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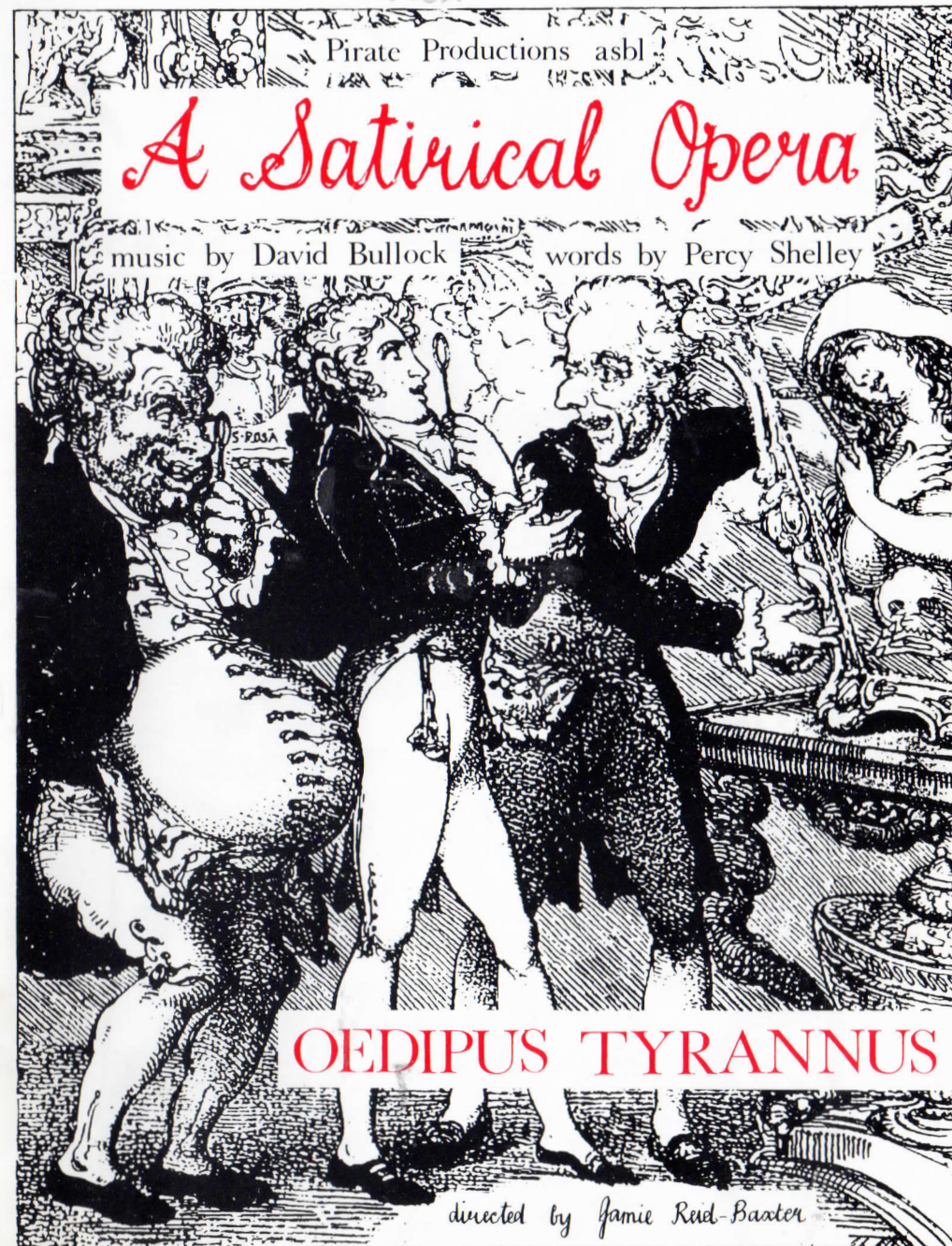
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Primary School



at Théâtre Municipal Esch-sur-Alzette
on 26th, 27th March 1992 at 20.00 hrs

Il cantuccio

RESTAURANT - PIZZERIA - TERRASSE



14, av. de la Faiencerie
L-1510 Luxembourg
Tel. 22 34 32

Welcome to the
WORLD PREMIERE
of
Shelley's
OEDIPUS TYRANNUS
a satirical opera, op. 52
by
David Bullock
in the
Bicentenary Year of the Poet's Birth
1992

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TILL ALL BE MADE LEVEL AGAIN!

