

GREENWICH STUDIO THEATRE

The Green Parakeet

By Arthur Schnitzler

6th April 1995 – 7th May 1995

Translated & adapted by Julian Forsyth

Directed by Margarete Forsyth

PROGRAMME

The Greenwich Studio Theatre Company
presents

THE GREEN PARAKEET

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

TRANSLATED BY JULIAN FORSYTH
DIRECTED BY MARGARETE FORSYTH



APRIL 6TH TO MAY 7TH 1994

THE COMPANY

James Allen
Émile, Duc de Cadigan

Theatre includes: *Julius Caesar* Royal Exchange Manchester, *King Lear* Old Vic, *Moll Flanders*, *Fifteen Streets* Mercury Theatre Colchester, *Hard Times*, *Relatively Speaking*, Century Theatre Keswick, National Tour of *Wuthering Heights*, *The Glass Menagerie*, Pocket Theatre Cumbria, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* Factotum.

For the GST: *Erasmus Montanus*.
Television Includes: *Casualty*, *Between the Lines*.

Short Films: *Identity*, *Appeal*.
Radio: *Breakaway*, Radio 4.

Laurence Barber
Grasset

Lawrence comes from Leeds. He graduated from LAMDA in 1993, where he won the George Farquar Restoration Prize and the Wilfred Foulis Memorial Prize. Theatre credits since include: *The Slow Approach of Night*, *The Love of a Good Man* (Arts Threshold), *Surely to the Sea* (Bridewell Theatre - RSC Fringe), *The Hostage* and *The Venetian Twins* (RSC).

Neil Bull
Lebrêt

Neil's theatre experience includes: Konstantin in *The Seagull*, Lussurioso in *Revengers Tragedy*,

Macbeth (The Watermill, the Globe, Tokyo and Buenos Aires), *Lust* (The Theatre Royal, Haymarket), Rick in *A Slice of Saturday Night* (UK tour), *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* (The Millfield Theatre), Puck in *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (NTP Productions) and *Calamity Jane* (BAC).

For the GST: Lepine in *The Will*.
Television includes: *One too Many* (Sky TV).

He was also on the concept album *When it Rains.....* (Vivienne Ellis Awards).

Rory Campbell
François, Vicomte de Nogeant

Trained as an actor at the London Drama Centre and at the Royal College of Music. Early experience included touring with Glyndebourne Opera, pantomime, and on the national tour of *King's Rhapsody*. He played Nigel in *Salad Days*, and then appeared in the Save the Children Gala Variety Performance in Birmingham, played in *The White Horse Inn* at Chur, and Freddy Eynesford-Hill in the German-speaking production of *My Fair Lady* in Zurich and on tour throughout Switzerland. He was then cast as Bustopher Jones/Gus/Growltiger in the enormously successful production of *Cats* in Blackpool, Edinburgh, Dublin, Zurich and finally in London.

Last year Rory flew out to Prague to appear in the film *Delta of Venus* by Anäis Ninn, directed by Zalman King playing the part of Miguel, the Spanish artist. Since

we saw Rory last he has played Richard Tauber at The Old fire Station in Oxford in a play called *Girls were made to Love and Kiss*, written especially for him by Robert Longden.

**Danny Charles
Gaston**

Trained at ALRA. Theatre includes *His Lordships Fancy* (The Gate), *Epitaphs for the Living* (Meantime Theatre Company), *The Merchant of Venice/Shylock's Revenge* (New End), *Hunger for All* (Man in the Moon), *Backpack Walkman Road and Money* (Alive and Kicking Theatre Company), *Cinderella*, (Smart Alec Productions).

Film includes: *The Noise and the Silence* (Glasshouse Productions).

**Steven Elder
Henri
(20th April-7th May)**

Trained at Webber Douglas. Recently played Timothy Creighton in the world premiere of Phyllis Nagy's *Disappeared* (Leicester Haymarket and National tour), and Lucien Edensor in a revival of the Orange Tree Theatre's production of *The Case of the Rebellious Susan*.

For the GST Company: Steven played Henri the original production of *The Green Parakeet*, Fedor in Schnitzler's *And Women Must Weep*, and co-directed *The Nun* with Margarete Forsyth.

Other Theatre includes: *Hamlet* (Greenwich Studio), Malcolm in

Macbeth (New End Theatre), Hamlet and Caliban in *The Tempest* (for Buttonhole Theatre Company at The Old Bull Arts Centre), a season with Southwold Rep, Claudio in a national tour of *Measure for Measure*, and Harry in Room *Five Hundred and Four* (Grove Theatre).

