

# BRITISH THEATRE

'The Stage' magazine, it is those listed here who deserve all the applause. By Louise Jury

3= Andrew Lloyd Webber



**Last year: 1st.** Having decided to focus on musical theatre, the composer sold off four of his playhouses, reducing his influence. But *The Woman in White* is doing good business in the West End and America. *Phantom* is about to become the longest-running show on Broadway and there are plans for a new version of *Sound of Music*.

3= Howard Panter & Rosemary Squire



**Last year: 3rd.** Managing director and executive director respectively of Ambassador Theatre Group, the largest group in the West End. Last year, they opened Travalgar Studio2 in London and took over the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, as well as launching a new panto business. First Family Entertainment.

5 Nica Burns & Max Weitzenhoffer



**New entry.** Seasoned producers Burns, the mastermind behind the Perrier Awards, and Weitzenhoffer, an American oil millionaire, raised £11.5m to buy the Apollo, Garrick, Duchess and the Lyric - from Lloyd Webber. Burns put the Donmar back into the black. She also got Christian Slater to star in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

6 Michael Grandage



**Last year: 16th.** "Man of the moment," says *The Stage*. The artistic director of the Donmar Warehouse, London, has presided over such hits as *The Philanthropist*, Schiller's *Mary Stuart* and the current adaptation of Ibsen's *Wild Duck* as well as the company's first musical venture on to the West End stage, *Gyps and Dolls*.

7 Michael Boyd



**Last year: 8th.** The artistic director has balanced the books of the previously troubled Royal Shakespeare Company while his programming has been "inspired", *The Stage* says. Projects such as the Gunpowder Season of plays have just transferred to London. This year, the RSC will present Shakespeare's entire canon in a festival.

8 Nicholas Hytner



**Last year: 5th.** The past year hasn't been quite as successful as his triumphant opening season, but the artistic director of the National Theatre is still warmly regarded for his efforts to bring new audiences to a challenging programme. Knock-out productions include *Pillars of the Community* starring Damian Lewis.

10 Bill Kenwright



**Last year: 10th.** Has been busy with *Night of the Igwana* starting Woody Armatson and A Few Good Men with Rob Lowe. But alongside work with the Hollywood stars, he helped take *Ethelina's Kitchen*, Kwame Kwei-Armah's first play for the National, into the West End and helped *The Big Black* become the first British Black musical in the West End.

11 Thomas Schumacher



**Last year: 6th.** President of Walt Disney's Theatrical Group, Schumacher remains a major player in the West End thanks to the ongoing success of *The Lion King*, which he produced, and *Mary Poppins*, co-produced with Cameron Mackintosh. *The Stage* predicts his power will increase as Disney's UK theatrical division grows.

12 Graham Sheffield



**New entry.** The artistic director of the Barbican Centre has turned producer since the departure of the Royal Shakespeare Company created space in his programme. Deborah Warner's *Julius Caesar*, with Ralph Fiennes and Simon Russell Beale, was a theatrical highlight of the year and *Yentlow*, the centre's Christmas show, was hailed a delight.

13 Nick Thomas & Jon Conway



**Last year: 9th.** Thomas, left, and Conway, the two directors of *Qdos*, are the world's leading producers of pantomime, but they now face a challenge from new panto-providers. First Family Entertainment. *Qdos* also produces summer seasons and West End shows. *Simply Bedroom*, a spin-off of the ballroom phenomenon, is a new venture.

14 Kevin Spacey



**New entry.** The Hollywood star turned artistic director of the Old Vic has made clear he is here to stay in the British theatrical scene. His first heavyweight role, Richard II, at the beginning of his second season in charge, pulled in big audiences. Forthcoming shows include the UK theatre directing debut of movie veteran Robert Altman.

15 Matthew Bourne



**Last year: 16th.** The choreographer who changed the face of dance with his *Swan Lake* and its all-male corps de ballet returned with a major new production before Christmas, a version of the Tim Burton film *Edward Scissorhands*. Currently at Sadler's Wells, London, it will then embark on a national tour. Bourne also worked on *Mary Poppins*.

17 Sally Greene



**New entry.** One of the best networkers in town, Greene said she would save the Old Vic and she should be credited for having rejuvenated the historic London theatre and surrounding herself with a "dream team" of Kevin Spacey, Elton John and David Liddiment. She was also one of the backers of the Billy Elliot musical.

