Two's Company and **Karl Sydow** in association with **Master Media** present

A DAY BY THE SEA

by N. C. Hunter

SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE

programme

A DAY BY THE SEA

by N. C. HUNTER

Cast in order of speaking

Miss Mathieson
governess to the children — **Stephanie Willson**

Elinor Eddison
daughter of Frances by her first marriage — **Tatum Smith-Sperling** or **Beatrix Taylor**

Toby Eddison
Elinor's brother — **Jack Swift** or **George Taylor**

Doctor Farley
Doctor to David — **David Acton**

David Anson
Laura's brother-in-law — **David Whitworth**

Laura Anson
a widow — **Susan Tracy**

Frances Farrar
recently divorced from her second husband — **Alix Dunmore**

William Gregson
a solicitor — **David Gooderson**

Julian Anson
Laura's son, in the Foreign Office — **John Sackville**

Humphrey Caldwell
an official in the Foreign Office — **Hugh Sachs**

Act I
The garden of Laura Anson's house in Dorset.
A morning in early May 1953

Act II, Scene 1
A beach nearby, the same afternoon

INTERVAL

Act II, Scene 2
The beach, an hour later

Act III
The garden again. Next morning

Director	**Tricia Thorns**
Set Designer	**Alex Marker**
Costume Designer	**Emily Stuart**
Lighting Designer	**Neill Brinkworth**
Sound Designer	**Candice Weaver**
Production Manager	**Owen Donkin**
Stage Manager /Operator	**Remi Bruno Smith**
Rehearsal Stage Manager	**Naomi Buchanan Brooks**
Performance Stage Manager	**Lauren Burns**
Design Assistant	**Natalie Furnell Calvert**
Costume Assistant	**Samina Sattar**
Assistants to the production	**Elizabeth Holden and Jan Rae**
Production photography	**Philip Gammon**
Press	**Anne Mayer** (020 3659 8482)
Marketing	**Mel Cox, Target Live**
Poster & programme design	**Jon Bradfield**
Producer	**Graham Cowley**

Our grateful thanks to: Duncan Coombe; Paul Grimwood; Miller Centre Theatre for costumes; Ladies' hair by Lynne of Emslie Griffin at Stars; Guy Chapman for extra marketing help; Out of Joint for rehearsal space; Phil Gammon and Tony Pescod for the boat; Jenny and Peter Parker and the Bottom Group for props; Ian Black, Sadie Crowder, Angus Duke, Mariella Neubauer, Esther O' Loughlin, Oliver Potter, Andrew Quick, Victoria Smith, Abena Weston, Fengfan Zhou for help with set building and painting; The Questors Theatre Ealing.

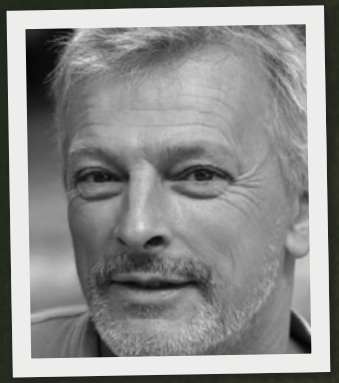
Lighting and other equipment supplied by DCLX: www.dclx.co.uk

Particular thanks to those who have contributed to the costs of this production. *A Day by the Sea* is generously supported by Backstage Trust, The Boris Karloff Charitable Foundation and the Leche Trust.

THE LECHE TRUST

BackstageTrust

THE COMPANY

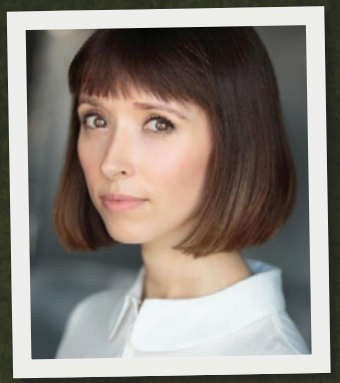


DAVID ACTON
Doctor Farley

Theatre includes *The Woman in Black* (Fortune Theatre and national tour); *Jane Wenham the Witch of Walkern* (Out of Joint/Watford Palace/ Arcola); *Richard II* (Palace of Westminster and Arcola). *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Comedy of Errors, Henry V* and *Twelfth Night* (Propeller); *Anjin: The Shogun and the Samurai* (Tokyo and Sadler's Wells); *The League of Youth, Vertigo, Burial at Thebes* and *I Have Been Here Before* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Relatively Speaking* and *Copenhagen* (Newbury Watermill); *The Dark Things* (Edinburgh Traverse); *Richard II* (Old Vic Company); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Peter Hall Company); *Hamlet, The Comedy of Errors, The Constant Couple, The Man of Mode, The Love of the Nightingale, King Lear, As You Like It, Henry V, Edward III, Eastward Ho!, The Roman Actor* (RSC).

