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SELECTED REVIEWS

[REVEIWS APPEAR CHRONOLOGIOCALLY. MORE RECENT WORK CAN BE FOUND TOWARDS THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT]

Artist Descending A Staircase – Tom Stoppard, WORLD PREMIERE, London and New York 1989 – 90

- Tim Luscombe's faultless production (Independent)
- Mr Luscombe is becoming the West End Wunderkind (Daily Mail)

When She Danced – Martin Sherman, London and New York 1988 – 90

- The perfection of Tim Luscombe's direction, which strikes me as the nicest gift a playwright's gotten in New York for years... (Village Voice)
- Luscombe is a major talent with a wonderful feel for atmosphere (N.Y. Post)
- Tim Luscombe, a young British director, who made his Broadway debut earlier this season, handles the shift in action from tragedy to melodrama to farce with ease (TV Review, N.Y.)

Warrior – Shirley Gee, WORLD PREMIERE, Chichester 1989

- Tim Luscombe's brilliant production... (Observer)

Jeffrey – Paul Rudnick, EUROPEAN PREMIERE, London 1995

- Tim Luscombe's European Premiere is even better than the New York original (Newsnight)

Salvation – Joe Pintauro, EUROPEAN PREMIERE, London 1995

- It's this potent sense of ensemble performance in Tim Luscombe's impeccably detailed production that makes an irresistible hymn to human compassion work splendidly (Evening Standard)
- Tim Luscombe's direction deserves the highest praise (Financial Times)

The Browning Version and Harlequinade – Terrence Rattigan, West End 1988

- Tim Luscombe's immaculate production (Telegraph)
- Masterly (Times)

Easy Virtue – Noel Coward, West End 1988

- The director, Tim Luscombe, has achieved miracles (Sunday Telegraph)
- A perfectly cast production (City Limits)
- Meticulous production by Tim Luscombe – that rare creature, a young director of impressive accomplishment and flair (Telegraph)
- Under the skilful direction of our new theatrical wunderkind Tim Luscombe... (Sunday Telegraph)
- Astonishing (Country Life)

The Power And The Glory – Graham Green and Dennis Cannon, Chichester 1990

- Tim Luscombe's revival is a rich and remarkable triumph (Int Herald Tribune)
- Superbly staged (Observer)
- Tim Luscombe's superb production (Daily Telegraph)

Private Lives – Noel Coward, West End 1990

- Stylishly directed by the remarkable Tim Luscombe (Daily Mail)
- Mr Luscombe's production, starring Joan Collins, brings out the emotional volatility under the repartee (Guardian)

The Merchant of Venice – Shakespeare, West End and World Tour 1990 – 1

- Masterful production (Times)
- Mesmerising production (Guardian)

Point Valaine – Noel Coward, Chichester 1992

- Tim Luscombe's direction has an expert control (Sunday Times)
- Tim Luscombe's production is a theatrical bolt from the blue...with its romantic atmospheres...always controlled (Guardian)

Relative Values – Noel Coward, Chichester and West End 1993

- The direction is perfect (today)
- Tim Luscombe directs with the style and attention to detail we have come to expect from him (Telegraph)
- Tim Luscombe's production is impeccably stylish (Sunday Times)
- The era is precisely evoked in Tim Luscombe's sparkingly played production (Daily Mail)

What The Butler Saw – Joe Orton, Northampton 2001

- Joe Orton's crazy farce is revived by Tim Luscombe, who is great at this kind of [thing] (Guardian)

The Rivals – Sheridan, Salisbury 2001

- This production neither plays it too safe nor seeks the extremes of the avant-garde; the kind one hopes for from a theatre such as the Salisbury Playhouse...It shows why Britain needs provincial theatres producing their own plays, offering a middle way between the high art of London's creative powerhouses and the vanilla mediocrity of most commercial productions. As so many provincial theatres are becoming merely waystops for low-calorie rehashes of West End blockbusters, it is good to know there are some beacons out there for us non-metropolitans." (The Independent 15/09/01)

A Perfect Ganesh – Terrence McNally

Palace Theatre, Watford, May 2002

What's On:

The crowd sat wrapt as Tim Luscombe's vigorous production unfolded...Director Luscombe steers the action so precisely that it never

descends into melodrama, and each woman's pain is explored with delicacy and great depth of emotion. (Phil Chapman)

The Evening Standard:

Tim Luscombe's delightful production (designer Steve Yull achieves wonders with simple arrangements of arches, trellises and boxes) could hardly be better served. It is hard to imagine the enthusiastic Katherine Brynne ("Kitty") being more perfectly expressed than in the pint-sized figure of Sandra Dickinson. Endlessly mobile, boundlessly sincere, she is matched by Lolly Susi's strained, uptight Margaret Civil, a woman whose whole physical demeanour reflects repression... (Carol Woddis)

The Stage:

The European premiere in Leeds provoked a barrage of hostile reviews for its mawkish sentimentality and the irritating mask-wearing Ganesha. Prospects for a London production seemed unlikely. **But director Tim Luscombe and a superb Palace Theatre cast have discovered deep layers of refreshing irony** under the marzipan. A limber Ganesha, played with tremendous style by Rohan Siva, wears his elephant mask for all of 60 seconds. The ladies are portrayed by outstanding American actresses - Lolly Susi and Sandra Dickinson... (John Thaxter)

Northanger Abbey Theatre Royal, York

2004

The GUARDIAN

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a theatre in want of audiences will eventually find another Jane Austen novel to exploit. Full credit, therefore, to adaptor and director Tim Luscombe for avoiding the more obvious titles and staging a slighter, earlier work that transfers more felicitously to the stage.

