

CHEEK BY JOWL

"A VERY GOOD PIECE OF WORK, I ASSURE YOU, AND A MERRY"

Nobody knows for certain where or when the first performances of A Midsummer Night's Dream took place. The most likely year is 1596 when Shakespeare was 32. The title page of the first edition maintains that there had been several public performances by the Lord Chamberlain's company, presumably in a large and noisy London playhouse.

Oberon's final blessing for marital harmony makes it likely that the play was initially conceived to grace a society wedding and performed privately to guests, exactly as "Pyramus and Thisbe" will distract Theseus on his wedding day and 'wear away this long age of three hours between our supper and bedtime'. So wedding guests see a play in which wedding guests see a play.

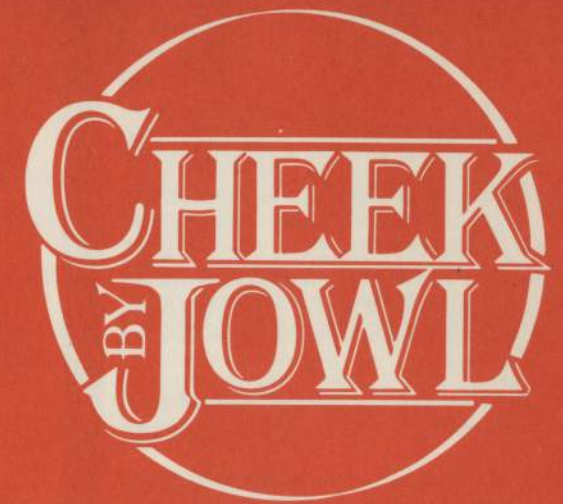
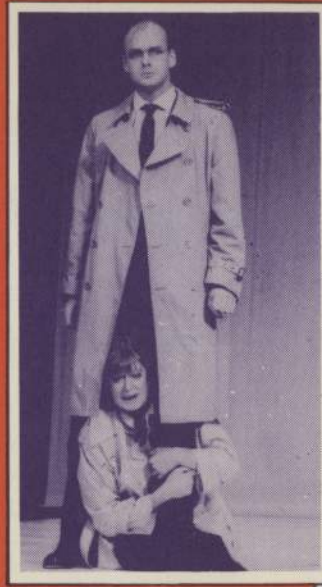
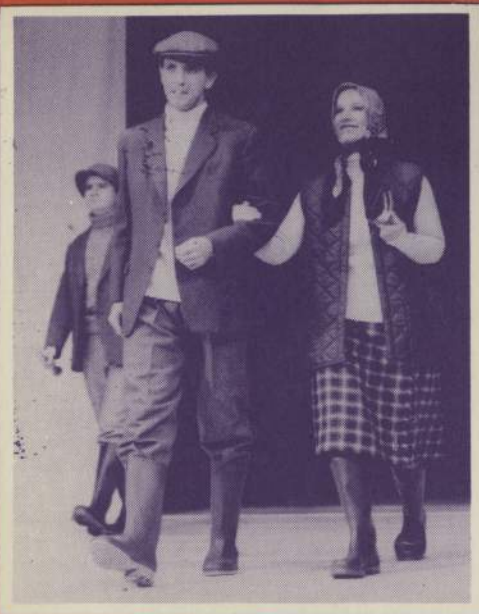
Maybe the marriage was that of the Countess of Southampton and Sir Thomas Heneage, maybe children of the house played Peaseblossom and company, and maybe the audience was just as rude as the young aristocrats are to Pyramus and Thisbe.

It seems likely that Queen Elizabeth was at the first performance as Oberon's 'fair vestal, throned by the West' is a courtly honour to the Virgin Queen.

