

# The Dresser

January 25 - March 23, 1996

by Ronald Harwood

Directed by Anthony Powell



Illustration by Ron Hicks

## Study Guide

prepared by the Education Department of the Denver Center Theatre Company  
and contributing writer Sally R. Gass



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Each show the Denver Center Theatre Company produces has its own unique informational needs. We here at the theatre, use the resources of our own and other libraries continually. Without access to information, it would not be possible to do what we do whether it is searching for the costumes of a particular period, defining the language of a specific time, discovering the customs and culture of when and where the play takes place, or finding technical information to produce the special effects on stage. Our people have to be well informed. We also think it's important that we share some of the resources we have discovered with you. In fact, this study guide has taken many hours of research, writing and editing in order to help you enjoy the production you are about to see and enrich your theatrical experience at the DCTC.

—Linda Eller  
*Librarian, National Theatre Conservatory*  
*A department of the Denver Center Theatre Company*  
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## SYNOPSIS OF *The Dresser*

It is England, 1942, and Adolf Hitler has unloosed the dogs. Here, outside London, there are howling sirens signaling another Luftwaffe bombing raid. As people scurry into shelters clutching their ration books, the two central characters of Ronald Harwood's play are locked in their own titanic conflict in a ratty backstage area of a crumbling theater.

Sir is an aged Shakespearean actor-manager. He is last in a long line of men and women in Britain and America who, during the 19th and 20th centuries, were not only the stars, but also the managers of their theatrical troupes. Sir is not only last of a line, he is at the end of the line. Physically exhausted from endless trouping through third rate towns with a war depleted troupe of actors, he is losing his wits. Earlier in this day, he was hospitalized for dazedly disrobing in public but discharged himself from the hospital and returned to the theater. His wife urges him to quit, but his dresser, Norman, will not let Sir give in.

Norman is supposed to prepare Sir for his 427th performance of *King Lear*, yet Norman is hardly in better shape than Sir. A middle-aged bachelor who's spent 16 years in

near feudal servitude to his master, Norman seems to gain mental and spiritual nourishment from the pint bottle he keeps in his pocket. Norman cajoles and entices Sir to go on even when the actor is unable to remember his first line, and then sustains his performance from the wings.

While Sir's and Norman's lives seem, at first glance, pathetic, they're bound together in a love-hate relationship by a common cause—an audience is in the house and the show must go on. And why must the show go on? Because for Sir and Norman the show is life and the stage is the one safe haven where the dreariest of life's realities can always be escaped.

Metaphorically, the play is a tribute to the British spirit of another era, trying to preserve 19th century dreams of glory in the brutalizing chaos of the 20th.

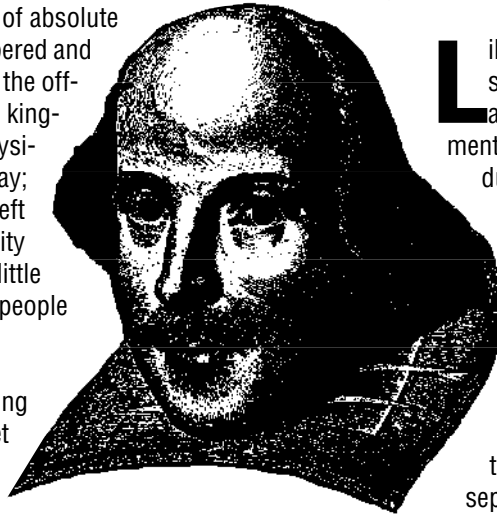
**Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air  
We wawl and cry—  
When we are born, we cry that we are come  
To this great stage of fools.  
(Shakespeare: *King Lear*, VI, vi.)**

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS: SIR AND LEAR / NORMAN AND FOOL

Sir, in *The Dresser* can be likened to the title character in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Norman can be compared to the Fool in the same play. Like Lear, Sir is used to getting his own way after a lifetime of absolute rulership/management. He is hot-tempered and self-willed especially when it concerns the off-stage storm effects of his "theatrical kingdom." Unlike Lear, Sir is not in top physical condition at the beginning of the play; the stress of wartime touring has left him exhausted and confused. Sir's reality is the play and, unlike Lear, he gains little common sense and insight into other people as the play progresses.

