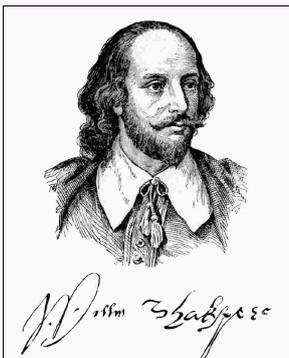


## Fenella Fielding at the Vic-Wells' 12<sup>th</sup> Night Party



Fenella Fielding and Nickolas Grace



### BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!

## Shakespeare Anniversary Party at the Old Vic

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April from 5.00pm to 6.30pm  
in the second circle bar area

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016 is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and the Vic-Wells Association is organising an extra special party to celebrate Shakespeare's life and work. This is an event not to be missed as the historic toast to Shakespeare will be given by a major Shakespearian performer.

Tickets are £7.50 for Members and £10.00 for Non-Members

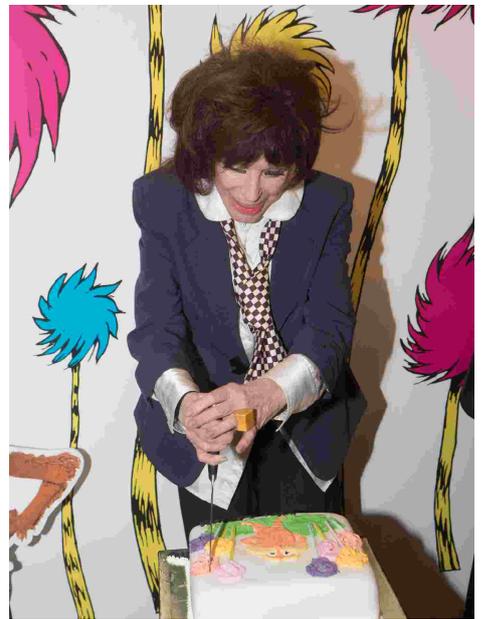
Please write for tickets with your cheque payable to the Vic-Wells Association and a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to:

Ruth Jeays, 185 Honor Oak Road, London SE23 3RP [020 8699 2376]

The seductive, husky voice was instantly recognizable. Yes, Fenella Fielding was the special guest at this year's annual 12<sup>th</sup> Night Party. She was introduced by VW's Vice Chairman, Nickolas Grace, who revealed that he first met Fenella as a 5<sup>th</sup> form schoolboy at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, when he was asked to help out as her dresser. The teenage Nickolas turned up in a blue PVC mac (PVC, he explained, was "all the rage in 1964"). Fenella took one look at him and exclaimed, "Ah! My little boy in blue!" and she still thinks of him that way, apparently.

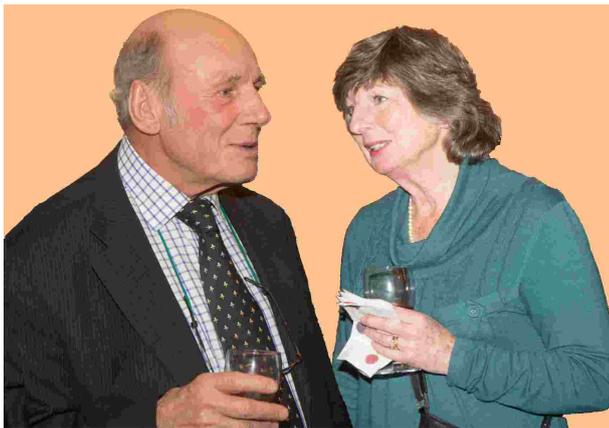
Nickolas went on to say that Fenella is a great, underestimated actress with performances in plays by Ibsen, Shakespeare and Henry James – often overshadowed by her appearances in the Carry On and Doctor films. Her Hedda Gabler, was described by *The Times* as "one of the experiences of a lifetime". She appeared with Kenneth Williams in the comedy revue *Pieces of Eight* written by Harold Pinter and Peter Cook. She also featured with Tony Curtis in the film *Drop Dead Darling*. VW's Chairman Jim Ranger pointed out that he had seen her "extraordinary" performance in the late 1950s as Lady Parvula in *Valmouth*, the Sandy Wilson musical that made her a star.

