

A Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds Production
in association with Anvil Arts, Basingstoke

Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are

By Elizabeth Inchbald

Directed by Colin Blumenau
Designed by Kit Surrey

September 9th – 20th 2008
Press night Wednesday September 10th at 7pm

Following the highly praised re-opening of the newly restored theatre with the inaugural production of Black Eyed Susan, the Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds is delighted to announce the next in its series of productions which sets out to rediscover the Georgian repertoire.

First performed in 1797 at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, *Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are* is the work of Elizabeth Inchbald – political radical, dramatist, novelist, critic, and actress. Inchbald was a seminal playwright of her age, whose work represents the essence of Georgian drama – a strong sense of social critique in an age of decadence and razor-sharp observational wit. Born near Bury St Edmunds, at the age of nineteen Inchbald moved to London from her native Suffolk, where she began her career as an actress. She turned to writing later in life and her work is cut through with strong feminist themes and exuberant dialogue. Elizabeth Inchbald is one of a handful of female playwrights from this period whose work has been largely overlooked, that Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds is actively seeking out as part of their process of rediscovering the Georgian and Regency repertoire.

Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are is set in London and follows the life and loves of Miss Maria Dorillion, a young woman still under guardianship. Though intelligent and independent minded, she courts disaster through dangerous flirtation and reckless spending in a city full of predatory bachelors and jealous husbands.

The play will be playing in repertoire with Inchbald's seminal three-act farce, *Animal Magnetism*. On selected evenings audiences will be able to experience a Georgian double billing as would have been common when the Theatre Royal first opened 200 years ago.

Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds is a unique theatrical marvel. It is the last surviving Regency Playhouse that is still being used for its original purpose. In September 2007 it re-opened after receiving a £5.3 million programme of restoration and development. In doing so it has become a vital, living link to a much forgotten era of British drama. Director Colin Blumenau is committed to an ongoing programme of work that picks the very best of the canon of work from the Georgian and Regency periods and revives them in the perfect environment.

This production is part of the Georgian Gem Festival which celebrates Bury St Edmunds' Georgian heritage. A series of events will be held across Bury St Edmunds by various organisations including: Greene King, the National Trust's Ickworth House, The Angel Hotel, Moyse's Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds Library, The Athenaeum and the Bury Record Office.

- Ends -

For further information about *Wives As They Were, Maids As They Are*, please contact The Corner Shop PR on 0207 494 3665 or email info@thecornershoppr.com

For further information about the Georgian Gem Festival please contact Lucy Close on 10284 829 947 or email lucy@theatreroyal.org

Listings information:

Wives As They Were, Maids As They Are
By Elizabeth Inchbald
Directed by Colin Blumenau
September 9th – September 20th
Monday – Saturday at 7.30pm
Matinees September 13th and 20th at 2.30pm
Tickets £7 - £27.50
Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds
Tel: 01284 769505
Post: 6 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1QR
On-line at www.theatreroyal.org

Cast information:

Cast for *Wives as they Were, and Maids as they Are*:

SIR WILLIAM DORRILLON - Tim Frances
MR NORBERRY - Michael Burrell
STEPHENS, Servant to Mr Norberry - Karen Elliot
LORD PRIORY - John Webb
LADY MARY RAFFLE - Ursula Early
MISS MARIA DORRILLON - Laura Doddington
SIR GEORGE EVELYN - Alex Caine
OLIVER, Servant to Lord Priory - Giles Faulkener

LADY PRIORY - Jo Tincey
MR BRONZELY - James Wallace
PORTER, a boy of the Priory household - Karen Elliot
NABSON - Giles Faulkener

Cast for *Animal Magnetism*:

JEFFREY - Michael Burrell
LA FLEUR - Alexander Caine
A DOCTOR - Giles Faulkner
LISSETTE - Karen Elliot
CONSTANCE - Ursula Early
MARQUIS DE LANCY - James Wallace
THE DOCTOR - John Webb

Crew:

Matthew Eagland - Lighting Designer
Charlotte D'Arcy - Deputy Stage Manager
Alison Lewis - Costume Supervisor for *Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are*,
and Costume and Set Designer for *Animal Magnetism*.
Robin Nash - Production Manager
Sharron Stowe - Producer