

GREENWICH STUDIO THEATRE

The Will

By Pierre Marivaux

23rd February 1995 – 26th March 1995

Translated by Michael Sadler

Directed by Margarete Forsyth

PROGRAMME

The Greenwich Studio Theatre Company
Presents

The Will

by
Pierre Marivaux

Translated by Michael Sadler
Directed by Margarete Forsyth



Opening February 23rd 1995

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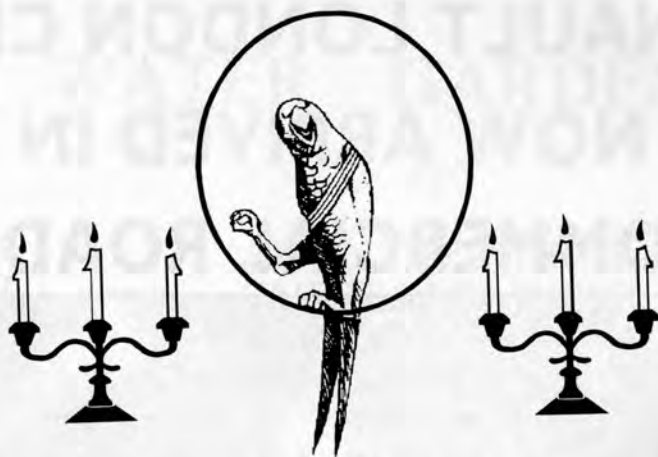
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The Greenwich Studio Theatre Company
presents
the return by popular demand of

The Green Parakeet

by **Arthur Schnitzler**

translated by Julian Forsyth
directed by Margarete Forsyth

April 6th - May 7th

Tuesday to Sunday at 8pm

14th July 1789. A seedy pub in the slums of Paris where the Landlord employs actors to portray criminal lowlife for the amusement of his aristocratic guests, who enjoy rubbing shoulders with supposed pimps, prostitutes, pickpockets and murderers. Outside things are hotting up around the Bastille and the beginnings of the French Revolution gradually intrude upon the illusory world of the theatre/pub, with catastrophic consequences.

THE COMPANY

Vicky Emptage Co- Designer

Vicky studied at Middlesex University and is an established designer who has been part of the GST team since the beginning. Her work for the GST includes set painting and poster design for all their previous productions.

Away from the theatre she has illustrated many books and produces a range of designer stationery and gift wrap.

Margarete Forsyth Director/Designer

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 1993/4) which she also translated, *The Nun*, *The Green Parakeet* and *A Spanner in the Works*. As a designer Margarete created the sets for the GST's

Erasmus Montanus and *Minna Von Barnhelm*.

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

Julian Forsyth The Marquis

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 *The Green Parakeet*, and played Major Tellheim in *Minna Von Barnhelm* and Gilbert & Dr Witte in *And Women Must Weep*.

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 productions of *The Blue Angel* and *Measure for Measure* for the RSC, Wedekind's *Lulu* and Howard Barker's *Scenes From An Execution* for Ian McDiarmid at the Almeida, 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*.



Sallyanne Law *Hortense*

After leaving the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 1981, Sallyanne has had an extensive career in television and films. Her TV appearances include *Flying into the Wind*, *The Agatha Christie Hour*, *A Time to Dance*, *The Glory Boys* and *The Clinger*.

Film appearances include: *Party Party* and *Willow*.

Recently she went to Canada to play The Duchess of York in CBS's production of *The Women of Windsor*.



Illona Linthwaite *The Countess*

In 1994 Illona went to Northern California to play *Shirley Valentine*. She then returned to play Sister Christine in *The Nun* by Diderot at the GST before going to the Traverse Edinburgh for Plaine Clothes' production of *Wolf* by Michael Bosworth.

London Theatre includes the National Theatre (*Phaedra Britannica*), RSC (*Outskirts*), King's Head, Soho-Poly. Most recently Illona played George in

Little Love by Stephen Fagan at the Lyric, Hammersmith, Cecilia in *Democracy* by Joseph Brodsky at the Gate and *Anna on Anna* by Adrian Mitchell at The Greenwich Theatre and on tour in Japan and in the United States.