The party was held in the second circle bar area of the Old Vic, in-between performances of *The Lorax*. And, following in the footsteps of Lilian Baylis and John Gielgud, Fenella cut the magnificent 12th Night cake (a VW's tradition dating back to the 1930's).



Fenella Fielding cuts the cake...

Fenella cut the magnificent 12th Night cake (a VW's tradition dating back to the 1930's). "I like being associated with something that has echoes of Lilian Baylis", said Fenella as she prepared to cut the cake (which was appropriately decorated with a colourful illustration of the Lorax). She reminded guests of yet another of the great Lilian Baylis' prayers to God, "Dear God, send me some good actors – cheap!" Fenella was accompanied by Simon McKay with whom she presents a radio show.



Jim and Meg Ranger



Daphne Self with Alistair Guy

Ruth Jeayes was thanked for organising another successful and well attended party.



VW Members socialise and catch up with their friends



## Shakespeare and *Margaret of Anjou*

Liz Schafer tell us how she and Philippa Kelly have carved out a 'new' Shakespeare play



Does anyone remember Peggy Ashcroft as Margaret of Anjou in *The Wars of the Roses* at Stratford 1963-4, when the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth was being celebrated? Or Helen Mirren in the same role at Stratford 1977-9? I certainly remember being mesmerised by Penny Downie's Margaret in *The Plantagenets* (RSC 1988-90) and Julia Foster's extraordinary performance in the BBC production of Shakespeare's First Tetralogy, directed by Jane Howell. The BBC production really made the point that Margaret outlives most of her enemies and gets what she wants – most of those enemies dead – by closing *Richard III* with Margaret surrounded by corpses, cradling the body of Richard, the man who killed her son and her husband. So it really irritates me when she gets cut from *Richard III*.

Both the Olivier and the McKellen films of *Richard III* leave her out. It's an easy cut to make as Margaret is not a plot driver, but what gets lost is that she is one of the few characters who stands up to Richard. And I think Shakespeare really wanted the 'Margaret Effect' in *Richard III*; that's why he went against history and kept her alive and in England when the historical Margaret died in 1482 in France. Indeed productions of *Richard III* that really exploit the Margaret effect have been memorable. In Sam Mendes' 1993 RSC production starring Simon Russell Beale, Cherry Morris was electrifying, teaching the other women to curse as if she were initiating them into the black arts. I saw the production when Ciaran Hinds was standing in for the

injured Russell Beale and in the small space of the Donmar Warehouse, where the audience were so close to the action, it was spine tingling to see Margaret appear, silently, to listen as each of the victims of her curse, in turn, remembered her prophesying that Richard would be their downfall. And finally, at the battle of Bosworth, when Richard looked as if he might win in hand to hand combat against Richmond/ Henry Tudor, Margaret appeared, haunting him, and willing him to lose the battle.

Across the four Shakespeare plays in which she appears, Margaret is an 'Everest' role on a par with King Lear. She matures from feisty princess to scheming queen, from cold blooded killer to grief-stricken mother, from shameless adulteress to cursing crone. So, for the year that we are commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death, I have worked with the dramaturg at CalShakes, Philippa Kelly, to carve out a 'new' play by Shakespeare, called *Margaret of Anjou*. The words are all by Shakespeare but they are – to adapt the great Eric Morecambe – 'all the right words but not necessarily in the right order'. We have a heroine who is a termagant, who in speech after speech demands, denounces and curses. There is the mourning Margaret, grieving for the execution of her lover as traitor; the Amazonian Margaret leading her troops into battle; the monster taunting her defeated opponent, Richard, Duke of York before stabbing him; the raging crone, whose husband and son have been murdered; she truly is the shrew who refuses to be tamed.