A MID- SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William
Shakespeare





MORTALS

HIPPOLYTA

Betrothed to Theseus

ANNE WHITE

THESEUS

Duke of Athens

MARTIN TURNER

PHILOSTRATE

Servant to Theseus

DAVID GILLESPIE

HERMIA

In love with Lysander

SASKIA REEVES

EGEUS

Hermia's father

COLIN WAKEFIELD

LYSANDER

In love with Hermia

PAUL SYKES

DEMETRIUS

In love with Hermia

WILLIAM CHUBB

HELENA

In love with Demetrius

SALLY GREENWOOD

MISS QUINCE
STEPH BRAMWELL

MISS FLUTE
LEDA HODGSON

REV BOTTOM
COLIN WAKEFIELD

IMMORTALS

TITANIA

Queen of the Immortals

ANNE WHITE

OBERON

King of the Immortals

MARTIN TURNER

PUCK

Or Robin Goodfellow

DAVID GILLESPIE

"Dream, dream, dream,
When I want you in my arms,
When I need you with all your charms,
Whenever I want you, all I have to do is dream."

The Everly Brothers



Director Declan Donnellan
Designer Nick Ormerod
Choreographer Sara van Beers
Costumes by Charlotte Humpston
Immortals' Costumes Keith Bish
Ass's ears by Lynne Wright
Lighting Design Nick Kidd

FOR CHEEK BY JOWL

Artistic Directors Declan Donnellan & Nick Ormerod
Administrator Barbara Matthews
Assistant Administrator Richard Hansom
Company Stage Manager Nick Kidd
Assistant Stage Manager Clare Le May
Company Voice Patsy Rodenburg
Graphic Design Iain Lanyon

There will be one interval of 15 minutes

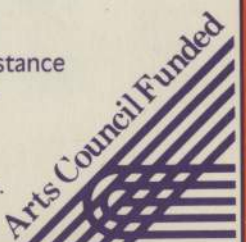
The first half lasts 80 minutes

The second half lasts 70 minutes

CHEEK BY JOWL:

11 Lower John Street, London W1
Tel: 01-439 0978

CHEEK BY JOWL receives financial assistance
from the Arts Council of Great Britain,
the British Council,
Southern Arts,
West Midlands Arts
and Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts.
Champagne by courtesy of
Moët & Chandon



"September 29th, 1662 . . . and then to the King's Theatre, where we saw 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM', which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life."

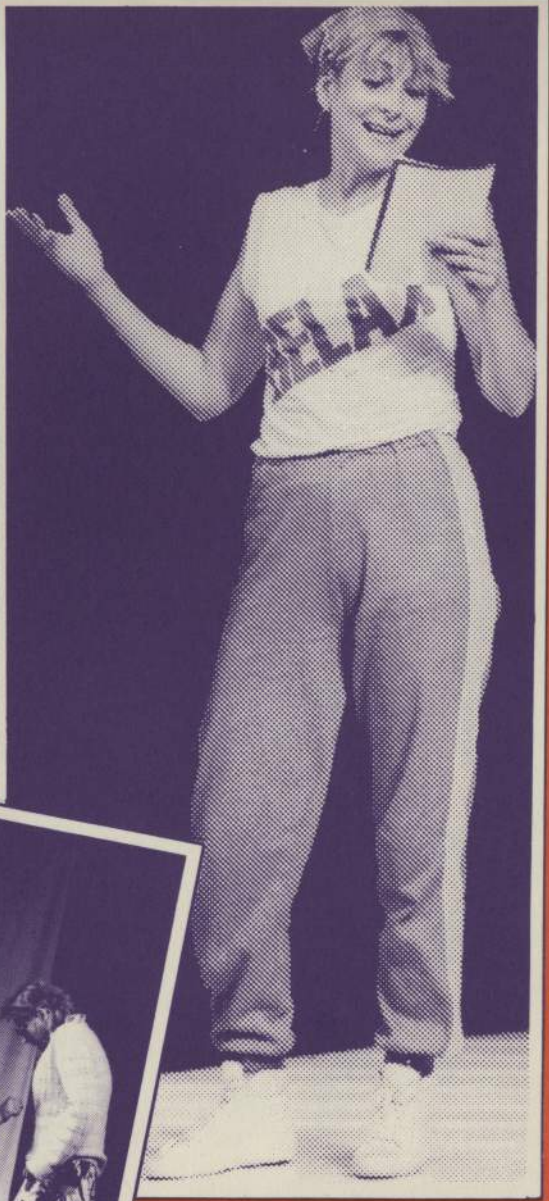
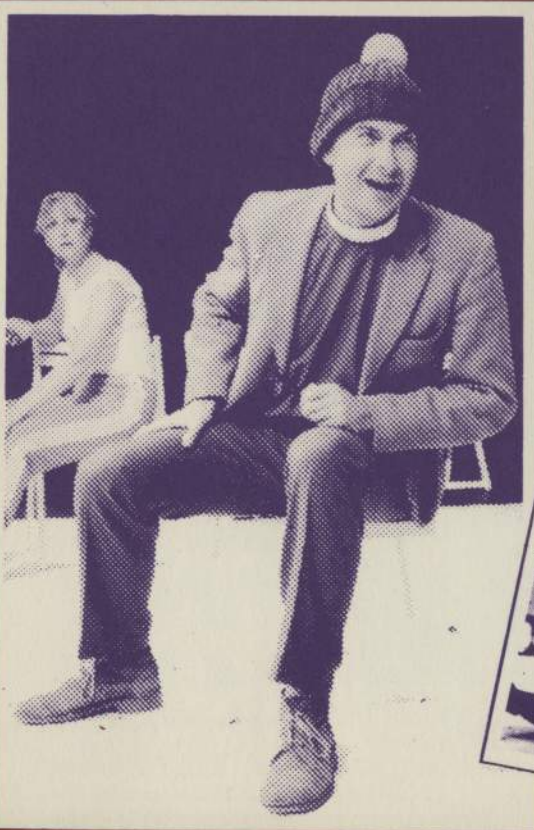
Samuel Pepys

