Once a Catholic
a comedy by
Mary O'Malley

WYNDHAM'S
THEATRE
MILD. BUT NOT MEEK.

Three Fives 'Medium Mild'

LOW TO MIDDLE TAR. MANUFACTURER'S WARNING: H.M. GOVT. HEALTH DEPT. WARNING: CIGARETTES CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH.
WYNDEHAM’S THEATRE

Wynndham’s Theatre was built in 1894 by the noted theatrical manager Charles Wyndham. Although he had lost his Company at the Criterion Theatre for over twenty years it had long been his ambition to build a theatre. Negotiations began for a site which was part of the Suburban Estate but the Magistrates would not permit a theatre to be built on it, for Wyndham, whose acting career had been in a parlous state. However, when the time came Wyndham was unable to raise the money and Mary Moody, his faithful lady (and later his wife), found a number of friends who wished to guarantee to enable the work to go ahead. The site acquired also included the land on which four years later the New Theatre (now the Albery) was to be built. Wyndham was the first of a number of London theatres to have W. E. G. Carpenter as its architect.

The theatre opened on 16th November 1909 with a revival of T. W. Robertson’s David Garrick. The first new production was Carmen de la Garza in April 1909 and in October that year Henry Arthur Jones’s Mrs. Dane’s Defence had the first of over two hundred performances.

Frank Carson became a part of the management in 1902 and subsequent successes included Mrs.任何人都のfalls, The Little Dandy and The Naked Truth in September 1918 Carson was killed by German machine gun fire during the war. His performance in The Little Dandy was so well received that he decided to produce it for a fifteen-year-old club. During this time, amongst the notable plays presented during the remainder of the theatre were: The House of the Dead, The Wages of Sin, Queen Victoria, Mrs. Dane’s Defence, The Last of Mrs. Cheyney, and The Man in the Moon. These were directed by Tyrone Guthrie, George Bernard Shaw, and J.M. Barrie.

The most important event in the theatre’s history was the opening of the new theatre in 1932, which was followed by a host of successful productions, including those by Sir Donald Wolfit, Sir John Gielgud, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke. The theatre continued to be successful in the post-war period, and in 1960 it was acquired by the National Theatre and was renamed the Lyceum Theatre. The theatre has since been used for a variety of productions, including musicals and revues.

The theatre was a centre for the theatrical community during the interwar period, and many of the leading actors of the time, including Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke, were associated with it. The theatre has also been the venue for many important productions, including those by Sir Donald Wolfit, Sir John Gielgud, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke.

The theatre is notable for its extensive production of Shakespearean plays, including those by William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and John Webster. The theatre has been associated with many of the leading actors of the time, including Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke. The theatre has also been the venue for many important productions, including those by Sir Donald Wolfit, Sir John Gielgud, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke.

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Quentin Crewe, Vogue

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Jeremy Kingston, What's On

... all our food was delicious, carefully cooked and beautifully served. The wine list is comprehensive, with about half the wines coming from Italy. Especially with Italian food, these make for the better choice to my mind.

Ganymede, Tatler

There's not much point in describing individual dishes since there are so many, but the four in my party were unanimous in their approval.

