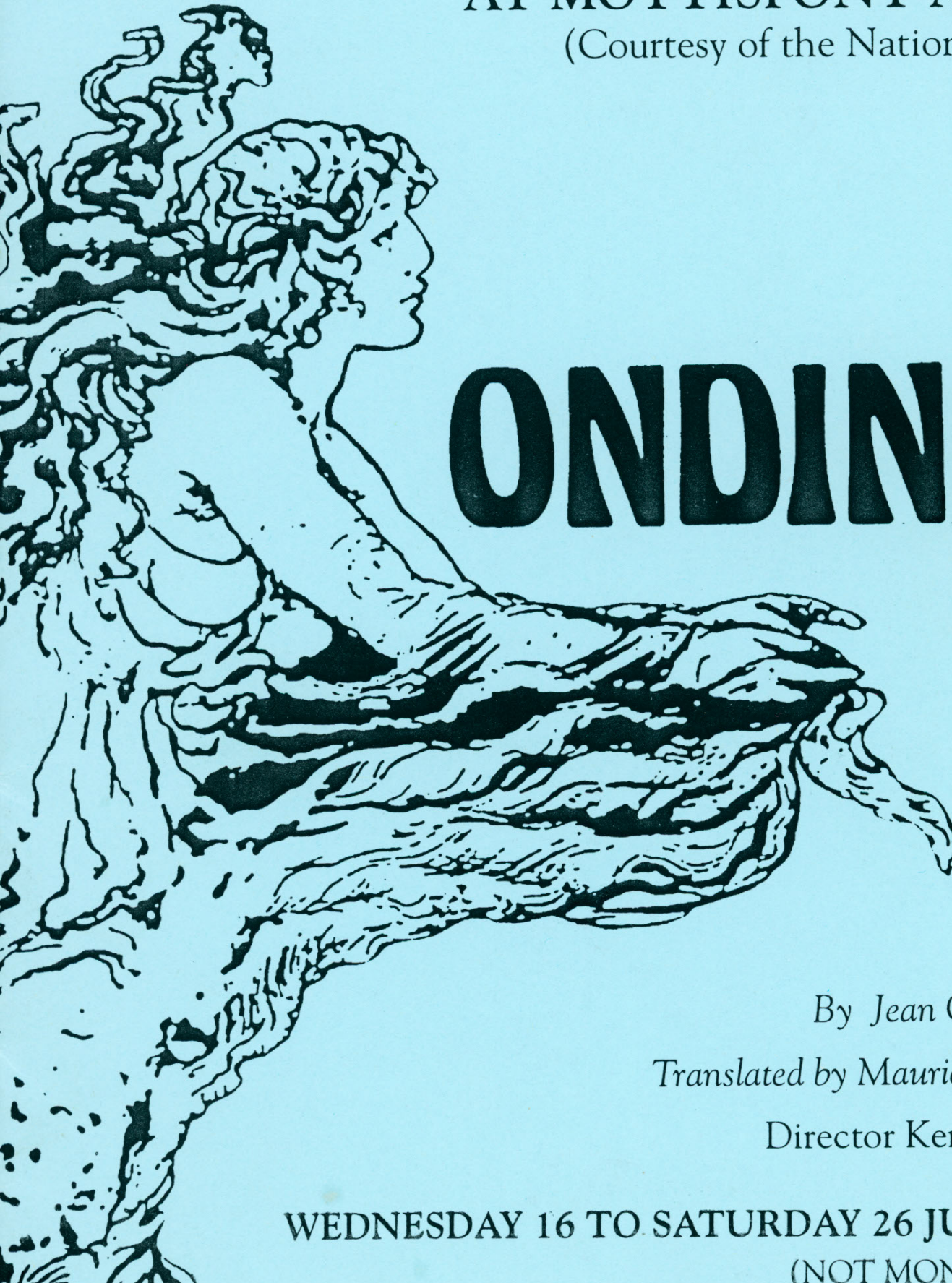


THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY

IN THE OPEN AIR

AT MOTTISFONT ABBEY

(Courtesy of the National Trust)



