

England Anticipates 'Best in Theater' When 1963 Season Opens

By GREGORY JENSEN
United Press International
LONDON (UPI) — Fragment from an unwritten play:

(The curtain rises on a bare wooden shed on a bombed-out London lot. Facing a decrepit desk at stage right sits a reporter, scribbling in a notebook. Behind the desk sits the greatest actor in the English-speaking world, who speaks.)

Oliver: No, not for a National Theater. No half-measures here. We're aiming at the top. What we want is to develop a company which will be the finest in the world.

Reporter: But why not? We have everything to work with. Money. A commitment to build a fine new theater. Cooperation from the most exciting theaters in Britain. And we can tap a

reservoir of talent greater than any anywhere.

Reporter: So you don't plan to start small and grow from there?

Oliver: At the top. We start with the greatest play ever written. The star is one of the two most exciting young actors in the world. The company backing him will be the best. . . . That dialogue is imaginary! Sir Laurence Olivier does not grant this sort of interview. But the scene is real.

In just such a setting, Oliver this month outlined to a press conference his plans for Britain's National theater. What emerged may be the most exciting theatrical project of the decade.

For one speech in that dialogue is real — Oliver's words that he aims to "develop a company which will be the finest in the world."

The National theater — it has no other name — may turn out to be just that.

Consider the lineup just for the first production, which opens Oct. 22:

The play: "Hamlet," by William Shakespeare, which is at

least a top contender for the label of the greatest play ever written.

The director: Sir Laurence Olivier, the English language's greatest actor and a veteran director of films and plays.

The star: Peter O'Toole, the

meteoric young actor whose fame shot skyward in the film "Lawrence of Arabia," but whose greatest acting plaudits have come for classical roles.

The supporting cast: A stunning array of Britain's finest classical actors, led by one of the nation's five actor-knights, Sir Michael Redgrave.

That is just the beginning. One of the plays to follow will allow Oliver to tackle "The part I have been ducking for years" . . . Shakespeare's "Othello."

For Britain, Oliver's exciting plans are the culmination of a struggle which has lasted more than 50 years.

In this half-century the whole nation, not just a segment of it, has argued, bickered and battled toward one theater which would embody the nation's vast theatrical tradition.

With the possible exception of Germany, England is the world's most theater-minded country. Central London alone generously supports 41 year-around theaters, with five more outside the city center and four more abuilding. The government subsidizes provincial and experimental theaters, which proliferate. The audience these

theaters attract is a genuine cross-section, helped by ticket prices which start at 50 cents and seldom exceed \$3.

Thus the argument over a national theater involved the whole British nation. George Bernard Shaw was one of its most outspoken backers 40 years ago. When, a decade ago, it looked as if a theater actually was to be built, Queen Mother Elizabeth laid the cornerstone.

The cornerstone, which has been the subject of everything from beatnik parties to protest marches by drama critics, still stands lonely and forlorn near

the site of the proposed new national theater building.)

When the government, through Parliament, finally agreed last year to go ahead with the theater plans, the news made banner headlines even in Britain's popular press. Olivier's appointment as the theater's overall director gained almost equal notice.

Money Available
Now Olivier seems to have all he needs to build the "finest company in the world." The government has given him one million pounds (\$2.8 million) to start, and promised an annual

subsidy of 130,000 pounds (\$364,000). Another 1.3 million pounds (\$3.6 million) has been allocated for construction of the theater building.

Olivier is attracting many of the British theater's leading lights, from drama critic Kenneth Tynan as literary adviser to the stage hands and designers who will back the 50 or 60 actors in the permanent company.

To make way for the National, the famed Old Vic has disappeared: National Theater productions will be staged in the Old Vic's renovated building

until the new theater is built. The English Stage company, the Avant-Garde group which developed John Osborne and the "Angry Young Men" is associating with Olivier's group for experimental productions. Design studies for the new theater are under way.

"What excites me now," Olivier says, "is the thought of feeling that hot breath of unity — a marvelous, exhilarating unity of purpose."

"We must try. We must experiment. We must not be afraid."



CLOSED FOR FACELIFTING—The Old Vic in London, one of the best known theaters in the world, is closed for its \$12,000 facelifting but will reopen again in October. With a new look it will be Britain's National Theater with Sir Laurence Olivier as director. (UPI)

STRIPPING ACTION!

