





congratulates Auckland Theatre Company on its production of David Hare's **SKYLIGHT** winner of the 1995 Olivier Award for Best Play.

The British Council and the British High Commission are pleased to support the visit of acclaimed British actor **Oliver Cotton** for an exciting feast of British theatre as part of **The Link**, celebrating the relationship between Britain and New Zealand.



The Link – a year long programme of events highlighting the modern and evolving relationship between Britain and New Zealand presented by the British High Commission and the British Council in New Zealand.

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David Hare

skylight

Welcome to **SKYLIGHT**, the fourth production of ATC's 1997 Montana International Season.

David Hare is one of Britain's foremost playwrights, with a reputation for magnificently crafted dissections of modern society. The impact of the Thatcher years proved a particularly rich source of inspiration, with plays such as **THE SECRET RAPTURE**, **RACING DEMON**, **MURMURING JUDGES** and **THE ABSENCE OF WAR** examining and questioning the politics, values and motives behind the institutions which shape our day-to-day lives. **SKYLIGHT** is perhaps his most intimate work. Winner of the 1995 Olivier Award for Best Play (and a nominee for a 1997 Tony Award in the same category), it combines all of Hare's traditional themes with a story of two people trying to reconcile their heads with their hearts, their politics with their passion. He has created for his characters an evening of reckoning that makes for complex and compelling theatre.

We welcome as director Colin McColl, whose previous productions for ATC include **DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN**, **THE SEAGULL** and **UNCLE VANYA**. We further welcome Miranda Harcourt, last seen with ATC in Tom Stoppard's **ARCADIA**. We especially welcome to the Company actors Oliver Cotton and Andrew Glover. Oliver's many stage credits include stints with the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company alongside such theatre greats as Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud and Peter Hall. Coincidentally, he appeared in the Royal National's premiere of Tom Stoppard's **ROSECRANTZ AND GULDENSTERN ARE DEAD**. Andrew is a graduate of the Unitec School of Performing Arts who makes his ATC debut in **SKYLIGHT**. Set Designer John Verryt and Lighting Designer Clint Buel complete a truly international creative team.

We would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the British Council, Air New Zealand and Alternative Rentals in making tonight's performance possible. ATC gratefully acknowledges the continuing support of Montana as Principal Sponsor and of Creative New Zealand, our major funder. We are indebted to TVNZ, The Carlton Hotel, Auckland City's Arts Alive, NZI, Albany Toyota, Arthur Andersen, Canon and NewstalkZB for their generous and continuing support throughout the year. Similarly, we would like to thank the management and staff of the Aotea Centre for their support and hospitality.

From us all at ATC, very best wishes for the remainder of 1997. See you at **MASTER CLASS**.



Photo: Latham Gaines

Simon Prast  
PRODUCER



MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR ROBERT ALSTON, CMG  
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER



I am delighted that Auckland Theatre Company are producing David Hare's **SKYLIGHT**, following their success with Tom Stoppard's **ARCADIA**. We are particularly pleased to be able to support the visit of distinguished British actor Oliver Cotton to play alongside Miranda Harcourt in this production. **SKYLIGHT** has achieved the highest recognition by the British theatre community, winning the 1995 Olivier Award for Best Play.

I hope that many of you will already have been involved in some of the events making up **The Link**, the year-long programme co-ordinated by the British High Commission and the British Council to promote the modern and evolving relationship between Britain and New Zealand. **The Link** also celebrates the 50th anniversary of the British Council opening its New Zealand office.

I wish Auckland Theatre Company every success and hope that New Zealand audiences will enjoy the production, which illustrates the vibrancy of **The Link** between our two countries.

Dear Auckland Theatre Company Patron

Welcome to the fourth production in the Montana International Season **SKYLIGHT**. This strong piece of theatre will provide food for thought about the way we regard relationships. This surely must be one of theatre's *raison d'être* - to get us to look at the familiar through new eyes and challenge us to think anew.

Montana is delighted with the strength and quality of the Auckland Theatre Company's season and trust that you find much to enjoy in this work.