Both Lear and Sir are fighting a losing battle against madness and despair, yet both are determined to remain "every inch a king." Lear's pride will not allow him to diminish his retinue by one knight; Sir will go on stage though he is near collapse. Though both characters are self-pitying, Lear's suffering makes him aware of the

suffering of all humanity, while the egotistic Sir's suffering blinds him to the sacrifices of Her Ladyship, Madge, and especially Norman.



Like the Fool to Lear, Norman is a devoted servant to Sir. He entertains him with quips and gossip and alternately cajoles and torments him into getting into costume. He exists, due in large part to Sir's largesse, as a clown and confidant to the "royal" ruler of the traveling court of players. Also like the Fool, Norman has insight into what is going on with his master but is reluctant to deal with it. Instead, he protects his master from the rest of the acting troupe with a kind of royal disdain. Norman does not disappear halfway through the play like Fool; he cannot be separated from Sir in their symbiotic relationship. When Sir's death forces a separation; it is bolically Norman's death knell also.

one knight; Sir  
s y m -

# ACTOR-MANAGERS

**An actor-manager is the leading actor of the company that he owns in which he directs, produces and stars in all the plays.<sup>1</sup>**

**A**ctor-managers were in existence as early as the Renaissance (1453-1550) when the *comedia dell'arte* flourished in Italy and spread to Spain and France. The companies of highly specialized professional actor-managers generally grouped together on family lines, with both men and women participating. The *comedia* itself, and the playing of specific roles, often became a family tradition.

In France during the 1600s, theatre was usually performed before court circles and tradesmen connected with the court. The most noted actor-manager was Bellerose who headed the Royal Company. His approved style of tragic acting was a kind of chanting declamation, interspersed with great bravura "tirades" during important passages in the play.

Actor-managers flourished in England in the 1700s but the most famous and successful was David Garrick who managed the Drury Lane Theater in London from 1747-1777 and epitomized this age of great acting. He introduced many improvements in staging, design and theatre management, as well as acting. He set a standard of production and performance that was truly unforgettable. He acquired the best performers available for his company and exacted "order, decency and decorum"<sup>2</sup> from them. He set up a rehearsal schedule to which he demanded absolute adherence, expected his company members to be letter perfect in their parts and eventually provided them with the best that could be secured in the way of plays, costuming and scenery. He even set up an actors' fund to take care of his troupe if disabled by accident, illness or old age. He was, overall, an astute businessman who made a fortune for

himself and a sizable income for his fellow players. As for his acting style, it was more natural a delivery than the French, but he demanded center stage whenever he appeared and was always conscious of his effect upon the audience. He was the nucleus around which the other actors orbited.

Sir John Martin-Harvey (1893-1944) was an actor-manager who led his company through the English provinces. His most successful role was as Sidney Carton in *A Tale of Two Cities*, an adaptation of the Dickens' novel he and his wife wrote and produced. He never became a London West End favorite because his style of acting, melodramatic and broadly histrionic, was going out of fashion. His "hamminess" plus his wife's inability to act, kept him from greater success.

**A**nother actor-manager who led his repertory company through the provinces of England was Frank R. Benson. In 1900, he led a tour through the industrial areas.

**Poor players and begging friars, we go up and down the length and breadth of the land—that the country may never go without an opportunity of seeing Shakespeare played by a company dedicated to his service.<sup>3</sup>**

He is honored by a memorial window at Stratford-upon-Avon.

The actor-manager system ended after World War II. The advent of a new breed of young directors and the domination of management by businessmen, lawyers and accountants led to its demise.

