

First night

Newsletter of the friends of the LYCEUM Theatre

December 1990

PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP

The RSC and Opera North's Brilliant production of **SHOWBOAT** will be coming to the Lyceum from Tuesday, 29th January, 1991 to Saturday, 9th February, 1991.

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Royal Seal of Approval



The Lyceum Theatre won the Royal seal of approval on Saturday, September 15th, when Prince Edward took to the stage. The Prince was shown around the theatre by Stephen Barry, and was enthusiastic in his praise of the restoration. After meeting various local dignitaries, including the actor Keith Barron, he was presented with a "Lyceum" van by Marc Johnson.

Good News

Public opening of the Lyceum Theatre is Saturday the 1st and 8th of December 1990 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Some of us belong to the Stars"

For as long as I can remember, I have been the servant of three mistress's: 1 Gertrude Lawrence; 2 musical theatre; 3 The Lyceum Theatre. The first sadly is only with us in spirit. The second thriving nicely and the third the Grand Old Lady of Norfolk Street. She was the mentor of my youth and together we began a life long love affair, laughter and songs, passion and tears were the soul mates which she produced and I have never forgotten those fresh faced golden days of the faraway sixties.



Vividly I recall the magic of 'Robert and Elizabeth' (Croft House) with London sets and costumes. 'Camelot' (Sheffield Amateurs) with London Drury Lane's Theatre costumes. And who could forget the late Dickie Valentine and Freddie Frinton in 'Cinderella' and Robinson Crusoe' respectively.

After many years of closure and cherubs gazing 'eyes down' onto Bingo audiences, the Lyceum is to be reborn 'Phoenix like' from the "ashes" of the old. The face of Sheffield is surely changing, The Lyceum's rejuvenation to its former glory makes it the incandescent jewel in Sheffield's crown. If the new



olympic pool is in size 'King' then the Lyceum is surely 'Queen'. Long may she reign. As a tribute to my first love, the Lyceum, I have trekked the length and breadth of England's theatres and many show biz stars have wished the fund raising appeal well from Anna Karen and Kevin Petts "Good wishes and every success". Likewise from Torvill and Dean. "Best wishes" from Richard Todd, Thora Hird. "Every success" from Willard White. Visits in the pipeline include 'Lynda

Baron', 'Stuart Grainger' and 'Julia McKenzie. I'm sure they will all join the others in wishing the new Lyceum a long and happy run of presentations. Watch this space.

STOP PRESS!!

'Much luck to the Lyceum appeal' just in from Robin Ray; Antony Head and '80 Days Around the World' Co. plus all the way from Australia Val Lehman (Bea - Prisoner Cell Block H).

Brian Hillaby

FIRE IN THE THEATRE

"A recent fire in the Lyceum's auditorium was quickly contained, and caused minimal damage to the auditorium."

"The show will go on" said Stephen Barry (Chief Executive).

£784,000

The Lyceum Appeal has to date reached £784,000.

324 seats have been sold.

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MERCURY FLIES INTO SHEFFIELD

As we enter the final stages of THE LYCEUM'S restoration a new statue of Mercury was flown onto the copper dome, on 29 June, heralding a new cultural resurgence in Sheffield. The twelve foot Mercury was the creation of Wendy Wall a local commercial sculptor. The statue was fabricated from fibreglass with fragments of copper.

THE LYCEUM

New main staircase has 86 steps and there are over 250 internal doors.

Specialist joinery has been undertaken by local firm, Gillans of Sheffield.

The Sheffield Works Department are responsible for restoring the ornate gilding in the Auditorium.

"Moorland View"
45 Upper Allient Road
Sheffield S8 9HT

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed please find a cheque for £175.25 to 'buy a seat' in the restored Lyceum Theatre.

Over the past year we have been giving talks to local groups on our experiences in the theatres over the past 45 years.

Having played many leading roles in shows at the old Lyceum (and the Empire) and having happy memories of the theatre in our lives we would like to give a little back for people's enjoyment in the future.

Herewith also a list of some of the groups we have talked to who gave us a donation:

Dore Towns Womens Guild — Crosspool Womens Guild —
United Reform Lunch Club, Norfolk Street —
Renishaw Ladies Circle — Heath Heritage Society, Chesterfield —
Dore & Totley Reform Church —
Mercia Towns Women's Guild —
EMGAS Retired Persons Group — Thurnscoe O.A.P. —
Endcliffe Methodists O.A.P. — Bents Green O.A.P. —
Gleadless Ladies Circle — Coal Aston Wesleyan Reform —
Rawmarsh Ladies Group and Swinton Retired Persons Group.

