

The Country Wife

William Wycherley's



Illustration by Thomas Rowlandson

The University Theatre
November 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17 at 8 PM
November 18 at 2 PM
Kennedy Theatre
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

The Country Wife

by WILLIAM WYCHERLEY

Directed by TERENCE KNAPP

Settings by RICHARD G. MASON

Costumes by SANDRA FINNEY

Lighting and Technical Direction by MARK BOYD

Dances Reconstructed by PATTI BEEN

THE ACTORS:

A QUACK DOCTOR

HARRY HORNER, a lascivious man about town,

HARCOURT, friend to Horner and in love with Alithea.

DORILANT, friend to Horner.

JEREMY, servant to Horner,

SPARKISH, a foolish fop, engaged to Alithea.

SIR JASPER FIDGET, a busy courtier,

JACK PINCHWIFE, a reformed libertine.

MARGERY, his young country wife.

ALITHEA, sister to Pinchwife.

LADY FIDGET, wife to Sir Jasper, and a lady
of pretended virtue.

DAINTY, his sister, the same,

BIDDY SQUEAMISH, his cousin, the same,

LADY SQUEAMISH, Biddy's grandmother,

LUCY, maid to Alithea,

PEDDLER.

THE LADY AT THE HARPSICORD.

WAYNE VERTIDO

RICK GREENE

DOUG REED

TOLA BENNINGTON

DANDO KLUEVER

DENNIS DUBIN

EARLL KINGSTON

WILLIAM SAYLOR

PATTI BEEN

ELIZABETH WICHMANN

SARA EDLIN

MARGIE PETERSON

NINA WISHENGRAD

JOAN GOSSETT

BARI MOSS

WAYNE VERTIDO

BEATRICE FREITAS

THE STORY OF THE PLAY:

Scene 1.

Harry Horner has paid the Quack doctor to spread a rumour around London that he, Horner, was recently castrated and is now impotent. The idea is to fool jealous husbands and seduce all available wives. The Fidget family comes to call and the ladies are outraged by Horner's insolence. Harcourt, Dorilant and Sparkish call to gossip about the rumour and as Sparkish leaves to collect his fiancée, Alithea, for the afternoon play, Jack Pinchwife arrives in search of him. Horner questions Pinchwife and learns that he has just married a young country girl, Margery, whom he intends to keep to himself.

Scene 2.

Pinchwife locks Margery in her room when Sparkish and Harcourt call. Harcourt falls in love with Alithea but she rejects him out of loyalty to Sparkish. The Fidget ladies, with cousin Biddy Squeamish, try to visit Margery but Pinchwife will not let her be seen. Horner and Sir Jasper follow in and Lady Fidget is persuaded by her husband to let Horner escort her about town. Horner reveals to her the truth and she consents to be his mistress.

Scene 3.

Pinchwife finally agrees to show Margery the sights of town but insists on disguising her as a boy.

Scene 4.

Harcourt persuades Sparkish to reconcile him to Alithea. Horner recognizes the 'boy' Margery and whisks her away during Pinchwife's absence.

Scene 5.

Sparkish is duped into bringing Harcourt, disguised as a parson, to perform the marriage ceremony. Pinchwife forces Margery to tell him what Horner has done to her and then dictates to her a nasty letter for Horner, warning him off. Margery switches this letter for a declaration of love.

Scene 6.

Lady Fidget keeps an assignation with Horner but is disturbed by Sir Jasper. Pinchwife delivers the substitute letter to Horner who promises to comply with its directions. Sparkish appears to pooh-pooh any idea that his wedding was a farce.

Scene 7.

Pinchwife catches Margery writing another letter to Horner and she pretends that she has written it on behalf of Alithea who, she says, is in love with Horner. Pinchwife swallows the story and is gulled into taking his wife, disguised as his sister, to Horner's chambers.

Scene 8.

Horner receives Margery disguised as Alithea but is interrupted by Sir Jasper calling to tell him that Lady Fidget, Dainty and Biddy are on their way in masquerade.

Scene 9.

Pinchwife shows Margery's forged letter to Sparkish, causing him to reject Alithea in a fit of jealousy.

Scene 10.

Horner finds himself in a foursome. Rival parties converge on him demanding explanations. Pinchwife suspects that Horner has made a cuckold of him but allows himself to be persuaded that Horner is impotent, and to avoid being an open figure of fun, makes the best of a rotten situation.

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CUCKOLD . . . from the Old French *cucu* (cuckoo) . . . a man whose wife has committed adultery. It was popularly believed that a cuckold had horns of jealousy visibly protruding from his brow.

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The action of the play is set in London at a time when pleasure was business.

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There will be one 10-minute intermission

Will Wycherley was born in 1640, the eldest son to Daniel Wycherley, Squire of Clive in Shropshire.

At the age of 15, the lad was sent to France for a proper Royalist and gentlemanly education under the aegis of Julie, Marquise de Montausier—a lady of decided and sophisticated views whose coterie was of the kind to be so deliciously scourged by Moliere in *LES PRECIEUSES RIDICULES*. Will was converted to the Catholic Faith and as an impressionable teenager enjoyed things French and delicious which were to be transported to England by the cavalier bagful when the Merry Monarch, Charles II, was restored to the throne of his Father-Martyr in the Golden Year of 1660.

That same year, however, our young hero found himself packed off to the sober institution of Oxford University where he was duly reconverted to a fitting Protestantism and was later allowed to come to London for an education in the convolutions of Law at the Inner Temple.

From this time onwards his learning at the School of Life proper began, since it was a short walk from the cloisters of Legislature to the environs of coffee-houses, gaming parlours, arcades, and playhouses which surrounded Covent Garden. He joined the roistering company of young noblemen known for their outrageousness in the Fops Corner at the theatres and for such pranks as throwing off their clothes, running naked up and down Bow Street and beating up the night watchman. Said King Charles, apropos, "God will not damn a man for a little irregular pleasure."

