

# Southport Dramatic Club

# Body Language

## By Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Adrian Roberts

Presented by special arrangement  
with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.



# 21st - 29th November 2014

## 7.45pm



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# Director's notes

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this evening's performance of Alan Ayckbourn's *'Body Language'*, our last play before Christmas and indeed pantomime season, 'Oh yes it is, Oh no it isn't'...you get the gist.

Once again I was honoured to be asked to direct a play for the SDC and *'Body Language'* has not disappointed. I have many people to thank who have helped during our rehearsal period these include Lynne Hawksworth, as always, Kate Hargreaves for taking away my worries and Linda Miller, our guest actress, an asset who I hope stays with us.



**Adrian Roberts**  
**Director**

The talented cast have worked hard to bring Ayckbourn's brilliantly funny writing to life and I hope you enjoy watching it as much as we have enjoyed rehearsing it to bring to you tonight.

Not only is the play wonderfully funny, it has led

us to think much more deeply about ourselves...are we just as concerned, as the characters in the play, about the 'body beautiful' and 'how much might we judge a book by its cover'? Do magazines and the media tell us how to think? Are we all just really concerned with our image that others see?

Come and join us now at the Georgian country home of the 'Othman Clinic' and make that decision for yourself.



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# Body Language

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# The Author

The playwright Sir Alan Ayckbourn, CBE was born in Hampstead, London, on April 12, 1939.

His mother was the short story writer Irene Worley, who used the name Mary James when she published her work. His father was Horace Ayckbourn, a former deputy leader of the London Symphony Orchestra.

Ayckbourn went to school at Haileybury an independent school near Hertford. He left at seventeen and started work for the theatre impresario Sir Donald Wolfitt in 1956. He was an acting stage manager for the company's presentation of *The Strong Are Lonely* at the Edinburgh Festival.

The playwright then joined the Library Theatre, Scarborough in 1957 and worked for the director Stephen Joseph as an actor and stage manager. A year later, Ayckbourn – with the encouragement of Stephen Joseph - wrote his first play called *The Square Cat*.

In 1962 Ayckbourn, along with Stephen Joseph and Peter Cheeseman, helped in the establishment of the



**Sir Alan Ayckbourn**

Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, the first permanent professional theatre in-the-round in the country.

The writer's play *Meet My Father* was first presented at the Library Theatre in 1965. Two years later it was renamed *Relatively Speaking* and became a massive hit in London's West End. Other plays to follow were: *How The Other Half Loves* (1969), *Absurd Person Singular* (1975) and *The Norman Conquests* (1973). His work at this time looked at the middle classes in Britain and marriage.

During the 1980s Ayckbourn began to look at other themes. His 1985 play *Woman in Mind* was about a woman experiencing a nervous breakdown. He also

wrote *Intimate Exchanges* (1982), a play with sixteen possible endings.

The playwright's work in the last ten years includes: *Private Fears in Public Places* (2004), *If I Were You* (2006) and *Life and Beth* (2008). His latest work was called *Roundelay* and had its world premiere at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough in September of this year.

Ayckbourn is also an established director and directs his plays' world premieres and has done since 1967. With the exception of one, he has since 1977, also directed his plays' West End premieres. From 1972 to 2009, the playwright was the artistic director at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough. Ayckbourn has written over 75 plays and nearly all of them have had their world premieres at this venue.

The 75 year old has seen his plays performed all over the world. In 1987, he was given a CBE and a knighthood in 1997.

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# The Play

Body Language was Alan Ayckbourn's 39<sup>th</sup> play and received its world premiere at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in The Round in Scarborough on May 21, 1990. The play, which is set in a clinic, had a successful run and was well received by audiences. Angie Dell was played by Lia Williams and Jo Knapton by Tam Hoskyns.

The critics were mainly positive about the play with Robin Thornber writing in the Guardian: "Ayckbourn's stagecraft as a director is still in peak form; he extracts immaculate performances from the whole company as

well as toying joyously with the physical illusions." While David Jeffels wrote in The Stage on June 21, 1990: "Having seen all the plays penned by this leading international comedy playwright, *Body Language* must certainly rank as one of his finest and must already be guaranteed a successful West End run - **it's a real box office winner!**"

However, a planned transfer of *Body Language* and the Scarborough cast to the West End unfortunately did not happen.