Yours sincerely

Ben & Beryl Marsden

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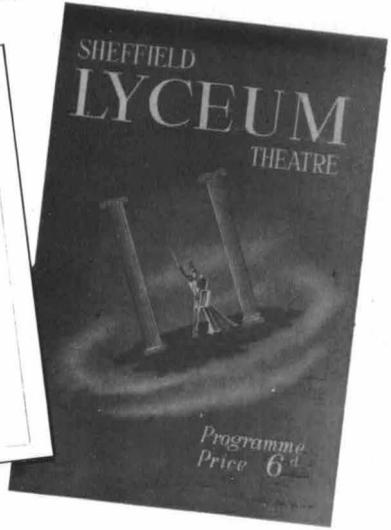
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MEMORIES OF THE LYCEUM IN THE SIXTIES

2nd July, 1990. I'm standing in the upper circle of the almost completed restoration work of this magnificent theatre. Workmen above and below busy renovating and painting the very ornate plaster work ready for the grand opening. My thoughts however, are way back in 1961 when I was an active member of Sheffield Amateur Operatic Society looking forward to our next production of 'Chu Chin Chow' in March of that year.

"The Amateur's" were one of the top three or four societies to take over the Lyceum for a week each year, usually straight after the pantomime, presenting such large scale shows as 'Pyjama Game', 'Bitter Sweet', 'Land of Smiles', to name but a few. We would rehearse for almost six months, twice a week at Springfield Road School, then on the Sunday prior to the show we took over

share with four other members. The chorus were on the top floor in very large dressing rooms with two wash basins to share. Once the performance had started you were not allowed out until you were called to go on stage, and if you were caught out, the Stage Manager, a big man called Johnny, would put you right in no uncertain terms (I am not able to repeat these even in



got near to 7.15, time for curtain up and overture and beginners call. From then onwards it was three hours of hard work. If we were running to time we could dash across the road after the show and get a quick half at the

Adelphi pub almost on the site of the Crucible, before going home. The Lyceum has given me many happy hours and I hope that it will continue to do so in the years ahead.

Nev Helliwell.



Carousel 1965

the theatre for technical and music rehearsals with the dress rehearsal in the evening.

How well I remember those Sundays, you arrived at the Stage Door for 9.30a.m. and were allocated a dressing room. The two main male principals were given the best rooms at stage level, the lesser principals rooms on the first floor to

1990)!!! By the way, the male dressing rooms were always stage left and the female stage right.

The week of the show we were advised to be in the theatre about an hour before curtain up and had to report to a small room to the right of the stage door for make up under the supervision of Hetty Hutchinson. After that you could feel the excitement growing as it



Bitter Sweet, March 1963

A Commemorative Plate
A commemorative plate made by Raymond Everill and Sons costing £35 will be on sale at
John Sinclair Ltd., 266 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10
or alternatively
c/o Peter Johnson, Lyceum Theatre Appeal,
PO Box 439, Sheffield S10 1AQ.

ROBERT JACKSON

Sports Producer, BBC Radio Sheffield



Happy memories for me of both the old Lyceum and its sister theatre, the Sheffield Empire. The Empire stood in Charles Street, where the Suggs Sports shop is today. Twice-nightly shows, usually 5.30p.m. and 8.00p.m. Comedians often changed their material to suit the younger, early audience. Dance bands where the conductor invited members of the audience to 'take the baton'. The results were hilarious. Always a song and dance act at the start of each half to allow the latecomers to settle, or the boozers to come back from the bar! Nothing so lowbrow for the Lyceum though. Harry Hanson's Court Players with two dramas a week. In 1961 the Lyceum was my first experience of a truly raked stage. Croft House Operatic Society had to move

from the Empire because it was to be demolished. Their first production at the Lyceum had to be one of their finest productions. That magical Rodgers and Hammerstein show from the 2nd World War, SOUTH PACIFIC. Croft House were very short of young men with muscles who could take their shirts off on stage and not appear wimps. We turned to 12 lads from the Sheffield Weight-lifting Club. They were shy at the first rehearsal but, with coaxing from that enthusiastic and highly skilled choreographer, Judy Silvester plus a few "oohs" and "aahs" from the nubile chorus, they all agreed to have a go on stage. After a few rehearsals they all sang, acted and responded like old-timers. A few even enjoyed the experience so

