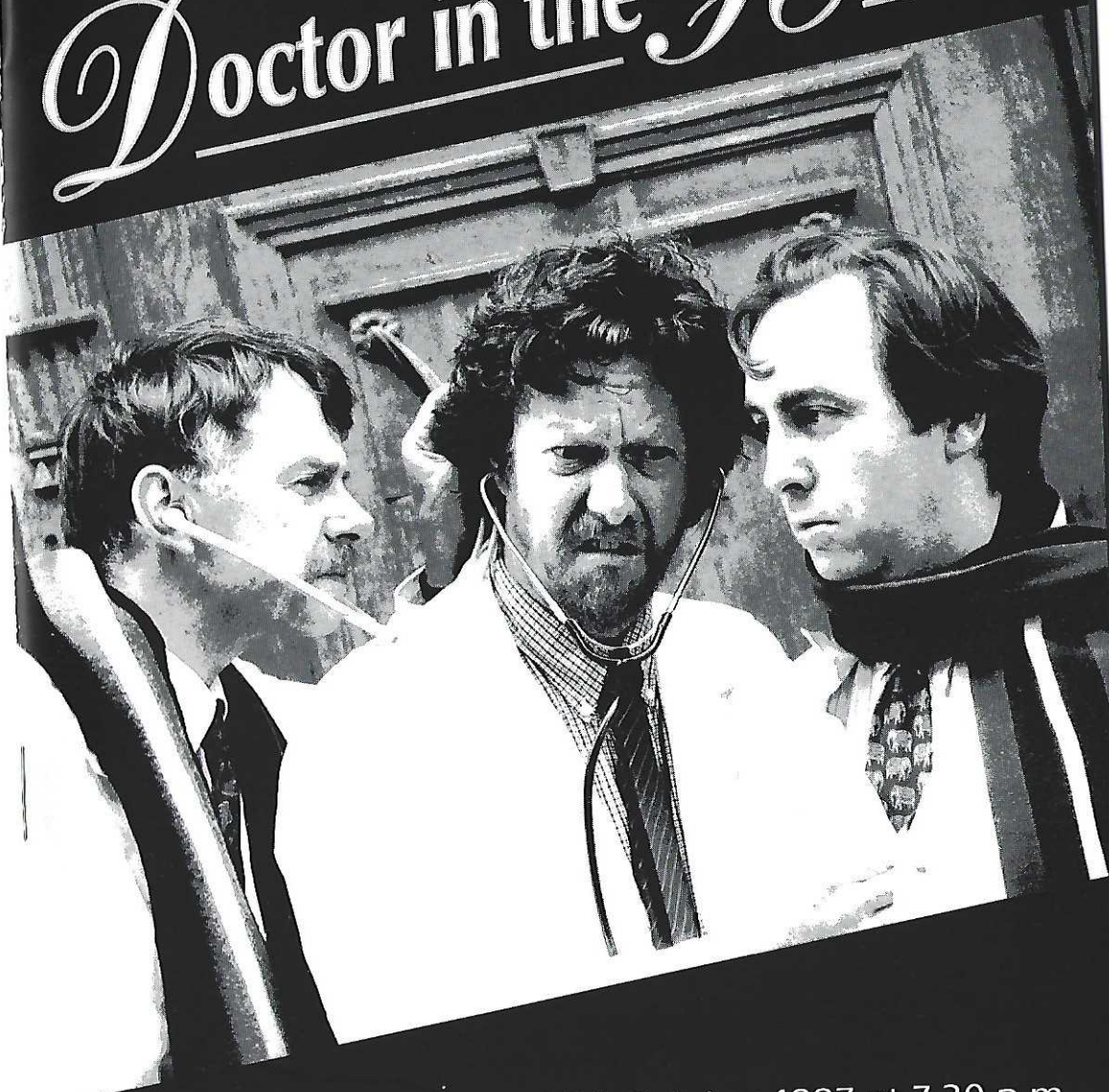


**The Semi-Circle** presents

A comedy by Ted Willis, from the novel by Richard Gordon  
Directed by Sonia Dell

# Doctor in the House



21, 22, 23 and 24 October 1997 at 7.30 p.m.

