

The Cotswold Savoyards proudly present

CALAMITY JANE

Evenings 7.30pm and
Saturday Matinee 2pm
Tuesday 5th - Saturday 9th
November 2019

CALAMITY JANE
Adapted by RONALD HAMMER and PHIL PARK
From the stage play by CHARLES K. FREEMAN
after WARNER BROS. film written by JAMES O'HANLON
Lyrics by PAUL FRANCIS WEBSTER
Music by SAMMY FAIN

This amateur production is presented by
arrangement with Music Theatre International (Europe)
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**CHELLENHAM
PLAYHOUSE** BOX OFFICE: 01242 522852 WWW.CHELTPLAYHOUSE.ORG.UK

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You will not like me.

The Libertine

By Stephen Jeffreys

2nd - 5th October 2019, 7:30pm
www.cheltplayhouse.org.uk



CHELTENHAM PLAYHOUSE

Partners in the Playhouse

The Partners in the Playhouse Scheme offers our valued patrons a chance to help keep this lovely theatre alive while getting closer to the life of the theatre and the people who work in it. For more information on becoming a Partner, please contact us on 01242 522852.

We extend our thanks to our current Partners:

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The next show at the Playhouse will be Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society's production of *Our House* from 11th - 19th October.

Welcome

On behalf of The Playhouse, welcome to our wonderful intimate theatre here in the heart of Cheltenham. 2020 will mark our 75th anniversary as a performing venue, although the building has a fascinating past dating back to 1806. If you require any assistance during your visit, please do not hesitate to ask one of the front of house volunteers and they will do their best to help you.

Whether you are a regular patron or this is your first time with us, could I please ask you to respect those around you by switching off your mobile phone and not using photographic or audio equipment during the performance.

Aside from a grant of £5,700 from the borough council, the theatre is totally self-funding, and the charity is always looking for financial and practical support to assist with the operation and maintenance of one of the town's most historic and interesting grade-II listed buildings. If you'd like more information about ways you could help us, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Paul Scott, Theatre Manager
paul.scott@cheltplayhouse.org.uk



Allow me to be frank at the commencement...

This production represents the end of a journey that began several years ago, during a chance conversation in (rather appropriately) an alehouse - Cheltenham's very own Railway pub. In its smoky, candlelit interior, David and I were discussing favourite films, and *The Libertine* entered the landscape for the very first time. The screen adaptation, with its distinctive visual style and atmosphere, engaged us both to such a degree that we invested in a copy of the stage play. We discussed the possibility of staging this play with theatre contacts, but it transpired that the script had been considered by some too risqué for community theatre. Not to be dissuaded, we resolved to create our own company specifically to bring this story to the Cheltenham stage.

To do it justice, David and I knew the casting needed to be exact. We scoured our collective contacts for the very best people we could find for each role, and the initial reading proved to be even more successful than we could have hoped for. Almost all the cast who attended that first reading in the autumn of 2018 will be performing for you tonight; the 'Merry Band' have been an absolute pleasure to work with throughout, and their talent and dedication have been a constant source of inspiration and joy.

The planning of all the elements of the production has truly been a labour of love. Searching for costumes and taking part in some incredible photo shoots have been real highlights, and David's construction of 160 individual LEDs for the candelabras was a particularly Herculean effort! I would like to thank the vast number of people who have helped to make this project a reality; all the support - both practical and advisory - has helped us to realise a dream we once considered an impossibility.

John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester, was the blazing star of the restoration; a writer, poet and playwright, possessed of a sharpness of wit rivalled by few - and appetites rivalled by none. He was a divisive celebrity figure, at the forefront of the public consciousness, whose great potential remained largely unrealised due to his obsession with excess and his various addictions. Through its use of modern language, interspersed with verse, the play is made inclusive and accessible, and by mixing authentic period dress with contemporary music choices, we have reinforced this anachronistic dichotomy. This story is as remarkable as its themes are recognisable, communicating its message as clearly to a modern audience as it would have done to a restoration mob in the pit.

Let us conclude by raising a glass to recently departed author, Stephen Jeffreys, and his own insightful critique of our protagonist:

Rochester was a man endowed with every conceivable talent and chose, deliberately and methodically, to waste each one. It is a response to life which still strikes a chord today.

We thank you for your patronage.