Kind regards

**Peter Hubscher**  
Managing Director



**D**avid Hare was born in Sussex in 1947. In 1968 he received an MA from Jesus College, Cambridge. That same year he co-founded the *Portable Theatre Company*. From 1969-1970 he served as Literary Manager, and from 1970-1971 as resident Dramatist, for the *Royal Court Theatre*. In 1975 he co-founded and became Director (until 1980) of the *Joint Stock Theatre Company*. David has been an Associate Director of the *National Theatre* since 1984.

Following a series of acerbically witty plays anatomising the social mores of the 60s and early 70s (including **SLAG** and **TEETH 'N' SMILES**), David Hare turned to the betrayal of the ideals of the 40s in **PLENTY** (for the *National Theatre*), and **LICKING HITLER** (for the BBC). Although in the 80s he continued to write for the stage, his main work was on film, and included the features **WETHERBY**, and **PARIS BY NIGHT**. In the early 90s, he returned



**DAVID HARE**

triumphantly to the theatre with the first two plays of a proposed trilogy on British institutions (**RACING DEMON** on the Church of England and **MURMURING JUDGES** on the law).

**Selected Plays:**

- 1970 **SLAG**
- 1973 **BRASSNECK** (with Howard Brenton)
- 1974 **KNUCKLE**
- 1975 **TEETH 'N' SMILES**
- 1978 **PLENTY**
- 1982 **LICKING HITLER**
- 1985 **PRAVDA** (with Howard Brenton)
- 1985 **WETHERBY** (screenplay, also director)
- 1988 **PARIS BY NIGHT**
- 1989 **RACING DEMON**
- 1991 **MURMURING JUDGES**

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"Contemporary British Dramatists" Touring Exhibition.*

## SYNOPSIS

Recently widowed Tom Sergeant, a successful restaurateur/entrepreneur, seeks solace from former lover Kyra Hollis, a teacher of underprivileged children. The attraction was forged when as an eighteen year old Kyra was employed in one of Tom's many restaurants. Kyra lived within the family home, came to love Alice, Tom's wife, developed a sisterly friendship with Edward, Tom's son and secretly slept with Tom for over six years. Alice has now passed away and Tom is living on the edge. Edward goes to see Kyra, in hopes of finding a way to help his father overcome his grief. Later Tom arrives, for the same reason, and what eventuates is an evening which reveals their differences in politics and lifestyles. This is a play of two worlds living side by side in one society, and two people who have created a division between them that may not be breached. Tom, the self-made millionaire who came into his own in the 1980s, cannot comprehend her dedication to "clearing out society's drains". Kyra is repelled by his culture of macho competitiveness, which leaks into his personal life as well as his politics. This is a moving account of an affair that tests the limits of even the strongest love: a meeting of bodies but a division of minds and an awful muddle in between.



## HEART TO HEART

An interview with David Hare by Hilary Beaton

**HB** How do you go about writing your plays? ...What comes first? A character? A plot? Politics? Where do you start...?

**DH** I start with a physical image. For example with *Plenty* - which is the play I'm best known for - it was the image of a woman sitting on a packing crate, rolling a cigarette, while her naked husband lies at her feet.

For *SKYLIGHT* it was the image of a teacher returning to a small, anonymous, depressing flat. Freezing cold. Incredibly cheerless. That was the image. Then off I go... sit down and type out the opening. The opening of a play always comes to me first. That image leaves a strong impression...

Then I leave it for about a year. I let my subconscious do the work. It's like planting bulbs for the spring. You put them in the ground and let them take their time to gestate and come to blossom. I find you can't force this kind of thing.

Having said that, I see myself as writing two very different kinds of plays. Firstly there is the public play which requires a great deal of research. The Trilogy (*RACING DEMON*, *MURMURING JUDGES*, *THE ABSENCE OF WAR*) deals with British institutions: the church, the law, and politics; therefore the writing process is very different. My plays are often epic and demand a great many re-writes to fine tune the ideas. I'm constantly re-writing. I approach the writing almost like a screenplay; write a synopsis, then twenty pages or so of dialogue, or a few scenes and ask repeatedly, how am I doing.

