

PROSCENIUM

Skylight

By David Hare

Skylight

Wednesday 1st to Saturday 4th May 2019
Compass Theatre, Ickenham

Skylight

The Cast

Kyra Hollis.....Mary-Anne Anaradoh
Edward Sergeant.....Nadir Shah
Tom Sergeant.....Mike Williams

Directed byMark Sutherland
Stage Manager.....Izzie Cartwright
Assistant Stage ManagerAngie Sutherland
Assistant Stage ManagerBen Morris
Assistant Stage ManagerCrystal Anthony
Lighting Design and Operation.....Janet Harrison

The action takes place in a first-floor flat in north-west London

Act 1 Scene 1 - 6.00pm

Act 1 Scene 2 - The same day, a few hours later

Interval (15 minutes)

Act 2 Scene 1 - The following day, 2.30am

Act 2 Scene 2 - 7.00am

Our thanks to Linda Hampson, Jamie Barras,
Pirton Players, East Lane Theatre,
Compass Theatre, Hillingdon Furniture Store

Director's Note

With a cast of just three, the 1995 NT production of *Skylight* was a new departure for David Hare. In an interview for the tour programme in 1996 Hare referred to his recent NT Trilogy (*Racing Demon*, *Murmuring Judges*, and *Absence of War*), which had large casts and complex staging, essential he believed for plays in the Olivier Theatre. Hare described the challenge of moving from this scale to an intimate play: “Normally you shape things by scene ends and by the length of different scenes with different characters, but if you’ve got two people who are together for a long time the only thing that can give the piece discipline is a sense of shape in the subject matter itself. The actors who play *Skylight* always say that it’s like music, and that you have to observe the bar rests, that you have to play the scherzo, and andante as andante. It is written musically.”

The luxury of having a small cast means that we (cast and director) have been able to spend time focusing on this “musicality”. The priority in early rehearsals has been to identify the important moments in the play, where it changes gear, hits high (and low) points, and to understand how these can be used to illustrate what the characters are thinking as well as saying. The physical locations of the actors, their reactions to each other, and their behaviour, in each moment – all these became easier to define as we ran the scenes, and analysed what was really going on in the text. Hare also provides extensive directions in the script, to give his own view of what’s happening. Whilst with some authors these can be seen as a bit dictatorial, in this case they have been very useful as steers to what we then go on to discover for ourselves. The further we worked on the text and staging the more we could confirm what I’ve known since I saw the premiere nearly a quarter century ago – this is a wonderful modern play, packed with important ideas and compelling characters.

I’m confident we will convey all this to our audiences, given the strong cast and crew I have around me. The play has humour, tragedy, and spaghetti bolognese cooked live on stage – what more do you need?

Mark Sutherland, Director

David Hare (1947 –)

Born in 1946 in St Leonards-on-the-Sea, Hastings, East Sussex, David Hare is an English playwright, screenwriter, and theatre and film director. After attending Cambridge, he formed his own troupe called The Portable Theatre Company in 1968. Comprised of other young graduates, The Portable Theatre Company aimed to wake up what they thought was an out-of-touch England with shocking works of theatrical creation. Hare wrote his first play when another writer failed to deliver them a script on time. He quickly became the Resident Dramatist at London's Royal Court Theatre in the early 1970s, and was named Associate Director of the National Theatre in London in the 1980s, where he not only premiered new plays of his own, but directed many others. At the same time he formed his own film company called Greenpoint Films. Since 1970, David Hare has written more than 50 scripts across theatre, film, and television genres.

...His most popular films include 2002's *The Hours* which was based on the novel of the same name by Michael Cunningham. It tells the story of the lives of three women (played by Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep, and Julianne Moore) through three different time periods, who were influenced by Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. Hare's 2008 screenplay for *The Reader*, inspired by the novel by Bernard Schlink, also journeys across time to reveal the devastating love affair between a young man and an older woman in post-war Germany. Hare continues to write for both stage and screen, and just last year (2016) he released his memoir, *The Blue Touch Paper*.

Calgary Theatre Play Guide, 2017

<https://www.theatrecalgary.com/news/2017/2/7/download-play-guide-skylight>

... "I never knew that, I never realised that, I never felt that" is what you hear from the departing audience when their evening has been well spent. Because we think we know, but we don't...

We are living through curious times and they demand curious art – in both senses of the word.

Never take advice from anyone with no investment in the outcome.

*I actually think love changes everything.
I think it is the only thing worth having.*

Hare on Plays

Does it surprise you that you're still writing plays?

I sort of resolved my struggle about theatre. I had a crisis about theatre and about wanting to make my life in theatre.

What caused it?

All the things that you would expect. That it was the like-minded speaking to the like-minded. And that it was an unreal world. That the British theatre was a very small pond. This stuff about crisis and theatre, in my certain memory one of those crises with which we live all the time bubbled up at the end of the 1970s. Just in the theatre at large there was one of those crystalline moments in which everybody says, "This is all going nowhere, this is getting smaller and smaller, it's less and less significant, it's not reaching people, television and film are the mediums that are reaching people." Once the burst of energy that came out of fringe theatre died, which was the mid to late 1970s, then that feeling was very very common in theatre. And that's when Thatcher arrived and all those things. So of course that brought on a sort of philosophical period in which you found yourself asking, first of all having been wrong about a whole lot of political stuff that you had misdiagnosed – crudely, none of us saw Thatcher coming – and then secondly after that, do I want to spend my lifetime in a form which is likely to be less and less central to the culture? To which the answer is a ringing yes. But it took me a long time to decide that is what I want to do with my life.

Has that storm been weathered?

