



The cast of Leopoldstadt at Wyndham's Theatre Pictures: MARC BRENNER

Stoppard's 'last' play has a cumulative and moving power

**LEOPOLDSTADT
WYNDHAM'S THEATRE**

★★★★☆

Tom Stoppard's latest, possibly last play lacks his usual linguistic and formal trickery. Instead, it's a straightforward, linear piece, with an immense cumulative power that leaves audiences awed and tearful.

It's also a deeply personal work. Stoppard only recently learned about his Czech-Jewish ancestors, many of whom perished in Nazi camps. Once his mother had escaped with him to England, she "drew a blind" over her former life.

The play follows an extended Jewish family in Vienna – from affluence in 1899 to 1955 and the aftermath of unthinkable horror. Textile magnate Hermann has married Catholic Gretl, and is optimistic about assimilation. They have a casual upper-middle-class status: waited on by servants, their home featuring a grand piano and chandelier.

Over time, home, status and safety are stripped away – indelibly demonstrated by Richard Hudson's design and Neil Austin's lighting. Between scenes, Adam Cork's

MARIANKA SWAIN
features@hamhigh.co.uk

soundscape and Isaac Madge's black-and-white images plunge us into the past.

However, the first half is overloaded with exposition – usually from men – and the mammoth cast and multi-generational tale make it hard to track who's who.

Patrick Marber's direction is effective in the lovingly chaotic ensemble sections; the speeches are too static.

But a gripping second half demands that you bear witness to the Holocaust's atrocities. It's stark, simply told, and unbearably moving. Current events – the rise of

anti-Semitism and nationalism, our shameful treatment of refugees – add further potency.

There's excellent work from Adrian Scarborough as the gradually disillusioned Hermann, Faye Castelow's restless Gretl, Caroline Gruber's outspoken grandmother, and Ed Stoppard's mathematician, clinging to logic in the face of senseless persecution. Sebastian Armesto, Jenna Augen and Luke Thallon handle the complicated 1950s cross-currents – including Stoppard interrogating his own adopted British identity – with supreme delicacy.

This is a play that demands we remember – and, by remembering, honour those we lost.



Ramsey Robertson and Faye Castelow in Leopoldstadt

Competition



England team celebrate Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's opening goal. Pics: THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

See Three Lions v Denmark friendly

The countdown to Euro 2020, which England are co-hosting, continues when Gareth Southgate's men entertain fellow qualifiers Denmark at Wembley and here is your chance to be there...

The Tuesday, March 31 international match (ko 8pm) will see The Three Lions step up their preparations for this summer's showpiece - when all roads will lead to London.

The visit of Denmark is one of three home fixtures England are scheduled to play before kicking off Euro 2020 against Croatia at Wembley on June 14. Free-scoring England secured their place at Euro 2020 by winning Group A

by six points, averaging over 4.5 goals per game in the process.

Wembley is one of 12 host venues, spread across the continent, for this unique edition of the championship. Wembley will host all three of England's group matches plus a round of 16 match, the semi-finals and final. Tickets for England's friendly against Denmark at Wembley on Tuesday, March 31 (ko 8pm) are on sale now at TheFA.com/Tickets

We have five family tickets (two adult, two junior) to give away for this important encounter against Age Hareide's side. To win, fill in the coupon and send it to England v Denmark competition, Editorial, Archant, 7th Floor, Maritime House, 1 Linton Road, Barking IG11 8HG by Tuesday, March 3.

Terms and conditions: The FA will issue tickets upon receipt of winners' details. Travel and accommodation not included.

England v Denmark competition

Q: Who are England's first opponents at Euro 2020?

A Spain B Wales C Croatia

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode..... Tel no.....

Email.....

Unless you have chosen to receive other information from us, Archant Community Media Limited and The Football Association will solely use the data you provide for the purpose of running the competition, including contacting winners and the distribution of any prize.

Keep me up to date on special promotions, products and services from Archant Community Media Limited [] You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing dpo@archant.co.uk

Full Archant terms and conditions apply (available on request).