Films include - *The Hiding Place* and *The Little Drummer Girl*. BBC work includes many radio plays, and for television two Plays For Today - *Night People* and *No Defence*, *All The World's A Stage*, and one play in their series *Shadow Of The Noose* - seen last year.

She recently lived in California for a year where she directed and ran Shakespeare workshops. She also toured her show *Ain't I A Woman*. The material in this has formed the basis of an anthology of poetry (same title) which she has edited. (Virago 1987). She directs occasionally and is an Associate Director at the Drama Studio, London.



David Plater
Lighting Designer

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

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

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 & Dead Fish* (Man in the Moon), *The Cherry Orchard* (Capitol Theatre Horsham), *Girls were made to Love and Kiss* (Old Fire Station Oxford), & Rossini's Opera *Count Ory* for New Sussex Opera, (Gardener Theatre Brighton & Tour).

David is currently Deputy Chief Electrician at the Donmar Theatre in the West End.



Charlotte Randle
Lisette

Trained at Webber Douglas Academy. Member of Theatre Laboratory, Charlotte has performed at Heaven and Café de Paris.

Films include: Alison in *The Millers Tale* shown on B.B.C. 2, Ms Robson in *The Token King* shown Channel 4, Clare in *The Evil Eye*.

She has also played the part of Uma Thurman from *Pulp Fiction* in the next Massive Attack video!



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* and *A Spanner in the Works*.

Jeremy Spriggs
Chevalier

Jeremy is a graduate of Cambridge University and Guildhall which he left in 1992. Since then theatre work on the London & Edinburgh Fringe and on tour includes: *Hamlet* (Claudius and the Ghost), *Merchant of Venice* (Bassanio), *In Praise of Love* (Sebastian Crutwell), *The Odyssey* (Zeus and Eurylachus), *Who killed Tchaikovsky* (Jakobi), *Boardroom Shuffle* (Peter Blake) and *Deadly Replay* (Detective Sergeant Quinn).

Radio includes several plays for B.B.C Radio 4 including: *The Lintel* and *Good Morning, Midnight* (Director Jane Morgan).

Two short films and several corporate video and voice-over contracts. A director of *Sound and Fury* with Alex Chisholm in whose *Romeo and Juliet* at the DOC in January 1995 he played Mercutio.



Stephen Stigwood
Lepine

Trained at Bretton Hall and Webber-Douglas. Received the TIME OUT Best Actor Award 1993/94 for his performances as Alan Strang in *Equus* and Thomas Chatterton. He previously appeared at the Greenwich Studio as Guildenstern in *Hamlet* and Etienne in *The Green Parakeet*.

Stephen has written and performed in two one-man shows *The Hydra* (Barons' Court) and *Charles Dickens* The Christmas Tour (Virginia, U.S.A.). He will soon appear in a new BBC TV Drama *For Valour*.

Harrison Freeman

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The Will

by
Pierre Marivaux
Translated by Michael Sadler

CAST
In order of appearance

Lisette
Lepine
Hortense
Chevalier
Marquis
Countess



Charlotte Randle
Stephen Stigwood
Sallyanne Law
Jeremy Spriggs
Julian Forsyth
Illona Linthwaite

The action of the play takes place in a conservatory
attached to the Countess's country house.



THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Director
Set Design

Lighting Design
Sound

Costume Design
Casting Associate
Stage Manager

Lighting Operator
Set Construction

Publicity Design
Photography



Margarete Forsyth
Margarete Forsyth
Vicky Emptage
David Plater
Rhys Davies
Richard Clayton
Beeke Ropers
Julia Crampsie
Patricia Benecke
Joel Johnson
Renato Nadal
Vicky Emptage
Margarete Forsyth
Renato Nadal
Richard Clayton
Helga Bertazzo
Giorgio Frare
Vicky Emptage
Camilla Watson