ONDINE

By Jean Giraudoux

Translated by Maurice Valency

Director Ken Spencer

WEDNESDAY 16 TO SATURDAY 26 JULY 1997

(NOT MONDAY 21ST)



Welcome to Mottistont Abbey! This production marks our 17th year of performing on the greensward at the Abbey and we trust that you, our audience, will enjoy this evening's look at Giraudoux' 'Ondine' as much as our past productions and that your memories of this performance will favourably match those of ~A Man for All Seasons', 'Tom Jones', 'She Stoops to Conquer', 'Ring Round the Moon', 'Cyrano de Bergerac', 'The Beaux' Stratagem', 'The Rover', 'Much Ado About Nothing', 'A Penny for a Song', 'The Recruiting Officer', 'The Canterbury Tales', 'Joseph Andrews', 'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and last year's 'The Three Musketeers'.

The setting of Mottisfont Abbey - or to be more precise, the Priory of Holy Trinity - was most carefully chosen by its founder, not presumably on account of its natural beauty, but because of its seclusion and practical advantages. The site was admirably suited to the needs of the Austin Canons who settled here. Not only had they chosen a gentle valley sheltered from what was then savage and bleak country, and plentifully supplied with water and fish but Mottisfont was also very near the main Norman road from Winchester to Salisbury, which crossed the Test just downstream at Kimbridge. Travellers on this pilgrim route could be expected to use the priory as a hostel and enrich it with gifts or the purchase of indulgences. Just South-west of the house is a spring rising into a deep pool where the Saxon freemen used to hold their village moots. The combination of the terms 'moot' and 'font' was long held to be the origin of the place name. The coincidence is now disputed, but although earlier versions of the name - Mortesfunda (xi c.),



Modesfunte (xiii c.), Motes Fountton (xiv c.), and even Mottson (xvi c.) - vary, a fairly consistent meaning seems to be retained throughout. Today the Abbey grounds present an aspect of immemorial beauty. The ancient house lies low on green lawns adorned with enormous plane, cedar, chestnut and beech trees.



The play 'Ondine' is based on the book 'Undine' by the German - Prussian writer Karl de la motte Fouqué and is set in an historically non-specific distant Romantic past - the golden days of chivalry and heroism.

'Undine' was first published in a quarterly journal in 1811 - its success was so immediate that it appeared in book form later that year. By the end of the century 26 editions had been published and translated into every major European language. 'Undine' caught the imagination of Victorian Britain; perhaps the tale's lilting idyll offered escape in a world of industrial and social gloom, or perhaps its vision of female nature was refreshing to those shocked or disturbed by feminism, emancipation or the 'woman question'. Whatever the reason, the book was immensely popular, aided no doubt by its appealing and innocuous eroticism.

An undine in folklore is a specific type of water sprite - unique in their ability to acquire a human form. Like all spirits they lack a human soul but can obtain one if they marry a mortal. However, if their spouse rejects them, on or near water, they lose their hard won soul. It is relevant that Ondine in her innocent natural state [whilst appealing] is shallow, capricious and uncompromising. But when she falls in love she is transformed into a sensitive, devoted and literally soulful woman. The tragic irony is that only the entirely human experience of betrayal reveals the extent of her goodness, whilst at the same time robbing her of the essential human attribute.

The influence of Fouqué's 'Undine' has been lasting - an opera by Hoffman in 1816 - libretto by Fouqué; Hans Christian Anderson used the theme for 'The Little Mermaid'; by Oscar Wilde in his collection of fairy tales. 1958 saw the ballet 'Ondine' by H.W. Henze, choreography by Ashton, conducted by Henze, with Fonteyn in the lead; and finally Giraudoux' play 'Ondine' which we present tonight.



Jean Giraudoux - born in 1882 in the city of Bellac in the department of Haute Vienne in central [southern] France, was the outstanding dramatist of that now 'hallowed' epoch between the two wars.

Shortly after the First World War, in which he was wounded in action, he began a career as a diplomat - a career he pursued for most of his life. Much of Giraudoux' work was written in the morning before he left to perform his governmental duties. From 1909 to the time of the production of his first play he had written nine volumes, consisting of novels, sketches and short stories and three other volumes of essays.

