

Dream pair: Desmond Barrit and Stella Bonet. Photograph by Richard Mildenhall

out lovers, providing crucial props in the third-act quarrel scene, as well as an idea, endemic to the comedy, of coming and going, of intrusion and stealth. There's even one great new gag, when Snug (Kenn Sabberton), as the Lion in the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' interlude, has to remove his paw in order to gain a purchase on the knob as he exits.

Haydn Gwynne, tall, anxious and willowy, and Emma Fielding, small, pert and feisty, are near-perfect as Helena and Hermia, and Toby Stephens ambles authoritatively through Lysander, with Kevin Doyle's Demetrius letting no one down. These lovers are colour-coded in orange, mauve, green and blue. Barrit's Bottom is an irrepressible amateur dramatics enthusiast (as indeed was Barrit himself at one time), transformed from a biker in leathers, goggles and crash helmet to a Bernie Winters comic ass by his pointed ears and Ken Dodd gnashers. A notable, and noble, Noble revival.

The sycophantic lauding and promotion of Arthur Miller's binds in London is a complete mystery to me. *Broken Glass* is the work of a great playwright reduced to prophetic, finger-wagging abstractions. As in his last two plays, *The Ride Down Mt Morgan* and *The Last Yankee*, Miller relates a trite fantasy of national malaise to feebly imagined histories of physical and mental disintegration.

A woman in 1938 Brooklyn is mysteriously paralysed as the Nazis smash windows in Berlin. Revulsion at racist extremism is tendentiously linked to personal and sexual disappointments. David Thacker's reverential production is struck with the ponderous attenuation that afflicts both the new Mamet in London and the new Albee in New York. Henry Goodman is busy and compelling as the helpless husband;

Ken Stott (recently a tremendous Willy Loman in Leeds) as the seductive doctor, is partial, fleshy compensation for weak, untethered acting on the distaff side. A lone cellist scrapes away, and a glassy partition splits the bare stage.

The Card (1973) is an enjoyable summer musical, spiffingly directed by Ian Talbot. The music of Tony Hatch, and the lyrics of Jackie Trent and Anthony Drewe, are pleasant and unpretentious. Ditto the libretto by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall from Arnold Bennett's novel about a rising entrepreneur in the Potteries. Peter Duncan is outstanding in the Jim Dale role of Denry Machin, and there is an excellent design of yet more doors by Tim Goodchild.

The Almeida should be shy of importing such sloppy and conspicuously over-financed work as Rod Williams's second play,

Theatre de
The Street of Crocodiles
"Haunting, v
an
The In
3 August - 3 September
Young Vic Theatre
Four 1993 Laurence Olivier Award nomination
Best Play, Best Director, Best Choreography

Coveney On Broken Glass

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