***"She is truly the  
shrew who  
refuses to be  
tamed"***

I think Lilian Baylis would have approved. In 1922-3 the Old Vic became the first theatre in London to stage the first Tetralogy (the Bensons had already done it at Stratford). The plays were directed by Robert Atkins and they were staged primarily so the Old Vic could claim to have staged all Shakespeare's plays by 1923, the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the First Folio. However, Baylis insisted that Shakespeare's unflattering portrait of Joan of Arc be given a makeover.

There was a well received reading of *Margaret of Anjou* in Perth, WA in February 2016 and there will be another on March 8 for International Women's Day at Royal Holloway, University of London.

More information: [historyofemotions.org.au/events/](http://historyofemotions.org.au/events/) or [@MegAnjou](https://twitter.com/MegAnjou)

## Adventurous Traditionalist – Ninette de Valois

Dance Books has announced a re-print of the book *Ninette de Valois, Adventurous Traditionalist* which was first published in 2012 and which quickly went out of print.

Based on a conference held at the Royal Ballet School in 2011, the book contains essays by and interviews with some of de Valois' closest collaborators. The book is accompanied by a 4-hour DVD of interviews, classes, and coaching sessions.

It is co-edited by our incoming Vice-Chairman, Professor Richard Cave. The Vic-Wells Association contributed significantly to the conference on which the book is based by supporting the remarkable performance of Yeats's dance play, *The King of the Great Clock Tower*.



Ninette de Valois in 1931

## Vic-Well's Memorabilia



Oldest Vic-Wells Association member Patricia Payne has given the Association theatre programmes, postcards and signed photographs dating back to the 1930s. We will feature some of these in our next issue.



Have YOU seen a Sadler's Wells or Old Vic show recently?

Do you have an opinion about it?

Please send your review to the Broadsheet Editor

(see back page for details)

## HELP! ASSOCIATION SECRETARY POSITION STILL VACANT

Richard Reavill, Secretary of the Vic-Wells Association shortly retires from the role and a volunteer to undertake the work is urgently required.

It is not an arduous job but does, in the course of each year, require attendance at about five meetings of the Committee and also at the Association's AGM, in order to record notes for minutes of the meetings.

## Isla Blair at our VW's AGM

Report by Liz Schafer



At the AGM in November, Nickolas Grace introduced Isla Blair as the guest speaker. It was particularly apt that Isla was speaking as she and her husband, Julian Glover, have both worked extensively at the Old Vic, particularly for Prospect Theatre Company. I certainly remember Isla from 1978 as Regan in Anthony Quayle's *Lear* and as Lydia Languish in *The Rivals*. Isla had been associated with Prospect since she played Viola for them in 1973 and she has many happy memories of the Old Vic which she said was one of her two favourite theatres; her other favourite theatre is the Wyndhams. What she identified as special about the Old Vic was the sense of heritage and the knowledge that wonderful people had worked there – Lord Olivier might have sat on this loo! She also said that, like Wyndhams, the Old Vic hugs you.

Isla told us about her life at a Scottish boarding school where there were no qualified teachers and she wasn't even taught to read. Her father was a tea planter in Kerala - she was born in Bangalore – and she was sent away to school when she was six and didn't see her parents again until she was nine. When she saw *Kiss Me, Kate* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane her response was 'I'm going to do that' and later on she did indeed play Lilli Vanessi/ Kate at Bristol. As her mother and father had only heard of RADA she auditioned there but her parents insisted she had to get a grant or she wouldn't be able to go. She managed to obtain a grant after auditioning at the age of 16 in white knee socks. She was announced as number 148 in the auditions and was just getting ready to go on when she heard the person in front of her; it was Anthony Hopkins doing Dylan Thomas. What an act to follow! Isla mentioned several inspirational teachers at RADA including Peter Barkworth but she had a miserable first year. She became seventeen only nine days after starting at RADA, and she felt she didn't fit in at all: she sounded middle class, and, she felt, she wore the wrong, unfashionable, clothes. But Peter Barkworth told her to believe in herself, to be brave enough to be still, and not be like the others and not to feel the need to wear the same makeup they were all wearing. However, now she advises young hopefuls not to go straight into actor training when they are only seventeen.

