

# Coming Soon

at Hampton Hill Playhouse

## Love and Understanding

By Joe Penhall

Three into two goes bad

Sun 16 Jun 2013 to Sat 22 Jun 2013

Coward Studio

## Tons of Money

By Will Evans & Arthur Valentine

Adapted by Alan Ayckbourn

Tons of money makes tons of fun

Sun 30 Jun 2013 to Sat 6 Jul 2013

Main Auditorium



To enjoy good theatre locally, join TTC today by calling the  
Membership line: 020 8287 2663

Postal bookings are accepted on publication of the booking form.  
Telephone enquiries open 2 weeks before each production.  
Call: 0845 838 7529 (10am - 8pm)

For up-to-date information on TTC and the Playhouse check our website  
[www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)

Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. It is easy to join as an audience member, or as a full performing and technical member. Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

All are encouraged to help with the Front of House, Bar and Marketing activities of the Club and Playhouse. To find out more please call our Membership Secretary on 020 8287 2663 or complete one of the forms you will find in the Foyer.



TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION  
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CASAROTTO RAMSAY & ASSOCIATES LIMITED

## Pravda A Fleet Street Comedy by Howard Brenton & David Hare

Sun 19 May to Sat 25 May 2013

£1.50

Hampton Hill Playhouse

Looking for a reception venue?

### **The Coward Suite** at the Hampton Hill Playhouse

- Competitive rates
- Superbly appointed rooms
- Air conditioned
- Dedicated Duty Manager to look after you
- Lift accessible
- Optional bar facilities
- Ample space for your catering
- Flexible layouts
- Disabled toilet and nappy changing facilities

Why not call us on 07957 307370  
or email [hires@teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](mailto: hires@teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)



90 High Street  
Hampton Hill  
TW12 1NZ

[www.hamptonhillplayhouse.org.uk](http://www.hamptonhillplayhouse.org.uk)



## Teddington Theatre Club Ltd

President **Tony Eva**

Vice-Presidents **Joann Fuller and David Cornwell**

Patrons **Hayley Mills, Prunella Scales CBE, Timothy West CBE**

### **Board of Directors / Trustees**

Chairman **Clare Henderson-Roe**

Operations Director **Barry MacDonald**

Finance Director **Brian Brignall**

Artistic Director **Michelle Hood**

Premises and Equipment Director **Ken Mason**

Sales and Marketing Director **Gerry McCarthy**

Director **Susan Conte**

Director **Dawn Lacey**

Company Secretary **Sue Bell**

Company Registration Number 939448

Registered Charity Number 257265

### **Other Members of the Team**

Membership Secretary **Robin Legard**

Chairman of the Wine Committee **Adrian Limerick**

Production Accountant **Ann Beauchamp**

Backstage and Technical Chairman **Gary Stevenson**

Front of House Manager **Rosemary Brett**

Magazine Editors **Barry Hill and Gerry McCarthy**

Box Office Manager **Roberta Garcka**

Teddington Theatre Club acknowledges with grateful thanks the practical and financial support given by local residents, businesses and community groups.



Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain, and to **artsrichmond**.

This production is entered for the **artsrichmond** Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.

Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.

All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or video recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.

An induction loop system is installed in the Main Auditorium to assist those who use hearing aids with the relevant setting.

Wheelchair positions are available in both the Stalls and the Balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.

TTC Ltd, as managers of the Playhouse, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

## **Susan Conte**

### **Director**

After a career touring on the fringe and TIE circuits followed by film production with C4, Susan was delighted to join TTC where she played Nurse Mary Kennedy in *Mary Stuart* and Helen Irving in *We Happy Few*. Susan won a Swan Award in 2009 for designing her own production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for BCP and for TTC directed *A Doll's House* in the Coward Studio in 2010.

There have been other productions with other companies and in 2012 both of her actresses in *Vita & Virginia*, a two hander, won Best Leading Actress Swan Awards for RSS.

*Pravda* has been a pleasure with an extremely generous cast and a fabulous production team.

