



ttc

TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB PRESENTS AN AMATEUR PRODUCTION
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH KUBLER AUCKLAND MANAGEMENT

French Twist

By Georges Feydeau & Eugene Labiche,
adapted by Matthew Ryan
Directed by Steve Taylor

Sun 2 Jul – Sat 8 Jul 2017

£1.50



Hampton Hill Theatre

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For reasons of safety, glassware must NOT be taken into any part of the auditorium.

Latecomers will be admitted at the first convenient moment provided that no interruption or distraction to the performers might be caused.

All gangways, passageways and stairways must be kept free from obstruction. Persons are not permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and the making of sound and/or visual recordings in the auditorium are not permitted.

An infra-red hearing assistance system is available in the auditorium but not in the Coward Room. Personal systems with a T-switch will require an additional unit available in the foyer. 'In ear' headsets are also available.

Wheelchair positions are available in both stalls and the balcony. The Box Office Manager will be happy to discuss your requirements.

TTC Ltd, as managers of the theatre, reserves the right to refuse admission and to make alterations to the programme and cast without notice.

ABOUT THE WRITERS



Eugène Labiche (1815-1888) was born into a wealthy bourgeois family. In 1834, he took a hiatus after the death of his mother and spent six months on a trip in Italy with some close friends who were later to become his collaborators. On his return, he finished studying law and started to write short stories for various publications, short plays, skits, and formed a collaborative association with Marc-Michel and August Lefranc under the pseudonym Paul Dandre. The success of their short plays and skits inspired them to write a few more and experiment in the opera-comique, operetta and vaudeville forms. Not really needing an income from his writing and already maintaining a healthy annual income, Labiche didn't spend much time in the art form and preferred to spend his time travelling throughout Europe - his early output from 1834 was on average only three to four plays a year. By 1848 he settled in his career and accelerated the rhythm of his output, producing on average ten plays a year. Out of his 174 major plays he is most renowned for *An Italian Straw Hat*, *The Happiest of The Three*, *The Jackpot*, *Mr. Perrichon's Travels*, *29 Degrees in the Shade* and *The Martin Prize*. He has also written librettos for various comic operas such as *The Journey in China*, *The Son of A Brigadier*, and he was commissioned by Offenbach to write for Omelette Follembouche. He was elected to the French Academy in 1880, a position he held for eight years. He died on 22 January 1888.



Georges Feydeau (1862-1921) officially abandoned his studies at a young age to dedicate himself entirely to theatre. He wrote his first play *Through the Window* at the age of 19, setting in motion his first wave of success which culminated with *The Ladies' Dressmaker* in 1886. He took time off at this stage to master the French vaudeville art form by closely studying and pastiching the works of Eugène Labiche, Henri Meilhac and Alfred Hennequin, and married Marie-Anne Carolus-Duran, the daughter of a well renowned artist of the time. His second wave of success started in 1892 with a quick succession of hits: *Champignol In Spite of Himself*, *The Happy Hunter* and *The Ribaldier System*. His career began in earnest gaining acclaim throughout Europe and the United States. Out of his 40 major plays his most well-known are: *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Hotel Paradiso* and *The Lady from Maxims*. By 1909 his marriage broke down and he separated from his wife. He moved permanently to the Hotel Terminus and spent the rest of his career focusing on a new style of comedy centred on domestic conflict. His last four plays, grouped under the title *From Marriage to Divorce*, are *Going to Pot*, *My Wife's Late Mother*, *Stop Parading In The Nude!* and *Hortense said: I Don't Give A Damn!* In the winter of 1918-1919 he contracted syphilis and slowly slipped into madness. He was sent to the Rueil Malmaison Asylum where he died on 5 June 1921.

NOTES ON THE ADAPTATION

As Steve Martin said, the process of adapting a play is like the stages of a failing marriage: fidelity, transgression, and finally separation.

Try as one might to recreate the historical experience of the original French farces, times have changed. (If you were watching an original performance of Labiche you'd be drunk by now – and getting ready to sing along). Modern audiences are well-versed in the rhythm and rules of comedy. Farce can no longer pull its punches. Ideas which once worked, do not necessarily work today. And today's audiences seldom sing along. Which is a polite way of saying I made some changes.

