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STARS IN
THE CHICAGO
AFTERNOON

by Eric Shorler

They call it a culture shock. What I
had spent forty years enjoying as
fiction became suddenly fact. Every-
where I went I looked about for
hoodlums in thongs with sawn-off
shot guns plopping out of the win-
don the ride from the airport the
taxi driver declared: “Yeah, sure,
there’s plenty of gun-play in this
town”.

And as I took my place in the Biograph
cinema it proved to be the only seat
without its plush. Why? Because it
was where Dillinger supposedly not
before he left through a side-door to
be betrayed by a girl friend’s signal
to an assassin who promptly shot him
dead on the pavement.

So, can you wonder if I felt a little
nervous on my first visit to Chicago?
It’s no good blaming Hollywood.
Dillinger really lived. It’s no good
dismissing such films as a filminor’s
fantasy. People still get shot in
Chicago or, if not shot, then worked
over.

For example, there was a film
festival on. And film-makers are
specially keen to see that their films
are shown with the refs in the
right order and the correct lens-setting
and the sound track rearranged for our
eardrums. Which implies a visit to the
projection room.

This is not recommended by the
festival officials in Chicago. In fact
it is positively discouraged. Film pro-
jectionists in Chicago do not welcome
hires from film-makers on how to
show films. One such attempt by a
director who was worried about the
focus ended in the director’s being
flung downwards and being unable to
focus on anything for some time
 afterwards.

“Do not”, everyone advised, “walk
back to your hotel alone late at night.
You must hail a taxi!”. Having
reached the hotel I found unshowered
I turn on television. The news is that
another headless body has been found
in the boot of a car after a pursuit by
the police.

Even to enter a shop which sells
crampaphone records brings a reminder
of Chicago’s reputation for crime.
For there at the entrance of the shop
was a guard with a revolver in
his holster—ready to shoot impres-
sibly if I left without paying.

No wonder therefore if a degree of
apprehension clouded the first day or
two. In a city as graceful architectu-
 rally as its manners, even the motorless
seemed not to be in a hurry.

And though I never found the nerve to
continued overleaf
There was a device often used by action-managers of old for fear of losing the limelight but it seemed superficial that afternoon at the Studebaker, Chicago, given the role and the actor's fame from films.

Lora Turner played up more brilliantly still to her star billing. As soon as she came on in a flimsy marlitt comedy about a middle-aged wife who finds herself as a professional lawyer arranging the divorce of one of her husband's footsteps, she took the presentation of bowing to the audience on each side of the arena stage to lap up applause as soon as possible.

And so on, and so on. For the veritcal play turned out so dull and fruitless, in stultifying its domestic situation around, that Miss Turner was not likely to win more applause when we had seen her act. There was in fact little acting for her to do once we knew that her marriage didn't matter to her or her boonish husband except as a business partnership. But the play successfully displayed Miss Turner in a succession of everchanging poses. If the actress is not as slim and lovely as she was in the Hollywood films we can still admire her pose and her way with clothes. Unlike Mr O'Toole she doesn't know an actor-proof role from the other kind.

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Vol. 3 No. 12

Week commencing Monday February 26th 1979

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in
YES, WE HAVE NO PYJAMAS
by ANDRE LAUNAY
with
JACK CARLTON
KEVIN SHEEHAN
DEBORAH BRAYSHAW
FIONA DOUGLAS-STEWART
PETRINA DERRINGTON
GEORGIE PHILLIPS

DIRECTED BY
VICTOR SPINETTI

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the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable cause.
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FIONA RICHMOND

Miss Fiona Richmond was born in Norfolk and attended various schools including the Alfred Colefax in Bridport, Dorset. She started her career by swimming in a tank at the Whitehall Theatre in 1970 in the play "PAJAMA TOPS" and went on to become the star of the show. She re-opened the Windmill Theatre for live theatre in "LET'S GET LAID" and during this time had her own radio phone-in programme on LBC.

She compiled a documentary, "WHAT THE ACTRESS SAID" for Westward TV which has since won the Gold Award for documentaries at Atlanta, Georgia. "COME INTO MY BED" had a very successful run at the Whitehall Theatre and she followed this with an American play "WOMEN BEHIND BARS" at the same theatre. Her films include "EXPOSE", "HARD CORE" and "LET'S GET LAID".

Miss Richmond has had three books published and is a regular contributor to "Men Only" magazine; she is also a free lance journalist and a member of the NUJ.

Miss Richmond can currently be seen in ATV's "CELEBRITY SQUARES" and Granada's new comedy series "TAKE MY WIFE".

JACKIE CARLTON

Jackie Carlton, the well known Northern Comic, has appeared in numerous Revues and Pantomimes (as the Dame), and played all the 'Big Reems' in Clubs throughout the country with his special brand of Cabaret. Jackie was the only comic winner from the TV series "NEW FACES" to go to the Palladium — and the New Faces panel of judges were moved to say 'My favourite comic' — Mary Whitehouse, 'My kind of comic' — Clement Freud and Bill Ward of the Palladium said 'a beautiful comic'.