Public plays carry with them a responsibility to be accurate. The ideas are up for discussion. I want people to contribute. Value their input. Respect their opinions.

The other kind of play is private. It is an act of the imagination. *SKYLIGHT* is about an intense love affair... the writing was not a conscious process... in some ways it wrote itself.

Once a play was in production I would go along to rehearsals and say to Richard (Richard Eyre consistently

directs the premiere productions of Hare's plays), 'How's it going?' And he'd say, 'Fine, just fine.' 'Need any work?' 'No,' he'd say. And that was that, I trusted him.

I have done some re-writes of Act II since the first production. After the actors have played the roles for a year, they know the characters better than I. So I listen to what they have to say and make changes.

**HB** How do you name your characters?

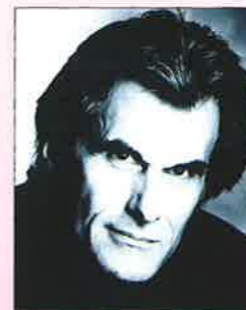
**DH** The names of the characters are very important to me. They should never appear forced. If a name doesn't work, it usually means the character shouldn't be there.

Kyra was a deliberate choice. It created a sense of mystery. British audiences are finely attuned to names because they reveal a person's class. So if you name a character Sophie, they know immediately she is middle-class. Other names tell you who is upper or working class. I do not want the audience to know what class this woman is ... not at first. This is very important.

*Hilary Beaton is an affiliate writer with Queensland Theatre Company*



## OLIVER COTTON - Tom Sergeant



Oliver Cotton trained at Drama Centre London. He has appeared in over twenty productions at the *National Theatre* including: **THE ROYAL HUNT OF THE SUN**, **ROSECRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD**, **HAMLET**, **TAMBURLAINE**, **NO MANS LAND**, **THE MADRAS HOUSE**, and **THE CRUCIBLE**. At the *Royal Court Theatre* he has appeared in many productions including **THE LOCAL STIGMATIC**, **THE DUCHESS OF MALFI**, **LEAR** and **BINGO** by Edward Bond. At the *Royal Shakespeare Company* he has played leading roles in Granville Barker's **THE MARRYING OF ANN LEETE**, **HENRY VI**, **EDWARD IV**, **RICHARD III**, **THE PLAIN DEALER** and **SOME AMERICANS ABROAD** by Richard Nelson. In the *West End* he has starred in **THE HOMECOMING** by Harold Pinter, **CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD** by Mark Medoff, and **BENEFACTORS** by Michael Frayn. He recently played **KING LEAR** at the *Southwark Playhouse*. His many TV appearances have included **THE BORGAS** (Cesare Borgia), **DAVID COPPERFIELD**, **THE YEAR OF THE FRENCH**, **REDEMPTION**, **THE CAMOMILE LAWN**, **WESTBEACH**, **SHARPE**, **S BATTLE**, **RHODES**, and **ALL QUIET ON THE PRESTON FRONT**. His films include **HERE WE GO ROUND THE MULBERRY BUSH**, **THE DAY CHRIST DIED**, **OLIVER TWIST**, **FIREFOX**, **ELENI**, **HIDING OUT**, **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**, **SON OF THE PINK PANTHER**, **THE INNOCENT SLEEP** and **THE OPIUM WAR**. Oliver writes, for both stage and screen, and plays classical guitar.

## ANDREW GLOVER - Edward Sergeant



Andrew is a graduate of the Unitec Performing Arts School where his roles included Mr Dussel in **THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK** and Oberon and Starveling in **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**. Since graduation he has performed the roles of Banquo and Bloody Sergeant in **MACBETH** in Singapore, in the Aunties production of **JASON AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE** and **FAUST**, **WOYZECK** and **THE LOWER DEPTHS** for the professional ensemble group *Journeyman Theatre* of which he is a founding member. This is Andrew's first appearance for ATC.