much that they appeared in later productions. We packed the audience in for 2 weeks, with a matinee on the middle Saturday, 4th March 1961. I remember that afternoon well. Sheffield United won 3-1 at Newcastle in the FA Cup and Billy Russell hit a hat-trick! SOUTH PACIFIC must have had the finest amateur cast ever assembled in Sheffield. The late, great John Bonner was Emile de Becque, Nan Clarke and Jean Hudson shared the Nellie Forbush role, Bill Cummings was Lt. Cable, Beryl Langton was a brilliant Bloody Mary and Pat



load of John Bonner's admiring ladies in the same room.

Laur Lingard produced, what a character he was. He let you do it your way so long as it worked. The late Leslie Rew, who was Musical Director, worked for Firth Brown's.

After that show it was KISS ME KATE in 1962 and OKLAHOMA in 1963. Then for me it was a growing business and a growing family who had to come first. The rehearsals and the shows were wonderful but time consuming.

Those were great days for the Lyceum and all of us who "trod the boards". Now Sheffield's finally got a 'proper' theatre with curtains again.

Congratulations to all those people with vision who have seen the renovations through. I never thought it would happen.

Settle back and enjoy "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE". Sullivan's lovely music and Gilbert's brilliantly witty libretto, so much of which still hits nails on heads today.



Sullivan was a beautiful WAT.

I played Luther Billis and my grass-skirt was ripped off every night by somebody in that chorus.

Memories of rushing to get changed and home for bed, so as to rise at 6.00a.m. next day for the fruit market where I than worked. It was difficult stripped off in the dressing-room, trying to get the body make-up off with a

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Although the Lyceum is a completely different type of theatre to the Crucible, people who are familiar with modern stage lighting equipment will have no difficulty in recognising the similarities of the two installations.

The lighting control board in the Lyceum will be a Rank Strand Galaxy Mark III which is the updated version of the Mark II in the Crucible. These controls are fully computerised and capable of the most complex lighting plots that can be devised without very complex

computer generated assistance. They can certainly provide effects as quickly as any human can dream up. The control in the Lyceum will not be as large as the Crucible but will have the

A BACKSTAGE UPDATE

additional facility of an additional keyboard which will enable it to be reprogrammed even while the show is running. It will also have a further disc storage facility which will allow shows to be

permanently recorded. So even though it doesn't control as many dimmers it is a more sophisticated control.

Similarly the lights themselves will be updated versions of the ones used at

the Crucible. There will of course be a much larger number of lights for the lighting of Cycloramas and Backcloths both of which have very restricted applications in the Crucible. For the technically minded

they will primarily be 1.2KW Zoom Profiles, and 1KW and 2KW Fresnels together with the cyclorama units mentioned before together with the ubiquitous Par Cans using the 110 V American Bulbs wired together in a series pairs.

And of course 2 state of the art Follow Spots for the all Opera, Ballet and Musical Comedy productions we hope will be a feature of seasons at the Lyceum.

Geoff Merscereau
Lighting Designer and Chief Electrician

Turning the pages of History

The rebirth of the Lyceum after two decades promises to be one of the year's major theatrical events. To celebrate the long awaited reopening, the Theatre Appeal has commissioned a special commemorative book which will include a brief history of the building along with memories of past shows provided by famous names, theatre staff, and the people of Sheffield.

The editors are James Richardson and Damon Fairclough, two young

theatre enthusiasts from Sheffield who are keen to include as many affectionate tales and humorous stories about the Lyceum as possible.

James commented, "We have had superb contributions from national celebrities such as Joss Ackland, Michael Palin, Prunella Scales and Roy Hudd. But they can only tell half the story. By using people's recollections we're going to show what it was like for the audience visiting the theatre, and what they remember about the shows they saw. Any reminiscences previously sent in to 'First Night' by Friends of the Lyceum have a good chance of being included!"