- Percy Shelley, Pirate Productions, and Oedipus Tyrannus.

In his short life (August 1792 - July 1822), Percy Bysshe Shelley did more than most of us would manage in several life-times. In one of his poems on Love, he proclaimed that "all things in one another's being mingle", and this awareness that everything is interlinked and interdependent is the keynote of his life's work. Our production of his most outrageous text is the result of collaboration, cooperation and solidarity - a worthy celebration by an English-speaking music-theatre group of the Bicentenary of one of the finest poets in the language. Every individual contribution made to this show is essential, and as director and instigator, I would extend my personal thanks to the Chairman and Committee of Pirate Productions, and also ask you, our audience, to remember that your applause includes all those whom you will not see or hear on stage or in the orchestra pit - all the back-stage and back-up folk whose names are listed in this programme.

Nobody, I believe, really wants to be an anonymous unit in a faceless herd, for each of us knows full well that mankind is not "the swinish multitude" that the arch-reactionary Tory philosopher Edmund Burke dismissed us as being; we are mankind, each one of us, an infinity of individual personalities, faces, gifts and talents, and we have an inalienable right - and need - to be ourselves. This is something central to Shelley's text, and I have tried to make it so in the production, by means of the contrast between the ends of the two acts.

We cannot, of course, be ourselves on our own: "how can I die like a hero if there's no-one here?" Ego-maniacal solipsism leads just as straight to the denial of life as does mass totalitarianism. In order to know ourselves, we need to be known. We need families, friends, society itself; we need collective activities in which we can play our own part. And so we have things like Pirates, twelve years old and going strong. To each and every one who has made this production possible, humble thanks in a spirit of solidarity.

Oedipus Tyrannus is the third piece of music-theatre I have worked on with David Bullock, but this time the text is by a real poet - one of the greatest. Percy Shelley may have been through Eton and Oxford, but he combined his supreme lyric gifts with a ferocious egalitarianism and hatred of injustice that make his work rather more socially engaged than some of his fellow-countrymen seem to think a poet's should be. It was as a first year student at Aberdeen in 1973 that I first came across Shelley (and his spiritual brother William Blake). My interest had been aroused by the music of the English composer Havergal Brian. The future poet Tam Hubbard shared that interest, and did me his first cartoons of characters from Oedipus in 1974, for I was determined to stage this zany extravaganza... I even composed an overture for it. Mercifully, the production didn't happen. How could we, back then, have really grasped the depth and scale of Shelley's righteous fury and contempt for rulers who are unfit to govern? Oedipus is zany, of course; but it's also a profound work of genius.



