

Press Release

A Week of Georgian Delights

Dates: Monday 21 – Saturday 26 April

The Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds will be presenting a week of Georgian entertainments with drama, music and costumes, culminating with a free family open day.

A Week of Georgian Delights is the Theatre's first large scale Georgian event under its Re-Visit! heritage project, incorporating entertainments and educational activities to re-introduce the theatrical heritage of the 18th and 19th centuries. There will be evening performances and daily guided tours of the building.

The week will focus around the Theatre's next Georgian production *Animal Magnetism*, a three act farce by writer Elizabeth Inchbald, born in 1753 the Suffolk village of Stanningfield. Inchbald has been adopted as the Theatre's Georgian figurehead, and another of her comedies *Wives as they Were, Maids as they Are* is due to be performed in September.

Each performance of *Animal Magnetism* will be partnered with another entertainment to recreate the Georgian experience of going to the Theatre.

There will be two nights of Jane Austen's favourite music performed by Concert Royal. *Jane Austen's Musical England* features Austen's favourite music on recorder, flute, violincello, harpsichord and soprano, interspersed with extracts from her letters and novels.

There will also be performances of *My Dear Howey*, a poignant love story of loss and recovery, based on the true life letters sent by Georgina Countess of Althorp to lifelong friend Mrs Howe, concerning the death of her "dear, dear husband".

The week will end with a free open day for families, where children and adults can explore the theatre and its history. The family open day will include young people's tours, opportunities to dress up as a Regency lord or lady, and learn which games children would have played 200 years ago.

The Theatre's Artistic Director Colin Blumenau commented: "All the events investigate the Georgian period's entertainment as a whole; its music, its writing, its characters. There is

massive public interest in the era, evident from the popularity of period drama on TV and film and the writings of Austen and her peers. Yet, ironically, it is also a time which we don't get taught much about as it doesn't feature on the school's curriculum. We have made this event accessible and entertaining so people can find out more about this unique and wonderful part of our history."

A week of Georgian Delights runs from 21 – 26 April, for further information and tickets please contact the box office on 01284 769505 or visit www.theatreroyal.org .

-Ends-

**For more information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:
Lucy Close, Communications Officer, 01284 829947, lucy@theatreroyal.org**

Notes to editors:

1. Listings for A week of Georgian Delights

ANIMAL MAGNETISM, by Elizabeth Inchbald

A lively three-act farce set in late 18th-century Paris. Inchbald's pen, dipped in equal amounts of wit and bile, targets medical quackery and complacently outmoded attitudes to women. A dilapidated Doctor with a high mortality rate amongst his patients is guardian to his charming niece, Constance. Locked away from the public gaze in order to keep her for himself, Constance falls from afar for the handsome Marquis de Lancy, who convinces the gullible Doctor of the extraordinary powers of a magical magnetic wand and its infallible ability to attract the adoration of the opposite sex.

THE GEORGIAN GLOBE, lecture by Colin Blumenau

In this entertaining and fully-illustrated lecture, the Theatre Royal's Artistic Director Colin Blumenau explores the significance of Bury's Regency jewel in the history of European theatre and reveals just what makes this building so special.

JANE AUSTEN'S MUSICAL ENGLAND, Concert Royal

Jane Austen was a keen amateur musician with a large collection of music. Featuring recorder/flute, violincello, harpsichord and soprano, Concert Royal present a programme of music drawn from Jane's own collection and from contemporary sources, interspersed with extracts from her letters and novels.

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY, ReVisit Lunchtime Lecture

Initially a reluctant actor only taking to the stage to augment the meagre wages of his actor-manager father, the fiery William Charles Macready nonetheless became a celebrated tragic actor and innovative West End theatre manager. Macready played four consecutive nights with the local company at the Theatre Royal on November 1828.

RESTORING THE REPERTOIRE

A Rehearsed Reading of

THE FAIR PENITENT, by Nicholas Rowe

The Fair Penitent was first performed in 1702 and became one of the most successful English plays of the 18th century. Tragic heroine Calista disregards her father Sciolto's wishes for her to marry Altamont, and instead passionately yearns for Lothario, a notorious seducer, but it is a love that ends in tragedy.

MY DEAR HOWEY, performed by Pauline Gray, adapted / directed by Colin Wakefield

When John, 1st Earl Spencer, died in 1783, aged 49, it marked the end of a 30-year love affair with his wife Georgina, 1st Countess of Althorp. My Dear Howey is a poignant love story of loss and recovery, based on the letters sent by Georgina to lifelong friend Mrs Howe, concerning the death of her "dear, dear husband".

FAMILY OPEN DAY

This is your chance to explore the Theatre and its history with all the family! Join one of our new young people's tours, take the Theatre Trail, dress up as a Regency lord and lady or learn which games children would have played 200 years ago.

2. Georgian week schedule, times & prices:

Mon 21 (The Georgian Globe + Animal Magnetism) 7.30 pm, £20.50 - £7

Tue 22 (Jane Austen's Musical England + Animal Magnetism) 7.30 pm, £20.50 - £7

Wed 23 (Jane Austen's Musical England + Animal Magnetism) 7.30 pm, £20.50 - £7

Thurs 24 (Revisit Lunchtime Lecture at The Guildhall), 1pm, £4

Thurs 24 (Rehearsed reading, The Fair Penitent) 7.30pm, £7

Fri 25 (My Dear Howey + Animal Magnetism) £22.50 - £7

Sat 26 (FAMILY OPEN DAY) 10.30am-4pm, free admission

Sat 26 (My Dear Howey + Animal Magnetism) 7.30 pm, £22.50 - £7

3. Guided tours and Open Doors times:

Guided tours are £7.50, are open doors sessions have no charge.

Tue 22: Open doors 2 -4 pm
Guided tour 2pm

Wed 23: Open Doors 10am – 1pm & 2pm – 4pm
Guided tours: 2pm & 3.30pm

Thur 24: Open Doors 10am – 1pm

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