

THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE

by Frank Marcus



THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

THE KIU



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First Performance September 9th, 1978

Frank Marcus was born in Germany in 1928 and came to England as a child just before the war. He studied at St. Martin's School of Art and then formed an experimental company, the International Theatre Group, for which he acted, directed and designed.

His first play was written in 1950, but his first West End success came in 1964 with *The Formation Dancers*. This was followed in 1965 with *The Killing of Sister George*, which was first performed at the Bristol Old Vic on April 20, 1965, with Eileen Atkins and Beryl Reid in the two main parts. The production transferred to the Duke of York's Theatre on June 17, 1965 and later to the St. Martin's. In 1966, Andree Melly and Hermione Baddeley took over the parts of Childie and Sister George. The play won the Evening Standard best play of the year award for 1965.

Marcus was at the time running an antique silver shop, but in 1966 he turned Drama Critic; at first with The London Magazine and Plays and Players, but in 1968 with the Sunday Telegraph. Later West End productions have included *Mrs Mouse, Are You Within?* and *Notes on a Love Affair*

Frank Marcus is a close friend of Marcel Marceau, for whom he provided the idea for the Mimodrame *Les Trois Perruques*.

This production will also be presented at the Marlow Court Theatre on September 22nd and 23rd, 1978 as part of the Wooburn Festival.

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LING OF SISTER C

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Cast in order of appearance:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| June Buckridge (<i>Sister George</i>) | RUTH LISTER |
| Alice McNaught (<i>Childie</i>) | DOROTHY BOYD TAYLOR |
| Mrs Mercy Croft | FRANCES MARTIN |
| Madame Xenia | BETTY OGDEN |

Directed by
EDWARD PITT

Designed by
JOHN BUSH

Assisted by
ANGELA SAXTON and ERIC SAMPSON

Musical arrangements by DON KINCAID

The action takes place in the living room of a London West End flat.

ACT 1

A Tuesday afternoon in late September

ACT 2

Scene 1 — A week later, 4 a.m.

Scene 2 — Late afternoon of the same day

ACT 3

Two weeks later, morning

| |
|---|
| THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES BETWEEN SCENES 1 and 2 of ACT 2 |
|---|

GEORGE

Stage Manager SUE KENDRICK

Deputy Stage Manager GEOFFREY BARKER

Lighting DAVID EMMET

Lighting Operator PHILIPPA FORSTER

Sound MALCOLM ROBERTSON &
IAN HOWLETT

Assisted by PETER BROWNE

Construction JOE BIRCH

Assisted by ROBERT CHARLES
ALEX CHARLES
JOHN ROCHE
DAVID HARRIS

Wardrobe BETH CROWLEY

Assisted by MEMBERS OF THE QUESTORS WARDROBE
DEPARTMENT

Properties JOAN CURRY & IRIS PHELPS

Assistant Stage Managers PENNY McNAMARA
NINA ROBINSON
SOO STANLEY
ROBERT CHARLES

Champagne by courtesy of Moët & Chandon

Cigars by Gallaher

DISCUSSION DISCUSSION DISCUSSION

Have you found Frank Marcus' play interesting? Have you enjoyed the performance, or have you had reservations about it?

Come and tell us at the Open Discussion to be held on

**TUESDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER at 7.45p.m.
in the BERNARD SHAW ROOM**

The Discussion will be led by three experienced members of The Questors—actresses Carla Field and Jillyann Healy, and James Chinn.

It is hardly to be expected that three different people will find themselves in agreement. Alfred Emmet, in the chair, will keep the pot stirred and a lively and wide-ranging discussion may be expected in which we hope many will join.

**ALL ARE INVITED,
WHETHER TO DISCUSS OR JUST TO LISTEN
TUESDAY, 19th SEPTEMBER**

From J.C. Trewin's introduction to *The Killing of Sister George* in 'Plays of the Year 31':—

Miss Buckridge is the renowned Sister George, the district nurse who scorches on a moped through the lanes round Applehurst, singing her snatches of hymns. 'Applehurst' is the name of a broadcast serial which has developed into a habit. It praises Our Rural Heritage. It stands for the Traditional Values of English Life. It is, in other words, a sad compound, arch and glutinous, that has lasted so long there is no real reason why it should ever stop. At Broadcasting House it is a theme for reverence.

Mrs Mercy might herself be one of the Gentry of Applehurst.

We are concerned with daily life in the Buckridge flat where Sister George, as she has done throughout the entire Applehurst series, lives with a pathetic, clinging child-woman of thirty-four, who plays with dolls and who has been content to submit to the most humiliating penances. The partnership has frayed. 'Childie' is given more and more to spasms of rebellion; and it seems apparent that both Sister George and Miss Buckridge will find that a period has ended.

Sister George's public life is doomed inevitably. Even Applehurst and the Traditional Values must go 'contemporary'; Sister can have no place in a village that glorifies an anti-hero ('Contemporary appeal; Applehurst is facing up to the fact that the old values have become outdated'). In an accident timed carefully to coincide with Road Safety Week, Sister George is killed in a moped crash.

She gets the equivalent of a State funeral. Wreaths drape the flat; Sister George listens to her own public death on a morning that brings private catastrophe. The plot is made as closely as it is written; no doubt Pirandellists have had their fun with Miss Buckridge who can be possessed entirely by her other Fantasy-self.

Here is an essay, both rapid and subtle, in what Polonius might have called the comical-fantastical-tragical.

Next in the Theatre:

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE

THE FLORIDIANS

from Florida, U.S.A.

in **DAMES AT SEA** (September 22nd at 7.45 p.m.)

and **THE WORLD OF CARL SANDBURG**

(September 23rd at 7.45 p.m.)

FRESH FROM THE MINACK THEATRE:

A PENNY FOR A SONG

by John Whiting

October 7th – 14th at 7.45 p.m.

Next in the Studio:

LOOP OF TIME

by Nicholas Williams

A modern telling of the Oedipus legend

October 26th – 29th at 7.45 p.m.

Next at The Film Society:

Zabriskie Point

September 11th at 7.45 p.m.

The Front Page

September 15th at 11.00 p.m.
