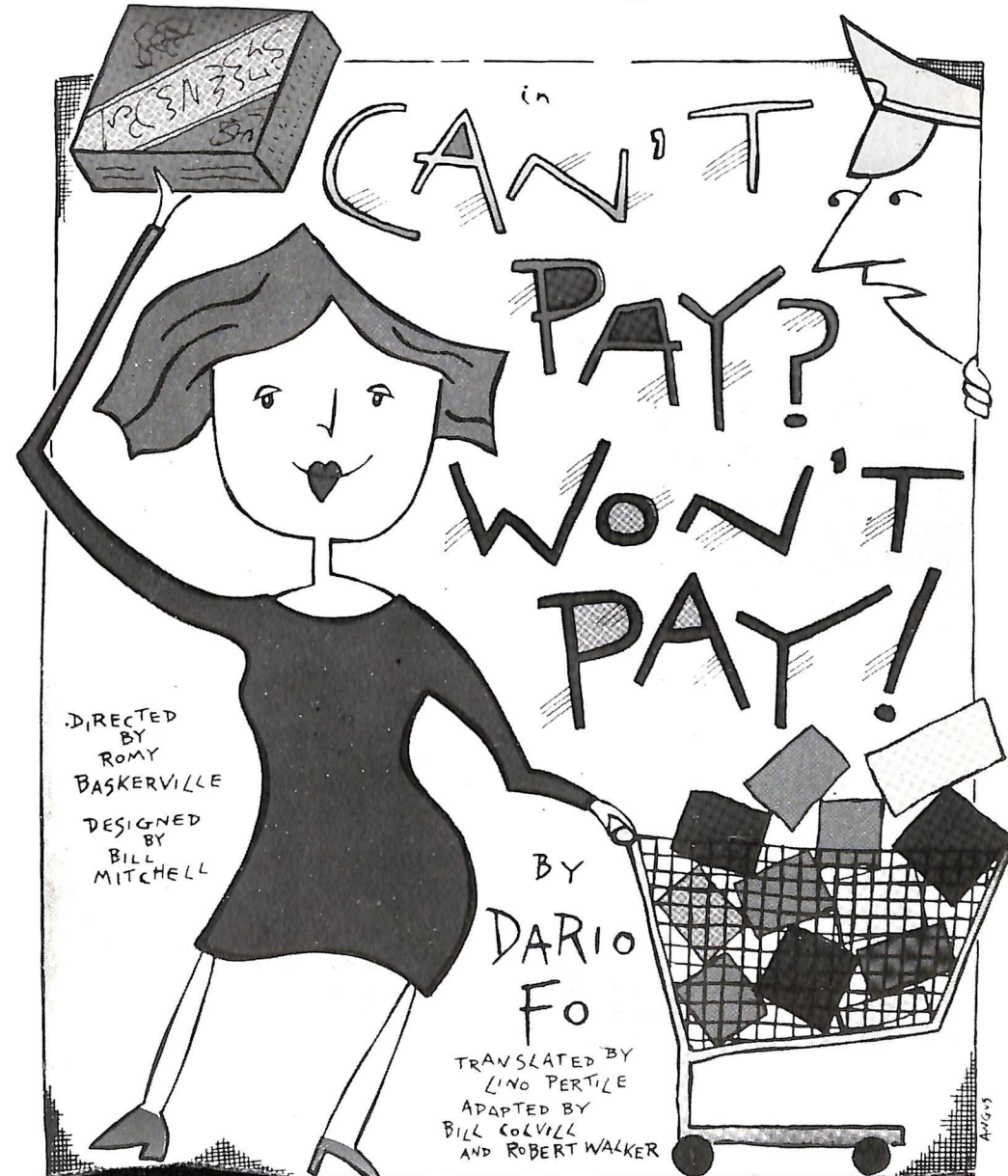

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The Young Vic



The MANOEL THEATRE 19 20 21 JANUARY,

THE YOUNG VIC

No longer the poor relation

The history of the English stage since World War II consists largely of a pioneering search for audiences who previously would never have set foot in a theatre. The new frontier spirit assumed innumerable different forms, most of them ephemeral.

One conspicuous survivor, however, is the Young Vic Theatre in London, where youngsters have been flocking to see workshops, fund shows, and world classics, since it first opened its doors in 1970.

Its story really begins in the 1940s, when the directors of the Old Vic set up an acting school and a touring company, the Young Vic, to foster the next theatrical generation. Unfortunately, however, once in full swing, this hopeful venture was axed by the governors, leaving a wound that remained unhealed until Sir Laurence Olivier, as director of the National Theatre, revived the idea of an attached playhouse for the young, and entrusted it to his associate director, Frank Dunlop.

Different

Dunlop's Young Vic was a very different affair from its 1940s prototype, which specialized in fairytale plays showing off the *commedia dell'arte* skills of Vic School graduates. This was the bottom rung of the so-called "ladder system", on which the young were supposed to scale the classical heights, and it struck Dunlop as pedantic and patronizing.

Dunlop's policy was lastingly inscribed on the building that houses the Young Vic, a multi-purpose glass hangar, which attempted to reproduce the informal conditions of a Mediterranean market in a northern European climate.

The negative side of the early productions was a besetting fear of boring the customers. No doubt, Dunlop's version of *The Cheats of Scapin*, for example, arose from pure love of Moliere. What came across, though, was the suspicion that nobody would have any time for this old piece unless it was jazzed up with cheeky ad libbing, funny walks and harmonizing waiters.

