

the mitre players

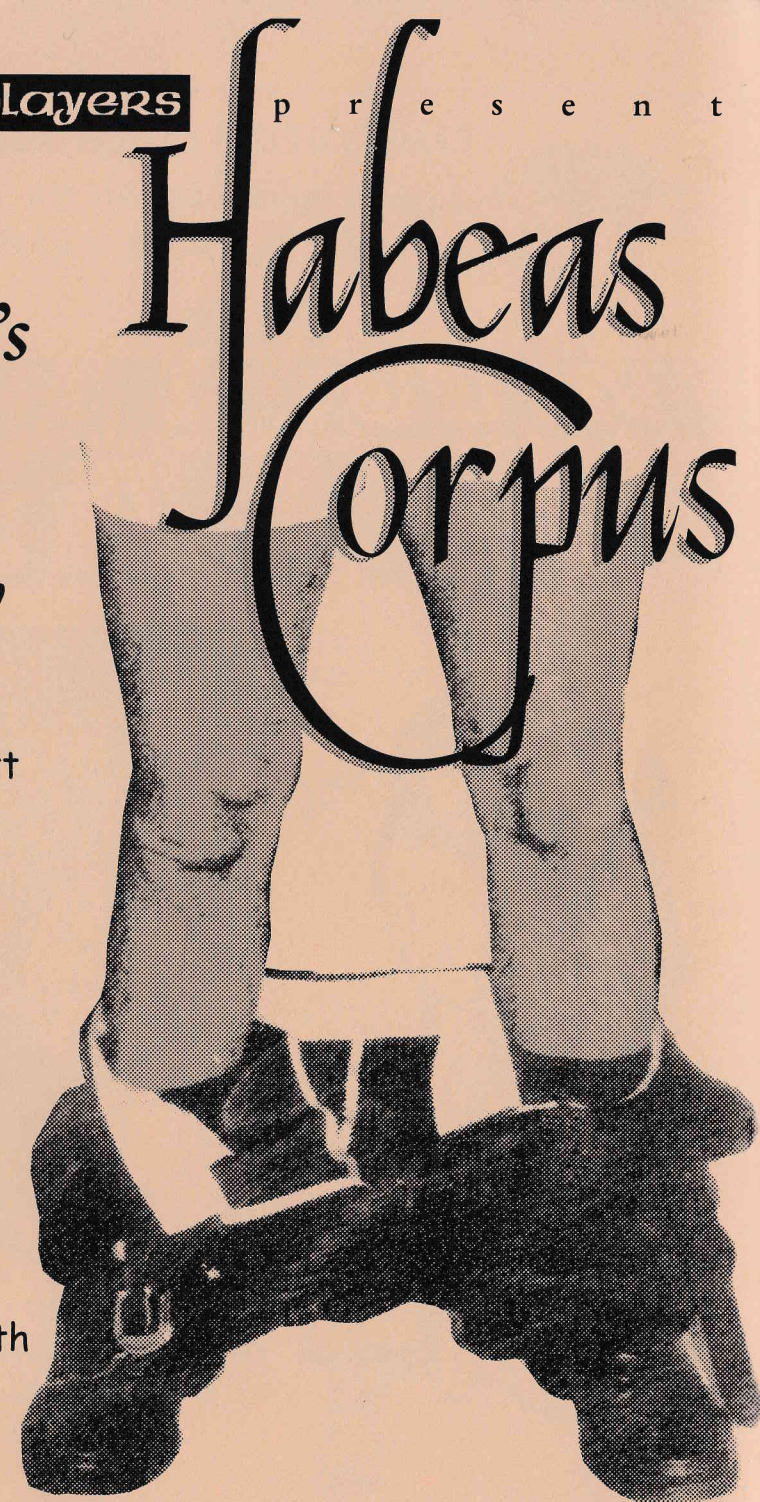
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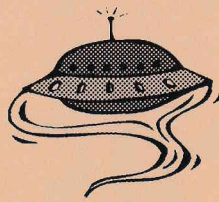
*Alan
Bennett's
Classic
Farcical
Comedy*

Directed by
Charles Marriott

At the
Mitre Theatre,
Trinity School,
Shirley Park,
Croydon

Thursday 28th
to Saturday 30th
October 1999
at 7.30pm.





the mitre players present
a pantomime for all the family
by Colin Warnock and Paul Beard

THE MILLENNIUM DAME



At Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon
Thursday 13th To Saturday 15th January 2000
at 7.30pm (matinee on Saturday at 3pm.)
Tickets £3 to £6 from Sheila Garnett
on 0181 650 7882

Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Mitre Player's autumn production of "Habeas Corpus"
It is a while since the society has performed a farce, particularly a relatively modern one.