Television: *Diaries of the Great War, Downton Abbey, Doctors, Hostage (Fire in the Desert), EastEnders, Silent Witness, Passage, Hollyoaks, Tchaikovsky, The Bill, Blair on Trial, Class of '76, Casanova's Love Letters, Fooling Hitler, The Wyvern Mystery, Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased), Casualty.*

David was a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company 2014-15.



ALIX DUNMORE
Frances Farrar

Trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

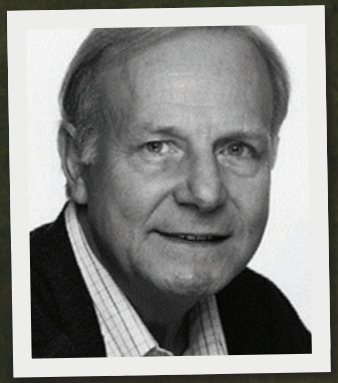
For Two's Company: *The Fifth Column* and *What The Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse), *London Wall* (Finborough and St James Theatre). Other theatre includes: *King Kong, A Comedy* and *A Christmas Carol* (Vaults); *Ben Hur* (Tricycle Theatre), *The 39 Steps* (Criterion, West End), *Gaslight* (New Vic, Newcastle-Under-Lyme), *Top Girls* (Out of Joint), *The Dead Guy* (English Theatre Frankfurt), *Nature Adores a Vacuum* (Soho Theatre), *Separate Tables* (Mill at Sonning), *A Winter of War* (Cheltenham Everyman), *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Bristol Old Vic).

Television: *Casualty, Doctors, Call The Midwife,*

Radio: *The Simon Day Show, 49 Cedar Street.*

Film: *London Wall* (Master Media)

Alix is a founder member of the Fitzrovia Radio Hour.



DAVID GOODERSON
William Gregson

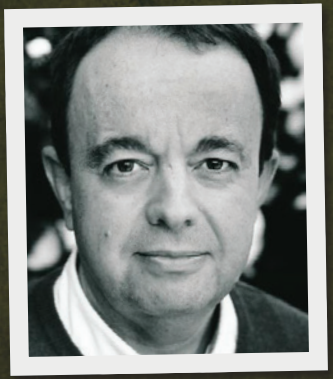
For Two's Company: *A Kind of Alaska* (Pleasance, Edinburgh). Other theatre includes *The Potting Shed, Portraits, The Flouers O'Edinburgh* (Finborough Theatre), *The After-Dinner Joke, The Conquering Hero, The Woman Hater, De Monfort, Saint's Day, The Road to Ruin, The Good Woman of Setzuan, A Penny for a Song* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (national tour), *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Ariadne on Naxos, Die Fledermaus* (English Touring Opera), *The Taming of the Shrew, Richard III, King Lear* (Ludlow Festival), *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, The Boys from Syracuse, Lady be Good* (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Middle East tour) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Singapore).

Television: *Doctor Who, A Touch of Frost, Mapp and Lucia, Lovejoy, Rumpole of the Bailey, Tenko. Bluebell, Mr Sloane* and *Cuffs.*

Film: *Limited Edition.*

Radio includes two long stints on the BBC Radio Drama Company.

Writing includes *The Wind in the Willows* (Vaudeville Theatre), *Kolbe's Gift* (Leicester Square Theatre), *Hector* (National Tour), *The Killing of Mr Toad* (Finborough Theatre) and *Walk or Die, Death of a Village* (BBC Radio 4).



HUGH SACHS
Humphrey Caldwell

Theatre includes: *The Roundabout* (Park Theatre and 59e59 Theater, New York), *Amadeus, One Man Two Guvnors, A Woman Killed With Kindness, Peter Pan* (National Theatre), *Anything Goes, The Cherry Orchard, The Country Wife* (Sheffield Crucible), *See How They Run* (Royal Exchange, Manchester), *Humble Boy* (tour), *Privates On Parade* (Donmar Warehouse), *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Touring Consortium), *Peter Pan* (West Yorkshire Playhouse).

