

methuen | drama

HERONS

SIMON STEPHENS



B L O O M S B U R Y

Hérons

Simon Stephens' first play, *Bring Me Sunshine*, was staged at the Assembly Rooms at the 1997 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, transferring to the Riverside Studios in London the same year. It was revived by the Royal Exchange in Manchester in 2000. His next play, *Bluebird*, was produced by the Royal Court in London in 1998 as part of their 'Choice' festival of new writing and received much critical acclaim. In 2000 he was the Arts Council Resident Dramatist at the Royal Court and the Pearson Attached Playwright at the Royal Exchange in Manchester.

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ROYAL COURT

Royal Court Theatre presents

HERONS

by Simon Stephens

First performance at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs,
Sloane Square, London on 18 May 2001.

Supported by Jerwood New Playwrights.

JERWOOD
NEW PLAYWRIGHTS

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HERONS

by **Simon Stephens**

Cast in order of appearance

Billy Lee Russell **Billy Seymour**

Scott Cooper **Robert Boulter**

Aaron Riley **Stuart Morris**

Darren Madden **Ryan Winsley**

Adele Kent **Lia Saville**

Charlie Russell **Nicolas Tennant**

Michelle Russell **Jane Hazlegrove**

Director **Simon Usher**

Designer **Antony Lambie**

Lighting Designer **Paul Russell**

Sound Designer **Ian Dickinson**

Casting **Lisa Makin, Amy Ball**

Production Manager **Sue Bird**

Company Stage Manager **Cath Binks**

Stage Management **Suzanne Bourke, Louise McDermott**

Stage Management Work Placement **Dani Youngman**

Costume Supervisor **Suzanne Duffy**

Voice Coach **Patsy Rodenburg**

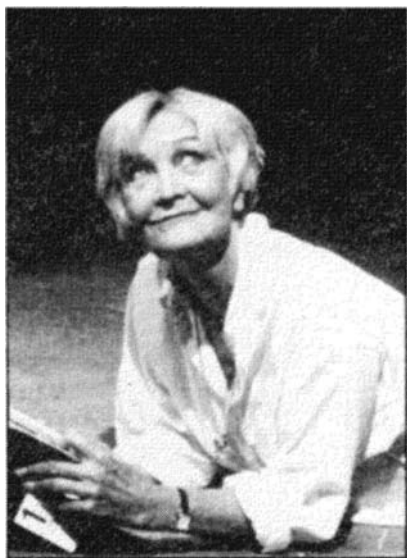
JERWOOD

NEW PLAYWRIGHTS

Since 1993 Jerwood New Playwrights have contributed to some of the Royal Court's most successful productions, including *SHOPPING AND FUCKING* by Mark Ravenhill (co-production with Out of Joint), *EAST IS EAST* by Ayub Khan-Din (co-production with Tamasha), *THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE* by Martin McDonagh (co-production with Druid Theatre Company), *THE WEIR* by Conor McPherson, *REAL CLASSY AFFAIR* by Nick Grosso, *THE FORCE OF CHANGE* by Gary Mitchell, *ON RAFTERY'S HILL* by Marina Carr (co-production with Druid Theatre Company), *4.48 PSYCHOSIS* by Sarah Kane and *UNDER THE BLUE SKY* by David Eldridge.

The Jerwood Charitable Foundation is a registered charity dedicated to imaginative and responsible funding and sponsorship of the arts, education, design and other areas of human endeavour and excellence. This season Jerwood New Playwrights are supporting *PRESENCE* by David Harrower, *HERONS* by Simon Stephens and *CLUBLAND* by Roy Williams.

www.jerwood.org.uk



UNDER THE BLUE SKY by David Eldridge
(photo: Ivan Kyncl)



EAST IS EAST by Ayub Khan-Din
(photo: Robert Day)

THE COMPANY

Simon Stephens (writer)

For the Royal Court: *Bluebird* (Choice Festival, 1998).

