copied: 127 versions of the scene are recorded, about a third of them considered authentic. Marten van Cleve's setting of his "Winter Landscape with the Massacre of the Innocents" was no doubt influenced by the outrages committed by Philip's soldiers in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century.

The seagoing vessels in the section Merchants and Travellers are depicted with such meticulous attention to detail that they have proved of great value to marine historians (as the peasant paintings add much to our knowledge of contemporary costumes). Antwerp was a thriving port at this time, the commercial centre of Western Europe, and every sort of vessel put in there, from fishing boats to four-masters. Notable too are Teniers II's tavern scenes, which give us a fascinating insight into seventeenth-century life in Flanders. At first sight these scenes appear simple, but often they contain hidden messages: the vanity of all human life, drunkenness versus sobriety, and allegorical details which constitute a memento mori.

Flower lovers will greet Room VI with a gasp of delight: we are given a dazzling display of still lifes of every kind of bloom and

"The Outdoor Wedding Dance" (detail), *c.*1610, by Pieter Brueghel the Younger

fruit. Jan II figures largely here, but there are also paintings by Ambrosius and Abraham. Dahlias and roses, lilies and irises abound, but of course the tulip is omnipresent. Tulipomania, at the peak of which a single bulb (probably the streaky *Semper Augustus*) could sell at ten times the annual wage of a skilled craftsman, created a huge demand for pictures of this genre, which achieved their greatest brilliance in this period.

Finally we come to Dance, the familiar theme of peasants' weddings, outdoor celebrations, one of the most popular subjects in all Flemish painting at the start of the seventeenth century. (The focus on peasant life is the second of the Brueghels' important innovations in the development of art. Suddenly the common man is of importance in his own right. And seeing these merry souls whirling about, the ugly bride, the rampant codpieces, the flirtations and the drinking, one is touched by the artist's humanity and love for ordinary folk, his cheerful acceptance of foibles and peccadilloes.) Thirty-six examples of this theme have been listed, of which fifteen are accepted as by Pieter the Younger. Two paintings on the same subject by him can be directly compared: "Outdoor Wedding Dance" and "Return from the Kermis". The original composition was by Pieter I. But Marten van Cleve's "Peasant Wedding", a series of six panels showing the processions of bride and groom, the offering of gifts, the wedding feast, and the priest's blessing of the marriage bed, is outstanding even in a room full of Brueghels. (Incidentally, it also provides a unique record of peasant marriage rituals of the time.) The sixth and last scene, entitled "Married Life", adds an ironic edge to the cycle: in it the wife is hastily shoving a man out of the window, while inside, it seems (as in Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*) a diversion has been contrived to conceal his exit.

The catalogue is full of magnificent reproductions, and contains an English translation of the six introductory essays. The audio guide, included in the ticket price, is a model of clarity. *Brueghel* has already been viewed by more than 300,000 people in various European locations. It is curated with admirable attention to detail by Sergio Gaddi and Andrea Wandschneider and with a thoughtful generosity towards the public that should set a standard for all future exhibitions.

All the sad young men

MIKA ROSS-SOUTHALL

Richard Greenberg

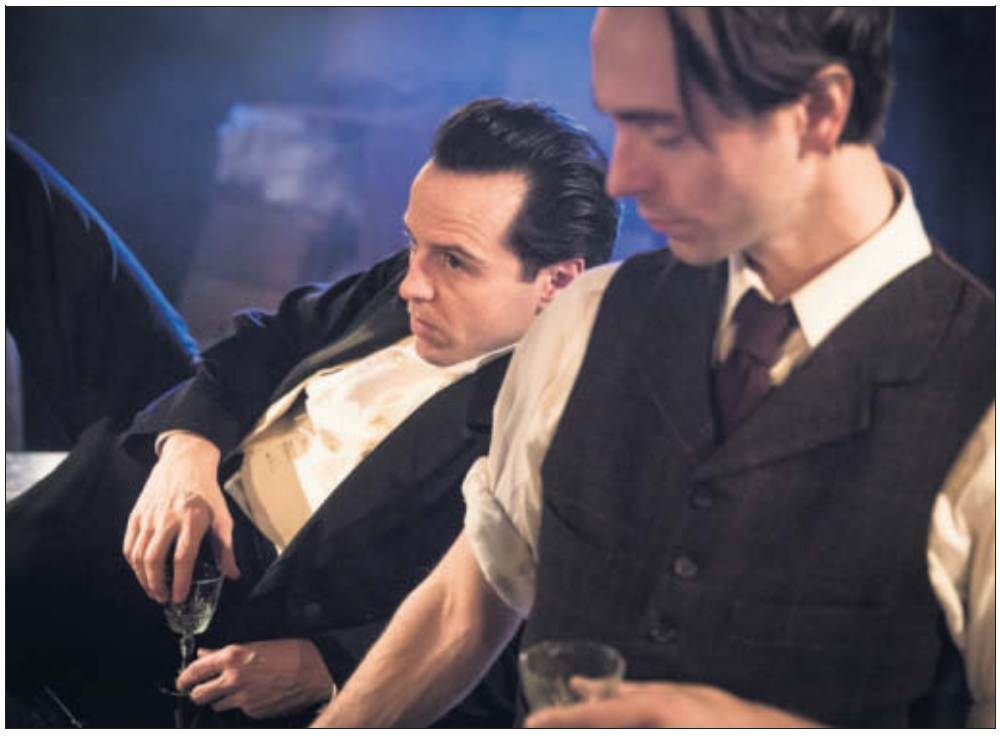
THE DAZZLE
Found 111, London, until January 30