***“Isla had a miserable first year in RADA”***

Isla's first role was Philia in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in 1963 when she was only 19 years old. She was originally cast as the understudy but when the actress playing the role had to leave rehearsals for film work, Isla landed the part. She also gained some notoriety when she appeared topless in the television series *The History Man* as this was the first topless scene on British television. Isla even got an unflattering mention in parliament!

Isla's sense of humour was clearly on display when she explained that she was once asked for an autograph by a fan who had turned up waving a huge photograph; the only problem was the photograph was of Isla St Clair. So Isla Blair signed as 'Isla St Clair' and didn't point out the fan had got the wrong Isla. But my favourite anecdote was about her Scottish grandmother who asked her 'Please promise me you'll always vote - I fought so hard so women could vote'.

## Britcellist Abroad

VW's Member Jane Salemson's travelblog has now been developed into on-line book

Musician and grandmother Jane Salemson has written a truly inspirational travel journal [www.britcellistabroad.weebly.com](http://www.britcellistabroad.weebly.com) in which she describes all the things she got up to last year when she decided, almost out of the blue, to up sticks and take herself off across the world seeking adventure. It details her ten month personal sabbatical which took her from her home in North Carolina to England, Italy and Budapest, using Salisbury as her base.

Jane set out on her travels with a cello, a treble viol, 5 suitcases and an open mind! In the book, she details her long sightseeing treks through Rome and Milan onto Venice by train, back to Rome then onto Budapest by plane interspersed by visits back to her base in Salisbury and to the USA to catch up with the grandchildren. In total she made 14 flight and innumerable bus trips. Her passion for music is threaded throughout the text.



Setting off...



Jane, with the Millstream Orchestra, prepares for a fund-raising concert near Salisbury

She recounts the highs - too many to list - and the lows – occasionally having to endure chilly, student-type accommodation.

She explains how it all started...“With my school teaching days at an end and my grandchildren growing up and getting on with their own lives, I felt under-stimulated. How can that be? Chapel Hill, in North Carolina is a highly-renowned academic town with great opportunities and resources. It was a wonderful place to bring up my family, teach great students, run a music business, play in numerous groups and orchestras, and go to thrilling performances. However, I still felt isolated from the rest of the world, knowing how much more to life there is out there. In June of 2014 I had spent three weeks in Salisbury, a medieval English market town, visiting my cousin who lives nearby. Impressed by the beauty of the area, I wanted to explore it further. Those three weeks gave me a germ of an idea and the impetus to go home and see what I could do to return there in September. I decided to try renting my furnished house for ten months, and two weeks after putting the ad up on [www.sabbaticalhomes.com](http://www.sabbaticalhomes.com), a couple from Oregon signed the lease! Three weeks later I was on the flight to Heathrow...”

Happily the 10 month sabbatical all turned out wonderfully – in part due to Jane's zest for life, her willingness to take risks at a time in life when most people are slowing down – and, it has to be said, a great deal of stamina. Jane says that it was the best gift she could ever have given herself, pointing out, “Travel is the only thing that makes you truly richer!”

In April 2016 Jane's music agency [MusicaMusicians.com](http://MusicaMusicians.com) is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a concert in the gardens of Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA.



Jane's travels took her to Venice, amongst other places.

