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What Drives Us
To Drink?
by Eric Shorter

"See you at the interval. What'll you have?" It's a familiar greeting. You
hear it often in bars. Two groups of theatre-goers have had a chance
encounter. There isn't time to do more
than say hello. But they know that
there will be at the interval.

In British theatres there is
something magical about it. It
represents a break from the task
ahead, a relief from duty, a pause
which is authorised, an opportunity to
relax, to return to the normal world,
to feel reassured from the implied attention
that art demands.

It isn't always as demanding as that.
One often goes to the theatre just for
fun, for laughs, for irresponsible enjoy-
ment. In that case the prospect of an
interval drink might not seem so com-
forting, so important, such a welcoming
moment of escapism from the thing
which everybody wants to see and pay,
probably, a good price for.

We, at the social side of the interval—
that's an audience which has a life of its own.
Most theatre-goers respect and sup-
port the tradition of an interval drink,
not because they necessarily crave alcohol but because it is a convention and a
vague but soothing ceremony. I have been known to share the compul-
sion eagerly myself, arising from a
long-held belief that drinks at theatres
attract intervals. Or rather that since
the interval is nearly always there we
had better do something during it and
what better than a drink?

To reject such a proposal is mildly
rebellious, pompous or at least eccen-
tric. At a first night for example if
you are seen in your seat in the inter-
val you are taken for either a reformer,
drunk, a critic who is above that sort of
bourgeois thing, or a coward.

Where does cowardice come into it?
At the bar, of course. The crush of
people, the catching of the bartender's
eye, the struggle to remember what
WHAT DRIVES US TO DRINK

you wanted to order (especially if you have, say, a party of four or six) and the final fumbling with notes and prices and bulky waiters, not to mention the search for your party when having botched you turn round to find them gone or huddled out of sight—all that can be discouraging and creates cowardice at half time.

But on the whole more people seem to go to the bar than to stay away from it. Or if they don’t go to the bar they go to one near by. And that can raise even more complicated issues.

For example, which pub to head for? Who will get there first? And can one count on knowing when the interval’s over as one can if one stays in the theatre? There’ll be more choice of li ght at the pub, but apart from the absence of an interval bell (though some pubs which are favored by theatregoers have an interval bell to add a sense of security), will he be ready for really rapid service?

But whether you go to a neighbouring pub or hotel in the belief that you are cutting out the struggle of a hundred clustered playgoers with loud voices trying to catch one barmen’s eye, or whether you sit quietly in the auditorium, or time up for an innocent ice cream, an interval at the play creates a gap which must be filled however philosophically and heading for the bar is one solution which I (I suspect) more of a reflex action than many of us realize.

At certain theatres, before the play begins, you are urged to order your interval drinks in advance. These are lined up on a shelf with your name on the piece of paper under them—paid for before the curtain rose. Very handy, for you and for the management.

But is the habit a consequence of alcoholic thirst, a pause in a ritual which breaks the tension, a routine derived from a social courtesy, a recognized release from cultural pressure? There is in fact a movement against it. Plays are being noted, here and there, without intervals. And not just short plays either.

Cynics say that this is merely to ensure that we do not find an excuse for leaving at half time if we do not like the show. Others say that it helps to concentrate our attention and that an interval, by breaking it, puts an extra burden on the author and actors to build it up again.

In some older plays you find two intervals. Two intervals used in fact to be normal. Hence the oddness today at certain older plays in being faced by two prices for playrights once regularly constructed their stuff in three acts.

They wanted at Malvern Festival last year to have only one interval and to make the second just a five-minute pause. But what can you do with a five-minute pause? No good opening the bars or going round with ice-creams. Even the inventories, where ladies are concerned, could bring queues.

So the management settled for two quarter-hour intervals, which naturally bumped up the bar takings, though to any aged they robbed the comedy ("Our Betters") of its momentum. But did you know that certain playgoers—for example Glenda Jackson—seem to increase the bar takings wherever they go?

And bar takings at some plays are not a small item; sometimes reaching a large percentage of the total "take" as it is called. If Miss Jackson (and she is not alone) is said by management to raise the profits at the bars as well as tension in the auditorium it is perhaps time a public survey was done, if only to find out what drives us to drink at the interval.

