A PROVINCIAL LIFE

BY PETER GILL
FROM A STORY BY ANTON CHEKHOV
1-17 MARCH

PULL OUT PROGRAMME
BEHIND THE SCENES
A PROVINCIAL LIFE

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Photographs
Helen Maybanks / National Theatre Wales

SPRING 2012  02
Gill has directed over 100 productions in the UK, Europe and North America, bringing extraordinary life, through his intricately detailed and impressionistically beautiful aesthetic, to both the modern and classical repertoires, including acclaimed productions of plays by Buchner, Congreve, Otway, Shakespeare, Hampton, Orton, Osborne, Pinter, McCafferty and Wright.

He has engaged with Chekhov as a writer and director throughout his life, in productions at the Royal Court, Riverside Studios, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre. The only Welsh writer besides Dylan Thomas whose work has been staged by the Royal National Theatre, his plays include The Sleepers’ Den (Royal Court 1965), Over Gardens Out (Royal Court 1968), Small Change (Royal Court 1976), Kick for Touch (Royal National Theatre 1983), Cardiff East (Royal National Theatre 1997), Certain Young Men (Almeida 1999), The York Realist (English Touring Theatre 2001), Original Sin (The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, 2002) and Another Door Closed (Theatre Royal Bath, 2009).

His work has repeatedly examined the Cardiff of his past as a ‘lost domain’ that can be imagined but never revisited, and his return to direct A Provincial Life (originally presented at the Royal Court in 1966) marks his first collaboration with National Theatre Wales.

Gill was born in Cardiff in 1939, and began his professional career as an actor. After several years on stage, he began to write and direct while working at the Royal Court, where he was responsible for introducing the plays of D.H.Lawrence to the theatre, and pioneered ideas of postmodernist staging with his production of The Duchess of Malfi. His first play, The Sleepers’ Den, was staged at the theatre in 1965, and he has continued to present work at the Royal Court throughout his career. He was the founding director of Riverside Studios, which was for a period one of Europe’s leading arts centres, mixing a programme of home grown drama with an extraordinary roster of international artists from Samuel Beckett to Tadeusz Kantor, and of the National Theatre Studio, which quickly became one of the most important centres for the development of new work in Britain.
### PRODUCTIONS & PLAYS

#### 1960s

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#### Key

* Written by Peter Gill
THE COMPANY

Cast

Anyuta Ivanova Blagovo
Kezia Burrows
Maria
Victorovna Dolzhikova
Alex Clatworthy

Prokofy
Richard Corgan

Madame Azhogina
Helen Griffin

Boris Ivanov Blagovo
Lee Haven-Jones

Victor Ivanov Dolzhikov
Mark Lewis

Cleopatra
Alexandrovna Poloznev
Sara Lloyd-Gregory

Ivan
Mikhailovich Cheprakov
John-Paul Macleod

Workman
Liam Mansfield
Alexandr
Pavlovich Poloznev
Clive Merrison

Old man/
Governor of the Province
Kenneth Price

Shopkeeper/Berlichev
Ieuan Rhys

Misail
Alexandrovich Poloznev
Nicholas Shaw

Andrey Ivanov
William Thomas

Karpovna/Madame Mufke
Menna Trussler

Other Parts
Played By

John Atkinson
Luke Bridgeman
Abigail Fitzgerald
Heledd Gwynn
Kristian Jenkins
Jan Jones
Ryan Nolan
Clare Parry Jones
Ian Phillips
John Redpath
Liane Walters
John Williams

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Photographs
Helen Maybanks / National Theatre Wales
Kezia Burrows
Trained at RADA.
Television credits include: Venice Preserved (Arola), Man For All Seasons, Kind Hearts & Coronets, To Kill A Mockingbird (PTV), The Merchant of Venice (Creation), The Mumshandee, The Bala Prima Donna (London Rd), Much Ado About Nothing (FSC), Measure for Measure (Sherman).

Film credits include: CRASH, Casualty (BBC), Phonebook (E4).

Radio credits include: The Anarchist in the Basement.

Alex Clatworthy
Trained at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she won the 2011 Michael Bryant Award.
Television credits include: Sleeping Beauty (Birmingham Rep).

Radio credits include: Eucquces and Meddlew (BBC Wales).

Richard Corgan
Trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.
Television credits include: Flowers From Tesco (Torch), Tanning Of The Sheen (Goode), Frozen (Sherman), It's About Me (Rampsheed), Money, Science, Me (Everyman), Romeo & Juliet (Lord Chamberlain's Men), Railed Off Blood & Darling (Rose Theatre), The Long, The Short & The Tall (Pleasance), La Fanciulla Del West (Royal Opera House), Macbeth, The Changeling (Barbican), Phoenix & The Carpet (Bristol Old Vic).

