

**Grand Theatre
WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

Nothing On

**only
70p**



**Proprietors: GRAND THEATRE
(Weston-super-Mare) LIMITED
General Manager: E.E.A. GRADSHAW**

The Grand Theatre Weston-super-Mare is a Member of the Grand Group.

Season Dates

Evenings at 7.45

Matinee: Wednesday at 2.30

Saturday at 5.00 and 8.30

Commencing Tuesday 15th January for
One Week Only

SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE AUDITORIUM

The use of cameras and tape recorders is forbidden.

The management reserve the right to refuse admission, also to make any alteration in

the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable causes.

From the theatre rules 'All exits shall be available for use during all performances'.

'The fire curtain shall be lowered during each performance'.



© Michael Frayn, 2011, *Noises Off*,
Bloomsbury Methuen Drama

Otstar Productions Ltd present

**DOTTY OTLEY
BELINDA BLAIR
GARRY LEJEUNE**

in

Nothing On

by

ROBIN HOUSEMONGER

With

**SELSDON MOWBRAY
BROOKE ASHTON
FREDERICK FELLOWES**

Directed by..... LLOYD DALLAS
Designed by..... GINA BOXHALL
Lighting by..... ROD WRAY
Costumes by PATSY HEMMING

WORLD PREMIERE PRIOR TO NATIONAL TOUR!

NOTHING ON

by **ROBIN HOUSEMONGER**



Dotty Otley in rehearsal.

Cast in order of appearance:

Mrs Clackett DOTTY OTLEY
Roger Tramplemain..... GARRY LEJEUNE
Vicki BROOKE ASHTON
Philip Brent FREDERICK FELLOWES
Flavia Brent BELINDA BLAIR
Burglar SELSDON MOWBRAY
Sheikh FREDERICK FELLOWES

The action takes place in the living-room of the Brents' country home, on a Wednesday afternoon.

for OTSTAR PRODUCTIONS LTD
Company and Stage ManagerTIM ALLGOOD
Assistant Stage Manager POPPY NORTON-TAYLOR



Belinda Blair, Dotty Otley, Frederick Fellowes and Garry Lejeune in rehearsal.



Garry Lejeune in rehearsal.



Brooke Ashton in rehearsal.

Production credits

Sardines by Old Salt Sardines. Antique silverware and cardboard boxes by Mrs J.G.H. Norton-Taylor. Stethoscope and hospital trolley by Severn Surgical Supplies. Straitjacket by Kumfy Restraints Ltd. Coffins by G. Ashforth and Sons. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of EUROPEAN BREWERIES in sponsoring this production.

A Glimpse of the Noumenal

(Condensed from J G Stillwater, *Eros Untrousered – Studies in the Semantics of Bedroom Farce*)

The cultural importance of the so-called 'bedroom farce', or 'English sex farce', has long been recognised, but attention has tended to centre on the metaphysical significance of mistaken identity and upon the social criticism implicit in the form's ground-breaking exploration of cross-dressing and trans-gender role-playing. The focus of scholarly interest, however, is now beginning to shift to the recurrence of certain mythic themes in the genre, and to their religious and spiritual implications.

In a typical bedroom farce, a man and a woman come to some secret or mysterious place (cf. *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, etc.) to perform certain acts which are supposed to remain concealed from the eyes of the world. This is plainly a variant of the traditional 'search' or 'quest', the goal of which, though presented as being 'sexual' in nature, is to be understood as a metaphor of enlightenment and transcendence. Some partial disrobing may occur, to sug-

gest perhaps a preliminary stripping away of worldly illusions, but total nudity (perfect truth) and complete

'carnal knowledge' (i.e. spiritual understanding) are perpetually forestalled by the intervention of coincidental encounters (often with other seekers engaged in parallel 'quests'), which bear a striking resemblance to the trials undergone by postulants in various esoteric cults (cf. *The Magic Flute*, *Star Wars*, etc.).

