

**THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY**



Based on the novel by **ALEXANDRE DUMAS**  
and adapted by **ALISON MUNRO**

# THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

Directed By **BRIAN STANSBRIDGE**

in the open air at

## MOTTISFONT ABBEY

Courtesy of The National Trust

**Wednesday 13 July - Saturday 23 July 2005**

except Monday 18 July

Grounds open at 6.30pm Performances start 7.30pm

# THE MASKERS AT MOTTISFONT

**Welcome to Mottisfont and the return of The Maskers Theatre.**

This year's production *The Man in the Iron Mask* is our 23rd production in the beautiful grounds of Mottisfont Abbey. In 1996 we brought you *The Three Musketeers* - which delighted our audiences with its wit and fast swashbuckling action... so we return with more of the same. We hope you will enjoy Alison Munro's adaptation with its colourful characters and the musketeers who throw themselves into every fight regardless of the suicidal odds!

Mottisfont Abbey is set along the River Test amidst some of Hampshire's most glorious countryside. Originally a 12th century Augustinian priory the building was converted into a private house after the Dissolution and has been adapted over the centuries by a series of owners. The grounds still retain the spring or 'font' from which the name is derived. The abbey contains a drawing room decorated by Rex Whistler and Derek Hill's 20th century picture collection. Mottisfont has beautiful grounds with magnificent trees (the Great Plane is thought to be the largest one of its kind in the country), sweeping lawns down to the river and walled gardens which house the National Collection of old-fashioned roses, making it a perfect place to visit all year round.

The National Trust at Mottisfont offer their facilities for corporate functions and entertainments as well as weddings and other private parties; see [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

We hope you enjoy your evening and we thank you for your continued support.



## THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK..... RAMBLINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Maskers first flirtation with Alexandre Dumas' wonderful, outrageous, swashbuckling characters was in 1996, when Fran Morley directed the Three Musketeers. Ever since then I have often toyed with the idea of presenting our Mottisfont audience with another musketeers' story and now we are. The links with the earlier production should probably be briefly made. Fran's husband Ian, plays Aramis in this production, I played Aramis in the earlier show and Johnny Carrington was cast as D'Artagnan in both. How's that for continuity!

When I set about finding a dramatisation of Dumas' novel I approached my PC, fingers poised and tapped in a 'Google search' and immediately struck gold - apparently. I found a play called The Man in The Iron Mask by Alexandre Dumas, Narcisse Fournier, and Auguste Arnould. I proceeded to download an electronic copy of the script for \$4.50 (a bargain) and set about reading it. About twelve pages in I began to suspect that something was wrong. When would D'Artagnan make his appearance or indeed Athos, Porthos or the Bishop of Varennes (Aramis)? They never did. What is more, the play ended with the tragic death of the prisoner and there were virtually no sword fights. No use at all for Mottisfont. A little more investigation and I discovered that Fournier and Arnould had written the play with no involvement from Dumas, but persuaded him to lend his more famous name to boost the chances of success.

Returning to the internet, I found the website of another theatre group, 'The Company', in Sheffield, who had performed the piece in 1999. I e-mailed them and was put in touch with Alison Monro, who had adapted Dumas story. She sent me the script and we were off.

### **Here are Alison's own words on the script:-**

'Readers of Dumas will soon realise that the title of the play is the same as his book. Some of the characters have the same names. The basic idea is the same. That's about it, though. Dumas killed Constance off at the end of The Three Musketeers and had D'Artagnan embark on an affair with Queen Anne. In this play, Constance is alive and well and as lethally clumsy as ever. There is a criminal shortage of good parts for women in period drama, and I was not about to pass up on Constance over a mere trifle such as her death in a previous episode. If it bothers you, imagine that Milady only strangled her to the point of unconsciousness, all right? Students of 17th century French history will discover an equal discrepancy between my script and real life. In the latter, Louise de la Vallière was the devoted mistress of Louis XIV and the true love of his life, and the Edict of Nantes was not revoked until 1685. As a history teacher I really ought to know better, but I have never allowed facts to get in the way of a good story.'

I am with Alison all the way and I hope you enjoy this irreverent romp.