While remaining true to the spirit of the original authors, I've drawn out themes more relevant to a modern audience while filtering the humour through a contemporary comedy-sieve. Some scenes have been added and some have been cut, all with the joy of Labiche and Feydeau in mind. The truth is of course, *French Twist* isn't just one adaptation. It's two. Two completely separate plays by two completely different writers, written over twenty years apart. And so, came my second goal – to get these two works to somehow relate to each other. The comedic works of Georges Feydeau were built on the foundations of Eugène Labiche. And I have done my utmost to serve this idea in the text. I made connections where I could and mirrors where I couldn't. The end result is (hopefully) two little plays that go hand-in-hand. A demented brother and sister skipping maniacally along for your amusement. I thank Morgan Dowsett for placing his strange little dream in my hands.

Dear Steve, Meg, Daniel, Jeremy, Graham, Dave, Rachel and all the creatives and crew of French Twist! I hope you've had a great rehearsal process, challenging as farce can be. During rehearsals for the original production the city of Brisbane flooded and the rehearsal room went under, making us lose an entire week and having to relocate rehearsals to the other side of town while the theatre centre we were to perform in was dried and cleaned in time. It was incredibly painful and somewhat hilarious - as only farce can be. I trust your process has been a lot smoother. I wish you all the best for a fantastic season. May the gin be plentiful and your fidos roar.

Kind Regards,
Matthew



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Farce is such a mechanical form and as such it's about precision and discipline. While it may appear to be hilarious and silly, the rehearsal process is quite often laborious and repetitive. Routines are drilled and drilled with each scene, sometime becoming choreographed, like a dance. Rhythm is key to the success of a farce. Any mis-step, any dropped line or slow response, ultimately will hinder the comedy.

Just as the movement is like a dance, the delivery of lines and rhythm is like a story. In that respect, it takes a lot of focus and note taking to take it all in. Making sure the lines are remembered and homework is done, proves invaluable, as there is so much physicality to rehearse. Characters are heightened (compared with realism) as are the stakes. Logic doesn't seem to faze these characters, as they each have an objective and are completely oblivious to everything that happens around them, if it doesn't directly affect their aim. In that way, all the characters are selfish.

The characters are stereotypes, extreme, often vulgar representations of people around us. If you met someone like this on the street, you would think they were mad. But through all their foibles, it's important to not forget they have to be likeable. The often theatrically discussed "fourth wall" is non-existent here and, as such, most of the performance is directed at the audience, so making sure the body is as open as possible, is really key.

I really do hope you enjoy tonight's offering and that it summons up a carefree evening of laughter and merriment – sing along if you know the words! If you enjoy this evening half as much as we have bringing it to you, then we will have enjoyed it twice as much as you!

(with apologies to Groucho Marx and Dave Simpson for the above gag)

STEVE TAYLOR



Here is another form of 'French Twist'



MO BROS

Moustaches have been commonly used in comedies to convey a sense of theatricality - some of the most famous comedians have moustaches including Groucho Marx, Charlie Chaplin and John Cleese's Basil Fawlty. Facial hair has come in and out of fashion over the ages, recently becoming popular with 'Movember' which encourages men to grow their mo in November each year for prostate cancer research. Will the mo come back into fashion for the other 11 months of the year? We hope not! At the World Beard and Moustache Championships 2007 there were six sub-categories for moustaches:



English – Narrow, beginning at the middle of the upper lip the whiskers are very long and pulled to the side, slightly curled; the ends are pointed slightly upward; areas past the corner of the mouth usually shaved.



Horseshoe – often confused with the Fu Manchu style, the horseshoe was possibly popularized by modern cowboys and consists of a full moustache with vertical extensions from the corners of the lips down to the jawline and resembling an upside-down horseshoe. Also known as “biker moustache”.



Dalí – Narrow, long points bent or curved steeply upward; areas past the corner of the mouth must be shaved. Also known as the vanilla bean. Artificial styling aids needed. Named after Salvador Dalí.



Natural – Moustache may be styled without aids.



Imperial – Whiskers growing from both the upper lip and cheeks, curled upward.



Fu Manchu – long, downward pointing ends, generally beyond the chin.



Handlebar – bushy, with small upward pointing ends. Also known as a “spaghetti moustache”, because of its stereotypical association with Italian men.



Mexican – Big and bushy, beginning from the middle of the upper lip and pulled to the side. The hairs are allowed to start growing from up to a maximum of 1.5 cm beyond the end of the upper lip



Pencil moustache – narrow, straight and thin as if drawn on by a pencil, closely clipped, outlining the upper lip, with a wide shaven gap between the nose and moustache.