For The Greenwich Studio Theatre

Artistic Director
Associate Director
Administrator
Company Manager
Front of House Manager
Stage Manager
Wardrobe
Administration Team

Margarete Forsyth
Julian Forsyth
Antonia Loyd
Julia Crampsie
Helga Bertazzo
Renato Nadal
Beeke Ropers
Hannah Lindsay
Evelyn Costello

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, Jim Loyd, Sarah and Bill Bridges,
and Drings the Butchers

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

Chair Sponsors

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.....by making a donation to our heating fund

The auditorium and dressing rooms are unheated in the winter and uncooled in the Summer, making it far from ideal for audiences and artists alike. To provide the correct atmosphere means a heating & cooling system which will cost £2,500. We need help to raise this sum, therefore a donation box is situated in the Box Office.

***IF YOU ENJOYED THIS PRODUCTION PLEASE HELP
US TO ENSURE THE GST'S FUTURE.***

If you would like to help the GST or would like any further information on either of these opportunities, please contact us on 081 858 2862, or fill in the form available in the foyer.

Pierre Marivaux 1688 - 1763

So little is known of the life of Pierre Carlet, later known as Marivaux, that there is scarcely enough material for a biography even from his best years. He was the son of a finance official in Riom, a small town in the Auvergne. Nothing precise is known of his early experiences but in 1710 he came to Paris, apparently to study law, though it quickly emerged that his real aim was to establish himself as a writer. A judicious marriage - whether or not he married for love we don't know - brought him a substantial dowry, but he then lost all his money in a financial crash in 1720. From then on he tried, in the absence of any kind of aristocratic patronage, to earn a living as a novelist, critic and playwright. His plays brought him very little money. His wife died in 1723, leaving him a daughter who eventually became a nun. Her father was too poor to pay for her annuity himself, and a friendly aristocrat provided the necessary funds. From the 1740s he lived with a certain Mlle de Saint-Jean, who seems to have been a little less poor than he was, and who supported him until his death in 1763.

Marivaux' life is singularly lacking in the colourful adventures and polemic intrigues that are so common in the biographies of other French literary figures of the 18th century. From a small collection of anecdotes we gather that he was a quiet, witty, dapper, pleasant and obliging man, a touch more fastidious than most, who valued peace and privacy, shied away from personal controversy and was not very good at blowing his own trumpet. Though not indifferent to criticism, his response to it was always to withdraw, never to counter-attack. Though he sympathised with the progressive social views of his Enlightenment contemporaries Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, he drew the line at their attacks on Christianity and the established church.

He loved frequenting the salons of such aristocratic patrons as the Marquise de Lambert, where he was a welcome guest. In the salons

everything could be said or at least suggested, provided it was said or suggested with grace. According to witnesses, Marivaux would sit listening to the animated conversation on literary, social and philosophical topics and watch for his turn to throw in such aphorisms as he had been carefully preparing in his mind. His literary works are a perfect expression of the ideals of the salon - grace, lucidity and elegance - and the overriding impression of his life, notwithstanding his financial difficulties, is of a man at ease with his times.

Commedia dell'arte, the pre-eminence of Moliere, and the Italian Theatre in Paris

The genius of Molière, who had died in 1673, still dominated French theatre well into the 18th century. His plays were the staple diet of the *Comédie Française*, and most of the leading playwrights of the early part of the century blindly followed the comic tradition that he had bequeathed. That tradition required the larger-than-life portrayal in the central character of a particular folly or vice. The miser, the misanthrope, the social climber, the religious hypocrite, the hypochondriac, the atheist are driven in Molière's plays by obsessions that become the mainspring for a comic action laced with social satire. To these types Molière's 18th century imitators, in France and elsewhere, added other obsessives: the gambler, the backbiter, the stubborn man, the prude, the pedant, the distracted man. The *Comédie Française* regarded itself as the temple of this drama of "types", and in 1720, when Marivaux began writing plays, it was the obvious outlet for comedy. But Marivaux chose to give his plays a troupe of Italian players performing at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Both Molière and Marivaux, in very different ways, drew on and developed the traditions of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. The *commedia* performances were not presentations of finished texts but scenarios within which the actors were free to improvise. The characters were confined to a small set of permanent types - romantic lovers, comic servants, a mean father who obstructs the lovers'

happiness etc., and the action embroiled all these figures in a madcap plot of extravagant adventures, mistaken identities and assumed disguises, without any pretensions to a moral or social "message", but with plenty of satirical gags, suggestive poses, indecent gestures, acrobatic stunts and other comedy business to spice the entertainment.

