

HABEAS CORPUS

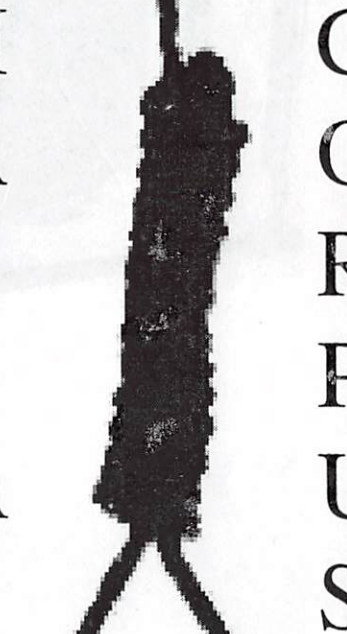


Directed
by Barry
Baynton

D. YOUNG

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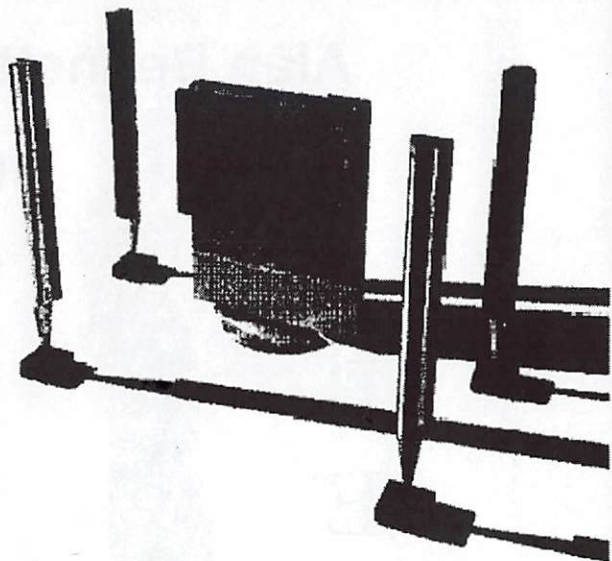


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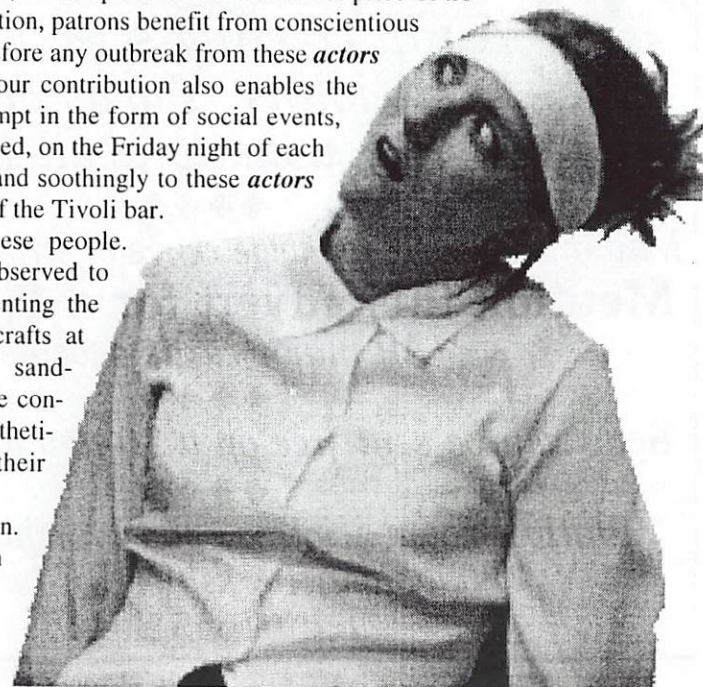
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the advantageous price of £15, as compared to the full ticket price of £6 for each performance. In addition, patrons benefit from conscientious warning at least two weeks before any outbreak from these *actors* is expected to take place. Your contribution also enables the regular rehabilitation we attempt in the form of social events, at which patrons are encouraged, on the Friday night of each production, to speak quietly and soothingly to these *actors* in the calming surroundings of the Tivoli bar.