**Brian Stansbridge**



# THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK - THE LEGEND

It is probably fair to say that the 'man in the iron mask' dominated the attentions of the conspiracy theorists in 18th century France and aroused strong interest throughout Europe. It is probably true that a mysterious prisoner was held in various prisons, including the Isle Sainte Marguerite and the Bastille, between 1669 and 1703. Lieutenant Etienne du Junca, an official of the Bastille, certainly recorded the death, on 19th November 1703, of a prisoner who had worn a mask since his arrival. Du Junca says it was a velvet mask, but Voltaire, writing in 1751, said it was riveted on, and described in detail a "movable, hinged lower jaw held in place by springs that made it possible to eat wearing it."

It is said that there were always two guards nearby ready to shoot him if he ever removed the mask, but that he was treated with extreme courtesy by his jailors. Some reports suggest that the governor and jailors removed their hats in his presence and remained standing until he invited them to sit - all of which implies royalty. Others challenge the suggestion of deferential treatment.

When the Bastille was stormed in 1789, reports were circulated that the invaders had found the skeleton of a man, with an iron mask riveted around his head, chained to walls in one of the dank, hidden lower prisons. But this was probably a pure 'public relations' scam on the part of the revolutionaries.

In 1855, an iron mask was put on public display as the "identical mask which the famous prisoner in the Bastille had worn during his incarceration." People paid to see this marvellous (but probably faked) novelty.

The identity of this tragic figure may never be known for sure, but speculators and investigators have suggested:-

**King Louis XIV's twin brother** who, as in Dumas' story, would have represented a threat to Louis and to the stability of France and who, at his mother's instigation, was brought up in secrecy and ignorant of his identity.

**King Louis XIV's half brother** by the Duke of Buckingham

**Moliere**, whose death was faked by the Catholic hierarchy, who were incensed by his play 'Tartuffe', a stinging satire on bigotry and religious hypocrisy. (But why fake his death and imprison him? Perhaps imprisonment in an iron mask was a more horrific punishment)

**The Duke de Beaufort**, allegedly the real father of Louis XIV, said to have been killed in a battle against the Turks at Candia, but his body was never recovered. The story claims he was either imprisoned as punishment for various naval and military calamities or for political intrigues. Other accounts say his body was actually mutilated by the Turks and put on public display.



**Louis de Bourbon**, Louis XIV's son by Louise de Valliere

**The illegitimate daughter of Anne of Austria**

**The Duke of Monmouth**, the illegitimate son of Charles II of England, who rebelled against his father's authority and stood as an alternative, protestant heir to the throne. The legend says Charles faked his son's execution (using a willing substitute!) and had him imprisoned in France.

**Henry, the second son of Oliver Cromwell** who, it was claimed, was held hostage by Louis XIV. Dumas himself wrote that 'by an odd coincidence the second son of the Lord Protector does entirely disappear from the page of history in 1659; we know nothing of where he afterwards lived nor when he died'. All this is tosh! Henry was a Lord-Deputy of Ireland where he governed moderately and with unusual sensitivity to the welfare of the Irish people until 1659. He was treated generously at the restoration of Charles II and retired to Spinney Abbey, Cambridgeshire where he died in 1674.

**Nabo, a 'negro dwarf'** who allegedly had an affair with Queen Maria-Theresa.

**Eustache d'Auger** who had either been a valet to a famous conspirator against the King or a member of the Queen Mother's entourage. Either way, he knew something which could not be divulged (If so, why not just kill him?)

**Matthioli**, an unscrupulous politician from Mantua, in Italy, who was involved in negotiations between the Duke of Mantua and the Republic of Venice, using France as an intermediary. He double-crossed everyone in sight, and "caused disturbances in at least five countries, which nearly led to general war," This put the King of France in a very awkward position.

There are many, many other ideas, often no less preposterous than some of the above.

Whilst we would prefer to be able to say that the 'royal twin' is the most likely answer to the puzzle, some authorities have concluded that d'Auger and Matthioli are the most likely candidates. We'll probably never know.



# CAST

PLANCHET  
MME PLANCHET  
KING LOUIS/PHILIPPE  
ANNE (QUEEN MOTHER)  
QUEEN MARIA  
CONSTANCE  
D'ARTAGNAN  
PORTHOS  
ATHOS  
ARAMIS  
LOUISE DE LA VALLIERE  
COLBERT  
REYNARD  
PERCERIN  
LEBRUN  
ASSISTANT TAILORS