## SIR DONALD WOLFIT, ACTOR-MANAGER

**S**ir Donald Wolfit (1902-68), upon whom the character of "Sir" is based, made his first stage appearance in 1920. In 1929-30, he played at the Old Vic then toured Canada as Robert Browning in Beiser's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. In 1937, he formed his own company.

**I felt convinced that there were larger audiences in the British Isles than those which could be contained at Stratford and the Old Vic. — There were only spasmodic tours in the country. Surely, I argued, there was room for fresh blood and a new policy which might embrace the country as a whole.<sup>4</sup>**

**D**uring the Battle of Britain, he gave over 100 performances of scenes from Shakespeare and later continued to tour Shakespeare and other classics. His company endured miserable conditions in theatres including the lack of dressing rooms, water and heat, as well as wailing sirens warning of impending air raids. He describes a performance in Lincolnshire in his autobiography *First Interval*.

**One evening during the performance of *Hamlet* the warning siren was closely followed by the drone of the approaching inhuman invader. I was just entering the stage to sit at the foot of the great column prior to commencing the greatest soliloquy on death ever conceived in the mind of a poet. "To be or not to be" came the opening line, and the only sound seemed to be my own voice and the ever-approaching engine of destruction. — There was no sound from the hundred or so people in the auditorium and I continued. Just as I reached the conclusion the sound of the engine stopped and the monster fell some few hundred yards behind the theater, blowing in the scenery-dock door and rocking the heavy column like a mast in a storm.<sup>5</sup>**

**W**olfit was a fervent believer in the constant presentation of plays for children and people of all ages. When he discovered on one of his tours that the audience had never seen *King Lear*, he wrote:

**How can we hope that a new generation will grow up with a better appreciation of the treasures of our national heritage if there is so little opportunity to encounter them in their right media?<sup>6</sup>**

# THE HOME FRONT, WWII: GREAT BRITAIN

Sept. 3, 1939

**For a week everybody in London had been saying everyday that if there weren't a war tomorrow, there wouldn't be a war.**

**Yesterday people were saying that if there wasn't a war today, it would be a bloody shame.**

**Now that there is a war, the English, slow to start, have already in spirit started and are comfortably two laps ahead of the office war machine, which had to await the drop of somebody's handkerchief.<sup>7</sup>**

**A**s early as June, 1939, the chief concern of most British people was to get as far away as possible from cities, towns and heavily populated areas, where enemy bombs would fall. There were two types of evacuation: public and official. Some two million who could afford it left cities and towns for the hamlets and villages of northern Scotland, Wales, or the moorlands of southwest England. Several thousand departed for America. But the official evacuation proved to be more complex. The main task was the evacuation of school children to places of safety and the results were not always satisfactory. Like parcels, the children had labels telling who they were and to which destination they were to go. Some wore arm bands and groups carried placards. In three days, almost a million and a half children, teachers, mothers with babies, expectant mothers, cripples and blind people left the cities, clutching their suitcases and emergency rations. But the first evacuation of children proved to be an overall failure,

because up to that moment the towns and cities of Britain had not been bombed and many of the children and their mothers drifted back to the densely populated areas.

**G**as masks suddenly became a part of everyday civilian equipment. In late September, 1939, 38 million gas masks were issued to the public. The people were forced to carry these cardboard cartons that looked like a "pound of grapes for a sick friend."<sup>8</sup> If they did not, they were

severely fined. Under the delusion that they were less frightening than the adult masks, children were provided with red rubber Mickey Mouse gas masks with chrome plated eye-pieces. Fortunately for all, gas attacks from the air never materialized.

**T**he blackouts were, apart from the actual bombing itself, the greatest wartime misery and inconvenience the British public endured. The blacking out of a house or

premises was a boring and complicated business except for those who could afford the expense of heavy blackout curtains for their windows and doors. For the average person, blacking out meant pinning up large sheets of black or brown paper with thumb-tacks at night and then taking them down in the morning. Air raid wardens or police inspected for brief or accidental flashes of light from windows and reported anyone caught lighting cigarettes or turning on flashlights in blacked-out streets. Additionally, the blackouts were responsible for

many civilian casualties. People fell down steps, off curbs, bumped into trees, lampposts, telegraph poles and each other.

