

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In 2002 Annie Woodward and I embarked on the marathon that was David Edgar's *Nicholas Nickleby*. Eleven hours of drama were pruned to seven-ish and the 50 strong cast performed the two plays alternatively over a period of two weeks. It was an exhausting experience for the cast, who all had day jobs, but we hoped they also found it as rewarding and exhilarating as we did.

Since then I have been looking for an adaptation that did justice to *Great Expectations*, which has long been a favourite book of mine, and ideally, one which avoided the heavy use of narration which had evolved post *Nicholas Nickleby*.

A year ago, Jane Railton drew my attention to this version which she had seen at the Royal Exchange Theatre and greatly enjoyed. After this recommendation a debate with the theatre ensued; but we met with obstacles in obtaining the rights to perform it as James Maxwell, the adaptor, had since died. But happily permission was given earlier this year, and we were able to go ahead with what is an amateur premier of this adaptation.

I love this version which tells the story in a clear and pacy way using a relatively small team of actors to play a variety of roles. It is also lovely to welcome newcomers to this stage along with some familiar faces!

The work on the roof in the summer has now given us access to the whole of the stage area and this has allowed Pete Bagley to create a flexible and atmospheric set. Even more exciting is the fact that the building work has now resulted in new and hygeinic loos backstage for the first time in my long association with this theatre. What joy!

**Helen Withers**  
October 2009

# Criterion Theatre

## A Chorus of Disapproval



by Alan Ayckbourn  
**5th – 12th December 2009**  
Directed by Ann Woodward



**BOX OFFICE (DIRECT)**  
**024 7667 5175**

This is a notice to members

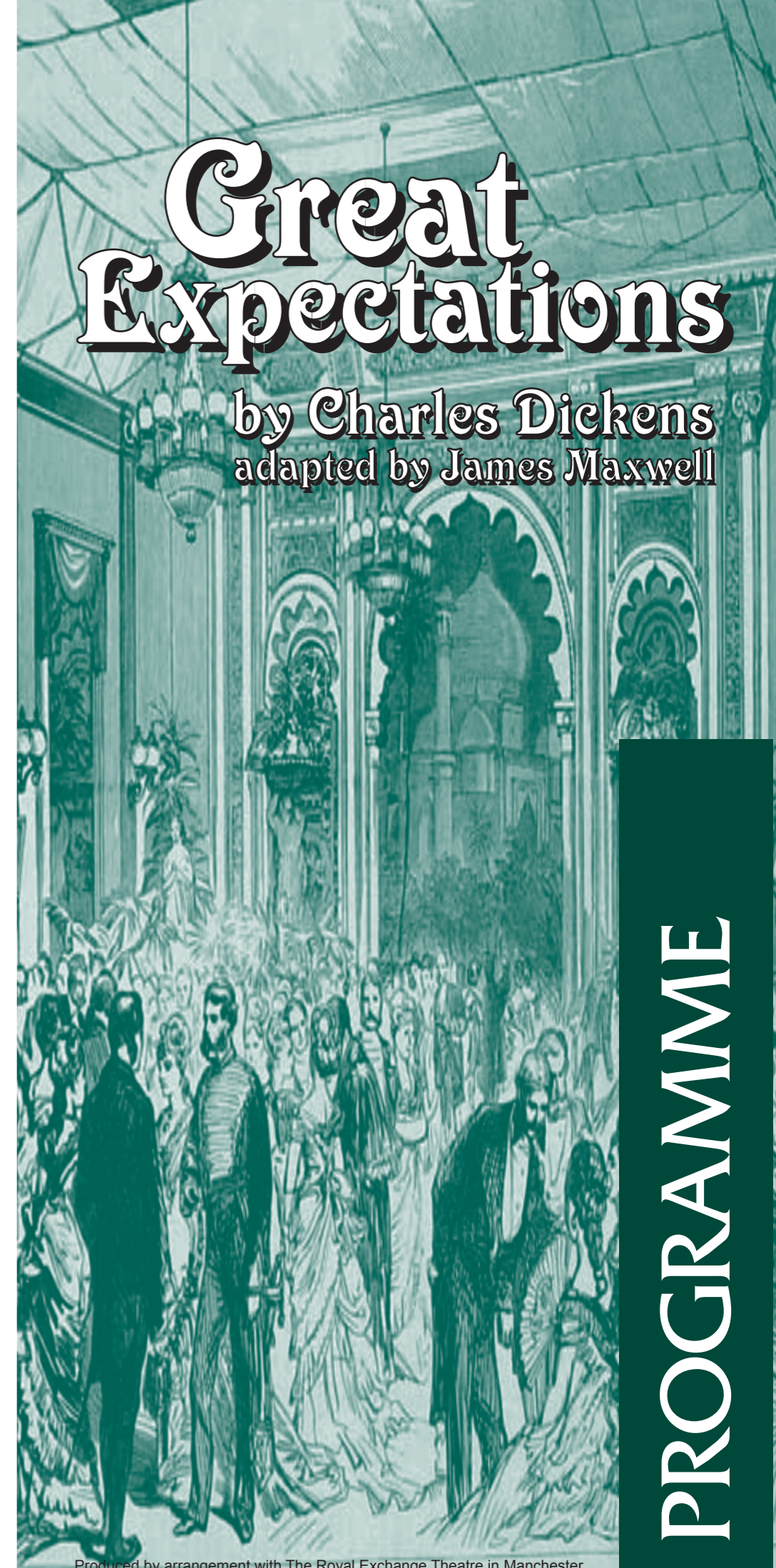
A diffident North Country widower attempts to escape from his loneliness by joining the local amateur light operatic society. By accident, rather than design, he advances from a one-line part to the lead. Ayckbourn skilfully draws parallels between John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and the day to day activities of the company who are performing it, showing how painfully embarrassed the British are in the face of emotion whilst keeping us laughing in happy recognition. Winner of the the London Standard Drama Award for best Comedy and last seen at the Criterion in 1991.