FLUNKY  
FOOTMAN  
MAIDS

GUARDS

JAILER  
HOUSEKEEPER  
TUTOR  
ARLETTE  
TAVERN GUESTS and  
BALL GUESTS

TAVERN BOY

**Ken Hann**  
**Hazel Burrows**  
**Matt Avery**  
**Avril Woodward**  
**Sarah Russell**  
**Sarah Roach**  
**Johnny Carrington**  
**John Souter**  
**Albie Minns**  
**Ian Morley**  
**Rachael Courage**  
**Harry Tuffill**  
**Rob Praine**  
**Paul Baker**  
**Richard Hackett**  
**Joanna Iacovou**  
**Alex Austin**  
**Bruce Atkinson**  
**Johnny Hearn**  
**Chris Baker**  
**Meri Mackney**  
**Angie Stansbridge**  
**Andy Dennis**  
**Adam Dyche**  
**Johnny Hearn**  
**Andrea Joyeusaz**  
**Phil Nottingham**  
**Adam Taussik**  
**Andrea Joyeusaz**  
**Lyn Austin**  
**Tony Austin**  
**Hannah Price**  
**Joanna Iacovou**  
**Lyn Austin**  
**Tony Austin**  
**Alex Austin**  
**Daniel Mackney**  
**Anna Carrington**



# PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR  
PRODUCTION MANAGER  
STAGE MANAGER  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR  
SET DESIGN  
WARDROBE

SET CONSTRUCTION

LIGHTING  
SOUND RECORDING  
ORIGINAL MUSIC  
FIGHT ARRANGER  
PROPERTIES  
KING'S PORTRAIT  
IRON MASK  
BALL MASKS  
FIREARMS  
SPECIAL EFFECTS  
STAGING  
WIGS  
BACKSTAGE

PUBLICITY DESIGN  
PROGRAMME  
MARKETING/PUBLICITY  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
SIGNAGE  
FRONT OF HOUSE  
BOX OFFICE

**Brian Stansbridge**  
**Chris Baker**  
**Angie Barks**  
**Tony Lawther**  
**Peter Liddiard**  
**Serena Brown**

assisted by **Kay Hann, Nina Jensen,**  
**Ros Liddiard, Fran Morley**  
**Peter Liddiard, Roger Lockett**  
**Graham Buchanan, David Jupp**  
**Clive Weeks and Nathan Weeks**  
**Geoff Grandy, Lawrie Gee, Steve Moulster**  
**Chris Hann**

**Paul Benzing**  
**Ella Lockett, Gill Buchanan, Alison Tebbutt**

**Olivia Keith**

**Fiona Bartlett**

**Sarah Russell and Jackie Foyle**

**John Hamon**

**Phil Moody**

**PRESTECH**

**Showbiz, Southampton**

**Nick Browne, Ralph Bateman,**

**Adrian Davis, David Fancett, Colin Maltby,**

**Ronnie Maddams, Mark Scoble, Anne Waggot**

**John Hamon**

**Brian & Angie Stansbridge**

**Angie Stansbridge & team**

**Clive Weeks**

**Ken Spencer**

**Julia Jupp, Pam & Geoff Cook and teams**

**Turner Sims Concert Hall, National Trust**

**supported by Emma Carrington, Sheana**

**Carrington, Pam Cook, Jan Ward and**

**teams at Mottisfont**

THE MASKERS WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE SPECIAL THANKS TO:-

**St Edwards School for rehearsal space**

**Manor Farm, Botley for props**

**Volumes Bookshop, Romsey for publicity**

**The Romsey Festival**

**Mark Bratcher from Cedar**



# ALEXANDRE DUMAS

## THE MAN AND HIS MANY MASKS

**Alexandre Dumas, author, traveller, voluptuary, swordsman, octoroon, flashy spendthrift, bon viveur, revolutionary activist, and famous father of a famous son (they shared a sequence of legendary mistresses), was born near Paris in 1802, his mother an innkeeper's daughter, his father, one of Napoleon's most insubordinate generals.**



Tumultuous success as a romantic playwright was followed in the 1840s by a series of historical romances, written with the sweat of research assistants in his 'novel factory', including *The Three Musketeers* (1844), *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845) and *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1848). They earned Dumas critical contempt but enormous popular fame for their fertile invention and brilliant depiction of times past - mostly invented by Dumas himself. 'History,' he declared, 'is just a nail on which I hang my novels.' After the 1848 Revolution, Dumas found himself in debt, fled to Belgium, then England, Russia, Greece and Italy, where Garibaldi placed him in charge of excavations at Pompeii. In his sixties, he became the lover of Adah Menken, an American actress famed for appearing almost naked on a wild horse in Mazeppa. He wrote cookery books and children's stories, and after many years of making and losing several fortunes, died in the arms of his son in 1870. His collected works run to 227 volumes.