This is Jackie Carlton's first appearance with Miss Fiona Richmond.

KEVAN SHEEHAN

Kevan Sheehan a well known face on both television and in the theatre can also claim the distinction of being the first male nude at the Windmill Theatre (Guinness Book of Records). He goes on to say if you'd like further information — don't be afraid to ask.

DEBORAH BRAYSHAW

Deborah Brayshaw's first professional engagement was a season with the Sheffield Repertory Company where she played a variety of roles. This was followed by a part in the musical "OH KAY" in Torquay, and then appeared at the Mermaid Theatre, London in "PROMETHEUS UNSOUND". Deborah appeared in Genoa with the Nell Talbot Productions and returned to this country for a season at the Kenton Theatre, Henley. She played Dorothy in a national tour of "TO DOROTHY A SON" and has also appeared in Cabaret in Palma, Mallorca and Spain.

Deborah has played many parts on television in such series as "2 CARS", "SOFTLY, SOFTLY", "SPECIAL BRANCH", "OH WHO" and the "DICK EMERY SHOW". Her films also include "CONFESSIONS FROM A HOLIDAY CAMP" and several of the "CARRY ON" films.

She is married and lives in Hertfordshire. Her favourite hobbies are horse riding, tennis, skating and sailing.

FIONA DOUGLAS-STEWART

Fiona hates having to write about herself, as she can never think of anything interesting to say, and would much rather be telling you about other half-wits or the dangers of extinction faced by whales. She was in "CARTE BLANCHE" in the West End, has just finished playing "Mama Rabbit" in "TOAD OF TOAD HALL", has recently done a tour of "JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT" in Scotland, and will soon be appearing in the B.B.C. production of "MEASURE FOR MEASURE". Now, about those whales.

PETRINA DERRINGTON

Petrina trained at the Guildford School of Acting. She has appeared in various musicals including "SALAD DAYS" and "JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT", and has done several tours of plays such as "THE LATE EDWINA BLACK" and "LET'S DO IT YOUR WAY". She also did the role of "EQUIUS" at Cheshamford. Petrina has just finished a season in "GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS".
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YES, WE HAVE NO PYJAMAS
Directed by Victor Spinetti

CAST
JULIA               FIONA RICHMOND
STANLEY OLDROYD    JACK CARLTON
MARLON             KEVAN SHEEHAN
ROSANNA            DEBORAH BRAYSHAW
TRIXIE             FIONA DOUGLAS STEWART
CLICK              PETRINA DERRINGTON
MASTER OF CEREMONIES GEORGIE PHILLIPS

The play is set now, in the present, in an apartment on the second floor of a large house in Mayfair, Central London.

ACT ONE
Scene 1
Scene 2

INTERVAL

ACT TWO
Scene 1
Scene 2

For "Yes, We Have No Pyjamas" Company
Stage Management
ARNOLD FRY
GEORGIIE PHILLIPS
JENNY CHARLES
GEORGE PHILLIPS

George was born in London and educated at grammar school where he first caught the theatre bug, as the school annually presented a high quota of plays in which he appeared regularly. However a career in design after gaining a diploma at Art College seemed on the cards, when he joined a local pop group for fun. This, however, developed into the whole group/cabaret circuit, business bringing reasonable success. Two years ago though he returned to his original love of acting. Last autumn he played the "villain of the piece" in an hour-and-a-half film for Thames TV all about professional football, and Christmas 1978, saw him in JACK AND THE BEANSTALK at Rickmansworth.

VICTOR SPINETTI (The Director)

With the wealth of experience he has garnered, and the things Victor has done in Theatre, Films and Television, it is difficult to imagine that he began his working life in such prosaic occupations as a factory hand and as a waiter. In theatre his acting activities have embraced the World and it is not possible to elaborate fully on the plays and musicals he has appeared in but to list just a few will demonstrate his popularity and ability: "EXPRESSO BONGO", "SOUTH PACIFIC", "OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR", "FING'S AIN'T WOT THEY USED TO BE", "THE ODDBOY COUPLE", etc. In films he appeared in "BECKET", "A HARD DAY'S NIGHT", "HELP", Zeffirelli's "TAMING OF THE SHREW", "THE RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER" and the TV special "THE MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR". He has been seen in Television in several dramatic roles and, in addition was seen in the USA on the Edie Griffl Show and Jack Polor show. Victor Spinetti can currently be seen in Granada's new comedy series "TAKE MY WIFE".

As a Director Victor was responsible for "HAIR" in Rome and Amsterdam, "JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR" in Paris and under the Paul Raymond banner "THE BED", "LET'S GET LACED" and "COME INTO MY BED".

