

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

presents



**RELATIVELY
SPEAKING**

by **Alan Ayckbourn**

RELATIVELY SPE

In general, the people who liked this play when it was first seen remarked that it was 'well constructed'; those that didn't called it old-fashioned. If the latter is true, then I suppose it's because, as the song goes, I am too. As to whether it's well constructed, well, in a way I hope it is, since I did set out consciously to write a 'well made' play. I think this is important for a playwright to do at least once in his life, since as in any science, he cannot begin to shatter theatrical convention or break golden rules until he is reasonably sure in himself what they are and how they were arrived at.

And this knowledge is really only acquired as a result of having plays produced, torn apart and reassembled by actors and held up to public scrutiny for praise or ridicule. I suppose I am extremely lucky, writing for a small theatre company as I did for so many years, to have had almost a dozen plays put through this very process before reaching the age of thirty. Not only this, but to have had to fight all the limitations of a small theatre — the number of actors available, difficulties of staging, even lighting complications — and, most important, being aware that if my play didn't at least break even at the box office, we'd all be out of a job on Monday. I wrote, in a sense, to order, and there was no harm in this, since the order was always of a technical nature and dealt only minimally with content. But there is no sharper lesson for a dramatist than to find himself sharing a dressing-room with an actor for whom he has written an impossible quick change.

I wrote this play originally as a result of a phone call from the late Stephen Joseph, a truly remarkable man of the theatre, without whose unrelenting deadlines this would never have been written and to whom I dedicate this play, sadly, but with great affection. He asked me then simply for a play which would make people laugh when their seaside summer holidays were spoiled by the rain and they came into the theatre to get dry before trudging back to their landladies. This seemed to me as worthwhile a reason for writing a play as any, so I tried to comply. I hope I have succeeded.

ALAN AYCKBOURN

AKING by Alan Ayckbourn

Alan Ayckbourn was born in London in 1939. He was educated at Haileybury and has worked in the theatre ever since leaving school, starting as an actor and stage manager with a series of jobs in Edinburgh, Worthing, Leatherhead, Oxford and Stoke-on-Trent. He joined Stephen Joseph's theatre-in-the-round at Scarborough and started writing plays whilst a member of that company, having decided that "my words were better spoken by other actors".

After his first West End production, *Mr. Whatnot*, he joined the B.B.C. in Leeds as a radio and drama producer and it was whilst he was working there that he wrote his first two hits, *Relatively Speaking* and *How the Other Half Loves*.

He inherited the job of Director of Productions at Scarborough and continued to commission himself to write at least one play a year for the company. The resulting successes included *Time and Time Again* in 1972, *Absurd Person Singular* in 1973, the *Norman Conquests* trilogy and *Absent Friends* in 1974, *Jeeves* and *Confusions* in 1975 and *Bedroom Farce* and *Just Between Ourselves* this year.

The Scarborough company have recently moved from the Library Theatre to Westwood, where Alan Ayckbourn continues to direct them and to pursue his chosen task of making people laugh.



The action of the play takes place during a summer weekend in London and the country.

ACT I Scene 1 Ginny's bedsitter in London. 7 a.m. Sunday.
 Scene 2 The garden patio of Philip and Sheila's house in
 the Home Counties that same morning.

INTERVAL

ACT II Scene 1 The same a moment later.
 Scene 2 The same an hour or so later.

There will be one interval of twenty minutes during which the theatre bar will be open. Ice cream will be on sale in the auditorium and coffee will be available in the bar.

at Leeds Civic Theatre 7th to 11th December 1976

CAST

GREG	<i>MALCOLM BROWN</i>
GINNY	<i>DEBBIE SMITH</i>
PHILIP	<i>DENNIS STEVENSON</i>
SHEILA	<i>ANN BENSON</i>

DIRECTED BY ROGER COOK

For the Arts Centre:

Stage Manager:	George Westmoreland
Assistant Stage Manager:	Ray Spurgeon
Set Design:	Malcolm Brown
Light & Sound Effects:	Douglas Harris
Prompt:	Dorothea Walker
Publicity:	Gordon Wilson
Box Office & Ticket Sales:	John Pemberton, Pam Wilson
Front of House Manager:	Joyce King
Properties:	Gillian Thresh, Anne Robinson, David Scott, Christine Wilson

For the Civic Theatre:

Theatre Manager:	Fred Mower
Resident Stage Manager:	Julia Piggott
Lighting Technician:	Nick Morris

We should like to thank **County Mowers** , Main Street, Thorner, for the loan of garden furniture and the **Post Office** for their help with telephones.

Publicity photographs by Anthony E. Mitchell.

The inclusion of a cigarette packet in the design of this programme does not imply a recommendation by Leeds Arts Centre of any particular brand of cigarette nor of the practice of smoking, which in any case is not permitted in the auditorium.

The public may leave the Civic Theatre at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open. All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any obstruction. The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before each performance to check that it is in proper working order.

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Coming shortly:

The Rivals

Sheridan's famous comedy

Directed by Margaret Rhodes

8th to 12th February 1977

OUR PRODUCTIONS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON WILL BE:

3rd to 7th May

**"When We Are Married" by J. B. Priestley.
Directed by Nina Goldthorpe.**

28th June to 2nd July

**"The First Born" by Christopher Fry.
Directed by Malcolm Brown.**

If you would like tickets for either of these shows please enquire at the box office during the interval or telephone Leeds 756796.

NEXT SEASON

A list of our productions for the 1977/78 season will shortly be published. If you would like to receive a copy of this list together with details of our season ticket scheme please leave your name and address at the box office this evening or write to Mrs. Pam Wilson, 22 Becketts Park Drive, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3PB.

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

Leeds Arts Centre was formed in 1945 as an amateur Society to encourage and foster interest in the arts.

The Drama Group mounts five productions – usually including a musical or revue type show – at the Civic Theatre.

The Green Room Group puts on plays and other forms of entertainment in the rehearsal rooms to give members valuable experience of acting and producing before tackling major parts or productions in the Civic Theatre. Season ticket holders are welcome to attend these performances.

The Fine Arts Group meets twice each week throughout the year for drawing, painting and other creative work.

In addition there is a variety of social activities for members, such as theatre visits, outings, parties, etc.

New Members are always welcome so if you are interested in acting, drawing, painting (pictures or scenery), set building, making costumes, helping back stage, front of house or even with publicity and think you might like to join the Centre, or would like more information please write to:

*The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre,
Stansfield Chambers, Great George Street,
Leeds 1.*

costume hire

You may not realise that the costumes you have seen tonight and countless others from different periods are available for hire from the Leeds Arts Centre costume collection at reasonable rates.

If you are interested please telephone Leeds 756796 and discuss your requirements with Mrs. Margaret Rhodes, our wardrobe mistress.