Giraudoux began writing plays in 1928 when he was forty-six and it was Louis Jouvet, the period's most celebrated actor-director, who urged him to turn dramatist. His first play was a signal success and he remained a dramatist for the rest of his days - a total of fifteen plays, two of which were produced posthumously. Giraudoux died on 31st January 1944 at the age of sixty-two. In Paris today a public school and a street bear his name.

'Ondine', for which rehearsals with Jouvet extended over six months, used every resource of imagination and technical skill. The play is said to have been one of Giraudoux' favourites....

[from an Introduction to Giraudoux - Harold Clurman]

ONDINE
The Company

The Old One.....	John Souter
Auguste.....	Liam Megisson
Eugenie.....	Jenni Watson
Hans.....	Alec Walters
Ondine.....	Lucia Latimer
The Ondines	Hazel Burrows
.....	Maria Head
.....	Malina McGirk
.....	Ellen Watson
Lord Chamberlain.....	Alan Watson
Superintendent of Theatre.....	Graham Buchanan
Trainer of Seals	David Pike
Matho.....	David Jupp
Salamambo.....	Julie Baker
Violante.....	Lisa Johnson
Bertram.....	Robbie Carnegie
Venus.....	Ceri Williams
Bertha.....	Sarah Lynn
King Hercules.....	Paul Baker
Queen Isolde.....	Marion Westbury
Servant.....	Christine Baker
Servant.....	Tony Bull
Fisherman.....	Bruce Atkinson
Clerk to the Judges.....	Steve Price
First Judge.....	David Craddock
Second Judge.....	Harry Tuffill
Grete.....	Brenda Atkinson

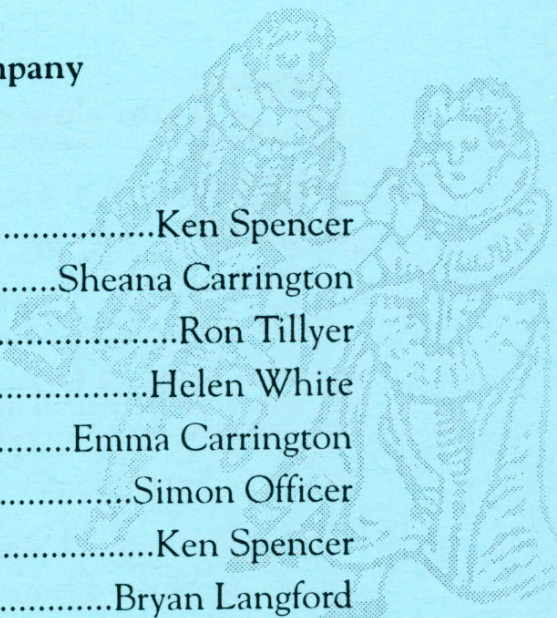
with

Deanna Hoyle, Valerie Wilson and Jeremy Minns

The play will be presented in three acts. The main interval of some 30 minutes will be taken after

Act 1, during which the refreshment facilities will be open. There will be a short interval between Acts II and III for technical reasons only. We would advise you to remain in your seats.

For the Maskers Theatre Company



Director	Ken Spencer
Gopher	Sheana Carrington
Technical Manager.....	Ron Tillyer
Stage Manager.....	Helen White
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Emma Carrington
.....	Simon Officer
Set Design	Ken Spencer
Set Construction.....	Bryan Langford
.....	Geoff Cook
.....	Douglas Shiell, Cameron Sheill
.....	Amy and Tom Langford
Lighting Design.....	Clive Weeks
Lighting Operators.....	Steve Price, Julia Campone
.....	and many more
Sound.....	Lawrie Gee
.....	Angela Barks
Waterman.....	Tom Stansbridge
Properties.....	Ella Lockett
.....	Irene Shiell
.....	Gill Buchanan
Wardrobe Mistress	Serena Brown
Wardrobe Hire	Royal Shakespeare Company
Ondine Costumes.....	Sarah Humphrey
Movement.....	Adrienne Bath
Musical Advisor.....	Michael Patterson
Front of House Manager.....	Geoff Cook
.....	with Mollie Manns & Martin Ingoe
Marketing & Publicity.....	Jan Ward
Programme production.....	Sandy White

The Maskers Theatre Company wish to extend their thanks to: Barry Futter and members of the National Trust staff at Mottisfont for their continued assistance and forbearance during the rehearsal period; to Paul Lewis and his Students at Southampton City College for their skills in the provision of the water transport and other properties, Underhill House Trophies, 517 Portswood Road, Southampton.



t the close of an era.....