Screenwork: *Resnick, Suffer the Little Children* (BBC), *Going Places* (Yellowstone Picture Company).

**Julian Forsyth
Translator**

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 won Best Director at the 1994 London Fringe Awards), adapted *The Nun*, translated *A Spanner in the Works* and played Major Tellheim in *Minna von Barnhelm*, Gilbert & Dr Witte in *And Women Must Weep* and The Marquis in *The Will*.

His other recent theatre work includes Dr Manette in *Tale of Two Cities* at Greenwich Theatre, Poulengy in *St Joan* at The Strand, Trevor Nunn's *Blue Angel* and *Measure for Measure* for the RSC, Wedekind's *Lulu* and Howard Barker's *The Europeans* for Greenwich Theatre and the Wrestling School, and Fagin in *Oliver* at Sadler's Wells and the Crucible, Sheffield.

His recent TV work includes *Poirot*, *Heroes*, *This is David Lander* and *Do The Right Thing*.

Margarete Forsyth Director

Margarete is the Artistic Director of the GST. 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.

Since then she has 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*, Büchner'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 she has directed *Minna Von Barnhelm*, *And Women Must Weep* (Nominated for Best Director - London Fringe Awards 1993/94) which she also translated, *The Nun*, *The Green Parakeet*, *A Spanner in the Works* and *The Will*. As a designer Margarete created the sets for the GST's *Erasmus Montanus*, *Minna Von Barnhelm* and *The Will*.

For Margarete's first season at the GST the theatre was awarded a Time Out Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Joe Fraser Police Inspector

Since graduating from Central. Joe's theatre work includes *An Ideal Husband* at the Royal Exchange, *The Country Wife* at the Mermaid Theatre, Bernie in *Sexual*

Perversity in Chicago (Etcetera) and a national tour as Michael Faraday in a musical biography. On television he has featured in: *The Bill*, *Poirot*, *The Victoria Wood Show*, *Harry*, and most recently as a conscientious Security guard in *Degrees of Error*.

Margaret Houston Léocadie

Theatre includes Anne Bronte in *Bronte* at the Cockpit Theatre, Mina in *Dracula* and Amanda in *Private Lives* at the Water Rats Theatre, Fleur Marsden in *Wodehouse* at the Theatre Royal Plymouth, the Lush *Diamonds and Roses* at Salisbury Playhouse, Princess Ozma in *Patchwork Girl of Oz* at Watford Palace Theatre, *Follies* and *Merrily we Roll Along* at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

Television: *Omnibus* (BBC1), *Wodehouse* (BBC2) and *Ten Glorious Years* (BBC1).

Recordings: The title roles on demos for the musicals *Mary Queen of Scots* and *Orlando*.



Helping the GST

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Lincoln Hudson
Scaevola

Lincoln graduated from Mountview Theatre School in 1991.

Theatre includes: *Sister Feelings* by Alan Ayckbourn, *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov, *Badin the Bold* at the Old Red Lion Theatre Club, Islington for the Tantalus Theatre company, Gepetto in *Pinocchio* and the Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz* at the Gaiety Theatre, Isle of man.

Other credits include *Nine* and *Guy Fawkes* for West End Theatre Works, Simeon in *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the London Palladium for the Really Useful Theatre Company, Hancock in *Hancock's Last Half Hour* for Relative chaos Productions and *Hot Stuff* for Bill Kenwright Productions.

Patrick Jamieson
Albin

Chevalier de la Tremouille

Recent theatre includes: Narrator in *Joseph And His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Leatherhead), *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (Orange Tree, Richmond), and *Valentine's Day* (Globe, West End).

Patric had appeared with *Newsrevue* at the Canal Cafe and Edinburgh Festival, and in *the Little Tramp* - a new musical about the life of Charlie Chaplin at the Horseshoe Theatre, Basingstoke.

He has also toured nationally with the musical *Evita*, before playing the role of Lord Alfred Douglas in *Oscar*, at the Old Fire Station, Oxford. More recently at Christmas

Patrick appeared in Hounslow in a Christmas Musical called *Jack and The Beanstalk*, playing a golden Harp !

Bernard Kay
Prospère

Early: Trained Old Vic London.