Northanger Abbey is more broadly satirical and less finely nuanced than Austen's acknowledged masterpieces, yet these are the qualities that translate best for dramatic treatment. Luscombe's giddy, headlong production takes its tone from the heroine's impatience. Awkward debutante Catherine Morland always has her nose in a book - the more ravishingly horrid the better - but only "as long as they are all action and no tedious reflection".

Conveniently for the dramatist, the book neatly divides into two halves - the first describes Catherine's social round in Bath where she meets the charming Tilneys; the second involves her stay as their house guest at Northanger Abbey...it's at Northanger, where Catherine's bookish imagination takes a morbid turn, that the real action and hilarity lies.

The performances illustrate many of Austen's mature themes in their formative stages. Jenni Maitland's excitable, saucer-faced Catherine is an early try-out for Marianne Dashwood; while

there is a Knightley-ish display of tolerant good sense from Freddie Stevenson as her amiable suitor Henry. Excellent support too from Susan Bovell as guarrulous chaperone Mrs Allen, a picture of disappointment when she declares that her tailor has not called: "I did so wish him to have a look at my old muff and tiffet."

The Schuman Plan **The Hampstead Theatre**

2006

Nothing that Luscombe has produced before quite prepares us for his latest play, The Schuman Plan, which is premiered now in Anthony Clark's absorbing production. Though it's often sharply funny, there's nothing frivolous about this piece.

Spanning 70 years, from the Thirties to the present day, the play is an intelligent and intricate attempt to explore the contradictions and shifts in our response to the European Ideal.

The thread that holds it together is the career of an invented character, Bill Bretherton (Robert Hands), the son of a Suffolk fisherman who becomes a protégé of Captain Edward Heath (an excellent Simon Robson) while serving under him during the war.

In one of the best scenes, which shows Heath fielding a phone call from the Norwegian prime minister while dressing to conduct a concert, it becomes clear that Bill's employer is prepared secretly to surrender the rights of English fishermen rather than falter at the final hurdle of taking the country into Europe.

The play oscillates between episodes that chart Bill's disenchantment (there's a very funny sequence on a Sicilian farm in which he's forced at gunpoint to accede to gross CAP corruption) and moving scenes among the fishermen, destitute because of EU directives, in Suffolk in 1992. It's the final irony that Bill, the local boy and visionary, returns home as the jobsworth MAFF official detailed to supervise the destruction of the boats. (Paul Taylor, the Independent, 09.02.06)

[The Schuman Plan] offers a detailed, intricate look at shifting attitudes to the European dream. It is invigorating to hear a public stage being used to debate a crucial issue. Fascinating stuff. You can't accuse Luscombe of failing to grapple with big issues. (Michael Billington, The Guardian, 07.02.06)

Ambition is obviously Tim Luscombe's middle name. It is exhilarating to see Hampstead on such aspirational form. The Schuman Plan raises the crucial question: is it possible to create a non-didactic political play if

the politics do not directly involve life or death. (Rachel Halliburton, Time Out, 15.02.06)

A courageous piece. (Sam Marlowe, The Times, 08.02.06)

Ambitious, clever, interesting, even fun. (Alastair Macaulay, The Financial Times, 09.02.06)

One of the most ambitious new plays I've seen in years. (John Peter, Sunday Times, 12.02.06)

THE RAT TRAP THE FINBOROUGH THEATRE

2006

Time Out Critics' Choice

Time Out Critics' Choice - **** Four Stars Time Out

"On stage in the West End at the Finborough Theatre after 80 years offstage"
Evening Standard ES Magazine

"Heroic effort by a young Coward...Written in 1918, when he was only 18 and not revived since a brief London run in 1926, Noel Coward's The Rat Trap is an absolute revelation."
Nicholas de Jongh, Evening Standard

"Tim Luscombe's revival for the Finborough's Forgotten Voices season makes for a most rewarding evening"
Jeremy Kingston, The Times

"For sheer energy, engrossing performances and entertainment value the production knocks spots off almost every other straight play in London at the moment" John Thaxter, British Theatre Guide

"It's certainly worth catching Tim Luscombe's excellent production, unless you want to wait another 90 years for the chance." Alastair Smith, The Stage

"Tim Luscombe's intense production makes ideal use of the Finborough's tiny round space"
Caroline McGinn, Time Out

"The rich entertainment provided by Tim Luscombe's production." Michael Billington, The Guardian

"Played in the round on the tightest of spaces, Luscombe and his cast vividly re-create an unjustly forgotten drama that is both like and interestingly unlike the plays that followed."
Jeremy Kingston, The Times

"A fascinating revival...very interesting and well worth seeing...It is an astonishingly accomplished and psychologically mature work" C J Sheridan, Rogues and Vagabonds

"Its post-mortem of the death of creative love in marriage is shocking and pertinent" Caroline McGinn, Time Out

"Tim Luscombe's fluid direction, which carefully balances stylish comedy of manners with truthful emotional psychology" C J Sheridan, Rogues and Vagabonds

"Staged in the round, the actors barely inches from some of the audience, it proves an intense experience and the cast do not disappoint even at such close quarters." Alastair Smith, The Stage

From a letter by the producer Kevin Wallace, April 2002

Tim has an insight and wit that he brings to his work that disarms the cynic through very specific direction that has a strong sense of period whilst being rooted in truth of character, situation and intention. His direction is light. He has a great sense of comedy. He is classy, witty, a very accomplished playwright and a charismatic leader.

He is one of the most organised directors I have ever worked with. His return to the industry is good for us all, and yet he is still a young man. The difference now is that he is a young man who has already been "around the block" and comes fresh from his "time out" but profoundly experienced - as his resume testifies.