

THE DUMB WAITER

FRI 12 MAY - SAT 3 JUNE



AND
A SLIGHT ACHE

BY
HAROLD PINTER

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

GREENWICH
THEATRE **LONDON**

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Production photos by Danny Kaan



Bringing together this duo of dark comedies by one of Britain's most influential modern dramatists, **Harold Pinter**, Greenwich Theatre presents their first in-house production of 2023. Both **The Dumb Waiter** and **A Slight Ache** were written by Pinter in the late 1950s; two unmissable short plays that explore the political machinations of those in power and those who are powerless. If you love Pinter at his influential, poetic, dramatic and provocative best, you'll love this duo of brilliant one-act plays.

Starring **Kerrie Taylor** (TV - *Hollyoaks*, *Where The Heart Is*, *The Bay*), **Jude Akuwudike** (Stage - *Three Sisters* at The National Theatre, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* at The Globe, *The Cherry Orchard* at Arcola) and **Tony Mooney** (TV - *Scott and Bailey*, *Casualty*, *Hollyoaks*, *Last Tango in Halifax*). These two of Pinter's "Comedies of menace" will be brought to life for this limited three week run.

A Slight Ache examines a middle-aged married couple, who's dreams and desires are thrown into sharp relief and shaken to the core when a mysterious man is welcomed into their private space. Whilst **The Dumb Waiter** follows hitmen Gus and Ben, who are awaiting instructions for their next job in a derelict building, when they start to receive strange messages via a dumb waiter.

Director, **James Haddrell** says *"I am excited to be twinning these two one-act plays by Pinter. At first sight they could not be more different – one a comic visit to a dingy basement where two hitmen await their latest mark, and the other an hour in the home of an upper middle-class couple whose invitation to an itinerant match-seller threatens their settled existence. However, both reveal Pinter's astonishing ability to identify our insecurities, in the spoken and the unspoken, and to blend the naturalistic with the surreal - and both end with an image that will stay with people long after they've left the theatre"*.

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THE PRODUCTION TEAM

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CREATIVES & CREW

James Haddrell - Director
Simon Francis - Producer
Brad Tutt - Assistant Producer
Lucie Morgado - Marketing & PR
Caz Hampton - Technical manager
Cora Parkinson - Stage manager
Jamie Grant - Technical Assistant Stage Manager
Alice Carroll - Set and Costume Designer
Matt Keywood - Lighting Designer
Paul Gavin - Sound Designer
Ryan Dunnet - Programmer
Centreline fabrications - Set Construction

FRONT OF HOUSE TEAM

This production would not have been made possible without the constant support of our dedicated front of house staff and volunteers led by **Ian Pettitt** - Front of House Manager



CAST

Kerrie Taylor - *Flora in A Slight Ache*
Jude Akuwudike - *Edward in A Slight Ache & Gus in The Dumb Waiter*
Tony Mooney - *The Matchseller in A Slight Ache & Ben in The Dumb Waiter*



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THE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Taking on not one but two plays by Harold Pinter has been a huge undertaking for this small company – especially as, on the surface at least, they seem so different. From the existential destruction of the ‘haves’ in *A Slight Ache* to the minutiae of the bored existence of the ‘have nots’ in *The Dumb Waiter*, the two plays take on totally different scenarios, characters and ideas.

However, whilst Edward talks about his territory and pontificates about international travel in *A Slight Ache*, it becomes clear that he is actually trapped in his own house by his own insecurities, forcing him into the same claustrophobic existence that our two bored hitmen are experiencing in *The Dumb Waiter*. Meanwhile the importance of matches in *The Dumb Waiter*, sitting at the heart of whatever surreal scenario Ben and Gus are experiencing, is mirrored entirely in the figure of the Matchseller in *A Slight Ache*.

Both plays have much to say about society and the abstract power constructs that limit us as individuals, about what fear can do to a person, about friendship. Ben and Gus can only cope with the treadmill of their regular jobs if they have each other, like a classic comedy double act. Edward and Flora are in the late stages of a dying relationship, but her concern for him is palpable despite the tantalising offer of a new beginning.

And then of course there’s the first eleven, present in both – which feels like a throwaway, a nod to Pinter’s obsessive love of cricket, but which actually suggests far more in both cases.

In the rehearsal room we have all developed our own view of what the Matchseller is, or what he represents, and what happens after the lights go down on *The Dumb Waiter* – and that might be the strongest connection of all between the two plays. Pinter is not afraid of ambiguity. His famous pauses and silences that sit throughout the plays continue long after the lights have gone out, as audiences are challenged to come to their own conclusion about what they have just seen. We have loved reaching our own conclusions but we’ve worked hard to preserve that ambiguity in both productions, to leave you to make your own decisions.

This double-bill is the first in a series of bold in-house productions scheduled for this year at Greenwich Theatre. Next up, Kerrie Taylor is set to return in Philip Ridley’s *Vincent River*, performing alongside Brandon Kimaryo, an astonishing new graduate actor that we found after a long search. After such a challenging time for theatres everywhere, 2023 feels like a year to be optimistic, and we look forward to sharing this and a host of other shows with you.

James Haddrell, Artistic Director



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