S. GEORGE & the Dragon.

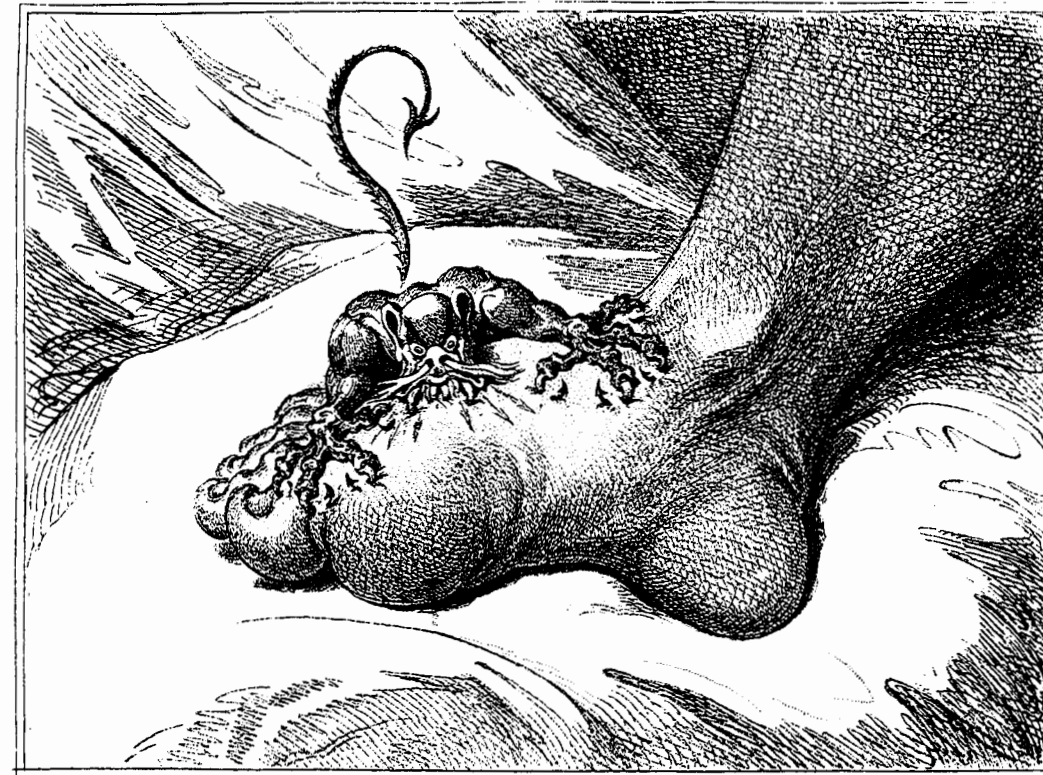
The Scottish (and indeed, the Welsh) Referendum débâcle of 1979 came as a savage shock to us all; our young hopes for our futures blasted by an establishment which simply changed the rules after the game started, and trampled the electorate underfoot. The aftermath, who was to last until quite recently, was so baleful that in 1980, I tried to mount Oedipus in Aberdeen, as a full-scale Alban-Berg-inspired opera by John MacKinnon, with stage and costume designs by Tam Hubbard. Some odd relics from that aborted project are on display in the theatre-bar.

But many more relics from those days are visible (and audible) in this Bicentenary production. David Bullock had never heard of Shelley's Oedipus, but he had grown up and studied in Manchester, and knew all about what lies behind Shelley's satire- the massacre of unarmed civilians demonstrating for electoral reform amid food-shortages and mass unemployment in August 1819 on St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, The Battle of Peterloo, as it was derisively dubbed, was only one of a series of tyrannical actions against the population carried out by Lord Castlereagh's government, while the bloated ruler, George of Hanover, built exotic palaces in Brighton, designed clothes for his coronation, and tried to divorce his estranged wife.

In Oedipus, the sheer scale of the monstrous injustice produces the victory of the oppressed - good proto-Marxian analysis. In their great chorus "Hail to thee, Famine!" the swine find solidarity with one another. In recent years, we have seen solidarity win the day in Czecho-Slovakia, Romania, even the streets of Moscow... Oedipus Tyrannus contains many levels and has multiple facets, and David and I have frequently extrapolated from what Shelley writes to provide a sounding picture of the deeper issues involved. Hence the ballet-interludes and the (shatteringly contrasted) endings of the acts. But not a word has been cut. I venture to think that the poet, himself one of "those radiant spirits who are still the standard-bearers in the van of Change" of whom Liberty sings, would have approved of this scenic realization of his dazzling amalgam of ancient Greek tragedy and comedy. Oedipus was originally inspired by Shelley's attempt to declaim his Ode to Liberty in competition with the furious grunting of a great herd of pigs for sale in an Italian fair. Aristophanes' Frogs sprang to mind, and then thoughts of the contemporary situation in Britain. Gout-swollen feet and tyrants led him to Sophocles and tragedy.

In Greek tragedy, the human protagonists are led to their fall by their own overweening pride, the hybris which makes them try to rival the Gods. The would-be gods of government, in their ruthless misuse of authority and oppressive exploitation of those whom they are supposed to serve, are no less doomed than Agamemnon or Creon. Lord Purganax knows he is dancing on the edge of the abyss, but unable to bring himself to institute reform, he embraces Lord Mammon's utter amorality. These creatures bring nemesis upon themselves - and all is made level again.

Dr. Jamie Reid-Baxter.



64. [14 May 1799]

The GOUT

Pub. May 14. 1799. by H. B. Smith. 67. St. James's Street.

THE ORCHESTRA

Notes from the composer...