Television: *The Interceptor, Family Tree, Benidorm, My Family, Trexx And Flipside, City Of Vice, The Catherine Tate Show, Him And Us, Housewife, 49, Midsomer Murders, Foyles War, Riot At The Ritz, Rome, The Shell Seekers, Murder Investigation Team, Prime Suspect 6, Perfect Strangers, Aristocrats, Giving Tongue.*

Film: *You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger, The Nutcracker: The Untold Story, Like Minds, The Libertine, Love, Honor and Obey.*

JOHN SACKVILLE
Julian Anson

Theatre includes: the title role in *William Wordsworth* (English Touring Theatre), *The Trial of Jane Fonda* (Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Festival), *An Inspector Calls* (National Theatre/PW Productions), *The Winslow Boy* (Rose Theatre, Kingston), *A Man For All Seasons* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *Othello* and *Volpone* (RSC), *A Cloud in Trousers* (York Theatre Royal & Southwark Playhouse), *Plunder, Lone Flyer, Witch, Dust* (Watermill Theatre), *Our Country's Good* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton), *Party* (Arts Theatre, London), *Hamlet* (Oxford Stage Company).

Television: *Genius: Einstein, The Crown* (Series 1 and 2), *Royal Wives At War, Doctors, Casualty, House Of Anubis, The Secret of Crickley Hall, Dark Matters, Young John Paul II, The Sunday Night Project, Brief Encounter of an Ordinary Woman, Rosemary & Thyme, Midsomer Murders, The Royal, Heartbeat, The Bill.*

Film: *Lost & Found* (Dean Street Productions), *The Hoarder* (Atlantic Picture Company/ Lionsgate), *Fossil* (Brickwall Films), *The Lost City Of Z* (Plan B/Studio Canal), *Hampstead* (Ecosse Films/Motion Picture Capital), *The Wedding Date* (Universal).

Awards: The McEuen Rosebowl for Acting for the title role in *Hamlet*, at the Scottish Student Drama Festival.

TATUM SMITH-SPERLING
Elinor

Theatre includes: lead roles in a number of school & Stagecoach productions. Tatum has taken LAMDA exams in acting, verse and prose.

Film: extra work in *Swimming With Men.*

This is Tatum's first professional stage production.

JACK SWIFT
Toby

For Two's Company: *What the Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse). Other theatre includes: *Creation Mystery Play* (St Barnabas Church) and a number of Stagecoach and school plays.

BEATRIX TAYLOR
Elinor

For Two's Company: *What the Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse). Other theatre includes: a Munchkin in the *Wizard of Oz* and acting, singing and dancing in school events. She is also studying LAMDA and voice at Italia Conti.

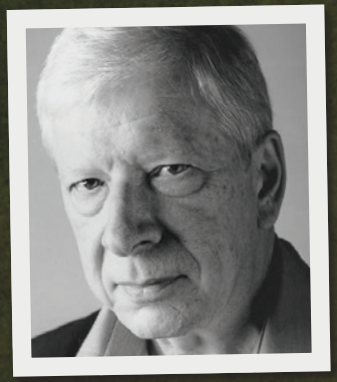
GEORGE TAYLOR
Toby

For Two's Company: *What the Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse). Other theatre includes: Prince Charming and an ugly sister in *Cinderella* in school productions. He attends Italia Conti.

SUSAN TRACY
Laura Anson

Theatre includes: Duchess of York in *Wars of the Roses* (Rose Theatre Kingston), *Variation on a Theme* (Finborough Theatre), A Chorus of Disapproval (Harold Pinter Theatre), Doll Common in *Playhouse Creatures* and Mrs Elton in *The Deep Blue Sea* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Inherit the Wind*, Duchess of York in *Richard II* (Old Vic), Lady Wishfort in *The Way of the World* (Royal Theatre Northampton), Mrs Moore in *A Passage to India* (Lyric, Hammersmith and New York), Evangeline Harcourt in *Anything Goes* (National Theatre and Theatre Royal Drury Lane), Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*, (Cambridge Theatre Company), Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing* (Regent's Park Theatre), Gertrude in *Hamlet* (Sheffield Crucible), Fay in *Loot* (Royal Exchange,. Manchester), *Denial* (Bristol Old Vic), Sophia in *The Old Wives Tale* (Victoria Theatre Stoke-on-Trent), Berinthia in *The Relapse*, Natasha in *Three Sisters*, Emilia in *Othello*, Anna in *Anna Christie*, Mistress Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Royal Shakespeare Company).