**T**owards the end of November, 1939, the government announced that food rationing would begin on January 8, 1940. On that dreary Monday morning, the ration book became a priceless possession. The first items rationed were bacon, ham, sugar and butter; meat followed in



March. In July came the greatest blow of all to Brits—tea was rationed to two ounces per weeks. Thereafter other items followed, including cheese, cooking fat, sweets, jams and gasoline until, by 1944, 11 shillings out of every pound spent on food was expended on rationed items. In addition, clothes rationing came into force in June, 1941. Rationing was not by the garment, but on a points system: the customer had a maximum number of “points” and could use them on whatever article he/she wished. The British Board of Trade contemplated putting everyone into a battle uniform, but this extreme measure was never taken. However, women adopted a distinctive wartime fashion flair—the head scarf became universal and slacks, once the badge of “fast” women, came into their own as a warm, decorous garment in any emergency.

Even the Monarchy were not exempt. They endured the same strict rationing as the rest of the country—albeit they ate it off exquisite china. The princesses Elizabeth and Margaret were sent to Windsor castle, where Elizabeth learned to handle small

guns and both went “wooding” to save fuel or drag out old rusty tin cans for scrap metal. Also, in the recesses of Windsor were the Crown Jewels wrapped in newspapers and, in St. George’s Chapel, were stacked valuable documents. As for the King and Queen, they stayed among their people in London. When Lord chamberlain offered the Queen a chance to sail to Canada and safety, she replied:

**The children won’t leave without me, I won’t leave without the King and the King will never leave.<sup>9</sup>**

With these selfless acts, the monarchy gave hope and courage to the English people. They also gave encouragement and signaled the monarchy’s capacity to endure in the face of conflict. All were in this fight together.

**We know, everyone of us, that in the end all will be well.**  
Princess Elizabeth in “Children’s Hour”  
broadcast of Oct. 13, 1940.<sup>10</sup>

## THE BLITZ OF BRITAIN

**I**n the summer of 1940, Hitler dominated Europe. His one remaining active enemy—Britain, under the new prime minister, Winston Churchill—vowed to continue fighting. Invasion was the expeditious way to finish off Britain, but that meant crossing the English Channel; Hitler would not risk it unless the British airforce could be neutralized first. As a result, the Battle of Britain was fought in the air, not on the beaches. In August 1940, the Germans launched daylight raids against ports and airfields and in September against inland cities. The objective was to draw out the British fighter planes and destroy them.

On August 24, 1940, a few German planes accidentally, and without Hitler’s orders, dropped bombs on London. Churchill was quick to order reprisals; the following night 81 airplanes of the Royal Airforce were sent to bomb Berlin. They did little damage, but Hitler used the attack to take action. On September 4th he announced that he intended to wipe out the British cities; on September 5th, the appropriate orders were issued. On September 6th, Hermann Goering, reich marshal and commander of the German airforce, arrived on the Channel Coast to take direct command of the “Battle of Britain.” His hope was to win everlasting glory in Valhalla and to end the war.

The first wave of German bombers came in on September 7 from the east. Their targets were the docks of Tower Bridge, Woolwich Arsenal, Surrey Commercial and others. In their attack, they damaged riverside neighborhoods on either side of the Thames. The second wave of Messerschmitts, with over 300 tons of high explosives, rained bombs down, not only on the docks, but also in the shabby, closely packed and highly inflammable rows of little streets that housed the workers and their families. In 90 minutes, London received the heaviest daylight raid of the war, setting its East End ablaze.

