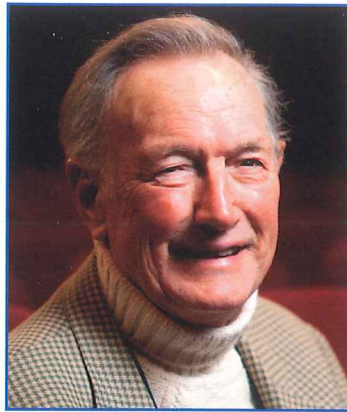


Director's notes

Good evening.

For those of us involved in theatre in 1956 when the 'original' angry young man, Jimmy Porter, burst onto the scene in John Osborne's ground-breaking drama, *Look Back in Anger*, and virtually put and end to the era of Rattigan's well made middle-class plays, I recall being highly puzzled at many critics' venomous onslaught against the "darling of 'Aunt Edna's' West End theatre". I had already acted in one Rattigan play, *The Winslow Boy* (now acquiring classic status), had seen *Flare Path*, *The Browning Version*, *Separate Tables* and the Vivien Leigh/Kenneth More film version of tonight's play, *The Deep Blue Sea*. All had moved me more deeply than *Look Back in Anger* a seminal play of ideas of the time.

Working on tonight's play with my talented cast has reinforced my then feelings that Rattigan was unfairly



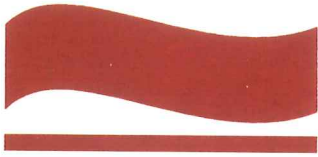
David Davies
Director

lambasted by the excoriating pen of Kenneth Tynan and others in the mid 1950's. It was the playwright's avowed aim, through 'well-made plays', to 'entertain' his audiences that had so upset them. Yet, if Jimmy Porter's brow-beaten wife, Alison, owes much to tonight's female lead, Hester Collyer, in Freddie Page we have an equally angry forerunner (if more sophisticated and sympathetic) of the ranting Jimmy.

English theatre would have been much poorer without Terence Rattigan and his frequent revivals are surely testament to his continuing and lasting popularity. Can the same be said, I wonder, for *Look Back in Anger*, which now seems to me much dated. After all, the best plays down the centuries have survived because as 'well-made plays' they 'entertain' in the broadest sense. Rattigan's dramas teem with characters experiencing the emotional problems and joys we all share and they are evident aplenty into tonight's drama. It has been a privilege for me to direct the *The Deep Blue Sea*, and I thank all club members and others who have helped to make this production possible. I hope you can share my enthusiasm and enjoyment in tonight's performance of this moving play.

David Davies
Director





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Terence Rattigan

“Terence Rattigan was widely admired and set the tone for serious English theatre in the decade after the Second World War, only to be relegated to critical oblivion at the height of his career. As he commented, ‘There I was in 1956, a reasonably successful playwright with *Separate Tables* just opened, and suddenly the whole Royal Court thing (George Devine’s ‘new writers’, season that produced John Osborne) exploded and Coward and Priestley and I were all dismissed, sacked by the critics.’

Today, Rattigan’s work has gained new significance as a forerunner of ‘Gay drama’. But his concern not to alienate the general public that his work was designed for, and which he christened ‘Aunt Edna’, led him to generalize the underlying homosexual themes of his most characteristic plays turning them into a plea for the sexually outlawed or disabled of all genders. This fictional image of a ‘respectable, middle-class, middle-aged maiden lady demanded ‘lowbrow entertainment, emotional satisfaction and suspense’. He supplied it. Rattigan’s themes are subtly subversive, his plots revolve around widely relevant moral issues and his plays have considerable depth. But because he has become identified with this average



Sir Terence Rattigan

Author

(Aunt Edna) spectator, his plays suddenly seemed dated when *Look Back in Anger* appeared in 1956. (1)

Sadly, Terence Rattigan only lived long enough to feel the first, faint stirrings of the pendulum swinging back in his favour. He died in 1977, just as theatres all over London were staging his work and new audiences were discovering those qualities in Rattigan that had made him one of the most fêted and commercially successful playwrights of the twentieth century. They admired his polished wit, his meticulous craftsmanship, his humanist sympathy for the outsider and his forensic analysis of the English psyche. His gift was for understatement rather than explanation, for the implicit rather than the explicit, and this gives his most successful plays their extraordinary emotional power.

Outwardly the epitome of the Establishment figure, Rattigan was born in June 1911, the younger son of a diplomat and the grandson of a knighted MP. Educated at Harrow and Eton College, Oxford, where he failed to take his History degree, he combined his passion for theatre with cricket. As an undergraduate, he achieved some success with *First Impressions* co-written with an Oxford friend, which had a brief run in the West End in 1934.