Television: *Midsomer Murders, The Cry, Casualty, Doctors, Holby City, The Bill, Poirot, The Jury, Lewis, The Diary of Anne Frank, Three Sisters, The Stars Look Down, Pull the Other One, Born and Bred, Minder.*

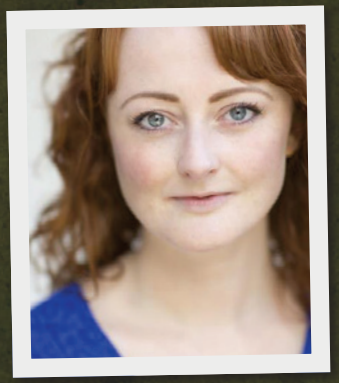


DAVID WHITWORTH
David Anson

For Two's Company: *London Wall* (Finborough Theatre and St James's). Other theatre includes *French Without Tears* (English Touring Theatre and Orange Tree), *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* (Charing Cross Theatre), *Aladdin* (Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bristol Hippodrome), *Sleeping Beauty* (Waterside, Aylesbury), *The Woman in Black* (Gothenburg English Studio Theatre and Stadsteater in Stockholm), *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd, The Thunderbolt, Mary Goes First, A Journey to London, Double Double, Trifles, Sauce for the Goose, King Lear, Magnificence* (Orange Tree), *Pride and Prejudice, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Henry V, As You Like It, The Dark Lady of the Sonnets, Love's Labours Lost* (Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park), *Rigor Mortis* (Finborough), *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (Rose Theatre Kingston), *London Assurance* (National Theatre), *Wuthering Heights* (Birmingham Rep and National Tour), *The Mousetrap* (St Martin's Theatre).

TV: *Alan Titchmarsh Show, The Bill, Nicholas Nickleby, Jasper Carrott, Big Deal, Poldark, Miss Jones and Son, Colditz, Z Cars, Coronation Street, A Family at War, Barlow, Armchair Theatre.*

Film: *Love's Kitchen, Little Dorrit.*



STEPHANIE WILLSON
Miss Mathieson

Trained at the Arts Educational School, London.

Theatre includes: Damsels in Distress trilogy: PC Grace Page in *GamePlan*, Annette Sefton-Wilcox in *FlatSpin* and Dee Jobson in *RolePlay* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *This Happy Breed* (Yvonne Arnaud), *Joking Apart, Pardon Me, Prime Minister* (Theatre Royal, Windsor), *Othello - The Doctor's Tale* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Miracle on 34th Street* (UK No. 1 Tour), *A Hard Rain* (Above The Stag), *Abigail's Party, Wait Until Dark, The Importance of Being Earnest, Boeing Boeing* (three summer weekly Rep Seasons at the Manor Pavilion Theatre), *Whodunnit* and *Stepping Out* (Greenwich Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (UK tour), *Shakespeare for Breakfast* (Edinburgh Festival).

TRICIA THORNS
Director

Tricia began her career as an actress in the West End as part of John Neville's company at the Fortune, after a Classics BA from Nottingham University. As a director, her work includes *The Fifth Column* and *The Cutting of the Cloth* (Southwark Playhouse), her own plays *Breakfast on the Beach* and *Creation* (with casts of 40, St Barnabas Church, Dulwich), *A Hard Rain* (Above the Stag), *London Wall* (Finborough and St James Theatres), *My Real War 1914-?* (Trafalgar Studios and national tour), *The Searcher* (workshop production at Greenwich Theatre), *Red Night* (Finborough Theatre), *What the Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse and revived there in 2014 for the Great War Centenary), *Forgotten Voices from the Great War* (Pleasance London), *Ex* and *Black 'Ell* (Soho Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Dulwich Picture Gallery), *Peer Gynt* (Alleyn's Theatre) and *Passion Play 2000*, a huge community play which she also wrote. As an actress, theatre includes *End of Story* (Chelsea Theatre), *Harry and Me* (Warehouse), *Façade* (Dingley and Dulwich Festivals), *A Kind of Alaska* (Edinburgh, tour and USA), *Time's Up* (Windsor), *The Libertine* and *The Man of Mode* (Royal Court and Out of Joint tour), *Betrayal* (BAC and tour), *Run For Your Wife* (West End) and leading roles in theatres in Salisbury, Ipswich, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Guildford, Derby and many more. Her many television and film appearances include *Dangerfield, A Touch of Frost, Keeping Up Appearances, The Darling Buds of May, The Bill, London's Burning, Captives* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

ALEX MARKER
Set Designer

In his role as Associate Designer for Two's Company Alex has designed all of their productions over the last 12 years: *Red Night* (Finborough Theatre), *My Real War 1914 - ?* (Trafalgar Studios and 2 national tours), *The Searcher* (Greenwich Theatre), Ex (Soho Theatre), *London Wall* (Finborough and transfer to St James Theatre), *What the Women Did, The Cutting of the Cloth* and *The Fifth Column* (Southwark Playhouse).