It's more, isn't it, that theatre isn't an end in itself. It's a means to an end. If theatre is an end in itself then you can measure it but if it's a means to an end, meaning it's a form in which we can effectively examine not just why we're here but where we are, then it's still there but it's weakening through its own irrelevance. In other words, if all we do in theatre is put on musicals and reiterate the same ten Shakespeare plays and play the four Chekhov masterpieces endlessly and revive Noel Coward then it will die as it deserves to die. But if on the other hand we can write about now in a way in which the young and the lively still find interesting and important, then it will live as it deserves to live. But the evidence of it wanting or needing to do that is less and less, and that is very dismaying. .. And so a theatre that first asks what kind of society people live in, before asking what kind of people are these, is completely without influence. And so it's hard to think of a

playwright who has been more performed with less influence than me. Of course that makes you wonder...

...Is it no coincidence that your trilogy of plays about love turned up after your second marriage?

I suppose that's true.

Could you have written about love in the same way when you were on your own?

I thought I could but probably I was wrong. And there's no question that ... Michael Gambon used to sit in the dressing room of Skylight and when people came in and said how much they'd enjoyed the play he'd sit there and say, "Yeah, it's his missus, you know. It's all down to his missus." Which I always thought was terribly endearing. Of course it was thanks to her in the sense that my life was changed by her completely, and only for the better, but it combined with a point at which I was exhausted with creating enormous plays for the Olivier stage and almost of necessity in the Olivier it's very hard to create the intimate atmosphere that you need to discuss these subjects. So I was thirsty to write about these things.

Events in your life turned on the tap.

It's certainly true that I'm less embarrassed, because Nicole made me so happy.

TheArtsDesk Q&A; Jasper Rees interviews David Hare

October 10th 2009

<https://theartsdesk.com/theatre/theartsdesk-qa-playwright-david-hare>

Terence Conran's Quaglino's

...From the top of the stairs, it looks as if someone has peeled back the deck of the QE2 and there it is, an entire ship exposed with smart brass fittings; giant Qs everywhere; fat columns, each painted by a different artist (homage to La Coupole); and a soaring fake skylight with hidden lights mimicking day, then dimming to twilight, and on into night.

It's an airplane hangar in a cellar boldly, brilliantly dressed for \$3.75m – an amazing burst of exuberance in a somber economy from designmonger Sir Terence Conran, knighted, then benighted when his \$1.95bn retailing empire soured and his Butler's Wharf dream went into receivership. Now that mythic workaholic drive and perfectionism has focused on feeding...

Gael Greene, *The New York Magazine*, August 2nd 1993

David Hare - Plays

1970	<i>Slag</i>	1998	<i>The Judas Kiss</i>
1972	<i>The Great Exhibition</i>	1998	<i>Via Dolorosa</i>
1973	<i>Brassneck</i> (with Howard Brenton)	2000	<i>My Zinc Bed</i>
1974	<i>Knuckle</i>	2001	<i>Platonov</i> (adapted from Chekhov)
1975	<i>Fanshen</i>	2002	<i>The Breath of Life</i>
1975	<i>Teeth n Smiles</i>	2003	<i>The Permanent Way</i>
1978	<i>Plenty</i>	2004	<i>Stuff Happens</i>
1982	<i>A Map of the World</i>	2006	<i>The Vertical Hour</i>
1985	<i>Pravda</i> (with Howard Brenton)	2008	<i>Gethsemane</i>
1986	<i>The Bay at Nice*</i> and <i>Wrecked Eggs</i>	2009	<i>Berlin</i>
1987	<i>The Knife</i> (with Nick Bicat and Tim Rose Price)	2009	<i>Wall</i>
1988	<i>The Secret Rapture</i>	2009	<i>The Power of Yes</i>
1990	<i>Racing Demon</i>	2011	<i>South Downs</i>
1991	<i>Murmuring Judges</i>	2014	<i>Behind the Beautiful Forevers</i>
1993	<i>The Absence of War</i>	2015	<i>The Seagull</i> (adapted from Chekhov)
1995	<i>Skylight</i>	2015	<i>The Moderate Soprano</i>
1997	<i>Amy's War</i>	2016	<i>The Red Barn</i> (adapted from <i>La Main</i> by Georges Simeon)
1997	<i>Ivanov</i> (adapted from Chekhov)	2018	<i>I'm Not Running</i>
1998	<i>The Blue Room</i>		

* *The Bay at Nice* was performed by Proscenium in 1988, and is the only David Hare play (apart from *Skylight*) that the group has performed.

Our Next Production

The Thrill of Love

By Amanda Whittington

Ruth Ellis confessed to the murder of her lover and, in the 1950s, was the last woman to be hanged in Britain; the result of one day's trial and the attitudes of the times. She offered no defence and appeared emotionless. In this play we discover details of the relationship, the abuse and the hardships of her life that were not made public at the time, or were ignored.

This gripping story has been the subject of a film, articles and documentaries. Ruth's case formed a large part of the outcry that eventually led to the abolition of the death penalty.

Directed by Anne Gerrard

June 26th to 29th 2019

7:45 pm, Compass Theatre, Ickenham
Box Office : 01895 250 615

About Proscenium

Proscenium was founded in 1924. Since then, the aim of this experienced group has been to present classic and contemporary plays to as wide an audience as possible. Since 1990, performances have taken place at the Harrow Arts Centre and, more recently, at the Compass Theatre, Ickenham.

The company meets three times a week in Harrow for rehearsals, so that four plays are presented in each season. Social, fund raising activities and play readings take place throughout the year.

Secretary : Ben Morris

Chair : David Pearson

Contact us at www.proscenium.org.uk