

THE KILLING OF  
*Sister George*

BY FRANK MARCUS



WED **6 JUL** – SAT **9 JUL 2022**

[teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)



**Programme £2**



# The Killing of Sister George

By Frank Marcus

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Concord  
Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd.

No photography or recording!

# Teddington Theatre Club

Formed in 1927, Teddington Theatre Club is now one of the leading amateur drama groups in south west London, performing in their own custom-built theatre in Hampton Hill. Starting out to stage Shakespeare for schools, it soon developed to stage a wide repertoire of plays for the general public, originally to raise funds for its schools programmes.

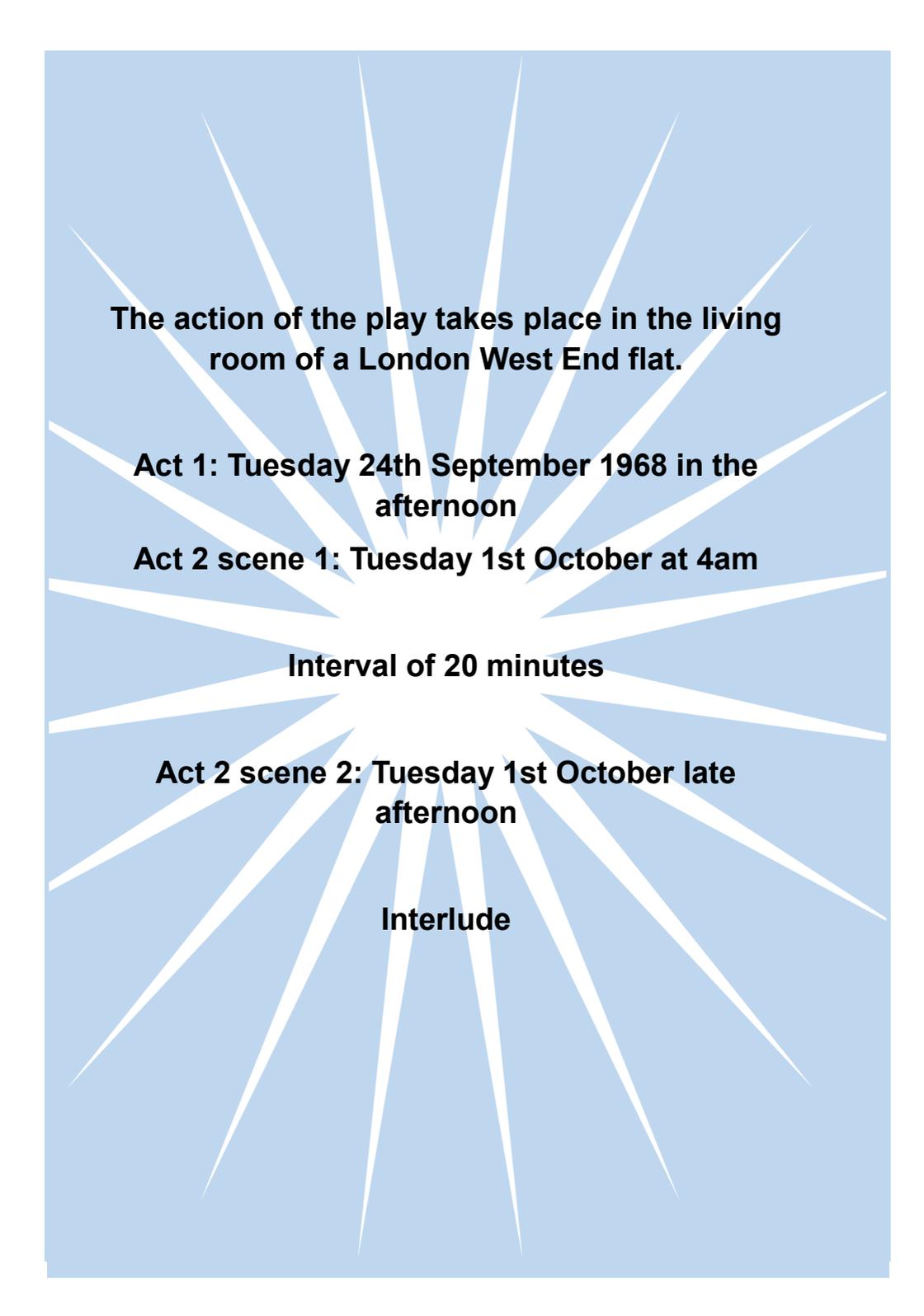
TTC's first production, in 1927, was *Scenes from Twelfth Night* followed in 1928 with *The Merchant of Venice* and *Scenes from As You Like It*. Since then, the Club has gone on to put on over 670 productions and counting as it rapidly approaches its hundredth anniversary. Having performed four or five productions a year in hired halls for many years, in 1969 the Club were granted a lease of part of Richmond Council's Hampton Court House and after two years of conversion work finally opened its own theatre in 1971.