Däumlihof, Zu den drei Linden, Basel



Programme cover design: Avi Drott, Michael Latrovsky

Photography: Joy Scherer

## DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

### SYNOPSIS

*Doctor in the House* is a riotously funny play about the misadventures of Simon Sparrow and his medical student mates at St. Swithin's Hospital. Simon has the misfortune to be the nephew of Sir Lancelot Spratt, "Old Blood and Thunder", the Senior Surgeon, so his career is under a blight from the outset. However, with the aid of his resourceful friend Tony Grimsdyke and a number of nubile nurses, Simon manages to survive medical training and even get within sight of his finals. Anyone who has ever darkly suspected medical students of "goings-on" only needs to see this play to find his suspicions amply confirmed.

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Doctor in the House* ist ein ausgelassen-fröhliches Stück über die Freuden und Leiden des Medizinstudenten Simon Sparrow und seiner Freunde am Spital St. Swithin. Dummerweise ist Simon der Neffe des Chefchirurgen Sir Lancelot Spratt, genannt "altes Mordsdonnerwetter", so dass seine Laufbahn von Anfang an unter einem schlechten Stern steht. Aber mit Hilfe seines einfallsreichen Freundes Tony Grimsdyke und einiger mannbarer Krankenschwestern überlebt Simon seine medizinische Ausbildung, und sogar die Abschlussprüfung rückt in Reichweite. Wer schon immer vermutet hat, dass es bei Medizinstudenten wild zu und her geht, wird dies in diesem Stück vollumfänglich bestätigt finden.

*Doctor in the House is produced by special arrangement  
with Samuel French Ltd.*

---

"Doctor, doctor, everyone keeps ignoring me."  
"Next patient, please!"

*(Englisch mit Witzen, Ravensburger Verlag 1987)*

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## DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

*Cast*  
*(in order of appearance)*

**Tony Grimsdyke**, *a medical student*  
**Simon Sparrow**, *a medical student*  
**John Evans**, *a medical student*  
**Vera**, *a lady-in-waiting*  
**Bromley**, *a hospital porter*  
**Sir Lancelot Spratt**, *a surgeon*  
**Miss Winslow (Riggie)**, *a nurse*  
**The Matron**  
**Janet**, *a nurse*

**DAVID COX**  
**EDWARD ATKINSON**  
**PETER WILLIAMS**  
**BARBARA HUMMEL**  
**MICHAEL CLARKE**  
**ERIC COLLINO**  
**ALEXANDRA FOGGETTA**  
**JOY SCHERER**  
**HELEN BALDOMERO**

**Directed by Sonia Dell**

The action of the play takes place in the lodgings of the medical students.  
The time is reminiscent of the 1950s.

### ACT I

SCENE 1: The flat, one evening.  
SCENE 2: The flat, a few days later. Evening.

### ACT II

The flat, two years later, a day or so before Christmas. Evening.

### ACT III

SCENE 1: The flat, two years later.  
SCENE 2: The flat, the following evening.

*There will be an interval for refreshments after Act I and a short interval  
(without bar) after Act II.*

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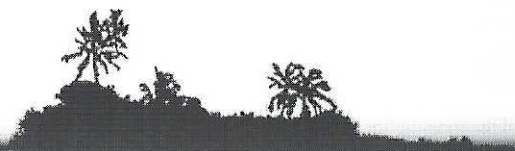
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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

*Doctor in the House* by Ted Willis is based on Richard Gordon's novel of the same name, which was the first book in the very popular *Doctor* series. Some of these were later adapted for the screen and became very successful films. Ted Willis is perhaps better known for his *Dixon of Dock Green* scripts, a classic television series which the not-so-young among us will doubtless remember.

This is a play I have wanted to put on for some considerable time. There were a few serious reservations - after all, the way these young doctors carry on is not very politically correct - male chauvinism in all its glory. However, I hope that we have passed through the extremes of the political correctness era and can once again see this play for what it is - very slick, very fast and, above all, very funny!

Those of you who are familiar with the *Doctor* films may be expecting a James Robertson Justice look-alike in the role of Sir Lancelot Spratt. However, I am sure you will agree that Eric Collino is a worthy Sir Lancelot. He brings his own inimitable style to the role - as indeed does each member of the cast. They have all had fun working together and I am sure this comes over on stage.