In 1999 Ayckbourn revived the play, he reduced the length of it but contrary to

his usual practice retained the title. When he revives his work, he usually changes the title. It was again presented at the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough and opened on August 24.

In '*Body Language*', the writer explores different issues, such as: what people think of their bodies and other people's; he also wanted to show how individual's thoughts on weight are affected by the media. He realised that books about fitness can always be found in the top selling charts.



# Body Language

It is through speech that human beings are distinguished from the rest of the animal kingdom. But when it comes to communicating and to expressing emotion we do not rely on words alone but use body language: face, eyes, posture, gesture, touch and movement. We may reinforce a greeting by shaking hands, for instance, or comfort someone by putting a hand on theirs. Turning one's back on someone is a strong expression of rejection or disapproval, whereas open arms and a smile signals welcome. There are many very obvious body movements that indicate aggression, but more subtly we can also use our bodies to contradict what our words are saying.

One of the first people to draw attention to the way we use body language was Charles Darwin in a book titled, *The Expression of Emotions in Humans and Animals*, published in 1872. 'The force of language,' he wrote, 'is much aided by the expressive movements of the face and body'. He was fascinated by the way particular emotions or states of mind were expressed in similar ways by peoples from different cultures: the down-turned mouth of unhappiness, the grimace of fear, the wide-open eyes of surprise and so on.

But the expressive potential of the body had been understood by artists and especially sculptors long before Darwin.

Visual art forms generally don't include words, but they show characters fleeing or fighting, kneeling in submission or arm raised in triumph, protecting or cowering.

During the Victorian period such stylised gestures and postures were collected in handbooks to guide the aspiring actor. Remember, there were no drama schools in those days. The illustrations in these handbooks look strange to us today – exaggerated, melodramatic – but they make the point that the actor cannot simply deliver words, but must consider his or her body language too.

