

# 3 WOMEN

by **katy brand**



PROGRAMME

# YOU AND CRI



It gives me great pleasure to be able to welcome you back into the Criterion after a hugely frustrating time for all of us. Following the successful run of "Queers!" back in October, we were very hopeful that would be able to return to something like normality for our 60th anniversary year. Alas, this was not to be and this is our first opportunity to get back in the building since then.

The biggest difficulty through all of this period has been what seems like the constantly changing rules, particularly with the different hats that the theatre has. As well as an artistic venue, which haven't always been given the same guidelines as those to professional organisations, the Theatre is also a licensed premises, which has had different guidelines again. Throw in some drama classes for young people, and it's not difficult to see how difficult it has been to make any sort of plans for the delivery of activities.

Whilst we've all missed the performances on the stage, as with many areas of society probably the biggest miss has been the opportunities we've had to be together; whether that is in building sets, in the technical box, meeting in the bar or a coffee morning. Let us hope that this is the first step in a return to re-establishing those relationships on a regular basis.

There are always ways that you can get involved with the Criterion, whether on or off the stage. If this is your first visit or one of many, everyone has a talent or skill that can be utilised - speak to a member of our front of house, or email us on [board@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:board@critteriontheatre.co.uk). And with opportunities like the Criterion Friends scheme and the Criterion Lottery, both of which you can read about later in this programme, you can even help us without moving from your living room!

We've been incredibly fortunate to have such supportive members over the last 15 months, enabling us to not only keep going through this period, but also to plan for a successful and productive future. We look forward to entertaining you again this evening and look forward to seeing you again more often in the remaining months of our 60th year and beyond.

And of course if you enjoy the show, why not watch it again in the streamed version on Saturday 17th July - tickets available from the website!

For all the latest updates from the theatre, check out the website

[www.criteriontheatre.co.uk](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk)

# DIRECTORS NOTES

We chose this play while still in the winter lockdown, when even sharing the scripts was a bit of an art form. We had to find a good play with a cast size that did not breach the rule of six and one for which we could get the rights to do an online performance. We were very pleased to find Katy Brand's '3 Women' which ticked all the administrative boxes, but most importantly is an interesting play with themes that support our objectives as a theatre.

Auditions were held on Zoom and I then abandoned my new cast while I had a knee replacement. Rehearsals then started on Zoom for a play requiring a degree of family intimacy that a computer screen does not allow - as most of us have discovered over the last 15 months. But that medium did allow us to meet, read the play together, discuss the characters and to enjoy each other's (virtual) company.

The May easing of lockdown restrictions allowed us to meet properly for the first time and to begin working in the theatre - albeit we have followed the safety protocols and I have lived in dread of a positive test in our group! That has not happened (so far!) and it is difficult to explain the simple pleasure we have had from being back together physically in the Criterion to work on this play. It is, of course, slightly perverse that, as a man, I have had the opportunity to direct a play that focusses on the experiences of three generations of women. I have, however had the assistance of my wonderful cast, Ruth, Lillian, Chloe (appearing for the first time at the Criterion) and Charlotte and my admirable Assistant Director Sarah Annis (also making a Criterion debut), to keep me on track. One of the privileges of this show has been the powerful discussions we have had as we have developed the characters and related them to the lived experiences of the women involved in this production. Ruth Herd's piece in this programme gives a feel of the journey we have all enjoyed.

What epitomises the cast was their enthusiastic embracing of my challenge to pick their cast 'heritage tracks' which feature in the pre-show music and the show itself. The background to this is set out elsewhere, but my Musical Director Gareth Withers led the cast in recording our own version of Helen Reddy's 'I am Woman' which we use to close the show - please stay and enjoy the cast anthem!

As always, the show depends on so many people and my thanks are due to Mandy Sutton for her design and her team's build of the hotel set, to Paul Chokran for leading the paint work, including the installation of a stylish wooden floor, to Pam Coleman and the wardrobe team for finding outfits that suit the characters, to the ever patient Sarah Basford and Becky Bartlet for indulging me on light and sound and to Sally Patalong who, with the props team, has again come up trumps with my extensive, particular and occasionally bizarre requests. I am also grateful to Steve Brown, who has taken on the challenge of filming a live performance so that we can broadcast it later, and to the Criterion team who have made it safe to put on the show. Finally, my thanks to the stage manager, Alan Fenn. I know the show is safe in his hands.