Directing a play for the Semi-Circle is ..... an interesting experience. Business trips and/or holidays, none of which coincide, of course, mean that it is rare to get more than a handful of rehearsals when all the cast is present at the same time. My favourite comment, and one that keeps me sane, is ..... "Well, at least I know that you will all be here for the dress rehearsal on October 19th!"

Despite all the trials and tribulations directing is a rewarding, exciting and certainly a fun experience - one which I thoroughly enjoy and hope to repeat in the future.

Here's hoping you all enjoy the play as much we have,

**Sonia**

---

Doctor: "Do you have trouble making up your mind?"  
Patient: "Well, yes and no ...."

(Engl. m. Witzgen, Ravensb. Vlg. '87)

---

## SECRETS OF THE CAST REVEALED .....

*We feel privileged to have been allowed access to highly confidential files at St. Swithins, from which the following information was obtained.*

### **Edward Atkinson** ♂

has lived in Basel since 1989 and works for a bank. He joined The Semi-Circle in 1991 and this will be his tenth production. He hopes that he will not have to call 'line' as often as he did in his last play.

### **Helen Baldomero** ♀

joined The Semi-Circle in 1987 when she played Miss Eynsford-Hill in *Pygmalion*. Since then she has had roles in several workshop productions and has performed a variety of jobs behind the scenes. *Doctor in the House* is Helen's second major production. Having trained in a London hospital many, many years ago, her desire to relive the good old days lured her back to the big stage again, this time as a nurse at the infamous St. Swithin's.

### **Michael Clarke** ♂ or ♀ ?

moved to Basel a considerable time ago and for many years his acting experience was limited to various roles in an on-going pharmaceutical company farce. His rise to fame was meteoric after camp performances in two English-speaking Club pantomimes, in which he demonstrated unlimited talent to sing off-key and out of time with dancing steps which beggared description. In 1996 his acting career changed course when he appeared on stage as a male (!) in The Semi-Circle workshop. This very macho role helped to enhance his acting reputation and caused most of his female acquaintances to stop talking to him for months afterwards.

### **Eric Collino** ♂

is an Englishman with a Latin Quarter (one grandfather was Italian), and has lived and worked in Basel for 17 years. In fear and trepidation he made his first stage appearance five years ago in a Semi-Circle workshop. To his (and perhaps others') surprise he managed to remember most of his lines and even where next to move. Building on this undoubted triumph he has been willingly coerced into roles in several workshops and full-length plays since then. He particularly enjoys the close teamwork that underpins all theatrical performances.

### **David Cox** ♂

has been actively involved in the last three workshop productions, but this is his first go at treading the big boards of the Bäumlihof stage! David is a nice man - not only has he actually learned his lines for tonight's performance, but old ladies, pussy-cats and small children like him ..... he has even been known to remove spiders (no matter how large or hairy) from the bathtub with his bare hands!!

### **Alexandra Foggetta** ♀

was born in Switzerland, is half Hungarian, part Italian and was raised in Canada. She works as a chemical lab. technician with a pharmaceutical company in Basel. Her first stage appearance was in a high school play in Calgary, Canada. She had her acting debut with The Semi-Circle last year in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and also took part in this year's March workshop. In *Doctor in the House* she plays the 'simple and dumb' - and permanently hungry - Riggie.

### **Barbara Hummel** ♀

has real-life experience of dealing with unruly members of the medical profession and so feels at home in the role of Vera. What's more, she is also a genuine Continental! She joined The Semi-Circle in 1991 and appeared in the sketch *Bar Stools* in 1992. Now, after many years of back-stage work, she is looking forward to finding out again "how the other half lives".

### **Joy Scherer** ♀

first appeared on stage at the age of seven in a school nativity play, cast - by a very discerning teacher - as 'a child'. A resident of Basel for over 25 years she joined The Semi-Circle in 1984. She appeared on stage most recently as Joyce, the slow-witted but multi-talented treasurer in *Last Panto in Little Grimley*. She has also helped behind the scenes and has been a committee member for several years. In between semi-circling and looking after her family she enjoys playing badminton, writing and solving jig-saw puzzles, to which she is hopelessly addicted.

