Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company presents

Arcadia by Tom Stoppard

Insight Pack

Created by Malena Wong and Allie Spencer

Rehearsal photographs by Robert Day

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Dr Mary Crone Odekon
Skidmore College, USA
Cherwell School, Oxford
for their contributions
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Cast and Creative Team

Jellaby/Noakes
Gus/Augustus
Valentine
Ezra Chater
Hannah
Thomasina
Septimus Hodge
Lady Croom
Chloe
Captain Brice
Bernard

MARK JARDINE
JACOB SEELOCHAN
ILAN GOODMAN
JAMES THORNE
TERESA BANHAM
EMILY LAING
PARTH THAKERAR
LIZZY MCINNERNY
FLORENCE ROBERTS
ROBIN KINGSLAND
DAVID BARK-JONES

Director
Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Choreographer
DSM

GILES CROFT
MADELEINE GIRLING
MARK JONATHAN
ADAM P McCREADY
ADELE PARRY
KATHRYN BAINBRIDGE-WILSON
The Cast of Arcadia:

EMILY LAING
Thomasina Coverly

PARTH THAKERAR
Septimas Hodge

MARK JARDINE
Jellaby / Richard Noaks

JAMES THORNE
Ezra Chater

TERESA BANHAM
Hannah Jarvis

FLORENCE ROBERTS
Chloe Coverly

DAVID BARK-JONES
Bernard Nightingale

ILAN GOODMAN
Valentine Coverly

LIZZY McINNERNY
Lady Croom

ROBIN KINGSLAND
Capt. Brice, RN

JACOB SEELOCHAN
Gus Coverly / Augustus Coverly
Introduction to Arcadia

The gardens at Sidley Park are being transformed from their eighteenth century symmetrical style into the newly fashionable 'picturesque' style of the early nineteenth century, a romantic wild landscape of irregular trees and jagged rocks.

"...English landscape was invented by gardeners imitating foreign painters who were evoking classical authors. The whole thing was brought home in the luggage from the Grand Tour."

The transformation of the garden is mirrored in a transformation of science occurring through the development of thermodynamics, which is alluded to throughout the play. The elegantly ordered perpetual universe of Isaac Newton is being challenged by the discoveries of Carnot in France, which ultimately suggest the universe is running down into disorder. It is a transformation that requires present day concepts and techniques to reveal it fully: the science of fractals, miraculously anticipated by Thomasina in 1809, must wait until the advent of computers before her genius can be revealed. The new theories of chaos, studied by a later family member, Valentine, seem to suggest a new approach to understanding.

"It makes me so happy. To be at the beginning again, knowing almost nothing...a door like this has cracked open five or six times since we got up on our hind legs. It’s the best possible time to be alive..."

However, not all share his vision. Bernard Nightingale, an impossibly conceited academic, is researching Byron at Sidley Park. He has no time for science:

"A great poet is always timely. A great philosopher is an urgent need. There's no rush for Isaac Newton. We were quite happy with Aristotle's cosmos. Personally, I preferred it. Fifty-five crystal spheres geared to God's crankshaft is my idea of a satisfying universe."  Through his play, Stoppard succeeds in merging science with human concerns and ideals. He leaves us with the view that if the universe is an apparently doomed machine, then whilst we are alive, we might as well dance.

(Source: [http://www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/arcadia/](http://www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/arcadia/))

The Original London Production

Arcadia was first produced on the Lyttleton stage at the National Theatre on 13 April 1993. It was directed by Trevor Nunn. Felicity Kendal played Hannah Jarvis and Bill Nighy played Bernard Nightingale. Rufus Sewell played Septimus Hodge.

It received excellent reviews. The Sunday Times said:

‘This is a brilliant, brilliant play. A play of ideas, of consummate theatricality, of sophisticated entertainment and of heartache for a time never to be regained.’

The Daily Telegraph said:

‘I have never left a play more convinced that I'd just witnessed a masterpiece.’