In November, 1936, his dazzling career began when *French Without Tears* became the ‘must see’ show in London and Rattigan found himself a wealthy young man. Able to indulge his expensive tastes, he dressed elegantly in the best of Savile Row, owned a flat at a prestigious London address and bought a Rolls Royce with a personalised number-plate. For a time he was said to be the world’s highest-paid screenwriter. His taste for the high-life would later earn him the disapproval of his more puritan critics. He was often photographed with a cigarette in a holder, delicately poised between his manicured fingers. His good looks and easy charm combined to make him a fixture in society magazines and he ‘partied’ extensively during the next two years. (2)



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Terence Rattigan continued...

Some thirteen more plays followed before his death in 1977 with tonight's play, *The Deep Blue Sea*, appearing at the Duchess Theatre in 1952 featuring Peggy Ashcroft as Hester, Roland Culver as Sir William Collyer and Kenneth More as Freddie Page. This production was later turned into a film with Vivien Leigh as Hester. As Al Senter writes, "If male actors queue up to play Crocker-Harris (The Browning Version), then their female counterparts all long to tackle Hester Collyer, the tragic heroine of *The Deep Blue Sea* who sacrifices everything – marriage, social position,

perhaps even her life – for the love of a restless ex-flying ace. One of the revivals of this play that encouraged a reassessment of Rattigan was the 1993 staging at the Almeida Theatre in North London with Penelope Wilton as Hester, Colin Firth as the lover and Ian Holm as the abandoned husband. Since then the play has been revived several times in the professional theatre, the most recent prestigious production being at Chichester this last summer featuring Amanda Root as Hester, Anthony Calf as Sir William Collyer and John Hopkins as Freddie. A film

adaptation of the play opens to the general public on the opening night of the Southport Dramatic Club's production featuring Rachel Weisz, Tom Hiddleston and Simon Russell Beale.

- (1) [Christopher Innes – Modern British Drama 1890 – 1990 First published 1992.]
- (2) [An Introduction to the Life and Work of Terence Rattigan – Al Senter 2011]



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Synopsis of Scenes

The action takes place during a single day in a first-floor flat of a large, converted Victorian mansion house in a badly-blitzed part of London.

It is autumn in the late 1940's.

ACT 1

Early morning as the house residents are preparing to leave for work

ACT 2

The same, late afternoon

ACT 3

The same, later that night

There will be a twenty minute interval between Act 1 and 2 when drinks and ice-creams will be served

A three to four minute interval will follow after Act 2.

It is recommended that drinks be pre-ordered prior to the performance in order to 'beat the rush'.

In the play the actors will be using fake cigarettes (VIP Electronic Cigarettes). They glow and give off a smoke-like vapour and look very real but will not give off any harmful smoke or fumes.



The Deep Blue Sea - cast

Hester Collyer:

Having left her respectable High Court Judge husband and abandoned herself totally to the charms of the younger man, Freddie Page, an attractive but wayward ex-fighter pilot, Hester's growing realisation that Freddie's love cannot match hers provokes a personal crisis. Caught between 'the devil and the deep blue sea', as she says, "the deep blue sea sometimes looks very inviting."



Sandra Unsworth



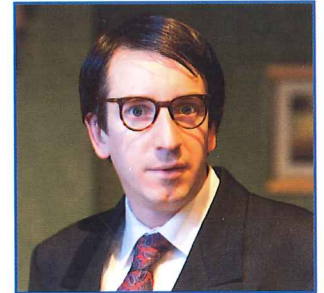
Sandy Town

Mrs Elton:

A kindly and inquisitive landlady/housekeeper who cares very much for her tenants and loves to be involved in their lives. Cheerful and resigned to her lot – caring for her invalid husband – she has no aspirations for a better life for herself.

Philip Welch:

A highly respectable young man in the Home Office, living in the flat above with his wife, Ann. A passionate one-time fling with an actress left him bruised and now he moralizes on human nature that "the physical side is really awfully unimportant – objectively speaking, don't you think?"



Eric Chadwick

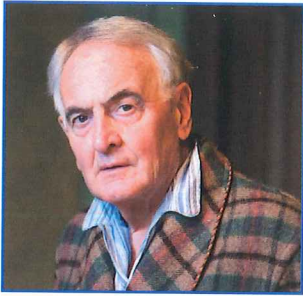


Kerry Baratinsky

Ann Welch:

The other half of the marriage, Philip's attractive and capable, possibly ambitious, young wife also works in the Home Office. An outwardly caring young woman who indulges her sense of drama and who seems to enjoy exercising a degree of control. Is it she who promotes the "spiritual values and the pettiness of the physical side?"

t in order of appearance



John Sharp

Mr Miller:

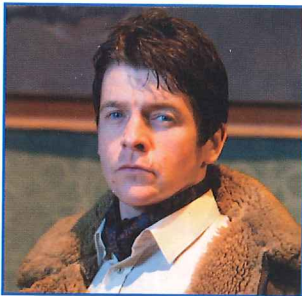
Kurt Müller, of German descent, moved to England before the Second World War. A qualified doctor, he was struck off the register for some unspecified, but probably shameful, act. Prison has given him a deep understanding of life's problems and his sanity and commonsense are a constant support to others.