The pandemic has changed many things - most noticeably for me, the bar remained closed which put a stop to my usual post-rehearsal relaxation. Rehearsals also saw the engagement of Charlotte and Dave (Congratulations!) and the birth of my grandson, who makes his debut photographically in this show. We were a bit rusty to begin with on the routines and disciplines required to pull a show together over a six-week rehearsal period - to build a set, dress it, light it, add sound and to contrive the acquisition of the necessary properties and costumes. We have, however shaken off that rust and hope you get as much pleasure from watching 3 Women as we have taken from preparing it for you.

# CAST

## *Lauren:* Chloe Hayward

I am honoured to say I am the newest member of the theatre, and this will be my first ever production here at the Criterion; I am so excited and this definitely won't be my last!

I have felt welcomed from the very start and enjoyed every moment. My character Laurie is a fun smart girl, who knows it all! I have learned a lot about others, just by playing her: I'm sure she'll teach you a lesson or two too!



## *Rufus:* Charlotte Rawson

I have loved the theatre ever since I was young. I have been a part of many theatre groups including the Criterion's junior group. I have performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in the West End and went to Serbia to perform songs with a choir. I was in the Railway Children at the Criterion in 2019 which I really enjoyed. Then, when the pandemic hit, I was part of the Criterion's Zoom production of Pressure which was a new experience, but I also really enjoyed it!



## *Suzanne:* Ruth Herd

When I started acting, I was slightly more "young and bendy" and was often cast in youthful, semi-glamorous roles; in fact, during my last outing at the Criterion, my character was specifically described in the script as being "a young girl".

However, after the birth of my second child in 2017, everything went a bit "tits down", and since then, I've specialised in playing a series of harassed, middle-aged mothers who eat and drink a lot.

It's not easy, putting on a show during a pandemic, and I want to thank the cast and crew for their talent, patience and support. It also seems appropriate here to thank my own mother, Anne – for the same reasons! I gave her more trouble than any of our 3 Women, so it only seems right that I dedicate this performance to her, and the generations of mothers and daughters who sweat, bled and cried in order to allow me to be here today.



## *Eleanor:* Lillian McGrath



After leaving school, I attended the Coventry School of Speech and Drama, first joining the Criterion in the late 80's. In the early 90's, wanting to pursue a career in acting, I returned to training as a Post Graduate student at the Birmingham School of Dramatic Art.

After 20 years of not acting I re-joined the Criterion in 2016 and has since been in a number of productions including Lovesong, which opened in March 2020 and closed after just two performances when the world changed and we went into the first lockdown. Getting back into the theatre and being allowed to open again feels like we have finally come full circle (all be it socially distanced!)

# CREW

Director

Bill Butler

Assistant Director

Sarah Annis

Stage Manager

Alan Fenn

Rehearsal Prompt

Dave Jones

Artwork Designer

David Butler

Set Designer

Mandy Sutton

Lighting Designer

Sarah Basford

Lighting Team

Paul Harrison

Karl Stafford

Sound Designer

Becky Bartlett

Set Build Team

Steve Brown

Frances Dixon

Chris Hernon

Terry Rahilly

Simon Sharpe

Mandy Sutton

Mike Waterson

Set Paint Team

Paul Chokran

Emma Padfield

Ry-Myfanwy Padfield

Judy Talbot

Matilda Withers

Props Team

Sally Patalong

Ruth Miller

Kerry Raynes

Erica Young

Wardrobe Team

Pam Coleman

Rowena Tye

Music Recording

Gareth Withers

Catering

Millsy's Cafe Bar

# Inheritance Tracks

Katy Brand's play requires music in several places, but only specifies one track - Heart of Glass by Blondie. I usually have a fair idea of the music I want to use in a play, but on this occasion was slightly stumped. I wanted the music to be the music that Suzanne, Eleanor, Laurie and Rufus would want to listen to.

So we talked about what that might be and, loosely based on Radio 4's Inheritance Tracks, I asked the cast to identify three tracks each that reflected music that they had taken from their parent, music they had found themselves and, for the parents, music they had stolen from their children. We then listened to the resulting play list, some of which you will hear before the show tonight and picked five tracks to use in the show.

The cast have set out below their choice and how it relates to their characters and the themes of this play. We hope you enjoy them.

## *I do* - Bat for Lashes (Bill Butler: Director)

This was my choice as director to open the show. I first saw Bat for Lashes at the Latitude Festival in 2007 on the recommendation of my son. This track, from the 2016 album *The Bride*, appeared unannounced in the middle of an Amazon Music playlist while I was on my indoor rowing machine and, I suppose, stuck in my head. It reappeared as I looked for something that would reflect some of Suzanne's thoughts on the eve of her wedding - and would introduce the audience gently to what is about to come!