Gregory Aston, Director



*I want the passionate love of my audience.
I want, when I make a sweep of my arm, to carry their hearts away,
and when I die that they should sigh for never seeing me again -
'till the next afternoon.*

Elizabeth Barry

Cast

John Wilmot, 2 nd Earl of Rochester	Gregory Aston
George Etherege, a playwright	David J. Singer
Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset	Robert Barton-Ancliffe
Billy Downs, a young spark	Paul Horgan
Jane, a prostitute	Maria Allebone
Mrs. Will Upton, a coffee-house proprietor / Madam	Lisa Capener
Thomas Alcock, a serving man	Stephen Bennett
Elizabeth Barry, an actress	Katie Preedy
Harry Harris, an actor / Watchman	Ben Pugsley
Molly Luscombe, a stage manager	Kate Aston-Williams
Elizabeth Malet, a country wife	Becks Grant-Jones
Charles II, a monarch	Paul Scott
Jacob Huysmans, a portrait painter	Jon Beynon
Kedgeo / Bouncer / Constable of the Watch	Adam Bottomley
Vizard	Sarah Bottomley
Tabitha	Rose Pountney
Dancers	Aimee Brassington
	Stephanie Brown
	Meg Gittins

Crew

Director	Gregory Aston
Producers	Gregory Aston David J. Singer
Assistant Director	Jon Beynon
Stage Manager	Adam Bottomley
Lighting Design	Matthew Nolan
Lighting Operator	Dylan Thomas
Special Lighting Effects	David J. Singer
Sound	Rob Prosser
Music	Gregory Aston
<i>Signior Dildo</i> Music Facilitator	Allan Gillespie
Choreographer	Maria Allebone
Costumes	Bristol Costume Hire Gregory Aston Katie Preedy
Wigs	Nottingham Operatic Society Wigs
Wig Consultant	Mike Barwick
Makeup Supervisor	Jon Beynon
Special Makeup Effects	Stephanie Brown
Props	Sarah Bottomley
Stage Crew	Brenna Martin Hannah Till Elizabeth White
Specialist Set Construction	Graham Aston John Singer
Poster / Programme / Publicity	David J. Singer
Photography	Antony Weir
Poster / Publicity Models	Rose Pountney Camilla Bassett-Smith Beatrice Cranke

The producers wish to extend their thanks to the following:
Mary & Peter Lidgard, Julie Herbert (Bristol Costume Services),
Chosen Hill School, Peanut Grant-Jones, Dacia Sandero,
Caroline Lowsley-Williams at Chavenage House (www.chavenage.com)

Act One

Prologue
Scene One
Scene Two
Scene Three
Scene Four
Scene Five
Scene Six
Scene Seven

Coffee (Mrs. Will's Coffee House, London)
Playhouse (Dorset Gardens Theatre)
Pall-Mall (St. James' Park)
Training Barry (Dorset Gardens Theatre)
The Imperfect Enjoyment (Dog and Bitch Yard)
Portrait (Rochester's London Home)
Sundial (Whitehall Gardens)

Act Two

Scene Eight
Scene Nine
Scene Ten
Scene Eleven
Scene Twelve

Sodom (Windsor Great Park)
Epsom (Epsom Races)
Attic (The East End of London)
Backstage with Barry (Dorset Gardens Theatre)
Husband and Wife (Adderbury)

The action takes place during the period 1675 - 1680.
For dramatic purposes, the events in Rochester's life
have been compressed and rearranged.

*In the country it is different.
We go to bed together and he smells of
dogs and horses.
And there is no sorrow in his love.*

Elizabeth Malet



John Wilmot (1647 - 1680)

John Wilmot was born at Ditchley House in Oxfordshire on 1st April 1647. His father, Henry, Viscount Wilmot, would be created Earl of Rochester in 1652 for engineering Charles II's escape to France (including the famous concealment in an oak tree) during the English Civil War. His mother, Anne St. John, was a fervent Puritan from a noble Wiltshire family.

Rochester was privately tutored from the age of seven, later attending Burford Grammar School. His father died in 1658 and John Wilmot inherited the title of the Earl of Rochester. In January 1660 he was admitted to Wadham College, Oxford. Following his father's death, and as an act of gratitude towards the son of Henry Wilmot, Charles II conferred on Rochester an annual pension of £500 - a nominal amount at the time.

After entering the royal court on Christmas Day 1664, the 17 year old Rochester's priority was to find a wealthy bride to alleviate his financial precariousness and his attentions soon turned to Elizabeth Malet. Described by the diarist Samuel Pepys as "The great beauty and fortune of the North", Malet had already attracted a great many eligible suitors. However, despite his Royal patronage, the impoverished Rochester was viewed by her family as a poor choice. Deciding to take matters into his own hands, on 26th May 1665 Rochester arranged a coach and horses to abduct Malet at Charing Cross, and succeeded in getting her as far as Uxbridge before Malet's grandfather, Lord Haly, caught them up and forcibly returned Malet to her family.