It transferred to Haymarket Theatre where it ran until 1995 with two casts. There have also been professional performances at the Lincoln Centre, New York and at the Arena Stage, Washington D.C. In 1998 there was a semi-professional open-air production at Stowe School.
Further References

Review by Benedict Nightingale in *The Times* 15 April 1993
Interview with Stoppard, *Independent on Sunday* 28 March 1993
Review in *Scientific American* by Tim Beardsley, July 1997
Article: Why Stoppard called his play *Arcadia* by Francis Gregory, *The English Review*
(Source: http://www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/arcadia/london.htm)

Synopsis

*Arcadia* is a 1993 play by Tom Stoppard concerning the relationship between past and present, order and disorder, certainty and uncertainty. *Arcadia* is set in Sidley Park, an English country house in Derbyshire, and takes place in both 1809/1812 and the present day (1993 in the original production). The activities of two modern scholars and the house's current residents are juxtaposed with those of the people who lived there in the earlier period.

In 1809, Thomasina Coverly, the daughter of the house, is a precocious teenager with ideas about mathematics, nature and physics well ahead of her time. She studies with her tutor Septimus Hodge, a friend of Lord Byron (an unseen guest in the house). In the present, writer Hannah Jarvis and literature professor Bernard Nightingale converge on the house: she is investigating a hermit who once lived on the grounds, he is researching a mysterious chapter in the life of Byron. As their studies unfold -- with the help of Valentine Coverly, a postgraduate student in mathematical biology -- the truth about what happened in Thomasina's time is gradually revealed.

The play's set features a large table, used by the characters in both past and present. Props are not removed when the play switches time period; books, coffee mugs, quill pens, portfolios, and laptop computers appear together, blurring past and present. An ancient but still living tortoise also appears in every scene, symbolising long-suffering endurance and the continuity of existence.

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arcadia_(play)#Synopsis)
Short Biography of Tom Stoppard

TOM STOPPARD was born Thomas Straussler on 3 July 1937 in Zlin, Czechoslovakia. He was the second son of a doctor employed by the Bata shoe company. In 1939, the family left Czechoslovakia and the German invasion and settled in Singapore. Mrs Straussler and her children were evacuated to India by the British, but Dr Straussler remained in Singapore and was killed by the Japanese. Mrs Straussler married Kenneth Stoppard, a major in the British Army.

In 1946, the family moved to England and lived in both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire before moving to Bristol. Tom was educated at the Dolphin School in Nottinghamshire and then Pocklington School in Yorkshire. It was his time living in Derbyshire that made him fall in love with the Derbyshire countryside, a love that later inspired Arcadia. In 1954 he became a reporter on the Western Daily Press. He became a freelance writer in 1960 and wrote his first play, A Walk on Water which was later staged in 1968 as Enter a Free Man. He wrote a number of radio and television plays and also became a theatre critic for Scene magazine.

He married first in 1965 and had two sons. That same year, his novel Lord Malquist and Mr Moon was published. In 1967, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead was first produced on the Edinburgh fringe and later transferred to the National Theatre, winning the Evening Standard drama award.

In 1972 he divorced, marrying Miriam Moore-Robinson (from whom he has subsequently separated). They had two sons. His play Jumpers was produced at the National. Subsequent plays include Travesties, 1974; Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, 1977, with music by Andre Previn; Night and Day, 1978; The Real Thing, 1978; and Hapgood, 1988. He has also directed a film version of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead.

(Source: http://www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/arcadia/)
In conversation with Giles Croft

Giles Croft is Artistic Director at Nottingham Playhouse and is directing this new “spine tingling” production.

Giles was Literary Manager at The National Theatre, London, when Arcadia was first submitted to the National Theatre by Tom Stoppard, consequently he was one of the first to read it and has loved it ever since.