Production photography by:  
**Richard Johnson**  
079 0450 6280

**The Criterion is a non-smoking theatre**

# Great Expectations

by Charles Dickens  
adapted by James Maxwell



PROGRAMME

Produced by arrangement with The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester.



# INTRODUCTION

The action of the play takes place in the Kent Marshes, Satis house and the city of London in the period 1830 -1860. It follows the life and adventures of the orphan Pip, through his relationship with a series of extraordinary characters.....

## Andy Chaplin (Joe Gargery)

Andy first appeared on the Criterion stage as Cancer Man in the 2007 production of Holy Ghosts, and more recently in Blue Remembered Hills, both directed by Geoff Bennett.



## John Fenner (Magwitch)

This is John's second appearance at the Criterion having played Sir Lawrence Wargrave in And Then There Were None earlier this year. He has been a prominent member of the Loft and Talisman theatres where he has played in everything from musicals, to farce to Shakespeare. Most recent roles were St Clair Bayfield in Glorious! at The Loft and Soriano in Filumena at The Talisman.



## Joe Fallowell (Herbert Pocket/Bailiff 1/Tailor)

Joe returns to The Cri after a 7 year break at Bangor University where he was involved in over twenty productions. His previous roles here include Jim Hawkins in Treasure Island and Lord in Forty Years On.



## Sara Farman Farmai (Amelia/Miss Pocket)

Sara made her stage debut with the Eden Theatre Company in 1997 and continued there until university. This is her first production for The Criterion.



## Rebecca Fenlon (Estella)

Rebecca made her debut at The Criterion in 2007 as Elaine in The Graduate and has since appeared in productions including Cider with Rosie, Blue Remembered Hills and Sex, Drugs & Rick'N Noel.



## Brian Goredema-Braid (Compeyson/Ensemble)

Brian 's theatre experience started as a student. He has been a member of The Criterion for a year and has appeared in And Then There Were None and Beauty and the Beast.



## Joe McKeown (Orlick/Drummler)

Joe has been involved in various theatre projects in Coventry including work with The Shysters and Imagineer. As well as shows at the Edinburgh festival and Leeds University. This is his Criterion debut.



## Sarah McDonagh (Biddy/Ensemble)

Sarah is a member of the Criterion theatre youth group and has attended drama lessons here since a young age. She appeared in Cider with Rosie last year. Her last performance was Cat and Mouse at the Belgrade last January.



## Craig Porter (Mr Pocket/ Soldier/Ensemble)

This is Craig's second show at the Criterion having debuted in It can Damage Your Health.