Rochester's actions greatly angered and embarrassed the King and he spent three weeks in the Tower for his trouble. He was released only after writing a penitent apology to the King claiming ignorance of "law and passion".

As an attempt to redeem himself to both Malet and the King, he volunteered for the navy in the Second Dutch War in the winter of 1665. Serving under the Earl of Sandwich, his courage quickly established him as a war hero. Pleased with his conduct, the King made Rochester a Gentleman of the Bedchamber in March 1666, a job which came with lodgings in Whitehall and a pension of £1000 a year. In the summer of 1666, Rochester returned to sea, serving aboard HMS Victory under Edward Spragge. He again showed extraordinary courage in battle, notably rowing between vessels under heavy cannon fire to deliver Spragge's messages around the fleet.

Rochester's redemption and establishment as a war hero did not go unnoticed by Elizabeth Malet. They were eventually married on 29th January 1667 and Malet moved to Adderbury, Rochester's country house in Oxfordshire. Rochester's life was, by now, increasingly divided between domesticity in the country and riotous excess in London. He was infamous as a member of the Merry Gang, whose members included Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, and George Etherege amongst others. A successful playwright of the day and now regarded as one of the founders of Restoration Comedy, Etherege would later go on to immortalise Rochester in his play *The Man of Mode* in 1676.

During his time in London, Rochester engaged in many public affairs, most famously with the actress Elizabeth Barry. He took her as a mistress in 1675 and they remained together for five years, during which time Barry bore him a daughter. Barry was hugely influential as an actress in Restoration drama, the actor Thomas Betterton writing that she gave "success to plays that would disgust the most patient reader".

By 1680 Rochester was mortally ill from the effects of alcoholism, combined with syphilis, gonorrhoea, and various venereal diseases. He was attended in his final weeks by his mother and her religious associates, including Gilbert Burnet, the later Bishop of Salisbury with whom Rochester established a friendship. After hearing that Burnet had left his bedside, Rochester uttered his final words: "Has my friend left me? Then I shall die shortly". He died aged 33 in the early morning of July 26th, 1680. He was buried at Spelsbury Church in Oxfordshire.

Elizabeth Malet died in 1681, little more than a year after her husband. King Charles II died in 1685. In the space of a few years, the "Golden Age" of the Restoration had finally drawn to a close.

*A girl can raise herself on the hook she stakes in an earl.
But I will not be burdened with his buzz.*

Jane



Maria Allebone (Jane). Maria has been acting and dancing for as long as she can remember. Her acting roles include Roxy in *Chicago* Julie in *Carousel*, Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Jackie in *Mauritius*, Nora in *A Doll's House*, Clea in *Black Comedy* and most recently, Abigail Williams in *The Crucible* last November. She is heavily involved in the Cheltenham theatre scene and is Digital Queen at the Cheltenham BID where she works full time.



Gregory Aston (John Wilmot). Greg has been performing on the stage for the past twenty years. He trained as an actor at the Birmingham School of Acting, graduating in 2007. He has since appeared in a wide range of professional and amateur productions, ranging in genre from Shakespeare to Musical Theatre. Performance highlights include titular roles in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and *Jekyll and Hyde the Musical*. Rochester has proven to be an incredibly challenging role but he is delighted to be performing with such a talented troupe.



Kate Aston-Williams (Molly Luscombe). An award winning Soprano, Kate began treading the boards at the tender age of 8 and has not stopped since, taking on musical roles such as Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun*, Marguerite in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, Lady Thiang in *The King and I* and Sister Mary Patrick in *Sister Act*. Her performance as Adelaide Adams in *Guys and Dolls* received a nomination for best actress from the Gloucestershire Theatre Association. Kate is delighted to be performing in this great play alongside such a fantastic cast!



Robert Barton-Ancliffe (Charles Sackville). Robert has performed many roles in Cheltenham over the last 15 years, his favourites include *Kiss Me Kate*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Cox & Box*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *Blackadder Goes Forth*. He has been assured he got the part of Charles Sackville on merit and not because he can convincingly portray a character whose main hobbies are eating and drinking. Rob is happy to be joining Blank Canvas as it has prompted him to finally read *The Man of Mode*, a play for which he once got a 1st in an essay without ever having read it.



Stephen Bennett (Thomas Alcock). Having been on and off the stage for 20 years, Stephen has developed a love for character roles and getting into the gritty side of his characters. Previous play appearances have ranged from Mr. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* to Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*. On the musical theatre side: Jesus in *Godspell* to Cliff Richard in *Summer Holiday*. He has even been seen gracing the stage as a nymphomaniac squirrel. After a 5 year break, this is Stephen's first foray back on the boards and he has really grabbed Alcock by the balls.



