

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS IN 2015



# Theatre in Three Acts

LONDON – STRATFORD – DUBLIN

with Jonathan Biggins  
04–18 June 2015 (15 Days)



# Theatre in Three Acts

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## TOUR LEADER

**Jonathan Biggins** actor, writer and director, is perhaps best known as one of the creators of *The Wharf Revue*. He has performed for all the state theatre and opera companies, with recent credits including *Travesties* and *Orpheus* in the Underworld. Jonathan won a Helpmann Award for his direction of the musical *Avenue Q*. A regular contributor to the *Good Weekend* magazine and former host of ABC TV's arts program *Critical Mass*, Jonathan's first play, *Australia Day*, debuted for the Melbourne Theatre Company and Sydney Theatre Company in 2012. He recently directed *Noises Off* for the STC. Jonathan is a regular speaker at *Art After Hours* and has led successful tours for the Gallery to New York and Chicago.

From the West End to Stratford and Dublin, join Jonathan Biggins for the best of British and Irish theatre and the visual arts.

Begin with a week in the British capital where, by day, you will see the latest exhibitions and museum redevelopments, and by night explore the unrivalled London theatre scene, from the West End to Southbank, from Covent Garden to the Theatre Royal. Then it is off to the English countryside for the best of classic and contemporary theatre by the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. Finish in Dublin, home of the famous Abbey, Gate and Smock Alley Theatres.

## At a glance...

- Mike Leigh's production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* by the English National Opera
- The record-breaking Broadway production of *The Elephant Man* starring Bradley Cooper
- George Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Britain's acclaimed National Theatre
- The Sydney Theatre Company's production of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* starring Hugo Weaving and Richard Roxburgh
- Shakespeare's *Othello* and John Ford's *Love Sacrifice* by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Seán O'Casey's *Shadow of the Gunman* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin
- Plus performances (to be announced) by Dublin's Smock Alley and Gate Theatres



# Itinerary

**Wed 03 June**

**Depart Australia**

Suggested departure from Australia on Qantas / Emirates overnight flights via Dubai.

**Thu 04 June**

**Arrive London**

Arrival and check-in to your hotel in the Bloomsbury District near the British Museum, Covent Garden and Oxford Street.

This evening, join Jonathan Biggins and fellow theatre lovers for a welcome briefing and dinner at the hotel. **B**

**Fri 05 June**

**London**

Begin your London stay with a visit to Kenwood House. Set on the edge of Hampstead Heath and surrounded by tranquil landscaped gardens on Hampstead Heath, Kenwood House is a fine example of a neo-classical villa set in acres of lush parklands with glorious views over the city of London. This elegant Robert Adam designed villa houses some of the finest artworks by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Turner and Gainsborough.

Free time for lunch. Mid-afternoon return to the hotel.

This evening, begin your London theatre experience with Mike Leigh's sparkling new production of Gilbert & Sullivan's much-loved comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance* by the English National Opera at the Coliseum. With stylish designs from Alison Chitty, this vibrant production is conducted by David Parry. The superb cast includes the ever-versatile Andrew Shore as the very model of a modern Major-General, Jonathan Lemalu as the affectionate parody of the British bobby, Robert Murray as the innocent pirate-apprentice Frederic, and Rebecca de Pont Davies as the older woman who has designs on him. **B**

**Sat 06 June**

**London**

Following a morning talk, start with a backstage tour of the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. Receive an introduction to the colourful history of the theatre, an insight into the redevelopment of the Royal Opera House and a look at aspects of current productions (subject to confirmation).

Continue to nearby Somerset House for lunch and a guided tour. Somerset House, now an exciting venue for arts and culture



Big Ben and House of Parliament at night

was once the home of three Catholic queens; Anne of Denmark, Henrietta Maria and Catherine of Braganza and played a vital part in the crisis of the Stuart dynasty. Return to your hotel mid-afternoon.

This evening, at the Olivier Theatre, see the first of two performances by Britain's acclaimed National Theatre - George Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem*. Directed by Simon Godwin and designed by Lizzie Clachan, George Farquhar's final play is a fabulous carnal comedy.

The 'Beaux', Mr Aimwell and Mr Archer, are two charming, dissolute young men who have blown their fortunes in giddy London. Shamed and debt-ridden, they flee to provincial Lichfield. Their 'Stratagem' is to marry for money.