*Dr. Valerie Pedlar*





# Synopsis of Scenes

The action of the play takes place in the Othman Clinic,

## Act One

Scene 1 A morning in June

Scene 2 Some weeks later

## Act Two

Scene 1 Two days later, Morning

Scene 2 A few days later, Morning

Scene 3 A few days later, Evening

Scene 4 Later, Morning

There will be an interval of 20 minutes between the two acts

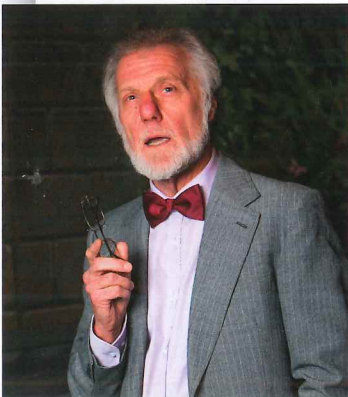




**Ray Mann**  
*Hravic Zyergefoove*



**Linda Millar**  
*Freya Roope*



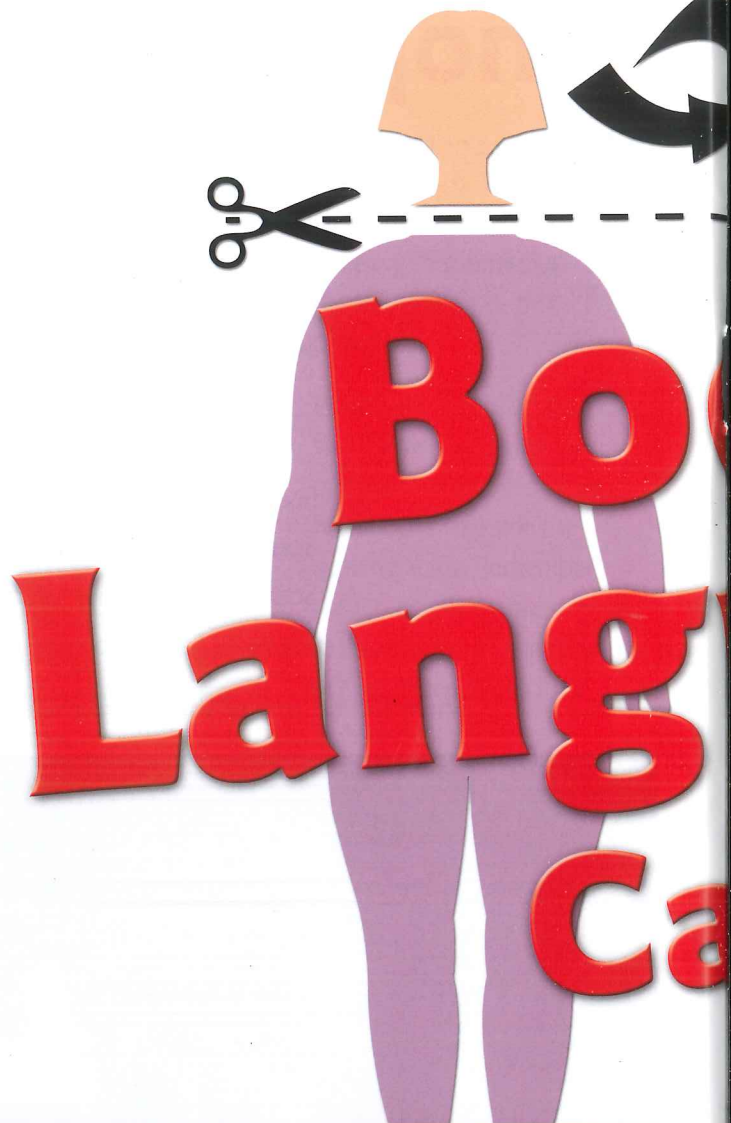
**Jim Longworth**  
*Benjamin Cooper*



**Graeme Hunt**  
*Ronnie Weston*

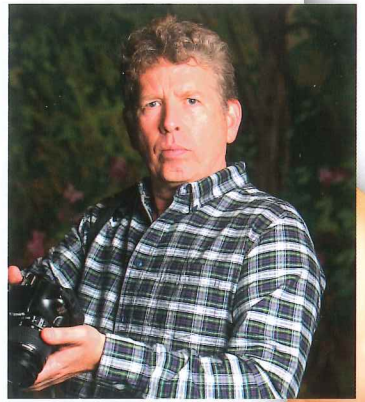


**Corinna Davies**  
*Angie Dell*





# dy uage st



**Brendan Gillow**  
*Derek Short*



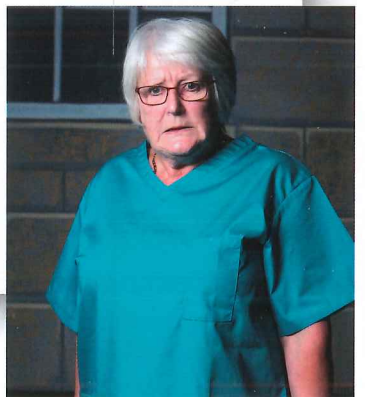
**Nikki Ritchie**  
*Jo Knapton*



**Les Gomersall**  
*Mal Bennet*



**Alice Burns**  
*Nurse*



**Glenys Critchley**  
*Nurse*

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# Staging

Stage Manager .....	Mike Yates
Assistant Stage Manager (Prompt) .....	Lynne Hawksworth
Properties .....	SDC Props Team
Wardrobe .....	Kate Hargreaves
Lighting .....	Team LX
Sound .....	David Proffitt
Set Design .....	Pete Beswick
Scenic Artist .....	Bob Jessamine
Set Construction .....	The SDC Construction Team
Photographs .....	Fletcherhill Photography
Programme Editor .....	Jacquie Bolshaw
Programme Sub Editor .....	Nathan Colman
Programme Content & Research .....	Henry James
Press Promotion .....	Ron Ellis & Ellen Campbell
Programme Layout and Design .....	Mitchell & Wright (Printers) Ltd

