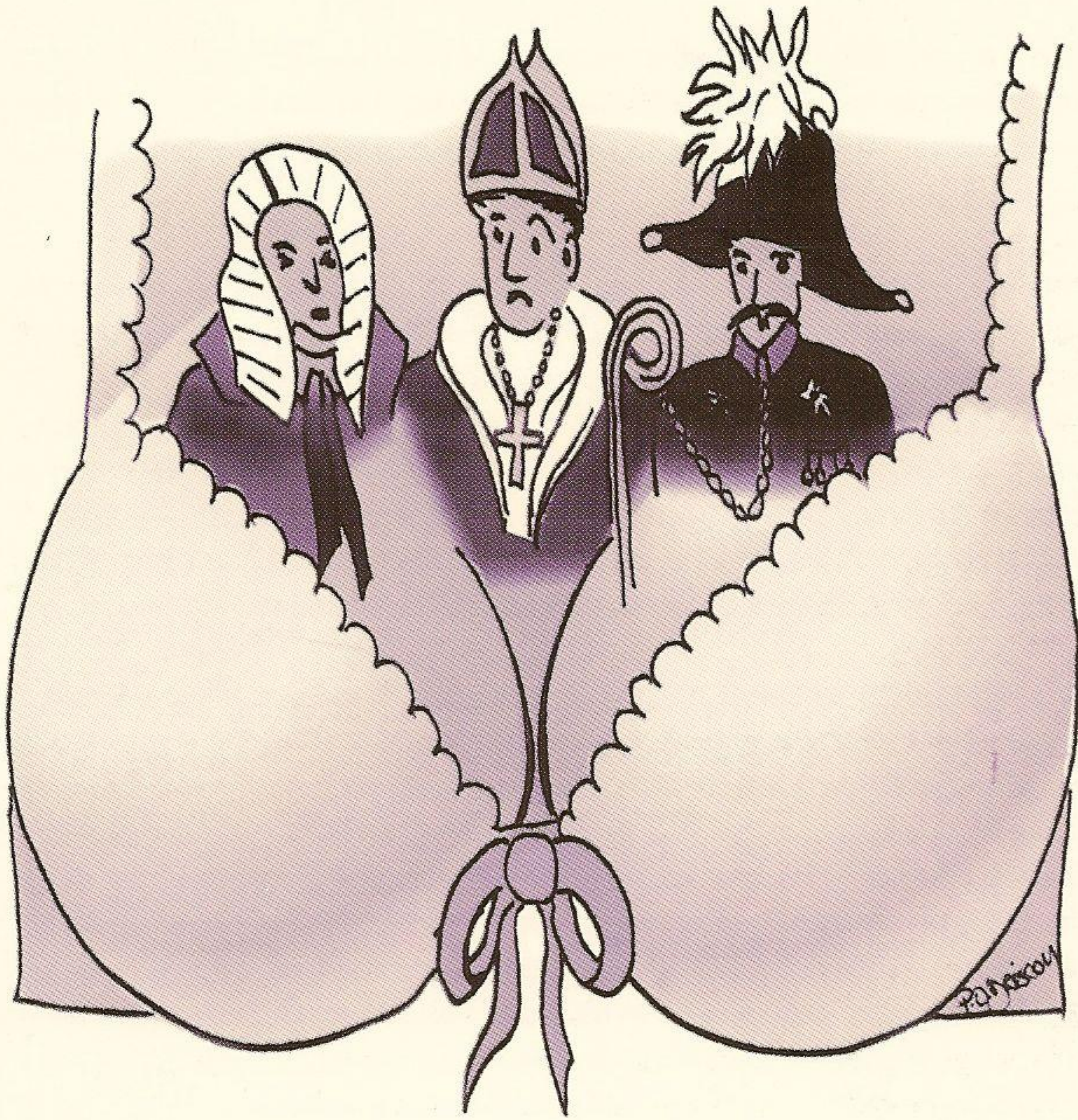


Where does reality end and fantasy begin?



**Set in an exotic brothel designed for the fulfilment of every conceivable fantasy, this is a play where Morality is turned on its head and nothing can be taken for granted.**



THE  
QUESTORS  
THEATRE

# THE BALCONY

by Jean Genet



# PROGRAMME NOTES

The gunfire from the revolution outside echoes with corrosive consequences, through Madame Irma's House of Illusions. Within its marble corridors fantasies are being re-enacted day after day. But where does fantasy end and reality begin? What will happen when the revolutionaries claim their right to belong to Irma's mirrors?

The Balcony is Genet's most metaphysical play, in which reality is illusive and conflicts are acted out within the context of questioning the validity of the political establishment; a humorous and terrifying dramatisation of the individual's rage against social norms.

Much has been said about the biographical content of Genet's work, particularly in the light of Jean Paul Satre's massive study, St. Genet. Genet's life of destitution, petty theft and male prostitution did, indeed, equip him with a rich array of characters whom he weaves into his writing, but they are placed in a created world where Genet's political and moral attitudes are given an environment where the very foundations of existence may be explored. The questioning of reality and existence echoes the work of Pirandello, who Genet admired, and cynical attitudes towards social and political institutions are reminiscent of Brecht, for whom Genet showed less enthusiasm.