Arcadia fits in perfectly with the current time and memory season, not only because of its constant swapping between the time periods, but also because of Stoppard’s local connections to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

The play stars one of the original cast members David Bark – Jones, who understudied Rufus Sewell (Septimus)

On asking Giles about the greatest challenges of directing Arcadia he answered
“Ensuring that the science is sufficiently clear whilst maintaining the dramatic/emotional energy”

The play has been rehearsed at Nottingham for three weeks before going into tech week and its subsequent opening night. During the rehearsal process the company have not only rehearsed, but also entertained scientists from the University of Nottingham, debated the Newtonian laws, and studied fractals.

On asking Giles what he had enjoyed most about the process he replied:
“Working with a company that have embraced the challenges of the play and finding that I could grasp Newtonian laws and chaos theory sufficiently well to be able to bluff my way at a party!”

“The most difficult scene to direct is the final scene - because it mixes the two eras and within it it has a number of time changes.”

He is looking forward to the play opening on 31 October.

“I hope there a moments where the spine tingles!”
Interview with Costume & Set Designer Madeleine Girling

Could you briefly describe your ideas for the upcoming play Arcadia? How would you describe your design? What sort of impression did you want to give to the audience?

I think Arcadia is not a play with one theme or intention, but rather many quite complex subjects and ideas for an audience to grapple with. It explores philosophy; poetry; physics; human relationships; love, landscape architecture, Romanticism, Classicism, the movement in England from thinking to feeling, and so on. It felt important to create a space that allowed all of these ideas room to breathe and have space to settle with the audience without too much physical clutter getting in the way. That was my initial feeling when thinking about the design for the play.

Where did your inspirations for the Arcadia stage set come from?

Giles Croft and I went on a number of day trips to some stately homes around Derbyshire, which was really helpful in getting a feel for the sort of environment the Coverly family might have lived in and what the surrounding landscape might have looked like. I also did a lot of independent research into artists and architecture of the time. A big influence was the 19th century architect John Soane, whose designs focus on reducing traditional Georgian styles and shapes to their simplest, cleanest lines and forms. This felt very apt for Arcadia - something geometric and beautiful, and yet simple, minimalistic and airy.
How is the design process for *Arcadia* different from your previous show, *Time and the Conways*?

I think each process is dictated completely by the subject matter of the piece, and where the research for that particular line of enquiry takes you. For *Time and the Conways* I looked at a lot of photography and installation artists, which was really helpful in finding a way to achieve the abstract surrounding world for the Conway family to exist within. This meant a lot of my research time was spent going to exhibitions and galleries. For *Arcadia*, the research has led me to historical houses, interior architecture, romantic landscapes, and chaos theory. Each new job presents a whole new area of discovery and varying means of discovering it.

Being the set and costume designer must entail a lot of responsibilities. What sort of difficulties have you encountered in recreating the *Arcadia* space on stage?

So far (touch wood) things seem to be going fairly smoothly with *Arcadia*. Of course there are always different challenges, but nothing we haven’t been able to solve yet. The design for this show is so structurally heavy, which is something I haven’t really done before, so there has had to be a lot of careful decision making on how it can be built, how it will be assembled in the space, and where the lighting designer is going to be able to light it from. Fingers crossed all goes to plan next week in the fit-up!

Madeleine Girling’s original designs for Septimus, Thomasina and Jellaby
Interview with Jacob Seelochan

Jacob Seelochan is the youngest member of cast and a member of Nottingham Playhouse Youth Theatre and Critics’ Circle. He takes time out of his first professional production to talk to Malena Wong.

Could you briefly tell us who you are, and your role in Arcadia as Gus?

I’m Jacob Seelochan. Currently I’m a trainee actor and musician, and I play Gus and Augustus in this production. Interestingly, I’m the only dual-storyline character, as Gus is the modern 15-year old, and Augustus is the teenager from the 1800s. The roles are basically polar opposites: Gus is a mute, who is described as a genius but suffers from severe social anxiety, whilst Augustus is the snarky younger brother of Thomasina, home from Eton for the holidays and out to annoy his sister.

Why did you decide to audition for Arcadia?

Arcadia is known for its thought-provoking narrative and combination of science and relationships, and so I knew it’d be a great challenge. It’s always interesting to see how a director tackles a play’s obstacles, and seeing as Giles was a part of the production’s first run at the National Theatre, we knew the play was in good hands.