Other theatre includes: *Bring Me Sunshine* (Assembly Rooms, 1997 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and revived Manchester Royal Exchange, 2000).

Simon's radio play *William Curran* is due to be broadcast by Radio 4 in September.

He also received a Pearson Bursary at the Manchester Royal Exchange and was the Arts Council Resident Dramatist at the Royal Court in 2000.

Robert Boulter

Theatre includes: *Runaways* (Questors); *Grease*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Watford).

Television includes: *The Bill*, TV commercials.

Ian Dickinson (sound designer)

Theatre includes: *Search and Destroy* (New End, Hampstead); *Phaedra*, *Three Sisters*, *The Shaughraun*, *Writer's Cramp* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh); *The Whore's Dream* (RSC Fringe, Edinburgh); *As You Like It*, *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice*, *Present Laughter*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Wolks World*, *Poor Superman*, *Martin Yesterday*, *Fast Food*, *Coyote Ugly*, *Prizenight* (Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Great Monsters of Western Street* (Throat Theatre Company); *Small Craft Warnings*, *Tieble and Her Demon* (Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards Best Design Team), *The Merchant of Venice*, *Death and The Maiden* (Library Theatre Company, Manchester).

Ian is Sound Deputy at the Royal Court.

Jane Hazlegrove

Theatre includes: *Snake in the Grass* (Old Vic); *Wishbones*, *Boom Bang-a-Bang*, *The Mortal Ash* (Bush); *The Wolves* (Paines Plough tour); *Heartbreak House* (Coventry); *My Mother Said I Never Should*, *Blood Wedding* (Bolton); *The Crucible* (Manchester Library); *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Manchester Contact).

Television includes: *Without Motive*, *The Cops*, *Hero to Zero*, *Big Smoke*, *Jonathan Creek*, *Shooting Star*.

Film includes: *Heidi*, *The Whipping Boy*, *The River Esk Triumph*.

Anthony Lambie (designer)

Theatre includes: *The Contractor*, *Troilus and Cressida* (Oxford Stage Company); *The Sea*, *Aristocrats*, *The Retreat from Moscow*, *The School of Night*, *Insignificance*, *The King of Prussia* (Minerva, Chichester); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It* (RNT and tour); *Lettice and Lovage*, *Burning Everest*, *Exquisite Sister* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Card Boys*, *All of You Mine*, *Mortal Ash*, *Pondlife* (Bush). Anthony has also designed productions for Leicester Haymarket, Sheffield Crucible, Almeida Music Festival, English Touring Theatre, Belgrade, Coventry, The Gate, Riverside Studios, Lyric Hammersmith, *Shared Experience*, *Paines Plough* and RSC Pit.

Opera includes: *Palace in the Sky* (Hackney Empire for the ENO/Lilian Baylis Programme), *L'Orfeo* (Purcell Quartet, Japanese tour).

Film includes: *A Secret Audience*.

Anthony is a course tutor for the Motley Theatre Design Course.

Stuart Morris

Theatre includes: *Oliver* (London Palladium); *Dick Daredevil* (Drill Hall).

Television includes: *Home Farm Twins*, *Monsignor Renard*, *Casualty*, *London's Burning*, *Anything's Possible*, *Shane Ritchie Experience*, *Middlemarch*, *The Tony Ferrino Phenomenon*, *Eastenders*, *Disney Club*, *Crimewatch*, *Get Your Act Together*.

Radio includes: *Fun Filled Days of Harriet Night*, *First Steps in Drama*.

