



TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH LIMITED

# Blackbird

By David Harrower

Directed by Paul Furlong & Sophie Hardie

Sun 16 Nov – Sat 22 Nov 2014

£1.50



Hampton Hill Playhouse

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[www.hamptonhillplayhouse.org.uk](http://www.hamptonhillplayhouse.org.uk)

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.

Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.

All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or visual recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.

An induction loop system is installed in the Main Auditorium to assist those who use hearing aids with the relevant setting.

Wheelchair positions are available in both Stalls and the Balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.

TTC Ltd, as managers of the Playhouse, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

*Blackbird* premiered at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh in 2005, as part of the annual International Festival, before transferring to the Albery Theatre in London. The production received the 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. Although the subject is reminiscent of Nabokov's *Lolita*, albeit in a modern setting, the writer has said that *Blackbird* was inspired by the case of Toby Studebaker, an American ex-marine who, in 2003, ran off with a 12-year-old British schoolgirl that he "met" in an internet chat room. However, the play is not a dramatisation of those events but more an exploration of under-age relationships and has been translated into numerous languages across the globe; an indication of the continued poignancy and relevance of the subject matter and its effect on societal attitudes.

To set the scene for tonight's one-act 90 minute play we meet Ray, now middle aged, who is unexpectedly confronted by Una, with whom he had a liaison 15 years earlier, when she was underage. Subsequently imprisoned for this offence, Ray has since rebuilt his life, changed his name, started a relationship and got himself a new job.

The play could be called a "love story" rather than a more commonly known predatory/prey story with malice aforethought, but our preconceptions about age make us recoil from such analysis and indeed such relationships are clearly criminal acts. But for Una, the girl/woman in our play tonight, it is very much a "love story" both now, in the moment, and as it was 15 years before. *Blackbird* is a tense cat and mouse type of trial by jury with defense and prosecution tearing into each other, often with wildly conflicting analyses. Ultimately, in terms dictated by the majority of global legal systems, the relationship is a "crime story" not a "love story" – and indeed it is a crime that is still played out today and has been met with widespread awareness and condemnation in some cases. Some are very much horrendous and vile victim/abuser stories where perpetrators will be dealt with by rule of law. However, we also remember last year the case of the Jeremy Forrest, the 30 year old married maths teacher from Eastbourne, who ran away to France with his 15 year old pupil Megan Stammers. They were later arrested in Bordeaux. This indeed was a crime but young Megan nevertheless maintained her love of the older man and was a willing accomplice to the relationship, pushing societal boundaries of what could be seen as arbitrarily drawn lines.

The play tonight is an intense psychodrama with hints of Mamet and Pinter. *Blackbird* features an almost unbroken stream of tersely charged dialogue portraying the past and present simultaneously and the unresolved emotions transmitted by the truncated and succinct lines delivered by our protagonists, are spell-binding. Certain things are never explained, for instance, the whys and wherefores of their relationship, or of the real effect on Ray's new life and relationship; nonetheless it is a wholly absorbing piece that raises as many questions as it answers. *It is left for you, the audience, to decide!*

Enjoy.

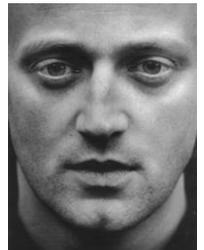
Sophie & Paul

# David Harrower

The playwright David Harrower was born in Edinburgh in 1966. His first play, *Knives in Hens*, was first produced at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1995. This received much critical acclaim and told the story of a complex triangular relationship and explored a young woman's internal quest to find out what she wants from life. Subsequent plays include *Kill the Old Torture Their Young* (Traverse 1998) about a group of disparate urban characters in a story mixing realism with poetry and fantasy; *The Chrysalids* (1999) adapted from the John Wyndham novel for the National Theatre; *Presence* (Royal Court Jerwood Theatre 2001) about the Beatles' early days in Hamburg and *Dark Earth* (Traverse 2003) a broad comedy speculating about the meaning of history and the land.

He has also adapted versions of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, first staged at the Young Vic in 2000; Chekhov's *Ivanov*, performed at the National Theatre in 2002; and Buchner's *Woyzeck*, performed at the Edinburgh Lyceum in 2002. He has also translated *The Girl on the Sofa* by Jon Fosse, in a joint production for the Edinburgh Festival and the Schaubuhne in Berlin. He has also written a new version of Odon von Horvath's *Tales from the Vienna Woods* for the National Theatre (2003), adapted Schiller's *Mary Stuart* (2006) and prepared a new translation of Brecht's *The Good Soul of Szechuan* (2008). He has also written the play *365* for the 2008 Edinburgh Festival, transferring to the Lyric, Hammersmith which told the stories of 14 young people who move out of care homes. In 2011 he wrote a new version of Gogol's classic text *The Government Inspector* for the Young Vic.

