

Jumpers Workpack

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Jumpers
by Tom Stoppard

Further production details:
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Director
David Leveaux

Set Designer
Vicki Mortimer

Costume Designer
Nicky Gillibrand

Lighting Designer
Paule Constable

Music
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Choreographer
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The play

Jumpers

by Tom Stoppard

Hell's bell's and all's well – half the world is at peace with itself, and so is the other half.

Who killed McFee? What's up with Dottie?
Does God exist? Questions, questions and a specially trained tortoise.

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Music	Corin Buckeridge
Choreographer	Aidan Treays
Staff Director	Matt Wilde

Cast	
Jumper	Robert Barton
Jumper	Jean Felix Callens
Jumper	Jonathan Campbell
Jumper	Gary Cross
Dorothy	Essie Davis
Archie	Jonathan Hyde
Jumper	Leo Kay
Swing	Joseph J Leigh
Secretary	Eliza Lumley
Jumper	Karl Magee
Jumper	Dodger Phillips
Crouch	John Rogan
George	Simon Russell Beale
Jumper	Phil Seaman
Jumper	Ashley Stuart
Swing	Supple
Bones	Nicholas Woodeson
Jumper	Lewis Young

The play

Introduction

Tom Stoppard is undoubtedly one of the greatest living playwrights, his catalogue of work having entertained and stimulated audiences for nearly forty years, from his much acclaimed breakthrough in 1966, with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at the Edinburgh Festival, through to the meteoric success of his screenplay *Shakespeare in Love* in 1999, and on to the epic trilogy *The Coast of Utopia* at the National Theatre in 2002.

“Theatre is first and foremost a recreation.”
Tom Stoppard

This comment certainly applies to the energy and zip that leaps out of this play. So let's begin by accepting that *Jumpers* has it all: acrobatics, a trapeze, a striptease, a murder, big dance numbers, a revolve, film and video, singing, satire, a band, fantastic language, nudity, farce, philosophy, one-liners, a mirror ball, verbal and visual gymnastics... In short, it's a theatrical feast of epic proportions. There are many references cited as the starting point

for *Jumpers*, the following lines from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* being one:

Rosencrantz Shouldn't we be doing
 something constructive?
Guildenstern What did you have in mind?...
 A short blunt human
 pyramid?...

Whatever the stimulus may have been, there is no doubt that Stoppard embarked on this project with an intention and ability (the success of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* a few years earlier enabled him to secure a commission from the National Theatre and gain access to the resources of the theatre) to indulge himself in various theatrical forms and ideas.

What he produced wasn't pure comedy or farce but a play that has a beating, desolate heart at its centre that resonates as loud as the laughter at his jokes.

Simon Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl



The play

Synopsis of JUMPERS

The Radical Liberals have secured a momentous victory at the general election and in the luxury Mayfair flat of George and Dotty Moore a triumphant party is held attended by local 'Rad-Lib' celebrities. Dotty, who is a 'prematurely-retired musical-comedy actress', leads the impromptu cabaret by breaking into song. When she 'dries' the entertainment is taken over by someone who later turns out to be George's secretary, performing a raunchy and spontaneous striptease while swinging from the chandelier. Meanwhile, George, a Professor of Moral Philosophy, remains in his study trying to compose his lecture for a forthcoming symposium and even telephones the police using a pseudonym to complain about the noise. The party atmosphere then explodes with the arrival of the Jumpers, a Rad-Lib-yellow-wearing team of amateur gymnasts. They somersault and tumble their way around the ballroom finally assembling an impressive human pyramid. Suddenly one of them is shot dead from the shadows – and the acrobatic structure implodes. Dotty, who has been rapidly losing her self-control, finds herself clutching the bloodied corpse as the guests quickly recede into the shadows; her friend Archie reassuringly tells her to keep the body out of sight – he'll be back in the morning. Dotty is left in her bedroom, naked, with a blood stained ball-gown at her feet and in her arms the dead Jumper, whose name was McFee.

Later, jubilant crowds, an impressive fly-past and a victorious military procession herald the new day as a hastily declared national holiday takes grip on the city, while on the newly conquered moon's surface two British astronauts desperately fight for the single place on their damaged earth-bound space capsule. Dotty achingly watches all these events unfold on her television set.

The arrival for work of the secretary wakes George from his slumber and as he launches into the dictation of his lecture, he remains blissfully unaware of the murder. Mc Fee's corpse is hidden from his view whenever he

enters the bedroom. George rattles off his thoughts on the existence of God, the notion of goodness and the origins of moral values to the attentive secretary whilst attempting to incorporate various attention-grabbing props into his lecture. He produces a bow and arrow, which he misfires into the study cupboard after Dotty yells another concentration-shattering appeal from the bedroom. He then tries to enlist his pets – a tortoise (Pat) and a hare (Thumper), to illustrate a further point but Thumper has escaped from his box and George goes off to search for him.

His journey takes him to the bedroom where Dotty stages a charade for George to guess. Their relationship seems affectionate but she has refused to have sex with him since her mental breakdown (which was triggered by the moon landings). She is, however, repeatedly visited in her bedroom by Archie, who is a distinguished psychiatrist, Vice-Chancellor of George's university and an exponent of Rad-Lib relativism. We later hear that the Rad-Libs have taken over the broadcasting services and appointed their former spokesman on agriculture as the new Archbishop of Canterbury

A police inspector, Bones, arrives. An anonymous phone call has alerted him to the murder, and he has come in person because he is a big fan of Dotty's singing. George believes Bones is merely there because of his own phone call about the noise and amazes Dotty by saying he will take the blame. (While Bones is entranced by Dotty in her bedroom, George returns to his lecture attacking his expected opponent at the symposium, the Professor of Logic, McFee – and thus reminding the audience that McFee was the name of the Jumper shot dead in the first scene.) At the end of Act One, unseen by Bones and George, Archie's Jumpers smuggle the corpse out in a large 'plastic bag', moving in rhythm to a song sung by Dotty.

At the start of Act Two, Bones assures George there is a body in the bedroom, but on entering they find it gone. Instead within the

The play

curtained bed, Archie is applying intimate therapy to Dotty, using a machine which analyses skin sensations. George goes disgustedly back to work on his lecture. Archie introduces himself to the Inspector by his full name: Sir Archibald Jumper. He begins negotiations with Bones to save Dotty from prosecution. Archie is a lawyer and a coroner as well as everything else, and his version will be that McFee shot himself in a public park, where the body was found by a team of amateur gymnasts. Hearing Dotty's cry, Bones withdraws to the bedroom to help her. Meanwhile, Archie slips into George's study and informs him of McFee's death. Returning to the bedroom, he comes upon Bones, in the midst of an exuberant game of charades, blacked-up and in drag. He threatens to disclose what he has seen if Bones fails to co-operate. Bones is then whisked away.