Sir William Collyer:

Devastated by his wife's "sordid infatuation" for a younger man, High Court Judge and pinnacle of the establishment, Sir William Collyer, whose genuine affections for Hester are mixed with shame of the scandal, attempts to win her back. "It worked quite happily once", he says. But Hester has now changed: "I'm not any longer the same person".



Leslie Cheesman



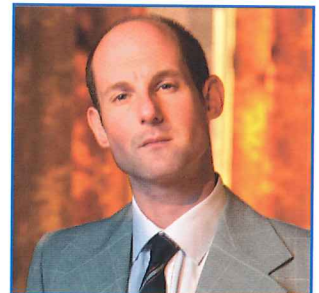
Gregory Russell

Freddie Page:

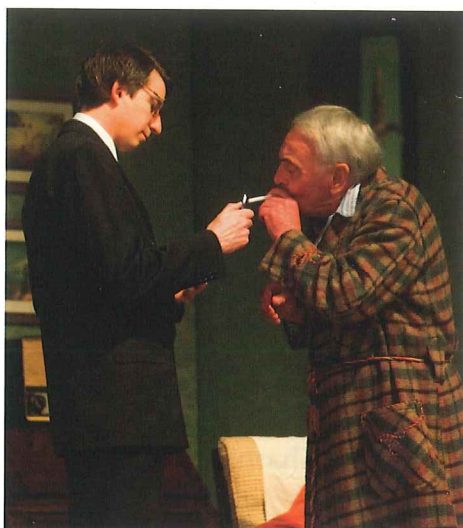
As Hester's younger lover declares: "This is me, Freddie Page, remember?" How could anyone forget!! Trapped in 1940 at the bottom of a whisky bottle, Freddie has given all he possibly can to Hester but it just isn't enough.

'Jackie' Jackson:

Freddie's wartime fighter-pilot pal and post-war companion. A bit of a 'Tim nice but dim' character who, while not the 'brightest spark' genuinely cares for Freddie and 'Hes'. Married himself in what seems to be a warm relationship, he offers some solid advice to his friend, while readily admitting to being out of his depth.



Jon Russell



Staging

Director	David Davies
Prompt	Fran Percival
Properties	Sandy Town Lynn Gosling Barry King Elizabeth Littlejohns
Wardrobe	Elizabeth Littlejohns
Stage Manager	Sabrina Regazzoni
Lighting Design	Syd Coley
Sound Design	Brian Hodge
Set Construction	SDC Construction Team
Scenic Artist	Bob Jessamine
Photographs	Fletcherhill Photography
Programme Editor	Jacquie Bolshaw
Programme Content & Research	Sallyanne Smerdon
Programme Layout and Design	Mitchell & Wright (Printers) Ltd

Music in this production

Ella Fitzgerald - *Every Time We Say Goodbye*
Glen Miller - *Selection*
Chopin - *Nocturnes*

Acknowledgements

The Director would like to thank:
Heads & Co for all their help with hairdressing.

The Little Theatre -
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- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
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Designated premises Supervisor,
Alan Newport



Southport Dramatic Club is not the first company to present a production of *The Deep Blue Sea* in Southport. Here is a photograph of the production put on at the Scala Theatre by Southport Repertory Company, we believe it was sometime in the 1950s. Does anyone remember going to see it and be able to give us the correct date?
(Photo courtesy of Flickr)

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Films of *The Deep Blue Sea*

The renewed interest in the works of Terence Rattigan stems from an appreciation of the continuing relevance of the themes and the craftsmanship of his plays, rather than just a commemoration of 100 years since his birth on 10th June 1911.

The first production of the play was in June 1952, triggered by a personal loss of a former close friend Kenneth Morgan by suicide in 1949, but presented in a heterosexual context because of the laws against homosexuality. Whether the general public realised this is unclear but the play was very well received with Peggy Ashcroft as Hester and Kenneth More in an early role in his career as Freddie. Following this success the play was turned into a film in 1955 with Vivien Leigh as Hester and Kenneth More again as

Freddie. At the time these were presented as broadly contemporary works.