Far away to the northeast in Woodford, a man remembers:

**A monstrous, monotonous droning announced the coming of the bombers. They swept south. — By 6 o’clock, the skies were empty, and all the Thameside blazed. As the sun began to sink, the vast expanse of the red glow—sent a chill to the heart. It seemed that all London was burning.<sup>11</sup>**

The Blitz continued with more or less intensity for the next year and a half. On May 11, 1941, as the firemen put out night fires, the warden’s rescue parties dug out the buried, the ambulances rushed the wounded and dying to the hospitals and the mortuary collected the dead. No Londoner could know that the blitz was over. 20,000 Londoners, some of them women and children, never did know, for the bombs and fires had sent them to sleep, forever, in London.

**T**he British people had looked fear in the face and displayed enormous morale, resilience and adaptability. They did not crack under this enormous pressure and, though they did not defeat the Luftwaffe, they frustrated Hitler’s plan, and that was the real victory. On September 17, 1941, Hitler postponed the invasion on England indefinitely, thereby conceding defeat in the “Battle of Britain.”

**All our past acclaims our future:  
Shakespeare’s voice and Nelson’s hand,  
Milton’s faith and Wordsworth’s trust  
in this our chosen and chainless land,  
Bear us witness: come the world against her,  
England yet shall stand.**  
Swinburne: “England: An Ode.”

# THE HOME FRONT, WWII: THE UNITED STATES

Ours was the only combatant country that was not involved; ours were the only cities that were not bombed and made into rubble. – Britain was blitzed, and air raid shelters became as familiar as the tea break.

German cities were fire-bombed. Need we mention Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Studs Terkel<sup>12</sup>



**D**uring the 1930s, the powerful forces of isolationism and pacifism combined to keep the United States at peace. Reflecting the popular mood, Congress enacted neutrality laws and appropriated very little money for the armed forces. In 1939, the U.S. Army ranked 39th in the world. But with the outbreak of war in Europe in September, 1939 and the drive by the Japanese to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, policies had to change. Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, warned President Franklin D. Roosevelt that Britain was close to economic strangulation. Britain was almost unable to pay cash for shipping and other supplies. As a result, Roosevelt was forced to think of new strategies to help England. The new strategy was to be “lend-lease.” This was the unusual concept that the United States could send Britain weapons and supplies without charge and then, after the war, be repaid, not in dollars, but in kind. The idea was strongly resisted and attacked by many. Senator Robert Taft was afraid it would lead America into war. This fear was also expressed by America First, a group of isolationists, and the influential Joseph Kennedy, ex-ambassador to Great Britain. Roosevelt eventually succeeded in persuading Kennedy, Secretary of Commerce, Harry Hopkins and the defeated Republican presidential candidate, Wendell Wilkie into supporting the idea. They would testify for the lend-lease bill in front of the reluctant Congress. In addition, Roosevelt took his argument directly to the American people in one of his famous “fireside chats” over the then powerful medium of radio; he urged the country to become the “great arsenal of democracy” by arguing for aid to Britain as an alternative to war. With help from Churchill who urged, “Give us the tools and we will finish the job,”<sup>13</sup> Congress passed lend-lease and Roosevelt signed it into law on March 11, 1940.

**W**hen Germany plunged Europe into war in 1939, America was still reeling from the ravages of the Great Depression, and almost 10 million remained unemployed. However, after Pearl Harbor, the government launched a massive spending campaign to convert to a full scale war economy and work was available to everyone who sought it. Plants in the United States and Canada converted from civilian to war production with amazing speed and a combination of private industry and government built new plants. Firms that made vacuum cleaners before the war now made machine guns; automobile factories turned out airplanes, engines and tanks. This swift conversion and mobilization was one of the reasons for the Allied victory.

In the concerted war effort, shortages of goods developed. Prices rose, wages increased and inflation spiraled. The Bureau of the Budget recommended swift and bold action, but Roosevelt wanted to avoid coercion and rely on voluntarism to appeal to the unselfish, patriotic spirit of a people at war. After all in 1940, hadn't a group of American women led by Mrs. Wales Latham of New York organized an effort called “Bundles for Britain”? Their purpose was to knit sweaters, helmets, gloves and socks for England's men, women, soldiers, sailors and airmen. Later they expanded their inventory to include used clothing and hospital linen. These “bundles” gave him faith and out of that faith came a series of grand experiments known as “war drives.”