### **Peter Williams** ♂

was born and bred in North London and the Home Counties. He came to Basel three-and-a-half years ago and joined The Semi-Circle early this year, when the lure of the bright lights and the grease-paint finally proved irresistible. On the strength of previous acting experience as a clever rat and a stupid vet he landed a part in the one-act play *The Actor's Nightmare* last March, when he played, among other things, the executioner. His small son assumes that in *Doctor in the House* Peter is cast as another executioner - perhaps a rigger-fiendish medical student is close enough .....

## A POTTED HISTORY OF THE SEMI-CIRCLE SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

**1967**

A few members of the British Circle met for the first time to read plays in English. It proved to be an auspicious occasion: some years later a drama society was formed and The Semi-Circle (hereinafter the SC) was born. Although initially sponsored by the British Circle we have for many years been a fully independent society.

**1975**

Our first public performance - a rehearsed reading of *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* by Oscar Wilde.

**1977**

The first of three musical revues, presented jointly with *The Flowing Bowl*, a jolly group of male vocalists from the British Circle.

**1978**

Our first full stage production: the play *Dear Charles* by Alan Melville ran for two nights before a captivated audience at the *Borromäum* theatre.

**1982**

The theatre of the Gymnasium Bäumlhof, with its greater seating capacity, became the new venue for our major productions. The first one at the new theatre was a Wilde success - *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The Bäumlhof seats were clearly not designed for maximum comfort (but we can afford the rent) and we are grateful to our many loyal fans who endure them year after year.

**1986**

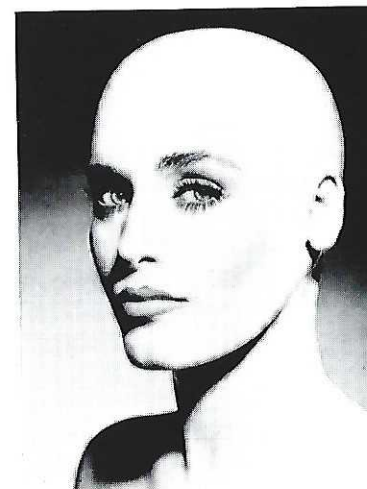
Our first workshop production took place. It was the fore-runner to the evenings of one-act plays now held regularly in March in the cellar theatre of the *Schönes Haus* in Basel. Of an experimental nature the workshops give new members greater opportunity to perform on stage, and adventurous souls wishing to broaden their horizons the chance to try their hand at directing or learning new jobs behind the scenes.

**1987**

Our main production - Shaw's *Pygmalion* - attracted a total audience of 1528 over four nights, an unbeaten record. The SC presented *The Paradise Pageant* at the first Festival of English-speaking Theatre in Switzerland, held in Berne. Subsequent festivals have been held every two years, most recently in Zürich in 1995 when the SC performed the one-act play *Last Tango in Little Grimley*.

Cont'd ....

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1988

The pioneer lady director who produced our first workshop in 1986, directed single-handed an evening of three one-act plays, a remarkable feat which has not been equalled since.

Another first: our major production *I Remember Mama* featured a four-legged extra, a very well-behaved feline who did not steal the show, but caused considerable amusement when she decided to investigate the auditorium during one of the performances.

1989

Without doubt the busiest year in the history of the SC with a total of 29 public performances of various pieces in 19 full evenings of entertainment. Incidentally, the two workshops presented were performed at the *Theater Vis-à-Vis*, a charming little theatre which sadly no longer exists but which is fondly remembered by many, especially for its plush seats - the most luxurious our audience has sat upon to date.

1991

Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend*, our first and, as yet, only full-length musical was one of our most ambitious productions so far. The audience loved it, the more extrovert among them were on their feet in the aisles - 'doing the Riviera' with members of the cast.

1994

A donation was made to the Basel *Lighthouse*, the most recent of several donations to charity, totalling Fr. 10,000.-, which have been made over the years. As a non-profit-making society receiving no external financial support the SC is delighted to have been able to make these donations which would not have been possible without the loyalty and support of you, our audience.

1995

Our annual post-Christmas party took on a brand-new dimension when we decided to break with tradition and sample a slightly more exotic cuisine. We dined at the Rhein-Palast restaurant in Basel and enjoyed a delicious Chinese meal, followed by Karaoke. It was a well attended event, with fine vocal performances from some members, while others helped to demonstrate that Karaoke is indeed an acquired art.

In the same year we celebrated our 20th birthday with a party at the Crossair patio.

