



# ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION of SMITH COLLEGE

## ***London Theatre Insight***

**March 25 to April 1, 2007**

### DETAILED PRELIMINARY ITINERARY

***Please Note:*** All events are subject to change due to performance schedules and availability of guest speakers.

#### Monday 26 March

- am **Individual Arrivals.** Check in to **The Cavendish Hotel**, 81 Jermyn Street SW1Y 6JF, a four-star luxury hotel in the heart of St. James's , the most elegant part of the West End, with easy access to theatres and restaurants. In the late 19th Century, the hotel was run by Rosa Lewis - the infamous "Duchess of Duke Street" and sometime acquaintance of Edward VII - and today, having been completely refurbished, offers a discreet and stylish service within a moments walk of Piccadilly Circus or Green Park.
- pm **Reception and Briefing:** a chance to look at the Itinerary in greater detail, and all other aspects of the tour from extra performances to recommended restaurants. Followed by an Introduction to the Tour from **ELLEN KAPLAN**, Smith's Guest Professor.

#### Monday 26 March

- evening **Welcome Dinner**, in the Private Room at Green's of St James's - with the atmosphere of a West End Club this stylish and exclusive restaurant is run by Simon Parker Bowles, former brother-in-law of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.

## Tuesday 27 March

- 10:00am **Britain Now** : An in-depth look at the country you are visiting, and especially its relations with USA. This will be a fascinating discussion with **POLLY TOYNBEE** of The Guardian, covering other major issues of the day: the Middle East, Tony Blair's departure as Prime Minister, our relations with Europe, global warming.
- pm A **Private Visit** to the home of a Smith Alumna living in London - perhaps the beautiful 17th house in Kensington Square owned by Candy Beery.
- 7:30pm **PERFORMANCE 1: THE ENTERTAINER** by John Osborne  
To mark the 50th anniversary of the first performance of the play, Robert Lindsay plays struggling comedian Archie Rice, a music-hall performer in an age when Music Halls have all but disappeared. As in *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne continues to examine the state of the country, this time using three generations of a family of entertainers to symbolise the decline of post-WW2 Britain. Sean Holmes directs, with Pam Ferris.  
At the Old Vic.

## Wednesday 28 March

- am **A Discussion** of last night's play with **ELLEN KAPLAN**.
- pm **Building The Globe**. We visit the authentic replica of the Shakespeare Globe Theatre, down the Thames in Southwark, perhaps in the company of **Peter McCurdy**, whose firm, McCurdy and Co. was responsible for the reconstruction of the theatre. We shall also visit other buildings of interest in Southwark, some of them known to Shakespeare, including the 12th-century Cathedral where his brother Edward is buried, as is Philip Henslowe who ran the Rose Theatre in the sixteenth century; John Harvard who founded Harvard University was baptised here and there is a chapel dedicated to his memory. Also the Anchor Inn, built on the site of an earlier pub where Shakespeare's actors certainly drank, and may have changed into their costumes.

*EVENING FREE*

## Thursday 29 March

### *MORNING FREE*

4:00pm **Celebrity Tea**, in the Conservatory at The Chesterfield Hotel, with a *GUEST* closely associated with the Theatre.

7:30pm **PERFORMANCE 2 : JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN** by Henrik Ibsen, in a new version by David Eldridge  
Disgraced and destitute, following a fraud scandal and imprisonment, Borkman paces alone in an upstairs room. Downstairs his family is trapped in the claustrophobic atmosphere of a household bound for explosion. A scorching indictment of 19th century capitalism, Ibsen's penultimate play paints a devastating picture of selfish ambition. With Ian McDiarmid and Penelope Wilton, directed by Michael Grandage.  
At the Donmar Warehouse.

**Post-performance discussion** with *ELLEN KAPLAN*.

## Friday 30 March

am **A Private Visit to Englefield House** in Berkshire, the Elizabethan (with high Victorian exterior) home of *SIR WILLIAM and LADY BENYON*. They will show us their beautiful house, which has been in the family's possession since the 16th Century, and was painted by Constable in 1833, before entertaining us to an elegant Lunch, served by their butler in the superb dining-room.

pm We continue by coach through the rural counties of Middle England to **Stratford-upon-Avon**, the Warwickshire market town where Shakespeare was born and is buried. On arrival, if there is time, we take a short walking tour to include Shakespeare's Birthplace, King Edward VI Grammar School where he was educated, Hall's Croft (where his daughter Susanna lived) and Holy Trinity, where he was both baptised and is buried.

pm **Inside The Royal Shakespeare Company**. A pre-performance discussion with one of the leading *MEMBERS* of the Company about life with the RSC in Stratford in general, and the production we are about to see in particular.

## Friday 30 March

evening **PERFORMANCE 3 : KING LEAR** by William Shakespeare.  
The closing production of the RSC's Complete Works Festival is Shakespeare's epic tragedy. Directed by *Trevor Nunn*, with *Ian McKellen* in the title role, this production has long been planned as the culmination of their RSC work together on Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and Othello.  
In The Courtyard Theatre.

## Saturday 31 March

10:30am **Critical Round-up** : a chance to compare your views of what we have seen this week with one of London's *LEADING CRITICS*, perhaps *MICHAEL BILLINGTON* of the Guardian.

*AFTERNOON FREE*

evening **PERFORMANCE 4: PORGY AND BESS:** *Trevor Nunn* has adapted and reworked Gershwin's classic jazz opera as a two and a half hour musical with a cast of 40 and a 20-piece orchestra. Clarke Peters and Nicola Hughes will be starring in this performance at the Savoy Theatre.

**Farewell Drinks** back at the hotel.

## Sunday 1 April

am Individual Departures

*24 January 2007*