Lodged at the local inn, posing as master and servant, they encounter a teeming variety of human obstacles: a crooked landlord, a fearsome highwayman, a fervent French Count, a maid on the make, a drunken husband, a furious butler, a natural healer and a strange, turbulent priest.

But their greatest obstacle is love. When the Beaux meet their match in Dorinda and Mrs Sullen they are most at risk, for in love they might be truly discovered. **B L**

**Sun 07 June**

**London**

Today enjoy an exploration of the area 'South of the Thames'. Start with a guided tour of the iconic Globe Theatre and auditorium, bringing the space to life with colourful stories of the 1599 Globe, of the reconstruction process in the 1990s, and of how the 'wooden O' works today as an imaginative and experimental theatrical space.

After lunch at a local restaurant explore the Dulwich Picture Gallery, England's first public art gallery, home to masterpieces by the likes of Rembrandt, Rubens, Poussin and Gainsborough amongst others. **B L**

**Mon 08 June**

**London**

Today you will visit Tate Britain, the home of British art from 1500 to the present day. The gallery has also just reopened (November 2013) following a GBP45 million renovation. Explore the permanent collection, which is especially rich in works by Turner, Constable, Blake and Moore, followed by lunch at the gallery.



Royal Opera House

Mid-afternoon return to the hotel.

This evening, see a London theatre performance from – Down Under! Attend the Sydney Theatre Company's production of Beckett's **Waiting for Godot** at the Barbican starring Hugo Weaving and Richard Roxburgh. **B**

### Tue 09 June

London

Following a morning talk enjoy a full day at leisure.

This evening enjoy a pre-performance dinner and attend the highly acclaimed record-breaking Broadway production of **The Elephant Man** at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Starring three-time Academy Award® nominee Bradley Cooper, this new production of Bernard Pomerance's Tony Award®-winning classic is directed by six-time Tony nominee Scott Ellis, and also stars Academy Award nominee and Emmy® Award winner Patricia Clarkson and Alessandro Nivola.

Based on the real life of Joseph Merrick, *The Elephant Man* tells the story of a 19th-century man (Cooper) who became a star of the traveling freak show circuit. When the renowned Dr. Treves (Nivola) takes Merrick under his care, he is astonished by the man's brilliant intelligence, unshakable faith and, most of all, his resounding desire for love and understanding. He introduces Merrick to the beautiful actress Mrs. Kendal (Clarkson), who is deeply touched by this pure and genuine soul. As a complex friendship blossoms among the three, Treves and Kendal struggle to protect Merrick from a world of questionable intentions... and so begins a story of love as unique as 'The Elephant Man' himself. **B D**

### Wed 10 June

London

Morning visit to the theatre and performance collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum. The collections were founded in the 1920s when a private collector, Gabrielle Enthoven, donated her extensive collection of theatrical designs, memorabilia, books and photographs to the Museum. Since then the collection has continued to grow and has provided a home for many other significant objects and archives. Remainder of the day at leisure to enjoy the museum.

This evening see the National Theatre's acclaimed production of **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** based on

Mark Haddon's award-winning novel, adapted by Simon Stephens and directed by Marianne Elliott.

Christopher, fifteen years old, stands beside Mrs Shears' dead dog. It has been speared with a garden fork, it is seven minutes after midnight and Christopher is under suspicion. He records each fact in the book he is writing to solve the mystery of who murdered Wellington. He has an extraordinary brain, exceptional at maths while ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. He has never ventured alone beyond the end of his road, he detests being touched and he distrusts strangers. But his detective work, forbidden by his father, takes him on a frightening journey that upturns his world. **B**

### Thu 11 June

London – Stratford-upon-Avon

After breakfast depart London and travel to Stratford-upon-Avon. (approx. 165 km, 2–3 hrs including break). Early afternoon arrival at your hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare and the home of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Enjoy dinner followed by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre performance of Shakespeare's **Othello**, directed by Iqbal Khan. Former RSC artist Hugh Quarshie returns to the Company to play the infamous Othello, joined by Lucian Msamati in the role of Iago. **B D**

### Fri 12 June

Stratford-upon-Avon

Today begins with a morning talk followed by a visit to the public and private areas of the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre complex. Learn about the origins of the RSC and its theatres in Stratford, which reopened in 2010 after a four-year £112.8 million 'Transformation' project designed to bring actors and audiences closer together.

