

# GREENWICH STUDIO THEATRE

## The Nun

By Denis Diderot

27<sup>th</sup> May 1994 – 26<sup>th</sup> June 1994

Translated & adapted by Julian Forsyth

Directed by Margarete Forsyth

# PROGRAMME

# THE GREENWICH STUDIO THEATRE COMPANY

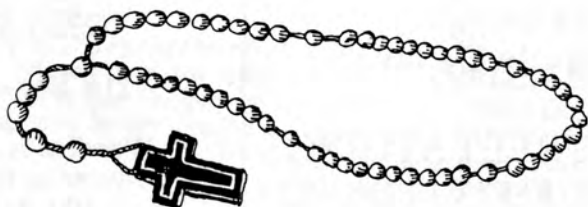
PRESENTS

## the nun

from the novel by Denis Diderot

adapted by Julian Forsyth  
directed by Margarete Forsyth

May 26th to June 26th 1994



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## THE COMPANY

### Robert Aldous

*Father Seraphim*

Trained at RADA, 1953-55. In a long career, most of his work has been in the theatre. His last appearance in the West End was as Sir Toby Bumper in *The School for Scandal* at The Haymarket and Duke of York's Theatres, followed by a tour of Europe.

He has worked with most of the regional theatre companies and on several major tours, the most recent being *Mr & Mrs Nobody* with Patricia Routledge.

For twenty three years he was one of the country's leading pantomime villains, playing with such celebrated names as Arthur Askey, Jimmy Edwards, Terry Scott, Leslie Crowther, Danny La Rue and many others. This is the third time Robert has worked with Margarete Forsyth.

### Angela Bain

*Sister Angelica/Sister Martha/  
Madame Moreau*

Prior to her engagement as a nun, Angela played Autolycus in an open air production of *The Winters Tale* for the Duke's Theatre in Lancaster.

Other theatre includes *The Shoemakers Holiday* (Leeds), *Torn Jones* and *The Brewery Beano* (Derby Playhouse) and *The Cherry Orchard* and *A Child in the Forest* for Cheltenham Everyman.

She played Dear Boy in *The Percy French Letters* at Kilburn Tricycle and for the Birmingham Rep, *Big Maggie*, *Dangerous Corner* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Angela also performs with the local band *Your Worst Nightmare*.

### Jacqueline Charlesworth

*Sister Sophia/Sister Sorelle*

Since completing a post graduate course at Mountview Theatre School, Jacqui has appeared at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, in *The Lost Musicals* season at the Barbican, in *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* at the Orange Tree and as Principal Girl in pantomime.

She was Sweetissa on a national tour of the Magnificent Theatre Company's production of Henry Fielding's *The Grub Street Opera* and most recently played Connie Field, wife of comedian Sid Field in a World Premier production of *What a Performance* at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth - a part she is delighted to be recreating later on this year.

### Heather Coombs

*Sister Barbara/Sister Theresa*

Recent work includes Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* (West 28th St. Theatre Co), Angela in *The Hang of the Gaol* (London Actors Theatre Co), Mae in *As Time Goes By* (Actors Theatre of Manhattan), Nelly Dean in *Wuthering Heights* (Freelance Theatre Co), Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* (Lichfield Festival), Ginny in *Relatively Speaking* and Thelma in *Groping for Words* (both Stage West), Violet Trefusis in *White Sepulchre* (Tabard). Also shows for Swan Theatre, Worcester, Royal Theatre, Northampton and Northcott Theatre, Exeter.

TV includes *Family Affairs* (BBC). Voiceovers (Macmillan Publishers).

### Steven Dykes

*Vicar General*

Recent theatre includes: Colquhoun in the American Premiere of John Byrne's *Colquhoun and MacBryde* at The Theatre Exchange, Minneapolis; Phil in *Stand by*

David Bown at the Symposium On New European Writing, Valencia, Spain; and Jerry in Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* for NXT (New Cross Theatre) on a tour of Mid-West America.