This evening's show is a change from some of the more serious dramatic pieces we have performed in recent years and we welcome a new Director, Charles Marriott into our midst for this production, it being the first time Charles has worked with us in any capacity.

Our previous show "The Boyfriend" was a great success, being the first time ever we have sold out every performance, both in Croydon and in Dawlish. We hope we shall be able to continue this trend, which is becoming increasingly necessary for all amateur dramatic societies to survive in today's climate. We would like to thank you all for your continuing support.

Our next show "The Millennium Dame" will also be performed here at the school on Thursday 13th, Friday 14th and Saturday 15th January. Written by Paul Beard with music by Colin Warnock and Mark Fleming, "The Millennium Dame" includes all the usual traditional pantomime elements, brought right up to date, for this year's special Millennium celebrations. It should be great fun for all the family.

For this evening however, sit back and enjoy the satirical merry-go-round that manifests itself for the characters of "Habeas Corpus".

Andy Thompson.

Chairman.

Biography

With a somewhat well known writer for a mother, and a much respected TV director father, it is not surprising that Charles became embroiled in "The Business". Originally trained as an actor at Arts Educational along with Jane Seymour, Jenny Agutter and Cherie Lunghi, to name but a few, he appeared in a small cluster of feature films, (still being shown on TV when the schedulers are desperate) and even less plays.

At an age when he was too young for the old parts and too old for the young parts, he had a lucky break and moved behind the camera into feature films and TV commercials in 1969 and became an Assistant Director. Major credits included **Superman, Yanks, Dragonslayer, Yentl** and **Carry on Behind**. In 1981 he became a Director and Producer exclusively. He has directed many programmes, documentary, advertising and promotional films for major international companies. In 1989, he directed 'Love Me Leave Me', a full length feature film for American TV and the film "Off your Trolley?" starring Kevin Whateley gaining two prestigious awards at The New York Film and TV festival and the IVCA in London. Other notable productions have been two successful series for Westcountry TV and Channel 4 of - "Great Little Trains" starring the late Willie Rushton which received a Royal Television Society award. More recently he has directed two major series for television. "The Tidings" a 26 episode animation series for 4-8 year olds starring Robert Powell and Susan George. Currently, "the day jobs" involves juggling a brand new series with Lisa I' Anson for Sky

TV called "Backchat" with a major documentary called "Blind Ambition", which charts the extraordinary story of blind ex-policeman, Ken Moss in his attempt to break the world land speed record for the blind, SOLO!!

At present, Charles is Vice chair of the Directors Guild of Great Britain. He lives in Croydon with his exceptionally tolerant wife Hilary and the two most gorgeous cats in the world.

Directors note.

After some thirty odd years in the entertainment industry, (some of them very odd!) I am finally realising an ambition to direct theatre. It's a first for me. Having been an actor, albeit many years ago, I always enjoyed the experience of stage production. But what was it like to direct a play? It's so very different behind a camera. Easier in some respects. I can quite literally dictate what an audience sees or not. You're dealing with small chunks of scenes, a few seconds at a time. On a stage, it is all there right in front of you. So, on my first and perhaps (and if you don't laugh) last excursion into stage production, please enjoy "Habeas Corpus". It's got many elements, dare one suggest, there's almost a touch of Carry On about it. Three things are for sure. I have had a lot of help in the shape of Alan Bennett's terrific writing, the marvellous cast and the backstage team who have made this happen. Lastly, to my long time buddy and guide Julia Ascott, who kindly steered me through this new territory for a novice to the "Boards", Ta!! I owe you one, or maybe two.....