Molière's hypochondriac Argan, miserly Harpagon, socially ambitious Monsieur Jourdain, gullible Orgon, all obsessive fathers anxious to sacrifice their daughters' happiness by marrying them respectively to medicine, money, nobility and religion, are natural derivatives from the *commedia* types of the *Dottore* and the *Pantalone*. The activities in character of these Molière creations overshadow their role as fathers and relegate to the margin the intrigue by which the romantic lovers are ultimately to be married. Meanwhile the comic servants of these characters, derived from the *commedia* figures Harlequin and Colombine, manipulate their masters and divert us with troubles and wisdom of their own. Marivaux, while giving even more prominence to the servants, took from the *commedia* what Molière had neglected, and brought the lovers to the fore, examining the complex nature of their feelings for each other where both Molière and the *commedia* had taken those feelings for granted, as unworthy of deeper analysis.

In the course of the 17th century, the Italian Theatre had established itself in Paris both as an exponent of the *commedia* and as a popular alternative to the rarified atmosphere of the *Comédie Française*, and towards the end of the century the Italians had successfully expanded their repertory by commissioning French dramatists to write comic scenes in French to be presented in the middle of their improvised action. In 1696 the Italians encountered royal disfavour - stoked perhaps in part by the jealousy of the established *Comédie Française* actors who resented the competition, and by the religious clique at court who disapproved of the indecent nature of the performances - and were forced to close their theatre and depart. However, they were allowed to return to Paris after an enforced exile of 19 years, built a stage for themselves in the Hôtel de Bourgogne immediately started performing entire plays in French written specially for them

by French authors. With their roots in the *commedia* and ability to improvise they provided a much-needed alternative to the performance style of the *Comédie Française*, where the presentation of the classics had become formalised, even with respect to intonation and gestures. The slight Italian pronunciation of the actors seems to have become not only accepted but fashionable. It was here in the Hôtel de Bourgogne that Marivaux found his spiritual home. Though he never became a professional man of the theatre like Molière, never acting in, directing or producing a play, he supplied the Italians between 1720 and 1740 with all his best work - 18 from his total of 30 comedies. The Italians were enriched more in reputation than hard cash during the 20 years in which they performed Marivaux' works. Their acting technique must have benefitted greatly from the demands made on them by Marivaux' language, but though the comedies were well received, they could not compete for audience appeal with the ballets, fireworks and *commedia* extravaganzas to which the Italians had to resort in order to survive.

Marivaux' reputation as a dramatist

Before Marivaux, French and Italian comedy had always bustled with activity. There was little time for psychological detail. Marivaux chose to drastically reduce the scope of his comic plots, and thus make time for the close inspection of complicated emotions. In doing so he became above all a master of nuance. Having few characters on stage, and only a short emotional journey to go with them - e.g. from the awakening of love to its declaration - he could stay with them, remain intimate with them, minute by minute, step by step. Awakening love - *la surprise de l'amour*, to use the title of one of his plays - is the emotion he examines most closely and most frequently in his work, though he is concerned, rather like Jane Austen, not so much with love in general as with the specific matter of love's relation to vanity - *amour propre* - the ego's self-esteem. Marivaux, like Austen, is tolerant of vanity as he is of most human foibles, believing that satisfied vanity, like a sound income, is a natural ingredient in marriage. "I have probed all the corners of the human heart in which

vanity can hide itself, and each of my comedies is intended to drag it from one of its many hiding-places." So Marivaux wrote of his work in what seems to have been a rare example of self-promotion.