Afternoon at leisure to explore Stratford. Evening performance at the Swan Theatre of **Love Sacrifice**. With echoes of Shakespeare's *Othello*, John Ford's rarely performed play is a thrilling revenge tragedy powered by the destructive force of unrequited love. Director Matthew Dunster makes his RSC debut. His most recent productions include *Mametz* (National Theatre Wales), *The Lightning Child* (Shakespeare's Globe) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre). **B**



Shakespeare's birthplace



Royal Shakespeare Company

Sat 13 June

Stratford-upon-Avon – Dublin

Transfer to Birmingham airport for an early afternoon flight to Dublin. Late afternoon arrival and transfer to the hotel. Dinner and overnight in Dublin.

Sitting at the mouth of the River Liffey on Ireland's east coast Dublin is Ireland's largest city.

Founded as a Viking settlement in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Kingdom of Dublin became Ireland's principal city following the Norman invasion in 1169. **B D**

Sun 14 June

Dublin

This morning begin the day with a historic walking tour of Dublin. Visit Trinity College where many famous Irish writers studied, a former pharmacy now a reading centre for James Joyce fans and Oscar Wilde's statue. Walk past the homes of WB Yeats and Sheridan le Fanu (Vampire writer before Stoker), St Patrick's Cathedral associated with Jonathan Swift, the Dublin Literary Parade (featuring Dublin writers) and Dublin Castle (Bram Stoker).

The tour ends at Smock Alley Theatre for a guided tour and lunch. Dublin's oldest theatre, Smock Alley was the first Theatre Royal built in Dublin. John Ogilby opened it in 1662 as part of the Restoration of the British monarchy and King Charles II in 1660.

Afternoon at leisure before your first Dublin theatre performance at either Smock Alley or Gate Theatre. **B L**

Mon 15 June

Dublin

Enjoy a day out of Dublin, with a visit to Powerscourt Gardens, one of Ireland's most famous gardens with a breathtaking panorama. The gardens first began to take shape over two-and-a half centuries ago and today stretch over 47 acres. Explore the charming walled garden, the sweeping terraces, and ornamental lakes which are linked by carefully designed walks – a magnificent estate overlooking Sugarloaf Mountain. **B L**

Tue 16 June

Dublin

Today you will visit IMMA. The Irish Museum of Modern Art is housed in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, the finest 17th-century building in Ireland. The Royal Hospital was founded in 1684 by

James Butler, Duke of Ormonde and Viceroy to Charles II, as a home for retired soldiers and continued in that use for almost 250 years. The style is based on Les Invalides in Paris with a formal facade and a large elegant courtyard. The Royal Hospital in Chelsea was completed two years later and also contains many similarities in style. The Royal Hospital Kilmainham was restored by the Government in 1984 and opened as the Irish Museum of Modern Art in May 1991.

Afternoon at leisure before your second Dublin theatre performance at either Smock Alley or Gate Theatre. **B**

Wed 17 June

Dublin

Begin with a morning visit and backstage tour of Dublin's famous Abbey Theatre. The Abbey Theatre was founded as Ireland's national theatre, by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory in 1904 "to bring upon the stage the deeper emotions of Ireland". Although written more than a hundred years ago, this is still the kernel of what constitutes the artistic imperative for the Abbey Theatre today.

Following a farewell lunch, the afternoon is at leisure before you return to the Abbey Theatre for a performance of Seán O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman*. The first of Seán O'Casey's Dublin plays, *The Shadow of a Gunman* is set during Ireland's War of Independence. Ordinary civilians have been dragged into a vicious guerrilla war of ambushes, raids and reprisals. Donal Davoren has recently moved into a Dublin tenement. His new neighbours believe he is an IRA gunman in hiding. He embraces this thrilling deception and earns the affection of the charming Minnie Powell. However, when the city is placed under curfew, his fantasy starts to feel very real. Wayne Jordan (*The Plough and the Stars*, *Twelfth Night*) returns to the plays of Sean O'Casey to direct this exciting co-production between the Abbey Theatre and the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. (BL)