A Satirical Opera? Without doubt, the most difficult technical challenge I've ever faced was to set these wonderful, radical words by Shelley, who incidentally, lived for a time in my own country, first in the Elan Vally, near Rhayadr, and then for a time in Porthmadog, in Gwynedd, running away from there after an alleged attack on his life by an unsympathetic shepherd.

Of course, the text is a send-up .. on one level, at least ... ridiculing theatrical and poetic convention as well as its offensive subject matter, the bloated heart and mind-less "aristocracy" in the literal wake of one of the English Tiananmen massacres, this at Peterloo, in Manchester. And therefore the music is ... on one level, at least ... a send-up of the conventions of that most ludicrous and "aristocratic" of entertainments (then, not now, diolch byth!) the OPERA! So you will certainly hear nearly-Mozart, with some nearly-Beethoven for the heavy bits, and quite a lot of nearly-Shostakovitch and nearly-(well, almost-) Verdi/Puccini as well. And all this nearly-beautiful music wasted on these utterly WORTHLESS "aristocrats"! the truly-noble, the poor, oppressed pigs who here reverse Orwell in advance, are given a more jazzy-blue-Gershwin-Weill treatment as befits their real and humble, down-trodden but triumphantly human status. OINK!

A bit artificial, perhaps? "Aristocratic" "classical" music versus the sounds of the gutter, the bar and maybe even the brothel? But then, to go to the theatre tends to be a rather artificial experience ...the real show is most definitely to be found in the audience!

A Satirical Opera, then, and in every dimension. There have, of course, been others. And with certain notorious exceptions, I do promise that every note is in fact my own, for better or worse, and that it is all meant to be MORE than just a send-up. Honestly! Something about meaning, and laughter, and tears, and smiles ... oh dear!

David Bullock.

Conducted by David Bullock

*****Leader Chris Birch *** 1st Violin Claude Fromageot*** 2nd Violin Anne Stemper, Lewis Guneratne *** Viola Wyn Guneratne, Sally Eborall *** Cello Céline Oeslick, Alegria Solana Ramos, Barbara Janssens *** Bass Tibor Loke ***Flute Julia Pruy ***Clarinet Alexander Hess *** Alto Sax Nicky Cross *** Trumpet Paul Barker *** Piano Yvonne Hay *** Keyboard Jackie Fleming *** Percussion Patrick Kessels *****



FAT GEORDIE AND THE MASQUE OF ANARCHY: the historical background

Oedipus Tyrannus is the most polished and resonant of a number of poetical works Shelley produced in 1819 and 1820 which directly concern themselves with the political situation in Britain. The rest are all worth reading, especially the long ballad The Masque of Anarchy, written immediately after the Peterloo massacre. George III having been certified insane some years earlier, his son George the Prince Regent was effective monarch, "Dull dregs of his dull race, who flow Through public scorn, mud from a muddy spring". The government was in the hands of the eloquent and ruthless Viscount Castlereagh, who had earlier been responsible for putting down the revolt in Ireland (1798) and then forcing through the Irish Parliament's self-abolition (1800). The Lord Chancellor was the self-righteous reactionary Anglican bigot Lord Eldon, forever weeping over the wicked ways of the world; the Home Secretary was Lord Sidmouth, another reactionary bigot, who suspended Habeas Corpus in 1817 and forbade public meetings etc. (His later career included opposing recognition of the South American republics, the Catholic Emancipation Act and the Reform Act of 1832!) The Commander of the armed forces was the Duke of Wellington, who was held ultimately responsible for the massacre in 1819 - hence not Water-, but Peter-loo...

(These four are King Swellfoot's government. Oedipus means "swollen foot", and Fat Geordie had bad gout from too much drink. "Purganax" simply means "Castle-reeve" in ancient Greek, while Lord Dakry means "Weepy" - Chancellor Eldon. Wellington is General Laoctonos - "Kill-crowd". And Lord Mammon, Archpriest of Famine? As the Masque puts it "Clothed with the Bible as with light, and the darkness of the night, like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy on a crocodile rode by".)