Towards the end of his lifetime the plays showed every sign of falling to dust, only to be rediscovered in, of all times, the turbulent years of the Revolution, when the *Comédie Française* inherited them from the defunct Italian Theatre and ad hoc theatrical companies began to spring up all over the place.

Recent favourable critical assessments of Marivaux' talent, along with a number of startlingly successful productions of his plays since the Second World War, have led to his being generally acknowledged today as the most original French dramatist of the 18th century. But such a view differs considerably from the relative disparagement of his work by his own contemporaries. Voltaire, never one to sit on the fence, was particularly damning: "*Il a connu tous les sentiers du coeur sans trouver la grande route.*" ("He became familiar with all the paths and byways of the human heart without ever discovering the main road.") Lovers of Marivaux today will praise his supremely delicate handling, within the framework of a simple plot, of the most intricate workings of the human psyche. His contemporary Voltaire, a great polemicist defying church and state in the campaign for enlightenment and progressive ideas, was clearly put out by the sight of a talented writer "trifling" full time in such matters as love, without ever participating in the epic battles of the day, and memorably accused Marivaux of "weighing flies' eggs in scales of gossamer".

Though his plays were regularly performed by noble amateurs in their châteaux, and he lived to see four collected editions of his plays through the presses, Marivaux never succeeded in his lifetime in extending his success beyond the *Théâtre Italien* to the established French theatre, though it was not for want of trying. Ten of his plays (including his one tragedy) went to the *Théâtre Français*, but only one was a (limited) success. The lightness of his prose and his unusual talent for shades of feeling required delicate handling, and the French actors, who liked oratory, bold theatrical effects, and idiosyncratic

characters such as Molière had created, lacked the knack or judgement to stage them properly.

Perhaps partly as a result of this rough handling, the term *Marivaudage* was quickly coined to signify a precious, exquisite and ultimately futile banter about insignificant details of feeling. As Marivaux, like Moliere, has had many subsequent imitators lacking his own taste and artistry, the term has stuck in a way unfairly harmful to his reputation, though it can equally be used approvingly today, now that his standing is higher than it ever was, and he is perceived as having been far ahead of his time.

Perhaps Voltaire was too busy to consider that flies' eggs are worth weighing too, and that few artists are dextrous enough to make scales, or anything else, of gossamer. Voltaire had a high opinion of his own plays, which are now entirely forgotten, and the most popular playwright of the day, Beaumarchais, author of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*, now has to be propped up by Mozart and Rossini, but Marivaux seems today to be as firmly settled in the French pantheon as Molière himself.



The Will

Le Legs (the legacy, or the will) was first performed (at the *Théâtre Français*) in 1736 and, despite being largely neglected elsewhere, has become one of the most frequently performed of Marivaux' comedies in the repertoire of the *Comédie Française*. Marivaux must have felt uncertain about the play's reception, for he did not acknowledge authorship at its premiere. *La Bibliothèque Française*, reviewing the piece, chided the author for letting all the characters positively "brim over" with wit. Even the servants, Lépine and Lisette, speak at times with a polish that, in the original French, is scarcely distinguishable from the elegance of their masters. Perhaps this play demonstrates better than any of his other comedies Marivaux' unique ability to spin out highly polished dialogue in a situation where hardly any action exists. The positions of most of the six characters are clearly stated early in the play and do not change much in the course of it.

The translation by Michael Sadler used in this production (published by Methuen) is freer than many other translations of Marivaux. It is much more idiomatic than the original, and spiced with witty stage directions that bring colour and contour to the setting and the characters. Though some purists may wince at the occasional anachronism, we suspect that a more faithful rendition of Marivaux' rhythms and polished elegance (into what many Frenchmen still consider our incurably barbaric English language) would have been less enjoyable for a modern English audience than Mr. Sadler's wonderfully actable version.

Julian Forsyth

Acknowledgements:

Love and Time in the Theatre of Marivaux by Barbara Buhler Walsh
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