## Music in this Production

*Girls on Film* - Duran Duran, *Doctor Doctor* - UFO, *Unpretty* - TLC,  
*Big Girls (You are Beautiful)* - Mika, *Fat Bottomed Girls* - Queen,  
*Killer Queen* - Queen, *Try* - Colbie Caillat

## Acknowledgements

The Director would like to thank Alexandra House, Lord Street, Southport for the supply of the wheelchairs

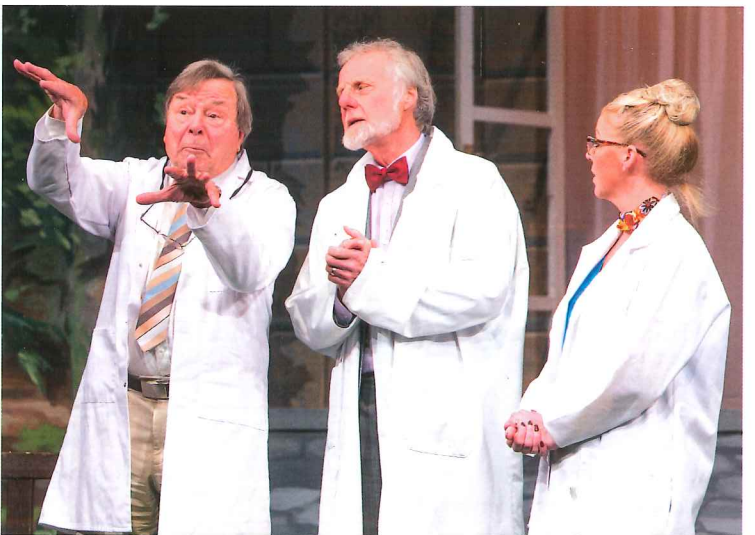
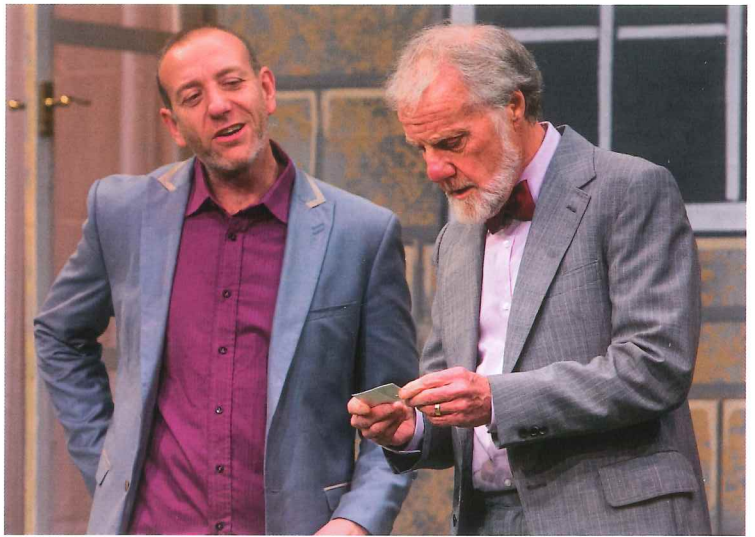
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The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your co-operation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance.
- Please ensure that all mobile phones and electronic devices are switched off during the performance.
- Photography and video recording are not allowed during the performance.

Designated Premises Supervisor, Alan Newport





# THEATRE HISTORY...

At a recent SDC production a member of the audience enquired of a member of the Front of House Staff “who was Lord Bessborough?”

The name of Lord Bessborough appears on a plaque of Founder Members of the Little Theatre which is on the wall in the Crush Hall near to the first floor lift.

The answer to this question was found by reference to the book written by the late Mr. Benny Darrah and is exemplified by the following reference from the book:

***Until, finally, a date was arranged for the official opening of the Little Theatre on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1937. Lord***

***Bessborough, a former Governor of Canada, and a great supporter of amateur theatre worldwide, was invited to perform the opening ceremony. The opening play was to be ‘Dear Brutus’ by James Barrie.***

We are eternally grateful to Benny for providing the information about our wonderful theatre and club which is preserved within his most valuable chronicle.