Back in the study George is left bewildered and confused. He attempts to complete his lecture by exploring the mathematical notion of the 'limiting curve', which leads him to dissect the news of McFee's death and the resulting vacancy. He hurries to the bedroom to tackle Archie about it and finds him dining with Dotty, and no sign of Bones. An explosive argument ensues between the married couple and George withdraws to the study, not before Dotty fools him into believing she is in fact eating the still missing Thumper, for lunch. Crouch wanders into the study and George bewails Thumper's demise. Crouch sympathises, but they are at cross-purposes: Crouch believes George is saying that Dotty is eating McFee. Crouch reveals that it was he who telephoned the police about the murder, and finally George learns what has happened. He hurries to the bedroom to confront Dotty and Archie, and is horrified to find them watching pictures of Dotty naked on the TV. This is however, the playback of Dotty's dermatograph examination. George believes Dotty has killed McFee but she refutes the allegation and asks whether George did it. Further baffled, George yet again returns to the study and comes across Crouch reading his lecture and showing himself to be a keen

amateur philosopher. Archie enters the study and entices Crouch into the hall. We learn that Crouch's knowledge is the result of a friendship with Professor McFee. What is more, McFee was having an affair with George's Secretary but was too afraid of her possible reaction to admit he was already married. Crouch also discloses that McFee had been so disgusted by the astronauts fighting on the moon that he had suddenly swung round to a belief in altruism, decided to enter a monastery and revealed all to the Secretary. Now it seems that she is also a murder suspect. Archie insists we shall never know for certain. He invites Crouch to chair the symposium, where Archie himself will take McFee's place.

As his Secretary leaves, George sees blood on her coat and realises it must have come from above his wardrobe. He grabs a chair and explores the top of his cupboard, where he finds his Thumper, impaled on the arrow he himself had accidentally fired earlier. Then, stepping wretchedly down from his chair, he treads on his tortoise and kills that too. The act ends in sobs.

The Coda (tailpiece) is the symposium, in bizarre dream form. Archie's unintelligible speech is awarded scores as if in a gymnastic contest. Then he calls witnesses as if in a court: an astronaut to testify to mankind's 'natural' selfishness; Tarzan of the Apes to show that moral values are 'merely the products of civilisation'; and the new Archbishop of Canterbury – who, to Archie's dismay, turns into a contrary witness, having warmed to his new job, and is briskly shot. Archie's final witness is Dotty, who sings a song of philosophical relativism, where two and two makes only 'roughly' four. George shouts for silence and gives us part of his lecture, claiming that even relativists are intuitionists at heart. But Archie counters this with a speech of total cynicism. The play ends with a sad one-line solo from Dotty, still mourning the violation of the moon.

The play

Farce

Although *Jumpers* isn't an out-and-out farce of the Ayckbourn or Cooney variety it does contain major components of the genre; it is interesting to look at the nature of farce and what its core elements are.

What is Farce?

A good definition of farce is: comedy in which the humour comes from broad satire and the improbable physical situations in which the characters find themselves.

Origins

In fifteenth-century France, actors would fill gaps or pauses in their religious entertainment (the equivalent of medieval Britain's Mystery Plays) with a bit of improvised clowning, hence the name 'farce' which is Old French for 'stuffing'. Elements of farce can be seen in both Molière and Shakespeare, and, by the eighteenth century, writers such as Feydeau were constructing whole plays around farcical situations. Then came Pinero, Ben Travers and the Whitehall farces of John Chapman. The

word farce has come to mean any kind of extravagant comedy, but it is generally assumed to be intellectually inferior to 'regular' comedy, partly because of its often improbable situations and far-fetched coincidences. The catalogue of deaths, both human and animal, through to the breathless dermatographical examinations in *Jumpers* are perfect examples of these outlandish occurrences. But farce is primarily based on flukes and misunderstandings such as these and, when executed with precision and skill, can be as intellectually complex as any other comedic form.

Compromising Exposure

Loss of status is a staple of farce. The more self-important or pompous the character, the broader the farce, so a vicar caught in a compromising position is more farcical than a likable rogue in the same situation. Society encourages people to aspire to high status jobs and attitudes, but if they fall over and are brought low, we find it hilarious.

Modern Farce

Theatrical farce was at its most popular in this country between the wars, but has endured in many forms. The farces of Alan Ayckbourn, Michael Frayn and Ray Cooney still play to packed houses. Farce can be found in many a television sit-com (the very name 'situation comedy' points to this). Look no further than the antics of Rowan Atkinson as Mr. Bean, the surreal comedy of Reeves and Mortimer or Harry Hill, and the physical clowning of Lee Evans. It might be laced with post-modern irony, but Vic and Bob hitting each other over the head with frying pans is still farcical.

The Rules of Farce?

Based on *Life in the Farce Lane* (or *Tragedy with its Trousers Down*) by Brian Rix, writer and director of many major West End farces (André Deutsch, 1995)

1. In the beginning there is THE PLOT. Not necessarily a 'comedy' plot or a 'funny' storyline. Farce needs a tragedy. Farce, more than comedy, is akin to tragedy.



Simon Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl

The play

For example in Cooney's *Run For Your Wife* the 'hero' is a bigamist: this situation in real life is an absolute tragedy for those involved. The play doesn't dwell on the tragedy (a farce is intended to get laughs), but the audience instinctively understands what is at stake.

In his *Out of Order*, a Cabinet Minister's illicit evening in a London hotel is brought to an abrupt halt when he and the young lady discover a dead body in the bedroom. The Government could fall ('one more scandal for the Conservatives etc. etc. '), and so he embarks on a cover-up, which risks both his marriage and his political future.

In real life – as politicians know – this situation brings tragedy. In *Out of Order* it also brings laughter, because the audience knows what's at stake for the characters in the play.

2. THE CHARACTERS must be truthful and recognisable. Again, this is why the audience laughs. The characters are believable – it is the situations that are slightly out of the ordinary; ordinary people who are out of their depth in a predicament which is beyond their control and they are unable to contain – tragedy again.

3. The ability to RE-WRITE is essential. Farces are pure concoctions. They are never exactly right the first time. The original script is comparable to a middle-of-the-range Ford motorcar. By the time it appears on the West End stage it must have acquired the precision, the elegance and the comfort of a Rolls-Royce.