As Friends know, for over seventy years the theatre

provided high class entertainment; opera, ballet, and variety stars all graced the stage beneath the ornate, gilded proscenium arch. The golden years of the past were, however, separated from those yet to come by twenty one years of closure. But even this period was not short of drama as various attempts were made to demolish the Lyceum or turn it into a pub, nightclub, or rock venue. Sheffield Telegraph editor, Alan Powell, will be writing a chapter detailing the many moves for and against the theatre which in its time has been described as a "Stradivarius amongst theatres" and as a "Victorian slum".

The full colour book will also include photographs of

posters, programmes, and theatre tickets. Damon said, "We are looking for anything to do with the theatre which can be photographed including newspaper cuttings, autographs, and playbills. If anyone has things lying around in an attic drawer which might be suitable we'd be very pleased if they would get in touch through the Appeal office".

The official Lyceum Theatre book costs £6.95 (+ £1.25 p & p) total £8.20.

And will be available from December 1990.

Please make cheques payable to SHEFFIELD LIBRARIES (LTB), and mail to Mr. John Pyle, Publications Office (LTB), Sheffield Libraries, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1XZ.

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FUTURE ATTRACTIONS

Monday 28th January to Saturday 2nd February 1991
ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD
South Yorkshire Opera

Wednesday 6th February to Saturday 2nd March 1991
A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE by Arthur Millar

Tuesday 5th March to Saturday 9th March 1991
RIGOLETTO, MARRIAGE OF FIGARO,
THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

FUTURE ATTRACTIONS

NEXT AT THE PLAYHOUSE



English Heritage

COME UP TRUMPS

The Lyceum Trust has recently received a generous grant of £200,000 from English Heritage towards the restoration of the Lyceum Theatre. A grant awarded for the preservation of historic buildings which have been saved from demolition. Furthermore, it demonstrates English Heritage's support for the regeneration of Sheffield. Officers from Land and Planning have been particularly instrumental in

ensuring the preservation of the Lyceum, and the Lyceum Trust are grateful for the City's support in securing the grant.

"The support of English Heritage further underpins the success of the restored Lyceum Theatre. We are very pleased that they have shown such confidence in this important city project."

*John Cornwell, Chair
Lyceum Theatre Trust*

JOB SELECTION

CHAIRMAN

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Framed limited edition of Terry Gorman's painting of the Lyceum

Also available are:
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All orders, enquiries or cheques should be made out and addressed to:

The Crucible Theatre
Norfolk Street,
Sheffield S1 1DH
or telephone: (684466).

Calendar 1991

To celebrate the opening of the Lyceum Theatre in December 1990, we have produced a calendar featuring the work of six local artists:

Joe Scarborough, Roz Norsworthy, Bill Kirkby,
Isabel Blincow, Barbara Mitchell, Keith Donald.