He most recently appeared as Morten in the GST's production of *Erasmus Montanus*.

## Steven Elder

Co-Director

Trained at Webber Douglas. Steven last appeared at the Greenwich Studio playing Fedor in the GST's production of *And Women Must Weep*. He previously appeared here playing the title role in *Hamlet*, and went on to play the part for Buttonhole Theatre Company at the Old Bull Arts Centre.

Theatre work also includes: Claudio in *Measure for Measure* (tour), Malcolm in *Macbeth* (New End Theatre), a season with Southwold Rep and Zeller in *The Sound of Music* (Theatre Royal, Lincoln).

Screenwork: *Suffer Little Children* (BBC), *Resnick* (BBC), *Going Places* (Yellowstone Pictures), and productions for Bournemouth Film School. A founder of Riverforest Productions, he recently co-produced *What's Wrong With Angry?* at the Oval House Theatre.

## Sasha Fisher

Sister Ursula/Sister Veronica

Trained at RADA. Television work includes *The Silent Export* (BBC), *The Bill* (Thames) and *Today* (Network 9, Australia).

Before RADA she toured in Voltaire's *Candide* (Home Brew); other theatre work includes an adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* (Redgrave Theatre), *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (Galtres Theatre Company) and the acapella show *It's a Girl* (Doo wa) which toured London and finished at the

Edinburgh Festival.

She has most recently finished a short film *Are You Sexually Disturbed?* for the Paris and Sundance film festivals.

## Margarete Forsyth

Director

Margarete is the new Artistic Director of the Greenwich Studio Theatre. She took an MA Degree in English and German at the University of Erlangen in Germany before teaching for four years at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

She then embarked on a career as a theatre and opera director, directing regularly for Carlos Opera and founding The Rude Mechanicals, for whom she directed Goethe's *Faust*, Buchner's *Danton's Death* and Brecht's *Life of Galileo*, all at the Young Vic Studio.

Margarete has also directed a wide range of European classics at some of London's leading drama schools. For the GST's opening season she directed *Minna von Barnhelm* and designed the sets for *Minna* and *Erasmus Montanus*.

She has most recently directed and designed the GST's production of a cycle of Schnitzler plays under the title *And Women Must Weep*, for which she was nominated as best director in the London Fringe Awards.

## Julian Forsyth

Adaptor

Julian taught at Erlangen University in Germany before training as an actor at Webber Douglas Academy. As Associate Director of the GST he has adapted and directed *Erasmus Montanus* (for which he received the Best Director award at the 1994 London Fringe Awards) and played



Major Tellheim in *Minna von Barnhelm* and Gilbert and Dr. Witte in *And Women Must Weep*.

His other recent work has been with the RSC in Trevor Nunn's productions of *The Blue Angel* and *Measure for Measure*, at the Almeida in Wedekind's *Lulu* and Howard Barker's *Scenes from an Execution*, with the Wrestling School in Barker's *The Europeans* (seen last April at the Greenwich Theatre), as Fagin in *Oliver* at Sadler's Wells and the Crucible, Sheffield, and in several West End musicals.

He is currently performing the role of D'Estivet in *St. Joan* on national tour, which is scheduled for the West End in July.

His TV work includes *Poirot*, *Heroes* and *This is David Lander*.

### Tim Frances

*Diderot*

Recent work includes readings of Browning and Tennyson for the BBC, a Surrey Detective for LWT's *Crime Monthly*, a tour of USA and Canada as Aufidius and Menenius in *Coriolanus* and the chorus in *Wasps*, Jack Good in *Good Rockin' Tonight* for Bill Kenwright, Paul Sears in *June Moon* for the Theatre of Comedy, Brecht in *I, Bertolt Brecht* in York, Petruchio in a TV version of *Taming of the Shrew*, two series of short stories for radio, a 20-something & 70-something Battle of Britain pilot in *Freedom to Forget* at Farnham, Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, the title role in *The Imaginary Invalid* in Edinburgh and Cornwall's servant and bits to Anthony Quayle's *King Lear*.