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STARTERS (All served with black bread)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monkfish</td>
<td>£2.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grilled Onion</td>
<td>£2.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>King Prawns</td>
<td>£3.95</td>
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<td>Smoked Mackerel</td>
<td>£3.95</td>
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MAIN DISHES (All served with mixed Greek Salad)

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<td>Grilled Onion</td>
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<td>Smoked Mackerel</td>
<td>£3.95</td>
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SWEETS

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<td>Minted Snap Peanuts</td>
<td>£2.95</td>
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<td>Minted Snap Peanuts</td>
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ANNE-MARIE JEFFRIES  RON KOPSIE
ISOBEL MASON  KYLA MOORE  WILLIS

Lighting by CHRISSY WICKHAM
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THE BASIC FACTS OF THE COMPANY

BOBBY DENNIS (stage name - Glenn) was born in Hull, Humber in the South of England, and now lives in Sheffield, where he has been playing for the last few years. As a young man, he worked as a jockey and later became a professional musician. He started his career by playing in various pubs and clubs, and soon became one of the most popular musicians in the area. His fame spread quickly, and he was invited to perform at the Edinburgh International Festival, where he received critical acclaim. Since then, Bob has been playing all over the world, from Europe to Asia, and has become one of the most sought-after performers in the industry. He is known for his powerful voice and his ability to connect with his audience. Bob's music is a blend of rock, blues, and country, and he has released several successful albums. He is also a popular performer in the theatre, having appeared in several productions. Bob lives in a large house in Sheffield with his wife and children. When he's not performing, he enjoys spending time with his family, reading, and playing golf. He is also a supporter of the local football team, Sheffield United. Bob is a true legend in the music industry, and his contributions to it will forever be remembered.
WHY NOT BANGKOK?

1. WHY NOT BANGKOK? – THE COMPANY EXCEPT
2. YOUR HOST – BOBBY DENNIS
3. DAY DREAMING – ISOBEL, BUNNY AND KYLA
4. HANGOVER – ANNE-MARIE AND TONY
5. WHY CAN'T YOU BEHAVE? – TRACEY, WILLIS AND RON
6. BALLOONS – KYLA, BUNNY, RON AND TONY
7. DOCTOR, DOCTOR! – ISOBEL, TRACEY AND BUNNY
8. BED FOR THE NIGHT – ANNE-MARIE, BOBBY AND TRACEY
9. WHAT A WEIRD CAY – BUNNY AND TONY
10. ORVILLE 1 – RON AND KYLA
11. LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD – WILLIS AND TONY
12. KUBRICKANIA – KYLA, ISOBEL AND ANNE-MARIE
13. MASTERMIND – TONY AND BOBBY
14. I LOVE YOU – TRACEY, BUNNY AND WILLIS
15. INFLATABLE DOLL – BOBBY
16. SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE THINGS – KYLA, RON AND TONY
17. RULE OF THE WHIP – THE COMPANY
18. LITTLE WHEEL – BOBBY AND TONY
19. ORVILLE 2 – RON AND KYLA
20. GETTING TO THE SEAT – TRACEY AND BUNNY
21. SEX EDUCATION – BOBBY AND ISOBEL
22. UNDERNEATH I'M STILL A WOMAN – ANNE-MARIE, TRACEY, WILLIS AND TONY
23. MISTAKEN IDENTITY – BOBBY, ISOBEL AND RON
24. GERMANY, MY GERMANY – THE COMPANY
25. SAY IT WITH FLOWERS – BOBBY, TONY AND ISOBEL
26. MASKS OF FREEDOM – THE COMPANY

COOLING OFF TIME – INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

SPORT FOR ALL – THE COMPANY
1. IN THE HIGH COURT – TONY AND BOBBY
2. AIN'T MISBEHAVING – WILLIS
3. FOREIGN RELATIONS – BUNNY, RON AND TONY
4. DOCTOR, DOCTOR! – BOBBY AND ANNE-MARIE
5. MOONFLOWER – THE COMPANY
6. DOCTOR LONG JOHN – BUNNY
7. SADISM SEX – BUNNY, KYLA, RON AND ISOBEL
8. EXPOSURE – TRACEY AND ANNE-MARIE
9. SPELLING IT OUT – BOBBY, ISOBEL AND RON
10. FOOLISH THINGS – BUNNY, TONY, WILLIS AND SUSANNAH
11. ORVILLE 2 – RON AND KYLA
12. PLAYTIME – ANNE-MARIE AND BOBBY
13. EVERYBODY BUYS SEX – THE COMPANY
14. YOUR HOST – BOBBY DENNIS
15. GOODBYE BANGKOK! – THE COMPANY

Original words and music by ROB COMAT and RED NEWMAN respectively. Other comedy material by ERIC MESSMAN, TONY CLAYTON and BOBBY DENNIS. Other original music by PAUL JURY.
Looking Back with Anna
by Patrick Ludlow

We used to see Anna. That is Eric and I (or should it be me?). Eric Shater coined the title of this article, 'Looking Back with Anna'. He must have been thinking of Anna Neagle, our dear old friend and colleague. She was always better than the average actress. She was a true professional, and she always made every performance count.

