



■ Hindus at Murugan Hindu Temple, Highgate Hill, carry a sacred statue of deities at the end of a Kavadi ceremony

Picture: Richard Slater

Richard opens eyes to city's diverse population

Primrose Hill Druids and Hindus in Highgate are among the images in an exhibition celebrating the rich diversity of life in the capital.

People In London is a love letter to the city from St John's Wood photographer Richard Slater, featuring 400 images taken over five years.

Running at the Royal Geographical Society until October 17, the exhibition and accompanying book are divided into six themes:

Tribal London celebrates Londoners' social groupings, from Camden Town punks and Gay Pride marchers to Royal Ascot racegoers.

Faith In London highlights the co-existing religions, from Southall Sikhs to worshippers in a Whitechapel mosque.

The London Melting Pot spotlights the racial and ethnic diversity of Londoners, and *Celebrating London* the many parades and festivals that take place including the Canal Cavalcade in Little Venice, the Notting Hill carnival and Shrove Tuesday pancake races.

Street London captures the energy and drama you encounter on a walk around London, from street performers in Covent Garden to a Michael Jackson tribute flashmob.

And *London Surprises* are those seemingly out-of-context spots such as urban Brixton's rustic windmill, the Roundhouse's temporary beach, and the



■ Druids on Primrose Hill celebrate the autumn equinox

Picture: Richard Slater

Christmas Serpentine swim.

Slater says: "It was a self-appointed commission. I am a Londoner, born and brought up here. I love London, its diversity, vitality and creativity, and I think it's the people who make it the fabulous place it is. Rather than taking landscapes and tourist attractions, the idea was to photograph people. The Royal Geographical Society backed the exhibition because it's social geography – people in their place. But it's also history, recording London today."

Themes

Slater started with "a vague, unstructured list of subjects", but crystallising the project into six themes helped focus the direction of his lens.

He believes the city has changed since his days as a UCS schoolboy in Hampstead,

"immeasurably for the better".

"It was a great city but it's now wonderful," he adds.

"A magnet for creativity and talent for the whole world. The extra nationalities who have come here have broken down some of the more rigid social barriers, widened our horizons and opened us to new ideas – from how we eat to our arts scene.

"I thought I knew the place but I now realise I hardly knew anything at all about the city.

"You can go from Royal Ascot to a shelter for the homeless in Deptford and it's another world. Some places are so foreign and exotic, I would look around at an amazing scene like the Sikh new year in Southall, and think, 'Can I really be in London?'"

■ *People in London* is free and open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm and from 10am to 4pm on Saturdays.

A Time Lord enters global political battle

Actor is ready to question invasion of Iraq in a timely Hare revival, he tells **Bridget Galton**

Peter Davison cannot escape the prefix Dr in his acting roles – unless of course he's playing a vet.

On the advice of Patrick Troughton, the well-known actor famously quit the role of Doctor Who after three years to avoid being typecast.

Luckily his career hasn't been overshadowed by the Time Lord – although his personal life became forever entwined with the series when ex-doctor David Tennant married his daughter Georgia.

Now he's on stage at the Park Theatre playing a medical doctor in David Hare's *The Vertical Hour* – the title inspired by the window of time after a combat catastrophe when a medic can still be of use.

'Scary'

As the 63-year-old rehearses the role of Oliver Lucas, a British doctor ideologically opposed to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he points out it's his first straight theatre role in 15 years.

"It's quite scary, I've done a lot of musicals recently (*Spamalot*, *Chicago*, *Legally Blonde*) and earlier in my career I tried every four years to go off and do some theatre. But as you get older, time slips and you realise it has in fact been 15 years. I am doing my best to get these lines in but the problem with doing a David Hare play is you want to do it absolutely as it's written. You embark on a

personal, political speech, there's no-one to help you, you're on your own then someone says, 'You've just cut out four pages!'" says the affable Davison who has a ready, self-deprecating humour.

But as Isis make headway in Iraq, and America once more debates its role in the country, it's a deadly serious and timely revival of Hare's 2006 play which originally starred Julianne Moore and Bill Nighy.