Tim works extensively as a pianist, but career highlights are playing Banquo to Steve Dykes' *Macbeth* and the last two months as a computer salesman.

### Anna Gilbert

*Madame Simonin*

Anna trained at the University of Kent.

Theatre: includes Margarita in *The Master & Margarita* (Lyric Hammersmith and Almeida), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (New End Theatre), *Lessons and Lovers* and *Trumpets and Raspberries* (York Theatre Royal), *Phaedra* (Pentameters), *Brezhnev's Children* at the ICA and a year with Theatre Venture, Stratford E15.

Television: includes *Between the Lines*, *Drop the Dead Donkey*, *Woof*, *Harry's Mad*, *Boon*, *The Critic*, *EastEnders* and *Girls on Top*. Film work includes *Lady Jane*, *The Secret Life of Fish* and *Bedtime Stories*.

### Patricia Heneghan

*Mother de Moni*

Theatre: includes *The Crucible* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield), *The Prisoner of War* (New End, Hampstead), *Point Valaine* (Minerva Studio, Chichester), *Screamers* (Arts), *Easy Virtue* (Garrick), *Passion Play* and *Once a Catholic* (Wyndhams), *Schippel* (Prince of Wales), *Trial and Error* (Vaudeville), *On the Razzle*, *Top Girls* and *The Ruling Class* (Leeds Playhouse), *Roots* (Bristol Old Vic).

Television: Includes *Lost Empires*, *The Jewel in the Crown*, *Some Distant Shadow* (Granada), *Maria Marten*, *Microbes and Men*, *An Age of Kings* (BBC).

Film: *Whistle Down the Wind*.

### Illona Linthwaite

*Mother Christine*

London Theatre includes: *Phaedra Britannica* by Tony Harrison (National Theatre), *Outskirts* by Hanif Kureishi (RSC), *King's Head*, Soho Poly. Most recently *Little Love* by Stephen Fagan (Lyric,

Hammersmith), *Democracy* by Joseph Brodsky (The Gate), *The Heiress* (Richmond and Bromley Theatres and national tour).

Earlier this year she went to the States in two one woman plays; *Shirley Valentine* by Willy Russell and *Anna on Anna* by Adrian Mitchell. In this last she appeared locally at Greenwich Theatre.

BBC work includes radio (she has also written for schools radio) and in television, two Plays for Today - *All the World's a Stage* and *The Shadow of the Moose*. She has been in several children's television series and was most recently seen on *The Bill*.

Favourite plays outside London include *A Month in the Country* (Liverpool Playhouse), *The Hot Hello* by David Pownall (Traverse, Edinburgh), *Arden of Feversham* (Theatr Clwyd), *Chorus of Disapproval* (Exeter). Films: *The Hiding Place* and *The Little Drummer Girl*. She is an associate director of The Drama Studio, London and lives in Greenwich with Peter Craze and their son Jack.

## Julia Marsen

Sister Monica/Sister Marie

Originally Julia went to Goldsmiths' College to study music, first study being the 'cello'. She then transferred onto the drama & theatre arts degree course.

Theatre: work includes Anja in *The Last Refuge* (George Wood Theatre), Evadne in *The Maids Tragedy*, Catherine in *A View From The Bridge*. She worked on Terence Davies' *The Long Day Closes*. She has started doing voice overs and has just finished a pilot for Anglia TV.

## David Plater

Lighting Designer

Before moving to London David lit many semi and professional productions. He

then trained in Stage Electrics and Lighting Design at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art where he lit productions of *The Shelter* for Alby James, *The Bright and Bold Design* for Caroline Eves and *Camille* for Clare Venables.

He has lit regularly at the Greenwich Studio Theatre, productions include *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Erasmus Montanus*, *And Women Must Weep*, and most recently *The Storytellers*. Plays lit for the touring company Gold are *Beirut* and *Single Spies*.