"But, as it is written,
'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him,'

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?"

1 Corinthians 2. 9-11

St. Paul



"THE ACTORS ARE AT HAND, AND BY THEIR SHOW, YOU SHALL KNOW ALL THAT YOU ARE LIKE TO KNOW."

The actor's position in society was ambiguous and precarious. He was feared and reviled by many, especially the clergy, who were particularly incensed by the assertion that actors, as artists, had a priestlike mission to society, to instruct, enlighten, or merely to exercise the audience's spiritual imagination.

'O blasphemy intolerable! Are filthy plays and bawdy interludes comparable to the word of God, the food of life and life itself?'

and

'God gave authority to instruct and preach, to correct and anathemise, only to the Apostles and their successors, and not to players'.

Actors could still, technically, be arrested as rogues and vagabonds if out of work, and even starve, if the theatres were closed for long stretches, as in times of plague. The young Earl of Southampton may have extended the hospitality of his country house to Shakespeare

during the great plague which flourished in London a year or two before the 'Dream' was first performed and which killed a sixth of the capital's population. The distance between aristocrat and actor/writer is hard to measure. Shakespeare may have been employed as a mere servant, scribbling at the fringe of a smart circle, or the relationship may have been far more intimate with Southampton as the 'master-mistress' of the sonnets. Many actors responded to this insecurity by striving to prove themselves responsible citizens, and like Shakespeare devoted considerable energy to acquiring a country seat, a coat of arms, and becoming the only begetter of a long line of gentlemen.

Elizabethan social mobility was frequently rapid — Shakespeare's father was illiterate; but it wasn't always upwards. In a few years the wild Southampton was in disgrace and under a sentence of death.

"IS ALL OUR COMPANY HERE?"

Theatre companies were similarly vulnerable and sought protection and subsidy from the great; so keen was one group that it accompanied its patron, Lord Leicester, when he went to war in the Netherlands. Queen Elizabeth herself had tried to set up her own Royal company, and chose 'twelve of the best men'. However this galaxy of stars shortly fell out and dispersed. Soon their reputation was eclipsed by a company protected by Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon, which worked more as a team. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM was one of their

first major successes. Three of the share-holders were Shakespeare, Will Kemp, the clown, who probably played Bottom and young Richard Burbage, who may have played Oberon and/or Theseus, and who was to become the most famous tragic actor of his day.

On the whole the companies toured in the Summer and played for the rest of the year in London in a variety of spaces, using little scenery, the actors relying on the audience's imagination to change a scene.

"YOU CAN NEVER BRING IN A WALL!"