There is hope for these people. Several of them have been observed to take a simple pride in presenting the results of their rustic handicrafts at these events, rudimentary sandwiches and simple snacks, the consumption of which they are pathetically eager to share with their benefactors.

Please do all you can. Act soon. Ring Carolyn on 245376. Become a patron of Wimborne Drama. Think of the children.

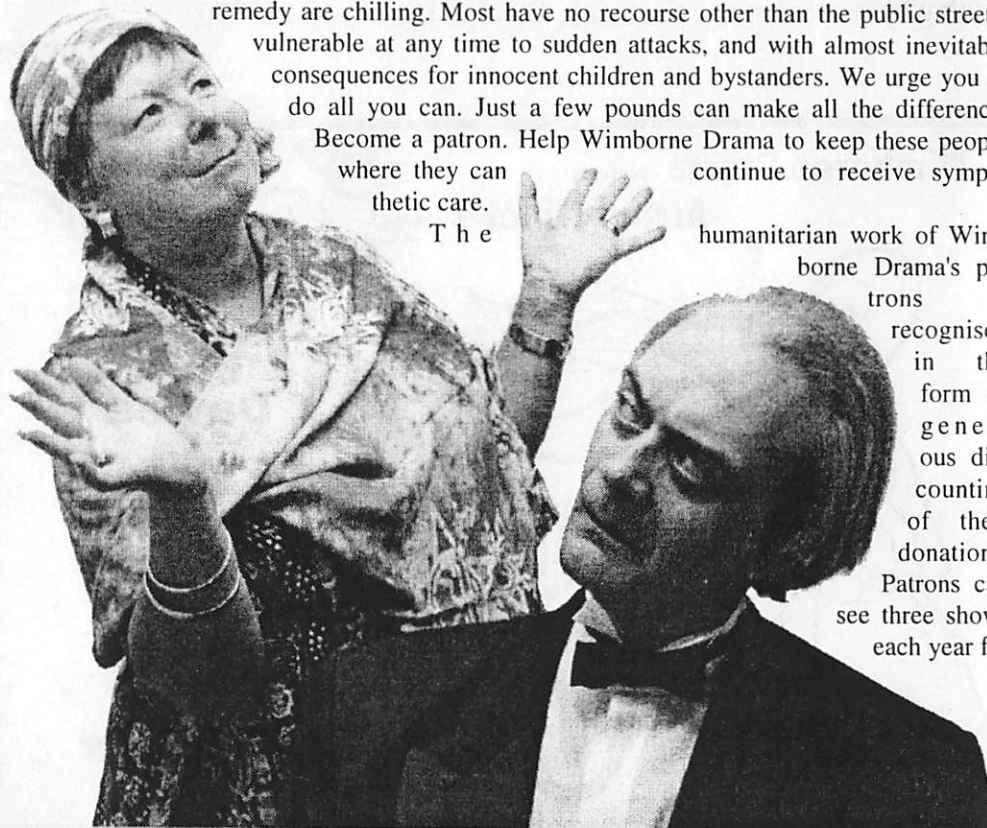


Frightening isn't it?

These otherwise perfectly ordinary people are *actors*. They need your help badly. Without your support their desperately needed therapy is at risk, and could even be withheld entirely. The prospects for sufferers denied access to their regular

remedy are chilling. Most have no recourse other than the public streets, vulnerable at any time to sudden attacks, and with almost inevitable consequences for innocent children and bystanders. We urge you to do all you can. Just a few pounds can make all the difference. Become a patron. Help Wimborne Drama to keep these people where they can continue to receive sympathetic care.