Yes, Anna was one of my favorite actresses. I remember seeing her in 'The Music Box', 'The Secret Garden', and 'The Mating Season'. She was always the perfect blend of elegance and charm. In 'The Music Box', she played the role of a Countess, and she was simply stunning. Her performance was impeccable, and she truly brought the character to life.

That great impresario, great packer of attractions, Charles B. Cochran, was always on the hunt for new talent. He was always looking for ways to attract the audience, and he was always willing to take risks. That is what 'Looking Back with Anna' is all about. It's about looking back at the greats of the past and remembering the good times.

There was a time when Anna was one of the biggest stars in the world. She was always on top, always in demand. She was a true icon, and she will always be remembered for her contribution to the world of entertainment.

That was clear to everyone save Americans, poor souls, who don't understand why girls play boys, men are girl's, and the audience participates (I could do with less of that myself). Nor can they make out why there is no music in parts. Well, there is a lot you know, such as visual gags like the ugly sisters losing their false teeth.

Yes, that was it. Cinderella. The best story ever written! (am I creating controversy?) And it was surprising that the tale was told with few interpolations: attractive dances, funny situations, witty fairy godmother (Anna) with wigs and in the right place, and-- pretty girls.

That great impresario, great packer of attractions, Charles B. Cochran, got the money to put on the play, and no one else could have managed that. It was very exciting. Not all the sort of thing one has in the carriages and sanctums of the Samson wanted to see.

Certainly there were other lovelinesses besides Anna but few didn't make up for all the wrong words. It wasn't actually in Greek but for most of us it might well have been.

Now there was nothing Greek about the show Eric and I had been to see.

That was to say a sunny afternoon in St. James's Street when Brigitte Bardot tumbled out of Prunier. But that's enough about Boote. What about the setting?
LOOKING BACK WITH ANNA

A high level is not required although we know Susannah York (the Prince) is more than capable. Nevertheless master and servant changing places and cut for a farce can be fun. And it was. To my mind the servant always gets the best of it. We love it when the boss gets told off, and there is the imitation of the swagger and posh voice.

With Portia and Nerissa joking about the former’s suitors, Nerissa always steals the scene because Portia must retain dignity with the trial scene coming up: ‘The quality of mercy is not strained…’

To a lesser degree Prince Charming must always be a Prince while Dandini can fool around with a silly walk at the audiences. So, Janet Mahoney as the servant scored the extra giggle. The two worked together well and it was delightful to find a light comedy scene in low panto.

All the cast were full to please us and we did our best to reciprocate. Lionel Blair bustled around as Buttons keeping the show going at a lively pace. It was his production but he showed no signs of the cares of office. And there was much to his credit: the cheerfulness, the informality, and the smoothly running mechanics.

But I’m balking waltzing about Cinderella because, while the point of the piece, she often came across as melodramatic. When Cleo Courtenay was asked to do pantomime she agreed, making the verbal promise that it must be either Aladdin or Dick Whittington. With her contract signed, she played Cinderella for comedy – and was a wild success.

But it wasn’t really right. We ought to be sorry for the drudge who is brow-beaten and bullied by her elder sisters, deserted when she’s forbidden the ball, elated when she goes, and descended when, befeft of her glass, she has to leave at midnight.

Perhaps the sisters or the ‘book’ or the direction were at fault as we didn’t feel they were really cruel, and maybe Miss Kemal, overwhelmed by comics gagging, missed her few chances of pathos. The defence of the funny man who doesn’t care about the acting side is: ‘In pantomime you’ve got to project. If I get a belly laugh on my first entrance I’m set – and they’ll giggle at everything I say and do.’

There’s much truth in that but some players can make us cry one moment and laugh the next show evil, then split our sides. While laughs are important so is the early establishment of the pathos in the title role.

If I appear to carry it was nonetheless a jolly afternoon, and though the singing and dancing weren’t a feature we came out humming something about spreading a little happiness, which Dame Anna had made so nicely in the 1960s manner.

In her dressing room Anna was delightfully reminiscent: ‘Did I remember the marvellous party Cocky gave at the Savoy after the Pantomime show of 1977?’

Certainly I recalled hearing about it. You see, the males were not invited. At three o’clock and lunch we had been a captive but Cocky liked to be surrounded by beauty. We chatted about that good showman who had much to do with Anna becoming a star. We were so enthralled that we forgot to congratulate the girls with the short shorts.
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