In Theseus and Hippolyta's exchange about actors, the Duke implies that an actor's talent is entirely dependent on the audience's imagination;

THESEUS: The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA: It must be your imagination then and not theirs.

THESEUS: If we imagine no worse of them, than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men.

and in Pyramus and Thisbe, Shakespeare specifically satirises too literal an approach to theatre. It is therefore ironic that of all Shakespeare's plays, the DREAM should have begotten such a long tradition of elaborate and decorative theatrics.

At the turn of the century, Beerbohm Tree filled his stage with real oaks and live deer, pigeons, rabbits, squirrels and hares. Apparently the audiences loved it, but the actors complained bitterly of being upstaged. Here is an extract from an operatic version of 1692:

Robin So, when thou wak'st with thine own Fools Eyes, Peep. (He takes off the Ass's Head)
Oberon Titania, call for Musick.
Titania Let us have all Variety of Musick. All that should welcome up the rising Sun.
The Scene changes to a Garden of Fountains. A Sonata plays while the Sun rises, it appears red through the Mist, as it ascends it dissipates the Vapours, and is seen in its full Lustre; then the Scene is perfectly discovered, the Fountains are perfectly gilding, and adorn'd with Statues; which terminated by a Walk of Cypress Trees which lead to a delightful Bower. Before the Trees stand rows of Marble Columns, which support many Walks which rise by Stairs to the top of the House; the Stairs are adorn'd with Figures on Pedestals, and Rails; and Balusters on each side of 'em. Near the top, vast Quantities of Water break out of the Hills, and fall in mighty Cascades for the bottom of the Scene, to feed the Fountains which are on each side. In the middle of the Stage is a very large Fountain, where the Water rises about twelve Foot.
Then the 4 seasons enter, with their several Attendants.
One of the Attendants begin . . .
Two others sing in Parts . . .
A Machine appears, the Clouds break from before it, and Phoebus appears in a Chariot drawn by four Horses; and Sings . . .

Mendelssohn's famous wedding march was in fact incidental music for a spectacular German version, and marks the triumphal entry of Theseus and Hippolyta after their marriage.

CHEEK BY JOWL

Cheek by Jowl was formed in 1981 by Nick Ormerod and Declan Donnellan to tour ensemble theatre.

Since then, the company has played in hundreds of different theatres throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland and won two awards at the Edinburgh Festival.

In addition, the company has toured Belgium, Holland, Israel, Spain, Egypt and Germany. In January Cheek by Jowl played to packed houses in London's West End.

This season, the company will tour England, perform at the Taormina Festival in Sicily, and undertake a major Asian tour taking in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal.

VANITY FAIR

"Cheek by Jowl is one of the few companies to have received accolades from its inception"

Drama magazine

THE COUNTRY WIFE (1981)

by William Wycherley.

"For sheer excellence of acting it is difficult to envisage anything surpassing this superbly compact production."

The Scotsman

GOTCHA (1982/3)

by Barrie Keefe.

and

RACK ABBEY

a new musical by Colin Sell and Declan Donnellan.

"A wonderful evening"

Nieuw Apeleoordnsd Courant

OTHELLO (1982/83)

by William Shakespeare.

"One of the most harrowing Othellos I have ever seen"

The Times

"For sheer pace, verve and above all clarity, this production deserves an award."

The Guardian

VANITY FAIR

(1983/4/5)

by William Makepeace Thackeray.

Fringe First and Scottish Arts Club Awards.

"Above any praise . . . a fluid, bubbling and dazzling show . . . one of the central theatrical experiences of the Israel Festival."

Yediot Achronot

"An exhilarating sense of Theatre"

The Sunday Times

PERICLES (1984/5)

by William Shakespeare.

"At the end, with a great shout of jubilation, the actors call the public to celebrate new joy for indeed the entire performance has been a joint and joyous act — the sheer essence of theatre."

Ya (Spain)

"Cheek by Jowl, an exhilarating young company, have brought their unique blend of inventiveness and precision to bear on Shakespeare's epic romance Pericles . . . The daring reaches its height as father and daughter, taken beyond easy joy by suffering, do not slowly awaken each other as if from an evil dream, but passionately batter each other into recognition."