1997

Back to the present, and some current vital statistics:

The SC is now in its **22nd** year and *Doctor in the House* is the group's **17th** major production. Over **60** productions (readings, musical revues, full-length plays and workshops) have been staged since the group's first public performance in 1975 (a complete list can be found elsewhere in this programme). The SC now has over **100** members. Our mailing list (our most effective means of advertising) contains well over **1300** names and there is space for many more! All addressees receive free mailings announcing forthcoming productions.



As this is a brief history of The Semi-Circle the present writer has resisted the temptation to mention names. Many people have helped the SC to achieve the reputation it enjoys today and, especially where space is limited, rather than mention only a few of them I have chosen not to mention any.

Our aim as an amateur dramatic society is to offer a high standard of theatrical entertainment in the English language. This is not possible without a lot of hard work on artistic, technical and administrative levels, and the polished performance which you see on stage (we hope!) is the culmination of the efforts of a whole team of players, all of whom make an important contribution to the production and help ensure a smooth-running, successful performance.

There is indeed a whole lot more to the theatre than bright lights and greasepaint. It is a long road from play selection to performance and although ultimately very rewarding amateur dramatics is a time-consuming hobby that requires commitment and discipline from everyone, especially the actors. However, this is not to say that we don't have a lot of fun as well, and fortunately our directors are not quite as strict as the master Noel Coward, who used to insist that his cast should be word perfect at the first rehearsal.

New members, with or without experience, are welcome, so if you think you can spare the time to share in both the hard work and the fun, either on stage or behind the scenes, please contact our Secretary, Ann Maerki, Weiherweg 84, 4054 Basel, Tel. 061/301 60 86, for more information. If you do not wish to become a member but would simply like to be informed about future productions she will be pleased to add your name to our mailing list.

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Psychiatrist: "As this is your first visit, I suggest you start at the beginning."

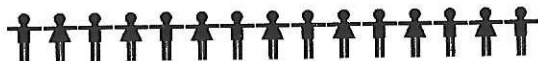
Patient: "Very well. In the beginning, I created Heaven and Earth ...."

(Engl. m. Witzten, Ravensb. Vlg. '87)

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## PRODUCTION TEAM

<i>Production Manager</i>	<b>DENNIS DELL</b>
<i>Director</i>	<b>SONIA DELL</b>
<i>Director's Assistant &amp; Stage Manager</i>	<b>YVONNE FENN</b>
<i>Set Building</i>	<b>JOHN STAFFORD</b>
<i>Set Artwork</i>	<b>BOB WILLIAMSON</b>
<i>Lights and Sound</i>	<b>ROGER KLEIBER SUSAN BILLINGTON</b>
<i>Properties</i>	<b>DIANA ZUGER</b>
<i>Publicity</i>	<b>CYNTHIA BAER ANN MAERKI ANDREW THOMPSON</b>
<i>Programme</i>	<b>JOY SCHERER</b>
<i>Make-up</i>	<b>RAY KLEIBER JENNY AELLIG and helpers</b>
<i>Foyer Exhibition</i>	<b>GRAYSON RICHARDS</b>
<i>Prompter</i>	<b>CAROLINE WEISSKOPF</b>
<i>Bar</i>	<b>MICHAEL WILKINSON</b>
<i>Box Office</i>	<b>SUZAN WILSON and helpers</b>
<i>Front of House</i>	<b>SUE STAFFORD</b>



The Semi-Circle would like to thank all those people not mentioned by name whose generous help has made this production possible.

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## SEMI-CIRCLE PRODUCTIONS FROM DAYS GONE BY

### Full-length plays

<b>Ayckbourn</b>	SEASON'S GREETINGS (1995)
<b>Coward</b>	HAY FEVER (1980), PRESENT LAUGHTER (1983), BLITHE SPIRIT (1984)
<b>Congreve</b>	LOVE FOR LOVE (1989)
<b>Cox</b>	LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME (based on the short story by Oscar Wilde) (1993)
<b>van Druten</b>	I REMEMBER MAMA (1988)
<b>Hart &amp; Kaufmann</b>	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU (1994)
<b>Kesselring</b>	ARSENIC AND OLD LACE (1996)
<b>Kilty</b>	DEAR LIAR (1989)
<b>Melville</b>	DEAR CHARLES (1978)
<b>Miller</b>	THE CRUCIBLE (1990)
<b>Priestley</b>	AN INSPECTOR CALLS (1992)
<b>Rattigan</b>	SEPARATE TABLES (1985)
<b>Robbins</b>	NIGHTMARE (1991)
<b>Shaw</b>	PYGMALION (1987)
<b>Wilde</b>	THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (1982)
<b>Williams</b>	NIGHT MUST FALL (1986)