## **Helen Smith**

### **Assistant Director**

Helen has been involved in amateur dramatics for many years and is experienced in all areas of stage work, from costumes and set design to stage crew and directing. She has directed both plays and musicals. These include a selection of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and more modern pieces such as the *The Baker's Wife*.

Her first love is acting and she has a collection of nomination certificates for 'Best Actress' including 'Sister George' in *The Killing of Sister George* and Martha Livingston in *Agnes of God*. She has enjoyed watching *Pravda* take shape.

# **Pravda**

## **A Fleet Street Comedy**

# **by Howard Brenton and David Hare**

**First presented at The National Theatre on 2 May 1985. This revised version of Pravda was first presented at the National Theatre on 2 May 1986.**

## **The time: 1986**

### **Various locations**

- 1. A Leicestershire country garden**
- 2. The Editor's office at The Leicester Bystander**
- 3. The Frankfurter Exhibitionhalle**
- 4. The Members' room at the Irving Club**
- 5. The newsroom of The Daily Victory**

### **Interval**

- 6. The newsroom of The Daily Victory**
- 7. A house in Weybridge**
- 8. A dog-track in Lancashire**
- 9. The Yorkshire Moors**
- 10. The newsroom of The Daily Tide**

**This is an amateur production.**

# Cast in order of appearance

Rebecca Foley

Andrew May  
News Vendor /Journalist

News Vendor /Dennis Payne, Cricket Captain /  
Journalist/Bingo Winner

Cindy/Reporter/Vendor/Show Hostess  
Reporter/Journalist/ News Vendor  
Reporter/Compositor/ Journalist/Vendor

Harry Morrison, Editor of The Leicester Bystander/  
Ian Ape-Warden/Cartoonist

Hamish McLennan/Doug Phantom/  
Commentary at Dog Track/Night Editor

Bill Smiley, Journalist & Friend to Andrew  
Punk/Lorraine Punt, a Young Journalist  
Moira Paterson, Owner of Health Food Shop/ Reporter

Sir Stamford Foley, Owner of The Leicester Bystander/  
Bishop of Putney/Cliveden Whicker-Baskett/Bert

Lambert Le Roux, South African Press Baron  
Michael Quince MP  
Sylvia Eaton, Australian Business Manager  
Elliot Fruit-Norton, Editor of The Victory  
Ben Silk/Breaker Bond/Hannon Spot  
Waiter in the Irving Club  
Leonora Scroop/Donna Le Roux /Show Hostess  
Princess Jill  
Dancers in The Daily Tide Commercial

**Katie Barton**

**Patrick Oldham**  
**Elizabeth Chambers**

**Greg Nicoll**

**Gina Way**  
**Sally Cadle**  
**Chris Hodges**

**Jon Coop**

**Bill Compton**

**Paul Lawston**  
**Harri Osborne**  
**Lyn Randall**

**John Bellamy**

**Keith Wait**  
**Robin Legard**  
**Lizzie Lattimore**  
**Barry MacDonald**  
**Jeremy Gill**  
**Ken Mason**  
**Jenny Hull**  
**Michelle Hood**  
**Rebecca Willson**  
**Maria Coleshill**  
**Pippa Coleshill**  
**Katy Clark**

he has appeared in *Henry VIII*. Many other theatre appearances have been for Westminster Players and Putney Arts Theatre. Barry has also worked for Kent Opera, London City Ballet and Rocket Radio FM.

## **Jeremy Gill**

**Ben Silk/Breaker Bond/Hannon Spot**  
Jeremy Gill has been acting for seven years and this is his 20th production for TTC. Recently he has been Rene in *'Allo 'Allo*, William in *The Boy On The Swing* and Major Flack in *Privates on Parade* (stand by your beds!) He has also performed for St Mary's Drama Group, most recently in *A Woman Of No Importance* playing Lord Illingworth and for OHADS, Tony Hancock being his most recent role for them.