Cheeky: Age 24 - learned, rehearsed and played Macbeth in 20 hours.

Lucky: Haven't taken a civilian job for over 40 years.

Reppy: Scores of parts in various reps - where have they all gone?

Telly: Who was the idiot who turned down *Z Cars*? Killed Ida Barlow in *The Street*. Known as the 'J.R.' of *Crossroads*.

Filmically: *Dr Zhivago*, *Darling Lili*, *the Hunting Party* (The English Actors dream - a Western), *Trog* - Joan Crawford's last film.

Lately: *Galileo* at the Young Vic, *Glendower* at the RSC, French King in *Fruit 'n' Fibre*, Werner in *Minna von Barnhelm* at the GST '94, another nasty in *The Street*, Tour of *Beaux Stratagem* (Boniface), Polonius and a one-armed gravedigger in the Richard Dreyfuss *Hamlet* at the Old Birmingham Rep.



backing trio - The Blues Sisters and most recently the role of Miranda in *The Tempest* for Changeinspeak Theatre company at the B.A.C.

The Green Parakeet is Amandas first production for the Greenwich Studio Theatre.

David Plater Lighting Designer

Trained in lighting design at RADA, where he lit productions of *The Shelter*, *The Bright and Bold Design* and *Camille*.

Shows lit for the Greenwich Studio Theatre are: *Minna Von Barnhelm*, *Erasmus Montanus*, *And Women Must Weep*, *The Storytellers*, *Cock-a-doodle-do*, *The Nun*, *The Green Parakeet*, *A Spanner in the Works* and *The Will*.

Other lighting designs include the musical *The Relationship* (Riverside Studios Hammersmith), *Entertaining Strangers* (Lyric Studio Hammersmith), *Oliver* for the NYMT (George Square Theatre Edinburgh/Adam Smith Theatre Kircaldy), *The Fox and Dead Fish* (Man in the Moon), *The Cherry Orchard* (Capitol Theatre Horsham), *Girls were made to Love and Kiss* (Old Fire Station Oxford), and Rossini's Opera *Count Ory* for New Sussex Opera (Gardener Theatre Brighton and Devonshire Park Theatre Eastbourne) and *Workshop 95* for London Royal Academy of Dance.

David is Deputy Chief Electrician at the Donmar Theatre.

Ray Polhill Balthazar

Ray returns to theatre after six years of working in television. Ray may be remembered as Jacko Jackbridge in the Television Series called *Waterfront Beat* set in Liverpool for Phil Redmond, the Bike Boy Angel from *2 .4 . Children* or Raquel's footballer boyfriend, Wayne Farrel, in *Coronation Street*.

He trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art, leaving in 1986. He then returned to being a comedian his career before training to be an actor. He then toured in Kent, with *Canterbury Tales*, *The Bear* and *Jack the Giant Killer*. His other T.V. performances include: *The Bill*, *London's Burning*, *Casualty* and *Trainer*.

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* (Lilian Baylis Theatre), *On Air* (Scarlet Theatre Company - assistant designer), *Idiot's Waltz* (Finborough Theatre - nominated for 1994 London Fringe Award). Opera: *Robinson Crusoe* (Opera Della Luna 1993 and 1994 tours). Dance: *Comedy and Tragedy* - Warnham Dance Company, Hawth Theatre for Channel 4.

Most recent work as Costume Supervisor for *Once on this Island* (Island Theatre).

THE GREEN PARAKEET

CAST

Prospère, landlord of the Green Parakeet

Grasset, ex-actor and revolutionary

Lebrêt, a tailor

Police Inspector

Grain, a murderer

Scaevola, actor

Flipotte, actress

Georgette, actress

Balthasar, actor

Gaston, actor

Étienne, actor

Henri, actor (April 6th - 19th)

(April 20th - May 7th)

Léocadie, actress at the Porte St. Martin

François, Vicomte de Nogeant

Albin, Chevalier de la Tremouille

Émile, Duc de Cadignan

Séverine, Marquise de Lansac

Bernard Kay

Lawrence Barber

Neil Bull

Joe Fraser

Eddie Marsan

Lincoln Hudson

Claire Machin

Alison Ruffelle

Ray Polhill

Danny Charles

Aiden Waters

Stash Kirkbride

Steven Elder

Margaret Houston

Rory Campbell

Patrick Jamieson

James Allen

Amanda Nolan

The action takes place in The Green Parakeet Public House
in Paris on July 14th 1789.



THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director

Set Design

Lighting Design

Sound Design

Costume Design

Fight Direction

Casting Associate

Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Lighting Operator

Set Construction

Set Painting

Costumes made by

Additional costumes made by

Publicity Design

Photography

Margarete Forsyth

Katherine Richards

David Plater

Rhys Davies

Beeke Ropers

armed - Charles Dale

unarmed - Bill Bridges

Julia Crampsie

Laura Allan

Annabelle Comyn

Renato Nadal

Renato Nadal

Richard Clayton

Margarete Forsyth

Vicky Emptage

Beeke Ropers

Tim Heywood

Vicky Emptage

Camilla Watson



Beeke Ropers
Costume Design/ Wardrobe

Beeke first started making and designing costumes during three years at Goldsmiths College. Since her graduation in 1991 she has worked on several fringe productions including *The Life of Galileo* directed by Margarete 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 has designed costumes for all the GST's productions of *Minna Von Barnhelm*, *Erasmus Montanus*, *And Women Must Weep*, *The Storytellers*, *The Nun*, *The Green Parakeet*, *A Spanner in the Works* and *The Will*.

Alison Rufelle
Georgette

Alison's theatre work includes: *Top of the Town* (Etcetera Theatre); *Fiddler on the Roof* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *The Doctor's Dilemma* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *A Dream of People*, *Coriolanus*, *As You Like It*, *Earwig* (RSC Stratford/Barbican); *The Admirable Crichton*, *The Sleeping Prince* (Theatre Royal Haymarket) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (national tour). She is also a founder member of *The Broadway Babies* (Donmar Warehouse). Alison's recent television credits include: *The House of Eliott*, *Between the Lines* and *The Bill*. On film she has appeared in *Under*

Suspicion and *Just for Diamond*. Alison trained with the Sylvia Young Theatre School.

Aiden Waters
Etienne

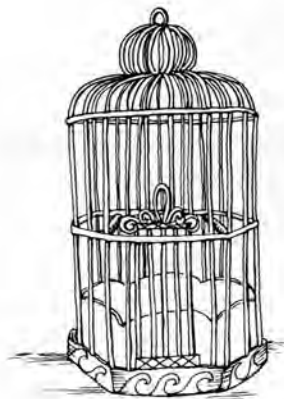
Theatre credits include: seasons at The Opera House and Library Theatre (Manchester), Belgrade Theatre (Coventry), Theatre Royal (York), West Yorkshire Playhouse (Leeds) and The English Theatre of Hamburg.

Middle and Far East Tour of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In London: Open Air Theatre (Regents Park), *Miss Saigon* (Drury Lane), *Elegies for Angels*, *Punks and Raging Queens* (Criterion Theatre).

Television includes: *All at Sea* and *Temptation of Eileen Hughes* for the BBC.

Film includes: *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie* for Misfit Films.



Stash Kirkbride

Henri

(April 6th - April 19th)

Theatre includes: *The Candidate* - a one man show (Man in the Moon Theatre, the title role in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (Grace Theatre), Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (Pentameters), Petruchio *Taming of the Shrew* (Hen and Chickens), Oscar Linquist *Sweet Charity* (Man in the Moon Theatre), Stanislas, opposite Lisa Harrow, *The Eagle Has Two Heads* (Lilian Baylis Theatre), Andy Hobart *The Star Spangled Girl* (Grace Theatre), Reviere in *Suzanna Andler*, with Susan Hampshire, (BAC) and has just finished singing in the revue *A Swinging Affair* (Kings Head and BAC)

Stash co-founded the Just So Theatre Company and in 1993 set up Mytton Crest Theatre Company who's patron, Susannah York directed the play at the Lilian Baylis Theatre.

He also co-produced four of the projects above and is currently working on the staging of a play with Dan Crawford at the Kings Head Theatre.

Claire Machin

Flipotte

Having recently left the cast of *Les Misérables*, Claire has been involved in George Stiles production of *The Three Musketeers* (a new musical). Prior to this she appeared in *The Sound of Music* in Lincoln and the National Tour of *My Fair Lady*

starring Edward Fox and directed by Simon Callow. Other theatre work includes: Isobel in the National Tour of *Pirates of Penance*, July in *Annie*, Linda in *Blood Brothers*, Lily in *Red Peppers*, soloist in *The Roy Hudd Variety Show* and *Late Joys* at the Players' Theatre.