## News from Sadler's Wells

*Just a taster of what's coming soon*



*She Said*

Photo: Perry Curties

### *Golden Hours (As You Like it)* (8 - 9 March at Sadler's Wells)

Loosely structured around Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the latest radical creation from Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker explores the Bard's play through dance. The rhythms and poetic imagery of the play take on a new life through dance and movement in a delicate balance between formal abstraction and concrete gesture. Choreographing a cast of 11 young performers, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker has developed a distinctive dance which is richly detailed, colourful and energetic. Playing with notions of seduction, attraction, repulsion, misunderstanding and silliness, she conjures a bright but gently ironic world.

### *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty* (24 March - 2 April at The Peacock)

English National Ballet and English National Ballet School return to The Peacock with *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*. With a narrator to help the young audience follow the story, and a shortened version of Tchaikovsky's gorgeous music, this is the perfect introduction to ballet.

### *She Said* (13 - 16 April at Sadler's Wells)

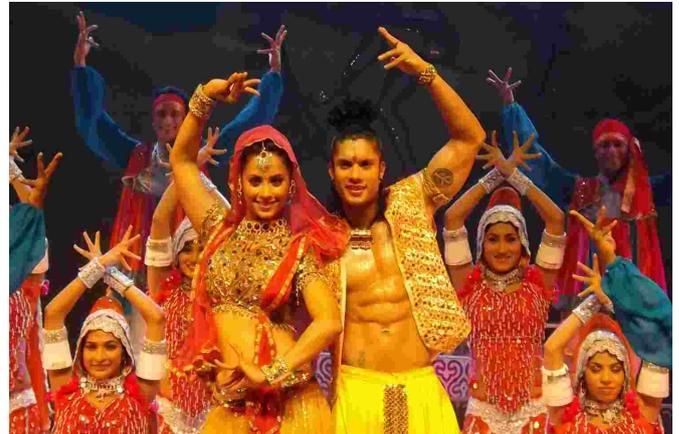
Sadler's Wells Associate Company English National Ballet presents a new triple bill dedicated to choreography by women, featuring three world premieres from world-class choreographers Aszure Barton, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and Yabin Wang. Barton presents a piece set to a score by Mason Bates. Lopez Ochoa, in collaboration with director Nancy Meckler, presents the story of Frida Kahlo. Wang brings the Greek heroine Medea into the realm of classical China, in a piece set to a new score by Jocelyn Pook.

### *1984* (24 - 28 May at Sadler's Wells)

Northern Ballet returns with the critically acclaimed production of *1984*, based on George Orwell's masterpiece. Created by guest choreographer and former Royal Ballet dancer Jonathan Watkins with a new score from Tony-nominated composer Alex Baranowski played live by Northern Ballet Sinfonia, the iconic classic is re-imagined for a modern audience.

### *The Merchants of Bollywood* (24 May - 11 June at The Peacock)

A theatrical dance spectacle boasting a large cast and a vivid array of costumes, *The Merchants of Bollywood* is a riot of colour and dance numbers, choreographed by one of Bollywood's top choreographers, Vaibhavi Merchant. A homage to the world's largest and most prolific film industry, the show is full of musical hits and features a score by the award-winning duo Salim and Sulaiman Merchant. Seen by over two million people worldwide, this "huge blast of fun" (*The Times*) continues to evolve, incorporating tributes to the latest Bollywood blockbusters.



*The Merchants of Bollywood*

### *Wild Card* (26 May at Sadler's Wells, Lilian Baylis Studio)

Dotdotdot dance is a new company formed by three British dancers Magdalena Mannion, Yinka Esi Graves and Noemi Luz, who have fallen in love with flamenco. An evening of stripped-down flamenco with surprises along the way, this evening explores the emblematic figure of the solo flamenco dancer, asking if an entire life's journey can be captured by a dance.

## News from the Old Vic

*by Laura Pryce*



Daniel Mays, Timothy Spall and George Mackay

Following the sell-out success of *The Master Builder*, next will be Harold Pinter's *The Caretaker*, starring Timothy Spall, Daniel Mays and George MacKay. Disturbed handyman Aston has invited an irascible tramp to stay with him at his brother's jumbled London flat. At first it seems that the manipulative guest will take advantage of his vulnerable host. But when Aston's brother Mick arrives, an enigmatic power struggle emerges between the three men that is in equal parts menacing, touching and darkly comic.