The Times



OTHELLO

ANDROMACHE

(1984/85)

British professional premiere of Racine's tragedy.
Translated by David Bryer.

"Riveting".
The Guardian

"Electrifying".
Daily Telegraph

"Racine in modern dress we have seen before. Racine stripped of heroic gesture, heightened delivery and played in idiomatic prose is a startling novelty, and Declan Donnellan's production justifies it up to the hilt."

The Times

BIOGRAPHIES

STÉPH BRAMWELL trained at Dartington College of Arts. She has worked with TIE companies in Leeds, Sunderland and Ipswich, toured with Durham Theatre Company and Les Oeufs Malades and appeared as Angelica Bianca in Aphra Benn's *THE ROVER*. Television work includes *WHEN THE BOAT COMES IN*, *ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE* and *THE MACHINE GUNNERS*. Steph joined Cheek by Jowl in January 1985.

WILLIAM CHUBB trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He has worked most recently with Orchard Theatre where his roles include Sherlock Holmes in *A STUDY IN SCARLET*. This is his first tour with Cheek by Jowl.

DECLAN DONNELLAN. Freelance productions include improvised plays for the Royal Court Activists, *DON GIOVANNI* for Scottish Opera-Go-Round, *BENT* for the Northcott Theatre, Exeter and *A MASKED BALL* for Opera 80. Plans include the Brecht-Weill *RISE AND FALL OF MAHAGONNY* for the Wexford Festival.

DAVID GILLESPIE trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. On leaving, he joined the production of *JACK AND THE BEANSTALK* at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, where he has been a regular performer in variety. He has worked in Chichester, Theatr Clwyd, Watford Palace, Nottingham Playhouse and recently the Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford. He joined Cheek by Jowl in January 1985.

SALLY GREENWOOD trained at LAMDA. She has worked in rep at Peterborough, Derby Playhouse and Theatr Clwyd, where parts played include Sonya in *UNCLE VANYA*, Fay in *LOOT* and Hilda in *THE MASTER BUILDER*. She has toured with Theatre Camel, Les Oeufs Malades and most recently Incubus Theatre Company's production of Conrad's *THE SECRET AGENT*. She is a member of the Wandsworth Warmers.

LEDA HODGSON trained at LAMDA and began work in the New Shakespeare Company's open air production of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*. This was followed by seasons at the Northcott, Exeter and the Unicorn Company and a tour of *HOUSE GUEST*. She has appeared on television in *TAKE THREE WOMEN* and in the film *THE FINAL ESCAPE*. She has toured Holland and Belgium with Cheek by Jowl in 1982 and rejoined the Company in January 1985.

NICK KIDD has worked for many companies in different capacities including Opera North, Royal College of Music, Interim, London City Ballet, Opera Players, Opera 80 and many West End shows. He first toured with Cheek by Jowl in 1983.

CLARE LE MAY took a Drama and English Literature Degree at Goldsmiths College. She has worked for Richmond Theatre, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith and Sadlers Wells. This is her first tour with Cheek by Jowl.

JOANNA MACGREGOR read Music at Cambridge and studied the piano at the Royal Academy of Music where she was awarded the Hodgson Fellowship. She has written music for many productions including *PICTURES OF WOMEN* for Channel 4, *RODERICK HUDSON* and *BEETHOVEN: A PRIVATE GRIEF* for Radio 4, *GOD'S WONDERFUL RAILWAY* for Bristol Old Vic and she is Musical Director of Little Women Theatre Company. As a concert pianist she has performed at the Purcell Room, Cheltenham Festival and in Texas.

BARBARA MATTHEWS studied at Durham and City Universities before joining the Old Vic's marketing department. She then joined Opera 80 for whom she still does the publicity. She has been the Administrator of Cheek by Jowl since the second tour.

NICK ORMEROD trained at the Wimbledon School of Art and spent a season at the Lyceum, Edinburgh. He has designed *DON GIOVANNI* for Scottish Opera-Go-Round, *THE MAGIC FLUTE* at RACM, *A MASKED BALL* for Opera 80 and productions at York, Exeter and Nottingham. Plans include a production of *MAHAGONNY* for the Wexford Festival.