Humphrey Littleton, Harpers and Queen

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of

ONCE A CATHOLIC

A Comedy by

MARY O’MALLEY

CHRISTOPHER ELLISON, JAMES ELLIS, KEVIN ELYOT

JANETTE FOGGO, JO-ANNE GOOD, PATRICIA HENEGHAN

ANNE MANNION, LYNETTE MCMORROUGH, CLARE RICHARDS

ANNE ROSENFELD, FRANK SHELBURY, CLARE TRAVERS-DEACON

ANGELA VALE, CAROLINE WELLER

Directed by MIKE OCKRENT

Designed by POPPY MITCHELL

Lighting by JACK RABY

Programme 50p
An introduction to ONCE A CATHOLIC by MARY O’MALLEY

Mary O’Malley is indeed an Irish name but I’m really an English person. I was born over here and haven’t got a brogue. My father is the Irishman. And Once A Catholic is not an autobiography; in fact, it was the result of an obsession with Irish Catholicism as taught before the Second Vatican Council. I went to a convent in Hailsham, and I went to a convent in Hailsham, yes, and some of the sisters in the play are based on incidents remembered, but the characters were created out of bits of various people I knew. I imagined. We learnt how to do this in childhood, you know. Two brothers and I, impossible scholars, the three of us, though natural minnows and musicians. Vagabonding in the ineducable we nevertheless wrote and acted in a steady stream of plays. Just for the fun of it. The one I remember best was Mrs. McNally’s Wooden Leg. Poor Mrs. McNally had to jump across the gloom in search of a tree out of which a wooden leg could be made. Wooden leg. She lived in the Safari Desert. Alice and Charlie the hands of the piece. Vincent Vесть, an Australian Legionnaire. We were influenced by the Gnomes, by Hollywood and Musiliane Muckel and by any ikon with its rich, illogical and rhythmical way of talking. I decided to be a writer at the age of about 17. I knew no more about it than I do now. That seemed to be the age at which something was expected of you. There is a lot of stuff about the age of 17. My mother was very cross with me. I’d write about it if I were younger. I read a lot of plays and stories, and I wanted to do something similar. I went to an Institute in St. John’s Wood where I was encouraged to write and I was encouraged by a young man who had a similar sense of humour. Together we developed a telepathic double act but when he became a married man and I became a wife we lost touch. I remember him for a number of years. In the meantime I bought myself a fancy little typewriter down at the Covent Garden. I sat there in front of the thing and tried to write a play but nothing happened. Without the help of brothers or fellow improvisers I was lost. I got to be very boring. And lonely. Everybody else was out and about having a good time. So I started putting it off until tomorrow. Seven years later in the Stowe Newington area I was still putting it off because I had managed a few pages of dialogue. Wonderful characters with powerhouse to go. I couldn’t work out a plot. Forget it, I said to myself. “You’re getting old. If you can’t do it now you’ll never do it.”

I put the machine away and moved back to Harrow and one day I went to buy a paper. There was a copy of The Stage in the newspaper shop so I picked it up and read it through. And I noticed a little article “Mr. Paul Thompson. ‘Hello’, I thought. ‘It’s Harold!’ He’d written a play for Unity Theatre and it was doing very well. I wrote him a note and we met. The flame of ambition was ignited again when he told me that the Soho Poly was looking for plays. Short plays on the subject of the social services. ‘Have a go’, advised Thompson. ‘So I did. I actually wrote a play. Fifteen pages long. About a bloke living in style on Social Security and charlatan. I called it Superman. It was written in a sort of style with an awful lot of panic and punctuation. But in the writing of it I found my way of working. To start with. The image of the writer bashing away at the typewriter, I kept up and had to throw it down on the floor. This is the only way I’ve ever been able to write. The typer is on your knee. A blessed relief when the page is done. Superman went down well. I lopped up the laughter of the audience and marvelled at the applause. But I couldn’t overcome the embarrassment of hearing actors speaking my words. I still can’t. It feels like walking down the Charing Cross Road in your underwear. I wrote another play, A Nekton Society, about two Jewish brothers in Stowe Newington. Then another, Oh, If I were a Man Suffered, about an Irish family living in a suburb in Cockedwood. Both were performed twice. But I was encouraged all the way from your house to the theatre, especially from the established writers.

Then the BGC commissioned a play, so I did the Royal Court. “Write a full-length play” said the Court. “What?” I thought. “Two whole acts and a interval. I’ll never be able to do it.” But I did. In fact I went a bit too far. The original version of Once A Catholic was at least three hours long. I spent about six months working on the play. Relocating all the dogs that had gone in one end and out the other back in Hailsham. Mares at Futuna, Limbo and the total impotence of purity. After a 20-year gap it all seemed highly indecent. Although when I started writing there was only a moment when I feared being suddenly struck down in the wee small hours all alone in Shepherd’s Bush. But by the time the play was finished I’d written Catholic right out of my system. I hope it leaves a trail, though, which can be picked up. Not with atheism. There’s no magic there or superstition. Astrology and clairvoyance seem to steady the soul. ‘You will be successful with your writing’ said the lady with the crystal ball on Eastonmore Place, a few years from the accurate old man who declared in no uncertain terms: ‘Mary O’Malley, you’ll never be any good.’