To achieve this, the writer will, initially, have a reading of the first draft of the script to a small invited audience. Then, having learnt if the basic premise holds good and how the various comedic ramifications have amused them, the writer takes the play back to the drawing board.

Huge areas are then restructured, re-written and generally re-shaped before the next step, which is a 'try-out' production often in a regional repertory theatre. Characters may be

added or removed in order to serve the requirements of the play. Once the writer knows, from the initial response, that the basis of the play is sound, no amount of time and effort is spared to get the play right for its regional try-out.

And after the try-out, more re-writing. Every single moment has to work. A West End production is not mounted until the writer knows for sure that the play is as perfect as he can get it to be.

4. CASTING is vital. Because of the laughter this kind of play invokes, it is sometimes thought that 'comedians' serve farce well. Invariably, this is disaster! Farce needs actors and actresses who can play tragedy, but they must also have the technique, the stamina, the precision and the dexterity that farce demands. And, almost above all, they must have generosity of spirit. Farce is teamwork. You can't have selfish actors pulling attention at the wrong moment.

Focus is vital. It all looks so easy when you're in the audience – and so it should – but many an established actor has come unstuck playing farce. There are usually no beautiful, poetic monologues to hide behind. It's mundane language. The characters are not standing centre-stage, spot-lit, intellectualising about their predicament. They're rushing around dealing with it.

5. A major rule is that of REAL TIME. The two hours spent in the theatre by the audience is two hours in the existence of the characters in the play. No fade-outs. No passage of time between Acts 1 and 2. When the curtain rises on the second act the characters are exactly how we left them at the end of Act 1, and the action is continuous.

This imposes huge demands on the playwright. Only one setting and two hours of continuous drama/laughter – but the rewards are worth it. And the conjuror has done everything 'before your very eyes'.

The play

6. Finally, never underestimate the intelligence of THE AUDIENCE. Apparently, several people who first read Ray Cooney's *Run For Your Wife* (including his own wife) said, 'It's very funny but the complications become so convoluted that I had to keep going back to the script to check what was what, who was who and who'd said what to whom.' That, of course, was reading the play. Farces have to be performed, not read.

The audience is always the missing ingredient; this is whom farces are written for. As it turned out, on the whole, the audiences never missed a trick in *Run For Your Wife*. They remembered everything. The audience without a pause takes up moments that are set up in Act 1 and pay off in Act 2.

You have to believe that the audience likes to work. Anybody who has paid upwards of £20 for a ticket, suffered the slings and arrows of British Rail or been reduced to penury by parking in a West End garage, deserves respect. The audience has had the intelligence

to leave their television sets, and the least the playwright can do is set before them the very best that can be mustered. As Alan Ayckbourn says in his book *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*:

"Obvious Rule No. 101: No-one ever set out to do a show with the intention of giving you a bad time."

Essie Davis and Simon
Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl



Interviews (Creative Team)

David Leveaux – Director

What attracted you to directing a new production of Jumpers?

Nicholas Hytner and Tom (Stoppard) both mentioned it to me. Nick was very keen to do it in his first season, and when I looked at it again, I realised I'd not read it for years and I thought it was amazing. I thought it was a play fundamentally about moral relativity; but setting that aside, it's like reading Stoppard's later play, *The Real Thing*, as reconceived by The Wooster Group! I was so hugely impressed that – the thrill and exhilaration of the philosophical process apart – it's a play about a kind of yearning for something more. It explores the idea that there must be something more to life than what is strictly measurable. It's a play that stands up not just for the right of the absolutely reasonable proposition that there may be a God of some kind; it also stands up for it with tremendous weaponry, and I just found that astonishing.

Have you worked with Simon or Essie before? How important was the casting of this piece and did you have an idea of whom you wanted to be your George and Doty?

Working on *Jumpers* now is the first time I've worked with Simon Russell Beale, but what an extraordinary actor he is; so is Essie Davis, who I've also never worked with before. I saw her play Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and I'll never forget a line she has that I'd never noticed before. When Blanche won't leave the house, Stella says, "I'll go with you." Essie had total access to where Williams had written that line from. You could spend your whole life waiting for someone to say that to you. She gave the line that kind of grandeur. She's an extraordinary discovery to me.

Do you agree with the maxim that 95% of directing is in the casting?

There's a very big truth to that, in that if you get the casting wrong, it's an uphill battle. Putting the right combinations of actors together is very important, too. Jonathan Hyde

and Nicholas Woodeson as Archie and Bones, work wonderfully on so many levels: physically, tonally and visually. An actor as skilled and experienced as John Rogan playing Crouch gives you an immense sense of pleasure as those priceless moments he has are taken care of with such aplomb. With *Nine*, which I directed recently at the Donmar and on Broadway, I had 18 women in the company, so the chemistry had to be right between them. Maybe 95% of directing is in the casting – but then there's the other 95%!

What makes Stoppard such a brilliant playwright?

What he writes is so massively layered, yet without being like a lecture or neurotic! I'm not sure that neurosis is the same thing as feeling. Every time you get into a rehearsal room with these things, the clichés start gathering like black crows on the telegraph wires. You have to watch out for them, but if you keep it light and alive, the ambush of feeling is so much greater.

What else does the director have to watch out for?

It's easy to fall over into earnestness and solemnity in the theatre. The further I go on, the less I think that has to do with the theatre. It's better to find a way to walk a wonderful tightrope where you can balance the ridiculous and the rhapsodic. It's one of the hardest things to do, but it means you can make serious points with a lightness of touch. I have a phobia about solemnity. In your early 20s, it's hard to be serious without being solemn. But the older I get, it's a wonderful thing when you can feel it's not a clenched fist holding on any more, but you can relax the fist and just hold it.

Do you prefer directing old plays or new ones? Is it a conscious choice to concentrate mainly on revivals?

Not really. Perhaps I'm naïve about this, but I don't feel it's particularly different to working

Interviews (Creative Team)

on a new play as I did with Pinter's *Moonlight*, where there's absolutely no record of what it's been like or can be like, to working on something like *Jumpers*, where although it's in the repertoire and around in people's minds, the truth is that every time you approach it, it is entirely new to you. It's a high-wire act with a brand-new play, because you're going into new territory. But every time you make a piece of theatre, you're trying to make it an event for the present. Whether it's *The Real Thing* or *Nine*, they come up differently – they're different events. Not because you're reacting against another production, but just because you're doing it the way you see it.

Do you have a favourite line from Jumpers?

My favourites are shifting about at the moment, but one of the ones I love very much is a line of Dotty's: "I won't see him if you like; I'll see you, if you like."

Tom Stoppard – Writer

How did the revival of Jumpers come about?