The humanitarian work of Wimborne Drama's patrons is recognised in the form of generous discounting of their donations. Patrons can see three shows each year for



ALAN BENNETT

Born in Leeds, Bennett attended the local grammar school, before going up to Oxford. It was here he met Jonathan Miller, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore and between them they wrote and starred in the revue *Beyond The Fringe*. This became a massive hit both in the West End and on Broadway. Fame followed the four of them, however the talents of Miller, Cook and Moore seemed to eclipse those of Bennett's, but gradually and quietly he became the most productive and creative of them all.

His first stage play *Forty Years On*, was produced in 1968 and starred John Gielgud as the Headmaster. *Habeas Corpus* opened in 1973 starring Alec Guinness, who also starred in Bennett's *The Old Country*, in 1977. Other plays include *Getting On*, *Enjoy*, *Kafka's Dick*, and *Single Spies*. At the end of November last year his latest play, *The Lady In The Van*, opened to massive critical acclaim.

Bennett has written much for television, his *Talking Heads*, is now legend, and has found itself joining the school curriculum for A-level study. *A Private Function*, *Prick Up Your Ears*, and *The Madness of King George*, were successful film scripts, the latter developed from his original stage play.

Alan Bennett is an immensely pri-

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greater freedom to live according to their individual ideals, and those determined to maintain the strict Puritan way of life.

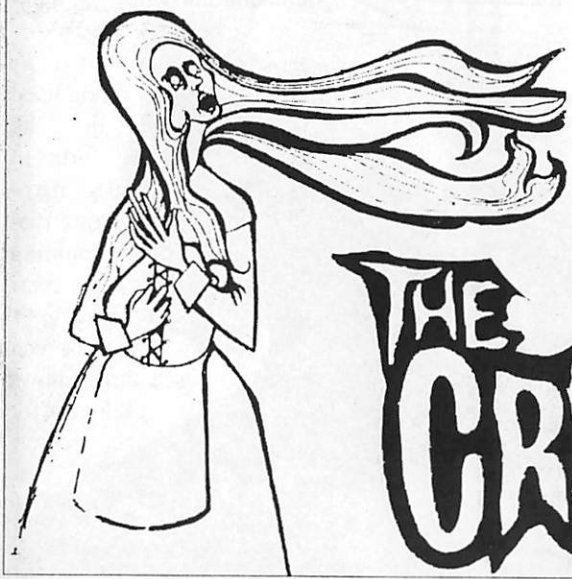
And so the story of John Proctor, his wife and friends unfolds. The characters are all based on real people and their fates were similar, and some cases, exactly the same as their historical models.

The wave of mass hysteria that swept Salem was overwhelming. Today we might find it difficult to understand how such things could happen, but there have been other such situations in the world: in China, in the Moslem world, and in America itself. In the 1950's when Miller wrote the play, McCarthyism was sweeping the country, and he himself was called before the House un-American Activities Committee and asked about his links with the Communist Party. Like John Proctor he refused to clear his name by incriminating others.

Wimborne Drama Club is reading and casting the play next Monday, February the 21st at 7.30 in their rehearsal room above the Tivoli for production in May. If you are interested in becoming involved, either on stage or back stage, do come along! Or you could become a Patron with priority booking by contacting the Secretary, Carolyn Hewitt, on 245376.

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The early settlers lived in close-knit communities dominated by the Church. Individuality was suppressed in the interests of communal safety, for the forests surrounding the settlements were hostile and threatening, inhabited by Indians and, they thought, evil spirits and the Devil.

However, as life became a little more settled, conflicts began to arise between those seeking

vate person. His book *Writing Home*, is as close as we get to him, although his latest play seemingly takes one into his life, or part of it.

THE PLAY

With its jokes, the organised anarchy of a crazy plot, the cross-purposes, coincidences, trouser-dropping and mistaken identities, *Habeas Corpus*, is formally a traditional farce.

However Bennett's vision is so persistently tragi-comic that even this farce centres on the pain of the human condition. *Habeas Corpus* is a meditation on the body, and hence on ageing and mortality.