As the lease came towards its end, negotiations with Richmond Council secured a site on Hampton Hill High Street for a new theatre and after a concentrated period of fundraising and with a grant from the National Lottery, the well-equipped Hampton Hill Playhouse (now Theatre) was opened in 1998.

TTC present about ten productions a year and welcome new members - from those who wish to be on stage to the technical teams or front of house. All shows at the Theatre are supported by a huge team of volunteers – so thanks to all of those who have supporting this show with marketing, front of house, bar, health & safety, box office, finance and more.

There are lots of ways to get involved, so please go to our website to find out more and to keep in touch with what's on at Hampton Hill Theatre, sign up to our monthly show listing at .....

**[www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk](http://www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk)**



**The action of the play takes place in the living room of a London West End flat.**

**Act 1: Tuesday 24th September 1968 in the afternoon**

**Act 2 scene 1: Tuesday 1st October at 4am**

**Interval of 20 minutes**

**Act 2 scene 2: Tuesday 1st October late afternoon**

**Interlude**

# A Welcome from our Artistic Director



Welcome to Hampton Hill Theatre and TTC's production of *The Killing of Sister George*

For those of us who remember the film adaptation of Frank Marcus' play the stage version is likely to come as something as a surprise. For a start, it's funny. And there is no sex. In fact the film that was marketed as a "shocking drama", released with an X rating (18 classification for our younger viewers) and famed for that graphic lesbian sex scene bears very little relation to the original play.

As will be revealed over the next couple of hours Marcus' play is actually a dark comedy, which merely implies the sexuality of the protagonists. Almost 60 years after the play was written this approach seems so much more sensible than the sensationalism of the hype that surrounded the screening of the movie. It does not "pull lesbians out of the closet" as one critic stated of the movie; it rather shines a light on the relationships between three very different people and is a brilliant study on how the balance of power within relationships can shift significantly and quickly. And it demonstrates very well how people – even our nearest and dearest - can surprise us. The fact that all of the people in this triangle are women may or may not be significant.

All that aside, though, I'm pleased that we're able to present the play at the tail end of Pride month. The world was a very different place 50 years ago at the time of the first Pride march, which came some 8 years after Marcus' play first appeared on the stage. Looking at the piece in that context does throw a slightly different light on it. Or does it..?

Whatever we may think about the message the playwright wanted to deliver when he wrote this play (and if his desire was to cause debate he's succeeded) we can without doubt say that it's a gift to four actresses. Each role in this play is significant, interesting and beautifully crafted. As indeed are the TTC performers playing them.

No performer exists in a vacuum though, and again I would like to thank TTC's brilliant membership who have pulled together to get this and many other shows on the road this year. This play is the official end of season for us. I'm pleased we're leaving you with laughter. And I'm looking forward to seeing you all at *Pygmalion*, which opens the Autumn/winter season.

## **Lottie Walker**



# Director's Note

*Jeremy Gill has been a member of TTC since 2006. He has acted in over fifty productions for TTC and other local drama societies. He recently wrote and directed Maynard's End for Q2 Players. This is his debut directing for TTC.*

In choosing this play I was mindful of the fact that it is often misunderstood. The effect of the film version, where Alice spends half her time in a flimsy nightie and is seduced, is to give a somewhat different and possibly prurient impression of what takes place. The play is in fact about love and the interdependence that can come about as a result. It is also about what happens when that love dies but the dependence still remains, until a tipping-point is reached when one or both partners realise that the underpinnings of their lifestyle and what kept them together have been eroded or lost completely. The effect of this is two people trapped together but carrying on "in quiet desperation".

The play begins on 24th September 1968. In setting the play four years later than originally set I hope to create more of a sense of an era ending. In 1964 there were clear indications that great social change was about to happen but by increments, at a comparatively leisurely pace. By 1968 many of the apparent certainties of British national life had been swept away. It was a year of such great social change as to make many people feel events were spinning out of their control, as indeed they were. (A mile away from June and Alice's Devonshire Street flat at the Shaftesbury Theatre, the cast and crew of the musical 'Hair' eagerly awaited the 26th of September, when the Theatres Act 1968 came into force, abolishing censorship of stage plays.)