The classic Hare examination of the intersection between public



■ Peter Davison played *The Doctor* from 1981 to 1984

Picture: Gary Weaser/Keystone/Getty Images

Comedy about lesbians' quest for a child needs to be more daring

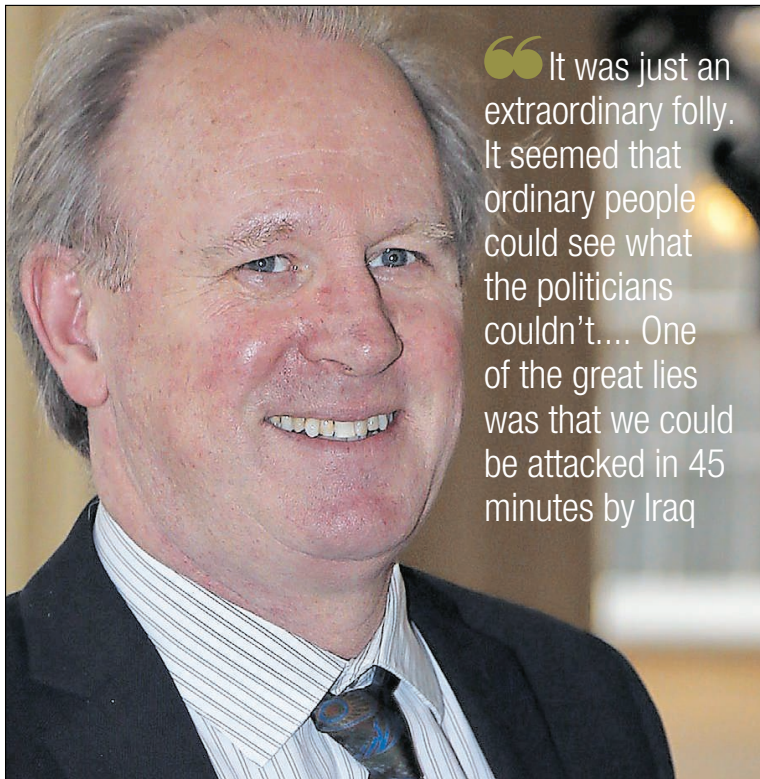
BREEDERS
St James Theatre
★★★★☆

How enlightened are we when it comes to unconventional families? Ben Ockrent's topical piece suggests there are variations that still have the power to shock, but *Breeders*, though frank and funny, is ultimately too nice to do its provocative subject matter justice.

Andrea (Tamzin Outhwaite) and Caroline (Angela Griffin) want a baby that reflects them both, so ask Andrea's brother Jimmy

(Nicholas Burns) to act as sperm donor, with Caroline carrying the child whose genetic makeup matches her wife's. They invite Jimmy and girlfriend Sharon (Jemima Rooper) to move in with them, creating a modern family unit, but tensions arise when the conception demands more than anticipated.

Ockrent illustrates the laborious nature of this process compared to the relative effortlessness of heterosexual conception, and Outhwaite passionately conveys Andrea's frustration at fighting for something that comes so easily to others. In a moment of



“It was just an extraordinary folly. It seemed that ordinary people could see what the politicians couldn't.... One of the great lies was that we could be attacked in 45 minutes by Iraq

■ Peter Davison is starring in *The Vertical Hour* at the Park Theatre

and private lives - personal philosophy and global politics - sees Davison's charming womaniser visited by his son and American girlfriend Nadia - an ex-war correspondent - whose experience covering the Balkans and Gulf War prompts her to agree with America's intervention in Iraq.

“He's an interesting flawed character,” says Davison,

“He's lived in a certain way that has brought enormous damage and death. He does kind of take responsibility for it and realise what he did within the marriage and to his son, while also defending himself. He bares his soul in the end.”

The play is couched as an argument between opposing ideas about whether countries should intervene in the affairs of others.

“Nadia is not a hawk but she epitomises that Americans have a completely different approach to their country. We are generally very cynical about our politicians, while in America, there is honour in the office of President. There is also this evangelical approach to intervene

and bring democracy to countries regardless of whether they want it or are ready for it, regardless that it is a deeply flawed way of governing that means governments get elected by less than 50 per cent of the electorate. There is no ideal system but we've somehow got ourselves to a point where it's the answer to everything in every country.”

Recalling the atmosphere in the UK as millions marched against Tony Blair's decision to go to war, the actor adds: “It was just an extraordinary folly. It seemed that ordinary people could see what the politicians couldn't, as if the closer you got to it the less you could see the big picture. One of the great lies was that we could be attacked in 45 minutes by Iraq.

“As my character points out, the evidence for going to war came from corrupt and dishonest elements within the country who were opposed to Saddam Hussein.”

After training at Central School of Speech and Drama, Davison's big break came in Sunday night family

favourite *All Creatures Great and Small*, playing a hapless young vet in Yorkshire alongside Christopher Timothy and Robert Hardy.

The fame it brought led to other screen parts including the fifth incarnation of The Doctor, and popular series such as *The Last Detective*, *At Home with the Braithwaites* and *Law and Order UK*.

‘Exciting’

“Theatre is traditionally where actors spread their wings but I've been very lucky to be in several things on TV I haven't wanted to change a word of. In theatre you never have to pin down the way you play something, it changes from night to night, it's exciting. With TV you think, ‘This is the take, I have to do the definitive thing’ and these days you don't even get a rehearsal.