A recurring and highly significant feature of the genre is a multiplicity of doors. If we regard the world on this side of the doors as the physical one in which mortal men are condemned to live, then the world or worlds concealed behind them may be thought of as representing both the higher and more spiritual plane into which the postulants hope to escape, and the underworld from which at any moment demons may leap out to tempt or punish. When the doors do open, it is often with great suddenness and

unexpectedness, highly suggestive of those epiphanic moments of insight and enlightenment which give access to the 'other', and offer us a fleeting glimpse of the noumenal. Another recurring feature is the fall or loss of trousers. This can be readily recognised as an allusion to the Fall of Man and the loss of primal innocence. The removal of the trousers traditionally reveals

a pair of striped underpants, in which we recognise both the stripes of the tiger, the feral beast that lurks in all of us beneath the civilised exterior suggested by the lost trousers, and perhaps also a premonitory representation of the stripes caused by the whipping which was formerly the traditional punishment for fornication.

Farce, interestingly, is popularly categorised as 'funny'. It is true that the form often involves 'funny' elements in the sense of the strange or uncanny, such as supposedly supernatural phenomena, and behaviour suggestive of demonic possession. But the meaning of 'funny' here is probably also intended to include its secondary sense, 'provocative of laughter.'

This is an interesting perception. It scarcely needs to be said that laughter, involving as it does the loss of self-control and the spas-

modic release of breath, a vital bodily fluid, is a metaphorical representation of the sexual act. But it can also occasion the shedding of tears, which suggests that it may in addition be a sublimated form of mourning. Indeed we recognise here a symbolic foretaste of death. If sneezing has been widely feared because it is thought that during a

sneeze the soul flies out of the body, and may not be recaptured

(whence 'Bless you!' or 'Gesundheit!'),

then how much more dangerous is laughter.

Not once but over and over again the repeated muscular contractions and expulsions of breath drive the 'soul' forth from the body.

The danger of laughter is recognised

in such expressions as 'killingly funny,' and 'I almost died'. There is a lurking fear that even more spectacular violence may ensue, and that a farce may end with a bloodletting as gruesome as in Oedipus or Medea, if people are induced to 'split their sides' or 'laugh their heads off'.

Fear of the darker undertones of bedroom farce has sometimes in the past led to its dismissal as 'mere entertainment'. As the foregoing hopefully makes clear, though, financial support by the Arts Council or a private sponsor for the tour of a bedroom farce would be by no means out of place.



The Fall of Man as illustrated by Frederick Fellows.

In Rehearsal

(left) Belinda Blair and (right)
Brooke Ashton in rehearsal.



**Dotty Otley, Frederick Fellowes
and Belinda Blair in rehearsal.**



**Poppy Norton-Taylor,
Assistant Stage Manager, with
Tim Allgood, Company and
Stage Manger..**



**Belinda Blair, Director Lloyd
Dallas, Selsdon Mowbray and
Dotty Otley in rehearsal.**



Behind The Dressing Room Doors



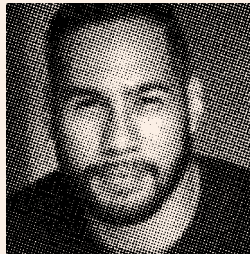
DOTTY OTLEY

(Mrs Clackett) makes a welcome return to the stage to create the role of Mrs Clackett after playing Mrs Hackett, Britain's most famous lollipop lady ('Ooh, I can't 'ardly 'old me lolly up!') in over 320 episodes of TV's ON THE ZEBRAS. Her many stage appearances include her critically acclaimed portrayal of Fru Säckett, the comic char in Strindberg's SCENES FROM THE CHARNEL-HOUSE. Her first appearance ever? In a school production of HENRY IV PART 1 - as the old bag-lady, Mrs Duckett.