Simon Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl

Well, Nick Hytner asked me if I'd like it revived with Simon Russell Beale playing George, and of course I was thrilled to bits. I felt there had been too much of me with *The Coast of Utopia* not long gone at the NT, but he told me not to worry about that, so away we went. Nick also suggested that David Leveaux would be the right director for the production, which I was also delighted with as I thought he'd done marvellous work on *The Real Thing*.

What has it been like to revisit a piece written 30 years ago and last presented in the 80s?

I hadn't really thought about or seen *Jumpers* much since the last major production. But it all came back to me very clearly and familiarly. It still appeared to be a clean, modern event of relevance and poignancy. It's great fun and very stimulating revisiting my earlier work, particularly when something different is unearthed or discovered, as it was with this production of *Jumpers*. Incidentally, very little was changed or rewritten from the last performed text. One moment we did introduce was Dotty's TV remote control somehow, unexplainably, opening the wardrobe door to reveal the dead McFee, when she attempted to turn on the TV after George's exit.

How important was the casting of this piece?

The casting is always important and with this production all the company are first rate. As I said, Simon Russell Beale was on board from the beginning, which I was more than happy with. Nick and David were also both keen to cast Essie Davis as Dotty. I didn't know much about Essie apart from her well-received performance in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. But I trusted them both and the results have been fantastic.

You've worked with David Leveaux before (The Real Thing 1997). How does this experience compare?

Once again, thoroughly enjoyable. I love working with David. He's wonderfully acute but without being sharp in his manner; he's gentle

Interviews (Creative Team)

but strong of mind. He also has a great understanding and patience with my work. For example there were a few moments in rehearsal where I found myself uncertain about the way things were going but he encouraged me to wait and see how they developed. Letting some moments 'breathe' and come to fruition was a good voyage of discovery. He has an intuitiveness that isn't often wrong.

You spent quite a lot of time in rehearsals. Why? Is it important to you to be around and do you enjoy it?

Yes, I do like being in rehearsals very much. I think I was at two thirds of these rehearsals, which is quite a lot for a revival I suppose, although I always feel I'm behaving badly by not being there. I like to make myself available as a resource for the director and company. David, as Trevor Nunn was previously on *Utopia*, was very generous about me being there and always encouraged me to interrupt when I felt the urge. It's a question of judgement really and it occasionally feels quite difficult stopping or questioning a moment, but more often than not it's welcomed by all.

What surprises or unexpected elements did you discover during this rehearsal period that maybe hadn't arisen before?

I think more than anything it was the different tone that David and the company found in the play. The part of the play that is about a marriage in trouble, and not just a comedy or gag machine. I felt that this area was never truly represented before and in essence, this production has captured the desolation of being married and the emotional terrain that surrounds Dotty and George. Also, David didn't get too worried about the 'comedy cogs' going around too quickly so the rhythm found its own life.

In essence, what do you think Jumpers is about?

Gosh, it's not a question that's easy to answer but I guess it's the notion of a man trying to

find the answer of how to behave morally and ethically. It's a man who understands the utilitarian argument, who keeps insisting the consciousness of human beings should be paramount. It's about the effort of a man to hold on to an individual sense of morality in conflict with an eternal pragmatism. Put simpler, it's a conflict between sentiment and cynicism.

Do you have a favourite scene or moment in the play?

Oh yes. The 'Plastic Bag' scene. I think it's a terrific 'curtain ender'.

What line or lines in the play really resonate for you?

I think it would be unfair to elevate a single line above any others.

Jumpers is essentially 'a farce with a heart', what ingredients do you need to make a farce successful in performance?

Precision, clarity and faultless timing.

Vicki Mortimer – Designer

What attracted you to design Jumpers?

David Leveaux directing it, having found his production of *The Real Thing* addictive. Also, knowing I was in many ways the completely wrong designer for it. I mean, normally I wouldn't be asked. Only by David!

As designs go, this must have been particularly demanding because of the different elements – video/film, trapeze, flying, revolve and so on. What was the most complicated problem-solving you had to negotiate?

How the rhythm of the play worked, so that transitions could have a developing life of their own as well as deliver the next scene. The rhythm appears rather wayward and anarchic, but it finally is a spiral to the moment of Dotty on the moon. We set ourselves the added task

Interviews (Creative Team)

of really wanting to deliver emptiness at the beginning and the end. A tall order.

What was your starting point for the design?

The cataclysmic consequences of the moon landings, and all the images around the moon, orbits, the collision between the cosmos and the disintegration of intimacy. The poetic, semi-nostalgic tone which the play has accumulated, as well as a surrealism smelling of Orwell.

Have you worked on Stoppard or with David Leveaux before and if so, how does this experience compare to your previous foray?

Yes, on Stoppard's *The Real Thing* at the Donmar – much more a chamber piece, no requirements for show-stopping events, and more a slow twist of the emotional knife. In that production, we played with the idea of shifting domestic realities, Henry's perception not necessarily being reliable.

What surprises or unexpected elements did you discover once rehearsals had begun?

It was simultaneously more fiendishly demanding and simpler as a play. The pitfalls were not where I had thought.

Do you have a particular working 'method' or process?

No. Just working with the same directors as consistently as possible. Perhaps mistakenly, I think this leads to a continuing examination of what we think we are doing with our craft, and how it might be better.

*In essence, what do you think *Jumpers* is about?*

The elusive nature of real connection... between people and peoples.

Do you have a favourite scene or moment in the play?

The first scene in Act Two, visually – it's just a fantastic collection of Tom's visual "grandmother's footsteps": Nick Woodeson in a pinny, pushing a trolley laden with lunch; Simon Russell Beale munching a carrot, be-cardiganed brilliantly by Nicky Gillibrand.... all in front of a wardrobe and a moonscape. How many plays would that be right for?

What do you think makes a farce successful in performance?

I have no idea! Great actors and the right door positions, probably, only one of which we had in *Jumpers* (doors that is!).

Corin Buckeridge – Composer

*What attracted you to *Jumpers*?*

Apart from, obviously, being offered the job, I'd studied *Jumpers* years back for 'A' level, and I remember being swept away by the barking mad world of the play. Also I'd been a fan of Tom Stoppard for a very long time, and was quite fascinated to see exactly how to get music to fit into this world.

*Obviously some of the music in *Jumpers* is predetermined but you are still left with quite a free hand. What was your starting point for the compositions?*

Some of it comes from the context of the predetermined music ('Fly Me to the Moon' for the Radical Liberal *Jumpers*, using a slow version of 'Shine on Harvest Moon' in the first scene change), but as far as the rest goes, it's difficult to say. I normally try to absorb as much as possible from the rehearsal room, the set model and so on. Then I write quite quickly from what I guess is gut instinct, and try to justify it later. I think the idea of George running down endless corridors in this huge revolving flat has a lot to do with the music, but then again, that's justifying after the event.