Paul Russell (lighting designer)

For the Royal Court: Not a Game for Boys. Other theatre includes: Hard Times (Watermill, Newbury); Closer (RNT international tour); Madame Butterfly (Singapore Repertory Theatre); Trainspotting, Raising Fires, One Flea Spare (amongst many other productions at the Bush); The Way You Look Tonight (Druid); Exodus (Tara Arts); The Cherry Orchard (Guildhall); Danton's Death, The Portuguese Boat Plays, The Great Highway, Rousseau's Tale, Bad Blood, Picnic /Guernica, Talking Tongues, Anowa, Dear Elena Sergeievna, Silver Face, Hunting Scenes in Lower Bavaria (Gate); Madness in Valencia, The Great Pretenders (Gate and tour); Fat Janet, Iona Rain (Croydon Warehouse); Peribanez (Cambridge Arts); The Wolves (Paines Plough tour); My Mother Said I Never Should (Oxford Stage Co); Yiddish Trojan Woman (Cockpit); Boy (Everyman Liverpool/Lyric Hammersmith/BAC and national tour); Love at a Loss (BAC and national tour); Mr Director (Orange Tree); Theaker Dance (Palace and tour); Webster (Old Red Lion); The Eleventh Commandment (Hampstead); Max Clapper (Electric Cinema); Exquisite Sister (West Yorkshire Playhouse/Edinburgh festival); Musical Opera (BAC); Pig's Ear (Liverpool Playhouse) Opera includes: Snatched by the Gods, Broken Strings (Almeida), Linda Di Chamonix, Rape of Lucretia (Guildhall), Così Fan Tutti (Ealing), West Side Story (Pimlico Opera at Wandsworth Prison). Paul is Resident Production Manager at the Young Vic.

Lia Saville

Theatre includes: Annie (Victoria Palace); Oliver (London Palladium); Whistle Down the Wind (Sydmonton Festival). Television includes: Pig Heart Boy, See Saw, Black Britain, Eastenders, Live and Kicking.

Billy Seymour

Hérons is Billy's first professional theatre production. Television includes: A Christmas Carol, Brainfood, Modern Times, The Pig Boy, TV commercials.

Nicolas Tennant

Theatre includes: Les Justes (Gate); The Recruiting Officer (Chichester Festival); King Lear (RSC); Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against The Eunuchs (Hampstead); Sugar, Sugar, Love and Understanding (Bush); New Play Festival (Derby); Henry IV, I & II (ETT tour and Old Vic); Not a Game for Boys (RNT tour and Edinburgh Festival 98); The Blue Ball, Billy Liar (RNT); Bad Company (RNT Studio and Bush); Sailor Beware (Queen's, Hornchurch and tour); Soundings (Old Red Lion); Inventing a New Colour (Northcott Theatre, Exeter); Billy Budd (Crucible, Sheffield); K-Top, The Trouble with Girls (RNT Studio). Television includes: Residents, The Bill, Eastenders, Back-up, The Bombmaker, Between the Lines, Friday on My Mind, Trainer, Nice Town. Film includes: Tube Tales, Oscar and Lucinda, Backbeat, The Gift, The Fool, A Dangerous Man.

Simon Usher (director)

Theatre includes: Looking at You (Revived) Again, The Evil Doers, Pond Life, Not Fade Away, The Mortal Ash, All of You Mine, Wishbones, Card Boys (Bush); King Baby (RSC, Pit); The War in Heaven, Timon of Athens, Pericles, The Winter's Tale, The Broken Heart, The Lover's Melancholy, French Without Tears, The Bells, Pale Performer, Trios, Lettice and Lovage, The Naked, Murders in the Rue Morgue (Haymarket, Leicester); Waiting for Godot, The Browning Version, Heartbreak House, Hamlet, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Whole Lotta Shakin' (Belgrade, Coventry); No Man's Land (English Touring Theatre); Mr Puntilla and His Man Matti (Chichester); Can't Stand Up for Falling Down (Watford Palace and tour); Burning Everest, Exquisite Sister (West Yorkshire Playhouse); The Wolves (Paines Plough); Twins (Birmingham Rep); Great Balls of Fire (Cambridge theatre, West End).

Ryan Winsley

Hérons is Ryan's first professional production.

THE ENGLISH STAGE COMPANY AT THE ROYAL COURT

The English Stage Company at the Royal Court opened in 1956 as a subsidised theatre producing new British plays, international plays and some classical revivals.