### One-Act-Play Workshops, Readings, Sketches, Monologues

<b>Ayckbourn</b>	A CUT IN THE RATES (workshop, 1996)
<b>Bennett</b>	TALKING HEADS (3 monologues, 1993), GREEN FORMS (workshop, 1995)
<b>Chinn</b>	A RESPECTABLE FUNERAL (workshop, 1987 & 1988; at the 3rd Festival of English-Speaking Theatre, Geneva, 1991), FROM HERE TO THE LIBRARY (workshop 1988), TOO LONG AN AUTUMN (workshop, 1989), INTERIOR DESIGNS (workshop, 1996)
<b>Christie</b>	THE RATS (workshop, 1996)
<b>Coward</b>	FUMED OAK (workshop, 1986)
<b>Davis</b>	THERMAL UNDERWEAR (workshop, 1992)
<b>Dickens</b>	A CHRISTMAS CAROL (reading for charity, 1989 & 1990)
<b>Durang</b>	THE ACTOR'S NIGHTMARE (workshop, 1997; at the 17th Amateur Theatre Festival, Aarau, 1997)

<b>Edwards</b>	SWEET CAROLINE SWEET (workshop, 1993)
<b>Hickman</b>	GEORGE (workshop, 1993)
<b>Ives</b>	SURE THING (workshop, 1995)
<b>Kelly</b>	QUEER STREET (workshop, 1990)
<b>St. Vincent Millay</b>	ARIA DA CAPO (workshop, 1987)
<b>Morris</b>	BAR STOOLS (workshop, 1992), PHONES (workshop, 1994)
<b>Mortimer</b>	KNIGHTSBRIDGE (workshop, 1989), LUNCH HOUR (workshop, 1994)
<b>Pertwee</b>	POSTAL ORDERS (workshop, 1988)
<b>Pinter</b>	5 REVIEW SKETCHES (at the 2nd Festival of English-Speaking Theatre in Berne, 1989; workshop, 1989)
<b>Shaw</b>	HEARTBREAK HOUSE (reading, 1976)
<b>Shirley</b>	BUS STOP (workshop, 1988), ROUND AND ROUND THE GOOSEBERRY BUSH (workshop, 1989)
<b>Smith</b>	DEPARTURE (workshop, 1990)
<b>Stafford</b>	ROLL OVER (workshop, 1997)
<b>Strange</b>	A JOLLY SINISTER JAPE (workshop, 1994)
<b>Terence</b>	A SENSE OF THE RIDICULOUS (workshop, 1993; at the 4th Festival of English-Speaking Theatre in Berne, 1993)
<b>Townsend</b>	WOMBERANG (workshop, 1987)
<b>Tristram</b>	WHAT'S FOR PUDDING (workshop, 1992), LAST TANGO IN LITTLE GRIMLEY (workshop, 1995; at the 5th Festival of English-Speaking Theatre in Zürich, (1995), LAST PANTO IN LITTLE GRIMLEY (workshop, 1997)
<b>Wasserstein</b>	THE MAN IN A CASE (workshop, 1994)
<b>Waterhouse</b>	JEFFREY BERNARD IS UNWELL (workshop, 1996)
<b>Wilde</b>	LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME (reading, 1975)
-	THE PARADISE PAGEANT (at the 1st Festival of English-Speaking Theatre in Berne, 1987; for charity, 1987 & 1988)
-	THE NATIVITY PAGEANT (for charity, 1987 & 1988)
<b>And on a musical note .....</b>	
-	A JUBILEE REVIEW, jointly with <i>The Flowing Bowl</i> (1977)
-	OLD TIME MUSIC HALL, jointly with <i>The Flowing Bowl</i> (1978)
-	A SEASIDE SHOW, jointly with <i>The Flowing Bowl</i> (1980)
<b>Wilson</b>	THE BOY FRIEND (1991)