As for tonight's production, *Blackbird* was written in 2005 and performed at the Edinburgh Festival and subsequently at the Albery Theatre in the West End with a revival in 2008 at the Rose Theatre, Kingston prior to a national UK tour. It is believed that Harrower is also writing a screenplay of *Blackbird*.



# **Bibliography of David Harrower**

- 2010 Sweet Nothings, after Arthur Schnitzler's 'Liebelei', Faber and Faber
- 2008 The Good Soul of Szechuan/Brecht, translator, Methuen
- 2006 Mary Stuart/Schiller, adaptation, Faber and Faber
- 2005 Blackbird, Faber and Faber
- 2003 Tales from the Vienna Woods, a new version, Faber and Faber
- 2003 Dark Earth, Faber and Faber
- 2002 The Girl on the Sofa, Jon Fosse, Oberon
- 2002 Purple, Jon Fosse, Faber and Faber/NT Connections
- 2002 Ivanov, a new version, Oberon
- 2001 The Chrysalids, adaptation, Faber and Faber
- 2001 Six Characters Looking for an Author/Luigi Pirandello, a new version, Methuen
- 2001 Presence, Faber and Faber
- 1998 Kill the Old Torture their Young, Methuen
- 1997 Knives in Hens, Methuen

# cast & crew

Ray Steve Taylor  
Una Joanna Harker

Directors Paul Furlong  
Sophie Hardie  
Producer Michelle Hood  
Stage Manager Bridget Arnold  
Set Designers Lizzie Lattimore  
Jenna Powell

Lighting Designer Michael Bishop

Sound Designer John Pyle

Costume Designer Maggie Wrightson

Fight Choreographer Dane Hardie

Photographer Sarah Carter

Many thanks must go to Heather Morgan and Joolz Connery for their support during this production and special thanks must also go to Orla Lyons for her ongoing contribution throughout the production process.

One last big thank you to everyone for their contribution of eating lots of junk food in the lead up to the set build!

# Cast Biographies



## Steve Taylor

Steve's adult drama career began in G&S - HLOC and The Young Savoyards - playing the full canon of comic characters. Modern Musicals include *Carousel*, *Oklahoma*, *Sound of Music*, *South Pacific*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and many more. Steve has been involved in many straight plays as well, including *An Inspector Calls*, *Hard Times*, *Interior Designs*, *Albert Make Us Laugh*, *Sylvia's Wedding* and *Dead Funny*. Steve has won the **arts**richmond Swan award for Best Actor in *Not About Heroes* and *A Different Way Home* by Jimmie Chinn. Directorial credits at HHP include *Chess*, *Business of Murder*, *Anagram of Murder*, *Playing Sinatra* among others. Steve was most recently seen at HHP in Dennis Potter's *Brimstone & Treacle*, David Haig's *My Boy Jack* and Jim Cartwright's *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*.



## Joanna Harker

Joanna originally trained in theatre arts in Edinburgh. Her previous roles include Charlotte Corday in *Marat/Sade*, Nina in *The Seagull*, almost every character from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in various productions, and most recently Mrs Martin in *The Bald Soprano*. This year she directed her first feature film, an adaptation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. *Blackbird* is Joanna's first show with TTC.

# CREW Biographies

## Paul Furlong

Paul has been involved in theatre from a young age, both on stage and backstage and is truly honoured to be co-directing such a thought-provoking piece for the first time at TTC with a close friend. Alongside many physical theatre pieces, a lighting cameo as Tinkerbell in a joyous TTC production of *Peter Pan*, lighting direction for YAT's *Taming of the Shrew* and a very interesting performance of *Lady Macbeth*, Paul's previous credits have included *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Loot*, *Stags and Hens*, *After Miss Julie*, *After Mrs Rochester*, *Elephant Man*, and *Dinner*.

## Sophie Hardie

Sophie has been an active member of TTC starting at the grand old age of eight as a field mouse in *The Wind and the Willows* and since then has played many roles from Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* and most recently as Patty in Dennis Potter's *Brimstone and Treacle*. Although confident on stage this is Sophie's directorial debut with TTC and with adults! She is normally staging children's shows such as *Bugsy Malone*, *Grease* and *The Sound of Music* with the Chadsworth Stage School and more recently co-choreographed YAT's latest production *Into The Woods*.