He is also resident designer at the Finborough Theatre, where he has designed over 40 productions including: *The White Carnation* (and transfer to Jermyn Street), *Dream of the Dog* (and transfer to Trafalgar Studios) and *Plague Over England* (and transfer to the Duchess Theatre). At the Finborough he recently directed the first production for over 60 years of J. B. Priestley's play, *Summer Days Dream*.

Other productions that Alex has designed this year include: *The Firm* (Hampstead Theatre), *Sherlock Holmes and the Crimson Cobbles* (The Theatre Chipping Norton and tour), *Lie With Me* (LAMDA), *Strictly Murder* (National Tour) and *Dead Simple* (The Mill at Sonning).

He is also director of the Questors Youth Theatre in West London.

www.alexmarker.com

EMILY STUART
Costume Designer

Trained at Wimbledon School of Art

For Two's Company: *The Fifth Column, The Cutting of the Cloth, What the Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse), London Wall (Finborough Theatre and

St James Theatre), *Ex* (Soho Theatre).

Other theatre Costume Design includes: *Much Ado about Nothing* (Shakespeare in the Squares), *Robinson Crusoe* and *Robin Hood* (The Theatre, Chipping Norton), *Martine* (Finborough Theatre), *The Blinding Light, The Living Room, Anyone can Whistle, Natural Affection* and *Bloody Poetry* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Shiverman* (Theatre 503), *Antigone* (Southwark Playhouse), *Murder In The Cathedral* (Oxford Playhouse), *Flock* (Northern stage), *Lingua Franca* (Finborough Theatre and E9E59, New York)

Emily has twice won the Off West End award for best costume design: in 2011 for *Anyone Can Whistle* and again in 2016 for *The Cutting of The Cloth*. She was nominated in the same category in 2014 for *Martine*.

Film includes: *Drunken Butterflies* (Rockhopper productions) and *London Wall* (Master Media). She has recently been working on film installations with The Postal Museum and The SS Great Britain (opening 2018).

NEILL BRINKWORTH
Lighting Designer

For Two's Company: *The Fifth Column, The Cutting of the Cloth* (Southwark Playhouse). Other recent Lighting Designs: *Mozart vs Machine* (Mahogany Opera), *The Dark* (Fuel Theatre), *Billy the Kid* (NYMT, Leicester Curve), *Tamburlaine* (Yellow Earth), *Children of Killers* (NT Connections, Olivier Theatre), *The Meeting* (Hampstead Theatre), *In the Night Garden Live* (Minor/BBC), *The Divided Laing* (Arcola Theatre), *Dessa Rose, As Is, Step 9 of 12, Tape* (Trafalgar Studios), Sweat Factory (YMT, Sadlers Wells), *Dido & Aeneas, Jephthe* (English Touring Opera), *The White Feather* (Union Theatre), *Contact.Com* (Park Theatre), *In Lambeth* and *Who do we Think We Are?* (Southwark Playhouse), *Café Chaos, A Square of Sky* (The Kosh), *The Seagull* (Arcola), *An Enemy of the People* (Albany), *Strauss Gala* (Raymond Gubbay), *Bridgetower* (City of London Festival/ETO), *Vincent River* (Old Vic productions), *Antigone, Lysistrata, Prometheus/The Frogs/Agamemnon* (Cambridge Arts Theatre), *Adding Machine, Accolade, Don Juan Comes Back from the War, Fanta Orange* (all Finborough Theatre), *Seven Pomegranate Seeds* (Oxford Playhouse).

As Associate: *Lohengrin* (Warsaw National Opera) *Ludd & Isis* (ROH), *Maria Stuarda* (Opera North), *Lohengrin* (WNO), *Symbionts* (Wayne MCcGregor, Estonia National Ballet)

CANDICE WEAVER
Sound Designer

Candice is a recent graduate of RADA having completed a postgraduate diploma in Sound Design for Theatre, and has previously completed a degree in Music at the University of Westminster. Previous sound designs include the Southwark Playhouse, the Arcola Theatre, and the Edinburgh Fringe, and other work includes various productions at the National Theatre, Secret Cinema, the Royal Opera House, and most recently the Young Vic. Upcoming work includes *Network* and *Pinocchio* in the Lyttelton Theatre.