## *Talk Dirty to Me* - Poison (Charlotte Rawson: Rufus the Head Waiter)

I chose the song 'talk dirty to me' by Poison because I think Rufus has this love of rock and likes to listen to it as an escape, to get away from everyday life and to just be himself which I think he struggled with for a while. It gives him a confidence and helps him too just be himself.

## *Heart of Glass* - Blondie (Katy Brand: Writer)

This is the only track specified by name in the script. We have added our own karaoke twist to the plot!

## *Lose Yourself to Dance* - Daft Punk (Ruth Herd: Suzanne)

Daft Punk's album, *Random Access Memories*, from which my song selection was taken, has been a favourite of mine for several years. It came out in 2013 when I was hugely pregnant with my first child. Like Suzanne, "I was so huge by that point, I barely got out of bed", although, as this all happened during one of the hottest summers of recent years, I was living on ice pops, rather than sandwiches.

I loved the whole album (even the track which consists of Giorgio Moroder reminiscing about his career for 9 minutes...). But *Lose Yourself to Dance* was a standout track for me, right away. Maybe it's Nile Rodgers' fantastic guitar playing. Maybe it's the heavy beat. Maybe it's because, at that point, I could only dream of dancing, and knew I probably wouldn't be going "out-out" for quite some time. But there's just something so liberating about it. To me, it's a song about a middle-aged woman, like Suzanne (or, increasingly, me) breaking away from her workaday life to have a night of fantasy. "Throwing everything off, and just doing what she wants". There's something very universal about that idea.

Plus, it's a song from the 2010s, written by a group formed in the 90s, heavily inspired by disco legends of the 1970s, so I could easily see Suzanne introducing her daughter to the band, leaving the track on Laurie's phone for Eleanor to discover and find something of herself in.

## *Call Me Maybe* - Carly Rae Jepsen (Chloe Hayward: Lauren)

I have chosen this song because of Laurie's instant attraction to Rufus "the uh - head waiter guy". Laurie cannot resist Rufus from the very first sighting and makes it obvious that she wants a piece of him all throughout the evening and into the night, giving him flirtatious stares, sticking up for him when grandma begins to question him and more.

## *I Am Woman* - Helen Reddy (Lilian Sykes: Eleanor)

A little younger than Eleanor, I remember the song from growing up in the 70's when the world was changing for women and we were told we could have it all. The song represents all women who since then have had to constantly juggle work, home, children, and relationships and often feeling guilty that they are failing at everything, expected to be perfect at everything and overwhelmed by it all.

The song for me reminds me that all women are amazing, strong and most of all pretty invincible; singing it with the cast and having the opportunity to go into the studio with musical director Gareth was a wonderful experience and a really fun evening!

# LOTTERY

## Fancy a £365 Christmas bonus?

Your chance to win £1 for every day of our 60th year with the Criterion Lottery.

"The Criterion Lottery" replaced the old "100 Club" in 2007. With monthly prizes of £100, £50 and £25 for the winners, it has also generated a crucial net income for the theatre of over £35,000.

This year, to celebrate the Criterion's 60th birthday, we're introducing a special one-off prize to be drawn in December: £365 - that's £1 for every day of 2021. For the lucky winner, it's a nice Lottery bonus for Christmas; for the Criterion, it's a vital financial lifeline now as we begin to reopen.

Members and company members can take part in the Lottery for just £5 a month, paid by Standing Order. With less than 100 numbers in the draw, your chances of winning are much higher than with other lottery draws and you get to help out your favourite local theatre at the same time.

What could be better?

For details, please e-mail [lottery@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:lottery@critteriontheatre.co.uk) or call/text Mike Tooley on 07946 274846.



# CRITERION FRIENDS

We are so grateful to our current Criterion Friends who continue to give us small, and larger, donations on a regular basis to help us keep going into our seventieth decade!

You can join this list - there is real power in lots of people giving us small amounts on a regular basis. And you can gift-aid your pledge too. Gifting the cost of a double gin and tonic every month will make all the difference to your local theatre!

So what are you waiting for? Contact Helen McGowan on [friends@critteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:friends@critteriontheatre.co.uk) or visit [www.critteriontheatre.co.uk/join/friend](http://www.critteriontheatre.co.uk/join/friend) to find out more."

- Anonymous
- John and Wendy Baxter
- Mick Forey
- Pete Gillam and Anne-marie Greene
- The McGowan Family
- Ruth Miller and Bill Butler
- Chris Murly
- John and Kate Purcell
- Jane and Keith Railton
- Judy and Simon Sharpe
- Zoe and Rob Wartnaby

## **The Criterion Playreading Group**

Each month the Criterion's Playreading Group come together to read a selected play. Everyone is welcome to join the reading, either to take a part, or just to listen. And you don't have to leave your home to do it either, as all readings are available viz Zoom.