I was put forward by the artistic team of the Playhouse Youth Theatre production I’d just done of Equus, in which I played the lead Martin Dysart.

(Jacob in rehearsal for Equus. Director: Sarah Stephenson, Designer Eleanor Field Photo Allie Spencer)
Knowing that you have been part of Youth Theatre, joining a professional theatre entails a huge transition. What has so far been your biggest challenge?
I definitely agree about the huge transition. Everything feels slightly different, and I had no idea what to expect from day one.

With youth theatre, you generally know who you’ll be working with either from previous commitments or word of mouth, but this piece was cast in London, and so we had to bond whilst we worked. Even though it is a job, the work has been immensely enjoyable, especially the endless hours of analysis, and the whole team are a great source of knowledge.

Having also been in Critics’ Circle, how did you apply the skills learned to acting? Did it benefit you in any way?
For me, I think there are two tasks an actor should be constantly doing to keep themselves fresh. One is seeing other people’s work, and watching theatre of all genres; everyone looks for an actor who is completely well-rounded, and seeing a range of theatre helps to give you a base for any work you may encounter in the future. The other responsibility is working in other jobs aside from just acting. Being part of a critic’s group, I was able to see productions from an evaluative side, and understand what an actor or director does that makes a play stimulating. Everything is experience.

For more information on Nottingham Playhouse Youth Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse Critics’ Circle visit
http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/participation/youth-theatre/
and
http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/participation/critics-circle/

Jacob Seelochan and Emily Laing in Arcadia rehearsals
Photography by Robert Day
Rehearsal Photographs by Robert Day
Useful Glossary for *Arcadia*

**Arcadia**
The traditional idealized rural setting of Greek and Roman pastoral poetry later a popular setting in the art and literature of the Renaissance. Nicolas Poussin’s painting *Et in Arcadia Ego* (1629-30) shows shepherds and a nymph reading the inscription on a tomb. The title can be translated as "I, who am now dead, also lived once in Arcadia" or the more foreboding "Even in Arcadia, there am I [Death]."

**The Enlightenment**
A 17th and 18th century philosophical movement concerned with the use of reason to understand the Universe and humanity’s place in it.

**Romanticism**
A movement in European art, music and literature in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, characterised by an emphasis on feeling and content rather than order and form, on the sublime, supernatural and exotic, and the free expression of the passions and individuality.

**Chaos Theory**
The area of mathematics, first developed in the 1970s, that sets out to model unpredictable phenomena, such as the weather, the growth of animal populations, or the human heartbeat, using non-linear equations. Simple rules can give rise to complex phenomena, and the end result is exquisitely sensitive to the starting conditions. It turns out that Nature uses such rules rather than Newton’s to produce leaves, clouds, snowflakes and thunderstorms.

**Fermat’s Last Theorem**
The French mathematician Pierre de Fermat died in 1665. A note found in the margin of his textbook *Arithmetica* declared he had found a proof for his theorem that \(x^n + y^n = z^n\) has no solutions where \(n\) is a whole number greater than 2, but did not have room to write it down. The proof was finally found by the Cambridge mathematician Andrew Wiles in 1993.
**The Newcomen Steam Engine**

Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729) invented the first atmospheric steam engine in 1712. His idea, subsequently developed and improved, was a major landmark on the way towards the Industrial Revolution.

**Newton’s Laws of Motion**

Isaac Newton (1642-1727) stated that three fixed mechanical laws could account for all the movement in the Universe. Pushed to its logical conclusion, this *deterministic* view meant that all future movement could be predicted according to a single formula by the positions and directions of all currently existing objects. This idea was first made explicit by Pierre Simon de Laplace in his *Treatise on Celestial Mechanics*, the final volume of which was published in 1825.

**Population Biology**

The study of the rise and fall of animal populations in relation to predation, food supply, mating success etc. Scientists working in this field were among the first to see that each year’s population size could be related to the next by a simple mathematical equation, yet still be unpredictable in the Newtonian sense (see Chaos theory).