“That isn't so bad because I like working quickly and have never liked an enormous amount of talking beforehand.”

Although he wondered at the time whether he should have gone on longer as The Doctor, he was in his early 30s and “younger actors don't want to hang around that long in case a great opportunity might appear.”

“I remember in the rehearsal rooms seeing contemporaries of mine coming in doing different parts while I was still doing *Doctor Who*.

“If I had done it later in life I might have stayed in it until I was dead.”

He is happy to continue his association, attending fan conventions, narrating audio CDs of episodes from his era, and taking part in the 50th anniversary celebrations.

“I don't regret doing it although I regret we didn't have the special effects - that was one of the great things about the return. I never needed to turn my back on it like Tom Baker who did it for seven years and found it necessary to close the door for a while. But you know the return wouldn't have happened without the original series, the people who grew up watching it like Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat who raised the bar in the whole quality of it.”

As for that odd coincidence of having an ex-Doctor Who son-in-law, he admits: “It's kind of a weird thing, when we take the dog for a walk in the park together, it kind of freaks *Doctor Who* fans out.”

■ *The Vertical Hour* is at the Park Theatre from September 23 until October 26.



■ Jemima Rooper, Tamzin Outhwaite and Nicholas Burns Picture: Manuel Harlan

rancour, Jimmy even questions the contradiction between her desire to procreate and her sexual preference.

However, such spikiness is in short supply, with a suggestion from eco-

warrior Sharon that the dire state of our planet should outweigh desire for children dismissed, and Caroline afforded only a hint of doubt as to whether she really wants motherhood,

or just feels pressure to pursue it.

More successfully, Tamara Harvey's lively production draws out organic conflict and tracks shifting sibling, romantic and platonic bonds. Outhwaite and Griffin share a convincing, understated chemistry; Burns is master of the pained reaction as his sister overshares, but also hints at Jimmy's stubborn irresponsibility; and Rooper commits to Sharon's bluntness and crippling isolation.

A visual echo of building a life through gradual construction work is literal but effective, while the use of Swedish covers of pop songs and carols during scene changes is oddly brilliant. More of that creative daring might lift *Breeders* from cosy comedy to true zeitgeist theatre. *Until October 4.*

Marianka Swain

Clarinet Lessons offered

All grades from beginner to

Diploma levels

Ian Herbert FRAM



0207 435 6823

07702 420 383

What's On

Odeon Camden Town

Film times for Friday 19th to Thursday 25th Sept inclusive
Opening times: Fri 14:15, Sat-Sun 11:45, Mon - Thu 14:15

A Most Wanted Man (15)
W/CHAIR AUDIO DESC 202m

Fri	15:15	18:00	20:45	
Sat	12:00	15:15	18:00	20:45
Sun	12:00	15:15	18:00	20:45
Mon	15:15	18:00	20:45	
Tue	15:15	18:00	20:45	
Wed-Thu	15:15	18:00	20:45	

A Walk Among The Tombstones (15)
W/CHAIR 1h54m

Fri	14:30	17:15	20:00	
Sat-Sun	12:00	14:30	17:15	20:00
Mon	14:30	17:15	20:15	
Tue-Thu	14:30	17:15	20:00	

Lucy (15)
W/CHAIR AUDIO DESC 1h29m -

Contains strong bloody violence
Fri-Sun 17:45
Tue-Thu 17:45

Magic in the Moonlight (12A)
W/CHAIR 1h37m

Fri	15:30	18:15	20:30	
Sat-Sun	13:00	15:30	18:15	20:30
Mon-Thu	15:30	18:15	20:30	

NT Live: Medea (Encores) (PG)(TBC)
W/CHAIR 1h45m

Mon	20:00
-----	-------

Pride (15)
W/CHAIR AUDIO DESC 2h00m -

Contains strong language and sex references
Fri 15:00 20:15
Sat-Sun 15:00 20:15

Mon	15:00	17:35
Tue-Thu	15:00	20:15

The Riot Club (15)
1h47m

Fri	18:30	21:00		
Sat-Sun	12:45	15:45	18:30	21:00
Mon-Thu	18:30	21:00		

The Boxtrolls (PG)
W/CHAIR 1h37m -

Contains mild violence and threat
Fri 15:45
Sat-Sun 12:15 15:00
Mon-Thu 15:45

For details and bookings visit
www.odeon.co.uk or call 0811 2244007
Please be aware you may be asked for identification

This page is read by thousands of people every week

CALL
020
7433
0101



to reach these people with your company's message

ARCHANT Inspiring Communities



Got something to celebrate?



Whatever your special occasion, share it with
familynotices24.co.uk