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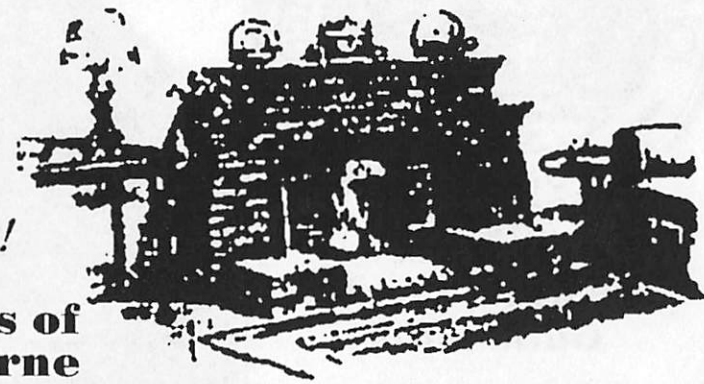
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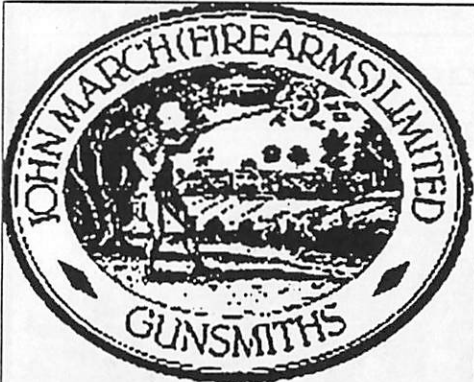
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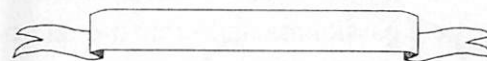
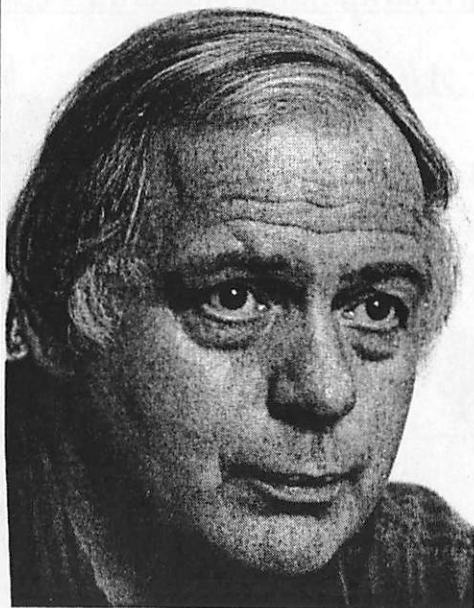
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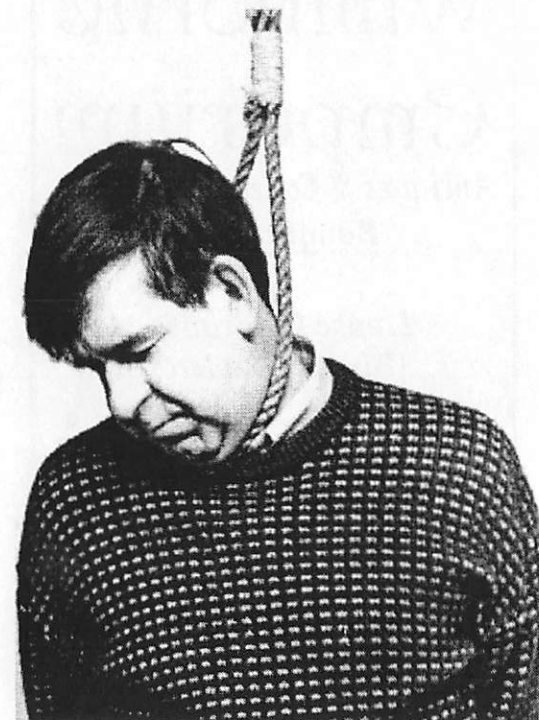
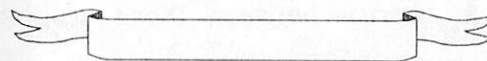
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Barry Baynton joined Wimborne Drama during 1993 appearing as the Owl in *The Owl and The Pussycat Went to See*, Ernest in *Bedroom Farce*, and Bill in *Woman in Mind*. Other plays have included *A Voyage Round My Father*, *Fur Coat and No Knickers*, and Porterhouse in *Run For Your Wife*. Direction includes *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, and Alan Bennett's *Forty Years On*. His production of Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* won the Pokesdown Award for the Youth Class at the Fern-down Drama Festival. Appearances elsewhere include *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *Wait Until Dark*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Ten Times Table*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Lloyd George Knew My Father*, and *Billy Liar*. Barry is currently also directing *The Anniversary*. Future directing projects include *Lord of the Flies*, *Talking Heads* and *Dancing at Lughnasa*.



