

DEC 1989



THE

# QUESTORS

THEATRE



## THE REAL DEATH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

by Michael Green

(based on the character created by Conan Doyle)

### CAST

(in order of appearance)

Dr. John Watson.....David Pearson  
 Mrs. Hudson.....Monyene Kane  
 Sherlock Holmes.....Michael Langridge  
 Professor Moriarty.....Colin Pronger  
 Molly Smith.....Caroline Bleakley  
 Mr. Hudson.....Tony Diggle  
 Three surly cab-drivers: The voices of Eddie Cullen, Michael Green and Tony Diggle

Director.....Michael Green  
 Designer.....John Stacey  
 Stage Manager.....Eddie Cullen  
 Deputy Stage Manager.....Jim Caithness  
 Stage crew..... Diane Nesbitt, John Lucas, Glen Wilson, Edel Erickson, Elizabeth Mistry, Kelvin West, Cherry Kane  
 Lighting.....Pete Walters  
 Lighting assistants.....Richard Laszoz, Jenny Richardson  
 Sound.....Steve Hames  
 Sound assistants.....Peter Tompkins, Steve Barnett  
 Wardrobe.....Lynn Williams  
 Construction.....Arthur Boardman, Tom Marton.  
 Prompt.....Barrie Blewett  
 Make-up adviser.....Julie Cruttenden  
 Music.....Nic Mayhew  
 Bust of Sherlock Holmes by Greasepaint School of Make-up, Ealing.

Special thanks to Alan N. Smith, London Borough of Ealing, John Sanders, Henry Heilpern

Scenes: The Reichenbach Falls, Switzerland; Holmes's rooms at 221b, Baker Street, London; and Dr. Watson's journey to Victoria station.

Time: 1891.

## The Real Death of Sherlock Holmes

Apart from Shakespeare's immortal creations, Sherlock Holmes is probably the world's most famous fictional figure. All over the earth there are clubs dedicated to keeping his memory alive. Since the copyright expired in recent years there has been a new surge of interest with plays, films and television programmes about the Great Detective.

Yet Holmes remains an enigma, an aloof man who appears at times to have no emotions. His demeanour is that of the scientist delicately dissecting a piece of tissue. He boasts he knows nothing of any matter not connected with his profession. And as for women, he has no time for them at all. When overtaken by what Conan Doyle vaguely describes as "brain fatigue" in "The Reigate Puzzle" he can only be persuaded to rest at a house in the country on the firm assurance "that it is a bachelor establishment".

Yet this is the man who can be roused to fury when his best friend, Dr. Watson, is threatened. "If Watson had died you would not have left this room alive" he snarls at a villain who had the temerity to shoot the good doctor in the thigh ("The Three Garridebs").

One reason for the glorious riddle of Holmes' character is that Conan Doyle, his creator, to whom the world owes an immeasurable debt, came to regard him as a nuisance who got in the way of his real literary work. Indeed, he tried to kill him off at the Reichenbach Falls in 1891 and had to resurrect him by popular demand and keep him going for another thirty years or more. But such a theory is blasphemy to your real Holmes' addict, because it presumes the detective is a fictional character when everybody knows he is completely real and any discrepancies are due to poor old Dr. Watson's errors as a biographer. How can he be fictitious when we know where he lived in Baker Street and we know what he wore and what he smoked? To this day the building society with premises covering the original Holmes' address at 221, Baker Street receives hundreds of letters every year addressed to Holmes. If Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character, then so is Father Christmas.

In this play I have attempted to put forward an explanation as to what really went on behind Holmes' ice-cold facade and to throw light on the mystery of his emotional (or non-emotional) life). I have also given a new theory as to what happened at The Reichenbach Falls. I need not apologise for this. Most Holmes' fans regard the account of his death as somewhat unconvincing. We are asked to believe he deliberately let Moriarty trap him there and that the arch-criminal, instead of shooting Holmes, was foolish enough to grapple with him, both falling to their deaths.

It is the sign of a great fictional character, such as Hamlet, that he is discussed and treated as if a living person. I can think of no greater tribute to Conan Doyle than the fact that so many other authors, including myself, have stolen his great creation for their own purposes.

--Michael Green.

First performance: Dec 9, 1989