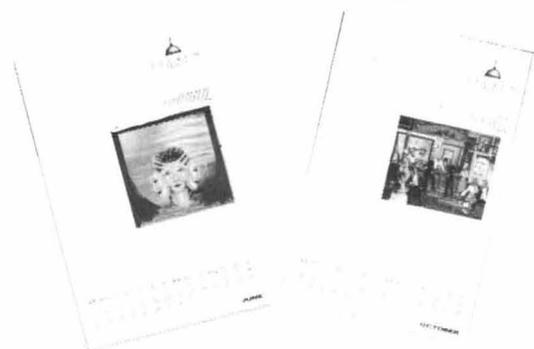
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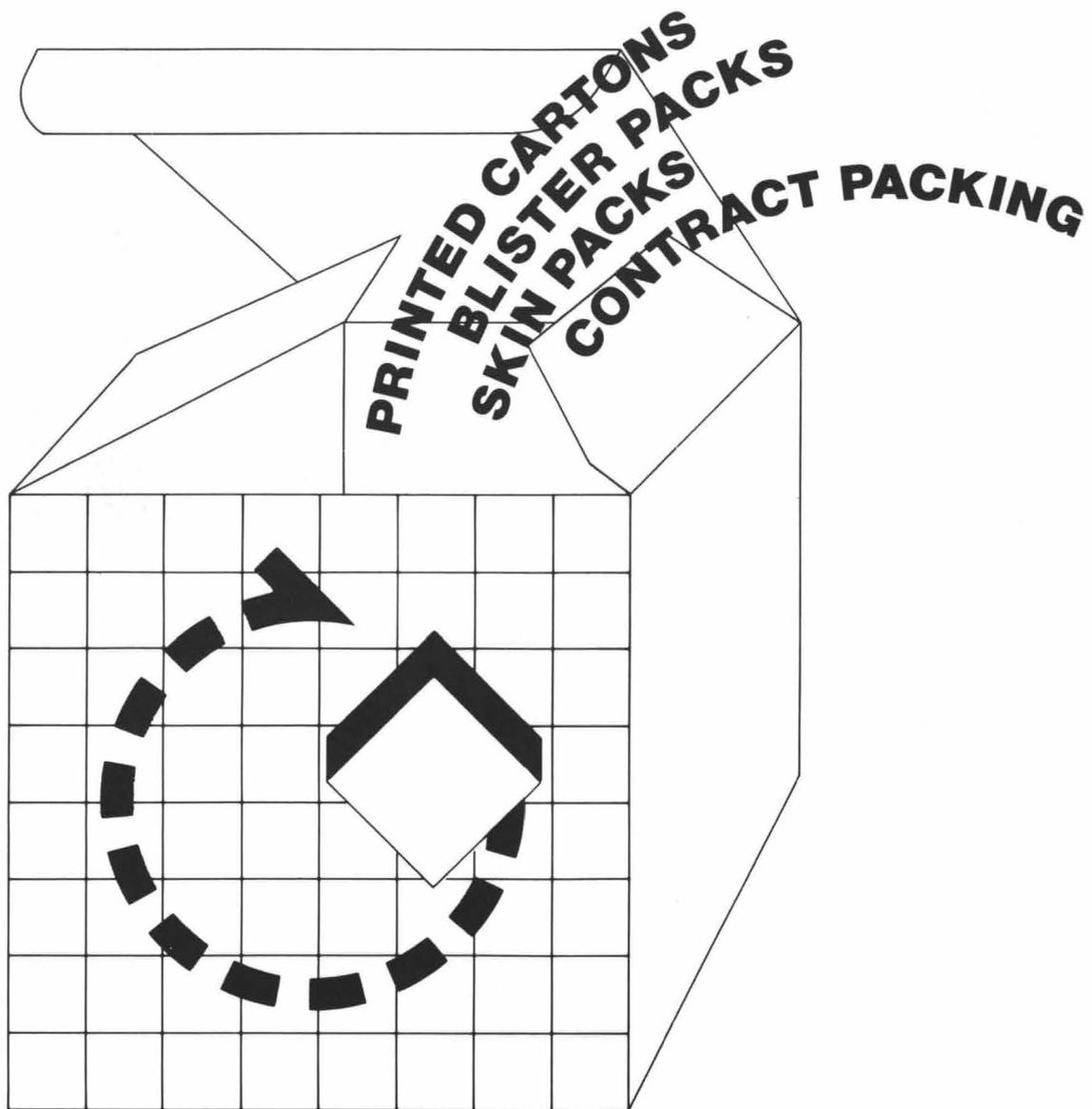
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SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

— Sheffield's Lyceum Theatre Celebrated in Paint

When the Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield finally shut its doors in the late sixties, there were many who said that it would never live again. The building was a familiar fondly remembered landmark in the centre of the city, but it was to remain closed and rotting for over two decades.

Now, however, work is progressing well on its £12 million restoration, a project which will turn it into the jewel in Sheffield's crown. Opened in 1897, it was designed by the famous Victorian theatre architect WGR Sprague, and its dazzling architecture has always been a favourite subject for local artists. The theatre's closure over recent years has meant that pictures of the Lyceum have been tinged with nostalgia for its past glories, but now the

exciting transformation of the building from a decaying eyesore into one of the country's showpiece theatres has been dramatically captured in a new painting by Trevor Neal.

The Sheffield artist, recently successful at the Great Sheffield Art Show, was commissioned by the Lyceum Theatre Appeal to produce a piece celebrating the theatre's reopening after 21 years of closure.

Trevor, who is widely known for an unconventional and imaginative approach to his work, decided to embrace both the past and the present in the picture.

"It would have been a little obvious to focus on the Lyceum's well known face," says Trevor. "I preferred to use the new parts of the theatre using architects drawings and regular visits to the site as source material."

The results are startling. Crumbling plasterwork frames an image of the theatre's recently built extension - the new seems to burst through the remnants of the original building. It all adds up to a fitting

celebration of what will, in effect, be a 'new' Victorian theatre.

