

- 1600** Until the 17th century the street was known as Portugal Street. The name Piccadilly comes from the tailor Robert Baker, who owned a shop on the Strand, making and selling piccadills; stiff collars with scalloped edges that were in vogue. With his fortune he bought what was then open country and in 1612 built a large house there. The mansion became known as Piccadilly Hall.
- 1870** Development begins on the site of the White Bear, a seventeenth-century posting inn, stretching between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly Circus, known as Regent Circus.
Thomas Verity wins the competition to build a music hall complex.
- 1873** The Criterion was completed comprising a large restaurant, dining rooms, ballroom, and galleried concert hall in the basement.
- 1874** 21 March the programme opened with a double bill; An American Lady written and performed by Henry J Byron and a piece by W. S. Gilbert, with music by Alfred Cellier, entitled Topsyturveydom.
- 1875** Charles Wyndham joins as manager and lessee and establishes The Criterion as one of the leading light comedy houses in London.
- 1876** The farce The Great Divorce Case, opens on 15 April.
- 1877** W.S. Gilbert was back at the theatre in 1877 with his farce, On Bail.
- 1881** W.S. Gilbert was back again with the festive farce hit Foggerty's Fairy.
- 1882** The Prince and Princess of Wales attends Fourteen Days on the 13th March 1882. 108 performances.
- 1883** Electricity replaces gas. The Metropolitan Board of Works closes The Criterion on the grounds that it would be unsafe in the event of fire and as it was below ground and lit by gas, there was risk of toxic fumes. As a result the proprietors carried out extensive alterations.
- 1884** The theatre reopens with a new area open to the sky taken from part of the ground floor dining-room. Corridors were built along the Piccadilly front, leading at one end to the box office entrance and at the other to a new crush room and exit. In the auditorium most of the boxes were removed in order to increase the size of the circles. New decorations were carried out by Messrs. Simpson and Sons. The improvements also included an elaborate system of air conditioning and the installation of electric lights throughout the theatre.
- 1885** The Candidate and Naval Engagements. The Candidate was a revival, starring Charles Wyndham & Mary Moore, Naval Engagements by Charles Dance.
- 1888** David Garrick. Runs for 152 performances with Charles Wyndham in the lead role as David Garrick.
- 1889** The ever popular comedy of manners, She Stoops to Conquer by Oliver Goldsmith is performed and is revived at the Criterion for several years
- 1891** The actress and royal courtesan Lily Langtry performs in the eponymous titled Miss Decima for 191 performances.

- 1892** Anteros by Sir Alfred Gilbert, R.A is unveiled to commemorate the philanthropic works of Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.
- 1893** The Bauble Shop by Henry Arthur Jones opens and runs for 135 performances.
- 1894** The Case of Rebellious Susan by Henry Arthur Jones and starring Charles Wyndham & Mary Moore, runs for 164 performances.
- 1896** Charles Wyndham celebrates his 20th year with the theatre
- 1898** The Liars by Henry Arthur Jones runs for 291 performances
- 1899** Chas Wyndham leaves the Criterion to open his own theatre, The Wyndham's Theatre.
- 1901** Kawakami Troupe perform Madame Sadayakko by Cosmo Gordon Lennox.
- 1902-03** The theatre was closed for seven months for further renovations.
- 1904** The Duke of Killicrankie runs for 328 performances.
- 1906** Piccadilly tube station opens.
- 1907** The Mollusc runs for 324 performances.
- 1911** Man and Superman by George Bernard Shaw. Starring Pauline Chase runs for 191 performances.
- 1913** Oh! I Say by Sydney Blow & Douglas Hoare opens, starring James Welch, Marguerite Scialtiel and Sybil de Bray. It runs for 288 performances.
- 1915-1918** A Little Bit of Fluff by Walter W Eillis. Starring Ernest Thesiger, Marjorie Maxwell, George Desmond, Ruby Miller, Stanley Lethbury, Alfred Drayton, Violet Gould, Lilian Talbot and runs for 1,241 performances.
- 1919** Lord Richard in the Pantry by Sydney Blow and Douglas Hoare. Starring Cyril Maude & Gertrude Aylward runs for 576 performances.
- 1921** Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure runs for 455 performances.
- 1923** Advertising April by Herbert Farjeon and Horace Horsnell. Directed by Lewis Casson. Starring Sybil Thorndike, Frank Cellier, Elizabeth Pollock, Gwladys Gaynor, Lawrence Anderson & Ashton Pearse.
- 1924** The Mask and the Face runs for 232 performances.
- 1926** The electric billboards are erected on the London Pavilion. In the futures, on special occasion,s the lights are switched off, such as the deaths of Winston Churchill in 1965 and Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997.
- 1927** The Happy Husband opens and runs for 109 performances.
- 1928** Passing Brompton Road opens and runs for 174 performances.