Jazz is a big part of the musical landscape you've created in this piece. What are the influences?

Interviews (Creative Team)

Because it's set in a very particular environment in the 70s (no disco horns here), I tried to keep the style equally particular. For that reason the jazz influences here are mainly Jacques Loussier, with his jazz versions of Bach, himself a composer largely dedicated to the idea of there being a God, and people like Dave Brubeck: intellectual as opposed to political jazz. Also there's a lot of silly 70s cartoon jazz influences...

Did you choose the band and what instruments you wanted it to consist of? If so, why those particular ones?

We had a budget for three players, and because of the opening scene (and to a lesser extent the coda), it needed to involve piano and drums. We had to choose between sax (which I was keen on at that point) and bass, and (very happily) bass won.

As productions go, this was a particularly demanding piece due to the different elements – video/film, trapeze, flying, revolve. What was



Essie Davis
photo Ivan Kyncl

the most complicated problem solving you had to negotiate?

We had it easy really. The most complicated thing for us was sync-ing up the recorded band with the real band for 'Sentimental Journey' in the coda, but that's hardly rocket science.

Have you worked on Stoppard or with David Leveaux before? If so how does this experience compare?

I've worked on Stoppard plays with Peter Wood as director, mainly on *Arcadia* in Chichester, but also some Indian arrangements of Bernstein for *Indian Ink*. I loved all three productions, but Peter is a very different person from David, and it's rather like comparing yellow and coffee. Peter likes to use theatrical elements that may be at his disposal, so things like underscoring just happen because they can, whereas with David you work with the reality of the moment, trying to reach the beauty of it. I don't think any one way is right, and I really love the different disciplines both aspects of work teach you.

I've worked with David at Chichester (*Cloud 9* and *Thérèse Racquin*) and at the RSC (*'Tis pity She's a Whore*). He knows a lot about music, and although that's not always an advantage, it is with him! He has a knack of getting you to surprise yourself with work, and also of asking exactly the right question.... On *Cloud 9* he asked me if I'd like to do a score without pitch. Then on *Thérèse Racquin* we had a very minimalist sound – one single violin line playing against the sound of a teaspoon tapping against a teacup. We made it into chords for *'Tis Pity*.

What surprises or unexpected elements did you discover once rehearsals had begun?

I hadn't thought there'd be nearly so much music in *Jumpers*. I thought that as the action happens in real time, there'd be no need for any music between the bookends of each act. Then David asked if I could find how to use

Interviews (Creative Team)

music as a door into different scenes, and that, coupled with the visual aspect of the revolve, got it all going.

Do you have a particular working 'method' or process?

Only that I try and polish up whatever I can at home after rehearsals – otherwise it would all sound a complete mess.

*In essence, what do you think *Jumpers* is about?*

Well, it's about a band who live in a ballroom.... I really liked Tom Stoppard's comment on George's argument that decency and honour are universal, but I don't know if that's what it's about.

Essie Davis has quite an amazing vocal range, was this interesting to work with?

It took us a while to decide in which area of Essie's voice Dottie lived. Once we'd done that we worked quite hard on getting Dottie's club act right – so in the beginning, the lines she sings from the songs have somewhere to come from. In that way we could make the 'Blue Moon' section exactly as it was when she was performing. Essie was great to work with because she had such a specific idea of Dottie-ness – rehearsing with her was a bit like having our own private cabaret at 9 o'clock each morning!

Aidan Treays – Choreographer

*How did you get involved with *Jumpers*?*

A good friend put my name forward to choreograph it. Then I met the director and one thing led to another. Before I knew it we were casting and doing auditions. It was an attractive job because I'd never worked at the National Theatre and that was exciting; also because of the challenges that the play represents.

What's your movement/dance/choreographic background and how did you use your

previous experiences in creating this production?

I trained as a classical dancer, then danced in musical theatre for 5 years. Then I learnt circus skills: aerial dance, stilts and fire manipulation. This led me to set up a small company that performed circus theatre – a blend of circus, theatre and dance. I've choreographed for film, theatre, commercials and TV. Along the way I've also learnt a good deal about body awareness and breath.

*Working on *Jumpers* I had to use every bit of experience that I had and then invent some! I think the main experience I drew on was how to create an atmosphere in the rehearsal space that was exciting, productive, hardworking but light. And it's only experience that can teach you that.*

*Some of the 'movement/acrobatics' in *Jumpers* is specified by Tom Stoppard, for instance *The Pyramid*, but the play still leaves a free hand in style and interpretation. What was your starting point for the choreography?*

There were so many different sources of inspiration. Initially it was the text. I read the play and there were certain qualities that I immediately felt needed to be present. Like the *Jumpers*' first entrance: I wanted it to be like an explosion. I get a lot of images that are intuitive and can come from anywhere: a conversation, a gesture, a dream, some get used and some don't. But once you're in the rehearsal studio and there are ten acrobats waiting to be choreographed, they become the inspiration. Also they made a lot of the choreography themselves and I just edited their ideas. I wanted the *Jumpers* to be individuals but also seem like a tight team.

Jazz is a big part of the musical landscape of the piece. Is this genre of music good to work with?

Jazz is great to work with. Corin (the Composer) and myself talked a fair bit during the rehearsal process as to what the music

Interviews (Creative Team)

needed to be. Sometimes he would write something inspired by the movement and then, when I heard what he'd written, the choreography would take another step forward. That process was like jazz in itself. A random free flow of ideas.

Did you choose the Jumpers and if so why those? What kind of troupe were you trying to assemble?

I wanted to assemble a group of Jumpers that didn't seem like top rate gymnasts or well trained dancers. We wanted them to look, as the text implies, like philosophers who were interested in gym, and gymnasts who enjoyed a bit of philosophy. We wanted all different shapes and sizes and interesting personalities. Ultimately I look for people who interest me and seem awake and alive in an audition.

What was the most complicated 'problem solving' you had to negotiate during rehearsals?

One of the most complicated things was, in the opening scene, creating a flow between the dialogue and the choreography. The lines spoken are in direct response to the movement and co-ordinating the two so both choreography and text were fluid was difficult.

Have you worked with Tom Stoppard or David Leveaux before?

No. This whole process was very new for me. I'd never worked on a piece where the text was so central to the choreography. The work I do is normally more abstract and less narrative based. This has been an informative process for me.

Do you have a particular working method or process?