**Jim Smith**





# THE REAL LIFE CHARACTERS

## **Louis XIV - 'The Sun King'**

Louis XIV was born in 1638 and succeeded his father Louis XIII, when he was only four. Anne of Austria ruled on his behalf until 1651. He ruled from 1643 to 1715 (the longest reign in modern European history). He was styled the Grand Monarch, and his brilliant court at Versailles became a model and the despair of other less rich and powerful princes. Until 1661, government was largely in the hands of the wily Cardinal Mazarin. On his death Louis declared that he would be his own Prime Minister ('L'Etat, c'est moi').

Louis fought many major wars with the aim of making himself supreme in Europe. A passion for fame and a desire to increase French territory in Europe were the leading motives of Louis XIV. He ruined the country financially and paved the way for the outbreak of the French Revolution. After 1685, Louis' reign was less glorious than in earlier years. Colbert died in 1683 and nobody else was able to prevent the King from fighting wars and plunging the country into debt. Louis built a magnificent palace at Versailles, where he and his court lived in luxury. King Louis XIV died in 1715 and he was succeeded by Louis XV, his great-grandson.

## **Colbert**

Jean-Baptiste Colbert was born in a merchant's family on August 29, 1619. He served as controller and general minister of finance in 1665 and secretary of state for the navy from 1668 under King Louis XIV. He carried out the program of economic reconstruction that helped make France the dominant power in Europe. He pursued the development of France's colonies, including settlements in Canada and is credited with developing huge trading links to the benefit of the mother country. He died in September 1683.

## **Louise de la Valiere**

Louise de la Baume le Blanc (later de la Valiere) was born in 1644 and by a circuitous route joined Louis' court at Fontainebleau in 1661. She had been only two months in Fontainebleau when she became the king's mistress. The affair quickly developed into real passion on both sides. Their relationship was diligently concealed at first, but that was practically abandoned later. On Anne of Austria's death in January 1666, she appeared at mass side by side with Maria Theresa, Louis' wife. But her favor was already waning.

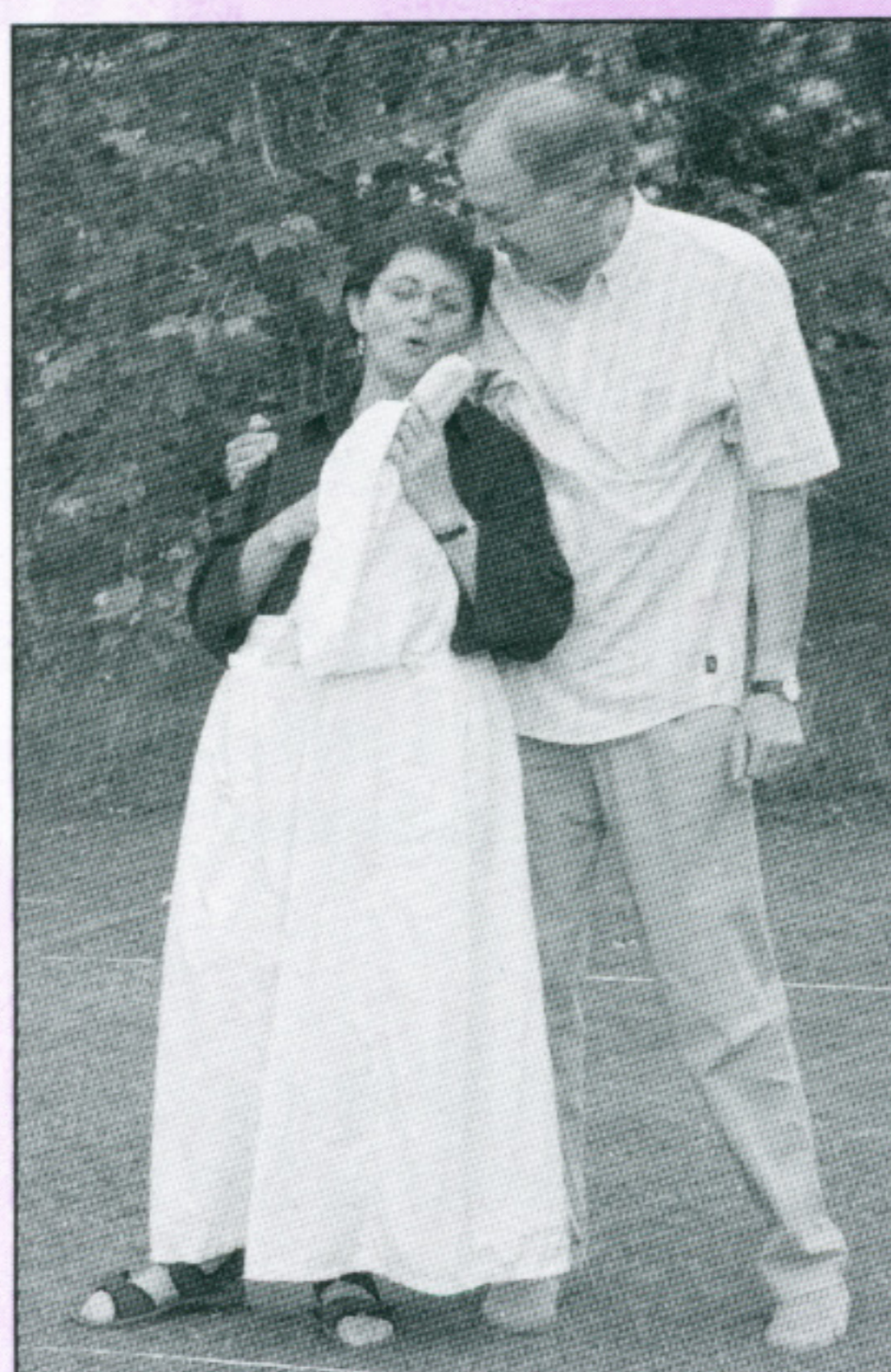
She had several children by Louis and a girl born in 1666, was publicly recognized by Louis as his daughter. Louise's place in Louis's affections was usurped by Madame de Montespan. She was compelled to remain at court as the king's official mistress, and even to share Mme de Montespan's apartments. She made an attempt at escape in 1671, fleeing to a convent, only to be compelled to return. In 1674 she was finally permitted to enter a Carmelite convent. She died in 1710 in Paris