The most startling feature of The Balcony is the attempt to create a mixed theatrical language that embraces not only the word, but a totality of sound, movement and visual image that sets it firmly as a supreme example of "total theatre" where the audience are invited to respond to the emotional, intellectual, metaphysical and spiritual influences. The characters are not only motivated by psychological desire, but by deeper philosophical questions that are rooted in the nature of being itself. For Genet, the discovery of 'being' is to find what he called 'solitude'. That is not to say loneliness, but the real 'being' of the individual that lies behind perceived existence. The apparent functions of existent life are merely masks that hide the truth. The prime function of life is death, and even that is interpreted as nihilistic.

The characters in the play can only find their truth in fantasy in which they acquire satisfaction through sex and power. In the end only truth is the realisation that there is no truth

**Contains Adult Themes, Not suitable for children.**

# The Balcony

by Jean Genet, translated by Barbara Wright & Terry Hands

First performance of this production - Saturday 22nd January 2000

## CAST

Bishop  
Irma  
Bishop's Girl  
Judge's Girl  
Judge  
Torturer - Arthur  
General  
General's Girl  
Beggar  
Blood/1st Photographer  
Tears/ Slave  
Sperm/2nd Photographer  
Carmen  
Chief of Police  
Georgette  
Chantal  
Wounded Man  
Roger  
Armand  
Louis  
Luke  
Mark  
Envoy

Michael Gerrard  
Michelle Frost  
Lara Flanagan  
Elizabeth Fowler  
Derek Chandler  
John Baker  
Graham Williams  
Celia Steyn  
Nigel Worsley  
Toni Conesa  
James Hammond  
Jonathan Rose  
Claire Whiteley  
Max Fisher  
Tom Butler  
Emma Patterson  
Barry Rawkins  
Mark Redrup  
Eris Standing  
John Mooney  
Ruby Sanghra  
Evan Rule  
Nick Hawker

## CREW

Director  
Set Design  
Costume Design  
Specialist Costume  
Specialist Shoes  
Composer  
Choreography  
Lighting Design  
Lighting Operator  
Sound Design  
Sound Operator  
Stage Management

Construction

Wardrobe

Make Up  
Photography

Brian Ingram  
Wanda Duszynska  
Julia Bradley  
Olisa Okwuosa, Johural Monaf  
Geraldine Van Der Puye  
Ian Amos  
Isolte Avila  
Frank Wood  
Katy Gallantry  
Mark Lucek  
Richard Bridgen  
Joly Babu, Merry Irwin,  
Ian Lamond, Evan Rule,  
Eddie Tolland, Caron Yearwood  
Roger Brace, Antony Bridges,  
Jim Craddock, Nick Hawker,  
Chris Sydenham  
Elisabeth Bisinotto, Julia Cooke,  
Grace Craddock, Emma Goodwin,  
Chris Tomlinson  
Amy Hill, Kelly Jones, Sarah Smith  
Martin Sapsed



# FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS

5th - 12th February

## **NOT I: A PIECE OF MONOLOGUE: FOOTFALLS: OHIO IMPROMPTU:** *4 short plays by Samuel Beckett*

### **IN THE STUDIO**

Images that will haunt you for the rest of your life. Some of the strangest and most beautiful pieces ever written, by the 20th Century's greatest theatre innovator. A rare chance to see four of Samuel Beckett's great late plays.

19th - 26th February

## **DEAD FUNNY** *by Terry Johnson*

### **IN THE PLAYHOUSE** - Free to Members

An hilarious comedy about life, love, sex, impotence, the English sense of humour and dead comedians. Eleanor wants what Richard won't give her. Richard wants to be left in peace. Benny would rather rest in peace, but for tonight, at least, his fans won't let him.

26th February - 4th March

## **THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE** *by Bertolt Brecht*

*translated by James & Tania Stern, with W. H. Auden*

### **IN THE STUDIO**

When the rebel Princes kill the Governor his abandoned son is adopted by the servant Grusha. However when the Governor's wife catches up with Grusha she goes to court to get her baby back. This Tug-of-Love drama is presented by The Questors' Young People's Group.

11th - 18th March

## **THE MATCHMAKER** *by Thornton Wilder*

### **IN THE PLAYHOUSE**

Swift moving farce set in Yonkers/New York in the early 1880's that tells the story of a rich old merchant who decides it's time to get married and to that end employs a matchmaker setting all concerned on course for a hilarious climax of complication.

Sponsored by Merchant & Co. Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors.

Sunday 2nd April

Ian Liston for **THE HISS AND BOO COMPANY** presents

## **THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE**

### **IN THE PLAYHOUSE**

*Devised & Directed by Christopher Luscombe & Malcolm McKee.*

Following a sell-out season at The Barbican and a critically acclaimed West End run, this "irrepressible musical production" (Daily Express), originally staged by The RSC, is coming to The Questors. This joyous words-and-music celebration of the delights of the bard gathers together some of the finest comic material inspired by Shakespeare. With contributions from the cream of writing and performing talent this collective masterpiece is certain to enthrall, entrance and ENTERTAIN!

A hugely enjoyable show.... Absolute Bliss.... A delightful comic cocktail.

**The Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, London W5 5BQ**

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