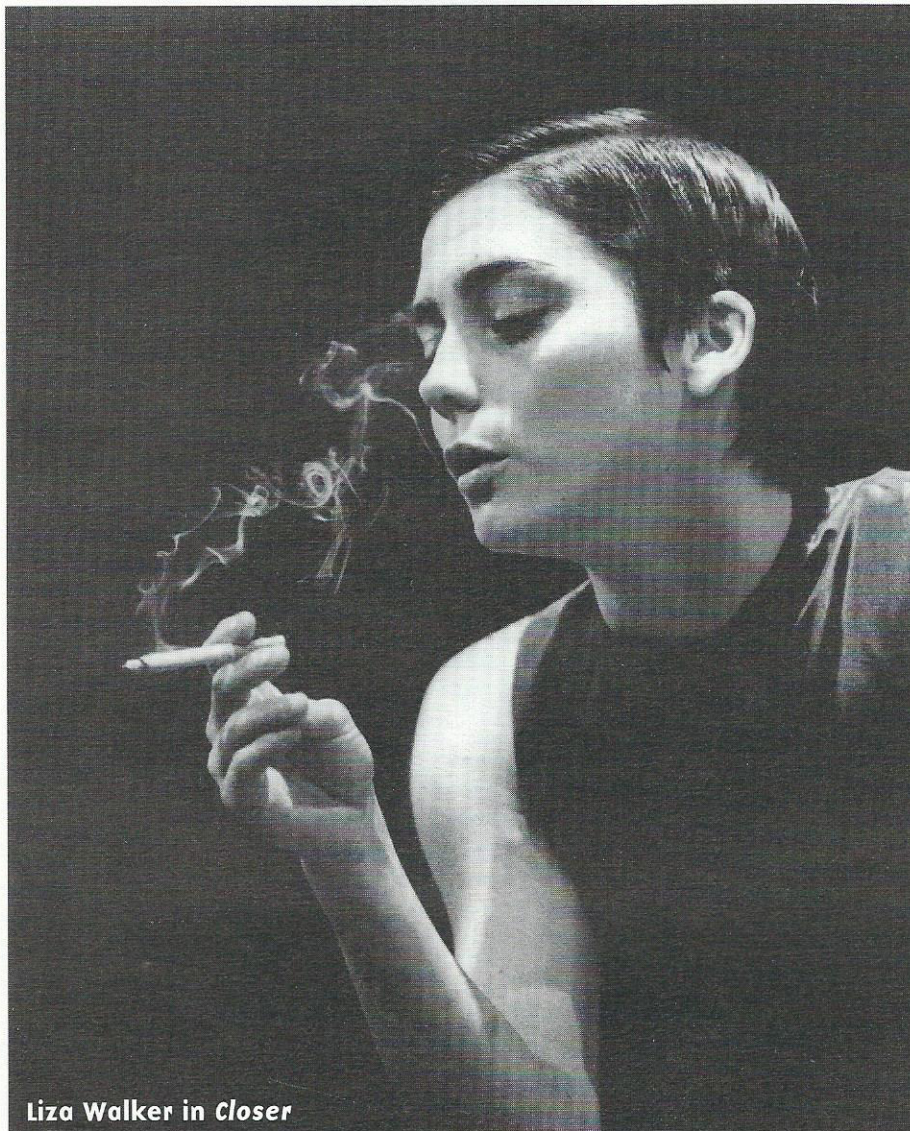


## THEATRE

# London Exports

> by Robert W. Cabell



Liza Walker in *Closer*

If you've seen everything worth seeing that New York's theater scene has to offer,

here's a suggestion: take a few days off, wing across the Atlantic to Old London Town, and catch a couple of pond jumpers before they open next season in the Big Apple.

### CLOSER > LYRIC THEATRE

This brilliant show is worth the plane fare to Heathrow, but luckily it will be coming to New York in October and, I predict, will be the season's megahit. Writer-director Patrick Marber gets more foreplay out of his four-member cast than the vice squad allows. Penning scenes and dialogue that explode like bombs, he creates sexual tension more gripping than an Anaconda in

this shaken-but-not-stirred concoction of complex emotional manipulations and carnal relations. The story revolves around four characters, a young stripper, writer, photographer and doctor, as they collide into each others' lives and beds. Liza Walker, as the stripper, is an elfin beauty with a stark inner strength that makes her smallest gesture simply magnetic. Lloyd Owen, as the obituary writer who finds his first novel through his sexual entanglement with Alice, is broodingly sexy and vulnerable in a towering way that seduces the audience, leaving them sighing. Frances Barber, as the photographer rising to fame, is a conflicted modern woman filled with desire who's neither quite capable of having nor handling it all. Neil Pearson, as the doctor, is the most emotional and explosive character. His life is first torn apart, then somehow restored, by the other three characters.

### POPCORN > APOLLO THEATRE

This is what happens when *Get Shorty* meets *Natural Born Killers*: a show so potentially cinematic, its film rights have already been snatched up. This blood-curdling comedy, cunningly written by Ben Elton and daringly directed by Laurence Boswell, takes place in the Beverly Hills mansion of an Oscar-winning film director as he, his family, and guests are held hostage by a perverted couple on a killing spree for the sexual rush it brings. As the media is notified and the kissing killers' plans unravel, redneck thrill-killer Wayne,

played with a wicked-and-wily edge by Corey Johnson, and his submissive, sex-crazed, visceral vixen Scout, played by Dena Davis, explain that "violence is the popcorn of the media." With this in mind, they place the fate of their hostages at the mercy of the TV viewers' integrity. That in itself is an oxymoron. It's the kind of show that can make you die laughing.

*The best way to get tickets for these or any show is through the New York office of Edwards & Edwards (800-223-6108). Or wait till the fall when Closer and Popcorn are slated to arrive Stateside. ★*