

**THE MASKERS
THEATRE COMPANY**

in
the open air
at

**MOTTISFONT ABBEY
ROMSEY HAMPSHIRE**
(courtesy of the National Trust)

Aristophanes'
bawdy comedy

LYSISTRATA

**Wednesday 19th July
to
Saturday 29th July
2000**

(except Monday 24th July)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ARISTOPHANES

The private life of this celebrated Athenian comic poet remains elusive. He was born c. 447 BC probably in Athens, although his status as an Athenian was questioned more than once during his lifetime. His comedy *Lysistrata* however makes it quite clear that he had a deep love for the city. Comic writing was considered to be a craft, and like other crafts, was handed down from father to son. Aristophanes' works are the earliest surviving representatives of the Old Comedy. His own son, Aratos, also became a successful comic poet.

Similarly, very little is known of Aristophanes the man, except that which can be gleaned from his own and other ancient writings. The Aristophanes who speaks in Plato's *Symposium*, although a fictional account probably written after Aristophanes' death, is quite possibly very close to the real man. Plato was certainly a close friend of Aristophanes. However, because of the difficulties of his language and the obscurity of his contemporary references, Aristophanes received little attention in England until the 19th Century.

In a career of some 40 years he had 40 plays produced of which, apart from fragmentary quotations, 11 are extant. Aristophanes was devoted to the comic theatre which, in 5th Century Athens, was a powerful means of communication of socio-political issues. His lifetime was one of extreme political turbulence and war.

With joyful accuracy, Aristophanes attacked anyone and anything. Humour is directed not at the system, but principally at the individual operating the system - the gods, politicians, intellectuals, artists, generals and officials. Real Athenians, particularly leading men of the day, were simply yet vividly parodied and found themselves insulted, ridiculed and vilified along with the everyday Athenian. On a framework of bold imaginative devices, bawdiness, fantasy and plain-spoken characters, the Aristophanic style ranges from the irreverent to the parodic, to the hauntingly lyrical.

Aristophanes died in 380 BC.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Lysistrata was produced in 411 BC. Athens was in a perilous situation: a messy and confusing war between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies was taking all her resources. Early defeat was a very real possibility. Peace could only come either by Athenian surrender [which was unthinkable] or by a miracle from the world of fantasy - the world in which Aristophanes' comedy dwells.

In *Lysistrata* the miracle is made to take place by the women of Greece uniting to force their male governed communities to bury the hatchet and resume the old friendship in which Athens and Sparta had come to each other's aid in time of need.

The play is built around two separate schemes devised by *Lysistrata*, and put into effect by different groups of women under her direction, to force male Greece to end the war. The first is the boycotting of sexual relations. This campaign is prosecuted by the young married women of Athens and Sparta. Its prime visible symbol is the erect phallus, which is little used in Aristophanes' other plays, but which in *Lysistrata* is worn by every male who comes on the scene, except the Old Men of the Chorus.

Once the sexual strike has been proposed, accepted and sworn to, there is no further explicit reference to it until the second half of the play. Until then, the action centres on the other scheme: the seizure of the Athenian women of the Acropolis with the object of denying Athens the resources to fight on. It is carried out by the Old Women who cannot take part in the strike since their days of sexual activity are assumed to be over. *Lysistrata* is in charge of both schemes and the Acropolis is the headquarters of both.

In Athens, the legendary combat of Greek heroes and Amazons held first place in popularity.... the motive of the rebellion of the Amazons was the most prominent expression of men's fear of women. Many other myths - as well as drama, the law, and the practices of everyday life - document the same view of women as caged tigers waiting for a chance to break out of their confinement and take revenge on the male world.

The play ends with the successive resolution of both themes, the admission of the men to the Acropolis, not to take out money to be used for war purposes, but to share in a feast of reconciliation, cutting across both political and gender boundaries - being followed by the formal re-pairing of husbands and wives.

[Extracts taken from An Introduction by Alan Sommerstein, from the edition of *Lysistrata* published by Aris and Phillips, and from *The Reign of the Phallus* by Eva C. Keuls].

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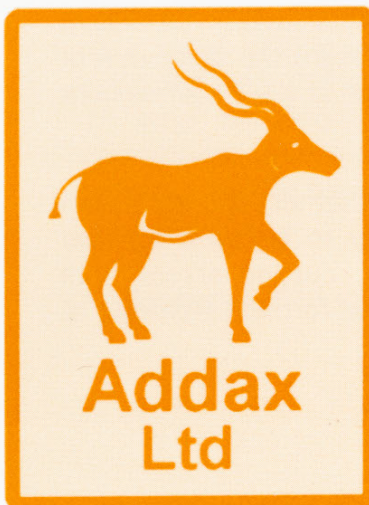
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LYSISTRATA