Thu 18 June

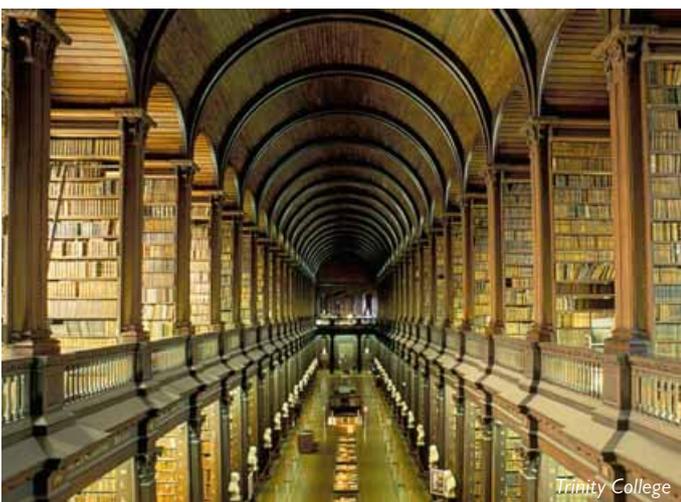
Depart Dublin

Tour arrangements conclude after breakfast. If returning to Australia today depart Dublin in the afternoon on Emirates / Qantas flights, via Dubai. **B**

Fri 19 June

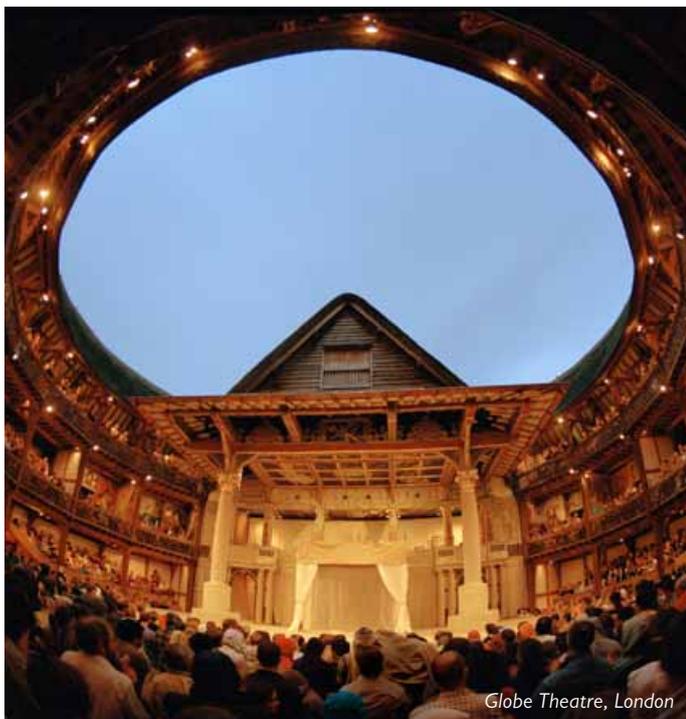
Arrive Australia

Late evening arrival in Australia (or early morning arrival on Saturday 20 June, depending on destination).





Signpost at West End



Globe Theatre, London



Ha'penny Bridge is pedestrian bridge built in 1816 over River Liffey, Dublin

## Tour prices

Per person, twin share	AUD 10,950
Single supplement*	AUD 2,650
Deposit per person	AUD 1,500
Final payment due	4 April 2015

\*Single travellers may request to share. Please advise at time of booking

**Tour code** AGI507

**Fitness level** Moderate

Please see booking conditions for fitness level definitions.

**Suggested airline** Qantas/Emirates

Please contact Renaissance Tours for current airfares and flight reservations.

### Tour price includes

- Accommodation in centrally located 4- and 5-star hotels with daily breakfast (B)
- Meals as per itinerary (L=Lunch, D=Dinner) including welcome and farewell meals. Wines with meals.
- A-reserve tickets (or best available) for five performances in London
- A-reserve tickets (or best available) for two performances in Stratford
- A-reserve tickets (or best available) for three performances in Dublin
- Pre-performance introductions and talks with Tour Leader
- Comfortable air-conditioned coach transportation
- Economy Class Flight on Aer Lingus between Birmingham and Dublin (Luggage allowance 20Kg)
- Comprehensive sightseeing including local guides and entrance fees as per itinerary
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (one piece per person)

### Tour price does not include

- International airfares
- Transfers on arrival and departure
- Drinks with lunches
- Items of a personal nature (e.g. telephone, laundry, minibar etc.)
- Travel insurance

### Your hotels★★★★ and ★★★★★

London – Radisson Blu Edwardian Bloomsbury Street

Stratford-upon-Avon – The Arden Hotel

Dublin – Westin Hotel

NB. Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted

# Terms & Conditions

## HOW TO BOOK

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form available from Renaissance Tours with your deposit and page one of your passport.