By 1671 Wycherley had written his first play, entitled *LOVE IN A WOOD* on the topic of the incompatibility of marriage and wit. The play prospered, the King liked it, Mr. Dryden applauded it and the Duchess of Cleveland, one of the King's ex-mistresses, took a fancy to the new author. Will had arrived.

His next play, *THE GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER*, produced the following year, didn't catch fire and was taken off after only six performances. But the next, *THE COUNTRY WIFE*, produced in 1675, inspired by Terence's *EUNUCHUS* with a nod towards Moliere, proved a winner. The following year *THE PLAIN DEALER* also hit the jackpot and Will was the toast of the town. In 1679, King Charles thought well enough of Wycherley to offer him the post of tutor to his young bastard, the Duke of Richmond. Well-paid and with a pension at the end of the job it looked as though everything in the garden was rosy; but a certain young Countess of Drogheda had come along and her charms proved too great an alternative attraction. When her ailing husband left the estates to his widow instead of to the proper heir, Wycherley turned down the King's offer and married his Countess in secret instead.

All hell broke loose: the King was annoyed, the Drogheda heirs pressed a lawsuit for the estates, the Countess and her new husband spent money they didn't possess and, after only two years, the dear lady suddenly died. Wycherley, without wife or estate and saddled with a lawsuit, found himself committed to Newgate prison and lodged alongside highwaymen, murderers and prostitutes. By 1685 he managed to have himself transferred to the Fleet prison—a home for debtors, bankrupts and Puritans rather than criminals—where he was joined by his younger brother George, a parson who was incarcerated by his own father for debt.

It wasn't until the spring of 1686, when James II had succeeded to the throne, that friends were able to have Wycherley pardoned and released with a royal pension of 200 pounds a year. Gratefully, Wycherley became a Catholic again in imitation of his generous patron.

However, with the overthrow of the Catholic King in 1688 and the accession of Protestant William and Mary, the pension came to an end. Indeed, the new Sovereigns appeared to like neither the theatre nor Catholic playwrights and, to avoid being thrown back into prison for yet new debts, Wycherley was forced to throw himself at his father's feet and retire to the country.

For the rest of his life—another 28 years—Wycherley attempted no more plays. His verse was mediocre, his friendship with the sharp young genius Alexander Pope recriminatory and unfulfilling. Much of his existence was in the country which he detested and, finally, he took permanent lodgings in London where at the age of 75 he married a young widow whose dowry paid off his debts. But within a few weeks of this wedding, he died on New Year's Day, 1716.—TK

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant to the Director: Phyllis Look
Stage Manager: Kevin Murphy
Lighting Crew: Daryl Kei Kaneshiro, Susan Low, Lisa Pascua, Ann Philip, Vickie Scales
Property Crew: Taryn Bigelow
Costume Crew: Peggy Egbert—Crew Head; Fujie Kajikawa, Cynthia Kunishige, Lynn Tsuruda, Jan Shipley, Kate McBride, Irene Ohashi, Molly Burns, Juanita Newcomb, Cassie Tudor, Mel Gionson, Kathy Thomsen, Coco Offer, Lynne Tanaka
Millinery: Holly Lindley, Cynthia Kunishige, Mel Gionson, Lynne Tanaka, Irene Ohashi, Kate McBride
Makeup Crew: Holly Lindley
Hairdressing: Rick Uggen and Grady Bumpus of PAUL BROWN'S CUTTERS
Technicians: Ken Rohde, James B. Bell, Jr., Luella Costello, Debora Farrell, Gerald Kawaoka, Lester Kimura, Alan Kobayashi, Kim McAlister, Doug McDougall, Tod Miles, Bari Moss, Barbara Nicholson, Michael Nobriga, Thomas Stempel, and the students of Drama 260 and 299
Photography: Francis Haar
Properties: Elizabeth Wichmann
Publicity: Jemm Kerr, Kitty Heacox
Box Office: Condelita Almazan, Kathleen Moriishige, Sidney Pilaes, Kerry Taggart
House Managers: Farouk Wang assisted by Nancy Castle, Jim Farmer, Eileen Hamai, Carole Ann Hee, Patti Najita, Alberta Nobu, Debra Ridenour, Donna Ridenour
Ushers: Castle High School Thespian Troupe #566, Roosevelt High School, Kalani High School (NHS), Radford Keyette Service Club, Aiea High School (NHS), Kaimuki High School (NHS), University High School Drama Class

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA AND THEATRE

FACULTY: Bernard F. Dukore, Chairman; Mark Boyd, James Brandon, Glenn Cannon, Dennis Carrol, Elizabeth Cole, Sandra Finney, Tamara Hunt, Terence Knapp, Edward Langhans, Richard Mason, Yasuki Sasa, Joel Trapido, Carl Wolz.

STAFF: Art Caldeira, Takeo Miji, Nancy Takei, Kozaburo Yukihiro.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: Paul Cravath, Dennis Dubin, Nell Fuson, Catherine Heacox, Tomas Hernandez, Jemm Kerr, Carol Murota, Richard Romer, Young Saylor, Elizabeth Wichmann.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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COMING EVENTS IN KENNEDY THEATRE

November 22, 23, 24, 25 (Lab Theatre) Sam Shepard's THE TOOTH OF CRIME
November 30, December 1, 2, 7, 8 (Lab Theatre) Kumu Kahua's COMMONROOM
December 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16 August Strindberg's A DREAM PLAY

NOTICE—Smoking is not allowed in the auditorium nor may photographs or recordings be made during the performance.