

GEORGE FARQUHAR

'It is surprising how much English Comedy owes to Irishmen'. Thoroughly Irish by birth and education, Captain George Farquhar (1677-1707) had delighted the town with a succession of bright, rattling comedies - *Love and a Bottle* (1698), *The Constant Couple* (1699), *Sir Harry Wildair* (1701), *The Inconstant* (1702), *The Twin Rivals* (1702), *The Recruiting Officer* (1706). In an unlucky moment, when hard-pressed by his debts, he sold out of the army on the strength of a promise by the Duke of Ormond to gain him some preferment, which never came. In his misery and poverty, with a wife and two helpless girls to support, Farquhar was not forsaken by his one true friend, Robert Wilks. Seeking out the dramatist in his wretched garret in St. Martin's Lane, the actor advised him no longer to trust to great men's promises but to look only to his pen for support, and urged him to write another play. 'Write!' said Farquhar, starting from his chair; 'Is it possible that a man can write with common-sense who is heartless and has not a shilling in his pockets?' 'Come, come, George,' said Wilks, 'banish melancholy, draw up your drama, and bring the sketch with you tomorrow, for I expect you to dine with me. But as an empty purse may cramp your genius, I desire you to accept my mite; here is twenty guineas.' Farquhar set to work, and brought the plot of his play to Wilks the next day; the latter approved the design, and urged him to proceed without delay. Mostly written in bed, the whole was begun, finished and acted within six weeks. The author designed to dedicate it to Lord Cadogan, but his Lordship, for reasons unknown, declined the honour; he gave the dramatist a handsome present, however. Thus was *The Beaux' Stratagem* written.

Farquhar is said to have felt the approaches of death ere he finished the second act. On the night of the first performance Wilks came to tell him of his great success, but mentioned that Mrs Oldfield wished that he could have thought of some more legitimate divorce in order to secure the honour of Mrs Sullen. 'Oh,' said Farquhar, 'I will, if she pleases, solve that immediately, by getting a real divorce; marrying her myself, and giving her my bond that she shall be a widow in less than a fortnight.' Subsequent events practically fulfilled this prediction, for Farquhar died during the run of the play: On Tuesday, 29th April, 1707, the plaudits of the audience resounding in his ears, the destitute, broken-hearted dramatist passed to that bourne where stratagems avail not any longer.
(from a Preface to the play by H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon)

MOTTISFONT ABBEY

Dating from the 12th century, the house was an Augustinian Priory until the Dissolution. Lord Sandys, the Lord Chancellor, was given it by Henry VIII in exchange for the villages of Chelsea and Paddington.

He pulled down the priory living quarters, making his home in the nave of the church - the buttressed wall of the nave forms the north front of the house. Major changes were made in the 18th century and rooms are still decorated in the style of that time.

One outstanding feature is the drawing room with a 'trompe d'oeil, Gothic fantasy painted on the ceiling, walls and curtain pelmets. The room was painted by Rex Whistler in 1938.



THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM

THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

The Maskers Theatre Company was formed in 1969 by a small group of enthusiastic amateur actors. Since then membership has swelled to over eighty and the company has become well-known for producing a wide variety of productions to a high standard.

This is the sixth open air production by the company at Mottisfont Abbey and the venue is a favourite with all the Maskers. Previous productions were : *A Man for all Seasons; Tom Jones; She Stoops to Conquer; Ring Round the Moon* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

The Maskers are based in Southampton and we are always pleased to welcome new members. We now have a new group within Maskers - the Maskers Youth Theatre. This is for members aged 15 - 25, who perform separate shows as well as taking part in the main company productions. Anyone interested in joining the company should ring our secretary, Betty Riggs, on Southampton 472619 or speak to any of the Maskers here.

The Maskers perform four or five major productions in each season. If you would like to be kept informed of future Maskers productions, please complete the enclosed slip and place it in the box provided in the Cellarium.



THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

presents

THE
BEAUX'
STRATAGEM

by George Farquhar

CAST (in order of appearance)

BONIFACE	KEN SPENCER
CHERRY	ANGELA STANSBRIDGE
THOMAS AIMWELL	MALCOLM BROWN
FRANCIS ARCHER	BILL McCANN
DORINDA	BELINDA DREW
MRS SULLEN	MOLLIE MANNS
SQUIRE SULLEN	ALBERT MINNS
SCRUB	DAVID BARTLETT
GIBBET	JOHN SOUTER
GIPSY	PHILIPPA TAYLOR
FOIGARD	HARRY TUFFILL
A COUNTRYWOMAN	JEAN DURMAN
LADY BOUNTIFUL	JOAN JOHNSON
HOUNSLOW	GRAHAM HILL
BAGSHOT	DEREK SEALY
SIR CHARLES FREEMAN	DAVID PIKE
TRAVELLERS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD	GEORGINA BANCE HAZEL BURROWS JANET CAIRNEY HOLLY DEACON ALICE WATSON ELLEN WATSON JENNY WATSON RICHARD TUFFILL ALAN WATSON

The Scene : At the 'Drunken Sailor' Inn and at Squire Sullen's house in Litchfield, at the turn of the Eighteenth Century.

The play will be presented in two acts, with an Interval of 30 minutes, during which the Cellarium will be open for drinks and other refreshments.

FOR THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

DIRECTOR	KEN SPENCER
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	PHILIPPA TAYLOR
STAGE MANAGER	ANGELA BARKS
LIGHTING DESIGN	CLIVE WEEKS
LIGHTING OPERATORS	LAWRIE GEE SCOTT CHAPMAN KEVIN SMITH
SOUND	ANGELA BARKS TONY LAWATHER JAN WARD
SET DESIGN	KEN SPENCER
SET CONSTRUCTION	DAVID ALLEN EDWIN BEECROFT TONY LAWATHER JOHN RIGGS RICHARD TUFFILL
PROPERTIES	ELLA LOCKETT GEORGINA BANCE RICHARD TUFFILL
WARDROBE	JANET CAIRNEY ROS LIDDIARD

The Maskers Theatre Company would like to extend their thanks to :

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