Every production seems to invent its own process. But as a rule I like to ensure that people's bodies are taken care of, that they have a good warm up. On *Jumpers* the first week was spent in sharing skills, some of the

Jumpers knew loads of tricks and we taught each other what we knew. It was a great way to get to know each other as well.

In essence what do think the play is about?

It's about the quest for freedom that's there in the human spirit, and the frailty and struggle of our existence. It's also about love.

Interviews (Performers)

Simon Russell Beale – George

How did you get involved with this project?

Nick Hytner asked me to do *Jumpers* as part of his first season as Director of the National. I couldn't really refuse; George is a wonderful man to play and I had enjoyed my previous experience of working with Tom [on the NT revival of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*] enormously. What I found initially intriguing was that George's journey through the play is both ridiculous and deeply serious – a description of philosophy in general, perhaps.

Had you worked with David Leveaux before?

I had never worked with David before. He's a man with a deeply romantic (or, at least, uncynical) sensibility and a director with an unnerving ability to locate the emotional roots of a play – even one as apparently absurd and virtuosic as *Jumpers*. As with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Tom seemed to enjoy revisiting an early work with a mixture of pride and puzzlement. It was daunting to have him in rehearsal in that we all felt, I'm sure, the need not to disappoint him. I found it difficult to be completely accurate with the script, and since Tom writes with such precise rhythm, accuracy is important. But he himself was unfailingly courteous and gentle.

As productions go this was a particularly demanding piece, what was the most complicated problem-solving you had to negotiate?

Quite simply, the central argument of George's lecture. Not a technical problem like the others in the play, but certainly hard enough.

What was your starting point for 'creating' George?

A series of tiny things – not a colour or a line or an image. Not a single starting point, except the fact that he is a good man. He was like a mosaic, I found, built up slowly. I did do a short DIY course in philosophy.

Do you relate to any parts of George's character?

His need for faith I suppose. And perhaps his inability, ultimately, to find it.

*In essence, what do you think *Jumpers* is about?*

As Tom has said before, it's about a man trying to write a lecture. True enough. It's also about a married couple trying to find or preserve some value in their relationship. Moral philosophy is, after all, a study of how we should live, and it has visible repercussions.

Do you have a favourite scene or moment in the play?

I love the speech about the exchange of signals between two lorry drivers on the old A1. It's when George's lecture finally collapses in on itself and when he speaks from his heart. I'm also very fond of the surprisingly serious scene between Archie and George – the rationalist and the intuitionist.

What line or lines in the play really resonate for you?

"McFee... never put himself at risk by finding mystery in the clockwork."

And:

Atheism is for those "who can't bear the reality of God."

What do you think makes a farce successful in performance?

Really good, working doors. Total innocence.

Essie Davis – Dotty

What attracted you to this project and how did you get involved?

David Leveaux sent me the script while I was playing Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. I found it a hard read and was not attracted to that kind of humour. It felt dated and difficult to comprehend. I then met with David who talked

Interviews (Performers)

about *Jumpers* in a completely different light to the way I had read it and made me re-read it with a fragile beating heart at the centre of the story. By the second and third reads, I felt my blinkered bias had been removed and I saw the play as much more raw, a vibrant exposure of the human soul and behaviour. David's meticulous and intuitive sensitivity was a major reason for saying yes to a project that still held a huge number of terrors and challenges for me.

Have you worked on a Stoppard play or with David Leveaux before?

No I haven't. Yet, it has been the most delightful, funny, caring, challenging, terrifying, roller-coaster of a process, I have ever been through. Both Tom and David have been wonderfully generous and supporting. Tom's words grow on you and into you like Shakespeare. Suddenly, daily, things reach deeper levels inside you.



Simon Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl

This must be a particularly demanding piece for the actress playing Dotty.

Yes, it was very, very demanding. Dotty is so complex and changeable, so fluidly honest, it was and is a huge challenge finding her and her through-line. To deal with personal confrontations such as nudity, singing and dancing, none of which I have tackled in performance before, on top of that, has been extremely hard, concentrated work.

What was your starting point for 'creating' Dotty?

Well I guess I find the deeply emotional honesty easier to grasp personally than the headier more intellectual banter. I work from the guts up and out. ICH!!

What surprises or unexpected elements did you discover once rehearsals had begun?

Surprises came daily but the strangest surprise is the amount of people who keep telling me that they think this is a very sexist play. I don't feel that at all. Dotty is outnumbered by the male characters but she is highly intelligent and emotionally free. She may be a "changeling", representing all male desires for the "perfect woman". But no man, not even the one she loves, can really live up to or carry out what she believes is the *basic* intuition of humanity.

Do you have a particular working 'method' or process?

My personal method is very complex and private but I do surround myself with imagery, music and sensations that I believe my character would have in their lives. My flat is a monument to the moon at the moment!

*In essence, what do you think *Jumpers* is about?*

About trying to find the essence of love in the mundane. It's about each character's search

Interviews (Performers)

for the perfect form of love, of consolation in its simplest, purest form.

Do you have a favourite scene or moment in the play?

I love the bedroom scene with Simon in Act One. It's a non-stop train through fast changing terrain and it's always a different journey.

What line or lines in the play really resonate for you?

"I won't see him any more if you like. I'll see you. If you like."

Dodger Phillips – Jumper

How did you get involved with this project?

I've long been a fan of Tom Stoppard's work and relished the opportunity to get involved in such a theatrically challenging piece. Also, the chance of working at the National Theatre is not to be sniffed at.

What's your 'movement/dance/choreographic' background and how did you use your previous experience in working on this production?

My training has been pretty eclectic, ranging from mime to martial arts, from tightrope walking and trapeze to traditional story-telling, stand-up comedy to Commedia del arte. And which of these skills came in handy during the process of getting the production on the stage? All of them and more. General life experience, an interest in politics and a smattering of philosophy ("It's just a hobby with me") was helpful. Most of all, the amazing cast and crew were a constant fountain of ideas. My fellow Jumpers include such a wealth of experience, skill and joy, it was more a question of paring the movement down to size. We could have gone on for hours.

Some of the 'movement/acrobatics' in *Jumpers* is specified by Stoppard, but the play

still leaves you a free hand in style and interpretation. How did you use this?

When I read the play, the Jumpers came across as Sir Archie's personal paramilitary force. The precision of a military operation and the exacting nature of acrobatics and acrobatics seemed to give us loads to play with. Jazz is a vital part of the story and working with live musicians is a real thrill. It's easy to find energy when you're being driven on by such a great soundscape.

What was the most complicated problem solving you had to negotiate?

