



SOUTHPORT
DRAMATIC CLUB



PRESENT

Mrs. Warren's Profession

By George Bernard Shaw

Directed by John Sharp

27th February -
6th March 2004
7.45pm

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George Bernard Shaw

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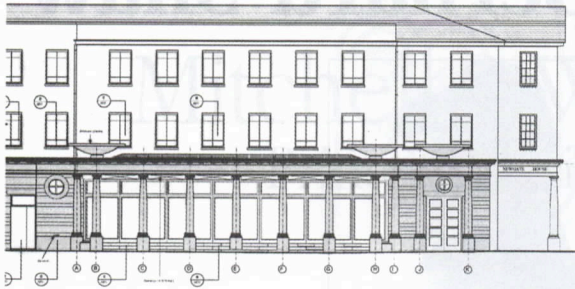


(1856-1950)

Shaw was born in Dublin and was brought up in what can best be described as genteel poverty. At the age of 20 he decided to become a writer and went to live in London. His first efforts were novels, a form in which he had no success, but he did eventually establish a reputation as a journalist. His criticisms of art, music and literature were widely read. He became a socialist and a vegetarian.

He started writing plays around 1890 and *Mrs Warren's Profession* was one of his earliest. He included it with two others in a collection called 'Plays Unpleasant', unpleasant because they forced audiences to face up to some disagreeable facts about the society in which they lived. He went on to write some more popular and light-hearted plays, of which *Pygmalion*, performed for the first time in 1913, is probably the most famous. In 1926 he won the Nobel Prize.

Shaw was one of the most prolific writers of the 20th or indeed any century, completing over 50 pieces for the theatre. He continued writing until shortly before his death at the age of 94. His achievement was to make drama a vehicle for social and moral comment, but to use comedy as a means of doing so. He was also a craftsman who knew how both to construct and shape a play, and to provide it with interesting characters. His sense of mischief was combined with an elegant command of language.



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‘IMMORAL AND OTHERWISE IMPROPER FOR THE STAGE’

With these words the Lord Chamberlain justified his decision to prohibit the public performance of *Mrs Warren's Profession*. Shaw was indignant. He regarded his play as a moral one and a serious attempt to tackle some important social problems. He was able to ridicule the censorship powers of the Lord Chamberlain by pointing out that much more objectionable pieces had escaped banning. After a delay of eight years, the play was performed, in 1902, but as a private event by the Stage Society.

In 1905, a production was mounted in New York and once again there was outrage, particularly from the press, which presumed (as nowadays) to regard itself as the guardian of decency. This pressure from journalists led the police to arrest producer and cast, and although the case was subsequently dismissed, with some contempt, by the courts, damage to the reputation of those involved was already done. Shortly afterwards one of the newspapers that had attacked *Mrs Warren's Profession* was fined for allowing advertisements to appear in its pages for establishments like those run by Mrs Warren.

Nowadays we may wonder what all the fuss was about. We are rather more relaxed about what appears on the stage, although anything which challenges commonly held assumptions is still likely to provoke complaint. It is also true that the ‘profession’ goes on, characterised today particularly by the exploitation of girls from poorer countries. There is also the question of money, as raised by Sir George Crofts in Act Three. How seriously do we care whether our investments are ‘ethical’? Shaw’s play, as a period piece, takes us back to what was a theatrical cause célèbre a hundred years ago, but it also does present us with questions about society and morality which are relevant today.

EXTRACTS FROM SHAW’S PREFACE

All censorship exists to prevent anyone from challenging current conceptions and existing institutions. All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions. Consequently the first condition of progress is the removal of censorships.

People who sacrifice every other consideration to love are as hopelessly unheroic on the stage as lunatics or dipsomaniacs. Hector and Hamlet are the world’s heroes; not Paris and Antony.

My plays are built to induce, not voluptuous reverie but intellectual interest, not romantic rhapsody but human concern.

My characters behave like human beings, instead of conforming to the romantic logic of the stage.

Nothing would please our sanctimonious British public more than to throw the whole guilt of Mrs Warren’s profession on Mrs Warren herself. Now the whole aim of my play is to throw that guilt on the British public itself.

Starvation, overwork, dirt and disease....they are the vices and crimes of a nation.

Stupid men think that indecency consists, not in evil, but in mentioning it.

