

Director's Notes

Since Alan Bennett's Talking Heads first appeared on television in 1988, they have captivated audiences when performed. He exactly captures the thought chains and language of people who we can recognise, in settings that are familiar and circumstances that are believable, but by no means ordinary.

The delights of these pieces grab audiences and actors alike and, with the cast and crew, we have spent time enjoying these plays as we seek to prepare them for the stage. As Bennett points out in his notes, these are not about realistic settings and action on stage, they are about stillness and thought on stage - and lots of action off it! There are striking similarities and themes in the plays - women alone while surrounded by neighbours, a striking disregard for the modern cleric (especially if bearded!), concerns about the impact of social work, the stereotypes of names and cultures and the different ways in which redemption and contentment are found.

The birth of this performance has not been straightforward. A late change of director, the withdrawal of performing rights and, for a finale, snow affecting rehearsal schedules have all been sent to try us. The production could not have succeeded without the sterling effort and commitment of all those involved in the crew who have worked cheerfully to my unrealistic deadlines, but especially the cast who have, in a very short period, brought Bennett's characters to life in a careful, sympathetic and believable way. And finally, a special thank you to Jane Railton whose support and work with myself and the cast has been a key part of making this work.

I hope you enjoy spending some time with Susan, Irene and Doris as much as we have.

Bill Butler
January 2013



Our next production:



21 - 23 February, 2013

This critically acclaimed, award-winning evening of comedies combines wit, intellect, satire and just plain fun, a hilarious collection of short plays that can be performed together or separately. David Ives' award-winning piece is actually a series of thematically interlinked sketches about beginnings and endings and the power of words, featuring chimp-literati, a brand new language, handy tips for party conversation and even Leon Trotsky, complete with an axe in his skull. The world of David Ives is enchanting, perplexing and very, very funny. One of the plays (Sure Thing) recently delighted audiences in our Festival 50.

"Smart, silly and highly enjoyable, it's well worth catching."
Daily Info Oxford

"Very clever and funny but also quite instructive. Well worth seeing."
Broadway Baby

BOX OFFICE (Direct)

024 7667 5175

This is a notice to members

No photography or videoing allowed.

The Criterion is a non-smoking theatre.

The logo for Richard Johnson, consisting of the letters "RJ" in a stylized, white, serif font on a dark background.

Production photography by
Richard Johnson
079 0450 6280



by Alan
Bennett



PROGRAMME

by arrangement with Samuel French Ltd

A Bed Among the Lentils

Susan

played by Cathryn Bowler

DIRECTOR

Bill Butler

STAGE MANAGER

Dave Crisp

LIGHTING

Ian Knight

*assisted by Karl Stafford &
Simon Sharpe*

SOUND DESIGN

Dave Cornish

SOUND OPERATOR

Adam Bodycote

WARDROBE

**Jane Railton, Lucy Hayton,
Sara Farmanfarmai,
Maureen Liggins**

PROPERTIES

**Frances Dixon, Jackie Crisp,
Sally Patalong, Judy Sharpe**

SET BUILD

**Simon Sharpe, Judy Sharpe,
Pete Bagley, Terry Rahilly,
Frances Dixon, Mike Tooley,
Kevin Woods**

SET PAINT

Judy Talbot, Louise Bagley

Special Thanks to Jane Railton

There will be two intervals of 15 minutes.

Cathryn Bowler

Cathryn has appeared in various productions and in a variety of roles during her time at the Criterion Theatre. Previous productions include The Blue Room, Brassed Off, Hedda Gabler, Four Nights in Knaresborough, Memory of Water, Oliver Twist, The Crucible, 39 Steps, Single Spies and most recently in the 2012 production of Gypsy.



A Lady of Letters

Irene

played by Christine Ingall



Christine Ingall

Chris joined the Criterion in 2004 and has appeared in a wide range of productions and played a number of significant roles, including Jane in 'Speaking in Tongues', Martha in the two-hander 'The Unexpected Man', Paige in 'Dinner', and the Mother in 'The Monkey's Paw' the theatre's Festival of One Act Plays, as well as performing in a number of ensemble pieces and musical productions. She is also a lead tutor for the Saturday morning drama classes for 11 to 15 year olds at the theatre.

A Cream Cracker Under the Settee

Doris

played by Ann Woodward

Annie Woodward

Annie joined the Criterion as Ann Stewart in 1972 and played Maggie, the Irish maid in Bob Morley's production of 'Pride and Prejudice'. She enjoyed it so much she just kept going, playing Hippobomene in 'Rape of the Belt' a month later. She made the theatre her second home and to date has played in over 45 productions and directed over 20, as well as doing two stints as Artistic Director, one as Theatre Manager and one as Chairman. Annie most recently played Mummy in The Cripple of Innishmaan and directed 'Visiting Mr Green' in late 2012.