He has recently lit a new musical *The Relationship* at the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith. David is delighted to be back at the GST lighting *The Nun*. Future work will include *Entertaining Strangers* for the London Academy of Performing Arts at the Lyric Studio in Hammersmith and *Oliver* for the National Youth Music Theatre in the George Square Theatre in Edinburgh and the Adam Smith Theatre in Kircaldy.

## Nic Rauh

Sister Catherine/Sister Clare

Trained at the Welsh College of Music and Drama '92 - '93.

Theatre: *Backstage Tours of the National* (Etcetera Theatre, Camden and Edinburgh Fringe Festival), *An Ideal Husband* (Lyric, Belfast).

## Katherine Richards

Designer

Trained at Rose Bruford College.

Theatre: Recent work includes *The Wax King* (The Man in the Moon Theatre - nominated for 1992 London Fringe Award), *A Little Night Music* (Lillian Baylis Theatre), *On Air* (Scarlet Theatre Company - assistant designer), *Idiot's Waltz* (Finborough Theatre - nominated for 1994 London Fringe Award).

Opera: *Robinson Crusoe* (The English Players 1993).

Dance: *Magic* (Warnham Dance Company, Hawth Theatre 1992).

Katherine is currently working on *Robinson Crusoe* on the second national tour and *Comedy and Tragedy* - Warnham Dance Company, Hawth Theatre.

## Beeke Ropers

Costume Design/Wardrobe

Beeke first started making and designing costumes during her three years at Goldsmiths College (University of London).

Since her graduation in 1991 she has worked on several fringe productions including *Galileo* directed by Margaret Forsyth at the Young Vic Studio and *Vitus Bering* at the ICA. She has also worked with the National Youth Music Theatre on *Aesop, Guys and Dolls, Billy and Poppy*.

Most recently she designed the costumes for the GST's productions of *Minna von Barnhelm, Erasmus Montanus, And Women Must Weep* and *The Storytellers*.

## Sharon Small

Suzanne Simonin

Trained at Mountview Theatre School.

Theatre: *Suddenly Last Summer* (Basingstoke), *Himself* (Southampton and national tour), *Travesties* and *School for Wives* (Edinburgh Lyceum), *Pinocchio* (Arts, London), *Wuthering Heights* and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Perth), *Cloud in Trousers* (London), *Cinderella* (Stafford), *Comedy of Errors*, *Chorus of Disapproval* and *My Cousin Rachel* (Colchester), *The Forsyte Saga* (Basingstoke and national tour), *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Circle*, *Separate Tables*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Sailor Beuare* (Pitlochry).

Television includes: *Taggart, Roughnecks*.

## Tessa Worsley

Mother Superior at Arpajon

Tessa has just returned from the Haymarket Theatre Leicester where her most recent role was as Aunt Julia Tesman in Paul Kerryson's production of *Hedda Gabler*. Immediately prior to that she played the Matron in Ray Cooney's *It Runs in the Family* at the Playhouse Theatre in the West End. Tessa had just completed a six month tour of *Two into One*, playing the Receptionist and appeared as Maria in *Out of Order* at Bromley, both directed and written by Ray Cooney. Tessa was part of Jonathan Miller's first season at the Old Vic, and appeared in *One Way Pendulum*, which also toured to Toronto and as Pero in *Bussy D'Ambois*.

Her West End credits include Marta in *Man of the Moment*, directed by Alan Strachen at the Globe and Mrs Northrop in Ronald Eyre's acclaimed production of *When We Are Married* at the Whitehall. Tessa has appeared with most of the leading repertory companies in the country playing a variety of leading roles.