## DEPOSIT / FINAL PAYMENTS

Your deposit is due at the time of booking and is used to pay hotel, airline, performance tickets and/or other deposits. It is non-refundable in the event of your cancellation.

Final payment is due 60 days before departure. Failure to make the final payment by the due date may result in cancellation of your booking and loss of deposit.

Payments are accepted in cash and by cheque, bank transfer, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. A 3% service charge applies for payment by American Express and Diners Club.

## CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

**a) Cancellation by You** – Cancellation charges will be applied as shown below, calculated from the day written notification is received by Renaissance Tours. In addition to cancellation fees for tours operated by Renaissance Tours as shown below, airlines, hotels and other third parties may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

60 days or more	Forfeit of deposit
59 – 45 days	25% of tour cost
44 – 31 days	50% of tour cost
30 – 15 days	75% of tour cost
Less than 15 days	100% of tour cost

The above cancellation charges include applicable GST.

In addition to the above, cancellation charges may apply for additional arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours, such as air tickets, hotels and travel insurance premium. If the reason for cancellation is covered by the insurance policy, you may be able to reclaim these charges.

**b) Cancellation by Us** – We reserve the right to cancel a tour for any reason (such as failure to reach minimum tour participant numbers). Except for force majeure, we will not cancel a tour less than 60 days before departure. No further compensation will be paid in the event of cancellation by

Renaissance Tours. A full refund of monies paid for tour costs will be the full extent of our liability.

Cancellation and/or amendment fees may apply for additional travel arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours.

## PASSPORTS, VISAS AND VACCINATIONS

All travellers must be in a possession of a valid passport – most countries require a 6-month validity from your date of entry or exit. For some countries (e.g. China, Vietnam, India, Russia), visas are included in the tour cost and will be arranged by Renaissance Tours prior to travel. For other countries, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the appropriate visa(s).

You are also responsible for obtaining all necessary inoculations and preventative medicines as may be required for the duration of the tour.

## TOUR PRICES

Prices quoted in our tour information are based on exchange rates, cost of services and applicable taxes at the time of publication. Prices may be subject to change in the event of significant currency fluctuations or the introduction of new taxes, up until final payment is received.

In the event of a price increase, whether because of a currency fluctuation, increase in taxes or a correction in advertised prices, we will advise you and you have the option of accepting the amended prices, inclusions and booking conditions or withdrawing from the tour and receiving a full refund of all monies paid.

Once final payment is received, all prices will be guaranteed and no surcharges will apply.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a condition of travel that you are covered by comprehensive travel insurance for international tours. Your travel insurance can be arranged by Renaissance Tours.

## FITNESS AND PARTICIPATION

Most of our tours require a MODERATE level of fitness.

However, in certain destinations (e.g. Silk Road, Central Asia, Outback Australia, tropical destinations) or in certain seasons (e.g. mid-winter,

mid-summer) or because of the nature of travel (e.g. remote rail), certain tours will require an ABOVE AVERAGE or CHALLENGING level of fitness.

If you (or we) have any doubts about your level of fitness, you may be required to have a doctor's appraisal. This would require your doctor to read the itinerary of your chosen tour, including the fitness level, and provide you (and us) with a written confirmation of your ability to participate.

## MODERATE

For the overall benefit of the group, all tour members must possess a moderate level of mobility, including the ability to:

- negotiate airports and railway stations without wheelchair assistance
- use combined shower/bath facilities (it is impossible to guarantee walk-in shower facilities)
- undertake walking tour of 1–2 hours duration, including using stairs, walking over cobblestones and other uneven surfaces
- stand for long periods in museums and other sites
- embark / disembark coaches, trains and other methods of transportation without assistance
- handle your own luggage

## ABOVE AVERAGE

In addition to the above, tour members must also be able to:

- undertake walking tours of 2–3 hours
- climb staircases of 100 or more steps

## CHALLENGING

In addition to the above, tour members must also be able to:

- handle extremes of temperature (e.g. below 0 or above 35 degrees)
- handle extremes of altitudes (e.g. 4000 metres and above).

You can find the full terms & conditions on the Renaissance Tours booking form.

They can also be found at

[www.renaissance-tours.com.au/booking-conditions](http://www.renaissance-tours.com.au/booking-conditions) or we would be happy to post you a copy on request.





Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**R**  
Renaissance  
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Your travel agent is