Cast in order of their appearance

Arthur Wicksteed	Warwick Jones
Muriel Wicksteed	Carol Harrington
Mrs Swabb.....	Eileen Coombs
Dennis Wicksteed	Nick Lawson
Constance Wicksteed	Julia Ascott
Sir Percy Shorter.....	Paul Smith
Lady Rumpers.....	Ann Bowden
Canon Throbbing.....	Neil O'Gorman
Felicity Rumpers.....	Kelly Beard
Mr Shanks.....	Phil Evans
Mr Purdue.....	Martin Garnett

The action takes place in and around the Wicksteed's house in Hove, sometime in the late 1960s. The play is divided into two Acts (with an interval of approximately 20 mins), the action being continuous.

Production Team

Director.....	Charles Marriott
Director's Assistant.....	Julia Ascott
Stage Manager and Prompter	Gillian Bartle
Lighting Design	Alan Bishop
Costumes	Julia Gibbs
assisted by.....	Sheila Garnett, Jill Wilson
Properties.....	Sue Carter, Mary Holton
Sound.....	James McLeod
Backstage and Technical Crew.....	Alan Collins, Dave Richards Sue Carter, Julian Parsons, Andrew Thompson
Programme and Poster Design.....	James Miller
Box Office Manager.....	Liz Kallend
Photography.....	Marcus Ascott
Front of House	John Benstead
Foyer Display	Diana Dobson, Anna Warnock
Refreshments.....	Helen Harries-Rees
Production Manager.....	Anna Warnock

The Mitre Players would like to express their thanks to The Headmaster and Governors of Trinity School for the hire of the school facilities and to Graham Kellas, John Bertram, Eric Jones and other members of Trinity Staff who have assisted with this production.

Biographies

Julia Ascott (Constance Wicksteed) joined the Mitres in 1975 when she was 11. Since then she has been involved in more than 60 productions both on and off stage. Her favourite roles include Marguerite Blakeney in **The Scarlet Pimpernel**, Aldonza in **The Man of La Mancha** and Puck in **A Midsummer Night's Dream** at The Globe. Julia will spend most of tonight in the dressing room either strapping "them" down or padding "them" up - all will become clear, we promise. She has no previous experience as a cub mistress but was a sixer at Brownies when she was 9. She works part-time, writing & recording voice overs for in-flight entertainment news programmes. Unlike Connie, she is married - to Marcus and they have two sons.

Kelly Beard (Felicity Rumpers) joined the Mitres in 1992. Favourite roles include Amy in **Where's Charley?**, Sharon in **A Slice of Saturday Night** and Dulcie in **The Boyfriend**. This is her first (and hopefully not last) principal role in a play - you will see she has all the correct assets for this particular part. She is a maths student at Brighton University where she is learning to be a teacher and is currently on teaching practice at Addington High School - prospective private students please form an orderly queue! She is single at the moment so if you're interested send flowers and love tokens to the stage door for consideration.

Ann Bowden (Lady Rumpers) joined us in 1985. Favourite roles have included Fraulein Schneider in **Cabaret** (1993 version), Madame Dubonnet in **The Boyfriend** and the raunchy singer in **Godspell**. She is affectionately known as "The Queen Mother" in Mitre circles and is therefore well qualified to play a "Lady". She may have told you she was once chairman of CODA, for whom she played Mrs Wicksteed in their production of **Habeas Corpus**. She works as PA to a London theatrical agent and enjoys being Granny to 4 wonderful grandchildren.

Eileen Coombs (Mrs Swabb) joined the Mitres in 1980 to be in **The Winslow Boy** and since then has been in over 20 productions. Her favourite roles also include Fraulein Schneider in **Cabaret** (1985 version), Mama Morton in **Chicago** and Madame Boniface in **Hotel Paradiso**. She is a retired school teacher and now keeps herself busy with a long list of interests including bowling, philately, water colours, gardening, patchwork, and toy making. She still has time to do all her own cleaning and years of experience with an upright (hoover) and duster will be on display tonight. She is married to fellow Mitre Player, Dennis.