18 Harold Pinter



**New entry.** Pinter has earned his place for a "truly great year" in which he won the Nobel Prize for Literature - using it to launch a searing indictment of American foreign policy. Health permitting, he is due to return to performing this year in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*.



(Palstaff in *Henry IV Parts I and II* at the National), **Richard Griffiths** (hero in *Heroes*, not least for rebuking mobile phone offenders); **Greg Hicks** (verse speaker acclaimed for Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*); **Clare Higgins** (*Death of a Salesman* and *Night of the Iguana*); **Derek Jacobi** (*Don Carlos*); **Helen McCrory** (Sienna Miller got the headlines but she won the critical plaudits in *As You Like It*); **Ewan McGregor** triumphant in *Gays and Dolls*); **Sir Ian McKellen** (launched "posh panto" trend as the Old Vic's Widow Twankey); **Janet McTeer** (Mary Queen of Scots

in Schiller's *Mary Stuart*; **Joanna Riding** (from Noel Coward's *Billie the Spirit* to Arthur Miller's *Playing For Time*); **Harriet Walter** (a menacing Queen Elizabeth in *Mary Stuart*).

## DESIGNERS

**Lez Brotherston** (*Acorn Antiques* and Matthew Bourne's *Edward Scissorhands* ballet); **Giles Cadle** (Olivier winner for *His Dark Materials*, but also work at Sheffield and the Almeida); **Bob Crowley** (for jaw-dropping *Mary Poppins* and the National's *The History Boys*); **Ian MacNeil** (for *Billy Elliot* and *Tintin*); **Christo-**

**pher Oram** (worked with his partner, the director Michael Grandage, on the hits *Gays and Dolls* and *Don Carlos*).

## MUSICALS

**Elton John/Lee Hall** (*Billy Elliot*); **Paul Joseph/Paul Street** (whose *The Big Life* became the first black British musical in the West End); **Richard Thomas/Stewart Lee** (team behind the controversial *Jerry Springer - The Opera*, which is about to tour).

## COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS

**Matthew Byam-Shaw** (money-man behind *Don Carlos* and

Sheila Hancock's son-in-law); **Mark Goncher** (shows included *Fame* and *Anything Goes*); **Raymond Gubbay** (impressario about to bring *Show Boat* to the Royal Albert Hall); **Theima Holt** (veteran who helped Sir Anthony Sher take his show *Primo* to America); **Richard Jordan** (young producer to watch); **Adam Kenwright** (who also owns one of London's West End big marketing agencies); **David Pugh** (for a successful regional tour of *Rebecca*); **Arielle Tepper** (Broadway producer who supported *Mary Stuart's* transfer from London's Donmar to West End); **Jon**

**Thoday/Richard Allen-Turner** (whose management company Avalon backed the Jerry Springer opera); **Duncan Welton/Paul Elliott** (worked together on *As You Desire Me*); **Kevin Wood** (a panto king this Christmas as chief executive of First Family Entertainment).

## LITERARY

**Richard Bean** (*Harvest* for the Royal Court was many people's new play of the year); **Alan Bennett** (*The History Boys* roars on with a regional tour, a return to the National then Broadway); **David Eldridge** (for adapting

**New entry.** The house-wives favourite may seem a surprise entrant. But his regional tour as Maxim de Winter in a stage version of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* records every where. "He was able to attract musical theatre-sized audiences to a straight play," *The Stage* says.

19 Nigel Havers



**New entry.** Babani, left, was an intrepid new producer and Tarento an actress-turned-restauranteur when they fell in love with a disused factory and turned it into what has become London's hottest new venue. Two years after the Menter Chocolate Factory opened in Southwark, it has a name for presenting new writing and quality revivals.

20 David Babani & Danielle Tarento



Ibsen's *Wild Duck* and his own work at the Royal Court); **Brian Friel** (possibly the most performed modern playwright of 2005); **David Greig** (a busy year included the award-winning new play *Pyrenees* and *The Cosmonaut's Last Message* at the Donmar); **Kwame Kwei-Armah** (the first living black British-born playwright to have work in London's West End); **Mike Leigh** (his first play for 12 years sold out before it opened at the National); **Owen McCafferty** (prolific and popular); **Tom Stoppard** (adapted *Heroes* from the French for London's West End).