On 30 June 1951 Louis Jouvet, collaborator, producer, director and actor in many of Giraudoux's plays, was on his way to Bellac where on the morrow was to take place the dedication of the monument erected to Giraudoux' memory by the citizens of his native town. Jouvet had already been called upon, as was fitting, to speak on the occasion of the unveiling of the plaque which marks the building on the Quai d'Orsay where Giraudoux died: now he had prepared a short programme of scenes from *Intermezzo*, *Electre*, *L'Apollon de Bellac* and *Ondine*, as part of the simple ceremony at Bellac on the 1 st July.

In the car in which he travelled down from Paris were other former members who had taken part in the creation of one or other of Giraudoux' plays who had wished to be associated with this last tribute to the author they had loved. As was natural, conversation was mostly about Giraudoux and about what he had meant to all those now preparing to honour his memory.

Next afternoon the players assembled in the little courtyard of the local school, where a small stage had been prepared. Never had Giraudoux' presence seemed closer, nor his absence more regrettable. The familiar words of *Intermezzo*, of *Electre*, were heard; last came the closing scene from *Ondine*, played on this occasion by Jouvet and Monique Melinand. No stage costumes were worn, and the ceremony derived its whole power from the simply-spoken words. As he had done on every occasion on which *Ondine* had been played since its creation in 1939, Hans drew his last breath as *Ondine's* moving appeal for help rang out. It was the last time Jouvet was to appear upon a stage. A few weeks later he had a sudden stroke immediately after a rehearsal and in spite of his desperate fight for life, he died in his own theatre on the evening of 1 6th August 1951 .

There is something singularly moving in this death of Jouvet in the very exercise of his profession, recalling as it does the death of Moliere. Moving too, in its simplicity and fitness is the fact that the last words he spoke to an audience were also the last words of the knight Hans in Ondine, the last play in which he had enjoyed from beginning to end the active collaboration of Giraudoux. With his death there came the end of a theatrical adventure unique in its nature and in its results: with him also disappeared the last of the great theatre personalities trained by Copeau. It was the close of an epoch in the French theatre.

[from: Jean Giraudoux - *The Making of a Dramatist* by Donald Inskip]

he Maskers Theatre Company was formed on 25 July 1968 with the coming together of just 12 actors, actresses and technicians, all of whom shared a 'professional' approach to their chosen hobby. The membership is now over a hundred and, some 250 productions [large and small] later, the Company maintains its well earned reputation as the leading, most active and successful in the area.

With the acquisition of our own home in Southampton in 1994 our activities, both theatrical and social, are ever-extending. Last year, in response to requests from regular patrons 'The Friends of the Maskers' came into being.

If you are interested in supporting the Company information and membership details may be discussed with our Front of House team, this very evening, or by telephoning our Membership Secretary, Mrs Betty Riggs, on 01703-472619.



uture Events at Mottistont Abbey:



All That Jazz at the Abbey - Friday 15 August.

An open air concert in the picturesque surroundings of this 12th century Augustinian priory. Featuring Laurie Chescoe's Goodtime Jazz with guest singer Pauline Pearce. Tickets £10. Call the Box Office on 01372-451596 or 457223 or further details.

Gospel Choir at the Abbey - Saturday 16 August 1997.

A night out with a difference traditional and contemporary gospel music with the London Community Gospel Choir. Tickets £10. Call the Box Office on 01372-4511596 or 457223 for further details.



The Maskers Theatre Company return to Mottisfont Abbey in December when they will be providing a suitably festive cabaret for the Special Christmas Dinners organised for the evenings of 5th, 12th and 19th December.

Full information and bookings from Mottistont Abbey on 01794-340757.



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- Sound & TV ◆
- Scenic Decoration ◆
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All enquiries to: Betty Riggs, Membership Secretary on 01703 472619