## **Kenneth Mason**

**Waiter in the Irving Club**  
Ken joined TTC in 1976 and has acted, directed, been a trainer on drama skills workshops, stage managed, designed lighting and sound and enjoys working on the bar! He has been chairman of the artistic committee and was TTC chairman during the transition from Hampton Court House to Hampton Hill Playhouse. He has edited Theatre and Theatre Stage Door, the Club magazines. He has acted in various productions, adapted and directed *A Christmas Carol*, with original music and lyrics by Will Williams. Co-wrote and directed a pantomime, *The Diamond Princess*.

## **Jenny Hull**

**Leonora Scroop/Donna Le Roux/  
Show Hostess**

Jenny has never worked in print journalism but she is used to the cut and thrust of the news room having worked for both BBC and ITV news as a reporter/presenter. This is the second show she has taken part in at the Hampton Hill Playhouse, the first playing Yvette in a very well attended production of *'Allo 'Allo*.

## **Michelle Hood**

**Princess Jill**

Michelle has been a member of TTC for over 20 years. She is active both as a director (*Wizard of Oz*, *After Mrs Rochester*, *We Happy Few* and *The Secret Garden*) and as an actor (*Voyage Round my Father*, *Albert Nobbs*, *Seal Wife* and *Women of Troy*). Her most recent role was being a wardrobe in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* and she was also stage manager for *Rat in the Skull*. Michelle is also TTC's Artistic Director.

**Rebecca Willson/Maria Coleshill/  
Pippa Coleshill/ Katy Clark**  
**Dancers in The Daily Tide Commercial**

The 4 dancers performing this evening are all pupils with the Chadsworth Stage School in Esher. Chadsworth has been established for almost 45 years and offers over 70 classes a week in all aspects of performing arts. The girls are really excited to be performing at Hampton Hill Playhouse and hope you all enjoy the show.

theatre, and later the title role - not Androcles - in *Androcles and the Lion*. In *Pravda* she plays several human members of the Press Corps.

### **John Bellamy**

**Sir Stamford Foley, owner of The Leicester Bystander/Bishop of Putney/Cliveden Whicker-Baskett/Bert**

John's first acting role was as a non-speaking foxglove at the age of six. He subsequently graduated to more challenging roles, and has spent many happy hours in the intervening seven decades acting and singing on stage. His most recent appearance on stage at HHP was as God in *Boy On A Swing* (November 2012), and he imagined that there was nowhere to go after that, but to be cast as the Bishop of Putney (amongst other roles), seems somehow appropriate.

### **Keith Wait**

**Lambert Le Roux**

Although an occasional visiting director, Pravda marks Keith's first on-stage appearance at the Playhouse, having debuted with TTC as voices off in *Night of Dark Intent*. Last year he played Prospero in *The Tempest* (Questors, Network). Other many cherished roles have included in *Messiah* (Coliseum), *Julius Caesar* (Barbican), *Family Affair* (Network), *Lysistrata* (Prague Festival) and *Inherit the Wind* (Tricycle Theatre). As a writer, Keith's plays have been seen on the Fringe, at Riverside Studios (*Facades*), at the Orange Tree Theatre (*Evening Swallows*, *Silver Age Adieu*, *Carelessly Discarded Yesterdays*) and here at HHP (*For Ever In Trust*).

### **Robin Legard**

**Michael Quince MP**

Robin acts with several local companies as well as being Membership Secretary for TTC. Having played a king and a god in recent TTC productions, he is delighted to be firmly back on earth again playing an MP in this production. Other roles have included Lord Hastings in *Richard III* [TTC], the vicar husband, Gerald, in *Woman in Mind* [for OHADS] and the Chief Inspector in *This Story of Yours* [for RSS] - which won a Swan Award for best production in 2011.

### **Lizzie Lattimore**

**Sylvia Eaton**

Lizzie is currently a YAT committee member, and has been heavily involved with directing for them in recent years. Credits include *Spring Awakening*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Taming of The Shrew* and *Pride and Prejudice*. With TTC she has been set designing most recently *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, *Privates on Parade*, *The Seal Wife*. Most recent acting credits with TTC include Det. Beck in *Boy Gets Girl*, Narrator/Singer in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Peppermint Patty in *Snoopy The Musical* (Swan Award nomination), and Martha in *The Secret Garden* (Swan nomination). Lizzie is looking forward to taking YAT to the Edinburgh festival this year with Congreve's *The Way of The World*.

