

# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

As Sir Trevor Nunn takes *Fatal Attraction* from the screen to the stage, **Jo Caird** pays him a visit in the midst of rehearsals to find out more.

**F**atal Attraction was the smash hit Hollywood blockbuster of 1987: the highest-grossing movie of the year and recipient of six Oscar nominations. So it's a bit of a surprise to find that its stage premiere will be in London.

Not so, says the veteran theatre director Sir Trevor Nunn (right). Though the movie starred Michael Douglas as a happily married New Yorker who strays, and Glenn Close as his vengeful one-night stand, the original screenplay was written by Brit James Dearden and set in London. 'Of course,' explains Nunn, 'once it was picked up by Hollywood, then it had to be adapted to something American.'

Nunn and Dearden discussed returning the stage adaptation to a London setting, but decided that they had 'a certain responsibility to expectation. People are going to want to see a recognisable account of what they saw in the cinema.' That said, Nunn liked the fact that the

writer wanted to do something more representative of his original intentions for the film. He confirms: 'Right from the get go it wasn't just a repeat.'

The new cast will also bring a new dynamic. Mark Bazeley of *The Bourne Ultimatum* plays the cheating husband. The Glenn Close role is played by Natascha McElhone, who previously starred in *The Truman Show* and is now famous in America for the TV series *Californication*. And making her West End debut as the cuckolded wife is Kristin Davis, aka Charlotte in *Sex And The City*.

The film caused a sensation in 1987, partly because it was seen as a metaphor for AIDS: a one-night stand has hideous consequences when the woman refuses to accept it was a casual fling. She stalks and threatens her lover, ultimately breaking into his home and cooking the family pet in a pot. The popular term 'bunny boiler', meaning an unstable and obsessional woman, originated with *Fatal Attraction*.



The ending also caused fevered debate about its sexual politics: preview audiences hated how the woman got the upper hand, and though Glenn Close fought the change for two weeks, a new ending was filmed in which her character was brutally shot dead in the bath. London audiences, surprisingly, will be seeing neither of the two endings.

'What we're doing,' reveals Nunn, 'is a third, and therefore to some extent I've got to keep my cards very close to my chest because we want people to be duly involved and intrigued and surprised.'

And what of the notoriously steamy sex scene? How will that work on stage? It won't, is the answer. 'Sex scenes that are absolutely commonplace in the ►