"habeas corpus n.
a writ requiring a person to be brought before a judge or into court, esp. to investigate the lawfulness of his or her detention.
[L, = you must have the body]"

The concise Oxford dictionary of current English.--8th ed



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In their own words

Chrissie Neal Mrs Swabb

Mrs. Swabb, compere extraordinaire. A role I have enjoyed playing. Somewhat typecast possibly? Trying to keep it all in control and keep myself in control: makes you wonder if it's "all in the mind".

Carolyn Hewitt Constance

Poor dowdy, insignificant Connie, resigned to living the rest of her life with her brother and his family because Mr. Right has not come along. Years of 'engagement' to the local, lusting vicar, and the butt of everyone's comments about her flat chest. How can she break out? Well

Martin Matthews Dennis

Whatever your opinion of Dennis, one thing is prevalent. No, it's not the fact that he is deluded. And, in fact paranoid. His father would describe him as lazy, his mother dull. Anyone can see his low self-esteem. Dennis would call himself a victim. No, none of these captures his prevailing characteristic.

Dennis fiddles with himself.

Val Mantle Muriel Wicksteed

I was delighted to have been chosen to play Mrs Muriel Wicksteed - the frustrated, menopausal wife of GP Dr. Arthur Wicksteed of Hove.

Poor Muriel tries hard to re-kindle a relationship she had with Sir Percy - all to no avail. Then there is the gross misunderstanding with Mr Shanks - but any more will spoil the plot.

The role is a joy to play, and as you can imagine, rehearsals have been hilarious.

Jeremy Austin Dr. Wicksteed

While others might speculate on their place in the "new" permissive society, Dr. Wicksteed, only too familiar with its deceits, has been practising its excesses and mendacity for years. Poor Arthur. No matter how battered and weary, he just can't resist all the old enticements. Oh well, even though he insists on remaining unredeemed by a single virtue, perhaps the one thing we can admire about him is his relentless persistence!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I am delighted that this current production is an 'Alan Bennett' for I do so admire his writing. Bennett is a wonderful everyday observer of the human being and his dialogue is a masterwork of that observation.

During 1996 I directed his *Forty Years On* for Wimborne Drama here at the Tivoli and it is very pleasing to be working again with four out of the five adult cast members. For *Habeas Corpus* I am spared the team of schoolboys!

Habeas Corpus is Bennett's only farce and is set on what is basically a bare stage. During rehearsals for the original West End production, starring Alec Guinness, the director made a great innovation by reducing the only furniture - four chairs - to three. I have taken this down to two! Alan Bennett made it clear that should the stage be cluttered with the usual array of doors, furniture, plants etc, then the actors would not have sufficient dialogue and time to get themselves on and off stage.