### **Barry MacDonald**

**Elliot Fruit-Norton**

Barry has appeared for TTC in *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Peggy For You*, *A Doll's House*, *Richard III*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. For Richmond Shakespeare Society

**Director Susan Conte**  
**Assistant Director Helen Smith**

### **Production Team for Pravda**

Stage Manager

Lighting Design

Sound Design & Operation

Wardrobe

Assisted by

Set Build and Design

Assisted by

Set dressing & Props

Specialist prop maker –

The Golden Finger Award

Projection Design

Lighting Operators

Assistant Stage Managers

Dance Choreography

Japanese Martial Arts

Photography

Poster & Prop Newspaper Design

Press Officer

Marketing & Publicity

Front of House

Bridget Arnold

Mike Elgey

Harry Jacobs

Maggie Wrightson

Margaret Bolton &

Lesley Alexander

Alan Corbett

Various students of design

Penny Heighes

Annie Collenette

Gary Stevenson/Rachel Lawston/

Malcolm Maclean

Rob Foot with Rachel Lawston

Lana Bickerstaffe

Vicky Horder

Harri Osborne

Miriam Fairbairn

Dawn Lacey

Clive Russell

Cath Messum and

Adrian Limerick

Martin Baker

Enid Segall

Gerry McCarthy

Team led by Rosemary Brett

# Return to the street of shame

The following interview with Howard Brenton and David Hare is reproduced with the kind permission of its author, Aleks Sierz. It first appeared in the Daily Telegraph of 26 August 2006 as Chichester Festival prepared to open its production of *Pravda*.

The merciless Fleet Street satire *Pravda* has not been staged since 1985 - so, with a revival imminent, will it still work today? Aleks Sierz meets authors Howard Brenton and David Hare.

Do newspapers tell the truth? In the programme for the original 1985 production of *Pravda* - written by David Hare and Howard Brenton - Brenton wrote: "Pravda means 'the truth'. English newspapers aren't propaganda sheets. The question is, why do so many of them choose to behave as if they are?"

Starring a mesmerising Anthony Hopkins (in the National Theatre production) as the reptilian Lambert Le Roux, a South African newspaper tycoon not unlike Rupert Murdoch (owner of The Times and the Sun), *Pravda* was one of the biggest hits in the history of the National Theatre. The play is an epic satire on the media in the Thatcher era; a morality tale about how Andrew, a young liberal journalist, finally succumbs to Le Roux, who makes him editor of a tabloid.

Now, some 20 years later (ie 2006), *Pravda* is being revived for the first time in a co-production between the Chichester Festival and Birmingham Rep. It's taken so long to revive because it is such an expensive large-cast venture. The play's

name, of course, evokes the communist propaganda sheet of the former Soviet Union, but do Brenton and Hare still believe that the British media deserves that comparison with that?

"Well," says Brenton, "it's easier to write propaganda than to write about something that's actually happening. It's easier to make bad papers than good ones, and they sell better. At the time, I was very enamoured of the idea that English people have a policeman in the head, and like to be policed in their thoughts." "We were talking about the self-censorship of the journalist," adds Hare. "And the British are very good at self-censorship."

Then, as a reminder that *Pravda* is a satire, Brenton says, "The title is basically a provocative joke which actually has a ring of truth." In fact, the play combines hearty jokes - characters have names such as Elliot Fruit-Norton and Ian Ape-Warden - with an acerbic criticism of the failures of Thatcher's liberal opponents.

