

Alan Ayckbourn's

# R SPEAKING

Directed by  
Joyce  
Goldsworth

L A Vintage Comedy

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# Director's Notes

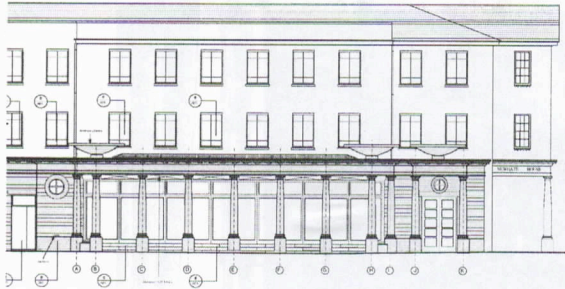


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**Joyce Goldsworth**  
Director





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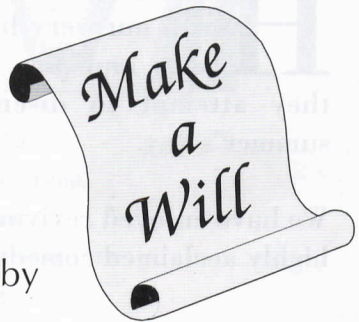
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# Introduction

“In general, the people who liked this play when it was first seen remarked that it was “well-constructed”; those that didn’t call it old-fashioned. If the latter is true then I suppose it’s because, as the song goes, I am too. As to whether it’s well constructed, well, in a way I hope it is, since I did not set out consciously to write a “well made” play. I think this is important for a playwright to do at least once in his life, since as in any science, he cannot begin to shatter theatrical convention or break golden rules until he is reasonably sure in himself what they are and how they were arrived at.

And this knowledge is really only acquired as a result of having plays produced, torn apart and reassembled by actors and held up to public scrutiny for praise or ridicule. I suppose I am extremely lucky, writing for a small theatre company as I did for so many years, to have had almost a dozen plays put through this very process before reaching the age of thirty. Not only this, but to have had to fight all the limitations of a small theatre - the number of actors available, difficulties of staging, even lighting complications - and, most important, being aware that if my play didn’t at least break even at the box office, we’d all be out of a job on Monday. I wrote, in a sense, to order, and there was no harm in this, since the order was always of a technical nature and dealt only minimally with content. But there is no sharper lesson for a dramatist than to find himself sharing a dressing-room with an actor for whom he has written an impossible quick change.

I wrote this play originally as a result of a phone call from the Stephen Joseph, a truly remarkable man of the theatre, without whose unrelenting deadlines this would never have been written and to whom I dedicate this play, sadly, but with great affection. He asked me then simply for a play which would make people laugh when their seaside holidays were spoiled by the rain and they came into the theatre to get dry before trudging back to their landladies. This seemed to me as worthwhile a reason for writing a play as any, so I try to comply. I hope I have succeeded.”

**Alan Ayckbourn**

These are Sir Alan’s words about *Relatively Speaking* - written in 1968



## RAY MANN

*In over thirty seasons with the S.D.C., Ray has played a rich variety of roles. He especially enjoys having direct access to the audience; for example, when playing the narrator in such plays as 'Scent of Flowers', 'Royal Hunt of the Sun', 'Cider with Rosie' and, more recently, 'Dancing at Lughnasa'.*

*The Club's occasional musical have also allowed Ray "to tackle" the audience, too; his favourite roles being the Lion in 'Wizard of Oz', Joe in 'Good Companions' and the Dame in seventeen pantomimes. Of course, conventional roles are equally satisfying and Ray has particularly enjoyed playing sophisticated characters, such as Mr. Knightley in 'Emma', the Scarlet Pimpernel and Tony in 'Dial 'M' for Murder'.*

## CATHERINE GREENHALGH

*A member of the SDC since April 1998, Catherine has enjoyed playing various roles both on and off stage. Her initiation period as backstage crew on 'Lady Windermere's Fan' led to becoming a barmaid in the Theatre bar, an ice-cream seller and even a backstage 'Tea-Lady'.*

*Playing 'Fiona' in the Summer Youth Production of 'How the Other Half Loves' was her first acting role and after a fleeting (but dramatic) part in 'Witness for the Prosecution', Catherine is very pleased to be playing 'Ginny' in 'Relatively Speaking'.*

*Catherine has been accepted at the Drama Studio, London, to train for a career in the professional theatre.*







## EILEEN HUXTABLE

*Since 1977 and her appearance in Alan Ayckbourn's 'Absurd Person Singular', Eileen has been hoping for another opportunity to appear in a play by this most successful playwright since Somerset Maugham or Noel Coward.*

*As luck would have it, in 1990 she was asked to co-direct, with her husband Clifford, one of the 'Norman Conquests' trilogy, 'Round and Round the Garden'.*

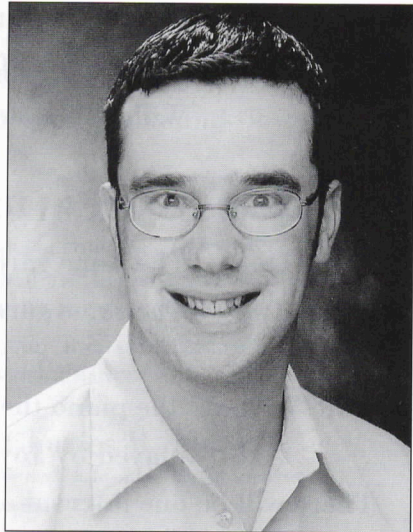
*And now, in 1999, her chance has come to play Sheila in 'Relatively Speaking', the writing so technically adroit, an actress's dream come true.*

## MATTHEW WOODHAMS

*Matthew is a relative newcomer to the club, having joined only last year, but has managed to clock up good experience in 'Lady Windermere's Fan' (as an Australian) and in 'Witness for the Prosecution' (as a nerd).*

*This is Matthew's second Ayckbourn production, the first being last summer's younger members' fund-raiser - 'How the Other Half Loves'. Coincidentally Matthew played opposite Catherine in that production, a partnership that worked well and is repeated here.*

*Matthew is also a member of the S.A.O.S. and enthusiastically sang and danced his way through many musicals before joining the S.D.C..*



# **RELATIVELY SPEAKING**

by Alan Ayckbourn

Directed by Joyce Goldsworth

## **CAST**

Phil Carter	RAY MANN
Sheila Carter	EILEEN HUXTABLE
Greg Poynter	MATTHEW WOODHAMS
Ginny Whittaker	CATHERINE GREENHALGH

The action of the play takes place during a summer Sunday in London and the country. Time: 1960's.