Chevron – thick and wide, usually covering the top of the upper lip.



Toothbrush – thick, but shaved except for about an inch (2.5 cm) in the centre.



Walrus – bushy, hanging down over the lips, often entirely covering the mouth.

THE COGS THAT MAKE THE CLOCK WORK

By Morgan Dowsett

When you first encounter Feydeau, Labiche or Hennequin (to list some of the more notorious French Vaudeville playwrights), you learn about the clockwork – this intricately meticulous machine that makes up these farces – a mechanism that releases laughter. In an article with The AV Club, John Cleese mentions “emotions in farce are more intense than they are in ordinary comedy, and the result is that there’s more energy, and therefore bigger laughs at stake. When you combine that with the intellectual perfection of the clockwork, it’s profoundly satisfying.” So, what is this clock? How does it work? How is it built? Here’s a short list of some of the cogs used by these masterful French clockmakers.

Situation Comedy (sitcom): is part of a plot intrigue and is provoked by the incongruity of a situation in which characters find themselves. The success of this comedic effect is solely dependable on the audience colluding with all characters on stage. As such asides are highly used by characters to inform the audience. The lover, hidden in the closet or under a bed to escape the husband who has unexpectedly returned home, is a classic example of situation comedy found in many French farces.

Comedy of Characters: highlights a particular character’s obsession, like avarice (Harpagon in Molière’s *The Miser*), megalomania (The Captain in *Comedia Dell’Arte*), gluttony (Ubu in Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*) to name a few.

Physical Comedy: is attached to the actor’s physique and the physical behaviours they adopt: grimaces, mimicry, acrobatics, tics, etc. It’s also attached to the stage work, choreography, blocking, rhythm and timing of the piece.

Linguistic Comedy: relies heavily on the use of language particularly in the verbal exchanges between characters: witty retorts, puns, alliterations, double entendre, etc.

Comedy of Repetition: is the result of the mechanical repetition of a set pattern, be it a plot intrigue, a piece of dialogue, or physical behaviour. A signature effect found in Burlesque but most notably in silent movies. This is also where the laws of “three” or “seven” is born; if the pattern is to be repeated a third time there must be a variation on the pattern in order to re-release the humour – if not – the pattern needs to be repeated at least seven times before the humour can be released again.

Comedy of Caricature: based entirely on the imitation and exaggeration of “another”, whether a character on stage or a direct reference to someone well known by the audience. This type of comedy lends itself to parody and satire.

Absurdist Comedy: born from the absence of meaning, where an attempt to control an uncontrollable element sets in motion a desperate need to conquer the unconquerable. This effect tends to lead a character down a path where their verbal or gestural expressions lose their meaning. An abrupt reversal of dialogue deliberately unacknowledged by mutual characters, misunderstanding a misunderstanding, unfolding a chair that can’t physically unfold, are a few classic examples.

CAST

JAILBIRD

An already complicated love triangle between a doctor, his wife and her lover, becomes even more confusing upon the arrival of another suitor. Disturbingly, he matches the exact description of a wanted murderer.

LEMERCIER	Daniel Wain
TAUPINIER	Jeremy Gill
PLUMARD	Graham Titcombe
DEBRUCHARD	Dave Dadswell
PEPITA	Rachel Burnham

THERE WILL BE A 20-MINUTE INTERVAL

THE COAL SELLER AFFAIR

Two old school chums are painfully hungover and missing a few personal items. But when their belongings are discovered at the scene of a heinous crime, their day gets a whole lot worse.

LENGLUME	Daniel Wain
MISTINGUE	Jeremy Gill
JUSTIN	Graham Titcombe
POTARD	Dave Dadswell
NORINE	Rachel Burnham

CREW

DIRECTOR
PRODUCER & SM
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER
SET ADVISOR
SET CONSTRUCTION &
MAKE-UP
LIGHTING
SOUND & SET
WARDROBE
PROPS
PHOTOGRAPHY
ARTISTIC LINK

Steve Taylor

Meg Hird

Alan Corbett

Wesley Henderson Roe

Junis Olmscheid

Tom Shore

Alice Metcalf

Mags Wrightson

Penny Heighes

Jojo Leppink

Lottie Walker



THE BAR IS OPEN AFTER THE SHOW

The foyer bar remains open after the show and is well used by cast, crew and members. We extend a very warm welcome to everyone who has been to see the performance - it is an ideal opportunity to meet the actors you have seen performing, find out more about our theatre and our club or simply relax over a drink.