A criticism often levelled at this play is that the characters are grotesques. June (Sister George) certainly is. I once shared a flat with a woman who was so like June as to beggar belief. She was well known in the gay clubs of London as a spectacularly successful serial womaniser. Despite being a thief, a compulsive liar and a cheat one had to love her for her considerable charm and wit. I knew that one day, despite being her own worst enemy, she would find love with someone who would understand her.

From Carl Orff's Carmina Burana – Cours D'Amours: In Trutina (In the balance)

In the wavering balance of my feelings  
set against each other  
lascivious love and modesty.  
But I choose what I see,  
and submit my neck to the yoke;  
I yield to the sweet yoke.

**Jeremy Gill**



# The Cast

June Buckridge (Sister George) ..... Lizzie Williams  
Alice 'Childie' McNaught..... Jacinta Collins  
Mrs Mercy Croft..... Sian Walters  
Madame Xenia ..... Enid Gayle



# The Crew

Director ..... Jeremy Gill  
Production Manager..... Vicky Horder  
Stage Managers .....Leigh Dent and Eilish Langham  
Set design and construction..... Alan Corbett and Priya Virdee  
Lighting design..... Laura Sharp  
Lighting operation ..... Rob Foot  
Sound design ..... Charles J Halford and Fintan Davies  
Sound operation ..... Fintan Davies  
Costume .....Margaret Boulton  
Props .....Jacqui Grebot and Priya Virdee  
Applehurst theme arranged and played by ..... Carole Smith  
Publicity ..... Christine Wayman  
Photographer ..... Sarah Carter  
Artistic Link .....Daniel Wain  
Backstage & Technical Link..... Dave Rumens

Grateful thanks to

Harry Jacobs and Nigel Cole for their help with the interlude.

All at TTC who gave their time to support the production.

And of course the front of house, box office and bar teams without whom the show couldn't go on!

# The Cast Biographies

## Lizzie Williams

Lizzie has really enjoyed being involved in local theatre over the past ten years. Favourite productions have included: *The Matchgirls*, *The Winter's Tale* and *A visit from Miss Prothero* (TTC), *The River* (OHADS), *Tom and Viv* (RSS), *Absent Friends* (Park Players) and *Celebration* (Putney Theatre Club). She has also turned her hand to back stage and production work as well as a stint running the box office at TTC for over two years. She hopes you enjoy this dynamic play involving characters as diverse as they come...a flamboyant medium, a dignified cobra, a strident, crusty sadist and a nubile orphan...all coping with life in their own way....



## Jacinta Collins

Jacinta has performed in a number of plays for Teddington Theatre Club and other local theatre companies. She most recently played the part of Irene in *The Dresser* at Hampton Hill Theatre and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Richmond Shakespeare Society.

Jacinta is a Year 5 teacher at a local primary school where she enjoys sharing her love of drama with her pupils.



## Siân Walters

Siân made her stage debut aged five playing a snowflake and has been involved in all things theatrical ever since! She enjoys working on both sides of the curtain, so when not treading the boards can usually be found lurking in the wings dressed in black. Siân joined TTC in 2012 and has performed in five pantomimes, *Daisy Pulls It Off* and the double-bill of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up The Bodies*. In 'real life' she is owned by two cats, drinks far too much tea, has a job in TV-land and is also a member of BROS Theatre Company.



## Enid Gayle

Enid trained at Morley College and formed a group with fellow students writing, directing and producing shows of short plays, performing in miniscule boxroom theatres above pubs. Enid is an accomplished salsa dancer, appearing in British film *Born Romantic*, almost up close and personal to the fabulous Adrian Lester. For TTC, Enid has appeared as a funeral director in *Marvin's Room* and a feisty wife in *The Recruiting Officer*. Enid most recently performed as Nurse in *Shakespeare in Love* whilst recovering from a fall 3 weeks earlier which resulted in a broken left elbow and a smashed right wrist – a trooper or utterly bonkers!



# The Killing of Sister George

by Frank Marcus

*"The only honest conclusion to comedy is the sense of life going on."*

Frank Marcus came to England with his family as refugees from nazi Germany in 1939. He became an actor and playwright. His plays were known for their sensitively written parts for female actors such as in this, his best known play, perhaps because of the active collaboration of his wife the actress Jacqueline Sylvester. As well as his own plays he made several translations and adaptations from his native German, notably adapting Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*.