Philip Evans (Mr Shanks) was first seen by Mitre audiences in 1994. His favourite roles have all been deformed cripples - he has played several, in **Nicholas Nickleby**, **The Elephant Man**, **Quasimodo**, **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** etc. If not a deformed cripple, he is usually the male lead. Tonight is something of a novelty though as he plays neither male lead nor deformed cripple but a seedy travelling false boobs salesman - with lots of opportunity to practice his favourite hobby! We think he is incredibly talented - not only can he act, sing and dance but he also plays several musical instruments, is a very good tennis player and excellent baby-sitter - we are told though he could do with a few lessons in domestic science. He works as a Senior Publicity Officer for Sky News Television and although not married, he is spoken for!

Martin Garnett (Mr Purdue) has been a Mitre since the very beginning of time and has been in more than 50 productions. He was first seen wearing red tights as the Demon King in **Cinderella Charleston** and over the years not much has changed, except perhaps the colour of the tights. Tonight he dispenses with all leg wear and will be revealing bare flesh! This is not the first production where he dies or nearly dies on stage (obviously we are not referring to his performance) - in **The Scarlet Pimpernel** he had to be beheaded by a working guillotine - his false head still takes pride of place

Biographies

in our props cupboard. He is currently our Honorary Secretary and is married to Sheila and has one grown up daughter.

Carol Harrington (Muriel Wicksteed) has only previously appeared on stage once in a Mitre production, which was Titania in **A Midsummer Night's Dream** in 1996. Favourite roles with other societies include Mole in **The Wind in the Willows** and Paulina Salas in **Death and the Maiden**. She has often "done her bit" behind the scenes but we are delighted to have her once again treading the boards. You will see she has been required to put on a lot of weight to play Muriel - I'm sure the pounds will just drop off after the run. She works as Head of Education for **Shakespeare 4 Kidz** and in her spare time is a Reiki practitioner. If you don't know what that is - ask Warwick. She is mother of two and also a Granny.

Warwick Jones (Arthur Wicksteed) has been a Mitre since 1974 and has just retired from a five year stint as our Chairman. He has been in more than 30 productions and some of his favourite roles include Quentin in **After the Fall**, Guildenstern in **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead** and Dame in **Way Out West** (1981 version). He has played several different doctors in the past but this one has had the most perks in terms of the attractiveness of his patients - although he would like to point out examinations have been kept purely on a professional level. His other passions (as well as acting) are cricket and being beaten by his 11 year old son Richard at Nintendo. He is married to Di and says no-one is interested in hearing about his very boring job. He is thinking of retraining to be a Reiki practitioner.

Nick Lawson (Dennis Wicksteed) joined us this time last year to play Trofimov in **The Cherry Orchard**. Since then he has also played Eddie in **A Slice of Saturday Night** and Bobby in **The Boyfriend** when he experienced his first Mitre tour. He is a student in his final year studying for a BA degree in Business at Croydon College. Other interests include golf and learning to play the piano but we know he spends most of his spare time learning his lines, at least several weeks before the rest of us - you can tell he is the newest member in the cast, but he'll soon change! He is single but not currently available.

Neil O'Gorman (Canon Throbbing) first appeared for the Mitres in 1993 when he played one of his favourite roles - a transvestite in **Cabaret**. He also enjoyed playing Dame Cecily in **Dick Whittington** (also dressed as a woman) and ranks Canon Throbbing high in the enjoyment stakes. If you didn't know otherwise you could think he is something of a sexual deviant - of course you couldn't be more wrong as Lucy his new wife, will happily confirm. He is Principal of the South London branch of the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy - just the sort of person we want to be in charge of our children's cultural needs and probably has been responsible for causing most giggles during rehearsals. That must be a result of his professional training at..... McDonalds?

Paul Smith (Sir Percy Shorter) has been a Mitre since 1984. Since then he has played many varied roles and he lists his favourites as Eric in **A Slice of Saturday Night**, Bottom in **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and Koko in **The Mikado**. Surprisingly at over 6ft, Paul is the shortest member of our male cast tonight but will still be spending most of the evening trying to look much smaller (we did discuss Paul and Carol swapping roles - but that of course would be ridiculous, even for the Mitre Players). He works as a Training Manager for Marie Curie Cancer Care, has a passion for cricket and is very good at quizzes.