LINDSAY POSNER studied English at Exeter University and went on to train at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. He then appeared in Shakespeare's *ROMEO AND JULIET* at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. He has recently been working as an assistant director with the Soho Poly Theatre.

SASKIA REEVES trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She has worked in street and fringe theatre, including Covent Garden Community Theatre Co. She appeared in *CATHLEEN NI HOOLIHAN* at the Lyric Hammersmith and played Marguerite in *FAUST* at Theatr Clwyd. TV work includes *THE LAST DAY OF SUMMER*, *LYTTON'S DIARY* and *A WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE*. She joined Cheek by Jowl in January 1985.

PAUL SYKES trained at the Guildhall where he played Fitz in *SAVAGE AMUSEMENT* by Peter Flannery, Friar Francis in *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* and Mr Smetanch in *THE MANDATE*. This is his first professional engagement.

MARTIN TURNER trained at the Drama Centre. Previously he was an Inter-Action worker and performer. He has appeared at the King's Head Almost Free and Pentameters. He joined Cheek by Jowl in 1984 and has played Jos Sedley in *VANITY FAIR*, Simonides in *PERICLES* and Phoenix in *ANDROMACHE*. He played Lysander in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* earlier this year.

SARA VAN BEERS trained with Jacques Lecoq in Paris. Movement direction includes *DR FAUSTUS* at The Lyric, Hammersmith, many productions at the Contact Theatre, Manchester, *PETER PAN* for the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, *A MASKED BALL* for Opera 80 and *PERICLES*, *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* and *A MAN OF MODE* all for Cheek by Jowl. She teaches mime at Arts Educational, The Actor's Centre and Bristol and Manchester Universities.

COLIN WAKEFIELD trained at Webber Douglas. He has worked with Bubble Theatre where parts include Dr Prospero in *RETURN TO FORBIDDEN PLANET* and Thomas Heartfree in *THE ROGUE'S PROGRESS*. He played Bernard in *FRANCIS* at Greenwich, directed *THE MADNESS* and last year toured with two productions for Whirligig Theatre. He joined Cheek by Jowl in January 1985 to play Demetrius in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*.

ANNE WHITE trained at Webber Douglas. Roles include Beattie Bryant in *ROOTS*, Essie in *THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE*, Desdemona in *OTHELLO* and Frosine in *THE MISER*. She first joined Cheek by Jowl to play Emilia in *OTHELLO* and has since played Peggy O'Dowd in *VANITY FAIR* and Cephis in *ANDROMACHE*.

KEY TO PHOTO

1. Lindsay Posner
2. Paul Sykes
3. Nick Kidd
4. Clare Le May
5. Leda Hodgson
6. Colin Wakefield
7. Steph Bramwell
8. Anne White
9. William Chubb
10. Saskia Reeves
11. Joanna MacGregor
12. Declan Donnellan
13. Nick Ormerod
14. David Gillespie
15. Sally Greenwood
16. Sara van Beers
17. Martin Turner
18. Barbara Matthews

Photo: Iain Lanyon



ON TOUR THIS SEASON



A MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM by William Shakespeare

"Tremendous vision . . . an outstanding performance which will be remembered forever by those who love theatre in Egypt."

Akhir Sa'a

"An exploration and demonstration of theatrical skills, an analysis of the magical qualities of live drama, an essay in spellbinding. Cheek by Jowl Theatre Co. has come up with a dream of a Dream."

The Guardian

"One of the most totally enjoyable and highly dramatic Shakespeare productions I have seen in a long time."

Arts Review

THE MAN OF MODE by George Etherege

Priapic Dorimant's scramble round the beds of London, hotly pursued by Mrs Loveit in a rage and Sir Fopling Flutter in rouge and ribbons, is whipped into a lunatic froth in this masterpiece of Restoration comedy. However, the satire gnaws its way well beneath the glitter of fashion and exposes a void of suspicion and hypocrisy.

Etherege's grotesque characters dance a mad caper in this bizarre world of powder and scent, power and sex and wit as sharp as a razor.