**The Second Law of Thermodynamics**

First discovered by the French engineer Nicolas Leonard Sadi Carnot in 1824, and formulated by the German physicist Rudolf Julius Emanuel Clausius in 1850, the Second Law states that heat cannot pass from a colder to a hotter body. One consequence is the concept of entropy, enunciated by another German, Hermann von Helmholtz, in 1854, which states that everything in the Universe is destined to cool down until all activity ceases.

**Hermits**

A hermitage was a popular feature of English landscape gardens in the 18th and 19th centuries. Painshill in Surrey, recently restored, was no exception. But the hermit recruited there (through a newspaper advertisement) by the owner the Hon. Charles Hamilton, lasted only a fortnight before being found under the table in the local pub.
The Picturesque
A development of English landscape design popular in the early 19th century, when the calm tranquility of lawns, lakes and Grecian temples gave way to jagged, irregular shapes, ruins and "romantic" wildness.

Francis Jeffrey
Critic and editor of the Edinburgh Review, who in 1806 agreed to fight a duel with a poet whose work he had panned. The enterprise was forestalled by the police, arriving in the nick of time, much to the relief of the combatants.

Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828)
Wife of Viscount Melbourne, romantic author, and lover of Byron, to whom she was passionately attached during 1812.

Mrs (Ann) Radcliffe (1764-1823)
English novelist whose best-known work, celebrated (and mocked) in Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey, was The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794).

Lord Byron (1788-1824)
English Romantic poet, author of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage(1812-18) and Don Juan (1819-24). Left England hurriedly and without explanation in the summer of 1809, bound for Albania, Greece and the Levant (Turkey). Returned to England two years later, conducted numerous affairs, notably with Lady Caroline Lamb, and entered into a short-lived marriage with Anne Isabella Milbanke in 1815. Died at Missolonghi in Greece, fighting for Greek independence.

Robert Southey (1774-1843)
Poet, friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, attacked by Byron in his satire English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809).

Horace Walpole (1717-97)
Author of Gothic novel The Castle of Otranto, also advocate of Gothic style in landscape and architecture
Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier (1768-1830)
French politician and mathematical physicist, who in 1812 won the Grand Prize in Mathematics of the Institut de France for his essay describing the propagation of heat in a solid body.

Ada Lovelace (1815-1852)
Only legitimate child of Lord Byron (whom she never met). Mathematical prodigy who, although largely self-taught, often "saw" solutions to problems rather than working through mathematics that was beyond her competence. In adulthood collaborated with Charles Babbage, inventor of the first computer. Credited with anticipating the computer age and originating the concept of the computer program. A plausible inspiration for Stoppard’s Thomasina in Arcadia.

Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1716-83)
Best known of a group of 18th century landscape architects who rejected the formalism of Italian, French and Dutch garden design for an idealised, asymmetric "naturalism" derived from the pastoral landscape paintings of Claude Lorraine and Nicholas Poussin. His first completed project was at Croome Park in Worcestershire.

Humphry Repton (1752-1818)
Landscape gardener known for preparing Red Books for his clients that included watercolour "before" and "after" scenes of his designs, the one fitting over the other.

Salvator Rosa (1615-73)
Italian landscape painter with a preference for romantic, wild and brooding scenes.

(Source: http://cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/arcadia/frame5.htm)
Two articles from Skidmore College, USA on *Arcadia*:

**Order and Disorder: Classical and Romantic Physics in *Arcadia***

Dr. Mary Crone Odekon, Professor and Chair, Department of Physics, Skidmore College

(Reproduced with kind permission from Dr Crone Odekon)

