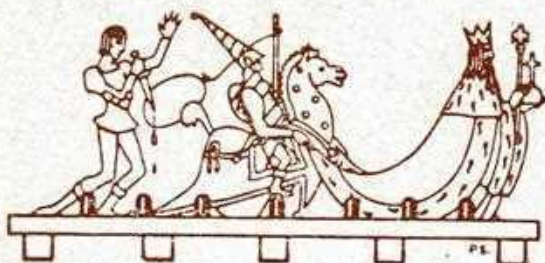


The
Birmingham
Repertory
Theatre



Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

TOM STOPPARD

ONE SHILLING

**Don't send
your daughter
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Counties
Ice Cream
Mrs Worthington
(... eat it all yourself)**



From DE PROFUNDIS

by OSCAR WILDE

I know of nothing in all Drama more incomparable from the point of view of Art, or more suggestive in its subtlety of observation, than Shakespeare's drawing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They are Hamlet's college friends. They have been his companions. They bring with them memories of pleasant days together. At the moment when they come across him in the play he is staggering under the weight of a burden intolerable to one of his temperament . . . Of all this, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz realise nothing. They bow and smirk and smile, and what the one says the other echoes with sicklier iteration.

When at last, by means of the play within the play and the puppets in their dalliance, Hamlet 'catches the conscience of the King', and drives the wretched man in terror from his throne, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz see no more in his conduct than a rather painful breach of court etiquette. That is as far as they can attain to in 'the contemplation of the spectacle of life with appropriate emotions'. They are close to his secret and know nothing of it. Nor would there be any use in telling them. They are little cups that can hold so much and no more.

Towards the close it is suggested that, caught in a cunning springe set for another, they have met, or may meet, with a violent and sudden death. But a tragic ending of this kind, though touched by Hamlet's humour with something of the surprise and justice of comedy, is really not for such as they. They never die. Horatio who, in order to 'report Hamlet and his cause aright to the unsatisfied',

Absents him from felicity awhile

And in this harsh world draws his breath in pain,

dies, though not before an audience, and leaves no brother. But Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are as immortal as Angelo and Tartuffe, and should rank with them. They are what modern life has contributed to the antique ideal of friendship. He who writes a new *De Amicitia* must find a niche for them and praise them in Tusculan prose. They are types fixed for all time. To censure them would show a lack of appreciation. They are merely out of their sphere: that is all.

TOM STOPPARD

Tom Stoppard began his career as a journalist in Bristol, subsequently freelancing in London. He started writing for the stage in 1960. His first play, *A Walk on Water*, was produced on TV in 1963 and on stage in Hamburg and Vienna in 1964. This play, retitled *Enter a Free Man* was staged in London in 1968.

In 1964 he went to Berlin for five months on a Ford Foundation grant and wrote a one-act verse burlesque, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, which occupied itself with these two characters from the moment of their ultimate exit from 'Hamlet' to their deaths in England. On his return from Berlin he started work on *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* which owes little to the one-acter except momentum. Its first production was by the Oxford Theatre Group as part of the 'fringe' of the 1966 Edinburgh Festival. The play was given its professional premiere at the National Theatre in 1967 and is still in their repertoire.

Mr. Stoppard's other work includes *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon* (novel), *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (Radio Play), *M is for Moon among Other Things* (Radio Play), *A Separate Peace* (TV Play), *Another Moon Called Earth* (TV Play), *Teeth* (TV Play), *If You're Glad I'll be Frank* (Radio Play), *The Real Inspector Hound* (Play), *Neutral Ground* (TV Play) and *After Magritte* (Play).

In the July 1970 edition of 'Plays and Players' John Russell Taylor wrote of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*:—

"And then came *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. This play too had a rather chequered history. The first whisper of it was a one-act farce in verse, which Stoppard now hopes and believes has disappeared for good. Next, he started again, this time to write a full length play about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and what sort of lives they led in their own right in the intervals of being attendant gentlemen at the beck and call of the great, which would summon them for brief moments out of the shadows into the glare of dramatic attention. Before he had properly finished the play he let it, or as much of it as he had then written, be performed on the Edinburgh Festival fringe in 1966. The Royal Shakespeare Company more or less commissioned him to write the last act, but then for some reason decided not to produce the play, and finally it went on at the National Theatre in April 1967. Its reception by critics and public was little short of ecstatic, and almost overnight Stoppard found himself accepted on all sides as the new white hope of British theatre.