"For the past 20 years, liberals have been on the defensive," says Hare. "In the 1980s, progressives suddenly found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being conservative and resisting change. I myself was thrown by the 1980s. This play - and my conversations with Howard -

**Chris Hodges**  
**Reporter/Composer/ Journalist/ Vendor**

This is Chris's third production with TTC, having previously been in *A Voyage Round My Father* in 2010 and *All's Well that Ends Well* in 2012. He has been acting with various drama groups for many years, recently with Q2 Players in Kew, with whom he has performed in Ayckbourn's *Improbable Fiction*, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (as Karenin), *The Flint Street Nativity* (as a seven year old schoolboy!) and Wilder's *The Matchmaker*. In his spare time he dabbles in the law and local politics.

**Jon Coop**  
**Harry Morrison, Editor of The Leicester Bystander/Ian Ape-Warden/ Cartoonist**  
Jon has appeared in several shows at HHP, including playing Mr Puff in *The Critic*, and *Miss in her Teens*. He also played Father in *Voyage Round My Father* having been cast whilst stuck in Abu Dhabi due to the Icelandic Volcano. He has also appeared in several musicals including *Pirates of Penzance* (Major General), *Anything Goes* (Evelyn Oakleigh), and *Yeoman of the Guard* (Lieutenant) for HLOC. Jon is also a member of Q2.

**Bill Compton**  
**Hamish McLennan/Doug Phantom/ Commentary at Dog Track/Night Editor**  
Bill joined Youth Action Theatre back in early 1994, when David Wheatley successfully conned him into appearing in *Genghis Khan - Child of the Blue Wolf*. Since then he's hardly left the theatre. He has now appeared in 24 stage productions, most recently as Manolo Costazuela in *The Odd Couple - Female Version* (Feb/

March 2013). Since 2000, Bill has directed 17 major productions for TTC and YAT and in 2005, he and former members of YAT formed a Management Committee to take over the running of the group from a retiring Eric Yardley. Bill has been the Chairman of YAT since 2007.

**Paul Lawston**  
**Bill Smiley**

Paul has been performing on stage since the age of eleven when he joined the local youth theatre group in his New Forest home-town. Since moving to London he has appeared in a number of productions with the Barnes Charity Players, including Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in numerous pantomimes at the nature reserve at which he works. This is his first play with TTC.

**Harri Osborne**  
**Punk/Lorraine Punt, a young journalist**  
Harri is thrilled to be working on such an awesome play and even more thrilled to be part of it! This is the fourth play she's worked on at TTC since joining in November last year! She's also part of Richmond Youth Theatre/Richmond Young Company.

**Lyn Randall**  
**Moira Paterson, owner of Health Food Shop/ Reporter**  
This is Lyn's first acting appearance for TTC following a long period of audience membership. TTC has kindly allowed her to reclaim her original membership number which dates back to 1971. She remembers being the panda Ty-phoo in *Aladdin* at the old Hampton Court

## Cast biographies in order of appearance

### **Katie Barton**

#### **Rebecca Foley**

Katie most recently played the role of Helen in *Women of Troy*. She has been a TTC member for many years and was nominated for a Swan Award for her roles in *The Old Country* and *When We Are Married*. Katie studied Drama at Bristol University and then trained at The Poor School in London.

### **Patrick Oldham**

#### **Andrew May**

Patrick trained on the RADA Drama Foundation and has since been in numerous plays including *Othello* - Michael Cassio (Emanate Theatre), *Measure for Measure* - Angelo (Emanate Theatre), *The Pillowman* - Katurian (KUDOS), *The Revenger's Tragedy* - Spurio (Picklock), and *Macbeth* - Banquo (ETG). Film Credits include *London Latino*, and *Captain America: The First Avenger*.

### **Elizabeth Chambers**

#### **News Vendor /Journalist**

Born in New Zealand and moving to England in her late twenties, Elizabeth has been a keen performer for her entire life, training as a musician and singing professionally during her young adult years. She has recently ventured into the world of theatrical performance and is greatly looking forward to her debut in *Pravda*.

### **Greg Nicoll**

#### **News Vendor /Dennis Payne, Cricket Captain /Journalist/Bingo Winner**

Greg is usually found front of house, and has played small parts in various shows at TTC including *Mary Stuart*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Christmas Carol*, *The One that Got Away* and *The Critic*.

