# Tamsin Greig’s portrayal of Hester brings fresh depth to Rattigan’s post-war classic



The Deep Blue Sea, Terence Rattigan's poignant exploration of post-war despair, continues to resonate in a modern context, especially under the current production at the Theatre Royal in Haymarket, London, featuring Tamsin Greig as Hester Collyer. This play, set in 1952, delves into the emotional turmoil faced by Hester, a society woman driven to the brink of suicide following an affair with the irresponsible Freddie, portrayed by Hadley Fraser.

Rattigan's narrative hinges upon the themes of loneliness, societal repression, and the complexity of love and despair. Greig brings depth to Hester's character, capturing a spectrum of emotions ranging from abject sorrow to fierce resilience. Critics have noted her ability to embody Hester's shame and anguish, often evoking a sense of tragic beauty in her portrayal. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph acknowledges Greig's nuanced exploration of Hester’s internal struggles, highlighting her journey from despair towards a semblance of self-realisation.

The production, directed by Lindsay Posner, might struggle to embody the intimate atmosphere that the narrative demands. The set—depicting a damp, decaying flat—functions as a character in its own right, reflecting the oppressive weight of Hester's circumstances. Critics have pointed out, however, that a more confined staging could amplify the emotional stakes and allow audiences to truly inhabit Hester's world. The setting, though evocative, sometimes hinders the intimate connections that Rattigan's script seeks to evoke, as noted in both The Guardian’s critiques and the seasoned evaluations of former productions.

Supporting performances also play a crucial role in this revival, particularly Finbar Lynch as Miller, the former doctor who interjects his own experiences of loss and regret into Hester’s narrative. Their exchanges highlight not only the complexity of human relationships but also the societal expectations stifling genuine emotion. Lynch’s portrayal, lauded by several reviewers, serves to deepen the emotional landscape of the play.

In a broader context, Rattigan’s work continues to hold a mirror to contemporary struggles, making it particularly relevant today. The play’s exploration of the emotional costs of societal conventions and the hidden depths of personal anguish resonates amid modern conversations about mental health and emotional wellbeing.

While the production runs until June 21, its relevance extends beyond the stage, inviting audiences to reflect on the interconnectedness of love, loss, and the often-silenced cries for understanding and connection in a world that can feel isolating. As the curtains fall, many may leave with a renewed appreciation for the delicate threads that tie human experiences together, both on stage and in life itself.

### Reference Map

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14717979/PATRICK-MARMION-reviews-Deep-Blue-Sea-Theatre-Royal.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/deep-blue-sea-theatre-royal-bath-review-tamsin-greig/> - In this review, Dominic Cavendish praises Tamsin Greig's performance as Hester Collyer in Terence Rattigan's 'The Deep Blue Sea' at Theatre Royal Bath. He highlights Greig's ability to convey the character's internal struggles and emotional depth, noting her nuanced portrayal of Hester's journey from despair to self-realization. The production's intimate setting and attention to period detail are also commended, providing a compelling experience for the audience.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/article/2024/may/14/the-deep-blue-sea-review-theatre-royal-bath-tamsin-greig-terence-rattigan> - The Guardian's review by Arifa Akbar discusses Tamsin Greig's portrayal of Hester Collyer in 'The Deep Blue Sea' at Theatre Royal Bath. Akbar emphasizes Greig's skill in capturing the character's wit, self-deprecation, and underlying sadness. The production's design, featuring a gloomy, period-accurate set, effectively mirrors the play's themes of repression and despair. The review also notes the strong performances of the supporting cast, contributing to a powerful revival of Rattigan's classic.
4. <https://www.broadwayworld.com/westend/article/Review-THE-DEEP-BLUE-SEA-Theatre-Royal-Bath-20240514> - Cheryl Markosky's review highlights Tamsin Greig's exceptional performance as Hester Collyer in 'The Deep Blue Sea' at Theatre Royal Bath. She praises Greig's ability to convey the character's internal conflict and emotional turmoil. The review also notes the production's intimate setting, which enhances the play's themes of isolation and despair. Supporting performances, particularly by Finbar Lynch as Miller, are also commended for adding depth to the narrative.
5. <https://trh.co.uk/whatson/the-deep-blue-sea/> - The official Theatre Royal Bath website provides details about the production of 'The Deep Blue Sea,' starring Tamsin Greig as Hester Collyer. The page includes information about the cast, director Lindsay Posner, and the play's themes. It also features critical acclaim, with quotes from reviews praising Greig's performance and the production's impact. The website offers ticket information and performance dates for audiences interested in attending.
6. <https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/the-deep-blue-sea-at-baths-ustinov-studio-review_1599893/> - Kris Hallett's review discusses the revival of 'The Deep Blue Sea' at Bath's Ustinov Studio, featuring Tamsin Greig as Hester Collyer. Hallett notes Greig's nuanced portrayal of the character's emotional journey and the production's attention to period detail. The review also highlights the intimate setting of the Ustinov Studio, which enhances the play's themes of isolation and despair. Supporting performances and direction are also praised for contributing to a compelling revival.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jun/12/deep-blue-sea-helen-mccrory-terence-rattigan-review> - In this 2016 review, Michael Billington praises Helen McCrory's performance as Hester Collyer in 'The Deep Blue Sea' at the National Theatre. He highlights McCrory's ability to convey the character's internal conflict and emotional depth. The production's design, featuring a grey-green apartment block, effectively mirrors the play's themes of repression and despair. The review also notes the strong performances of the supporting cast, contributing to a powerful revival of Rattigan's classic.