## Keith Railton (Jaggers)

Keith joined the Criterion in 1965 to play the part of Prince Charming in Cinderella. Since then he has played many leading roles. His more recent appearances include Oliver Twist, Art, Hysteria, The Memory of Water and And Then There Were None. He has also directed Treasure Island, Oh! What a Lovely War, Brassed Off and The Graduate. Keith is currently Artistic Director of the Criterion.



## Debbie Relton-Elves (Miss Haversham)

Debbie started dancing and acting at the age of three appearing in shows at the Belgrade and Coventry Theatre. During her professional career as a dancer, she worked with many well-known entertainers including Norman Wisdom and Frankie Howerd. Returning to Coventry to take up a different career she missed the stage so joined The Criterion. She has played many roles including Mavis in Stepping Out and Alma Rattenbury in Cause Celebre and she co-choreographed Oh! What a Lovely War.



## Nancy Silvester (Mrs. Pocket/Ensemble)

Nancy last appeared at the Criterion a couple of years ago in Holy Ghosts, Lady in the Van and Hedda Gabler. She has played in many ensemble pieces including Oliver Twist, Oh! What a Lovely War and Nicholas Nickleby.



## Andrew Tyrer (Wemmick)

Andrew appeared as Dr. Gibbs in the Criterion's recent production of It Can Damage Your Health. Favourite roles at the Criterion include Carl Spector in Holy Ghosts and John Knox in Speaking in Tongues. He has also regularly appeared at the Talisman Theatre Kenilworth.



## Emma Withers (Mrs Joe/Molly/Ensemble)

Emma has been a member of the Criterion for 20 years and her most memorable roles include Beatrice in A View from the Bridge and Nell Gwyn in Playhouse Creatures. She returns to the stage after a 4 year break following the birth of her daughter



## Gareth Withers (Pip)

Gareth first performed on the Criterion stage in 1988 played Sammy in Babes in the Wood. Since then he has performed in numerous productions as Arnold Epstein in Biloxi Blues, Michael in The Golden Pathway Annual, Eugene Jerome in Brighton Beach Memoirs and various roles in both Teachers and Forty Years On. Gareth also directed the 2001 production of Romeo and Juliet and musically directed Return to the Forbidden Planet in 2005.



## Calum Speed (Startup/Ensemble)

This is Calum's stage debut.



# Great Expectations

Pip  
Magwitch  
Compeyson  
Joe Gargery  
Mrs Joe/ Molly  
Biddy  
Orlick / Drummler  
Estella  
Miss Havisham  
Herbert Pocket  
Jaggers  
Wemmick  
Startup  
Mrs. Pocket  
Miss Pocket  
Mr. Pocket  
Ensemble

Gareth Withers  
John Fenner  
Brian Goredema-Braid  
Andy Chaplin  
Emma Withers  
Sarah McDonagh  
Joe McKeown  
Rebecca Fenlon  
Debbie Relton-Elves  
Joe Fallowell  
Keith Railton  
Andrew Tyrer  
Calum Speed  
Nancy Silvester  
Sara Farman Farmai  
Craig Porter  
Nancy Silvester, Calum Speed, Sara Farman Farmai,  
Craig Porter, Sarah McDonagh, Brian Goredema-Braid,  
Joe McKeown, Emma Withers.  
Helen Withers  
Gennie Holmes  
Pete Bagley  
Paul Wilkins  
Debbie Relton-Elves  
Jonathan Rees  
Ian Knight  
Luke Dabin  
Dave Cornish Tony Cuttiford  
Maureen Liggins Pam Coleman Maureen  
Copping Nikki Muckle  
Les Rahilly Erica Young Clair Henrywood  
Aileen Rahilly Sally Patalong Kim West  
Pete Bagley Mike Tooley, Simon Sharpe,  
Paul Wilkins, Kevin Woods, Andrew Tyrer,  
Mike Tierney, Paul Tierney, Tom Ellis, Harry  
Lawrence  
Doreen Belton, Judy Talbot, Paul Chokran,  
Judy Sharpe, Sue Hadlum

Director  
Stage Manager  
Designer  
Props Design  
Choreography  
Prompt  
Lighting Design  
Lighting Operator  
Sound  
Wardrobe

Props

Set Build

Set Painting