Radio credits include: The Womb, The B W Bird (BBC).

Helen Griffin
Television credits include: The Devil Inside Him (National Theatre Wales), Small Change, Shadow Of A Boy, acclaimed one-woman show Carlito (Sherman Cymru), Cymbeline (Ludlow Festival).

Film credits include: Coronation Street, Getting On, Criminal Justice Two, Woman Bye Bye Show Con Passionate, Or Who 'The Age Of Steel', Casualty, The Bill.

Lee Haven-Jones
Clwyd Theatre Cymru Associate
Television credits include: Gwath Carref (Fiction Factory), Caerdydd (S4C) and Love in A Cold Climate (BBC).

Film credits include: The Prince and the Perfect Day.

Trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and graduated in June 2011.
Television credits include: Under Milk Wood (Framham Repl), Fearless (S4C), 24 Hour Plays: Old Vic New Voices (Old Vic Theatre), A Christmas Carol (Maxim Theatre, Stockholm).

Film credits include: Ushers (Jukka Productions).

Mark Lewis
Trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama and for many years was associated with the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow. He has worked at the National Theatre, The Royal Exchange, The Riverside, The Donmar, The Arcola, among others and worked with writer/directors such as Howard Barker and Steven Berkoff. He has appeared in TV series, Films and Radio.

Sara Lloyd-Gregory
Trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.
Television credits include: Up 'n Under (Black Rat), Romeo and Juliet (Wales Theatre Co), The American Pilot and A Midsummer Night's Dream (RMWOD).

Television credits include: Alys, Can't Remember, Y Pris, (S4C), Thyme Sleepeth (Sky 1), Taff of the D'Oyly Cartes, Torchwood, Belonging (BBC), Sleep With Me and Afterly (TVW).

Film credits include: Little White Lies (Red & Black Films), A Way of Life (ABOL Films). Radio credits include Last Tango in Abersychyn (BBC Radio 4).

John-Paul Macleod
Trained at RADA.
Television credits include: Spies (Theatre Alibi), King Lear (Headlong/Liverpool Everyman) directed by Rupert in Passion, Passion (NTW) directed by Michael Sheen, All Night I Dream about being God (The Yard Hackney).

Television credits include: Casualty (BBC), Doctors (BBC), My Boy Jack (TVW).

Film credits include: Small Birds No River, To Kill a King (Fairfax Films), Calendar Girls (Buena Vista).

Liam Mansfield
Trained at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.
Television credits include: Phaedra's Love (Arola), Hamlet (Northern Broadsides), Tit Pity She's A Whore and Anthology (Liverpool Everyman/Duing Low), The Fairy Queen (Glyndebourne/Opera Corniche/RAM), Romeo and Juliet and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Open Air Theatre, Regents Park), Merchant of Venice and Holding Fire (Shakespeare's Globe), and Easter (Oxford Stage Company), for which he received an Ian Charleson Award commendation.

Television credits include: Cabaret, The Ritzers Club, The Romantics (BBC), Foyle's War, Afterlife (ITV), Goldspotted (Channel 4).

William Thomas
Work spans four decades, and he received a nomination for Best Actor at the BAFTA Cymru Awards (2007) for his portrayal of Glym in the award winning Con Passionate.

Other television credits include: Doctor Who, Midsomer Murders, Alba, Gavin & Stacey, Bletchley (10 Series), Grass, at the Funeral ParLOUR and We Are Seven. William also plays Geraint Cooper in the BBC & US Series, Torchwood. Film credits includes Mr Nice (Kodak Award Winner), Longitude (2001 BAFTA Cymru winner for Best Drama Serial), Solomon & Gaenor, and Twin Town.

Menna Trussler
Trained at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.
Television credits include: The Winter's Tale, The Merchant of Venice (Ludlow Festival), Amadri (Ergot Cymru), Hamlet (Northern Broadsides), Tit Pity She's A Whore and Anthology (Liverpool Everyman/Duing Low), The Fairy Queen (Glyndebourne/Opera Corniche/RAM), Romeo and Juliet and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Open Air Theatre, Regents Park), Merchant of Venice and Holding Fire (Shakespeare's Globe), and Easter (Oxford Stage Company), for which he received an Ian Charleson Award commendation.