Trevor Neal, who has worked in public and private collections in Britain, USA, France, Germany and Israel is delighted to be associated with such an exciting project. He only remembers the Lyceum during its days as a rock venue in the early eighties but its rebirth as a theatre has given him the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to its future.

A limited edition of 200 signed and dated prints of the painting have been produced to aid the Lyceum Theatre Appeal's ongoing fundraising. They are

available, framed and glazed, for only £65 each. Anyone interested in buying a print and helping the Lyceum live again should contact Peter Johnson, the Appeal Director, PO Box 439, Sheffield, S10 1AQ. Tel: (0742) 660987.



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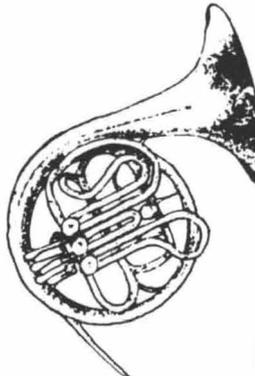
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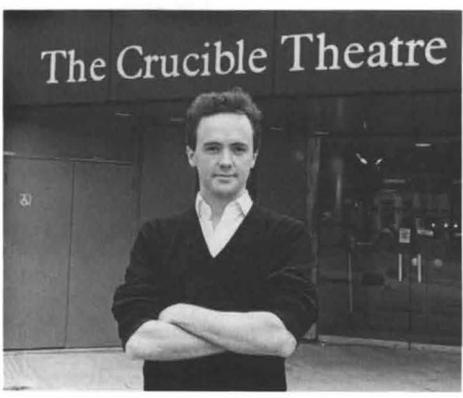
TWO NEW DIRECTORS FOR THE CRUCIBLE THEATRE

Two Directors have been appointed in Sheffield today, one for the Crucible Theatre and one for the Theatre In Education team attached to Sheffield Theatres Limited.

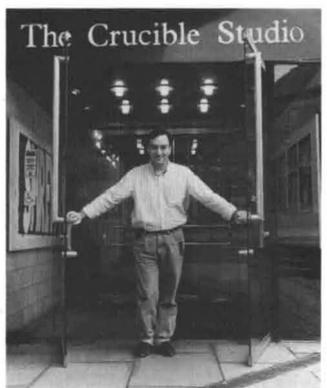
Mark Brickman is to be the Director of the Crucible and his role will be to develop and implement the artistic policy for the theatre. Mark is looking forward to taking up his new appointment in September, "I've just had my 30th Birthday, it is the best

present I could hope for. I have always loved the city and wanted to work at the Crucible, it really is a dream come true."

Mark is probably best known for his dynamic and innovative productions of classical texts.



After graduating from Cambridge Mark went to New York to work both in film and off-Broadway. He returned to England to direct for the Edinburgh Festival, Redgrave Theatre Farnham, and Croydon Warehouse Theatre. In 1983 he won a Thames Television Young Director's Bursary Award. After directing for Actors Touring Company he was invited to become Artistic Director of the company.



Lawrence Till is to become new director of the Theatre In Education and Community team. Lawrence, aged 27 is currently Associate Director at Contact Theatre, Manchester, he has worked extensively with young people in various capacities. Lawrence recently co-directed the highly acclaimed RED BALLOON for Contact Theatre and

directed PRIVATE TIMES for the Library Theatre. "This is a great opportunity to be involved with a major new arts complex" Lawrence said. "I look forward to expanding the work of the Crucible Theatre in Education, community work and the Youth Theatre and to pursuing varied programmes of innovative, challenging and diverse work for young people."

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PIRATES TAKE OVER THE LYCEUM

From December 18, 1990 - January 26 1991 the new LYCEUM will reverberate to the spectacular music and dancing of Joseph Papp's brilliant swashbuckling production of "PIRATES OF PENZANCE".

VICTOR SPINETTI, multi-talented actor, writer and director, whose career has spanned all facets of theatre, film and television.

Public interest generated by the LYCEUM'S restoration has been so enormous that: "Since bookings started, we have been rushed off our feet" says Michael Bailey (Box Office Manager).

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STOP PRESS: Due to overwhelming public demand the Crucible's Christmas musical "The Wizard of Oz" has been extended for a further week.

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