## MIRANDA HARCOURT - Kyra Hollis



A graduate of Toi Whakaari, The NZ Drama School, and the Central School Of Speech and Drama, London, Miranda has worked throughout New Zealand on TV, stage, in film and in prisons. **VERBATIM**, which she devised with writer William Brandt, has toured prisons, festivals and theatres in the UK, the USA, Hong Kong and Australia. Voted Best Actress at the *Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards*, and 4-time finalist in the *NZ Film and TV Awards*, Miranda has featured in TVNZ's **GLOSS**, **CITYLIFE**, **MARLIN BAY** and the upcoming **DUGGAN**. She recently directed **VOICEOVER**, a short film funded by Creative NZ, produced by M.A.P. film productions and premiering in the 1997 International Film Festival. This is Miranda's second appearance with ATC, having performed the role of Hannah Jarvis in this year's highly acclaimed production of Tom Stoppard's **ARCADIA**.

## COLIN MCCOLL - Director



One of New Zealand's leading directors, Colin was Artistic Director of Wellington's *Downstage Theatre* from 1984-1992 and a founding director of *Taki Rua Theatre*. His innovative productions of classics such as **ROMEO & JULIET** and **THE THREE PENNY OPERA** spurred an invitation to tour Ibsen's **HEDDA GABLER** to the Edinburgh Festival, the Ibsen Festival in Oslo, the Covent Garden Festival and the Festival of Sydney. Colin was also acclaimed for his production's of **MICHAEL JAMES MANAIA**, **VERBATIM** and **SNAG**, all of which toured NZ, Australia and the Edinburgh Festival. He directed Ibsen's **THE VIKINGS** for the *National Theatre of Norway* and **MRS WARREN'S PROFESSION** and **THE MASTER BUILDER** for the *Dutch National Theatre*. In 1996 he directed **SWEENEY TODD** for the *Queensland Theatre Company*. Colin's production of **RICORDI** opened the 1996 International Festival of the Arts. After directing the Australasian premiere of the Tony Award winning play **MASTER CLASS** in 1996, Colin directed a new production of **CHESS** at Melbourne's *Princess Theatre*. For ATC Colin has directed **DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN**, **THE SEAGULL** and **UNCLE VANYA**.

## JOHN VERRYT - Designer



Auckland theatregoers will be very familiar with John's work as a designer because of the many memorable productions he has been associated with at *Theatre Corporate* and *Mercury Theatre*. In 1987 a Fullbright Scholarship provided him with the opportunity to study in New York. From 1990-92 John was the Head of Design at *Mercury Theatre*. His set designs included **CAROUSEL**, **THE BARBER OF SEVILLE**, **THE SEX FIEND**, **AMADEUS** and **PORGY & BESS**, *Auckland Opera's CARMEN* and *Opera New Zealand's LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*. John has designed sets and costumes from **CYRANO DE BERGERAC** and **KING LEAR** for *Theatre at Large*. For ATC John designed the highly acclaimed **SOMEONE WHO'LL WATCH OVER ME**, **THE LEARNER'S STAND** and **MARKET FORCES**.

## CLINT BUEL - Lighting Design



Clint is a graduate of Eastern Washington University with a Bachelor in Arts and Theatre. In the United States he has created many designs including the **GODSPELL** *USO* tour to Korea and Okinawa, the **BIG FORK SUMMER STOCK THEATRE** in Montana and **AQUACADE** at the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans. In New Zealand his many designs include the 1987 **FORESKINS LAMENT** tour, the **RIVER DANCE** project for *LIMBS* and **PINK FLOYD**, the **LIGHT SERIES** and **STAGE & SCREEN** for the *Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra*. This is Clint's first design for ATC.

## AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

by Arrangement with Robert Fox Ltd

P r e s e n t s

# skylight

by David Hare

First performed at the Cottesloe, National Theatre, London on 4 May 1995  
Herald Theatre, Auckland - from 17 July 1997  
Fourth Production of the 1997 Montana International Season

Director	Colin McColl
Designer	John Verryt
Lighting Design	Clint Buel
Stage Manager	Gregory Smale
Set Construction	Third Stage
Wardrobe	Elizabeth Whiting
Properties	Arts Bandits

### C A S T

Tom Sergeant	Oliver Cotton
Edward Sergeant	Andrew Glover
Kyra Hollis	Miranda Harcourt

*There will be a 15 minute intermission*

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