Please
Turn off Your
Mobile Phones

PLEASE DON'T SPOIL THE PERFORMANCE

We respectfully request all members of the audience to make sure that mobile phones are switched off during the performance. Thank you.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Daniel Wain

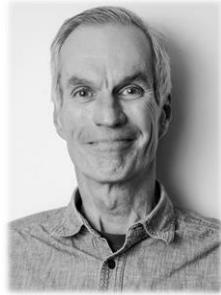
Daniel is delighted to be back treading, or rather dashing across, the boards at Hampton Hill Theatre, having last revolved around them in *The End of the Affair*. Previous sprints here have included Garry in *Noises Off*, Nelson (*Rat in the Skull*), Bernard (*Arcadia*), Sparkish (*The Country Wife*), *Side by Side* by *Sondheim*, Captain Hook (*Peter Pan*) and Douglas in *Man of the Moment*, also directed by Monsieur Taylor. He is extremement ravi to be back playing farce, having last attempted the genre as Robert in *Boeing Boeing* for Richmond Shakespeare Society in 2016. Earlier RSS appearances include Pato Dooley (*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*), Roma (*Glengarry Glen Ross*), DS Johnson (*This Story of Yours*), Major Arnold (*Taking Sides*), Ford (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), Iago (*Othello*), Flamineo (*The White Devil*) and the title roles of *Henry VIII* and *Uncle Vanya*. It's great to be back doing the heavy stuff.

Jeremy has been acting since 2006 for TTC and anyone else who will have him. This is the third time he has been directed by Steve Taylor, previously, *Time of My Life* in 2007 and *Straight and Narrow* in 2010. Last time out for TTC was as a scene-borrowing private detective in *The End of the Affair*. Before that he played Knox in *Breaking the Code* and Sgt Wilson in *Dad's Army*. If somebody had told him years ago that he'd be spending his spare time playing silly saucissons and generally acting le chèvre with a bunch of ageing comedians and a vivacious young comedienne he'd have said - Where do I sign?



Jeremy Gill

Graham has been a member of TTC since 2010 and has enjoyed being in a variety of productions, taking in serious drama (*A Voyage Round My Father*, *The Elephant Man*, *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* and recently *Stevie*); comedy (*The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Tons of Money*); and a musical (*The Drowsy Chaperone*); and now French farce son pièce de résistance peut-être?



**Graham
Titcombe**



**Dave
Dadswell**

Dave's recent appearances include *Breaking the Code* for TTC and the *Shakespeare Revue* for OHADS. But Dave is well known to many TTC audiences – particularly the pantomime ones, although not exclusively – Dave appeared as Mr Boo in TTC acclaimed production of *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* and after his wordless role in *Cinderella* and a "blink and you'll miss him" part in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Dave is looking forward to a slightly more substantial role in this production – ne clignote pas – au cas où!

French Twist is Rachel's second TTC production after appearing in *The Cat's Meow* in March. She is vachement contente to be working with such a talented cast and crew. This year she has also been involved with Richmond Shakespeare Society, playing Masha in *The Seagull* and Jane in *The Regina Monologues* at the Mary Wallace Theatre. Previously, she has worked backstage and onstage for a number of productions while at Royal Holloway University and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.



Rachel Burnham

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Steve Taylor - Director

Steve's adult drama career began in G&S - HLOC and The Young Savoyards - playing the full canon of comic baritones. Modern musicals include *Carousel*, *Oklahoma* and *The Sound of Music* amongst others. Play credits include *An Inspector Calls*, *Hard Times*, *Interior Designs*, *Albert Make Us Laugh*, *Sylvia's Wedding* and *Dead Funny*. Steve has Best Actor Swan awards for Siegfried Sassoon in *Not About Heroes* and Leslie/Maureen in *A Different Way Home* by Jimmie Chinn. Most recent performances at HHT include *Brimstone & Treacle*, *My Boy Jack*, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, *Blackbird*, *Dad's Army*, *Colder Than Here*, *Side by Side by Sondheim* and *Dick Barton: Special Agent*. Steve also made his debut performance at RSS earlier this year as Jack in *The Weir* and appeared last month at HHT as Wesley in *Jerusalem*. Directorial credits at HHT are not limited to but include *Chess* (which won a Swan award for Best Musical), *Business of Murder*, *Anagram of Murder*, *Playing Sinatra*, *Kiss Me Like You Mean It*, *Time of My Life*, *Man of the Moment* and the winner of the Swan Award for Best Play - *Straight and Narrow*.