She has toured Sri Lanka as a guest of the British Council with her one woman show *A Mirror for Women* and also performed this at the Link Theatre. Her television credits include *Sherlock Holmes, All for Love*, and *Chess Game* for Granada, *Second Chance, In Loving Memory* and appeared as Rennee Barstow in *Emmerdale Farm* for Yorkshire Television and *The Bill* for Thames. Tessa regularly broadcasts for BBC Radio and has spent 18 months with the Radio Repertory Company





# the nun

from the novel by Denis Diderot

adapted by Julian Forsyth

directed by Margarete Forsyth

PARIS 1760

ACT 1

Suzanne Simonin - *a novice*  
Madame Simonin - *her mother*  
Father Seraphin - *her confessor*

Sharon Small  
Anna Gilbert  
Robert Aldous

## the convent at Longchamp

Mother de Moni - *the first Superior at Longchamp*  
Mother Christine - *the second Superior at Longchamp*  
Sister Ursula  
Sister Sophia  
Sister Angelica  
Sister Catherine  
Sister Monica  
Sister Barbara  
Vicar General  
A Lawyer

Patricia Heneghan  
Ilona Linthwaite  
Sasha Fisher  
Jacqueline Charlesworth  
Angela Bain  
Nic Rauh  
Julia Marsen  
Heather Coombs  
Steven Dykes  
Tim Frances

THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

ACT 2

## the convent at Arpajon

The Mother Superior at Arpajon  
Sister Theresa  
Sister Sorelle  
Sister Martha  
Sister Marie  
Sister Clare  
Sister Veronica

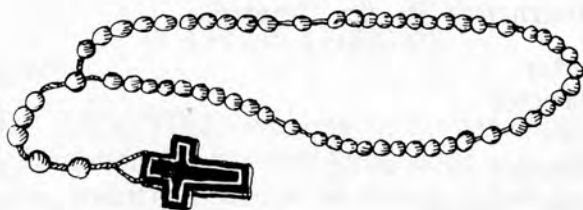
Tessa Worsley  
Heather Coombs  
Jacqueline Charlesworth  
Angela Bain  
Julia Marsen  
Nic Rauh  
Sasha Fisher

## DIDEROT'S STUDY

Denis Diderot  
Madame Moreau

Tim Frances  
Angela Bain





## THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director  
Assistant Director  
Set Design  
Lighting Design  
Sound Design  
Costumes designed and made by  
Company Manager  
Stage Manager  
ASM/Sound Operator  
Lighting Operator  
Set Construction

Literary Advisor  
Casting Consultant  
Publicity  
Publicity Design  
Photography

Margarete Forsyth  
Steven Elder  
Katherine Richards  
David Plater  
Rhys Davies  
Beeke Ropers  
Julia Crampsie  
Anabelle Comyn  
Armin Coerper  
Renato Nadal  
Richard Clayton  
Giorgio Frare  
Renato Nadal  
Vicky Emptage  
Enid Stockwell  
Pippa Ailion  
Louisa Gummer  
Vicky Emptage  
Camilla Watson



## *For The Greenwich Studio Theatre*

Artistic Director  
Associate Director  
Administrator  
Company Manager  
Front of House Manager  
Stage Manager  
Wardrobe Mistress  
Publicity

Margarete Forsyth  
Julian Forsyth  
Mark Feakins  
Julia Crampsie  
Giorgio Frare  
Renato Nadal  
Beeke Ropers  
Louisa Gummer

The Greenwich Studio Theatre is allowed to operate by kind permission of Bill Bridges, the Landlord and Leaseholder of The Prince of Orange Public House. The room in which the theatre is situated is dedicated to the memory of Dean Bridges.

*The Greenwich Studio Theatre would like to thank the following people and companies for their support in realising this production.*

Cathy Bell, Helga Bertazzo, Bill Bridges, Sarah Bridges, Neil Fraser,  
Ruth Froese, Antonia Loyd

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## Denis Diderot

Denis Diderot (1713 - 1784) was one of the leading thinkers of the French Enlightenment. He pursued knowledge in all its forms with an amazing vigour, and it was under his direction that the great French *Encyclopaedia* was published between 1747 and 1766, a major work, which aimed to '*change the way of thinking*' in France. This mammoth task completed, the pace of Diderot's output scarcely slackened, and when he set off for Russia in 1773 to visit Catherine the great, he was working on five different pieces of work as he travelled.