Things went from bad to worse in 1820, the year of George's much-delayed coronation. His estranged Queen, Caroline of Brunswick, returned to England from Italy, demanding her rights as Consort. The King, whose own morals stank to heaven, demanded that she be got rid of, and in the Commons Castlereagh called for an Inquiry into her private life slamming down a Green Bag containing evidence of her immorality on the table in the House. The populace, rightly or wrongly, saw in the King's treatment of his wife (a far from fastidious lady who had bad teeth and ate raw onions) an image of his mistreatment of themselves, and demonstrated in her support. (She was forcibly excluded from the bizarre extravaganza of the coronation, and died within a month...)

Shelley, it turned out, was right to make Castlereagh/Purganax the main tragic figure in his play; the King is a near-imbecile, who calls his own crown "the emblem of a pointless nothing", while Mammon is simply evil incarnate. After 1820, Castlereagh's mental condition rapidly deteriorated into paranoia, and in August 1822 he killed himself with a rusty penknife. Children danced and sang in the streets as his funeral cortège passed. A month earlier, Percy Bysshe Shelley had been drowned in a storm at sea. He was not yet thirty years old. (JRB)



CAST

Principals

<i>Tyrant Oedipus (King Swellfoot)</i>	<i>Ian Brooks</i>
<i>Lord Mammon, Archpriest of Famine</i>	<i>Steve Preston</i>
<i>Purganax, Chief of the Council of Wizards</i>	<i>Ian Thomson</i>
<i>Gadfly</i>	<i>Barbara Halloran</i>
<i>Leech</i>	<i>Fran Potasnik</i>
<i>Rat</i>	<i>Christine Pedley</i>
<i>General Laoctonos</i>	<i>Simon Bennett</i>
<i>Dakry, Lord Chancellor</i>	<i>Brian Eeles</i>
<i>Queen Iona Taurina</i>	<i>Margret Love</i>
<i>Liberty</i>	<i>Janice Baldwin</i>
<i>Minotaur</i>	<i>Malcolm Turner</i>

Directed by

Jamie Reid-Baxter

Music composed and conducted by

David Bullock

Special Appearances

by

<i>Solomon</i>	<i>Alan Carlisle</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>Dragon</i>	<i>Alan Carlisle</i>
<i>Moses</i>	<i>Pam Rice</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>Unicorn</i>	<i>J. Reid-Baxter</i>
<i>Zephaniah</i>	<i>Ken Saunders</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>Leprechaun</i>	<i>Tim Beattie</i>

****Principal Sow - Fran Potasnik,*** A Boar - Roger Clough,***
Gallows - Gayle Ashley, *** Banknotina - Georgina Trinder, ****

****Guard s& Gibbets ****

****Karen Hay, Katherine Lake, Harriett Clover, Sarah Pirie****

****Choreography Jeanette Hutchines, Sara Eden****

**** Priests - Alan Carlisle, Pam Rice, Norman Sinclair-Baines, Mick
Swithinbank, Steve Russon, Colin Fraser, Eric Hartley, Paul
Barker.****

CHORUS

** Pietro Bianchessi * Carolyn Bickham * Claude Biver * Betty
Cadoret * Roger Clough * Anita De Viell * Margaret Green * Roy
Green * Adrienne Lynch * Ria Mordijck * Kumar Motiani *
Christine Pedley * Fran Potasnik * Eileen Pratt * Maria-Pilar Salso
* Pauline Saunders * Eileen Scallon * Catherine Sear * Norman
Sinclair-Baines * Tekla Skowronski * Mick Swithinbank * Steven
Wicker **

PRODUCTION CREW

Stage Management

Stage Manager **Malcolm Turner**, Set Design **Liz Turner**, Props made and designed by **Malcolm Turner**, Assistant **Ciara Murphy**, Gofer **Linda Myers**, Lighting & Sound **John Brigg**.

Stage Crew

Malcolm Turner, **Edward Seymour**, **Ken Saunders**, **Martin Cardew**, **Hugo Seymour**, **Stefan Sipos**, **Simon Critchlow**, **Colin Myers**.

Costumes

Design by **Lone Crotty**, coordination by **Ria Mordijck**, sewn by **Hillary Brown & Liz Turner**, Priests designed and sewn by **Annie Baldwin**.

Hair & Make-up

Sally Cardew, **Linder Chong**, **Elly Eeles**, **Geraldine Ashton**, **Danielle Foggon**, **Sue Ellingworth**.



THE CHURCH MILITANT.