Jon Beynon (Jacob Huysmans). Jon began acting aged 10 and has barely stopped since. His association with The Playhouse has lasted over forty years, with a two year hiatus for professional work. He has played a variety of roles including Hamlet, Richard III, Mozart in *Amadeus*, Billy in *Billy Liar*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors* and parts in *Othello*, *M. Butterfly* and *Twelfth Night*. Direction includes *West Side Story*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Oliver!*, *Les Miserables*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Crucible* and *Entertaining Mr Sloane*.



Adam Bottomley (Kedgeo / Bouncer / Constable). Adam is mostly known as a stage manager these days, however he has previously appeared on stage with St. John's Churchdown, the Rococo Players, CODS and The Playhouse Company. He now works professionally at The Everyman Theatre as stage crew.



Sarah Bottomley (Vizard). Sarah has been involved in theatre since her early school days in Derbyshire, where she played a dove with a broken wing in her first nativity play. Since then she has performed with numerous groups, including The Playhouse Company, CODS, The Cotswold Savoyards, and The Rococo Players. Some of her favourite productions include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Sister Act*, and *Follies*. Sarah also has many skills backstage, and sites her role as DSM for *The Full Monty* as the scariest thing she has done in any theatre.



Lisa Capener (Mrs. Will / Madam). Lisa has performed at The Playhouse since she was 10 years old in a variety of productions. She trained in music and drama and gained lots of experience locally before moving abroad and performing professionally. She returned to Cheltenham and most recently played 10 characters in the comedy *Bouncers and Shakers*, and is playing Mary in the upcoming production of *The Flint Street Nativity*.



Becks Grant-Jones (Elizabeth Malet). Becks read Music and majored in performance at Leeds University and went on to work with English Touring Opera. Becks recently played Eddie's mum alongside Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards in a world premier of the musical *Fly Eddie Fly* at the Everyman theatre. She also recently starred as Mabel in the Cotswold Savoyards' production of the Broadway *Pirates of Penzance*. Becks has performed well-known opera roles such as Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, Clorinda in Rossini's *Cinderella* and Maria in *West Side Story*.



Paul Horgan (Billy Downs). Paul has been acting on and off since a young age, but hasn't done any for a while (so please be kind). After attending Stagecoach Performing Arts School in his early teens, Paul has appeared in several shows throughout school and university, including *Sweeney Todd*, *A Chorus Line*, and *The Magic Flute*. Paul originally came to Gloucester to sing in the Cathedral Choir, and has since appeared as John in *The Lion in Winter*. This is Paul's first performance at the Playhouse and he is very excited to also be part of Blank Canvas's first ever production.



Rose Pountney (Tabitha). This is Rose's second theatre role after previous performances in several short films and music videos. She is also a burlesque dancer and semi-professional model and is looking to expand on her performance experience over the coming year. In her spare time she enjoys watching horror films, learning Italian and singing to her cats.



Katie Preedy (Elizabeth Barry). Katie has been involved in amateur dramatics since the age of ten but this is her first time on the Playhouse stage. Following a long stint of school plays, youth theatre productions and pantomimes, some of Katie's most notable roles include: Beatrice in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, Julie-Ann in Alan Ayckbourn's *RolePlay*, and Mary Warren in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. When Katie isn't busy treading the boards, she can be found (literally) attached to her sewing machine, drinking copious amounts of tea, or gallivanting with penguins.



Ben Pugsley (Harry Harris / Watchman). Having joined the Playhouse in 2018 Ben played Judd in the Playhouse's production of the satirical look at British nightlife *Bouncers and Shakers*. Now for this year's production of *The Libertine* Ben takes of the role of the new and upcoming actor Harris who looks to impart his recent yet charming knowledge with the most recent prodigy, Mrs Barry...



Paul Scott (Charles II). Paul Scott first trod the Playhouse boards in 1998 and recent roles in Cheltenham have included Major Courtney in *The Ladykillers*, Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady*, and Beadle Bamford in *Sweeney Todd*. He (and a few others) refer to the Playhouse affectionately as the 'Palace of Varieties' and finds it rather amusing that having managed this Palace for 14 years, he's now portraying someone who managed a real one.



David J. Singer (George Etherege). David has appeared in many shows for many companies over the years - in everything from serious drama to musicals. Some of his favourite roles include Henry II in *The Lion in Winter* The Russian in *Chess*, Thomas Andrews in *Titanic The Musical*, Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*, Professor Callahan in *Legally Blonde The Musical*, Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd* and both John Proctor and Samuel Parris in *The Crucible* (although not at the same time!) *The Libertine* is David's first attempt at producing a play and he has loved every minute of it.