Is life a series of conflicts between thinking and feeling, between order and disorder, between the Classical and the Romantic? Stoppard suggests that our interpersonal relationships and aesthetic preferences are driven by this dichotomy, and even goes so far as to suggest that our picture of the physical universe is, as well. In *Arcadia*, simple Newtonian physics represents Classicism. This "clockwork" view of the universe considers forces between a small number of objects in a controlled environment, and provides a metaphor for control, logic, and the picture of the world as orderly and unchanging. Two fields within physics represent Romanticism: the second law of thermodynamics, which was new in the nineteenth century; and chaos theory, which scientists and mathematicians have studied recently through the use of computers. These two fields are actually both outcomes of Newton's formulation of physics, and are therefore sometimes called "Classical" by physicists, although they represent Romanticism here. What makes these two fields different is that they deal with situations in the real world more complicated than a small number of objects in a controlled environment. In the case of thermodynamics, the difference is that a large number of objects are involved, like molecules in the air. In the case of Chaos Theory, the difference is that the system is very sensitive to small variations in the environment which we cannot predict.

One way to summarize the second law of thermodynamics is to say that disorder increases. In this context, "disorder" has a specific technical definition which is often stated in terms of the temperature and energy of a system. In physics, this kind of disorder is called "entropy." A good simple way to think about entropy is randomness. For example, if you have 10 white balls and 10 yellow balls and you throw them into a box at random, it is likely that the colors will be pretty well mixed together, and unlikely that all the white balls will be at one end and all the yellow balls at the other. The reason the disordered state is more likely is simply a matter of statistics; there are many combinations of positions of the balls which look
disordered, and only a few which look ordered. The second law of thermodynamics states that over time, systems tend to go into disordered states. If you start with many boxes of balls, some in ordered states, and other in disordered states, and shake them all around for a while, they will probably all look disordered in the end. In other words, entropy increases.

The second law sometimes seems puzzling because although it is mathematically consistent with Newton's laws for two bodies interacting, its implications are somewhat different. As summarized by Valentine, "... you can't run the film backward. Not like Newton." In other words, if you watch a movie of two balls colliding, there is no way of telling whether the movie is running backwards or forwards. On the other hand, if you watch a movie of many colored balls bouncing around, and it starts with all the yellow balls on one side and all the white balls on the other, and its ends with the colors mixed up, it is extremely likely that the movie is running forwards rather than backwards.

Another reason the second law seems puzzling is that disorder does not always seem to increase; for example, we can pick up balls and put them in order. However, when we interact with the balls, we are making the situation more complicated. We expend energy to do this, our bodies produce heat which emanates out into the room, and this heat is an example of disorder! Think of the molecules in the air as balls and the temperature of the molecules as color. As the heat diffuses through the room, the temperature evens out, and entropy increases.

( [http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/theater/productions/arcadia/order.html](http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/theater/productions/arcadia/order.html) )

"Arcadia" and the Aesthetic of Romanticism

by Amelia Rauser, Assistant Professor of Art and Art History

Towards the end of Tom Stoppard's "Arcadia," Thomasina shows her tutor the diagram of heat exchange she has devised-- a diagram which proves that Newton's theory of the universe is inadequate. Unlike the perfect, stable and symmetrical world Newton had imagined, Thomasina realizes that, just as a cup of tea will only and irreversibly grow cold, so the universe is tending not toward order, but toward chaos. "This is not science," the tutor Septimus says, "This is story-telling" (p.93). It is this kind of story-telling, this newly chaotic world-view, that also underlies the aesthetic of Romanticism. Romanticism was the dominant
aesthetic movement in early 19th-century England, the period of Thomasina and Septimus, a period in which social, political, economic and scientific change combined to produce a new aesthetic of irregularity and irrationality, in place of the balanced and harmonious classical aesthetic that had dominated the previous century.

(http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/theater/productions/arcadia/romanticism.html)

**Useful Links**

http://math.bu.edu/DYSYS/arcadia/index.html

A very technical explanation on the maths of Arcadia

http://www.sondheimguide.com/Stoppard/links.html

A Tom Stoppard bibliography and links to various articles about his plays

**Feedback**

We hope this Insight Pack has been helpful and will enhance your enjoyment of the production.

If you have any comments on this Pack, please email allies@nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk