

Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, 2000

(director Michael Grandage)



Celia reluctantly presides over Rosalind and Orlando's mock wedding (Act 4 Scene 1).

The opening court scenes for this production were set in a colourless, high-windowed state room, which then transformed into a Forest of Arden dominated by three tall trees. 'Grandage's production has a grave simplicity as it charts, with a flurry of snowflakes or the flutter of leaves, the journey from emotional winter to the joyous arrival of spring and the blossoming of true love' (Lyn Gardner, *Guardian*, March 2000).

Critics praised Victoria Hamilton's performance as Rosalind (pictured above): 'a dazed and dazzling creature of fragile intensity who breathes every word as if it had just fluttered into her mind' (David Nathan, *Jewish Chronicle*, March 2000). 'Her performance thrillingly captures all the breathless impatience and impulsiveness of young love, its pain as well as its pleasure' (Georgina Brown, *Mail on Sunday*, March 2000).

Ben Daniels was an impressive Orlando who 'develops from loose-limbed, hot-headed adolescent into radical new man. The sexual electricity between him and Hamilton's Rosalind is so great that you actually long for them to fall upon and ravish each other to relieve the tension' (Lyn Gardner, *Guardian*, March 2000). But the tension was also very comic: 'When Rosalind and Orlando lie opposite each other, chins on hands, his face dwarfs hers; when he slaps her on the back, she's propelled into the air; and when he snaps her braces, she recoils in eye-stinging pain. (By the sound, so did many women in the audience.)' (Maeve Walsh, *Independent on Sunday*, March 2000)

Samantha Spiro as a fiery, bespectacled Celia was forever eyeing anxiously Rosalind's meetings with Orlando, because from the moment he first appeared it was comically obvious that she also rather fancied him. No wonder then that later in the play she 'no sooner looks at Orlando's reformed brother than she, too, is whacked by a Cupid who seems to have abandoned his arrows in favour of clubs' (David Nathan, *Jewish Chronicle*, March 2000).

- 1 Review the images of this production and make notes on what *you* think audiences would have enjoyed about it.
- 2 Which of the above comments and descriptions have intrigued, inspired or annoyed you most, and why?