Meg Hird – Producer & Stage Manager

Meg can usually be found habillé en noir, behind one desk or another. For *French Twist*, that's the SM desk, but she's lost count of the number of productions she's done over the last few years. Some of Meg's theatre credits include *How to Succeed in Business*, *42nd Street*, *The Producers* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* for BROS; *Oliver* and *Annie Get Your Gun* for Step on Stage, as well as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Dick Barton - Special Agent* and most recently *The Pillowman* for TTC. She looks forward to many more productions, both at HHT and further afield...

Alan Corbett – Construction Manager

Alan's first collaboration with Steve was in 2007 in *Time of My Life*, then *Kiss Me Like You Mean It* and *Straight and Narrow*, to now, *French Twist* his 57th (!) different set construction in the past ten years - C'est magnifique! Alan's most recent successes being, *Jerusalem*, *The Cat's Meow* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Wesley Henderson Roe – Set Advisor

Wes joined TTC in 2007 and il regardait autour de l'atelier when someone assumed he knew how to design and build a set. From such small accidents, large slightly wonky and unstable oak-effect trees grow.

Junis Olmscheid – Set Construction & Make-up

Junis is a relatively new but very experienced member of TTC, renowned for her exquisite attention to detail – whether of the set, hairdressing or make-up effects. Few will have failed to notice that extra “je ne sais quoi” in recent productions: *The Cat's Meow*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Breaking the Code* and *Dick Barton - Special Agent*.

Tom Shore - Lighting

Tom is un professeur d'art dramatique at The Heathland School in Hounslow. Most recently for TTC, he assisted with the lights for Jerusalem and played Katurian in *The Pillowman*. Previously, he also performed in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Alfie*. He will be lighting *Still Life and Red Peppers* in the autumn.

Alice Metcalf – Sound & Set

2016 saw Alice debut for TTC backstage and she has proved to be a real, homme à tout faire, (strictly, une mademoiselle a tout faire - but translates badly!) in set construction, projection, sound, follow spot lighting and ASM to boot! Her past productions are *End of the Affair*, *Cinderella*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Cat's Meow* and *Jerusalem*.

Mags Wrightson - Wardrobe

French Twist will be garde-robe numéro vingt-huit in the past nine years, most recently dressing *Muswell Hill*, *The Mercy Seat*, *Rent*, *Stevie* and *Cinderella*. Mags also has credits for appearances in *The Secret Garden* and *A Christmas Carol*.

Penny Heighes - Props

Penny is best known at TTC for her role as small props mistress. Or the 'cupboard-full-of-stuff' tidier. She did make her debut on the TTC stage in panto *The Diamond Princess*, beaucoup des lunes depuis but that, frankly, was enough! She has worked with many productions at TTC over the years, *Kitchen Sink*, *Dinner*, *The Thrill of Love*, *My Boy Jack* and more. Coping with teenagers has taken her away from TTC recently but with GCSEs looming, she has decided she is probably best out of the way and so is delighted to be sourcing nonsense once again, this time for *French Twist*.

JoJo Leppink - Photography

The camera never lies, and this will be JoJo's 11th fois clignotant pour TTC. JoJo has credits also for Set & Crew – *Dick Barton: Special Agent*; ASM – *Rent*; Assistant Director – *Proof* and DSM & Props - *The Linden Tree*.

SPECIAL THANKS

- Mart Stonelake for la chaise curieuse
- Matthew Ryan and Kubler Auckland Management for their unconditional access to this wonderful new adaptation



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Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain and to Arts Richmond. This production is entered for the Arts Richmond Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.

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at Hampton Hill Theatre

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By Dylan Thomas

The majestic play for voices comes to life

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A haunting tale of passion and possession

Sun 1 Oct 2017 – Sat 7 Oct 2017

Auditorium



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Teddington Theatre Club is a Club Theatre open to members and their guests. Each month, details of forthcoming productions are mailed to each member together with Theatre, our club magazine and newsletter.

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www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk or call our Membership Secretary on 020 8287 2663 or complete one of the forms you can find in the Foyer.