PROGRAMME NOTES FOR EDUCATING RITA 23rd February 2017

Willie Russell’s award-winning comedy Educating Rita comes to the Lyric in this re-imagined new production, for the second time.

It is 1980 and Rita has decided it is time for a change. She enrols in an Open University course in English Literature, where she meets her tutor Frank—a lecturer who teaches at Queens—and begins her journey of self discovery.

The play is directed by Emma Jordan.

ACTORS:

RITA is played by KERRI QUINN

In her thirties, she is slim, of medium height, with thin legs. Her face is heart shaped, with light brown hair piled on top her head, eyes emphasized by blue eye shadow and dark eyebrows, high cheekbones, neat nose and small mouth with red lipstick.

She arrives wearing a knee length coat, with a shawl collar, and large silver brooch on the lapel, and red stiletto heels. Over her shoulder is a brown leather bag trimmed with tan. Glimpsed underneath the coat is a short turquoise blue skirt, worn with a blue and red patterned top, wide black belt and round blue earrings.

Her next outfit is the same top, pleated at the waist, below which is a pink skirt, matching her fluffy pink short sleeved cardigan, embellished with pink bows. Round her neck are red beads, and she also has a wide leather band around her left wrist.

In another scene she wears the same top with a straight blue denim skirt, with brown belt and black stilettos.

She changes into a short white and flower patterned blouse with a pink and grey fine scarf, worn under a brown knitted cardigan, with the denim skirt.

Then she adds a grey leather jacket and cream leather knee high boots to this outfit.

A blue top with a white diagonal stripe is then worn with the denim skirt, under a long beige coat with padded shoulders.

In the Second Act, her hair changes-worn drawn back from her face, and long.

Her clothes are more sophisticated too.

The leather jacket is worn with a short sleeved white open necked blouse, gathered grey skirt and red high heels.

Next, the brown coat with long floating beige scarf, worn with brown high waisted trousers and flat brown shoes.

Her last appearance is wearing a black long sleeved blouse with the trousers and tan low heels.

Frank, the university lecturer, is played by Michael James Ford. In his fifties, he is bald on top, with receding short grey hair. His red square shaped face has a creased forehead, grey eyebrows, broad nose and small mouth, with grey moustache. He wears frameless glasses.

He hangs his beige rain coat on the coat stand.

His wears the same baggy brown trousers throughout the First Act, with brown shoes.

His shirt is also beige, and he first appears wearing a brown knitted waistcoat.

He changes the first waistcoat for a grey woollen waistcoat, than a fine wool one. At the end of the first Act he sports a shapeless beige jacket.

In Act Two he has changed into brown cord trousers, over which he wears his shirt and tie.

SET

Frank’s second floor room is lined with book shelves, from floor to ceiling, at the left side wall and across the back wall, with a gap for the recessed, panelled door to the stairs.

These bookshelves and smaller bookcases at each side of the room, are completely filled with books of a variety of colours and sizes, arranged sideways at every angle, or stacked in piles. The smaller bookcases have books piled on top, and underneath.

To the right is a floor to ceiling window, made up of small square panes of clear and opaque glass with diamond shaped red glass pattern at the top.

The walls are papered in mottled shades of grey. On the rear wall to the right of the door recess hangs a large reproduction of The Birth of Venus, a large reclining nude with her back on display. There are various other small indecipherable pictures below the nude and on the wall to the left of the window.

Below the window, angled to the left is a large rectangular wooden desk, cluttered with more books, sheaves of paper, a mug, a green reading lamp, typewriter and white phone. Behind the desk is a leather swivel chair. A wastepaper basket and black brief case are on the floor at the end of the desk. In front there is a wooden stool.

Under the desk is a square beige rug, on which is a pile of cardboard files. Between the bookcases and the desk is a small revolving bookcase.

In the right corner, is a tall filing cabinet, with a little set of drawers and a potted plant on top.

Next to this, beside the window, is a stereo record player with radio below. A pile of records sits on top of a small table next to it. A small shelved bookcase is at right front.

There is a wooden coat stand and a set of wooden library steps to the left of the recessed door.

A large round wooden table sits on a beige rug at the left side of the room, on which are a small lamp, files, books and a pen. A tan leather chair with wooden arms and a leather arm chair are to the left and right of this table. At the front left is a small writing desk, with piles of books on and below..

Behind the table is a standard lamp with a fringed lampshade.

These programme notes will be read ten minutes before the play.

This is a good time to test your head set.

The audio description is by Amy Stewart and Sara Duncan from Sightlines.