

FILM CLOCK THIS

Richard Curtis's time-travelling rom-com

Words David Gritten

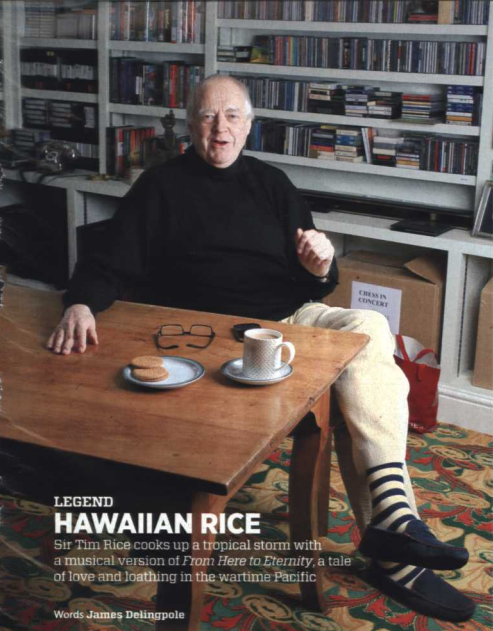
To say the new Richard Curtis film has a time-travel theme makes it sound a dramatic departure from the work we've come to expect of him. But, in truth, his supporters will find *About Time* reassuringly familiar.

It's a romantic comedy with a young, shy, diffident hero, Tim (Domhnall Gleeson), and the American object of his affection, Mary (Rachel McAdams, both below). They move into a flat - in London, which looks glorious. He has a sister who may be just eccentric or perhaps disturbed. There's a funeral. And a wedding.

So far, so Curtis. But Tim's father (Bill Nighy) tells him all the men in his family have a remarkable gift: they can go into a dark place, think of a bad or embarrassing moment in their past, and they're whisked back in time to relive and improve it. This device propels the whole story.

Nighy and Gleeson play father and son with touching affection. Subtle, deeply felt variations on a theme, then: Curtis fans will be delighted.

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LEGEND

HAWAIIAN RICE

Sir Tim Rice cooks up a tropical storm with a musical version of *From Here to Eternity*, a tale of love and loathing in the wartime Pacific

Words James Delingpole

If you think you've got a hit musical in you, there's one subject to avoid:

'Rasputin. All nine or so shows written about him have been terrible.' So says lyricist Sir Tim Rice - and he should know, after five decades carving triumphs out of board games (*Chess*), a dictator's wife (*Evita*) and a cartoon lion cub (*The Lion King*), not to mention the life of one *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

His latest, *From Here to Eternity*, is about brutality and lust at a military base in wartime Hawaii. ('It's not the music that counts most.

It's always the storyline, which is why *Mamma Mia!* works and *Spice Girls the Musical* doesn't, even though the songs are great in both.) But audiences expecting a recreation of the beach clinch between Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr may be disappointed. 'That scene was invented for the movie. James Jones' 1951 novel, to which

we've bought the rights, is slightly different, including gay undertones left out of the film.'

At 68, Sir Tim hadn't expected to be involved in another musical. His partnership with Andrew Lloyd Webber ended some 30 years ago and it's not as though he needs the money. But over the years he'd been sent various songs and musicals by a young Stuart Brayson (now his co-writer). Sir Tim felt *From Here to Eternity* was the first real winner.

Sir Tim's other great love is cricket. So can he imagine another life in which he ended up winning the Ashes for England? 'Well, first I'm not a very good cricketer,' he insists (others demur). 'And with cricket your triumph - when you take a wicket, say - is someone else's tragedy. Musicals are much nicer in that respect.' *Shaftesbury Theatre, London, from Sept 30, saga.co.uk/theatretickets, 020 7492 1560*