- 1931** After All runs for 262 performances.
- Flat To Let by Arthur Macrae. Starring Ann Todd, Reginald Gardiner, Lilian Braithwaite, Athole Stewart & Frank Allenby and runs for 125 performances.
- 1932** Musical Chairs opens starring John Gielgud.
- 1933** Premier of Ivor Novello's comedy Fresh Fields.
- 1935** Revival of Hogarth's The Beggar's Opera.
- 1936-1939** French Without Tears runs for 1,039 performances and launches the writing career of Terence Rattigan.
- World War II** The Criterion Theatre remains open during the duration of the war and was requisitioned by the BBC - as an underground theatre it made an ideal studio safe from the London blitz - and light entertainment programmes were both recorded and broadcast live.
- 1946** The Guinea Pig by Warren Chetham-Strode. Directed by Jack Minster and starring Cecil Trouncer, Rachel Gurney, Robert Flemyng, Denholm Elliott, Derek Blomfield, William Mervyn & Joan Hickson and runs for 236 performances.
- 1950** Who is Sylvia by Terence Rattigan opens. Directed by Anthony Quayle, it stars Robert Flemyng, Esmond Knight, Roland Culver, Athene Seyler and runs for 380 performances.
- 1952** The Vortex by Noel Coward. Starring Neville Prescott, Adrienne Allen, Robert Andrews, Sylvia Coleridge, Isabel Jeans & Michael Gough.
- 1954** Intimacy at 8.30 by Peter Myers, Alec Grahame & David Climie. Starring Aud Johansen, Dilys Lay, Ronnie Stevens, Ron Moody, Joan Heal, Pip Hinton, Hugh Paddick, Eleanor Fazan & Joan Sims runs for 551 performances.
- 1955** The first UK production of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot.
- 1956** Jean Anouilh's popular comedy The Waltz of the Toreadors. Directed by Peter Hall and stars Hugh Griffith, Beatrix Lehmann, Walter Hudd, Trader Faulkner, Brenda Bruce, Gabrielle Daye and runs for 700 performances.
- 1959** A Taste of Honey starring Wendy Craig and Richard Briers.
- 1960** The Art of Living written by Art Buchwald, Julian More & Johnny Speight, with music by Monty Norman & David Heneker and starring Edward Woodward.
- 1961** Three is a series of three plays by three contemporary writers; Lunch Hour by John Mortimer, The Form by NF Simpson and A Slight Ache by Harold Pinter. Starring Emlyn Williams, Wendy Craig, Alison Leggatt & Richard Briers.
- 1963** A Severed Head by Iris Murdoch and directed by Val May. Starring Heather Chasen, Bernard Horsfall, Peter Reeves, Irene Hamilton & Ann Saker. Runs for 1,110 performances.
- 1966** Joe Orton's Loot Directed by Charles Marowitz. Starring Michael Bates, Sheila Ballantine, Kenneth Cranham & Simon Ward and runs for 342 performances. Loot wins the Evening Standard Drama Award as the Best Play of 1966.

- 1968** Look Back in Anger by John Osbourne starring Martin Shaw.
- A double bill of *The Real Inspector Hound* and *The Audition*. *The Real Inspector Hound* by Tom Stoppard starred Richard Briers, Ronnie Barker, Josephine Tewson, Robin Ellis & Caroline Blakiston. *The Audition* by Sean Patrick Vincent starred David Baxter, George King, Jean Hart, Jill Johnson, Ronald Cream & Mervyn Pascoe.
- 1972** *Hullabaloo!* with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice. Starring Jimmy Edwards.
- The Criterion site was proposed by the GLC for redevelopment, which caused protest as people feared the theatre would be lost. High profile campaigners included John Gielgud, Edward Woodward, Diana Rigg, Robert Morley and Prunella Scales.
- 1973** *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and directed by Patrick Garland. Starring Claire Bloom, Colin Blakely, Anton Rogers, Peter Woodthorpe, Stephanie Bidmead, Nora Nicholson & Dorothy Baird.
- 1975** Musical Revue *Lenny* based on the life of the infamous comedian Lenny Bruce.
- The Theatre is saved from the developers on the condition that the theatre continued uninterrupted, while the redevelopments took place around it.
- 1976** *The Thoughts of Chairman Alf* starring Warren Mitchell.
- 1979** *Bent* by Martin Sherman. Starring Ian McKellan, Tom Bell, Jeff Rawle & Richard Gale.
- 1981-1983** *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!* by Dario Fo. Starring Alfred Molina, Maggie Steed, Sylvester McCoy, Christopher Ryan & Karen Drury.
- 1983-1989** Over 1,600 performances of *Run For Your Wife*, written & directed by Ray Cooney. Starring (among others) Bernard Cribbins, Patrick Mower, John Quayle, Ernie Wise, Aimi Macdonald, Leslie Lawton, Una Stubbs, Ron Aldridge.
- 1989-1992** The theatre building was purchased by Robert Bourne, a property tycoon and patron of the arts, and his wife, theatre impresario Sally Greene. The couple set up the Criterion Theatre Trust, a registered charity created to protect the Criterion's future.
- The theatre closed for major renovations. During that time, the block that exists today was built around it. The front of house refurbishment by Lawrence Llewellyn Bowen, restored the Victorian auditorium and its intimate atmosphere.
- 1992** For the opening week of the new Criterion, Ennio Marchetto, the quick-change, paper costumed, Italian comedian and entertainer.
- 1994** *My Night With Reg* by Kevin Elyot. Directed by Roger Mitchell and starred John Sessions, David Bamber, Anthony Calf, Joe Duttine, Roger Frost & Kenneth MacDonald.
- Maxwell* a musical revue about the media mogul Robert Maxwell.
- 2002** Yoko Ono hires a billboard to bring a little bit of peace among the neon signs above Piccadilly Circus. The board will carried one of John Lennon's most famous lyrics: "Imagine all the people living life in peace".

- 1996-2005** The Reduced Shakespeare Company take residence at the Criterion for almost a decade with their hugely successful shows, including: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged); The Complete History of America (abridged); The Bible: The Complete Word of God (abridged)
- 2006-2015** The hugely successful classic thriller, The 39 Steps adapted by Patrick Barlow, from an original concept by Simon Corble & Nobby Dimon and directed by Maria Aitkin with a comedic edge.
- 2016** Mischief Theatre Company premier their new play 'The Comedy About A Bank Robbery'