We're very excited to welcome dance back to the stage of The Old Vic in May, as one of the UK's most innovative theatre choreographers Drew McOnie re-imagines Robert Louis Stevenson's sinister drama, *Jekyll & Hyde*, in an excitingly physical new dance production with music by Grant Olding. Cast news coming soon.

In other news, our *Old Vic Voices Off* talks and debates around our productions continue with events for *The Master Builder* in February and March. Events include the *Gender Debate* for International Women's Day, chaired by Emily Maitlis with panellists: Shami Chakrabarti, Caroline Criado-Perez, Anne-Marie Imafidon, Jane Duncan, and Kate Jenkins.

# COMING SOON



Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN 0844 871 0090

[www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com)

## Main Theatre

Stills from Sadler's Wells website used with permission

- 14 - 21 March Bartabas - *Golgota*  
29 - 30 March Richard Alston Dance Company - *An Italian in Madrid*  
1 - 2 April The 7 Fingers - *Triptyque*  
7 April National Youth Dance Company / Michael Keegan-Dolan - *In-Nocentes*  
13 - 16 April English National Ballet - *She Said*  
20 - 24 April BalletBoyz® - *Life*  
30 Apr - 1 May Breakin' Convention '16 - *International Festival of Hip Hop Dance Theatre*  
4 - 7 May Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan - *Song of the Wanderers* ❶  
10 - 14 May Rambert - *A Linha Curva and other works* ❷  
17 - 20 May Nederlands Dans Theatre 2 - *Mixed Bill*  
24 - 28 May Northern Ballet - *1984* ❸  
31 May - 1 June Crystal Pite & Jonathon Young - *Betroffenheit*  
7 - 12 June Lucy Carter / Michael Hulls / Nitin Sawhney - *No Body*  
16 - 17 June Alain Platel, Frank Ven Laecke & Steven Prengels - *En avant, marche!* ❹  
20 - 21 June Marie Chouinard - *Double Bill*

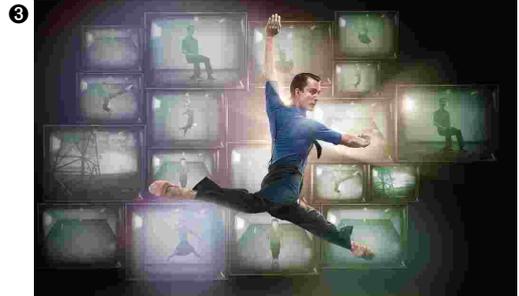
## Lilian Baylis Studio

- 25 - 26 March Sadler's Wells Family Weekend - *Tom Dale Company in partnership with MOKO Dance - Digitopia*  
5 - 6 May Cecilia Lisa Eliceche - *Unison*  
26 May dotdotdot dance - *Wild Card*

## Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, Kingsway, London WC2A 2HT

- 1 - 19 March Immortal Tango  
24 Mar.-2 Apr. English National Ballet and English National Ballet School - *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*  
6 - 9 April Motionhouse - *Broken*  
21 - 24 April London Children's Ballet - *Little Lord Fauntleroy*  
4 - 21 May ZooNation Dance Company - *Into the Hoods: Remixed*  
24 May - 11 June The Merchants of Bollywood ❺



## Old Vic Theatre

Waterloo Road, London SE1 8NB

[www.oldvictheatre.com](http://www.oldvictheatre.com)

0844 871 7628

22 January - 19 March: Ibsen's *The Master Builder*

26 March - 14 May: Pinter's *The Caretaker*

## DON'T FORGET

Now is the time to  
book your tickets for  
our 2016  
Anniversary  
Shakespeare  
Birthday Party



(see front page for details)

## The Vic-Wells Association

*Founded in 1923 by Lilian Baylis CH*

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