Illustration by M. J. Humphrey, N. J. J. J. J.

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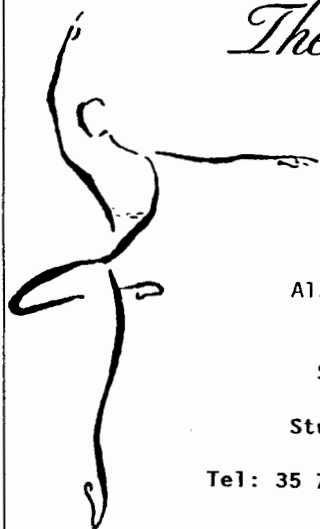
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PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Assistant **Edward Seymour**

*** Production Secretary **Pauline Saunders** ***

Publicity **Brian Eeles**, **Kumar Motiani**, **Matthew**

Kahn, **Lone Crotty** *** Poster **Catriona Bullock** ***

Programme **Fran Potasnik**, **Lone Crotty** *** Tickets

Pat Able *** Photography **Leslie Mahon** ***

SYNOPSIS OF THE ACTION

Act I Scene 1 - Thebes, main square, (Boeotia, 1820)

After the Overture, which sets the tone of the evening, we are introduced to the principal protagonist, "the Swinish Multitude", and to the eponymous hero of the tragedy, Tyrant Swellfoot himself. He pays homage to the Goddess of Famine in her Temple of Bones: she keeps things stable. Rulers like Swellfoot rule and get fatter and fatter, and everybody else stays in their place, so starved of nourishment of any kind they have no other option. The Tyrant and his oppressed subjects have an altercation, which culminates in the Pigs demanding food and housing because "It is the law!" At which point, Swellfoot resorts to butchery.

Scene 2

Enter Lord Mammon, Archpriest of Famine, followed by the deeply perturbed Lord Purganax, Chief of the Council of Wizards. "The future looks as black as death", he says, "There's something rotten in us". Lord Mammon, unflappable, advocates shooting a few mutinous regiments and encouraging inflation as a way of controlling the situation - "Coin paper!" But Purganax reminds him of the doom-laden Oracle, the prophecy that the day of radical change will come: "Boeotia, choose Reform or civil war! when through the streets instead of hare with dogs, A Consort-Queen shall hunt a King with hogs, Riding on the Ionian Minotaur!" However, Purganax has spies - the gutter press - engaged in making sure Queen Iona Taurina will never return to Thebes. Mammon observes that "Tis the swinish multitude I fear", and expounds his practice of combining inflation with capital punishment for dissidents, introducing us as he does so to the members of his (delightful) family.

Scene 3

All is not well; Purganax's spies return with the news that their efforts have driven Queen Iona home! The unthinkable has happened, and offstage we hear the rejoicing multitude. Tyrant Swellfoot returns, and brushes aside Purganax's schemes for Parliamentary Commissions and dishing out knighthoods, OBE's bits of coloured glass and cauliflowers as a way of dividing the populace. Swellfoot wants military action, but General Laoctonos reports that the Royal Apes have started fraternizing with the pigs... The Lord Chancellor, Dakry, mournfully says that he used the power of words on the population, and wept with the pathos of his own eloquence, and every tear turned into a millstone as it fell, and brained many a gaping pig, killing lots of people and hurling children into the air...

Scene 4

Into this potentially revolutionary crisis returns Lord Mammon, who has been to Hell to find a solution to save the King and hence them all. He will use Fraud to destroy the Queens credibility and reputation, which will destroy the pigs' morale and leave them leaderless. And it will be done by impeccably Parliamentary means! Lord Dakry, the Chancellor, reminds the King of his high office as hat-maker to the Goddess of War, just in case the constitutional route doesn't work. The new headgear is tried on; and we are given a foretaste of what the alternative to the parliamentary option might be. Or is it the reality behind the façade of law and order?



MONSTROUS CRAWLS, at a New Coalition Feast.