As with every production, personal safety has to be of paramount importance. We try to cover every eventuality in order that we can reproduce the same level of performance each night. Having spent some weeks putting together routines for the show, we then tried them on the revolve and had to do some major re-working. Still, I'm pleased with what came out of it. Necessity being the mother of invention.

Have you worked on Stoppard or with David Leveaux before?

This was my first chance to work on a Tom Stoppard play and it was very helpful to have him there during rehearsals to provide guidance and encouragement. It was also my first time watching David Leveaux do his stuff. Often times, directors will demonstrate what it is they want to see or hear. David would provide a question or philosophical conundrum and then allow the actors themselves to find something to spring off from there. Much of good theatre direction involves the misdirection of the audience's attention while organising the next image. This being as complex a play as it is, means that the logistics involved were mind-blowing. So hats off!

Do you have a particular working 'method' or process?

Interviews (Performers)

I can't say that I favour any specific "method" when approaching work. Mostly I just read the play again and again looking for clues and then if something I'm doing isn't telling the story, I cut it. Or I push it as far as I can until the director says "Dodger... That's far enough."

In essence, what do you think Jumpers is about?

For me, *Jumpers* is a story about the questions. And, happily, Tom Stoppard gives us no answers. At the end we are none the wiser as to who killed McFee, whether Doty is being unfaithful or whether "God, so to speak," exists. We are better informed as to how to go about pursuing these questions and I am sure the audience will continue to wonder long after the curtain has fallen. I know I shall.

Do you have a favourite scene or moment in the play?

George's scene which begins "How does one know what to believe?" on through the "Dip flash, Dip flash" of the headlights of long distance lorry drivers, to the section on the concept of a limiting curve. The whole speech is so full of compassion and faith in humanity. There is room in the world for sentiments like that.

Essie Davis
photo Ivan Kyncl



Interviews

Conversations with the company – Favourite lines

David Leveaux (Director):

My favourites are shifting about at the moment, but one of the ones I love very much is:

Dotty I won't see him anymore if you like; I'll see you, if you like.

Jonathan Hyde (Archie):

George ...in that Dip flash dip flash on a god awful night on the old A1...

Nicholas Woodeson (Bones):

George I'm not at all sure that the God of Religious Observance is the object of my faith.

Dodger Philips (Jumper):

I think I'll stick with the "limiting curve" speech from George. I'm an optimistic idealist at heart.

John Rogan (Crouch):

Archie ...millions of children grow up without suffering depravation, and millions while deprived, grow up without suffering cruelties, and millions, while deprived and cruelly treated, none the less grow up...

Eliza Lumley (Secretary):

George The fact that I cut a ludicrous figure in the academic world is largely due to my aptitude for reducing a complex and logical thesis to a mysticism of staggering banality.

Simon Russell Beale (George):

George McFee...never put himself at risk by finding mystery in the clockwork.

and

Archie Atheism is a crutch for those who can't bear the reality of God.

Essie Davis (Dotty):

Dotty I won't see him anymore if you like, I'll see you if you like.

Corin Buckeridge (Composer):

I found it quite interesting during the previews that I was still laughing afresh each night, whereas on other shows, while still finding them funny, I'd only be smiling. Also Simon Russell Beale got me crying each time he did his final speech in the coda. "The stained glass in what is now the Gymnasium" always gets me, but the whole play is so funny, and equally so moving – I sound like a joke vicar!

Aidan Treays (Choreographer)

George Goodness.....is a sense of comparisons being in order. Full stop.

Interviews

Conversations with the company – Favourite scene or moment?

Jonathan Hyde: Archie trying to 'buy off' Inspector Bones.

Dodger Philips: George's scene which begins "How does one know what to believe?" going on through the "Dip flash, Dip flash" of the headlights of long distance lorry drivers, to the section on the concept of a limiting curve. The whole speech is so full of compassion and faith in humanity. There is room in the world for sentiments like that.

Nicholas Woodeson: Opening of Act 2 when Bones and George are momentarily spellbound by the lingering sound of Dotty singing and discuss the merits of stardom.

John Rogan: Bones and George – Opening of Act 2.

Eliza Lumley: Listening to George's cassettes of Beethoven, elephant and fire escape.

Essie Davis: I love the big scene with Dotty and George in the bedroom in Act 1. It's a non-stop train through fast changing terrain and it's always a different journey.

Corin Buckeridge: Obviously the tortoise, and I really like the way the scene changes out of the party at the beginning. I also love the image of Dottie sitting at the window

Aidan Treays: I love the change from Act 2 into the coda. The Jumpers do some flips while George weeps over Pat and Thumper and we can hear his sobs. I find it simple and touching.

If your character had to write an ad for a 'Lonely Hearts' column, what would it say?

Eliza Lumley: "Young, hard working PhD student seeks attractive older man for high jinks and passionate philosophical debate. Good listener essential."

John Rogan: "Young at heart moral relativist with beautiful singing voice wants to fly you to the moon and play among the stars!!!"

Jonathan Hyde: "Come jump with me, let's jump, let's jump away."

Nicholas Woodeson: "Sick and tired of Kansas, Neasden or Walsall? Do you crave glamour? Come with me along the Yellow Brick Road, Over the Rainbow and live in the Land of Oz. Me – worldly wise, good things in a small package – You?"

Practical exercises

1. Come up with a situation that would be considered farcical. It may involve the traditional elements of farce such as mistaken identity, accidental violence, or people found in compromising positions. You could take these ideas a step further and dramatise the situation in a short scene. To make it harder, see if you can avoid including a policeman or a dead body. How can you make the genre your own?

2. Farce is often about the style of playing as much as the actual lines the characters speak. Have a look at the first entrance of Inspector Bones and the ensuing dialogue with George. Try delivering this exchange as if it was from a serious play, and see how it sounds. What happens? Now try it with the more exaggerated but quick acting style that farce requires. Every line should sound as if it has an exclamation mark after it. How different can you make them sound?

3. The bulk of George's lines are monologues as he spends much of the play 'practising' his lecture. He is attempting to convince the symposium of the existence of God. He takes us through several stories, examples and demonstrations. Find a subject, topic, argument or premise that you could prepare and attempt to convince the rest of the group of its validity or worth. What skills do you need to employ to engage and connect with an 'audience'?

For discussion

1. *Jumpers* is often referred to as a 'Farce with a heart'. What does this mean?

make you feel? Did it force you to re-evaluate something? Did it change your attitude?

2. Farce versus comedy. What do you think sets farce apart from comedy and makes it a separate genre? Perhaps you don't agree that they are separate? Is farce merely a style of language and performance, or can it be defined by the story or situation it depicts. Think of examples of plays that are considered farces, and discuss whether they are structured differently or use different scenarios from other comedies.