Television credits include: Serifics (S4C), Alys, Y Pris, Os Byw Ac Iach, Bydd Y Dyrol, Pobol Y Cwm (BBC Wales), Y Pris (Fiction Factory).

Radio credits include: Writing the Century (4BC Radio 4), Ceri Ellen (BBC Radio Cymru).
ENSEMBLE

01 John Atkinson
02 Luke Bridgeman
03 Abigail Fitzgerald
04 Heledd Gwynn
05 Kristian Jenkins
06 Jan Jones
07 Ryan Nolan
08 Clare Parry Jones
09 Ian Phillips
10 John Redpath
11 Liane Walters
12 John Williams

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THE CREATIVE TEAM

Designer
Alison Chitty

Lighting Designer
Paul Pyant

Stage Sound Services Sound Designer
Mike Beer

Composer
Terry Davies

Props Supervisor
Jane Slattery

Costume Supervisor
Carrie Bayliss

Wigs Supervisor
Joyce Beagarie

Assistant Director
(part of National Theatre Wales' Emerging Director Scheme)
Julia Thomas

Assistant Designer
Louie Whitemore

Production Manager
David Evans

Company Stage Manager
Matthew North

Deputy Stage Manager
Rachel Burgess

Assistant Stage Manager
Ryan Tate
Fiona Curtis

Head of Wardrobe
Jo Reynolds

Production Electrician
Ceri James

Production Sound
Rhodri Hunt

Assistant Designer
Louie Whitemore

Observer Assistant Designer
Kitty Callister

Observer Assistant Designer
Holly Pigott

Student Stage Management Placement
Rhodri Hunt

Promoter
Anna Poole
@annaloupoe

Thank you

Costumes
With thanks to National Theatre Hire, Angels and Cosprop

Wigs
With thanks to National Theatre Hire and Wig Specialties

Cardiff Theatrical Services

Stage Sound Services

Bristol Old Vic

Jacob Gough and Thomas Reilly

Chris Ricketts and all at the Sherman

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See Alison’s profile on pages 09–10

Mike started his career at the Sherman Theatre Cardiff in 1986.

Since then he has toured Theatre and Corporate events world wide over the last 20 years with companies including DV8 Physical Theatre, Theatre Royal Bath, Bristol Old Vic, Diversions Dance, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Birmingham Stage, Theatre Clwyd, Act Productions, Fiery Angel, Theatr Gwynedd, Imagination, Sony and Ford Motor Car Company.


Mike now works as full time Sound Designer and Production Consultant for Stage Sound Services.

Paul is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and works in opera, ballet, musicals and theatre worldwide. He has a long-established association with Glyndebourne Opera, English National Opera, The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, National Theatre, English National Ballet, The Donmar Warehouse, The Almeida Theatre and Northern Ballet Theatre. Recent productions include Grief (National Theatre), Richard III (The Old Vic), Aspects of Love (Menier Chocolate Factory), House of Games (Almeida), Betrothal in a Monastery (Theatre du Capitol and Opera Comique), The Heretic (Royal Court), and Hobson’s Choice (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield).

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Terry has written for many theatre productions at the National Theatre, RSC, West End, around the UK and elsewhere. His productions with Peter Gill include The Aliens (Bush), Look Back in Anger (Theatre Royal, Bath), The Voysey Inheritance (Royal National Theatre), Romeo and Juliet (Royal Shakespeare Company), Original Sin (Sheffield) and The York Realist (English Touring Theatre/Royal Court). He is an artistic associate of choreographer Matthew Bourne, composing for his Lord of the Flies, Dorian Gray, Edward Scissorhands, The Car Man and Play Without Words for which he received an Olivier Award. He has conducted the music for nearly 50 films including W.E., The King’s Speech, The Illusionist, Another Year and Brideshead Revisited.
ALISON CHITTY

Alison has had a distinguished international career in theatre, opera and film. Her theatre credits include eight years as resident designer at the National Theatre where she designed many productions, including Venice Preserv’d, Antony and Cleopatra, Bacchae, The Voysey Inheritance and Mike Leigh’s Two Thousand Years. She has just designed Mike Leigh’s new play, Grief. She has worked in opera houses throughout the world, including Chicago, Seattle, Munich and Paris. Recently she designed the highly acclaimed world premiere of Harrison Birtwistle’s The Minotaur at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and Rigoletto for La Fenice, Venice.

Film credits include: Aria, Turn of the Screw, and several Mike Leigh films including Life is Sweet, Naked and Secrets and Lies.