When Homer and Langley Collyer were found dead in 1947, trapped underneath piles of worthless bric-a-brac and detritus in their New York brownstone, the American press called them "the hermit hoarders of Harlem". Not much is known about these reclusive brothers, but Richard Greenberg imagines a story for them in *The Dazzle*, which first appeared at the Gramercy Theater in 2002 and now has its premiere in the UK at Found 111, a makeshift space on the top floor of the former Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design on Charing Cross Road. This half-derelict building is appropriate; a setting enhanced by Ben Stones's expressive design of haphazard, tumbling junk – which amasses and gets dirtier as the play goes on – encircling a black grand piano and a faded chaise longue. (The audience's chairs are as individual as those we see on the small stage.)

In stride Homer (David Dawson) and Milly Ashmore (Joanna Vanderham) – an heiress, would-be bohemian, dressed to the nines in early twentieth-century finery; fur, silk and shimmering jewels – returning from Langley's piano recital. They are followed soon after by Langley (Andrew Scott), who berates himself for not quite holding on to his final note for long enough: "da da daaa should have been da da daaa", he repeats, four or five times, then sits at the piano to explain it further by playing the single note again and again (each note is the same). An eccentric, fastidious, tortured – and pandered to – artist, he is portrayed as on the autistic spectrum. "My brother makes an epic of a molecule", Homer says. And Langley admits that "I don't propose my character as an ideology, it's a condition". Homer is frustrated and resentful, having given up a career in admiralty law to become his younger brother's accountant. He washes him and cooks for him, too; later, we find out that their mother had told Homer when he was little, "you are for your brother". This symbiotic relationship is brilliantly carried off by Dawson and Scott, in particular through the rhythm of their often very funny toing and froing:

Langley: Did you cook?
Homer: Yes, I made stew.
Langley: Good, I'm hungry.
Homer: Good, there's plenty.
Langley: Good, I'm hungry.
Homer: Good, there's plenty.

These characters are meant to be flippant Bright Young Things; we do find ourselves, however, questioning how many of their idiosyncrasies are authentic. Langley, for example, struggles to find the right words (it is through music, not language, that he comprehends the world); yet he can also deliver quick-witted or barbed eloquence ("Books always seem to me like music explaining itself under duress"). The two don't sit well together. Nevertheless, Scott is hypnotic as Langley, achieving an intense, touching mania; and Dawson and Vanderham are equally enthralling.



Andrew Scott as Langley and David Dawson as Homer

Worrying that their finances are nose-diving – because Langley only sporadically keeps to his concert bookings – Homer sees marriage as the solution. Milly is besotted with Langley; he, in turn, thinks of her as "miasmic" ("she has nothing to say but she says it excessively . . . she very nearly bores me, Homer. Yes, I can imagine living with her"); and Homer describes her as "our smidgin of plot", "an enzyme". She is the means by which the brothers can continue to exist in their current state. In an intimate scene, Milly seduces Langley by peeling off her ball gown, fold by fold, dropping the material on the floor until she's naked. "You're such a f-f-f-f-fact", he stammers (Greenberg's script is richly mannered throughout). "Do you want to touch?" Milly asks. As Langley reaches for the dress, his brother jumps out from behind some rubbish: "Not the dress, Lang, the girl!" There is an acute sense of our own uncomfortable intrusion here. But what Homer is trying to do is control the action, like the storyteller for whom he is named ("what happened next will startle you", he says to himself at one point). This is hammered home when he begins to go blind towards the end of the play. Mirroring the scenery, the plot becomes overstuffed to the point of incredulity. When a disowned, destitute Milly re-enters the brothers' lives after an unspecified amount of time (punctuated every now and then by the sound of carol singers), Homer says, "What's happened to you?" "Everything", she replies, before telling us in detail, all of it predictable. It would have been far more affecting if she had not.