It is a long play in which virtually nothing happens: as soon as we meet the principals for the first time, playing some interminable game of coin-tossing, which defies all the rules of chance by coming up heads 85 times in a row, we know (primed with Beckett and all that crush) that Godot will never come, nothing will ever change, the two will remain perforce waiting in the wings for the rest of their lives, never quite grasping what is happening centre-stage of life. They can perhaps make a choice of some kind, decide to act instead of merely being acted upon; but if they do, they will be denying their essential nature, and will be able to assert their own existence only by independently choosing to extinguish it.

Which is fair enough: a pattern of Stoppard's imposed upon, or neatly dovetailed with, the pre-existing pattern of Shakespeare's play. The conception is cool, cunning, and intellectual: not for Stoppard the romantic inventions of those who choose to speculate on the nature of King Lear's wife, the number of children Lady Macbeth had, or what happens next to Katharina and Petruchio—the whole point of his play is to reinforce the strict classical viewpoint that dramatic characters do not have any independent continuing existence beyond the confines of what their inventor chooses to tell us about them. This, it seems to me, Stoppard's play does with great skill and virtuosity; but, it is very evidently the working out of an intellectual, almost one might say, a scholarly conceit, which I would have thought little to capture the interest of a non-specialist audience once the pattern has become patent. It is not, to put it mildly, a play made with too much heart.

And yet I am obviously wrong in this assessment; the play has not only had great success on its home ground, but has gone on to almost universal success abroad. This proves, if anything does, that audiences are not by any means so impervious to the appeal of anything which sets out to work on them, primarily by way of their intelligence as we always, much too loftily, tend to assume. I am sure that the National Theatre was the ideal place for the play first to appear, because with a National Theatre audience it could take for granted an acquaintance with the root material (Hamlet, that is), and considerably less acquaintance with even the most hallowed classics of the Theatre of the Absurd. Taking its public gently by the hand, it confidently, excitingly led them from the known to the unknown, and gave them a good lively time along the way. I still feel that for audiences more thoroughly familiar with the more advanced sections of modern theatre, the play is too long-draw-out for its material, that too long a time elapses between our becoming aware of the play's drift and its actual accomplishment. But even so, it definitely marks the arrival of a dramatist who's not quite like any other."

GORDON GOSTELOW



Gordon Gostelow was born in Australia and is a graduate of Sydney University. After choosing a theatrical career he came to this country and worked in repertory at Ipswich, Guildford and Nottingham before such West End shows as *Camino Real*, *Brouhaha* and *The Iceman Cometh*. He played in Peter Dews' *Age of Kings* series for BBC TV before joining the Royal Shakespeare Company, where he played three seasons including, among others, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Representative*. For the Chichester Festival Mr. Gostelow played Trinculo in *The Tempest* in 1968 and last year played Pinchwife in *The Country Wife* and Pompey in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

On TV Mr. Gostelow has been seen in series such as *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *Esther Waters* and *The Railway Children*, and has made numerous film appearances.

KEITH DRINKEL



Keith Drinkel was born in York and read English and Drama at Birmingham University. On graduating with a B.A. degree he joined the Rep to play many small parts before moving on to roles such as The Dauphin in *St. Joan*, Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice* and Horatio in the Richard Chamberlain *Hamlet*. His last appearance at the Rep was as Mosca in *Volpone*.

For the last eighteen months Mr. Drinkel has been mainly involved in television. After playing in *The Contenders* and *The Newcomers* he began work on Granada's *Family at War* series in which he plays Philip Ashton. Last Christmas Mr. Drinkel made guest appearances in the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs' season of Old Time Music Hall.

JAMES HAZELDINE



James Hazeldine was born in Salford and began his career as a student at the Victoria Theatre, Salford. After playing in Rep at Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle he went to the Royal Court Theatre to play in the Edward Bond season of plays and *Look Back in Anger*. Whilst at the Court he had great personal success in Peter Gill's play *Over Gardens Out* at the Theatre Upstairs.

Mr. Hazeldine has made many television appearances including episodes in *Family at War*, a play in the *Tales of Unease* series for London Weekend TV and two Wednesday Plays, *Sovereign's Company* and *The Long Distance Piano Player* which is yet to be shown.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

TOM STOPPARD

Characters in order of appearance:

<i>Rosencrantz</i>	JAMES HAZELDINE
<i>Guildenstern</i>	KEITH DRINKEL
<i>The Player</i>	GORDON GOSTELOW
<i>Tragedians</i>	JAMES DUGGAN ADRIAN JAMES GARETH JOHNSON RODERICK LEYLAND
<i>Alfred</i>	MORAY BLACK
<i>Hamlet</i>	GUY ROSS
<i>Ophelia</i>	LYNN DEARTH
<i>Claudius</i>	DAVID GLOVER
<i>Gertrude</i>	PETRONELLA FORD
<i>Polonius</i>	JOHN GILL
<i>Soldier</i>	RODERICK LEYLAND
<i>Ambassador</i>	JAMES DUGGAN
<i>Horatio</i>	ADRIAN JAMES
<i>Attendants</i>	ANNABEL HAMPSON ANTONY JAMES AMANDA SAUNDERS MICHAEL STOCK

Directed by MICHAEL SIMPSON

Designed by JANET SMITH

Lighting by MICHAEL DUXBURY

Mime by GEOFFREY BUCKLEY

The play is in three acts with two intervals of twelve minutes

Stage Managers:
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TONY CRAVEN

Assistant Stage Managers:
ISLA DONALD
DAVID GOODHART

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JIM McANDREW

Carpenter:
ROBERT TAYLOR

Chief Electrician:
ERIC PRESSLEY

Assistant Electrician:
MICHAEL DUXBURY

Property Master:
ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Assistant Property Master:
DAVID LINGARD

Wardrobe:
JUNE CALLEAR

Assistant Cutter:
GILLIAN KEMSLEY

Wardrobe Assistants:
SUE NIGHTINGALE
JANET WOODALL
JENNIFER ADEY
MAUREEN HIGGINSON

Head Scenic Artist:
RAYMOND HOLDEN

Scenic Artist:
PETER JOHNS

Stage Staff:
STEPHEN PRESTON
STEPHEN WOODCOCK

Trainee Director:
DUSTIN HUGHES

Repertoire Manager:
JOHN WHITAKER

Production Manager:
ALAN RUSSELL

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Additional costumes by Kathleen Fisher.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance given by Messrs Rackham's and Lewis's.

Patrons are requested not to smoke in the auditorium.

In accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Justices: (a) The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrances other than those used on queue waiting rooms, and the doors of such entrances and exits should at that time be open. (b) All gangways, passages and staircases shall be kept entirely free from chairs and obstructions. (c) Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any part of the intersecting gangways. If standing at the rear of the seating be permitted, sufficient space shall be left for persons to pass easily to and fro. (d) The fireproof curtain shall at all times be maintained in working order and shall be lowered at the beginning and during the time of every performance.

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October 24 To be announced

October 31 Rehearsal of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

November 14 Michael Simpson talks about production.

Further Enquiries:

The Secretaries,
Theatre '67 Club,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
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The 80 page book will be published in December 1970 and will cost £1. All profits from the sale of the book will be donated to the New Theatre Appeal Fund.

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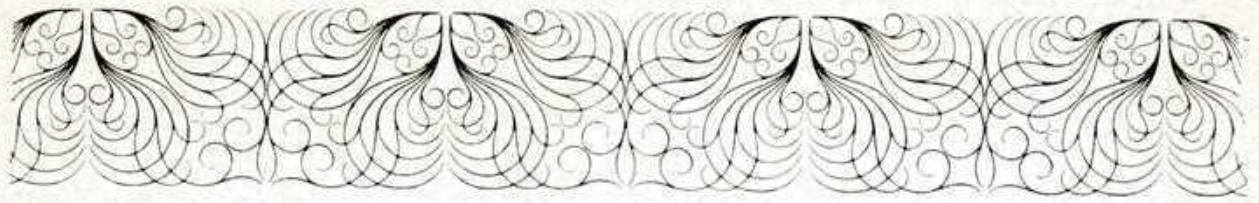
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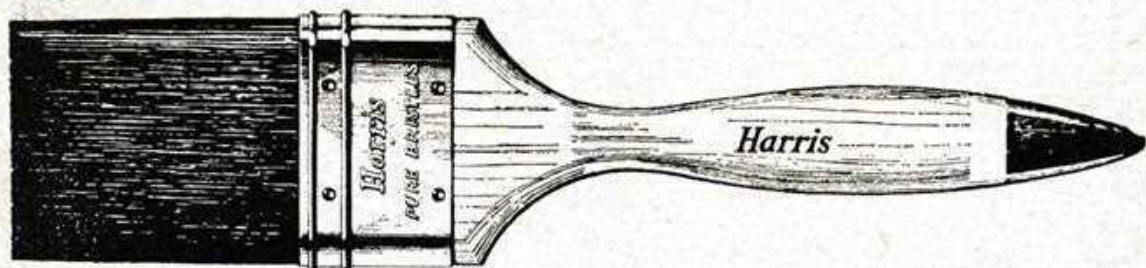
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