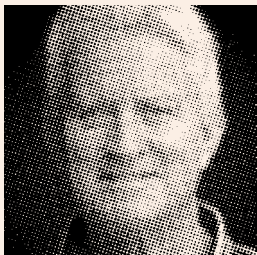
BELINDA BLAIR

(Flavia Brent) has been on the stage since the age of four, when she made her debut in SINBAD THE SAILOR as one of Miss Toni Tanner's Ten Tapping Tots. She subsequently danced her way round this country, Southern Africa, and the Far East in shows like ZIPPEDY-DOODA! and HERE COME LES GIRLS! More recently she has been seen in such comedy hits as DON'T MR DUDDLE!, WHO'S BEEN SLEEPING IN MY BED?, and TWICE TWO IS SEX. She is married to scriptwriter Terry Wough, who has contributed lead-in material to most of TV's chat shows. They have two sons and three retrievers.



GARRY LEJEUNE

(Roger Tramplemain) while still at drama school won the coveted Laetitia Daintyman Medal for Violence. His television work includes POLICE!, CRIME SQUAD, SWAT, FORENSIC, and THE NICK, but he is probably best-known as 'Cornetto', the ice-cream salesman who stirs the hearts of all the lollipop ladies in ON THE ZEBRAS.



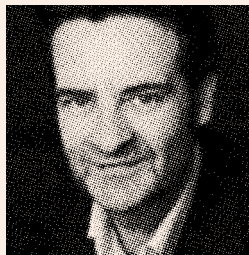
**SELSDON
MOWBRAY**

(Burglar) first 'trod the boards' at the age of 12 - playing Lucius in a touring production of JULIUS CAESAR, with his father, the great Chelmsford Mowbray, in the lead. Since then he has served in various local reps, and claims to have appeared with every company to have toured Shakespeare in the past half-century, working his way up through the Mustardseeds and the various Boys and Sons of, to the Balthazars, Benvolios, and Le Beaus; then the Slenders, Lennoxes, Trinculos, Snouts, and Froths; and graduating to the Scroops, Poloniuses, and Aguecheeks. His most recent film appearance was as Outraged Pensioner in GREEN WILLIES.



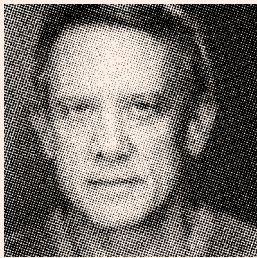
BROOKE ASHTON

(Vicki) is probably best known as the girl wearing nothing but 'good, honest, natural froth' in the Hauptbahnhofbrau lager commercial. Her television appearances range from Girl at Infants' School in ON THE ZEBRAS to Girl in Massage Parlour in ON PROBATION. Cinemagoers saw her in THE GIRL IN ROOM 14, where she played the Girl in Room 312.



**FREDERICK
FELLOWES**

(Philip Brent) has appeared in many popular television series, including CALLING CASUALTY, CARDIAC ARREST!, OUT-PATIENTS, and IN-PATIENTS. On stage he was most recently seen in the controversial all-male version of THE TROJAN WOMEN. He is happily married, and lives near Crawley, where his wife breeds pedigree dogs. 'If she ever leaves me,' he says, 'it will probably be for an Irish wolfhound!'



LOYD DALLAS

(Director) 'read English at Cambridge, and stagecraft at the local benefits office'. He has directed plays in most parts of Britain, winning the South of Scotland Critics' Circle Special Award. In recent years he has probably become best known for his brilliant series of 'Shakespeare in Summer' productions in the parks of the inner London boroughs.

ROBIN HOUSEMONGER

(Author) was born in Worcester Park, Surrey, into a family 'unremarkable in every way except for an aunt with red hair who used to sing all the high twiddly bits from THE MERRY WIDOW over the tea-table'. He claims to have been the world's most unsuccessful gents hosiery wholesaler, and began writing 'to fill the long hours between one hosiery order and the next'. He turned this experience into his very first play, SOCKS BEFORE MARRIAGE, which ran in the West End for nine years. Two of his subsequent plays, BRIEFS ENCOUNTER and HANKY PANKY, broke box office records in Perth, Western Australia. NOTHING ON is his seventeenth play.

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