Television includes: Sharon in *The Rite*, Miss Cawley's Maid in *Vanity Fair* and Lucy in *Miss Marple* all for the BBC.

Eddie Marsen

Grain

Eddie has been a regular member of the GST company performing in the inaugural season: Just in *Minna Von Barnhelm*, Jacob in *Erasmus Montanus* and Eduard in *The Storytellers*. Other theatre include: Caligula in Albert Camus' *Caligula* (Antic Hay Theatre Company), Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* in the open-air (Oxford), the Ghost and First Player in *Hamlet* (Guilford) and most recently Eddie appeared as the comic brother, Antonio, in Chipping Norton's Pantomime *Puss in Boots*, the Fascist Gangleader in *Eastenders* and in a Short Film for the RCA.

Amanda Nolan

Séverine

Amanda's previous credits include National tours of the Musicals a *Chorus Line* and *Grease*, a European Tour playing the role of Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show*, two series of *The Brian Conley Show* for L.W.T. as one third of a

For The Greenwich Studio Theatre

Artistic Director
Associate Director
Administrator
Casting Associate
Front of House Manager
Stage Manager
Wardrobe

Margarete Forsyth
Julian Forsyth
Antonia Loyd
Julia Crampsie
Helga Bertazzo
Renato Nadal
Beeke Ropers

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:

Bill Bridges, Sarah Bridges, Ellie Emptage, Charles Fox, Neil Fraser, Susan Grange-Bennett, Delphine Lettau, 'Richard I' Public House, Royal Hill, Royal National Theatre, Anna Sayburn, Young & Co. Brewery

And all those people who gave their time and talents for free, to make the costumes and set and to refurbish the theatre.

Chair Sponsors

Mrs C Johnstone, Karl Pfeiffer, Teo Maler, Gisela Ropers, Marianne Eggers, Nigel Forsyth, Joan & Mark Forsyth, Nicola Fawcett, Cornelia Graffam-Lewis, Dietrich L. Graffam, Christopher and Elke Graffam, Professor Dr. Wolfgang Lottes, Schlaepfer, Theaterkreis Bortfeld, Transtelex Plc, Dudley Dods, John Humphries and Nicole Canuet, Jane Wynn Owen, Deira Cooper, Peter and Suz Buckhurst, Professor Dr. Hölting, Sigrd and Herbert Bohn, Frank Hübner, Jörg Stegert, Ray Jones (Centre Stage), Rudolf and Martina Beck, Peter-Paul Schnierer, Ted and Margaret Batley, Winnie Moyes, Axel Treu, Eileen and Pete Chick, Trudi Lawrence.

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The Green Parakeet in Schnitzler's oeuvre

Arthur Schnitzler was born in Vienna on May 15th 1862. He initially studied medicine and, from 1886, worked as a doctor in the Imperial General Hospital. Schnitzler's energetic literary career began in 1888 with the cycle of one act plays *Anatol*, with 8 different scenes published between 1889 and 1891. Immediately, a characteristic feature of Schnitzler's whole oeuvre is apparent: the individual episodes, which depict various events from Anatol's love life, do not constitute a well-defined plot, but are loosely connected scenes related only through the figure of the eponymous hero. Of the characters, Hugo von Hofmannsthal says, in his foreword to the published edition of *Anatol*, "They are precocious, tender and sad." Through them Schnitzler gives an impressionistic portrayal of the decadent bourgeois society of turn of the century Vienna.

In the culture of the *fin de siècle*, the Viennese bourgeoisie is dominated by a weary resignation and mellowness which reflect both the sense of the coming end of a 'golden' era and the loyalty of society to outmoded forms and traditions. It is this ambivalence, above all, which is embodied in Schnitzler's characters, partly through their lightness of being, and partly through their consistently melancholy attitude to life. Again and again in his plays Schnitzler allows dream and reality to merge.

The apparently superficial gloss of these plays recalls the French drawing-room play of the 19th Century: pleasant salon conversations, which never manage to conceal the scepticism and the uncertainties, the weariness of life and the longing for death.