THE CAST

Lysistrata.....	Belinda Drew
Calonike	Sarah Lynn
Lampito.....	Maria Head
Myrrhine	Amelia Morse
Commissioner.....	David Jupp
Kinesias	Jim Crane
Spartan Herald.....	Alec Walters
Athenian Women.....	Meri Mackney Jhassi Eliot Jennifer Webb Kate Ward Claire Carter
Women's Chorus	Brenda Atkinson Chris Baker Julie Baker Julia Jupp Avril Woodward
Men's Chorus.....	John Carrington KenHann Paul Baker Bruce Atkinson Ron Randall
Spartans Ambassadors.....	Ken Spencer Nial McAuliffe
Zeus.....	Pete Neve

The play will be performed in Two Acts. There will be an interval of 30 minutes at the end of Act One when the cellarium will be open for the sale of wine and soft drinks

LYSISTRATA

PRODUCTION CREW

Director	Graham Buchanan
Co-director.....	Ken Hann
Stage Manager	Helen White
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Emma Carrington
Set Construction	Bryan Langford Douglas Shiell Cameron Shiell
Lighting	Clive Weeks Nathan Weeks Barrie Wells
Sound	Jim Crane Lawrie Gee
Wardrobe	Gill Buchanan Kay Hann Sarah Humphrey
Costume Hire	Costume Workshop, Sandown Bradfield College, Pangbourne
Properties.....	Ella Lockett Gill Buchanan Irene Shiell Kay Hann
Voice Coach.....	Jim Officer
Front of House Manager.....	Ken Spencer
Front of House Staff Manager	Julia Jupp
Box Office Manager	Sheana Carrington
Publicity/Marketing	Jan Ward
Programme Production.....	Sandy White

Many thanks to Barry Futter & The National Trust

The Nuffield Theatre Christmas Family Show



Treasure Island!

*by Robert Louis Stevenson
Adapted by Patrick Sandford*

Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum!



30th November 2000 to 13th January 2001

Tickets 023 8067 1771



Supported By



THE NATIONAL TRUST



The Maskers Theatre Company return to Mottisfont on the **8, 15 and 22 December** to provide the yuletide entertainment between the four courses of the Abbey's delicious Christmas Supper taken in one of the private dining rooms.

Tickets at £45.00 per person must be pre-booked by telephoning 01794 340757.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?

The Maskers is always pleased to welcome new members. If you would like to join The Maskers Theatre Company as an active member, please contact Betty Riggs, our Membership Secretary, who will be pleased to hear from you!



Alternatively you may join the Friends of the Maskers. As a Friend you will receive a monthly newsletter with advance notice of all our productions, and other events at the Maskers Theatre Workshop.

If you are interested in joining us as a full Member or as Friend please contact Betty Riggs on **023 80472619**.

FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

"A Play in a Day"... Your support is invited either as a performer from 10.00 am or as a member of the audience in the evening at the Maskers Theatre Workshop on Sunday, **10th September**. Supper will be served.

"A Doll's House" at The Maskers Theatre Workshop. A rehearsed costumed play reading with supper on **29 and 30 September**. Henrik Ibsen's tragic story of Nora, beautiful, fragile wife of Torvald Helmer, who having secretly borrowed money by forgery, faces the threat of blackmail....

"Insignificance" by Terry Johnson... At The Maskers Theatre Workshop from **22-25 November**. New York 1953 - on a hot summer's night, four of America's famous legends - a beautiful film star, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, a renowned baseball player and an infamous senator - meet for an extraordinary confrontation....

"Arsenic and Old Lace" by Joseph Kesselring at The Nuffield Theatre, Southampton, **16-20 January 2001**. A timeless comedy hit on Broadway, in the West End and extremely popular in theatres worldwide. Two charming and innocent elderly ladies and their persistent provision of poisonous elderberry wine, promises an evening of unlimited laughter in that 'just after Christmas' period. Don't miss it!

"Amy's View" at The Plaza, Romsey during the week commencing **25 February 2001**. The first amateur production of David Hare's masterpiece which mixes love, death and the theatre in a heady and original way. In 1979 Esme Allen, a well-known West End actress, is visited by her daughter Amy with a new boyfriend, and sets in train a series of events which only find their shape sixteen years later.

"The Herbal Bed" by Peter Whelan at The Maskers Theatre Workshop. A rehearsed, costumed play reading with supper on **11-12 May**. This emotional thriller is based on actual events which occurred in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613 when Shakespeare's eldest daughter Susanna was publicly accused of having a sexual liaison with Rafe Smith, a married neighbour and family friend - their private lives are held up to the glare of public scrutiny.

ON TOUR - The Maskers will be out and about in the region during the **April/May 2001** period in a new production of topical and local interest.

"The Hypochondriac" by Molière. This classic comedy will be presented in the open air at Mottisfont Abbey from **18-28 July 2001**.

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at Southampton University

(not just the ticket office for LYSISTRATA)

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