I suppose in all honesty *Habeas Corpus* is dated, and we certainly have long moved on from 'the permissive society' of the 70's. However, as with *Forty Years On*, the jokes are extremely painful and remain very, very funny. As one wag of a theatre critic put it at the play's last West End outing, "after all these years the

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play is remarkably hilarious and it is wonderful meeting Mr Bennett's McGill-type characters in his brilliant seaside romp".

Unlike *Forty Years On* – we presented the South Coast amateur premiere – *Habeas Corpus* locally has been done to death. The challenge then is to make the whole thing seem fresh and paint the script with what I hope is new visuals. We shall see.

Rehearsals for the play commenced during the last century and here we are in the next and indeed our first production of the Millennium. I am pleased it is a comedy, I feel we all need a good laugh during February. I trust you enjoy the farce, but beware it is a serious farce, for if you find yourselves to be around the middle age time of life then remember how well Alan Bennett observes . . . and writes. Is there a Wicksteed or Throbbing in you?

As always I greatly admire the extreme hard work afforded to me from the cast and backstage team, mind you we have had a lot of fun with this one. Thanks also to Eddie and Salliann Colton for their construction work with Connie's appliance, a rising tribute to you both!

Finally to the team of Tivoli volunteers, of which I am proud to be one. Thank you all for your support and help both technically and in front of house, you always so kindly put the audience in their place.

BARRY BAYNTON

In their own words

Bob Hucklesby

(*Bob's original contribution to this column was, "I've only got a little part".*)

Purdue is a sad character who for some reason wants to commit suicide - but really it is just a call for help.

Mr Purdue

Dave Williams

A paradigm of perennial pomposity, Sir Percy spends a large proportion of his time fighting the forces of "sizeism", seen to exist in every aspect of British society. His main opponent in this crusade is his rival in love and lust, Dr. Wicksteed, whom he pursues throughout the action in order to exact his revenge for real or imaginary past slights.

Sir Percy Shorter

Simon Jackson

It's all in a day's work for Mr. Shanks, sales representative and fitter for a company manufacturing ladies' chest enhancers (falsies). He has however, never visited a household like the Wicksteed's before. Which lady is to be found wanting? This is his dilemma. It certainly turns out to be quite a day for Mr. Shanks.

Mr. Shanks

Clare Downs

Lovely girl!

And she is really, despite appearing a little devious at times. She's actually a bit naive - hence her situation, and finding a solution to her "problem" is her main priority. But time is running out, so she must resort to desperate measures!

Felicity Rumpers

Margaret Pope

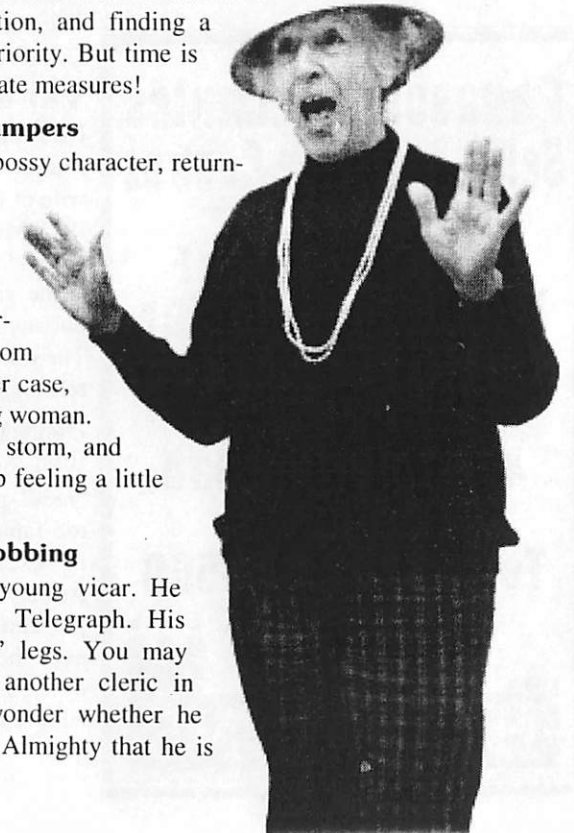
Lady Rumpers

Lady Rumpers, comes over as a strong bossy character, returning to England, after spending many years overseas, where her late husband was in Government service. She is disillusioned to find many changes, not least the casual attitude to sex, and worries about keeping her daughter safe from MEN. Men, or one particular man, in her case, having been her own undoing, as a young woman. She was strong enough to weather that storm, and whilst admiring her courage, I can't help feeling a little sorry for her.