The first artistic director George Devine aimed to create a writers' theatre, 'a place where the dramatist is acknowledged as the fundamental creative force in the theatre and where the play is more important than the actors, the director, the designer'. The urgent need was to find a contemporary style in which the play, the acting, direction and design are all combined. He believed that 'the battle will be a long one to continue to create the right conditions for writers to work in'.

Devine aimed to discover 'hard-hitting, uncompromising writers whose plays are stimulating, provocative and exciting'. The Royal Court production of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in May 1956 is now seen as the decisive starting point of modern British drama and the policy created a new generation of British playwrights. The first wave included John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Ann Jellicoe, N F Simpson and Edward Bond. Early seasons included new international plays by Bertolt Brecht, Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Jean-Paul Sartre and Marguerite Duras.

The theatre started with the 400-seat proscenium arch Theatre Downstairs, and then in 1969 opened a second theatre, the 60-seat studio Theatre Upstairs. Productions in the Theatre Upstairs have transferred to the West End, such as Caryl Churchill's *Far Away*, Conor McPherson's *The Weir*, Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg* and Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*. The Royal Court also co-produces plays which have transferred to the West End or toured internationally, such as Sebastian Barry's *The Steward of Christendom* and Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (with *Out of Joint*), Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (with *Druid Theatre Company*), Ayub Khan-Din's *East is East* (with *Tamasha Theatre Company*, and now a feature film).

Since 1994 the Royal Court's artistic policy has again been vigorously directed to finding and producing a new generation of playwrights. The writers include Joe Penhall, Rebecca Prichard, Michael Wynne, Nick Grosso, Judy Upton, Meredith Oakes, Sarah Kane, Anthony Neilson, Judith Johnson, James Stock, Jez Butterworth, Marina Carr, Simon Block, Martin McDonagh, Mark Ravenhill, Ayub Khan-Din, Tamantha Hammerschlag, Jess Walters, Che Walker, Conor McPherson, Simon Stephens, Richard Bean, Roy



photo: Andy Chopping

Williams, Gary Mitchell, Mick Mahoney, Rebecca Gilman, Christopher Shinn, Kia Corthron, David Gieselmann, Marius von Mayenburg and David Eldridge. This expanded programme of new plays has been made possible through the support of A.S.K Theater Projects, the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, the American Friends of the Royal Court Theatre and many in association with the Royal National Theatre Studio.

In recent years there have been record-breaking productions at the box office, with capacity houses for Jez Butterworth's *Mojo*, Sebastian Barry's *The Steward of Christendom*, Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, Ayub Khan-Din's *East is East*, Eugène Ionesco's *The Chairs*, David Hare's *My Zinc Bed* and Conor McPherson's *The Weir*, which transferred to the West End in October 1998 and ran for nearly two years at the Duke of York's Theatre.

The newly refurbished theatre in Sloane Square opened in February 2000, with a policy still inspired by the first artistic director George Devine. The Royal Court is an international theatre for new plays and new playwrights, and the work shapes contemporary drama in Britain and overseas.

REBUILDING THE ROYAL COURT

In 1995, the Royal Court was awarded a National Lottery grant through the Arts Council of England, to pay for three quarters of a £26m project to completely rebuild our 100-year old home. The rules of the award required the Royal Court to raise £7.6m in partnership funding. The building has been completed thanks to the generous support of those listed below.

We are particularly grateful for the contributions of over 5,700 audience members.

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THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE

AFRCT support the mission of the Royal Court and are primarily focused on raising funds to enable the theatre to produce new work by emerging American writers. Since this not-for-profit organisation was founded in 1997, AFRCT has contributed to seven productions including Rebecca Gilman's Spinning Into Butter. They have also supported the participation of young artists in the Royal Court's acclaimed International Residency.

If you would like to support the ongoing work of the Royal Court, please contact the Development Department on 020 7565 5050.

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