Considered by many to be dark and ending tragically, there are sufficient clues in the script of *The Killing of Sister George* to arrive at a different impression. There are plenty of laughs and it is for the audience to decide whether the play ends sadly or happily and for whom. As director I gave the play a nudge or two in the direction I think it should take.



Without wishing to give anything away (and we wouldn't want to do that, would we?) what happens to the character June, who plays Sister George in a long-running and much loved radio serial, reminds me of Emperor Hirohito's masterfully understated remarks about the defeat of his country at the end of the second world war :-

*"The war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage".*

Written four years before the Theatres Act of 1968, the play never specifically states that the two main characters are in a sexual relationship. Of course, much of this was of necessity. Relationships between women around this time were not recognised by the law and therefore although not actually illegal, still very much frowned upon by society in general. Open discussion of the issue on stage was likely to incur the wrath of the censor or at least his pen.

The characters of June and Alice live a double life as 'respectable' lady companions soaking up the cultural delights on offer in central London, living as they do less than a mile from the West End and theatreland, taking their particular shared pleasure in the ballet. Perched in their top floor Devonshire Street flat, they are also perfectly placed to enjoy the demi-monde lifestyle of discreet gay pubs and clubs. It's a life that seems to suit them both.

Then June (Sister George) has to ruin it.....

The play was a huge success, transferring from Bristol Old Vic to the West End, to another West End theatre and then on to Broadway and winning Beryl Reid a Tony award.

# COMING SOON

**Booking at [www.thelittleboxoffice.com/teddingtontheatreclub](http://www.thelittleboxoffice.com/teddingtontheatreclub)  
or phone 020 8410 4546 (5.00pm - 8.00pm Mon - Sat)**

**TUE 4 OCT - SAT 8 OCT 2022**

## **PYGMALION**

By George Bernard Shaw

**How can you turn a common flower seller into a duchess?**

**TUE 15 NOV - SAT 19 NOV 2022**

## **INCIDENT AT VICHY**

By Arthur Miller

**[Occupied] France 1942. No one is safe, but can one man give the ultimate sacrifice?**

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Josef Weinberger Limited.

**SAT 3 DEC - SUN 11 DEC 2022**

## **GUARDIANS OF THE PANTOVERSE**

By Danny Wain

**An epic adventure of fantasy and fun. Panto will never be the same!**

Teddington Theatre Club is affiliated to Arts  
Richmond and this production is entered for the  
Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals.



# Hampton Hill Theatre is looking to build its volunteering community - could this be you?

There are many ways to get involved at the theatre – a few of the more popular activities—Acting or Directing, Front of House team, Lighting and Sound, Set, Props or Costumes, Production Managers, Prompts, Stage Managers, Marketing and Events, Maintenance of our brilliant building and technical equipment.

It is a great way to meet local people, have a lot of fun and be part of something special. Many members are bringing their professional skills to a new environment or gaining experience for their future CV!

Find out more information on these roles at the website.

[www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk](http://www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk)

Send us an email [volunteers@teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)

Drop in to our Open Morning on the First Saturday of the month.

## LOOKING FOR A RECEPTION VENUE? HAMPTON HILL THEATRE

- Competitive rates
- Superbly appointed rooms
- Air conditioned
- Dedicated Duty Manager to look after you
- Lift accessible
- Optional bar facilities
- Flexible layouts
- Disabled toilet and nappy changing facilities



Why not call us on **020 8410 4546**

or e-mail [manager@hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk](mailto:manager@hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk)

90 High Street, Hampton Hill, Middlesex, TW12 1NZ

[www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk/hampton-hill-theatre/functions-hire](http://www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk/hampton-hill-theatre/functions-hire)

# **ttc** Fundraiser



## VAMP til READY

“The Boys with the Obedient Feet”

Very much alive and  
in person at

Hampton Hill Theatre

7.00pm Sunday 11th September 2022

Tickets £12 (£15 non members)

[www.thelittleboxoffice.com/teddingtontheatreclub](http://www.thelittleboxoffice.com/teddingtontheatreclub)







# **TEDDINGTON** THEATRE CLUB

**Facebook: @teddingtontheatreclub**

**Twitter: @teddington\_tc**

**Instagram: @teddingtontheatreclub**

**[www.youtube.com/c/teddingtontheatreclub](http://www.youtube.com/c/teddingtontheatreclub)**

**[www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk](http://www.teddingtontheatreclub.org.uk)**

Teddington Theatre Club is resident at Hampton Hill Theatre.

90 High Street,  
Hampton Hill,  
TW12 1NZ

**HAMPTON HILL**  
THEATRE