The one-acter *The Green Parakeet*, therefore, is very untypical of Schnitzler's themes in his works as a whole. It is the only play which Schnitzler set in a clear historical context: it is set on the evening of July 14th 1789 in the dubious tavern *The Green Parakeet*. The action starts in the late afternoon and ends shortly after the storming of the Bastille. Throughout the play, there are references to historical personages and events reflecting the course of the French Revolution. But even so, it cannot be regarded as a traditional historical drama. In contrast to the historical drama, history is here used not to show what happened and to represent the past, but to illuminate the present of the writer. It becomes clear that the society of the French aristocracy on the eve of the Revolution portrayed in the *Green Parakeet* shows parallels in structures and attitudes with the Viennese bourgeoisie of the late 19th Century. And through these parallels Schnitzler implies the historical development of Austria-Hungary, both the decline of the Empire and the social upheaval brought about by the First World War.

Along with the disintegration of traditional historical drama, the period between Naturalism and Expressionism (1890-1915) saw the development of new forms and styles. Schnitzler's plays, in particular, can no longer be adequately described by the traditional genres of comedy and tragedy. A combination of various stylistic elements is typical of Schnitzler's work and he uses them to develop new genres. *The Green Parakeet*, where he employs the Baroque metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* with the motif of the play within a play, marks a new phase in the development of modern drama. Schnitzler consciously places the history of the French Revolution in a theatrical context to show that history is nothing but a well staged play. The result is that the audience is often unable to distinguish between play and reality. And as is shown in the course of the play, the events escape the control of the actors. The play becomes reality. The adopted roles outstrip the control of their actors.

Schnitzler's oeuvre, then, already hints at the 20th Century view of history, which culminates in the Absurd, and finds its highest expression in Beckett's *Endgame*.

Beate Reinemuth
(translated by Peter Christian)

Translator's note

When the Times theatre critic Jeremy Kingston came to review our production of four short plays by Arthur Schnitzler at the beginning of this year, he was kind enough to suggest that we take a look at the same author's *Der grüne Kakadu* - *The Green Parakeet* (or *Cockatoo*, as an earlier translation has it). We knew several of Schnitzler's plays and were familiar with their typical turn-of-the-century Viennese milieu, populated in equal measure by representatives of bourgeois society and bohemia. But we had never read *The Green Parakeet* and were intrigued by the title. A feathered protagonist? Schnitzler's experiment with symbolism, perhaps, inspired by Ibsen's *Wild Duck*? A play about ornithology? With an adjacent aviary, affording challenging opportunities for a sound designer? But no, *The Green Parakeet* turned out to be the name of a pub, and a play about the French Revolution.

Ever since we had tried to stage Georg Büchner's epic *Danton's Death* in a specially commissioned version by Peter Christian in the diminutive Young Vic Studio in 1987 - a production that was a sell-out success but came close to causing a collective nervous breakdown for the director, translator, stage manager, Danton, Robespierre and everyone else involved, we had wanted to have another go at involving a theatre audience in the events of 1789 and

beyond without having to continuously switch the action from the Jacobin Club to the National Assembly to a street to a bedroom to a prison cell and finally to the tumbril, the scaffold and the guillotine. In short, we needed a play that would be a microcosm of events happening on a vast stage, powered by a sense of people improvising dangerously, creating a new social and political order from one day to the next.

The black comedy *The Green Parakeet* turned out to be that play. (The debate about Parakeet or Cockatoo was resolved when a recent visitor to Paris sent us a card from a restaurant in the Place de Clichy - *Le Perroquet Vert*.)

This version does not depart sufficiently from the original to be called an adaptation, but there have been a few textual additions and cuts. Schnitzler has 22 speaking characters plus numerous non-speaking aristocrats, actors and citizens of Paris. So many characters in the play pretend to be something other than they are that any additional confusion for the audience through the doubling of actors in more than one role was quite out of the question. The calibre of performers we required for the individual roles demanded that some of the parts - notably Balthasar, the actor who pretends to be a pimp, and the "pickpockets" Gaston and Etienne - be enlarged beyond Schnitzler's original conception. Séverine, the beautiful Marquise whose curiosity about *The Green Parakeet* draws her away from the tumultuous events happening outside to witness Henri's final performance, should really be accompanied by her husband and her lover, but there simply wasn't room for them on our tiny stage, and some of their lines have been reallocated to other characters.

Finally, we felt that in our intimate space it would be wrong to end the play as abruptly and noisily as Schnitzler does (with the escape of the beleaguered aristocrats and the words of the *sans-culotte*: "We'll catch up with them all eventually." We have therefore added a short coda, and hope Arthur Schnitzler will not turn in his grave.

Julian Forsyth

Le Perroquet Vert

RESTAURANT

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