

'A very modern examination of identity'

THE DOCTOR

Almeida Theatre

★★★★☆

Robert Icke's Almeida swansong is a typically bold and epic updating - this time, of Arthur Schnitzler's 1912 Professor Bernhardt.

The premise is the same, with a Jewish doctor refusing a priest entry to a delirious teenage patient because knowledge of her impending death could lead to a distressing end, but Icke's piece is a very modern examination of identity.

Juliet Stevenson is on blazing form as Professor Ruth Wolff, head of a private clinic researching dementia. She's intellectually brilliant, but naïve when it comes to the importance of PR, optics,

handling financial donors and navigating institutional politics.

Ruth believes that medicine trumps faith, and a doctor's professional abilities are paramount, not a personal biography. But her own unconscious biases are soon interrogated.

Icke skilfully captures outrage culture, including an online petition and social media witch hunt. A TV panel debate puts Ruth on trial (and a riveting Stevenson in close-up), and perception soon overtakes whether or not she acted within medical guidelines.

Some of the debating is dry theatrically, but Icke has a clever twist in his casting. We only realise partway through that a woman is playing a man, or a white actor a black character – and we realise, too, how much that affects our response, due to our own biases.



Ria Zmitrowicz and Juliet Stevenson in *The Doctor* at Almeida Theatre.

Picture: MANUEL HARLAN

Those reveals eventually distract somewhat, and there's also the issue that the piece is too weighted towards Ruth – she's humanised by her home life, and her opposition (whether anti-abortion activists or 'woke' millennials) is generally either

unsympathetic or, on occasion, presented comically.

But the ensemble is strong, particularly Naomi Wirthner, Paul Higgins and Ria Zmitrowicz, while Hildegard Bechtler's slowly revolving stage literally changes our point of view, and fantastic

drumming from Hannah Ledwidge ramps up the tension. Another provocative offering from Icke, and Stevenson provides its memorably wounded soul.

Marianka Swain

Continues at Almeida Theatre until Sept 28. Tickets: almeida.co.uk

FEATURE ADVERTISEMENT

Psychotherapists debate use of AI

As science and technology rapidly infiltrate NHS mental health care, a group of north London psychotherapists are facing the digital future head-on.

They are holding a conference about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on psychotherapy, reports Pat Devereaux.

This is the first conference of its kind in London and will bring scientists and psychotherapists together to discuss the ethics of using AI, data analytics and technology in their field.

Sponsored by the Arbours Association of Psychotherapists (AAP), the conference is under the auspices of the Council for Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis, a section of the United Kingdom Council of

Psychotherapists (UKCP).

Conference speakers include Dr Mark Freestone, who advised on the recent BBC TV thriller *Killing Eve*; Dr Kate Devlin, author of a new book *Turned On: Science, Sex and Robots*; and the renowned NHS psychiatrist and psychotherapist, Professor Jeremy Holmes.

Up to 200 people are expected to attend the all-day event on September 21 entitled *Psychotherapy and Ethics: Ideas For Our Time*. It will be held at Amnesty International's headquarters in Shoreditch.

American psychiatrist Dr Morton Schatzman, an Arbours founder, will chair proceedings and hopes to stimulate open discussions on the use of AI in psychotherapy, its risks and solutions. Talks will focus on technological innovation



Conference organiser Adam Saltiel
Picture: ARBOURS ASSOCIATION

as a tool for psychological advances.

Conference organiser and Arbours professional association (the AAP) chair, Adam Saltiel, said: "We are expecting this conference to address the impact on psychotherapy of new findings from science and the effect of artificial intelligence."
aapweb.website

"Psychotherapy and Ethics: Ideas for Our Time"

(Part of a conference series on Ethics and Psychotherapy organised by Arbours and UKCP CPJA Ethics Committee)

Will Artificial Intelligence and data analytics change the role of the psychotherapist? What are the implications of new research on the professions, as psychotherapy looks toward the future?

Date: 21 September 2019 (9am to 5pm)

Venue: Amnesty International, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, London EC2A 3EA

Speakers:

Professor Jeremy Holmes is a Consultant Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist in the NHS and the author of many scientific articles and books. His interest is in neuroscience and psychoanalytic theory. He presents "*The brain has a mind of its own: active inference (AI), and the new science of psychotherapy*".

Dr Kate Devlin is the author of the book: "*Turned On: Science, Sex and Robots*". She presents "*Technological change: forecasting our future relationships with machines*".

Professor Krasimira Tsaneva-Atanasova is a *Turing Fellow* and her pilot work has been on developing virtual reality-based diagnostic tools for mental health disorders. She presents "*Individual motor signatures and socio-motor biomarkers in schizophrenia*".

Dr Mark Freestone, Centre for Psychiatry, Wolfson Institute for Preventive Medicine, Queen Mary University of London, *Turing Fellow*. He presents "*Thinking causally about personality, offending, and violence prevention*".

Dr Maria Liakata is a *Turing Fellow*. She presents "*Opportunities and challenges in employing automated analysis of language and heterogeneous user generated content to support monitoring of mental health*".

During the day there are panels with questions. Around lunch there are also smaller facilitated groups (45 minutes) where participants can explore the issues raised.

To register

Visit website: aapweb.website for the full programme and tickets

Purchase and enquiries by email: Adam.Saltiel@aapweb.website

Please include your name and phone number

Receipt will be issued following payment

Conference fees include lunch and end of day cheese and wine

Earlybird fees £90.00 until 2 September 2019

Full fees £110.00

Student £45.00 (only 50 available)