KARL SYDOW
Producer

New York: NT's *Happy Days* starring Fiona Shaw and directed by Deborah Warner (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *Haunted* by Edna O'Brien; *Terra Haute* by Edmond White; *The Seagull* with Kristin Scott Thomas and Carey Mulligan; *All My Sons* directed by Simon McBurney with Katie Holmes; *American Buffalo* and *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker (six Tony nominations, NY Critics' Award for Best Foreign Play). North America: *Backbeat* (Royal Alexandra, Toronto and Ahmanson, Los Angeles). International Tours: *The Last Confession* with David Suchet, the centennial production of *Under Milk Wood*; and the Out of Joint revival of *Our Country's Good*.

London: *The Fifth Column* with Two's Company; *Backbeat* directed by David Leveaux; *A Dish of Tea with Dr Johnson* directed by Max Stafford-Clark; *Triptych* by Edna O'Brien; *Memory* directed by Terry Hands; *The Line* directed by Mathew Lloyd and *Jenufa* directed by Irina Brown, both written by Timberlake Wertenbaker (Arcola); *Ring Round the Moon* directed by Sean Mathias (Playhouse); *Dirty Dancing* (Piccadilly, Aldwych, UK tour, Germany, France, Australia and Italy); the spectacular multimedia production *Sinatra* at the London Palladium, directed by David Leveaux with choreography by Stephen Mear; *And Then There Were None* with Tara Fitzgerald (Gielgud); the London and Sydney production of *Dance of Death* with Sir Ian McKellen, Frances de la Tour and Owen Teale; Bea Arthur (Savoy); *Auntie and Me* with Alan Davies and Margaret Tyzack (Wyndham's); *Michael Moore, Live!* (Roundhouse); the West End revival of Noël Coward's *Semi-Monde*; Kevin Elyot's *Mouth to Mouth* with Lindsay Duncan and Michael Maloney (Albery); David Mamet's *Speed-the-Plow* with Mark Strong, Patrick Marber and Kimberly Williams; *Drummers* by Simon Bennet and *Some Explicit Polaroids* by Mark Ravenhill – winner of the Evening Standard Award as Most Promising Newcomer, both directed by Max Stafford-Clark for Out of Joint; *Macbeth* with Rufus Sewell (Queen's); *A Swell Party – A Celebration Of Cole Porter* (Vaudeville); Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* (Olivier Award for Best Play); *Hysteria* (Olivier Award for Best Comedy) and an adaptation of Sue Townsend's novel *The Queen and I* which was Out of Joint's inaugural production. Karl continues to serve on the board of Out of Joint, the UK leading producer of new writing for the theatre.

Karl also served as a director of Renaissance Film Company. He continues to act as an independent film producer; projects with David Parfitt, his colleague from Renaissance for Trademark Films, include *A Bunch of Amateurs* by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman featuring Sir Derek Jacobi, Imelda Staunton, Samantha Bond and Burt Reynolds and My Week With Marilyn featuring Michelle Williams, Dame Judi Dench & Kenneth Branagh and beginning principle photography this autumn *Red Joan* featuring Dame Judy Dench.

GRAHAM COWLEY
Producer

Graham has produced all of Two's Company's shows, including his own translation of Véronique Olmi's *End of Story*. Producer for Out of Joint for 15 years and now Associate. Previously with the Theatre of Comedy Company, the Royal Court Theatre (on whose behalf he transferred *Death and the Maiden, Oleanna, Six Degrees of Separation, My Night with Reg* and *The Weir* to the West End), Paines Plough, the Half Moon Theatre, Joint Stock Theatre Group, Greenwich Theatre and the London Palladium. His origins as an actor are hidden in the mists of time.

The 1953 production at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket

N.C. Hunter (1908-1971)

N.C. Hunter was one of the leading playwrights of the 1950s. As the Angry Young Men – John Osborne and the like – exploded around him, Hunter continued to provide moving portraits of a people questioning their own purpose in chaotic post-war England.

Norman Charles Hunter was born in September 1908 in Derbyshire. Originally intending to follow in the footsteps of his father, a decorated Lieutenant Colonel, he went to Sandhurst and in 1930 was commissioned into the Dragoon Guards. Three years later he left the army, determined to make a literary career. He wrote plays, novels and poetry, and found some moderate success. All of his early plays are farcical comedies, and while no masterpieces, they show a writer developing his own themes and his craft. He joined the BBC in 1938 as a writer and producer, but re-joined the army when war broke out in 1939.