ANDRE LAUNAY (The Author)

Andre Launay wrote his first sex comedy at the age of fourteen for his school's dramatic society and was asked to leave after its first reading. Though the author of successful plays and novels he has never taken his undoubted professionalism seriously enough to become boring. "If people around you are determined to be dull and narrow minded, there is always the theatre to escape to where life should be a romp, a farce, a laugh!". He wrote both this play and the West End hit "COME INTO MY BED" specially for Miss Fiona Richmond. He is married to Spanish authoress Maria Isabel Rodriguez.

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They wanted to be happy—and were

by Patrick Ludlow

If you wanted to give a party in the middle twenties you couldn’t do better than to take them first to the Palace Theatre, to see No, No, Nanette, and then on to the Café de Paris for supper. The cost, compared with today, would be trifling.

With Nanette, it didn’t matter whether your guests were "bright young things" or "stuffy dukes". The signature tune was "I Want to be Happy"—and that is the way everyone left the theatre. The principal reason for this high spot in the theatrical twenties was—casting. Certainly, the music and lyrics were good—"Tea for Two" swept the country—but it was Joseph Coyne and George Grossmith. In the two main parts, that made the piece such an enormous success.

The silly plot, as with many musicals, didn’t matter. It was about a man, married to an economical wife, who had made a packet selling bibles—and wished to give his money away to other women. But it was the singing of the ladies—always loveliness—that placed his benevolence in doubt.

When Charles Hawtrey played the part in the original musical version: His Lady Friend, the famous Hawtrey blonde—which amounted to a winking aside—made the story deliberately unlovable.

Joe Coyne, who had also appeared in His Lady Friend in Australia, used a similar technique in Nanette. He didn’t have the Hawtrey blink—no one else has ever been able to do that. But, when criticised, by his lawyer friend, for discriminating against "ugly old ladies", Joe’s innocent smile caused raucous gales of laughter. In all other respects, Coyne won the mantle of a sophisticated charmer, and dressed the part as a gay Lutero. He wasn’t as good as Hawtrey, but he could sing, after a fashion, and dance. And this is what the story required. Joe was a first class musical comedy performer who, as Danilo, in The Merry Widow had made such an outstanding success.

To "feed" and play second (as they used to say), the eccentric George Grossmith was engaged. G. G., as he was known to all, besides being an actor, was an impresario of reputation. He was descended from and surrounded by a talented theatrical family. His father styled himself—Entertainer. Why has this become a dirty word? The son, G. G., didn’t style himself as such—but he was vastly entertaining in his unrepentant portrayal of the lawyer friend. And with his capers, and high spirits, placed the part on a level with the lead.

continued overleaf
THE WANTED TO BE HAPPY—AND WERE — continued

What stopped the show, was not the good singing and dancing of the juveniles in the dress hit ‘Tea for Two’, but the way the two elegant mistresses—for no sane reason—came on, and guied the number. These two, put across the message: “This is all very nice but, oh boy, isn’t it fun?” They were aided and abetted by Binnie Hale and a magnificent company who seemed to delight in the toon spirit.

Naturally, the director, William McDowell, took a share of the credit for creating this happy atmosphere which came across to the audience in delicious waves. Mark you, it’s not always possible to inject and sustain amiability—it has been said that a man who can control a theatrical company can rule all Ireland. And in the recent revival of No, No, Nanette, at Drury Lane, all the ludicrous nonsense was lacking, and everyone seemed to be playing for themselves. As a result, the absurdity of the plot stood out like a sore thumb.

But let us go on from the jolly crowd at the Palace in the twenties to the fascinating Café de Paris where restaurateur Poulsen greeted everyone like royalty. (A great many of his habits were.) I can think of no more exciting moment in London’s night life than when the lights went down and the spots came on, the cymbals clashed and the drum beat—and down the finest cabinet staircase in Europe, come the two blackest negroes, in the whitest shirtfronts, to sing: ‘My Blue Heaven’.

At 8.45 p.m. on the 8th of March 1941, a bomb came clean through the glass dome, above the Café, killing most of the dancers, and Snake Hips Johnson who, on the front of the stand, was leading his orchestra in ‘Oh Johnnie, Oh Johnnie—how you can love’. During the blitz, the Café, being so low down, was thought to be a safe place to dance. Most people had the impression that it was underwritten by Boult’s Cinema which is next door. Actually, the only protection was the glass dome. The dance floor is circular—the tables around it. And I remember being startled by Poulsen who would take short cuts across the floor—dancing one’s way. As, he was right in the centre when the bomb fell. Perhaps he would have preferred it that way.

As the captain goes down with his ship so a restaurateur dies in his nighthawks. Those seated round the sides were hardly injured; but eighty-four people perished.

However, they rebuilt the Café and, in the fifties, it enjoyed another boom period with Noel Coward and Marlene Dietrich. But only superstars could sustain this establishment in its glory.

Although, it’s surprising how many worth while plays were produced during the twenties; they couldn’t be beaten for fun and frolic, and top of the list was Maxk Grasswick & Coyne for their idiotic renderings of “Tea for Two” end ‘I Want to be Happy’.
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