The administration's first great effort was the sale of war bonds. This campaign was designed to reduce the deficit, encourage saving, trim spending and curb inflation. It would also give the public a sense of involvement in a war being



fought thousands of miles away. Movie stars, sports figures and military heroes came to cities to appear at bond rallies, while schoolchildren brought dimes, nickels and quarters to buy stamps that were pasted in books that when filled out could be turned in for \$25 bonds. But it was simply impossible for the American people to support themselves, pay their taxes and have enough money left to buy bonds.

Almost no shortage was too mundane to inspire a drive. One campaign collected kitchen drippings and scarce vegetable fats; another brought in lead from empty toothpaste tubes. A scrap metal drive brought in the entire Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which had collapsed, as well as suits of armor used in a Broadway production of *The Vagabond King*. The drives were well-intentioned, but voluntarism failed to produce enough of anything.

**G**radually, Roosevelt and his advisors were forced to concede that voluntarism had failed and stricter measures were needed. In 1942, rationing began on items such as meat, butter, sugar, oil, coffee, canned food, shoes and gasoline. The ration books of light tan cardboard filled with

pages of tiny stamps were distributed through the public schools by teachers and volunteers. When the volunteers failed to show up the teachers had to do the work and take the verbal abuse, of which there was plenty. In addition, price controls were used as weapons against inflation. Congress gave the President power to freeze prices, salaries and wages at their level of September 15, 1942. And to finance the war, taxes were raised.

As men went into the armed forces, women took their place in war plants. By 1943, more than 2 million women were working in American war industries. In shipyards and aircraft plants, "Rosie the Riveter" became a common sight. In 21 key industries, officials discovered that women could perform the duties of eight of every ten jobs normally done by men. Their involvement changed the role of women in American society forever.

**I feel about that period a little like you feel about your first love when you lose it. No matter how many loves you have afterwards, they're never quite the same. That's how I feel about this country during WWII. I don't know if we could ever recapture that spirit.** Adele Ehrenberg<sup>14</sup>



# ACTIVITY PACKAGE

1. Interview someone who lived through World War II. Ask a relative or go to a community center.
  - a) What was their life like before the war? During? After? How did it change the interviewee's way of thinking? How did it change his/her life?
  - b) Describe the interview to the class. What lasting impressions did this interview make on you?
2. How would you describe the relationship between Sir and Norman? Explain.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Master/feudal servant
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/child
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Primadonna/nursemaid
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Suppliant/confessor
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Other
3. Why does Sir go on to play King Lear in spite of his bad health? Why does Norman encourage him? Her Ladyship does not want him to go on. Does Norman care any less for Sir than Her Ladyship? Does the theatre provide a kind of sustenance that both men cannot do without? Describe.
4. Read *King Lear* and list the similarities between Sir and King Lear and Norman and the Fool. Does reading *King Lear* increase your understanding or appreciation of *The Dresser*? Why? Does *The Dresser* stand on its own as a play without knowledge of Shakespeare's *King Lear*?
5. Research World War II and pick one of the following to discuss:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Civilian life in Britain during the war. One good source is the movie *Hope and Glory* by John Boorman.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Civilian life in the U.S. during the war.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ What new job positions could women hold during the war? Who (what) was "Rosie the Riveter"?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ What new job positions opened up to blacks during the war?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The "Battle of Britain" and the "Blitz."
6. Find articles on the war in Bosnia. How do civilians live day to day? What are the differences/similarities from wartime Britain and the United States.
7. After seeing the play, have students read the article on the following page entitled "Sunshine in Sarajevo." Both are examples of how art, in this instance, theatre is a means to metaphorically transcend the terror of the times.
8. Ask students what stories, plays, music, etc. would transcend a time of crisis in their community and bring hope, wisdom and perspective.