After war service in Italy with the Royal Artillery Hunter returned to playwriting in 1947. It was in 1951, with *Waters of the Moon*, that he came to prominence, going on to become one of the most successful and popular playwrights of his day. Hunter's plays caught the mood of a nation shaken by economic insecurity and post-imperial decline, with characters groping for purpose. *Waters of the Moon* depicted English gentility struggling for survival. Helped by star casting – Edith Evans and Sybil Thorndike – the play ran for two years at the Haymarket.

A Day by the Sea opened in 1953 at the same theatre, with a cast packed with theatrical Dames and Knights: Ralph Richardson, Sybil Thorndike, Lewis Casson and Irene Worth. John Gielgud directed and also played the leading part of Julian Anson. (It was during the run that the recently-knighted Gielgud was arrested for "cottaging"). The play was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike and ran for a year.

His next play, *A Touch of the Sun* (1958) starred Michael Redgrave and his daughter Vanessa, in her first West End role. An idealistic schoolmaster defends his ascetic way of life after he and his family are treated to a trip to the south of France by wealthy relatives. Hunter himself lived simply in a farmhouse in North Wales, far from the celebrity life.

The wave of new drama that crashed over London theatre in the late 1950s, championed by the likes of Kenneth Tynan and Bernard Levin, swept aside the kings of the West End, Terence Rattigan, Noel Coward, J.B. Priestley, and N.C. Hunter disappeared along with them.

Hunter continued, though the turbulent sixties, to write a range of thoughtful dramas, including *The Tulip Tree* (1962) and *The Excursion* (1964). He admired several of the younger writers emerging, particularly Tom Stoppard and Joe Orton, and wrote, "In a live and healthy theatre, there should be room for everything: the open stage and the proscenium, the play of commitment and the frivolous farce, Ibsen and Feydeau, and the 'tragical-comical-historical-pastoral'. It should be as varied, surely, as the tastes of the society it reflects are varied." Hunter died on 19 April 1971, aged 62.

N. C. Hunter

In recent years the tide has turned, and Coward's and Rattigan's plays are frequently seen on stages large and small. It is surely time to welcome back such a clear-sighted and compassionate observer of English society as N.C. Hunter.

N.C. Hunter on A Day by the Sea:

"Perhaps it is because I am myself in the forties that it seems to me that the strains and stresses of middle-age are a rewarding subject for the playwright.

"Middle-age – the word suggests the predicament in which many of us find ourselves at forty, with a foot in two worlds, half-way between youth and age, promise and achievement. At forty it is natural to look back and to look forward, to measure progress, to compare past hopes and present realities. And if the comparison brings little comfort, there is always this to remember: it is late, but not too late. There is still time, at forty, to do what is still undone. To succeed, to change one's mind, to shape one's life anew – there is still time, but there is not very much. The mistakes from which one can recover in youth cannot be made now, truths can no longer be evaded, decisions no longer postponed.

"This element of Last Chance gives this age its peculiar urgency, its air of crisis. My play is chiefly about such a crisis in the life of a forty-year-old official in the Foreign Service, and shows how it grows in the mind, how it develops and is resolved. It is a quiet play for, it seems to me, this is often how such crises come and pass – in a garden, on a beach, casually, on a day in summer."

Rehearsal photos
by Jon Bradfield &
Philip Gammon

Simon Donven and Michael Edwards in The Fifth Column

As a protest against the US/UK invasion of Iraq in 2003, **Two's Company** quickly mounted a production of Miles Malleson's ***Black 'Ell*** at Soho Theatre. The play shows a young officer, returning from the front, decorated for bravery but traumatised by his experience and refusing to go back. We felt that this cry of pain and rage written in 1916 expressed better than anything the folly of starting another war.

Lisa Jackson, Peter Symonds, Daniel Weyman in Black 'Ell

This play was the first in a series of what Two's Company became best known for: the rediscovery of plays about the First World War, written during the War or soon after. The first season, ***Forgotten Voices from the Great War*** at Pleasance London, consisted of three short plays, *'D' Company* and *Black 'Ell* by Miles Malleson, and *Brigade Exchange* by Ernst Johannsen. On publication in 1916, Malleson's plays had been denounced in the House of Commons as "a calumny on the British soldier" and all copies were seized by the police. Johannsen had served in the German Army in the War. Written for radio, his play had achieved international success before being banned when the Nazis came to power.