### **Gina Way**

#### **Cindy/Reporter/Vendor/Show Hostess**

A Member of St. Mary's Drama Group, Gina has appeared in many productions, including *Waiting in the Wings*, *Angels in Love*, *Deckchairs*, *And Evermore Shall Be So*, *Judgment*, *Dracula Revived*, *The Forest*, *Scapino*, *Habeas Corpus* and *The Firebird*. She was in The Stage Company's production *Forever in Trust* for the 200th Anniversary of the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity and in *What Else Would You Be Doing on a Monday Night* (Bridewell Theatre). As a true Gemini, Gina is delighted to be playing 6 different roles in *Pravda*.

### **Sally Cadle**

#### **Reporter/Journalist/ News Vendor**

Being cast in *Calendar Girls* last year heralded Sally's stage comeback after 31 years. She must have enjoyed it as she went on to demonstrate her piano playing skills earlier this year in *Allo Allo*, making this her third production in under a year. Sally was an original member of Youth Action Theatre, studied Dance and Drama at Teacher Training College followed by a two year part time Diploma in Drama at New College of Speech and Drama. She became a member of TTC in 2010 and can often be seen selling raffle tickets or ice cream.

was for me a way of trying to understand what was going on.

"The old Establishment that was destroyed in the 1980s was feeble and Thatcher pushed it out of the way. Thatcher always chose her targets carefully. She backed off reforming the legal system because she knew she would lose. On the other hand, she knew she would win against the miners. She was very shrewd politically. She chose the right enemies."

On stage, Le Roux appears as a monster, although his power and certainty of purpose are highly attractive.

"Dramatists love writing the bastard character," says Brenton. "The villain whose energy is so compelling - it's the Richard III phenomenon. And audiences just love the driving force of evil. *Pravda* is a Faust play: Le Roux is Mephistopheles and Andrew is Faust. He does the deal and pays the penalty of losing his self-respect."

"The play was also about the unthinkable," says Hare, "that a foreigner should take over a British institution. Today, you know perfectly well that if Gordon Brown were offered a timeshare in which the House of Commons was available to politicians for two-thirds of the year and for use as a casino for the remaining third, his only question would be: 'How much?' It's now accepted that everything's for sale in Britain. The only criterion is profit."

Both men laugh about how British journalists like to believe in a golden age, when the press was, in Hare's words, "completely wonderful until Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell

arrived and debauched it. This is absolute nonsense. *The Times*, when it was edited by William Rees-Mogg, was a terrible paper, a grey mass of words. It was rotten at the hinges - all Murdoch did was kick the door down."

*Pravda* wasn't the first time the two men worked together. Fresh out of Cambridge University in 1968, Hare formed Portable, an alternative theatre company, which Brenton joined. Then, in 1973, the two youthful radicals co-wrote *Brassneck*, a satire on property speculation. For them, the give and take of collaboration is a highly enjoyable way of generating comic energy.

"The whole enterprise was intended to make people laugh," says Hare. "That's what it was all about. The whole point of joint writing is to write comedy because it's such fun." "Yes," agrees Brenton, "I remember feeling hoarse at the end of a day collaborating on the play because I had made so many silly gags. And one or two even got into the script."

But, with hindsight, their play also proved surprisingly prescient. "It was our idea that an entrepreneur could change citizenship to buy more media," says Hare, so he was delighted when Murdoch - a couple of years later - became an American citizen in order to make some acquisitions there. "The play was full of good suggestions. And Murdoch is the only person who could asset-strip a satire."

*Pravda* also anticipated the rise of the celebrity columnist and would have foreseen the growth of satellite television if Brenton and Hare hadn't cut that

particular subplot. “What neither of us could predict,” says Hare, “is how the media has become obsessed with itself. When we wrote the play, there were no media sections in the newspapers. This new narcissism is quite extraordinary. Today, journalists think they are the most fascinating story.”