Mary O’Malley was going to be an actress or a singer or a dancer, but is now a writer. Some of her most recent work includes Paul and Kenneth for BBC Television, If I were a Man Suffered, which played at the Soho Poly and the BBC Play for Today entitled Oh, You Maria. Mary is now a resident writer at the Royal Court, won the Thames Television Playwright Award for Once A Catholic, the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright 1978 and the Susan Smith Blackman Award 1979. Her latest play, Look Out Here Comes Trouble was recently at the RNC Warehouse. Mary was born in Harrow and went to a convent school for girls in Hackney. She has two sons.
CHRISTOPHER ELLISON trained at Studio 68 and has worked with such companies as the Medine Theatre, Canterbury, two seasons at the Library in Manchester and in 1974 with the RSC (The Place) where he appeared in Suckers Nine and Blood and Bone. Recently he appeared at the Shaw.

JAMES ELLIS trained at the Bristol Old Vic on a Tycoon Scholarship and soon afterwards appeared in one of Godden’s productions at an early Edinburgh Festival. Although best known for the character of Bert Lynch in BIRCTV’s long running series Z Cars, James Ellis is a bit of a theatrical all-rounder. Most of his first decade in the profession was spent as a director, and Lawrence Olivier brought his record-breaking Irish production of Owad back to the Shakespeare and then Prince of Theatre. Most recently he appeared in A Bird in the Hand at Greenwich, where he directed the show as well as playing the part of a killed drunken Scot, and he toured in Silent Witness, Dead Man for Murder and My Fair Friend. Of his many TV plays, he perhaps remembers The Round Death with most affection; the play which led to his casting in Z Cars. His latest venture is song-writting.

KEVIN ELYOT was born in Birmingham and graduated from Bristol University Drama Department. His theatre work includes repertory at Chester, Perp, Wrexall and the Oxford Playhouse; and in London Stone (ICA) and The Slat (Almost Free), both plays by Edward Bond. Kevin played Tom in a Fool in The Fowdyke Shame (Bush Theatre and ICA) and most recently The Psychic in Ritter, also at the Bush. He has appeared with Hull Trmus Theatre Company in The New Clock (King’s Head and Soho). Television includes Angels, Recent, Whose Line is it Anyway? and The Fowdyke Shame.
Once a Catholic
by
MARY O'MALLEY

First performance at the Royal Court Theatre on Wednesday
10th August 1977 and at
Wendham's Theatre on Tuesday
8th October 1977
The text of Once a Catholic
is available from the
attendants at £2

Mother Peter
Mother Basil
Mother Thomas Aquinas
Mr Enaszelli
Father Mulachhey
Mary Moneey
Mary McGinny
Mary Gallagher
Mary O'Grady
Mary Hanaway
Mary Murphy
Mary Maynor
Derek
Carol:

ANGELA VALE
PATRICIA HENEGHAN
CLARE RICHARDS
FRANK SHELLEY
JAMES ELLIS
CLARE TRAVERS-DEACON
JO-ANNE GOOD
JANETTE FOGGO
ANNE ROSENFELD
ANNE MANNION
CAROLINE WELLER
LYNETTE McMORROUGH
CHRISTOPHER ELLISON
KEVIN ELYOT

Company and Stage Manager
Deputy Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Managers
MARJORIE WILLIAMS
MARIO PAUL CASSAR
PHIL STERLING
SARAH JAMES

The play takes place in Harlem from 1956-57
There will be no interval of fifteen minutes.

30-ANNE GOOD trained for eight years in ballet and then attended the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. On leaving college she worked in repertory in Bradford. Other theatre credits include a season at Leeds Playhouse and the Compass Theatre, Worthing. For the last two Christmases she has played Lina in *Peter Pan*.

