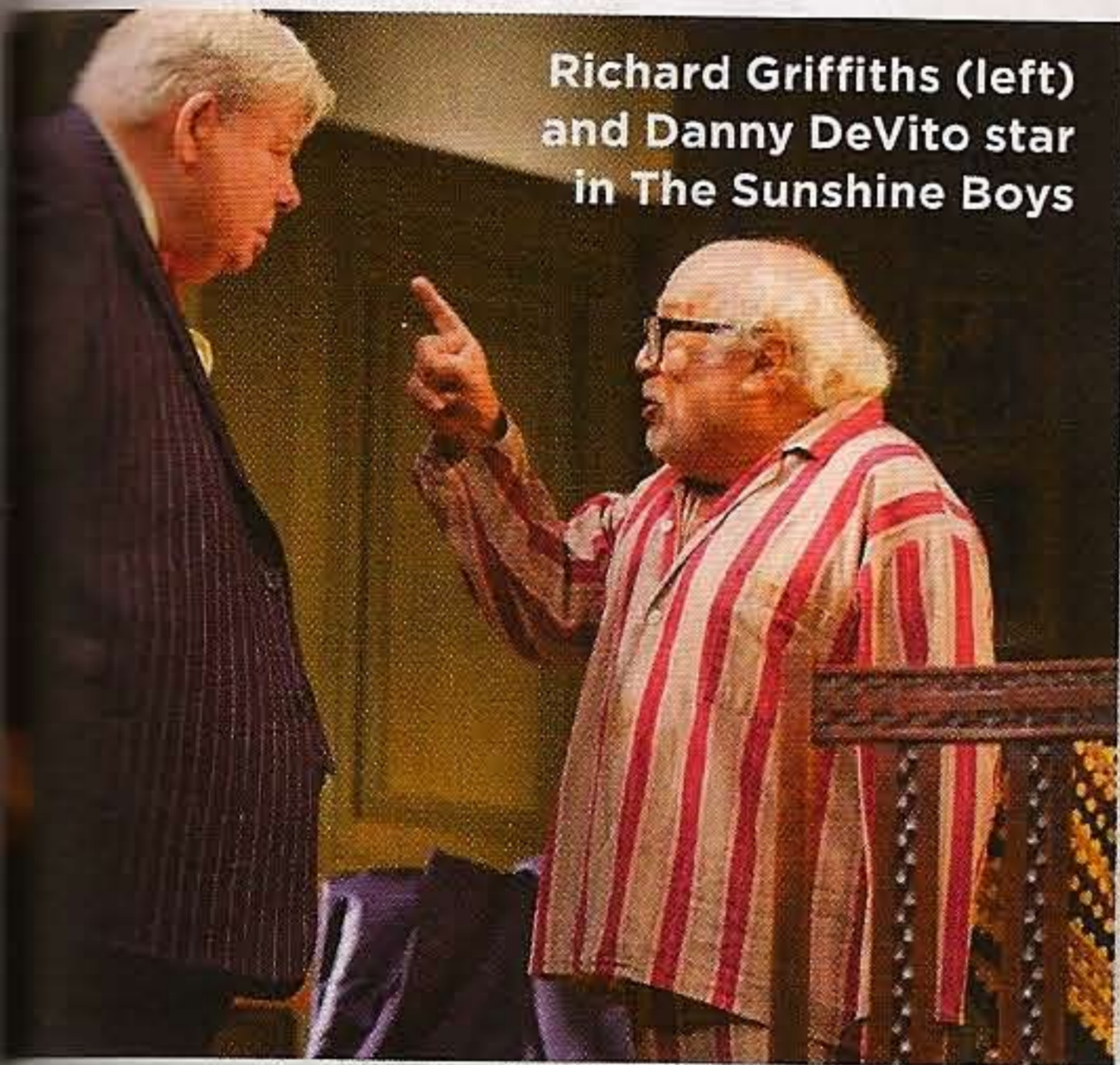




Art on the wing

Recordings of nightingales and a miniature planetarium mark the Biennial out as a star of the north

EX, Dinu Li's crash-landed flying saucer



Richard Griffiths (left) and Danny DeVito star in *The Sunshine Boys*

Richard Griffiths? I doubt it. The two are made for each other and Thea Sharrock's stellar direction steers them away from any chance of schmaltz towards a fast-paced comedy that is theatrical gold. In Al Lewis, Griffiths has found a character that he inhabits as memorably as the cult figure Uncle Monty, in *Withnail And I*.

Hildegard Bechtler's glorious facsimile of Willie's vintage apartment is so good it is almost diverting at times. The night I went the show ended with a standing ovation. It was no surprise. These two grumpy old lions roared all the way through. ♦ *Savoy Theatre, Strand, London WC2, until 28 July: 0844-871 7687, www.sunshineboystheplay.com*

WHICH PLAY BEGINS...

I got the horse right here

(Answer on page 80)



TERESA DRACE FRANCIS

TATTON PARK BIENNIAL 2012: FLIGHTS OF FANCY



This, the third edition of the Tatton Park Biennial, looks at aviation, war history, air, space, the human urge to fly, clouds, sound and more, all through the lens of one of the great estates of the north of England. Initiated, and still curated by Danielle Arnaud and Jordan Kaplan, previous editions have addressed identity, botanical collections and collectors. Part of what makes their approach so appealing is the human element, the objective interest in character – a cool contrast to the unthinking idolisation of the aristocracy often found in the literature and guides to historic houses.

The last Lord Maurice Egerton of Tatton was an early radio user and flight enthusiast. Deep in the woods, what looks like a huge boom microphone emits a mysterious soundtrack: garden party, birdsong, aeroplanes. Using a 1942 BBC recording of nightingales, which inadvertently picked up Allied bombers, this

powerful piece by Charbel Ackermann could be a visual substitute for Tom McCarthy's Booker short-listed novel *C*, echoing the majesty and thrill of early radio.

Nearby is a planetarium in miniature, a work by David Cotterrell receiving data from the nearby Jodrell Bank Centre. Beyond this, Simon Faithfull, clad in aluminium spacesuit, acts out a possible future. There are moments of pure visual wit – Hilary Jack's human-scale nest, and the breathtaking *Pont de Singe* by Olivier Grossetête, strung up by balloons, a serious folly straight out of the 18th century.

Inside the house, some pieces, such as Tessa Farmer's cosmic explosion of animal parts, and watercolours of Jem Finer's unrealisable *The Cloud Museum*, chime with the *Flights Of Fancy* theme. Others work less well in this context, although they show something often missing from this kind of intervention, which is a long-term engagement with an estate and its people. Elizabeth Sykes, wife of Wilbraham Egerton, and her collection of printed music, inspire a beautifully produced film by Aura Satz, made and shown in the Music Room, where the volumes still live.

As you approach Tatton up the long drive, you see an aeroplane fuselage, shaded in the trees. This is a stage set for the proposition that the artists, Juneau Projects, have gone feral in the parkland, following some unspecified apocalyptic event. What could be more 21st century than this, a direct update of the parkland hermit? The relationships between past and present, human and nature, are all gently scrutinised here, keeping the spirit of enlightenment alive.

♦ *Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire, until 30 September 2012: 01625-374400, www.tattonparkbiennial.org*



Pont De Singe by Olivier Grossetête