Richard Neal

Canon Throbbing

Canon Throbbing is Hove's thrusting young vicar. He shops at Oxfam and reads the Daily Telegraph. His favourite past-time is looking up girls' legs. You may recall that Richard previously played another cleric in *Roses of Eyam*; he is beginning to wonder whether he should interpret this as a sign from the Almighty that he is wasted in his current profession.




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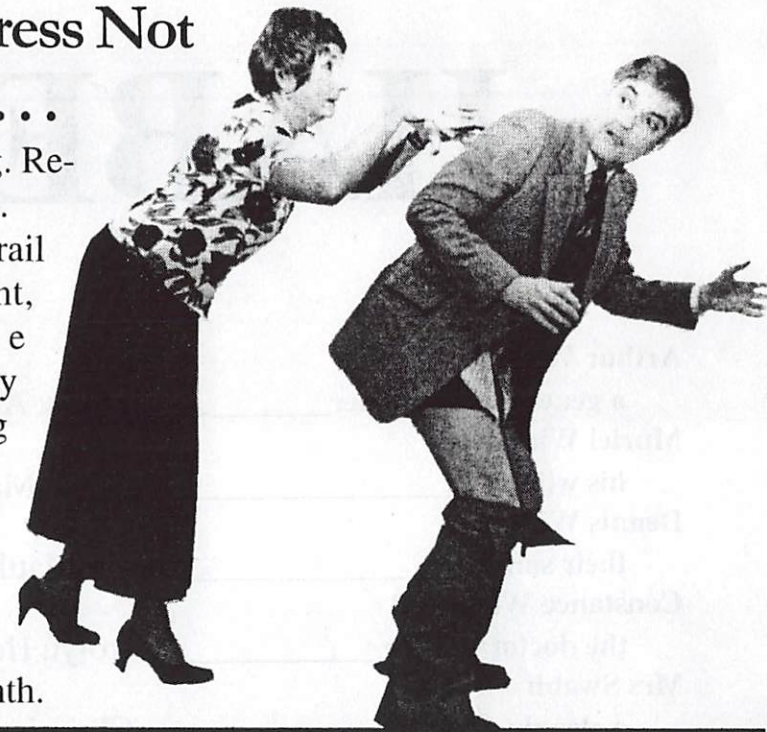
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HABEAS CORPUS

by ALAN BENNETT

Arthur Wicksteed

a general practitioner _____ Jeremy Austin

Muriel Wicksteed

his wife _____ Val Mantle

Dennis Wicksteed

their son _____ Martin Matthews

Constance Wicksteed

the doctor's sister _____ Carolyn Hewitt

Mrs Swabb

a cleaning lady _____ Chrissie Neal

Canon Throbbing

a celibate _____ Richard Neal

Lady Rumpers

a white settler _____ Margaret Pope

Felicity Rumpers

her daughter _____ Clare Downs

Mr Shanks

a sales representative _____ Simon Jackson

Sir Percy Shorter

FRCP FRCS, Chairman BMA _____ Dave Williams

Mr Purdue

a sick man _____ Bob Hucklesby

Directed by **Barry Baynton**

All scenes take place in and around the Wicksteeds' home in Brighton's plush, silk stocking district of Hove. Time—the early seventies.

The action is continuous.

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Set Design _____ Barry Baynton

Assistant Stage Manager _____ Joe Brooks

Lighting _____ Russell Parker

Sound _____ Carolynne Howe

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