

Old Times

By **Harold Pinter**

Play no. 284

Opening show : 12/05/1973

Creative team

Hebrew by : Ruth Kislev

Directed by: Leonard Schach

Sets by: Joseph Karl

Sets and Costumes : Adrian Vaux

Lighting: Micael Lieberman

Cast

Anna (The Friend): Miriam Zohar

Deely (The Husband): Misha Asherov

Kate (The Wife): Aviva Marks

Old Times is a chamber play about memory, the ambiguity of memory and the constant ability of man to remember things as they would have them be rather than as they were.

Kate and her husband Deeley talk about an expected guest, Anna. Kate once shared rooms with her, her best and only friend. When Anna appears the play quickly becomes an exchange, and then a battle of memories.

Anna chatters on about the past she shared with fellow-secretary Kate in the culture filled London of twenty years ago. Deeley hits back with a long recollection of his first meeting with Kate in a scruffy cinema showing "Odd Man Out". Anna counters with the casual remark that she went with Kate that hot afternoon to see "Odd Man Out".

A battle over Kate, conflicting claims of ownership and conflicting definitions of her nature ensues. Although Kate remains passive, she does at last make her own move at the end of the first act. She will run her bath herself.

In the second act we see a growing interest felt by Deeley in Anna. He insists that he knew Anna, too, in the old times, even before he knew Kate and that in his experience of her she was not at all the genteel, cultivated figure she represents herself as being.

Gradually more and more memories are 'bought out' cancelling each other out, or seeming to, and Anna and Kate blur, change places until there is no knowing what happened to and with which. At the end, when Kate at last speaks out, it seems to be in assertion of her existence, independent of Anna, her own choice of Deeley in place of Anna. Anna is seen as dead, smeared with dirt (a symbolic suggestion that the character is human; is flawed and not flawless) and when she tried to smear Deeley's face he refused and suggested a wedding instead and a change of environment.

By now the three are locked in an erotic unity, in the long silence after Kate's long, last speech, Deeley re-enacts the scene remembered (or imagined) by Anna in the first act, when she saw or thought she saw a man in their room, cradled by Kate.

At the end of the play, Anna is still there, as at the beginning. The three are there; separate but capably together.