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Solomon Proposed For Appeals Court

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Oregon's congressional delegation has voted to recommend the selection of Federal Judge Gus J. Solomon of Portland to a vacancy on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals at San Francisco.

The delegation also voted in favor of recommending State Sen. Eugene Huette (D-Eugene) as U.S. Marshal for Oregon to succeed the late Paul Kearney, who died last week.

Both requests will go to Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy, who then recommends such judicial appointments to President Kennedy. Both appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.

Judge Solomon, chief judge for the Oregon district, once before was recommended for a circuit court vacancy but the appointment went to a man from another state.

Truman Joins in Squabble To Move Battleship Missouri

SEATTLE (UPI) — Former President Harry Truman has fired another broadside in a continuing scrap to get the battle-

ship Missouri out of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

Truman, in a letter to Oree C. Weller, Bellevue, said he would like to see the history-making warship placed "where people can get to it." Weller got the letter Sept. 9.

Weller, in a letter to a Seattle newspaper, complained recently that the Navy had ordered him to destroy film in his camera because he had taken a picture of it. On its decks, the Japanese surrender was signed in World War II.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo) placed both letters in the Congressional Record and said he shared Truman's "views and hopes" for getting the Missouri moved.

River Trip Proposed
Missouri Gov. John M. Dalton and the Missouri House of Representatives proposed last year that the battleship be taken up the Mississippi river for permanent display in the state for which it was named.

The request was relayed to the Navy by Symington but it was turned down by Adm. George W. Anderson, then chief of naval operations. Anderson said the warship was being kept in the reserve fleet for possible reactivation in a national emergency.

The Navy also said the Mississippi river channel would have to be deepened and part of the warship's superstructure removed to provide clearance under bridges.

In his letter to Weller, Truman said: "I cannot understand the attitude of the people in charge with regard to the battleship. It is the most beautiful and the most famous battleship in the history of the world and I would like to see it stationed where people can get to it instead of having it in a 'closet' up in Puget Sound where nobody can see it."

Weller urged that the warship be moved to San Francisco or St. Louis "if we can't see it in our own backyard."

Boat Intercepted
He said he had taken pictures of the "Mighty Mo" from a boat. A Navy land craft intercepted the private boat and Weller was ordered to destroy the "unauthorized" pictures.

Weller also received letters from Congressmen Thomas Pelly and Bill Stinson, both Republicans from King county districts, offering aid in getting clarification of the status of civilian-taken photos of the Missouri.

A Navy spokesman in Seattle said that if the Missouri were tied up at a Seattle pier there would be no objections to photographs being taken of her, since she has nothing classified that a visitor could see.

He added that there is, however, classified equipment in and near the area where the ship is now berthed.

Portland Rosarians Pick Prime Minister
PORTLAND (UPI)—Dr. Mott Edwin, a dentist, has been selected as prime minister of the Portland Royal Rosarians. He succeeds Ellsworth Purdy.

RUSH FOR EXITS
EAST GREENWICH, R. I. (UPI)—A skunk waddled into the Kent theater Tuesday night and cleared the house five minutes after the start of the feature movie, "Come Blow Your Horn."

Jews To Observe High Holy Days

By United Press International
At sundown Wednesday the sonorous wailing of a ram's horn in thousands of synagogues around the world summoned Jews to observance of the High Holy Days, most sacred period of the year.

Observed continually since the time of Moses, the High Holy Days are 10 days of self-examination and penitence, which mark the beginning of a new year on the Jewish calendar.

This will be the year 5724. The High Holy Days open with Rosh Hashanah, a Hebrew phrase meaning "Head of the Year." Tradition holds that it is the anniversary of the first day of creation. Orthodox and Conservative Jews commemorate Rosh Hashanah for two days; most Reform Jews for one.

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Prices of Autos To Remain Steady
DETROIT (UPI)—The cost of new cars probably will remain steady during the 1964 model year.

Chrysler Corp. announced Tuesday it would generally hold the price line on its new models for the fifth straight year. Other auto firms were expected to follow the lead of Chrysler, which was the first to announce prices for the second straight year.

Ford, General Motors, American Motors and Studebaker will announce their prices within the next two weeks, probably within hours of introduction, at dealers' showrooms.

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