

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## Hello and Goodbye

Athol Fugard  
Southwark Playhouse  
(2003)

If you want to see two of the best performances in town, head for the Southwark Playhouse. Zubin Varla and Tracey-Ann Oberman are both outstanding as the dirt-poor brother and sister around whom *Hello and Goodbye* is built.

The parts of Johnny and Hester were originally played by Ben Kingsley and Janet Suzman and require and receive tremendous emotional energy from the actors.

Johnny has sacrificed his life to look after their one-legged father, the tyrannical victim of an explosion. Hester has taken the opposite route, escaping their claustrophobic home - convincingly designed by Laura Hopkins - for a life of prostitution in Johannesburg.

Under Paul Robinson's direction, Varla catches every twitch of a man almost driven mad by his existence while Miss Oberman rages away as his hard as nails sister, who then melts at the memory of their long-dead mother.

Neither has a happy existence and they seemingly represent opposite poles, he loves religion and ritual while she believes herself a free spirit, but neither can escape their roots, represented by the poor chattels of their childhood.

Watching *Hello and Goodbye* is a very intense but extremely rewarding experience. Once again, the tiny Southwark Playhouse has managed to put on a superbly-performed production that punches well above its weight.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)