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has the honour to present

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COMEDIE FRANÇAISE

FIRST PERFORMANCE
TARTUFFE
MONDAY, 4th MAY, 1953

FIRST PERFORMANCE
BRITANNICUS
MONDAY, 11th MAY, 1953

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TARTUFFE
Comedy in Five Acts in Verse by MOLIERE

M. Loyal .......................................................... JEAN MEYER
Orgon ............................................................... LOUIS SEIGNER
Tartuffe ........................................................... LEDOUX
L'Exempt ............................................................ LOUIS EYMOND
Damis ................................................................. PIERRE GALLON
Cleante .............................................................. HENRI ROLLAN
Valere ................................................................. JEAN-LOUIS JEMMA
Mme. Pernelle ..................................................... BERTHE BOY
Dorine ............................................................... BEATRICE BRETTY
Elmire ............................................................... ANNIE DUCAUX
Mariane ............................................................. MAGALI DE VENDEUIL

Directed by FERNAND LEDOUX
Decor by JEAN MICHEL FRANCK

Adapted from designs of ABRAHAM BOSSE

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TARTUFFE or the IMPOSTOS

ACT 1

Orgon has taken into his home a certain obnoxious individual, Tartuffe, who has succeeded in gaining a supreme influence over both himself and his mother, Mme. Pernelle. This lady would like Orgon's wife Elmire, as well as his brother-in-law Cleante, and his children, Mariana and Damis, to follow Tartuffe's "good precepts." The family, however, considers him a hypocrite and a fraud, refuse to do so. Dorine, who has served the family for many years, and is gifted with great frontness of speech, supports them with her able arguments, much to the rage of Mme,
Persever. It is through Dorine that Céline hears of Orgon's blindness, and his guest's true view. Tartuffe has obtained such power in the household that Dorine, fearing that the former will oppose his sister Mariane's marriage with Valere, asks Céline to speak in its place. Tartuffe, on the other hand, believes that Valere will be out of this marriage.

When Orgon arrives home from the country he is overjoyed to see the health and well-being of Tartuffe. He hears with satisfaction that the poor man eats, drinks and sleeps normally. Céline's reproaches and his attempts to demonstrate the difference between hypocrisy and genuine devotion have no effect on Orgon. Tartuffe is to make him declare his gratitude for Tartuffe's peaceful instruction, and to refuse to discuss Mariane's marriage.

ACT II

Orgon is so proud of Tartuffe that he plans to give him his daughter in marriage. Fortunately, Dorine is on the alert. Her mocking caustic words, who withdraws in a rage. Dorine reproaches Mariane for not standing up to her father, and Corinthians refuses her. She also tells the gossips the chances to find such a union. But the news drops her astonished and reconciles Mariane and Valere, who have quarrelled through this threatening of their love.

ACT III

Taking advantage of an interview which Céline has sought with Tartuffe to ask him not to oppose Mariane's marriage, the gentleman declares his love for her. Entirely treated with admiration, but promises to do nothing about it. Tartuffe will give his support to her plans for her daughter. Dorine, who is hidden in the room, intends to call the hypocrite to order. Tartuffe is so trusting of Mariane's purity. Tartuffe, however, accepts himself as the victim of a match plot. Orgon drives Dorine from the house, as a stranger, and to "defy his family" he calls Tartuffe to return to him all his possessions.

ACT IV

In the name of the higher interests of house, Tartuffe refuses to nominate Orgon to the house and to give up the bequest made to him. Orgon, pursuing in his projects, informs Mariane, is quite of his assurance, that she is to become Tartuffe's wife. His blindness does not, however, prevent him from opposing to Céline's proposals for demonstrating the hypocrisy. Hidden under a table Tartuffe witnesses a secret meeting between Tartuffe and his wife. He is able to convince himself of the most unusual discovery. As Tartuffe, who has gone to the door to make sure they are not being spied upon, returns to Eclair, Orgon meets himself and orders her to leave the house. But to Céline's surprise Tartuffe reveals that it is for them to leave, the house belongs to him, and Orgon is no longer master of it.

ACT V

Orgon is about to be the victim of his own gullibility. He has entrusted to Tartuffe a casket full of compromising documents. He tells his family. Mine, Persever, refuses to believe him. But when M. Loyd arrives to give Orgon notice to put the casket of papers to the interested parties and others to bid Orgon his rights, Mine, Persever has to face the unpleasant truth.

Tartuffe arrives triumphantly with an officer of the Watch. But the faces are dramatically turned. The officer demonstrates that Tartuffe is in reality a long-disguised for criminal. He will be imprisoned instead of Orgon who is forthwith pardoned, and Valere will marry Mariane.
BRITANNICUS

Tragedy in Five Acts by RACINE

Narcisse .................. MAURICE ESCANDE
Neron ..................... JEAN CHEVRIER
Burrhus ................... JACQUES EYSER
Britannicus ............... ROLAND ALEXANDRE
Agrippina ................. MARIE BELL
Junie ..................... RENEE FAURE
Albine ................... JEANNE BOITEL

Decor, Costumes and Directed by JEAN MARAIS

BRITANNICUS

The action takes place in Nero's palace. Young Britannicus, son of Claudius, dispossessed of the imperial crown by his father in favour of Nero, is in love with Junie, a daughter of the house of Augustus. Nero's mother: Agrippina, feeling her son's caressing her influence more and more each day, proceeds to the love of Junie and Britannicus.

Nero, however, has himself fallen in love with Junie. He has her abducted, exiles the freeman Pallus who serves the interests of Britannicus and Agrippina, across Britannicus, and finally puts his mother under guard.

Agrippina, however, succeeds in seeing Nero. She reminds him of all the has done for him, of her plotting and her crimes on his behalf. Her son accuses her of ambition, and of having wanted to make Britannicus Emperor. Agrippina refuses these allegations. Nero gives way, pardons Pallus and Britannicus and renounces his love.

This reconciliation, however, failed. Britannicus's death is decided upon. Burrhus, Britannicus's cousin, does succeed for a while in changing Nero's intention, but the advice of his freeman Narcissus prevails. Britannicus will die. Nero invites his rival to a feast and punishes him. Agrippina hurts a prophetic impression at her son. Foreseeing his own fate, she announces to this "budding monster" the châtiment to come.
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