The next in the Forgotten Voices series was ***What The Women Did*** at Southwark Playhouse, another triple bill, featuring *Luck of War* by Gwen John, *Handmaidens of Death* by Herbert Tremaine and *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* by J.M. Barrie. The third episode was ***Red Night*** by James Lansdale Hodson at the Finborough Theatre in 2005, which showed the comradeship and humour, fading to disillusion, of a platoon facing misery and death in the trenches.

Elliott Inglese, Jonathon Wardle, Phil Seeley in Red Night

The last rediscovery was Velona Pilcher's ***The Searcher***, an expressionist play with music by Edmund Rubbra, about Red Cross nurses tasked with finding what had happened to men missing in battle. This was presented as a workshop production as part of Greenwich Theatre's Musical Futures.

The final Forgotten Voices project was ***My Real War 1914-?***, adapted by Tricia Thorns from the letters home of Lt. Havilland le Mesurier, a young officer killed in 1916. It toured twice and played at the Trafalgar Studios in London.

The company departed from its main aim of rediscovering the "new plays of the past" with a new musical play, ***Ex*** by Rob Young with music by Ross Lorraine, at the Soho Theatre in 2011, before returning with ***London Wall*** at the Finborough Theatre. Set in a solicitor's office in 1931 and first produced that year, it shone a light on the lives of women working in offices, the work they did, the money they earned (not much) and the predatory attitude of their male colleagues. It was so well received it transferred to the St James Theatre.

Philip Desmeules in My Real War 1914-?

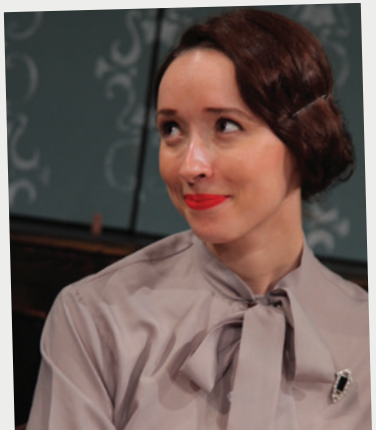
To mark the Great War Centenary there was a revival in 2014 of *What The Women Did* in the new Southwark Playhouse. We returned to Southwark Playhouse with the world premiere of ***The Cutting of the Cloth*** by Michael Hastings. Based on the author's youthful experience as a Savile Row tailor's apprentice, it depicted the eternal struggle between dedication to craft and skill and the pressure to make money.

The most recent production was the English premiere of Ernest Hemingway's only play, ***The Fifth Column***, about journalism and espionage in the Spanish Civil War, written in Madrid in 1936 as shells fell around him.

Earlier productions include ***Betrayal*** by Harold Pinter (BAC and Tour), ***A Kind of Alaska*** by Harold Pinter (Edinburgh Festival and tours of UK and USA), ***Harry and Me*** by Nigel Williams (Warehouse Theatre, Croydon) and ***End of Story*** by Véronique Olmi (Chelsea Theatre).

James El-Shaarawy and Andy de la Tour in The Cutting of the Cloth

Alix Dunmore in London Wall



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Two's Company is grateful to the following for their support for previous productions: Arts Council England, Ambassador Theatre Group, the Britten-Pears Foundation, Ray Cooney, the Feminist Review Trust, the Foyle Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Garrick Charitable Trust, the Golsoncott Foundation, the Manifold Trust, Master Media Ltd, the Mercers' Company, Karl Sydow, the Royal Victoria Hall Foundation, the Sylvia Waddilove Charitable Foundation, Vera Thorns, Unity Theatre Trust.

SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE

'Southwark Playhouse churn out arresting productions at a rate of knots' Time Out

Southwark Playhouse is all about telling stories and inspiring the next generation of storytellers and theatre makers. It aims to facilitate the work of new and emerging theatre practitioners from early in their creative lives to the start of their professional careers.

Through our schools work we aim to introduce local people at a young age to the possibilities of great drama and the benefits of using theatre skills to facilitate learning. Each year we engage with over 5,000 school pupils through free schools performances and long-term in school curriculum support.

Through our participation programmes we aim to work with all members of our local community in a wide ranging array of creative drama projects that aim to promote cohesion, build confidence and encourage a lifelong appreciation of theatre.

Our theatre programme aims to facilitate and showcase the work of some of the UK's best up and coming talent with a focus on reinterpreting classic plays and contemporary plays of note. Our two atmospheric theatre spaces enable us to offer theatre artists and companies the opportunity to present their first fully realised productions. Over the past 24 years we have produced and presented early productions by many aspiring theatre practitioners many of whom are now enjoying flourishing careers.

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The Stage

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