

GENERAL ELECTION LOOMING... TIMELY REVIVAL FOR DAVID HARE'S "SKYLIGHT" AT BECKENHAM THEATRE

Embargo: 16:00 hrs Monday 1st February 2010
Opening night: Monday 8th February 2010
Press enquiries: Please contact Kevin Monk: kevin@mangoswiss.com / 020 8676 4955

Next week sees a timely revival of David Hare's groundbreaking 1995 play, *Skylight*, at Beckenham Theatre Centre.

This powerful political drama will be directed by Alex Vail, and stars Louise Solts as Kyra, Tim James as Tom and stage newcomer Will Jafrato as Edward. Its intense nature is perfectly suited to the intimate atmosphere of Beckenham Theatre, one of the smallest permanent auditoria in the UK.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

David Hare is known for his earnest, political playwriting and this play, written just 18 months before the tide-change 1997 General Election, eloquently argues his disaffection with the then Conservative government. His platform for the debate was the dire state of inner-London schools and the play's sentiment struck a chord with its first audiences at the National Theatre that Tony Blair capitalised on with his winning "Education, Education, Education" manifesto.

New Labour swept to power and has since spent £600bn on education. Exam pass-rates are higher now, yet the requirements of GCSE and A-level candidates are at an all-time low. Violence, attitudes, attainment, literacy and numeracy in schools are worse than ever before and the government continues to fight expensive failing initiatives with more expensive failing initiatives.

In *Skylight*, Hare pits the rich, successful, capitalist (Tory) Tom against the poor, striving, socialist (Labour) Kyra in a battle of ideals. In 1995, there was no question who was "right" and who was "wrong". Now, we are able to watch this conflict with the benefit of hindsight and those definitions are much more difficult to distinguish.

In many ways, 2010 is the perfect year to stage a revival of this play, as we sit yet again on the cusp of an election in which both parties frantically scrabble for the solution to our failing schools. In a demonstration of how little has changed in the education landscape in the last 15 years, we have decided to set it in the present day without changing a single word of the original script to update it, and - though the meaning of some of the sentiments has changed - the play still feels incredibly current.

Skylight opens at Beckenham Theatre Centre on Friday 8th February 2010 and runs until Saturday 13th February 2010.

[Complimentary tickets for press reviews are available from Kevin Monk (details above).]

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ABOUT BECKENHAM THEATRE CENTRE:

- Beckenham Theatre Centre Ltd is a registered charity, staffed entirely by volunteers, which has been committed to serving, involving and delighting the local community for over 60 years. Registered number 236434 (England & Wales).
- Beckenham Theatre is a member of the Bromley Theatre Guild.
- Situated in the heart of Beckenham, this unusual Victorian building houses one of the smallest auditoria in the country - with just 47 seats - and the unique charm of the venue delights all who enter.
- Address: Beckenham Theatre Centre, 46 Bromley Road, Beckenham, BR3 5JD
- BTC is a traditional community theatre and membership is open to anyone interested in the dramatic arts, either as an audience member or as an active participant. Joining costs just £20.00 per year - more information is available on the website: www.beckenhamtheatre.co.uk.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:

Sir David Hare was born in Bexhill, East Sussex in 1947, and was educated at Lancing College and Jesus College, Cambridge. He co-founded Portable Theatre Company, acting, directing and writing plays. SLAG was first produced in London in 1970 at the Hampstead Theatre Club. He was Resident Dramatist at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1970-1 and Resident Dramatist at the Nottingham Playhouse in 1973. He co-founded Joint Stock Theatre Group with David Aukin and Max Stafford-Clark in 1975, and held a US/UK Bicentennial Fellowship in 1977. He has been Associate Director of the National Theatre since 1984. He was knighted in 1998 and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. His latest play, about the financial crisis (THE POWER OF YES) is currently running at the National Theatre.

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