In recognition of her particular approach to teaching, and commitment to developing the talent of young theatre designers and practitioners, Alison was awarded The Misha Black Award in 2006, The Young Vic Award in 2008 and a Fellowship of Birkbeck, London University in 2011.
# PRODUCTIONS

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<thead>
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<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000s</th>
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</table>
| Trained at St Martins and Central Schools of Art | **Assistant Designer at Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent** | **Julius Caesar**<sup>*</sup>  
William Shakespeare/Riverside Studios | **Khovanshchina**  
Olivier Award: Best Production  
Modest Mussorgsky/English National Opera | **Olivier Award:**  
Best Costume Design for Remembrance of Things Past  
Royal National Theatre |
| 74                           | 87                           | 92                           | 97                           | 101                          |
| **Head of Design at Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent** | **Much Ado About Nothing**<sup>*</sup>  
William Shakespeare/Royal National Theatre | **Fool for Love**<sup>*</sup>  
Sam Shepard/Royal National Theatre | **Bacchae**  
Euripides/Royal National Theatre |  
**Olive Award:**  
Received OBE |
| 79                           | 94                           | 100                          | 104                          | 105                          |
| **Measure for Measure**<sup>*</sup>  
William Shakespeare/Riverside Studios | **Fool for Love**<sup>*</sup>  
Sam Shepard/Royal National Theatre | **The Mask of Orpheus**  
Harrison Birtwistle/Royal Festival Hall | **Two Thousand Years**  
Mike Leigh/Royal National Theatre |  
**Misha Black Award for Innovation in Design Education** |
| 104                          | 107                          | 108                          | 109                          | 111                          |
| **British Drama Award: Best Designer for Venice Preserv'd**<sup>*</sup> | **Cardiff East**<sup>*</sup>  
Peter Gill/Royal National Theatre | **Tristan and Isolde**  
Richard Wagner/Seattle Opera | **The Young Vic Award** |  
**Grief**  
Mike Leigh/Royal National Theatre |
| 107                          | 108                          | 109                          | 111                          | 112                          |
| **Mean Tears**<sup>*</sup>  
Peter Gill/Royal National Theatre | **The Bartered Bride**  
Bedřich Smetana/Covent Garden |  
**Awarded Fellowship of Birbeck, London University** |  
**Costume Palette** |  |

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* Directed by Peter Gill
DR CHEKHOV AND
THE NEEDY HUMAN HEART

In 1875, when he was 15, his father fled from town hidden under a mat at the bottom of a cart after his grocery business failed. A year later the rest of the family’s humiliation was complete when a former lodger bought their house and turned them out.

Staying on in Taganrog until he was 15, Chekhov was also displaced in another sense. His grandfather had been a serf, part of Russia’s vast underclass literally owned by the country’s landowners until Tsar Alexander II freed them in 1861 and created a workforce for the huge network of railways he planned. They were routinely characterised as lazy, sly, drunk, ignorant and suspicious.

But Chekhov was educated, sober and industrious. He enrolled as a medical student in Moscow and began writing humorous pieces for small magazines. Working his way up the market and the ladder of literary ambition, he turned out hundreds of stories before writing his four great plays: The Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard.

The long story My Life out of which Peter Gill made his play A Provincial Life came just as Chekhov was blossoming as a dramatist towards the end of his life. In all of them you’ll find many a reference to medicine (which he regarded as his ‘wife’, with literature his ‘mistress’), to education (he built three schools) and even to railways.

You’ll also find pre-echoes of the Russian Revolution and astonishingly topical references to the environment or to the impossibility of justice and Mamman living together.

But his subject is the human comedy of people (like his protagonist) who dream of changing their own lives and the world but generally find the best they can manage is to get on with the drudgery they were born to; and people (like his protagonist’s father) who can’t see why anything should change in their comfortable universe. Narrowness of horizons is what defines provincialism.

‘Scenes from Provincial Life’ was the subtitle for his funny, heart-breaking Uncle Vanya, and the title was later used by the great South African writer J M Coetzee for his thinly veiled autobiography. Chekhov (with Ibsen) was setting the agenda for modern western drama; Beckett, Pinter and Ayckbourn are all in his debt.

Chekhov doesn’t sneer at us, as perhaps a metropolitan writer might for easy laughs. But he doesn’t indulge or sentimentalise us either. He is the outsider who can show us the funny, heart-breaking truth.

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A Provincial Life

By Peter Gill

Featuring the full text of the play alongside details of this new production, this is a great souvenir to take home and keep forever.

Purchase your copy in the foyer now, or online at

shop.nationaltheatrewales.org