Hare then acts out a passage from *Just William*, the children’s book by Richmal Crompton: “Ginger says to William, ‘Let’s start a newspaper.’ William says, ‘We can’t because we don’t know anything.’ And Ginger says, ‘We don’t have to know anything - you just have to say what sort of things you like, and what sort of things you don’t like.’ And William says, ‘We can easily do that!’” Both men fall about laughing. They are clearly having a good time.

Looking back, why do the writers think *Pravda* was so successful? “At the first preview,” remembers Hare, “the audience started laughing before anyone had said anything funny. And Howard and I both freaked: what was going on? Then we realised that the audience really wanted a satire on the press.” Afterwards, a journalist told him, “I knew how Hare and Brenton despised the press, but I didn’t know just how much the public despised journalists.” It will be interesting to see whether audiences today still feel the same way.

**Aleks Sierz FRSA is a journalist and Visiting Professor at Rose Bruford College. His books include *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* (Faber, 2001) and *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today* (Methuen Drama, 2011).**

“Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.”

Thomas Jefferson

“As the result of this principle operating as one of the cornerstones of our democracy, the press is given significant and special rights in this country which I recognize and have freely supported as both barrister and judge. With these rights however come responsibilities to the public interest: to respect the truth, to obey the law and to uphold the rights and liberties of individuals.

The evidence placed before the inquiry has demonstrated, beyond any doubt, that there have been far too many occasions over the last decade and more (itself said to have been better than previous decades) when these responsibilities on which the public so heavily rely have simply been ignored. There have been too many times when, chasing the story, parts of the press have acted as if its own code, which it wrote, simply did not exist.”

Leveson

## Some Key Events in the British Press

1969	The News of the World is sold to Rupert Murdoch and in 1984 becomes a tabloid and sister paper to The Sun.
1969	The Sun is sold to Rupert Murdoch as Robert Maxwell is out manoeuvred.
1979	The Sun famously supports Thatcher’s election campaign.
1979 – 1990	Margaret Thatcher is Prime Minister.
1967 – 1981	Harold Evans is editor of The Sunday Times where he develops a crusading form of investigative journalism such as The Thalidomide Scandal.
1981	To keep both titles together, The Times and The Sunday Times are bought from Thomson by Rupert Murdoch’s News International. The acquisition follows three weeks of intensive bargaining with the unions. After 14 years as editor, William Rees-Mogg resigns the post upon completion of the change of ownership.
1981	Murdoch makes his mark on the paper by appointing Harold Evans as Mogg’s replacement. Evans lasts just one year and leaves after disagreements over editorial independence.
1982	One of Murdoch’s most important changes is the introduction of new technology and efficiency measures. Following agreement with print unions, the hot-metal Linotype printing process used to print The Times since the 19th century is phased out and replaced by computer input and photo-composition. This allows print room staff at The Times and The Sunday Times to be reduced by half.
1986	However direct input of text by journalists is still not achieved, and this is to remain an interim measure until the Wapping dispute, when The Times moves to new offices in Wapping together with The Sunday Times, The Sun and The News of the World. This new technology greatly reduces the number of print men and their union power to halt production. Other newspapers quickly follow and “the Spanish practices” of the print unions are broken.
1983	Sarah Tisdall, an FCO clerk, is imprisoned for six months after leaking classified documents (about nuclear missiles arriving at Greenham Common) to The Guardian. The Guardian resists at first but eventually gives up their source as Sarah Tisdall.
1995	Tony Blair flies halfway round the world to cement his relationship with Rupert Murdoch at a News Corporation conference. Introducing him, the media tycoon joked: “If the British press is to be believed, today is all part of a Blair-Murdoch flirtation. If that flirtation is ever consummated, Tony, I suspect we will end up making love like two porcupines - very carefully.”
March 1997	The Sun supports Blair’s election campaign.
1997	Six weeks later, Tony Blair is elected Prime Minister.

**This play is a work of fiction and no interpretation other than the authors’ intention is inferred or implied by any elements of this production by Teddington Theatre Club.**