Act II Scene 1

The prelude sets the tone of the Ancien Régime and the period. The curtain rises on the "Public Sty; the Boars in full assembly": Parliament hard at work. Enter Lord Purganax, who makes a speech which is a farrago of lies and equivocation, as is usual for a Government minister. First he claims that despite temporary problems of starvation and economic collapse, all is well. About to launch into his attack on the Queen, he is forced to change tack and agree that she is "most innocent". He then tries to play on "divide and rule", but even here the Boars will not follow him. (They are pigs too, after all.) He introduces the whiff of - scandal! but then loses them again, until he produces the Green Bag. The Boars take some convincing about its colour. But this time, Purganax carries his case, even if the MPs are unable to find language adequate to their enthusiasm for his scheme to turn the Queen into an angel. The proposal is about to be voted when...

Scene 2

The disenfranchised mob (of women) bursts in: the "commons" invading the House and trying to make the law themselves! A great chorus of solidarity with the Queen - "those who wrong you, wrong us" - introduces Queen Iona Taurina in person. But instead of arresting Purganax and starting a civil war, she meekly agrees to undergo the test, whatever it may be, as part of the approaching Feast of Famine.

Scene 3 The main square

As the Tyrant and his Government enter, a chorus of obese clergy hymn the Goddess of Famine: "Through thee, the earth pours forth its plenteous fruits... Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat; Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean: Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that! And let things be as they have ever been": The King and his ministers sit and gorge themselves amid their starving people, the "Feast of Famine" in honour of the Goddess. As they sit squandering the nation's resources, the attitude of the pigs undergoes a change, despite Purganax's contemptuous toast to "the glorious Constitution of the pigs". The swine sing their own hymn, "Hail to thee, Famine!" which is very different from that of the priests heard earlier: "When thou risest, dividing possessions, When thou risest, uprooting oppressions, In the pride of thy ghastly mirth - Over palaces, temples and graves, We will rush as thy minister slaves, Trampling behind in thy train, Till all be made level again!". The Government decides to put the Queen upon her trial without delay; things are looking bad. As they advance upon her, a figure in white appears. It is LIBERTY, who calls upon Famine, her eternal foe, "to brief alliance, hollow truce" and vanishes again. A funeral march heralds Iona's doom...

But things do not always turn out the the way the established powers would like. The Opera is crowned with folk-music. The words of the last folk-song (Scottish) you hear are worth quoting, for it sums up the whole point of this work: **the dignity of humankind.** (JRB)

Is there for honest poverty That hings his heid an aa that?
The coward slave, we pass him by - We daur be poor for aa that!
Fur aa that, an aa that, Our toils obscure, an aa that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp: The man's the gowd for aa that!

What though on hamely fare we dine, Wear hodden-grey, an aa that?
Gie fools their silks, an knaves their wine - A man's a man for aa that!
For aa that, an aa that, their tinsel show an aa that,
The honest man, though ne'er sae poor, is king o' men for aa that!

Then let us pray that come it may - As come it will, for aa that -
That sense an waurth, ow'r aa the earth, Shall bear the gree an aa that.
Fur aa that, an aa that, it's comin yet, for aa that,
That man to man, the world ow'r, shall brithers be for aa that!

(Robert Burns, 1759-96)



Chairman's Thanks

Pirate Productions are very proud at being able to present The World Premiere of Shelley's Oedipus Tyrannus, the latest in a long row of musical productions that Pirate's have put on here in Luxembourg. I hope that you, the audience, will have as much pleasure in watching this show as we have had in putting it on.

Much thought and work have gone into the making of this show and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jamie Reid-Baxter and David Bullock for the enormous work they have put into this show.

Jamie joins me in thanking all who have participated in putting this show on the road. In particular we thank Malcolm Turner, without whom this show would not have been possible, for all his wonderful props and for his never ending enthusiasm, also Ria Mordijck who tirelessly coordinated the costumes and managed to find time to be a member of the chorus as well and Pauline Saunders who in addition to grunting happily on the stage made sure that we all got there on time and spent hours and hours organising the show for us all.

Lone Crotty-Andersen



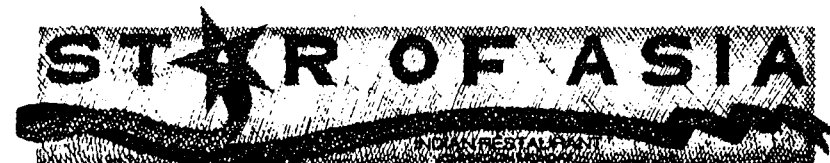


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