

26—THE STANDARD, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1984

The Critics

Season's greetings from the Court...

WHEN I first saw Edward Bond's *Saved* back in 1965 I said that its characters had moral attitudes that made the great apes a relatively civilised species.

Seeing it again at the Royal Court, I must confess that Mr Bond may have been more perceptive about the trend of English society. Moral values have trudged so far backward in the past 20 years that we are no longer shocked when a playwright suggests that anthropoidal behaviour is normal amongst lower-class families.

As part of its policy to thumb its nose at anything considered conventional or establishment, the Royal Court has chosen for the Christmas season a play that contains probably the most gratuitously violent scene ever shown on the British stage. Elizabethan and Jacobean plays have dis-



by MILTON SHULMAN

played people on the rack, eyes gouged out and off-stage children eaten but they shirked showing bestial violence against an infant.

Not so Mr Bond. For no other reason than an urge to release their sadistic impulses—they are not drunk or doped—a group of London youths gawk at a sleeping baby in its pram, try to rouse it by pulling its hair and pinching it, work themselves up into punching it, urinating on it, stoning it and finally throwing lighted matches at it.

We have been vaguely prepared for this development by seeing the home into which the child was born. Pam, its mother, is a shrieking tart known as the Ivy of the land. Its father may have been Len, a hangdog nonentity, or Fred, an arrogant vulgarian, whose sole idea of fatherhood is to blame somebody else.

There is one telling scene when we watch Len, Pam and her parents turn up the telly so that the cries of the baby will not disturb their concentration on a comedy programme.

Apologists for Mr Bond's vision of life claim that he is merely reflecting the genetic and environmental influences that generate our violent impulses. At least in 1965 he doesn't blame unemployment for these brutalised creatures.

It is true that he has a jagged and forceful writing style that hypnotises by its momentum. But sensationalism rather than moral commitment appears to be his dominant motivation. Occasionally the family verges on becoming the monsters of a horror cartoon.

Joanne Whalley is terrifyingly credible as a nagging, sex-obsessed young harridan with the mother instinct of a wolf spider. Peter-Hugo Daly, as Len, makes us believe he has the passive resignation of a spilloon.

MONSTERS:
Peter-Hugo
Daly and
Joanne
Whalley



A treat from the Royal

by EDWARD THORPE

IN RECENT years, Peter Wright, director of Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet, has created two brilliant classical productions for his own company. Now he has produced a new version of *The Nutcracker* for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, given a Royal gala premiere last night.

I will say at once that it is splendid, sumptuous, spectacular entertainment with all the artistic resources of the company deployed to tremendous effect.

Wright has gone to considerable lengths to resuscitate E. T. A. Hoffmann's original story with as much period

authenticity as possible. Julia Trevelyan Oman's setting of the first act, the Stahlbaum's drawing-room, is Nuremberg in the 1820s, the Biedermeyer epoch, the ultimate expression of solid bourgeois domesticity.

Many of the stage effects, using trap doors and mechanical contrivances, are relevant to the clockwork expertise for which that south German city was famous. But for my taste this elegant exercise in style is almost too clever; after repeated viewings I fear it may become boring.

The second act—nothing but dance diversions—is all white and gold fantasy. The whole company dances and act with great brilliance. Last night's opening cast was

led by Lesley Collier and Anthony Dowd, thrilling in their technical virtuosity. Guy Niblett made a real character out of the Nutcracker and Julie Rose was an enchanting Clara. David Peden, Maria Almeida, Bruce Sansom, and Angela Demello were all excellent in their mechanical doll variations of the first act.

Of the second-act national dances I was especially taken by the choreography of the Chinese and Arabian variations. One of the great pleasures of the evening was to hear Tchaikovsky's glorious score played under the direction of the distinguished Russian conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky. All in all, a great Christmas treat.

STANDARD TWO IN ONE CROSS

CRYPTIC PUZZLE

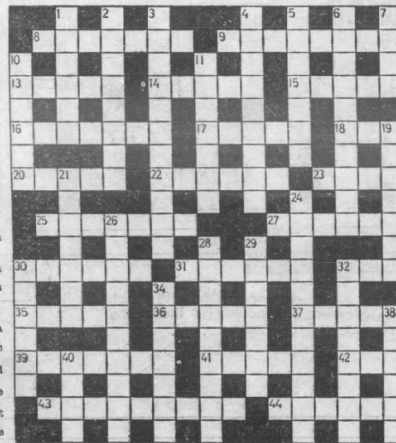
ACROSS

- 1 Convinced the crate has gone astray in L. end (7)
- 2 The number is a fifty, imprinted in the drug (9)
- 13 Can not twist the top off for him (5)
- 14 Not the afternoon I stay with a friend (5)
- 15 No, no. Not the motive for the crime (7)
- 16 Impudent member of the team (7)
- 17 Again do wrong by shielding the beautiful woman (5)
- 18 For a girl, rise number one (5)
- 20 Spent it coming back, having left (5)
- 22 A girl's and a man's name in the records (6)
- 23 A ticket for France and accommodation (6)
- 25 Games: doubles (7)
- 27 The villain meets his end on the golf-course (7)
- 30 Paint-book (5)
- 31 From Kent I get a break-down of the consumption (6)
- 32 An example of Nature's profligacy? (5)
- 35 Dress stand (5-2)
- 36 Scrap the article (5)
- 37 The man came back with a push-cart to take away (7)
- 38 What you think of the circular wing (7)
- 41 Had I not contracted a cold and got medicine (5)
- 42 Stop for a time when the animal comes round (5)
- 43 By which the express post comes? (4-3)
- 44 Search in the car a long time (7)

DOWN

- 1 To get cured, he runs a risk (8)
- 2 Paper rose, of a kind (8)
- 3 Artistically, two colours that don't mix (3, 3, 3)
- 4 The part of the child? (5, 4)
- 5 Is it stand offish? (7)
- 6 Intend to think about (4, 2, 4)
- 7 Halt the vessel and sound angry (6)
- 10 Took a healthy view of things and thought it right to (3, 3)
- 11 Skipping, but not there (7)
- 12 Not altogether acting (2, 4)
- 19 Do they wind up on the lawn? (7)
- 21 He doesn't dream it's true, at first (7)

Use the same diagram for either the Cryptic or the Easy Puzzle



- 24 Does he treat wood? (5, 6)
- 26 Chess and caper mixture unpopular with cyclists (10)
- 28 The nicer aunt is doddier and freer (9)
- 29 Caught the ravens flying from the hollow (7)
- 30 The animal disturbed one bird (5)
- 32 Take it out when you leave (8)
- 33 The whole ten mad with rage (6)
- 34 Not the shutters in the kitchen (7)
- 35 Learn to play the horn (6)
- 40 The man I brought to the fore (4)

Thursday's Crossword—4. Column, 7, 10, 13, Site, 14, Nest, 15, Pa-R-R, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44.

DOWN—1. My-Ron, 2. Trian, 3. B-sis, 4. Strap, 5. Bet, 6. Hitchcock, 30. V-ital, 31. Role.

Thursday's Crossword—4. Forage, 7. Reg, 14. Home, 15. Yell, 16. Wan, 17. A, 24. Anti, 26. Man, 27. Said, 29. L, 33. Conspire, 36. Switch.

DOWN—1. Brush, 2. Again, 9. Select, 11. Pot, 12. Tears, 13. B, 20. Still, 21. Fin, 22. End, 23. M, 31. Reval, 32. Wail, 33. Flea.