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# EXCERPT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE “SUNSHINE IN SARAJEVO”

by Phil Alden Robinson

Friday, November 20, 1992 was cold in Sarajevo. There were patches of snow on the narrow winding streets of Old Town. So we drew what little warmth we could from the bright winter sun and the weight of our flak jackets. I was with a group of writers who had been invited by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to accompany a relief convoy through central Bosnia. We had arrived in Sarajevo that morning and an American journalist wondered aloud if we might be interested in seeing (the musical) *Hair*.

*Hair*, like many of us, had escaped from the 60s, but most of us had no idea where it had gone. Now we knew. Where else? A city where people really do walk “proudly in their winter coats facing a dying nation.” A place that asks, with increasing impatience, “How can people be so heartless?”

At the Kamerni Theater, a shell-pocked old building with blown-out windows, we followed a crowd of pedestrians funnelling into the courtyard and up three flights of stairs. Unlike us, with our Kevlar vests and armored vehicles, they had all walked here unprotected.

Upstairs, the theatre was overflowing. It seats about 150, but almost twice that number squeezed in. The building, like most during this war, was unheated, and the audience sat bundled up in heavy parkas, leather gloves and woolen scarves.

The building was also without electricity, and on this day there was enough power from the emergency generator for only the amps and one spotlight. Wartime shortages prevented them from building the sets they had planned, or even making the costumes they had designed. Microphones cut out mid-song. The brief scenes were spoken in Serbo-Croatian.

I learned that this company included some of the foremost rock stars, dancers, actors and musicians of prewar Bosnia. They were Serbs, Croats and Muslims, and this show was their response to the awful siege of Sarajevo, as well as to the cruel lie that their peoples cannot coexist.

Admission was free. It was a desperately needed tonic for a people being shelled, shot at and starved. It was also completely wacky. Doing to all this effort to put on the ultimate hippie musical in the middle of a war is an act of unique lunacy. But this was what made it such a stunningly appropriate gesture. Outside, shells were falling and the sounds of sniping were never far away. Inside, people were singing about the Age of Aquarius, Manchester England, a 16-year-old virgin and gliddy-glup-gloopy.

It soon became clear that they had changed the show. These scenes were about Bosnia in the 90s. Some of the songs had been cut. Those that remained were in a different order. And as the show progressed, it became inexorably more serious. Without warning, the electric guitar cut through the room like a machine gun, and the dancers fell in slow motion to the floor. Singers, whose eyes had flashed earlier with earthy humor, now sang grim-faced about bullets, barbed wire and shrapnel.

Finally, the darkening tension burst as the singers’ and dancers’ arms thrust up and out to the world, pleading to let the sunshine in. They begged, “Let the sunshine in.” They demanded, “Let the sunshine in.” The audience was weeping. Still, the song kept going, as if the sunshine denied them for so long could somehow be forced in through their exuberant insistence. “Let the sunshine in!” Over and over, like a mantra. It was angry, it was loving, it was defiant. It was everything rock and roll is supposed to be.

When it finally ended and all the bows were taken, the audience wouldn’t stop applauding so the group did the only sensible thing: they plugged their instruments back in for a wild and raucous version of *Hare Krishna*. It was quarter past one on a winter afternoon in Sarajevo, and for just a little while, people were dancing, hugging, laughing, crying and singing.

## NOTES

1. Tony Church, in conversation
2. Roberts, page 225
3. Trewin, page 19
4. Wolfit, page 173
5. Wolfit, page 200
6. Wolfit, page 221
7. Panter-Downes, page 3

7. Panter-Downes, page 3
8. Morton page 78
9. Longford, page 95
10. FitzGibbon, page 47
11. Harris, et al, page 12
12. Goodwin, page 213
13. Harris, et al, page 255