



## Portraits (Oberon Modern Plays)

*William Douglas-Home*

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Augustus John's ability as portrait artist won him the admiration of fellow artists, public recognition and the Order of Merit. William Douglas Home's play presents various points in the Bohemian artist's turbulent life from 1944 – 1961 through a reconstruction of sittings with three of his subjects (all played by the same actor) – General Bernard Montgomery, fellow artist Mathew Smith and designer Cecil Beaton. This keenly observed, sensitive play is finely interwoven with the thread of John's gradually developing pacifism – from his certainty in spring 1944 that Monty's young ADC will not survive the second front, to war's devastating effect on Matthew Smith, to John's vibrant fear of the nuclear nightmare and his own approaching death. The first production of this play in 24 years, *Portraits* commemorates the 50th anniversary of the death of artist Augustus John.

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