

Talented 'Prospect' takes over Britain's best loved theater

United Press International
LONDON — One bright new promise on the London stage is the Prospect Theater Company's current demonstration that there's life in the Old Vic yet.

Prospect, probably Britain's best little-known company, has taken over the country's best-loved theater for an initial season of five plays. The hope is that the arrangement will become permanent.

For all of its 14 years, Prospect has been a touring company, constantly on the move in this country and abroad.

Yet it has consistently snared half a dozen of Britain's finest actors for productions excelled only by the massively subsidized giants, the National Theater and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The time has come, however, according to company chief Toby Robertson, for Prospect to settle down and find a London base. Besides the advantages of a fixed headquarters, it needs exposure to American and other tourists who buy an increasing bulk of London theater seats.

Which brings us to the Old Vic. London's most famous theater has been like a cast-off courtesan since the National Theater company decamped to its grandiose palace nearby. There have been temporary occupants, but the old girl has found no new relationship which satisfied both parties.

Now Prospect has moved in with a trio of riveting productions: an admirable "St. Joan" with Eileen Atkins as the Maid, Derek Jacobi as

a well-spoken and princely "Hamlet," and a fascinating exercise in total theater drawn from the Iliad of Homer.

In July Prospect goes touring again — to the Eastern Mediterranean, through Britain and to the Edinburgh Festival. It comes back to the Old Vic in November.

This is the pattern Robertson and his company hope to follow from now on — the Old Vic as a base, touring in between. The first Prospect season at the Vic shows what a valuable addition to London's theater this system could be.

Its three productions were cunningly chosen, apparently inspired by a bombastic quote from George Bernard Shaw:

"With the single exception of Homer, there is no eminent writer I

can despise so entirely as I despise Shakespeare."

So Prospect presents all three authors — Shaw, Homer and Shakespeare — one after the other. In some ways Homer fares best.

His ancient epic of the fall of Troy, adapted by poet Christopher Logus and retitled "War Music," is a stunning theatrical experience, rather like a ballet with words.

American dancer William Louthier drilled the whole company in dance and choreographed the performance's every movement. Gary Kettel, a virtuoso drummer, thunders out Donald Fraser's strident music from a platform suspended above the action.

Timothy West is a narrator in casual modern dress, contrasting with savage loincloths on the war-

rriors' painted bodies, topped by terrifying masks.

West, television's "Edward VII" and a Prospect veteran, appears again in "Hamlet" and almost steals the play. His Claudius is tight-lipped with fury in a protracted power struggle with Hamlet.

Jacobi, another company veteran now a television "name" here for his title-role performance in "I, Claudius," is handicapped by a few questionable director's touches. But his is a fine Hamlet, noble and anguished in equal measure and with a quicksilver intelligence overriding all.

Eileen Atkins gained much praise for her down-to-earth, north country "St. Joan." Her presence demonstrates the prospect company's strength in fine actors, more proof of which is to come.

For Edinburgh's Festival and London in November, the company will be joined by Dorothy Tutin and Alec McCowen in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra." It will be paired with John Dryden's little-known version of the same story, "All for Love," with Barbara Jefford and John Turner.

Psychiatrist says workers should relax

United Press International
WASHINGTON — If you find it hard to balance your work with rest and relaxation, you may wind up with symptoms of what a psychiatrist calls the "overwork syndrome."

The signs vary but commonly include fatigue, irritability, sleep disturbances, concentration difficulties, memory lapses, episodes of confusion, gastrointestinal problems or neuromuscular complaints.

Dr. John M. Rhoads of the Duke University Medical Center said the symptoms of overwork may mimic heart attack or even brain disorders. The problems can lead to alcoholism or drug dependency.

Rhoads discussed the syndrome in the Journal of the American Medical Association and said most people who have open-ended jobs without specific work hours are able to pace themselves even if they work long hours.

People who become ill are those who ignore the body's signals for rest, recuperation and recreation.

"Cursed with a compulsive need to work, they deny the existence of fatigue and push themselves beyond reason," Rhoads said.

Rhoads said the people most likely to fall victim to overwork syndrome are those in executive positions with no set work times and self-employed workers such as lawyers, doctors, accountants, clergymen and occasionally housewives.

Those who work too much do not complain about it, Rhoads said. Instead they go to the doctor complaining about one of the overwork symptoms.

In severe cases, Rhoads said it may be necessary to hospitalize the patient and give him specialized treatment. In mild cases, all that may be required are a vacation and advice on the need to balance work with rest and recreation.

Rhoads said little research has been done on the problems of overwork, but from 10 cases he described, he said it appeared the patients were attempting to solve their life problems by working excessively in a compulsive manner.

"Fear of failure to live up to ideals and goals played a prominent part in all cases," Rhoads said. "In a few cases, a continuing need to compete, originally with a childhood rival, became a way of life."

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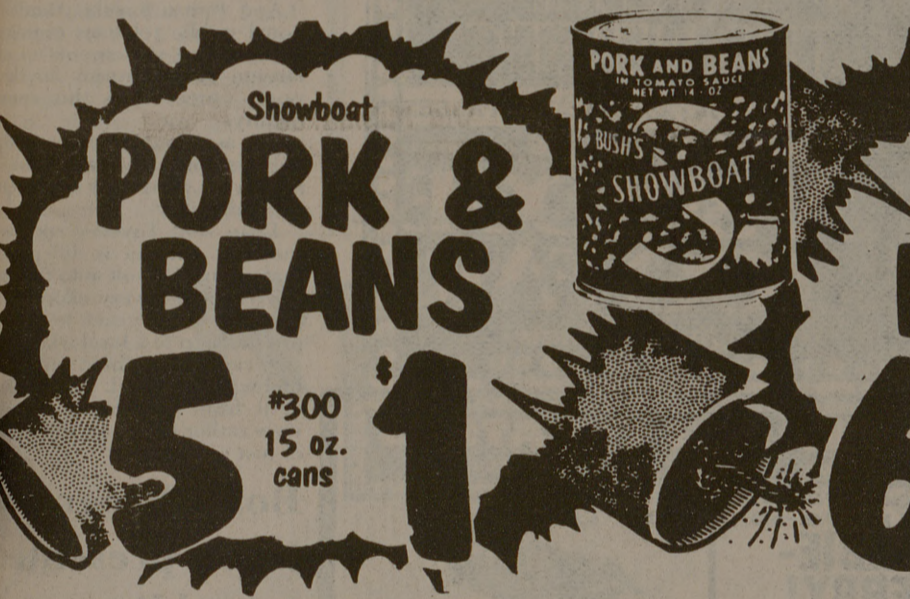
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