Chesil Theatre Press Release

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The November production at the Chesil Theatre, Winchester looks at how a play agent, Peggy Ramsay, greatly influenced theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. She nurtured novice playwrights including Robert Bolt, David Hare, Alan Ayckbourn, Peter Nichols, Joe Orton, Stephen Poliakoff and Willy Russell from their first efforts to Olivier Awards and Oscars.

Alan Plater was one of her clients for 30 years, achieving great success on radio, film, stage and television. In *Peggy for You* he has created a terrific play which shows Peggy in her chaotic office with three clients, in the course of an imaginary day. One is a 20-year-old who has written his first play, in which Peggy can see potential. Another is ‘flavour of the month’ Golden Boy, who has plays running in the West End and on Broadway. The third is an older man who has been with Peggy through these two periods in his career, and now feels neglected and ‘passé.

This witty, wry but always unsentimental play displays many different facets of Peggy’s character. When the National Theatre programme planner phones, she berates him for their current timid choice of play. She tells David Lean, the film director, she is busy, turns down a multi-million-pound film offer because the

company are using South African funds, and bails a drunken writer out of out of a police cell. She agrees to see the young man’s play, *Shades of Nothingness*, in a room above a pub, rather than Uncle Vanya at the National.

“Peggy was eccentric, intimidating, contradictory and inspiring,” says Director,

Lisbeth Rake. “She believed passionately that writing and new playwrights were

the heart and future of theatre.”

The play opens on Saturday November 19. Tickets from £10 available from [www.chesiltheatre.org.uk](http://www.chesiltheatre.org.uk) or 0333 666 3366

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Photo Rob James

Editorial Note

Since 1953 when Peggy opened her agency, the Chesil has performed 73 plays written by

her clients, including their recent production Willy Russell’s *Educating Rita.*

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