Upcoming readings:

**Weds 7th July** (7.30pm) "Naughts and Crosses" by Malorie Blackman

Full details including how to join the fun are available on the website.

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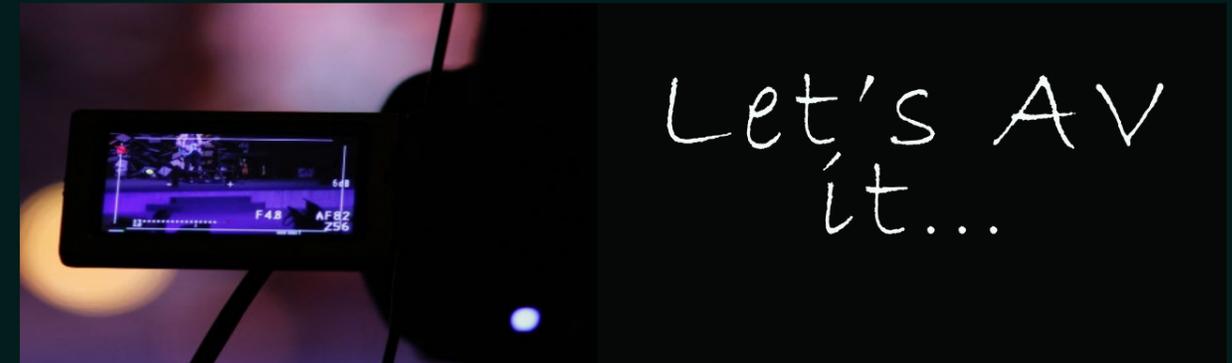
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The "AV Team" is a new venture leading the theatre to look at new ways of producing theatre and digital output. Headed up by Steve Brown, a small team of Criterion members will be using a range of creative techniques to bring even more life to our future productions, giving directors and production teams exciting new ways to create theatre.

The equipment needed to create this exciting new output has been acquired, thanks in the main to support from our sponsor *Penman's Solicitors* and the fundraising efforts of the Promises Auction held in November 2020. The generosity of our members in both creating promises back in the Autumn, and those bidding on lots, cannot be underestimated.



PICTURE: Steve Brown, from the Theatre's new AV Team and David Latham, from our corporate sponsors Penman's Solicitors.

# Coming Soon

CRITERION THEATRE Present

Curated by Mark Gatiss

## Queers.

A Series of Monologues

Sunday 18th July 2021

**THE ALBANY theatre**

A special one-off performance in association with the National Drama Festival 2021

Don't miss this extra opportunity to watch this fabulous Criterion production!

In late September 2020, we produced the sell out show 'Queers: Eight Monologues' to a socially distanced audience.

We are honoured to have been asked to reprise the production on Sunday July 18th 2021, providing the opening night of the week-long British All-Winners Festival at The Albany Theatre hosted by the National Drama Festivals Association. The festival staged in Coventry to coincide with the City of Culture 2021 is a celebration of the very best of amateur drama from around the country.

Come and support the Criterion Theatre as we promote our work in a different venue.

## Underneath the Lintel

by Glen Berger

Saturday 28th August - 4th September 2021

We are in a half-empty theatre. A middle-aged man appears, with a battered suitcase and a story he is clearly keen to tell. He's a librarian in a small Dutch town, and his job is to handle the overdue books. One day a book was returned anonymously: 113 years late. Who brought it back - and why? All the librarian has to go on is a clue scribbled in a margin, and an unclaimed dry-cleaning ticket.

How does he solve this mystery? And how does it change his life? That's what he's come here tonight to tell us....

Glen Berger's 2001 one-man play is a modern fable, neatly wrapped in a detective story, with something very powerful to say about humanity.

It's a beautiful, funny, moving piece of storytelling.



1961—  
2021

# SHINE BRIGHT LIKE A DIAMOND

**Celebrating 60 Years**

Find out about upcoming events at [www.criteriontheatre.co.uk](http://www.criteriontheatre.co.uk)

If you have any comments about your experience with The Criterion Theatre, please email us at: [customerexperience@criteriontheatre.co.uk](mailto:customerexperience@criteriontheatre.co.uk)



Video and/or audio recording of performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited

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We believe that it is important as an organisation that serves the people of Coventry to speak out against racial injustice and prejudice.

**We want to be clear – Black Lives Matter.**

We are listening, and we are learning about how we can serve our communities better together.

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