PATRICIA HENDERSON's last London appearance was in *The Philosopher's Proverb* at the Prince of Wales. Since then she has appeared in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* at the University Theatre, Manchester, toured Holland in *When You Least Expect It* for My Mother, toured with *Sun* and appeared in *Riches* at the Bristol Old Vic. She has previously played in *Twelfth Night* tour of India for Oxford Playhouse, *Portrait of a Queen* at Leicester and *The Spa* of the Shrew. Television appearances include *Sherlock* for Yorkshire TV, *Within These Walls*, *Crown Court*, *Life at Stake* and *Henry IV* both for BBC TV and *Mess* for BBC. She was recently educated and is married to the actor Kenneth Farrington and they have three children.

LYNETTE McCORMOUGH trained as an actress, singer and dancer at the Arts Educational School. She has worked with companies at Hornchurch, Sale, Sheffield and Deutscher, for Chichester, appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* and toured Hong Kong in *Barefoot in the Park* for BBC TV and *Mess* both for BBC TV and *Mess* for BBC.

LEE CHAPPELL has spent most of her theatrical years in Scotland where she was a member of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, and worked for the Perth Theatre and the Glasshouse Citizen Theatre. Scottish TV work includes starring in *The House of Her Own* and three series with *Summer Register*. She has also appeared in *Life and Death* for *Henry IV* and *Macbeth* at the Swan Theatre, *One Night on the Buses* at Chichester, *A Time of Trouble* and *An Inspector Calls* at *The World at Salisburys Playhouse*. Her most recent stage appearance was in *The Little Photographer* at Chichester. She has been seen in *In the Name of Love* for *Henry IV*, *Mudchute* and *Love of the Drowned* and was until recently a member of the BBC Drama Rep Co and has read the *Woman's Hour* serial.

FRANK SHELLEY has recently returned to England after long spells abroad, doing very varied work. In Rome and in Athens he gave a series of modern poetry readings; in South Africa he lectured in Drama and appeared in several of his plays in New York he was with Albert Finney in the award-winning production of *Ladies* which ran almost a year. Leading roles in this country include Captain Sherrin in *Heartbreak House*, *Pokémon in Hansel and Thomas More* in *A Man For All Seasons*. On television he has been seen in *The Brethren* and *The Antiques* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *The Secret Garden*. Films include *Darlings* and *The Diamond Syndrome*. Most recently he was in *Under the Greenwood Tree* at the Vaudeville Theatre.
CLARE TRAVERS-DEACON's education included a convent, and she ran an art shop in Sussan with her mother before becoming an actress. She trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and was awarded the Gold Medal. She appeared with the Great Eastern Stage tour, repertory theatre, based in Lincoln, in "Look Back In Anger, Don'ts at Sea, City Sugar and

ANGELA VALE after studying at RADA, worked at the Theatre Royal, York, and various other rep. She then went to Dublin and appeared on television and radio in numerous stage plays, including productions at the Gaiety Theatre. Parts she has played have ranged from Hero in "What's Ahead of Virginia Woolf?" to the housewife in "At A Ten-Pence-Stick-Holder-Above-The-Ground World" and she won a Critics' award as the most versatile actress for playing the drug-addicted Kitty in "Kemmy's Children" in the same year as "Lady India in Ring Around The Moon." Returning to London last year, she played Dick Whittington and took a six-month spell with the "Who's Left If It Anyway?" company. Mother Peter in her first Irish run part—the other one is still appearing on Irish television.


She has also worked extensively in television, appearing in "The Life," "The Dane Allen Show," "Gill's Night Show," "The Devils of Duke Street," "Carry On, Mr. Big." She has appeared in various feature films including "The Music Lovers," "The Devils, Doctor in Truffles" and "The Answering Mr. Rhodes."
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The interval literally sparkled with Dry humour...
The right one.
MIDDLE TAR  As defined by H.M. Government
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"ONCE A CATHOLIC"

Owing to the indisposition of Clare Travers-Deacon, the part of Mary Mooney will be played at this performance by ANNE MANNION, and the part of Mary Hennessy will be played by SARAH JAMES.