3. Bearing in mind the examples of Mr. Bean and Reeves and Mortimer mentioned earlier, how many other elements of farce could you think of from modern comic writers and performers. Do they rely heavily on farcical situations, as Buster Keaton did, or do writers these days mix different styles within their work? Try *Blackadder*, *Smack the Pony* or *The Fast Show* as starting points, or funny theatre shows you may have seen recently. And as an extension to the above discussion: Do you think farce as a genre can still be considered relevant in the twenty-first century. Do you think it looks at basic human absurdities in a way we will always laugh at? Is the metaphorical banana skin as funny as it ever was, or will writers and performers be forced to find other things to make us laugh?

4. *Jumpers* is full of theological and philosophical debates. Although they may appear complex their basic premise is quite simple. Pick a proposition from those listed below or select one of your own and attempt to discuss your thoughts on the topic.

- Man – Good, Bad or Indifferent?
- The existence of God. Does he exist?
- What is goodness?
- How do we know that we know anything?

5. Dotty is deeply affected by the moon-landings. They upset all notions she had about existence, faith and romance. Think of an event, incident, article, book, film etc...that has had a profound effect upon you. How did it

Written work & research

1. George catastrophically confuses two of Zeno's paradoxes with a fable of Aesop. Find out what the real paradoxes were and which of Aesop's fables he's mixed them with.

2. The character of Bones is often referred to as being 'Orton-esque'. Meaning that he's very similar, or a tribute to the policemen Joe Orton creates in his plays. Find some evidence of this in Orton's plays and pinpoint the characteristics that are similar.

3. The subject of the Moon is very prevalent in *Jumpers*. Look at Stoppard's other work such as his novel *Lord Malquist And Mr. Moon*, his piece for television *Another Moon Called Earth* and his radio play *M Is For Moon Among Other Things*.

4. In a heart-wrenching speech, Dotty bewails the demise of the moon in poetry citing Keats, Shelley and Milton. Find out which poems she is referring to and read them.

5. There are several references to other dramatists and writers in the play, some obvious and some more ambiguous. See if you can find them in the text and discover what their relevance is. (Helping hand: Shakespeare is one and Beckett is another.)

Simon Russell Beale
photo Ivan Kyncl



Tom Stoppard – A Biography

Tom Stoppard wrote his first play ENTER A FREE MAN, while working as a journalist in Bristol. He continued as a freelance journalist, at the same time writing radio plays, a novel, (LORD MALQUIST AND MR. MOON), and the first of his plays to be staged, ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD. His subsequent plays include THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND, AFTER MAGRITTE, JUMPERS, TRAVESTIES, EVERY GOOD BOY DESERVES FAVOUR (a play for actors and orchestra written with Andre Previn), NIGHT AND DAY, THE REAL THING, HAPGOOD, ARCADIA, THE INVENTION OF LOVE, and the trilogy, THE COAST OF UTOPIA..

For Ed Berman's Company, he wrote DOGG'S OUR PETT, DIRTY LINEN and NEW-FOUND-LAND, DOGG'S HAMLET and CAHOOT'S MACBETH. He adapted TANGO (Mrozek) for the R.S.C., UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY (Schnitzler), ON THE RAZZLE (Nestroy), ROUGH CROSSING (Molnar) and DALLIANCE (Schnitzler) for the Royal National Theatre. His other adaptations include Lorca's HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA, Vaclav Havel's LARGO DESOLATO, and Chekhov's THE SEAGULL.

His radio plays include IF YOU'RE GLAD, I'LL BE FRANK, ALBERT'S BRIDGE (Italia Prize Winner), M IS FOR MOON AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE DISSOLUTION OF DOMINIC BOOT, WHERE ARE THEY NOW?, ARTIST DESCENDING A STAIRCASE, THE DOG IT WAS THAT DIED and IN THE NATIVE STATE, and for television he adapted A WALK ON THE WATER (from ENTER A FREE MAN), THREE MEN IN A BOAT and THE DOG IT WAS THAT DIED and wrote ANOTHER MOON CALLED EARTH, A SEPARATE PEACE, NEUTRAL GROUND, TEETH, PROFESSIONAL FOUL, which won awards from BAFTA and the Broadcasting Press Guild, and SQUARING THE CIRCLE. He adapted his television dramatisation of Jerome K Jerome's THREE MEN IN A BOAT for BBC Radio. Quite a few of these radio plays have been adapted and performed on stage, notably ALBERT'S BRIDGE and ARTIST DESCENDING A STAIRCASE.

His Evening Standard Award-winning plays are ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, JUMPERS, TRAVESTIES, NIGHT AND DAY, THE REAL THING, ARCADIA and THE INVENTION OF LOVE. ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, TRAVESTIES and THE REAL THING have also won Tony Awards. ARCADIA won the 1995 New York Drama Critics' Circle Award.

Tom Stoppard has written screenplays for DESPAIR, THE ROMANTIC ENGLISHWOMAN, THE HUMAN FACTOR, BRAZIL, EMPIRE OF THE SUN, THE RUSSIA HOUSE, BILLY BATHGATE and SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE, which won an Academy Award for best original screenplay, a Golden Globe, and the Broadcast Film Critics and American Guild Awards for Best Screenplay; and a screenplay adaptation of Raymond Chandler's POODLE SPRINGS.

He directed and wrote the screenplay for the film of ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD which won the Prix d'Or at the Venice Film Festival 1990 for Best Film.

His most recent play THE COAST OF UTOPIA, consisting of three plays – SHIPWRECK, VOYAGE and SALVAGE – premiered at the National Theatre in London in June 2002.

Tom Stoppard is a CBE, was knighted in 1997, and made a member of the Order of Merit in 2000. He was honoured by the French Government in 1997 when he was made an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Further reading

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Katherine E. Kelly (Editor)
Cambridge University Press; ISBN:
0521645921

*Faber Critical Guides: Tom Stoppard:
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are
Dead/Jumpers/Travesties/Arcadia*
Jim Hunter
Faber and Faber; ISBN: 0571197825

Jumpers Tom Stoppard
Faber and Faber; ISBN: 0571145698

*Tom Stoppard: "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Are Dead", "Jumpers" and "Travesties": A
Selection of Critical Essays (Casebooks Series)*
T. Bareham (Editor)
Palgrave Macmillan; ISBN: 0333423860

*The Plays of Tom Stoppard (Readers' Guides
to Essential Criticism)*
Terry Hodgson (Editor)
Palgrave Macmillan; ISBN: 1840462418

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