His thought contains irreconcilable paradoxes, and one of his favourite literary forms was the dialogue, which allowed him to argue both sides of a question. In some of his works materialistic atheism (which earned him a spell of imprisonment in 1749) seems to lead towards a deterministic stance, but Diderot's simultaneous belief in progress and the possibility of the good society prompted him to use the stage as a secular pulpit, and he launched a new theatrical genre, the *drame bourgeois*, to demonstrate that happiness may be achieved through virtue. When dealing with the theory of drama and the actor's art, Diderot's writing is fascinating and vibrant with ideas, sometimes seeming to foreshadow the scope of cinema, but the plays themselves are the worst examples of this generally unsuccessful new genre, swamped by pathos and sentiment to a degree that a twentieth-century audience finds unbearable.

The ideas, and indeed the dialogue, contained in Diderot's narrative works pack a far greater punch than plays such as *The Illegitimate Son* (1757) or *The Father of the Family* (1758), and here now in Greenwich is another paradox in the making: a theatrical success for Diderot at last? - but created from his novel the satirical and anti-monastic *La Religieuse* (finished around 1760, but not published until 1797); more cogent and far richer in emotional colour than his plays, it ranges from humour to anger, from sentimentality to cynicism.

ENID STOCKWELL

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Diderot found that the story of her unhappy experiences had seized his imagination and refused to let go. As a young man he had been briefly incarcerated in a monastery. More importantly, his sister Angelique had entered a convent against her parents' wishes, only to go mad and die young. The subject touched a raw nerve in him. All through the summer of 1760, in addition to his continuing labours on the Encyclopaedia, he was furiously writing *The Nun*.

It is not difficult to see why Diderot felt unable to publish the novel during his lifetime. He was continuously at odds with the censorship over the Encyclopaedia, in which the Jesuits perceived a threat to the authority of Church and State. Any attempt to publish *The Nun*, a work which could be interpreted as a full-scale attack on the convent system and through that on the Catholic Church, and which contained an audaciously sympathetic portrait of lesbian love, might have damaged his standing with the authorities so severely as to give a death blow to the Encyclopaedia, a project to which he had devoted the best part of his life.

In fact, the object of Diderot's scorn is not convent life *per se*, but an anomaly in the law that allowed binding religious vows to be taken at the age of sixteen, despite the fact that it was illegal to dispose of one's own money before the age of twenty-five. Diderot is concerned with abuses of personal freedom arising from that anomaly, typified by Suzanne's parents' convenient disposal of her into a convent.

### Dénouement

Shortly before her "death", in one of her letters to the Marquis de Croismare, "Suzanne" had promised to send him the manuscript of her memoir, so that he might have some knowledge of the person to whom he was offering help. The memoir, completed by Diderot several months later, was never sent to the Marquis, but 8 years later he finally revisited Paris and called upon the go-between, Madame Moreau-Madin. Her ignorance of all that had passed through her hands brought the whole elaborate hoax out into the open. According to Grimm, the Marquis laughed heartily at the whole affair. One wonders if this is true.

Diderot died in 1784. Though the text of *The Nun* was circulated among a handful of subscribers in 1780, the first proper edition did not appear until 1796, twelve years after his death. Once Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte had given way to the return of the monarchy, the book was banned in 1824 and again in 1826. According to Diderot's biographer P. N. Furbank, it is only in recent years that it has ceased to be regarded as pornography. As recently as 1968, Mme de Gaulle had Jacques Rivette's film version banned by the French Ministry of Information.

JULIAN FORSYTH

*Diderot. A Biography by P. N. Furbank. (Minerva)*  
*Leonard Tancock's introduction to his translation of The Nun. (Penguin Classics)*

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