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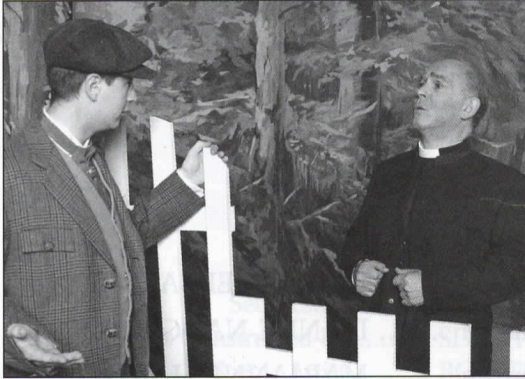
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Mrs. Warren's Profession



Mrs. Warren's Profession

by George Bernard Shaw

Directed by John Sharp

Cast

Praed LES GOMERSALL
Vivie Warren LIANNE NAUGHTON
Mrs Warren MARIANNE HARDY
Sir George Crofts DAVID DAVIES
Frank Gardner GARY CAIN
Rev Samuel Gardner HUGH WOLFSON

Time: 1890s

Act 1

The garden of a cottage near Haslemere in Surrey. Afternoon.

Act 2

The same evening.

Act 3

The Rectory garden. The following morning.

Act 4

Honoraria Fraser's Chambers in Chancery Lane. Two days later.

There will be an interval of 20 minutes between acts three and four.

Staging

Stage Manager	PETE BESWICK
Assistant Stage Manager (Book)	JEAN WATKINSON
Properties	BARBARA GEORGESON KAREN DAVIES JEREMY MYERS
Lighting	SYD COLEY
Sound	PETE BESWICK
Costumes	ROYAL EXCHANGE, MANCHESTER AND SDC WARDROBE
Set Design	SYD COLEY
Set Constructed by	SDC PRODUCTION TEAM
Scenic Artist	BOB JESSAMINE
Photography by	NEIL HICKSON

Stage Crew

Colin Haynes, Phil Hutchinson, Nick Evans
Andrew Connard, Michele Martin, Mike Yates

Acknowledgements

The Director would like to thank:
Lady Green Nurseries and Phil Horner Designs.

The management reserves the right to refuse admission to the auditorium after curtain up until a suitable opportunity occurs. First aid facilities are provided at this theatre by St John Ambulance Brigade, whose members give their services voluntarily.

Why not beat the rush and pre-order your interval drinks in the bar?

An induction loop is installed in this theatre for the benefit of hearing impaired patrons.
Please turn your hearing aid to 'T'.

Please ensure that all mobile telephones are switched off

At the end of tonight's performance you may leave by any of the exits, all of which will be open.
In an emergency, this theatre can be emptied in three minutes or less if everyone leaves in an orderly manner.

Smoking is prohibited in the auditorium.

THEATRE LICENSEE, BRIAN FORSHAW

'FOUND'

by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Anyone who attended the recent exhibition of Rossetti's work at the Walker Art gallery in Liverpool will probably remember this picture. In a London street at dawn a young woman is recognised by her former suitor, a countryman, who has come to London to bring his calf to market. The woman has fallen on evil ways and the young man seems to want to rescue her. Like the calf, she is trapped and on her way to be sold. Rossetti leaves the question open as to how she will respond.



THE RUINED MAID

'O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?' –
'O didn't you know I'd been ruined,' said she.

'You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!' –
'Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined,' said she.

'At home in the barton you said "thee" and "thou",
And "thik oon", and "theas oon", and "t'other"; but now
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!'
'Some polish is gained with one's ruin,' said she.

'Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!' –
'We never do work when we're ruined,' said she.

'You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims or melancho-ly' –
'True. One's pretty lively when ruined,' said she.

'I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!' –
'My dear – a raw country girl, such as you be,
Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined,' said she.

THOMAS HARDY 1840 – 1928
Westbourne Park Villas, 1866

A Play for Women

'*Mrs Warren's Profession* is a play for women...it was written for women.' (Shaw)

1881 The Married Woman's Property Act granted for the first time the right to separate ownership of property

1888 Anne Besant led the match girls' strike against long hours and inhuman working conditions. It drew attention to the miserable and dangerous lives of working class girls.

1890 Philippa Fawcett was placed above the Senior Wrangler in the mathematical tripos at Cambridge. She could take the examination, but was not allowed to receive a degree.

1891 Limitations were imposed on the enforcement of 'conjugal rights'. Rape within marriage was not illegal until a hundred years later.

1892 The two women's colleges at Cambridge, Girton and Newnham, played each other at hockey. It was considered 'unladylike'.

1893 A woman explorer, Mary Kingsley, undertook an expedition to unknown parts of the Congo.

1894 Women were allowed to vote in elections for parochial councils.

1894 *Mrs Warren's Profession* was written and prohibited from being performed.

1894 Lilian Murray became the first woman dentist.

1898 Heather Ayrton became the only woman in the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

1902 *Mrs Warren's Profession* received its first performance – in a private club.