## **D'Artagnan**

Charles de Batz-Castelmore, who later took the family name of D'Artagnan was born in 1620. He really was a valiant and accomplished soldier who attained the post of Capitaine Lieutenant of the Musketeers. He also carried out acts of espionage. He was killed in battle at the siege of Maastricht, on June 25, 1673, hit in the throat by a musket ball.



## THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK IN REHEARSAL



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?

The Maskers Theatre Company was founded in 1968. Several hundred productions (large and small) later, we are firmly established as one of the South's leading Amateur groups. We are always pleased to welcome new members. Alternatively you may join the Friends of the Maskers in order that you can be kept up to date with advance notice of all our productions.

**If you are interested in joining us as a full member or as a Friend, please contact our Membership Officer, Julia Jupp on 023 8044 6600 or see our website: [www.maskers.org.uk](http://www.maskers.org.uk) for further information.**



# FORTHCOMING MASKERS PRODUCTIONS

## **Tons of Money**

by ALAN AYCKBOURN

23rd - 29th October at the Maskers Studio Box office: 023 8055 1489

## **Christmas at the Tudor Merchants Hall, Southampton**

11th - 17th December Box Office: 023 8055 1489

## **Christmas Cabaret Dinners at Mottisfont Abbey**

Saturday 10th, Thursday 15th and Friday 16th December 2005

Booking: 01494 755572

## **When we are Married**

by J P PRIESTLY

22nd - 28th January 2006 - Nuffield Theatre, Southampton

Box Office: 023 80 671771

## **NEXT YEAR AT MOTTISFONT:**

### **The Wind in the Willows**

adapted by ALAN BENNETT Box Office: 023 8059 5151

### **The Gentle Hook**

by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE March 2006 at The Maskers Studio

### **The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds**

by PAUL ZINDEL May 2006 at The Maskers Studio

[WWW.MASKERS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.MASKERS.ORG.UK)

If you would like to receive details of Maskers productions you can leave your details on our website at: [www.maskers.org.uk](http://www.maskers.org.uk) or fill in the slip below and hand to any of our Front of House Staff or post to Maskers Theatre, Unit 1 Emsworth Industrial Units, Emsworth Road, Shirley, Southampton S015 3LX

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... e-mail: .....

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU





**'ALL FOR ONE  
AND ONE FOR ALL'**