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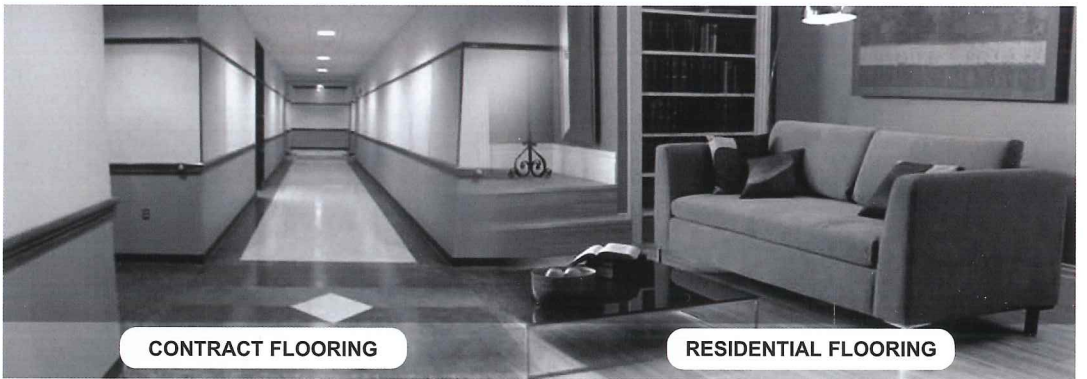
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# How the SDC works - Properties

*"Can you find me a dagger that will stick in someone's back?"*

*"I need a skinned rabbit"*

*"Where will I get a throne?"*

*"We have to serve 23 meals during one scene, what do we use for food?"*



These are all questions that have to be resolved by the person in charge of props for a play. Sometimes it is no easy task yet for others it is simply a rummage in the theatre's property store!

Under the stage area is a large (but low!) storage space where



we can keep an assortment of furniture such as settees, various chairs, tables of all shapes and sizes, suitcases, glass and china etc etc! We tend to keep hold of older brown wood furniture as it is much harder to get hold of now that charity shops have ceased to sell them. We have a stock supply of cushions, pictures, artificial flowers, curtains along with kitchen and garden equipment.

Each play has its own special requirements such as a stethoscope, some knitting, or a set of handcuffs and these are all added to our cupboards! As you can imagine we are often offered items by club members but unfortunately, owing to lack of space, we are unable to accept everything!

When a play first goes into rehearsal the first task is to source some basic rehearsal props...cups, wine glasses, telephones and key items essential to the plot. Discussions take place with the director about the larger items of furniture that he might like and to determine any specific colour theme! Over the ensuing weeks the rest of the props are

gathered together from a wide variety of sources..the store, charity shops, members homes, and the internet!

As the play nears dress rehearsal and the stage is set, the props team start to "dress" the set. This means putting up pictures, adding cushions, ornaments, side tables etc. Behind the scenes two props tables are set up on either side of the stage to hold all the hand props that are going to be used. It is usually best to label the tables with each item in place so that you can see at a glance if anything has gone missing! Sometimes the props person is needed to make the food and drink to go on stage and to refill wine bottles etc. If there is a scene change the props person may have to go onto stage and help set the next scene.

It is an interesting role and very rewarding to see it all come together on the first night!

*Lynn Gosling &  
Sandy Town*

**SDC - PROPS CARETAKERS**



**James Hughes-Alty**  
Director

NOW IN REHEARSAL

# Dick Whittington and His Cat

By Stephen Hughes-Alty

I am delighted to be directing the pantomime again this year, especially as I have managed to secure the services of almost everyone who helped make last year's production of *'Aladdin'* so successful. This year's panto from the SDC, is the traditional family favourite, *'Dick Whittington and His Cat'*. Join young Master Whittington as he journeys to London to seek his fortune. With the help of his new friends, Tommy the Cat and the beautiful Alice Fitzwarren, he fights to free London from the clutches of the evil King Rat and his army of terrible rats.

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Directed by James Hughes-Alty

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A Traditional Family Pantomime

# Dick Whittington and His Cat

By Stephen Hughes-Alty

Directed by James Hughes-Alty

Musical Direction by Pete Scholes, Choreography by Pippa Morris

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