A new film of *The Deep Blue Sea* has been made, now as a period piece, and coincidentally has its première on 25th November, the opening night of our SDC production. This is a relatively low budget production directed by Terence Davies and starring Rachel Weisz, Tom Hiddleston and Simon Russell Beale. Terence Davies is noted for his understanding of the 1950's so his attention to period detail will be considerable. In the ways these things happen he was chosen by one of the producers Sean O'Connor, who had a fascination for the play stemming from his friendship with the original director in 1952, Frith Banbury. Terence Davies was previously known for films relevant to his

Liverpool childhood *The Long Day Closes* (1992), *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives* (2008) and a documentary *Of Time and the City* (2008). Terence Davies apparently was attracted to *The Deep Blue Sea* and identified with its theme "the nature of love". He is quoted as saying "For me, the core of it is about wanting a kind of love from someone else that they cannot give. None of [the three main characters] gets love in the way they perceive it and want it and that's tragic."

Terence Davies then specifically sought out the three actors that he believed would best play the leading characters. Whether the new release will have the same impact as the original one or even make the prime cinema distribution remains to be seen, but looks as though it will be well worth seeking out.





Stephen Hughes-Alty
Director

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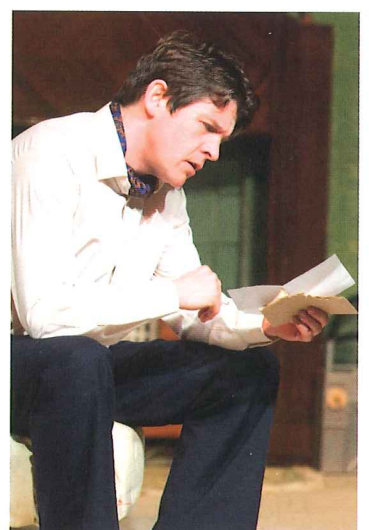
Choreography by Pippa Morris

Pantomime time is almost here again! 'Oh, no it isn't!', I hear you cry, but it is! It always seems very strange singing Christmas songs at the beginning of November but that's exactly what the cast of 'Cinderella' are doing at the moment. This year, we have a real seasonal treat for you as lots of familiar and experienced actors return to the stage to bring this rags to riches story to life.

Poor Cinders is constantly bullied by her wicked step-sisters, Whitney and Britney. Her father can't help as he's busy being ordered around by his new wife who has a penchant for poisoned cocktails! Buttons can't help as he's busy avoiding the ugly sisters! Luckily for Cinderella, Mab, the queen of all the fairies, assigns trainee Fairy Fluff to assist her. But is Fluff up to the job? Add to this a crazy Queen, a Prince on a mission and a wailing banshee and you have the ingredients for a festive feast of family fun!

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Brain Teaser

If you have attended the two previous plays this season (if not, you've missed some excellent entertainment) then you should be getting the hang of this by now! From the list of eight Rattigan plays below, find them hidden in the grid. They can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. See how many you can find!

AFTER THE DANCE; ROSS; WHO IS SYLVIA;
THE WINSLOW BOY; THE BROWNING VERSION;
FLARE PATH; IN PRAISE OF LOVE; SEPARATE TABLES

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W F D F R H Y I A U P A C R J K R W Y E
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Directed by Margaret Mann

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SDC Youth Theatre Production

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Proscenophobia

By Bettine Manktelow
Directed by Hilary Thomson



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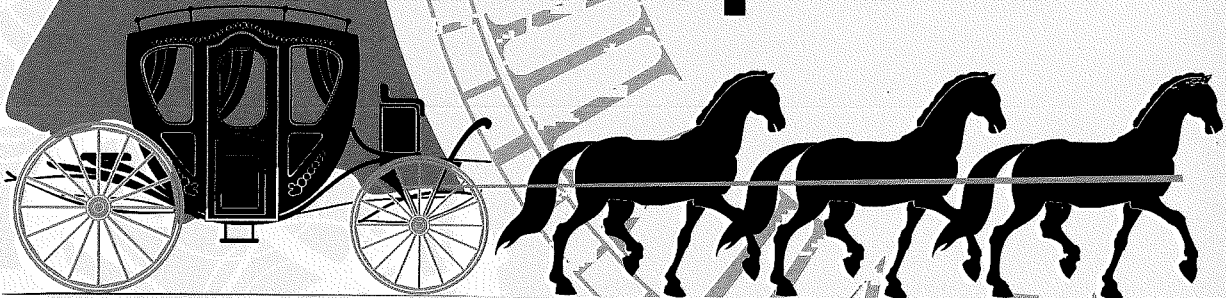
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Cinderella

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