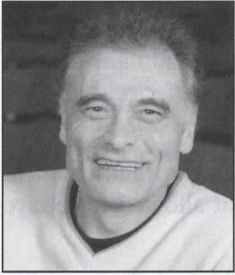
1913 The suffragette Emily Davison threw herself in front of the King's horse at the Derby and was killed.

1918 Women over 30 received the right to vote in parliamentary elections in the UK.

In the early years of the 20th century two sisters, Ada and Minna Everleigh, opened a bordello in Chicago. They invested the equivalent of £200,000 in the enterprise. They employed 30 girls and charged several times the standard rates. The bordello was a stylish establishment, with a music room, art gallery and ballroom. It was patronised by men of the professional and managerial classes. The city desk of the Chicago Tribune always contacted the Everleighs first when they were in search of absent journalists.

Mrs. Warren's Profession

Cast



Les Gomersall (*Praed*)

Last seen on stage two years ago as Fagin in a Birkdale Orpheus production of *Oliver*. Recently has spent much time with a variety of companies directing productions including: *Copacabanca*, *Babes in the Wood*, *Singin' in the Rain* and *Kiss Me Kate*. Earlier acting roles included pantomime and family dramas such as *Hindle Wakes* and *Spring and Port Wine*.



Lianne Naughton (*Vivie Warren*)

Has appeared in many SDC productions including pantomime - was Princess Jasmine in *Aladdin*. Appearances in 'straight' plays include *The Heiress* and *The Herbal Bed*. Has twice had the title role - *Katherine Howard* and *Amy's View*.



Marianne Hardy (*Mrs. Warren*)

Has played a wide variety of roles in an even wider variety of plays and over many years, as a member of both the SDC and the Sefton Theatre Group. Costume plays have included *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Hedda Gabler* and *School for Scandal*. In contrast has appeared in comedies such as *Not Now Darling*, *No Sex Please We're British* and *Funny Money*. Played the lead in the bar production *Peggy For You*.



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Cast



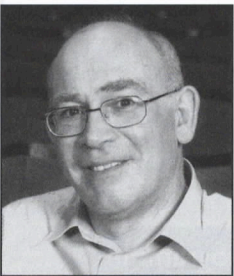
David Davies (*Sir George Crofts*)

Joined the club in 1990. Played Soames Forsyte in *The Forsyte Saga*. Other appearances have been in *Small Family Business*, *Conduct Unbecoming*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Dead Ringer*, *It Runs in the Family*, and *It Could be Any One of Us*. There have been three plays with a common theme in the title - *The Perfect Murder*, *The Business of Murder* and *Murder by Misadventure*. Directed *Hobson's Choice*, *The Seagull*, *Court in the Act*, *Lock Up Your Daughters* and *Hayfever*.



Gary Cain (*Frank Gardner*)

A recent member of the SDC, but this is already his third production. Studied Performing Arts and Theatre Studies and then joined a touring company performing Theatre in Education. Is also a member of Gambolling Arena Theatre. Performed in John Godber's *Loot* and *Star Quality*.



Hugh Wolfson (*Rev Samuel Gardner*)

A member of the SDC since 1981. Recent appearances have been in *Shadowlands*, *The Perfect Murder*, *The Herbal Bed* and *Katherine Howard*. Directed *Peggy for You*, the 2002 bar production. Also a member of the Altrincham Garrick.

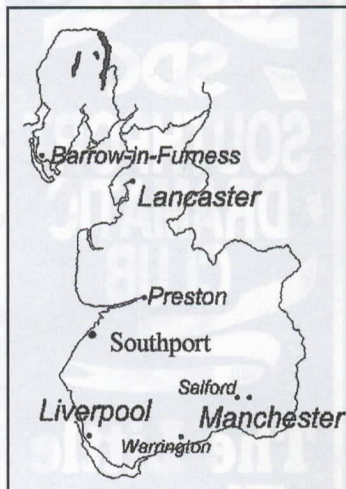
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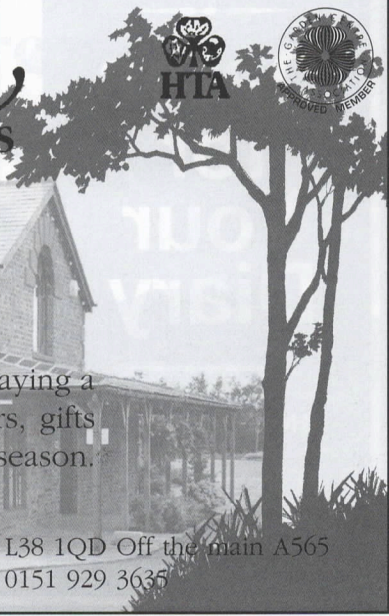
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