## Michelle Hood

Michelle has been a member of TTC for over 20 years. She is active both as a director (*Wizard of Oz*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *After Mrs Rochester*, *We Happy Few* and *The Secret Garden*) and as an actor (*Voyage Round my Father*, *Albert Nobbs*, *The Seal Wife* and *Peter Pan*). Her most recent role was as Lily Mortar in Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*. Michelle has been the Artistic Director at TTC but relinquished the role last November. Previous shows as crew include *Present Laughter*, *Rat in the Skull* and *Brimstone and Treacle*. Michelle is enjoying working on this intriguing and powerful drama.

## Bridget Arnold

Bridget has been a member of TTC for almost nine years now and enjoys getting involved backstage and behind the bar. The last show she stage managed was *The Children's Hour* in the Auditorium but she does enjoy the smaller productions in the Studio.

# CREW BIOGRAPHIES

## Jenna Powell & Lizzie Lattimore

Jenna and Lizzie are thrilled to be supporting Sophie and Paul in their directorial debut! Both actors as well, they have only been set designing and building together for three years but have notched up a few productions in that time, most recently *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* with the challenge of realising a house on stage! Other challenging set designs have included working showers in *Privates on Parade*, a locked room inside a room for *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, and a beach for *The Seal Wife*! In amongst that, they are members of the management committee for Youth Action Theatre and have just finished a run of *Into The Woods*.

## Michael Bishop

Michael has been a member of YAT and TTC for 13 years and has worked on around 50 shows at the Playhouse in several capacities. He thoroughly enjoys the creative aspect that lighting offers. He also enjoys writing and directing and, in the future, hopes to explore these facets further. Michael says it has been great working with Sophie and Paul again.

## Maggie Wrightson

As part of the TTC wardrobe team, Maggie has worked on a variety of shows in the Studio and the Auditorium. In 2014 after making far too many gymslips for *The Children's Hour* earlier in the year it was a delight to be asked to work with the cast of *Blackbird*.

## John Pyle

John is a member of several groups where he sings, acts and enjoys designing /operating sound for shows. In 50 years on stage – starting at 13 with two solo roles at the Royal Opera House – John has played most tenor/baritone leads in the G&S repertoire, most recently in March last year as Captain Corcoran in *HMS Pinafore*. John loves making authentic, realistic and timely sound effects for plays/shows and hopes you all enjoy this production.

## Dane Hardie

Recent TTC credits include - Fight choreography: *Peter Pan the Musical*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Acting: *Brimstone and Treacle*, *The City*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, and *My Own Show*. Directing: *Arcadia*, *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, and *Bouncers*. Dane attended The London Centre for Theatre Studies and will be completing his British Academy of Dramatic Combat (BADC) Advanced Stage Combat and Fight Directing qualification in 2015. Dane will be seen on the stage at TTC next portraying Nugget and The Young Horseman in Peter Shaffer's *Equus*.



## Please note...

*Blackbird* deals with sexual themes unsuitable for persons under 15 years.

This performance runs for approximately 90 minutes.

There is no interval.

This amateur production of ***Blackbird*** is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French Limited

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## The Bar is open after the show

The foyer bar remains open after the show and is well used by cast, crew and members. We extend a very warm welcome to everyone who has been to see the performance - it is an ideal opportunity to meet the actors you have seen performing, find out more about our theatre and our club or simply relax over a drink.



Please  
Turn off Your  
Mobile Phones

## Please don't spoil the performance

We respectfully request all members of the audience to make sure that mobile phones are switched off during the performance. Thank you.

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Teddington Theatre Club acknowledges with grateful thanks the practical and financial support given by local residents, businesses and community groups.



Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain and to **artsrichmond**.

This production is entered for the **artsrichmond** Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.

# Coming Soon

at Hampton Hill Playhouse

## The Snow Queen

By Colin Wakefield & Kate Edgar

An epic musical tale of friendship and adventure

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Auditorium

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By Peter Shaffer

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Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. It is easy to join as an audience member, or as a full performing and technical member.

Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

All are encouraged to help with the Front of House, Bar and Marketing activities of the Club and Playhouse. To find out more please visit our website [www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk), call our Membership Secretary on 020 8287 2663 or complete one of the forms you will find in the Foyer.