

George Woollands and Margaret Rendle founded Proscenium in 1924. The company's first production was the now little-known *The Tide* by Basil McDonald Hastings. Since then, the company has performed nearly 250 plays, using Harrow as a base since 1945. In this time Proscenium has built up a strong reputation for performing challenging plays (both classic and contemporary) to a high standard.

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Contact us at:  
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# PROSCENIUM

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## **Stepping Out**

**By Richard Harris**

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**4th, 5th, 6th and 7th June, 2003  
Travellers Studio, Harrow Arts Centre**

# Stepping Out

By Richard Harris

Mavis .....Clare Wooster  
Mrs Fraser.....Evelyn Moutrie  
Lynne.....Rosie Moutrie  
Dorothy.....Kathleen Jones  
Maxine.....Anne Gerrard  
Andy.....Emma Burton  
Geoffrey .....Julian Wood  
Sylvia.....Crystal Anthony  
Rose .....Susi Thornton  
Vera .....Denise Bone

Directed by.....Janet Harrison  
Dance sequences directed by .....Clare Wooster  
Stage Management .....Jane Inglese  
.....Izzy Cartrwright  
Set Design and Construction.....Michael Williams  
Assisted by.....Charles Anthony  
.....Pauline Anthony

Sound Operator.....Paul Davis  
Costume .....Evelyn Moutrie  
Lighting designed by .....Janet Harrison  
Lighting Operator .....Arts Culture Harrow  
Rehearsal prompt.....Angie Sutherland

Special thanks to Tim Bull, Judy McPhee  
of JAM2000.

The action takes place in a church hall in  
North London  
Time: 1984

## Act 1

**Scene 1:** Just before 8 o'clock on a February evening.

**Scene 2:** A month later. 7:45 p.m.

**Scene 3:** A month later.

**Scene 4.** A month later. 7:40 p.m.

## Act 2

**Scene 1:** A week later. May.

**Scene 2:** Two weeks later.

**Scene 3:** Two weeks later. June.

**Scene 4:** Three weeks later. June.

**Scene 5:** Night of the 'Save the Children Charity Show'. End of July.

## The Author

Richard Harris was born in London in 1934 and is one of the few popular writers in this country who combine a successful career in both theatre and television.

He began writing for the theatre in 1979 with *Two and Two Make Sex*. This was followed in 1984 with *Stepping Out* which was first presented at the Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead and subsequently produced by Bill Kenwright at the Duke of York's: it won the Evening Standard Comedy of the Year Award, and the Moliere Award for the Paris production. In 1985 *Outside Edge* transferred from the Hampstead Theatre to the Queens and also won the Evening Standard Comedy Award. All these early successes are very English comedies with settings - an evening class and a club cricket match - which enable him to highlight the eccentricities of the English class system: but he also had success with writing thrillers: *The Business of Murder* ran for seven years from 1991 at the Duchess and Mayfair theatres and in 1998 *Dead Guilty* played at the Apollo. Richard Harris proved his versatility and scope as a dramatist with a platform production at the National Theatre of his play *Visiting Hour* and a translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* performed at the Comedy theatre in 2001 starring Francesca Annis and Anthony Andrews.

He started writing for television in 1959 and has written many individual plays, has contributed to countless television series and co-created the BBC series *Shoestring*. He

wrote the first ten hours of *A Touch of Frost* and a comedy-drama series based on his play *Outside Edge* for which he won The Writers' Guild Best Comedy Award, The British Comedy Award for Best Series and The Television and Radio Industries Award for Best Comedy. His latest work, a series called *The Last Detective*, adapted from the books by Leslie Thomas, began in February this year.



## History of Tap Dance

**Tap Dance** : a style of American theatrical dance, distinguished by percussive footwork, that marks out precise rhythmic patterns on the floor. Some descriptive step names are *brush*, *flap*, *shuffle*, *ball change* and *cramp roll* - many of which you will see demonstrated in this evening's performance.

The sources of tap dancing include the Irish solo step dance, the English clog dance, and African dance movements. Among the slaves in the Southern United States, these merged by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century into folk styles, the modern descendants of which include *buck-and-wing* dancing and southern United States clogging (both done in leather-sole shoes). The slave dances were adapted theatrically in 1828 in the first blackface minstrel show, in the dancing of Thomas 'Daddy' Rice. In late 19<sup>th</sup> century minstrel shows and showboat routines, two techniques were popularised: a fast style in wooden-sole shoes, also called *buck-and-wing*, exemplified by the duo of Jimmy Doyle and Harland Dixon; and *soft-shoe*, a smooth leather-sole style made famous by George Primrose. These styles gradually coalesced, and by the 1920s metal plates, or *taps*, had been added to leather-sole shoes. In the 1920s and 1930s black dancers contributed to the development of new styles of tap dance, and black dance teams became popular for their acrobatic, often satirical, acts. John Bubbles popularised a slower, more *syncopated* style of tap dance. Prominent dance teams of the era included Slap and Happy (Harold Daniels and Leslie Irvin) and Stump and

Stumpy (James Cross and Harold Cromer). Jazz provided further rhythmic complexity, and Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson became America's most famous tap dancer. The style was further expanded in the 1930s and 1940s, when dancers such as Fred Astaire, Paul Draper, Ray Bolger, and, in the late 1950s, Gene Kelly added movements from ballet and modern dance. In the late 1970s and early 1980s interest in tap underwent a resurgence: the North London tap dancing class evening class in *Stepping Out* is, no doubt, part of this resurgence.



Bill "Bojangles" Robinson

## Proscenium

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If you would like to find out more about Proscenium, please contact :

Proscenium, 020 8954 2761

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## Arcadia

By Tom Stoppard

In a large country house in Derbyshire in April 1809 sit Lady Thomasina Coverly and her tutor, Septimus Hodge. Through the window may be seen some of the '500 acres inclusive of lake' where Capability Brown's idealized landscape is about to give way to the 'picturesque' Gothic style: 'everything but vampires', as the garden historian Hannah Jarvis remarks in the same room 180 years later to Bernard Nightingale who has arrived to uncover the scandal said to have taken place when Lord Byron stayed at Sidley Park.

Tom Stoppard's absorbing play takes us back and forth between the centuries and explores the nature of truth and time, the difference between the Classical and Romantic temperament, and the disruptive influence of sex on our orbits in life, 'the attraction which Newton left out'.

Directed by Colin Hickman  
Wed 22nd - Sat 25th October 2003  
7.45 pm, Compass Theatre, Ickenham