## **Act 1**

- Scene One    Ginny's bedsit-flat in London
- Scene Two    The garden of a country house - 'The Willows', Lower Pendon, Bucks.

## **Act 2**

- Scene One    The same garden a moment later
- Scene Two    The same garden an hour or so later.

'The Willows' the piano theme has been written and played by Joyce Goldsworth

There will be one interval of approximately 20 minutes



## **STAGE CREW**

Stage Manager	CHRIS RATCLIFFE
Asst. Stage Manager	GRAHAM RATCLIFFE
Prompt	MARGARET HILL
Properties	JAN HALE
Lights	MARJORIE COTTRILL
Sound	ROY CARR
Crew	ANDREW GREGSON
	JOHN BRINDLE
	CLIFFORD HUXTABLE

Set built by	PRODUCTION TEAM
Set painted by	BOB JESSAMINE

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/THANKS**

Sefton Council for plants

Mr & Mrs Alty for loan of garden furniture.

Lady Green Nurseries for loan of bench and flowers

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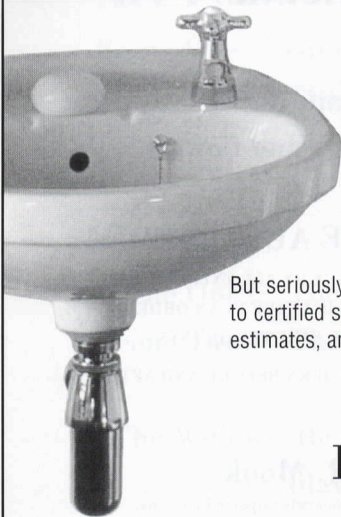
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# Alan Ayckbourn

**A**lan Ayckbourn was born in Hampstead, London on 12 April 1939, son of Horace Ayckbourn and Irene Maude (née Worley). Married Christine Helen (née Roland) in 1959 and they have two sons. He was awarded the CBE in 1987 and Knighted in 1997 for service to the theatre.

His first professional theatre job was with Donald Wolfitt at the Edinburgh Festival in 1956. The following year he joined Stephen Joseph's Theatre in the Round, Scarborough as an actor and stage manager and it was there he wrote his first play, 'The Square Cat' was first performed. He went on to work all over England and was a BBC Radio drama producer from 1965-1970 before returning to the Stephen Joseph's Theatre, Scarborough as Artistic Director.

He is the author of over 50 plays, most of which received their first performances at Scarborough. More than half have subsequently been produced in the West End, at the Royal National Theatre or the RSC. His plays have been translated into over 30 languages, are seen on stage and television all over the world and have won numerous awards, the most recent being the 1997 Lloyds Private Banking Playwright of the Year Award for 'Things We Do For Love'.

He is also an established Director, not only his own work but other people's. He received a Play and Players' Director of the Year Award for his RNT production of 'A View from the Bridge' starring Michael Gambon and in 1995, his production of Herb Gardener's 'Conversations With My Father' starring Judd Hirsch transferred from the Stephen Joseph's Theatre to the Old Vic. In the United States, his production of his and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical 'By Jeeves' was voted by Time Magazine one of the 10 best productions of 1996.

Also awarded the 1992 Cameron Mackintosh Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford, is the holder of a number of honorary degrees. Other accolades include a Montblanc de la Culture Award for Europe for "establishing a thriving theatrical tradition in Scarborough and for his dedication and commitment to it" and a Writer's Guild of Great Britain Lifetime Achievement Award and is a Fellow of the RSA.



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# **RELATIVELY SPEAKING**

This play was presented by Peter Bridge at the Duke of York's Theatre, London on 29th March 1967, with the following cast:

Greg  
Ginny  
Philip  
Sheila

RICHARD BRIERS  
JENNIFER HILARY  
MICHAEL HORDERN  
CELIA JOHNSON

Directed by NIGEL PATRICK  
Designed by HUTCHINSON SCOTT

The action of this play takes place during a summer weekend in London and the country.

No character in this play is intended to portray any specific person alive or dead.

This version of *Relatively Speaking* differs to some extent from the production at the Duke of York's Theatre. In particular, the setting of the first scene has been changed, if any companies prefer to produce the original version (which does not require the presence of the bed onstage), scripts of the alternative first scene can be obtained from the Publishers.

NB: this information was written in the script obtained by the SDC in February 1970 when it was first performed at the Little Theatre.

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Julia and David Tattersall played the young couple with Fred Harding and Ann Cornett in the other roles. The play was directed by Margaret Campion. Ken Burns was Stage Manager with his assistants, his wife, Vera and Judy Wells (Hall). Lighting was by Geoffrey Yates, Ann Sykes was prompt. The set was designed, constructed and painted by Arthur Nugent.

**J.G.**

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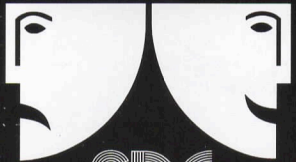
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