However, music-hall vulgarity was never more than one strand in Dunlop's work, mingling with an otherwise uncompromising repertory of world classics and the post-World War II avant-garde. Moreover, as the company gained confidence, strengthened by continental European tours, a definite aesthetic took shape: namely, that the English theatre needed the imaginative input of the unsophisticated young who, in return, deserved the best the profession could give them.

For this reason, Dunlop strongly opposed companies like the National Youth Theatre that presented amateur casts to paying audiences. The Young Vic might present plays by local teenagers, but they would be designed and performed to full professional standards.

This approach struck a sympathetic chord with other theatre workers who craved a different public from their usual middle class, middle aged clientele, and they gravitated to the Young Vic as their natural home.

Narrative spectacle

Outstanding among these recruits was Michael Bogdanov. He, typically had staged the Beatles' song "*Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*" as a tight-rope walking and firework show. He succeeded Dunlop as Young Vic director in 1978. He was even ruder than Dunlop when he had a pretext, as in *The Canterbury Tales*. It was one of his means of getting through to the young.

All his Shakespeare was in modern dress, and although it might convey forcefully independent views on the plays — for instance, that the exiled Prospero dreamed up "*The Tempest*" as a revenge fantasy — it was packaged under the attention grabbing title "*Action Man*".

Bogdanov also invented a form of narrative spectacle, in which famous poems like *The Ancient Mariner* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* would be simultaneously spoken and acted out in pantomime, with stage settings that changed with the thrilling speed of poetic metaphor.

The Young Vic has been an independent organization since Dunlop cut loose from the National Theatre in 1974. However, it was not until the appointment of its third director, David Thacker, in 1983, that the company finally shed its reputation as merely a training ground for young actors. Until then there had been no clear dividing line between its professional work and its specialist role.

Thacker now brought a new broom to Waterloo Road. He accepted Olivier's original policy of making great plays accessible to the young, but as he regarded intelligent teenagers as the ideal audience anyway, there was no point in cultivating a junior house style.

The best way of making masterpieces accessible was to cast them as well as possible. Hence the revivals of Ibsen, O'Neill and Arthur Miller that transferred to the West End and launched several brilliant new actors, besides offering the star casting of Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Dalton.

Alongside this high profile side of the company's work, its less visible aspects have also been vigorously recodified. After the success of his production of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in Norway, Thacker set up a Tours Unit, which sends out four major productions around Britain in the first half of the year.

He also restructured the various participatory and amateur activities that cross-fertilize with the company's main-stage work. He appointed a resident director for the 40-strong Youth Theatre troupe, and launched an Unemployed Community Touring Group, which has been on the road during February with *William*, a prize-winning piece written by Shaun Duggan in 1986 when he was 16.

Finally, in the person of David Holman, the Young Vic has at last found a first rate writer, as serious as O'Neil and Miller, who addresses himself to the experience of children and teenagers. Had he been around in 1970, they could have seen his plays *No Worries* and *The Small Poppies*, and the latest pre-West End revival, for a top price equivalent to 35 pence. Now it would cost them £8. But at least the Young Vic has conclusively cast off its old role of poor relation.

Irving Wardle



DARIO FO is a left-wing actor, dramatist, political satirist, songwriter, graphic artist, scene and costume designer, cultural historian and itinerant jester.

Franco Zeffirelli, in an interview on Rai, has described him as "a great actor, a great director, and a great clown; the last great clown of our time".

Born in Lombardy, northern Italy in 1926, he and his wife, Franca Rame, have been popular television performers and together have produced over thirty of Fo's plays throughout Italy. Their theatre

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THE YOUNG VIC PRODUCTION OF

CAN'T PAY? WON'T PAY!

by **Dario Fo**

Translated by **Lino Pertile**

Adapted by **Bill Colvill** and **Robert Walker**

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

ANTONIA	BARBARA PEIRSON
MARGARITA	SANDRA MAITLAND
GIOVANNI	HOWARD CROSSLEY
SERGEANT/INSPECTOR/OLD MAN	REG STEWART
LUIGI	GARY LUCAS

DIRECTED BY **ROMY BASKERVILLE**

DESIGNED BY **BILL MITCHELL**

LIGHTING DESIGNED BY **VERONICA WOOD**

COMPANY STAGE MANAGER **JAY EVANS**

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER **EMMA BASILICO**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER **MIKE SWORDS-COOK**

RE-LIGHTS **JON HOWARD**

COSTUMES SUPERVISOR **PHYLLIS BYRNE**

DESIGN ASSISTANT **FRAUKE BISCHINGER**

THE YOUNG VIC TOURS UNIT

DONALD SARTAIN TOURS ADMINISTRATOR

VI MARRIOTT ASSISTANT TO THE TOURS ADMINISTRATOR

LEN MARLOW TECHNICAL MANAGER

FOR THE MANOEL THEATRE

LIGHTING **VANNI LAUS**

CARPENTERS **FRANCIS MIFSUD, EMM. DALLI**

BOOKING CLERK **MICHELLE MUSCAT**

SOUND **JOHN BRUNO**

HOWARD CROSSLEY

Giovanni

Howard Crossley made his acting debut in 1980 with the BBC Playhouse production ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY. A native of South Yorkshire, Howard has worked at The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield and toured extensively for Theatre Foundry in the Midlands and DAC Theatre Company, Doncaster. For The Young Vic he has appeared in THE ENEMIES WITHIN, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, MEASURE FOR MEASURE, COMEDIANS, AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE and WAITING FOR GODOT. Both WAITING FOR GODOT and MEASURE FOR MEASURE toured nationally and in Europe as part of The Young Vic's 88/89 touring programme. Howard's television work includes OPEN ALL HOURS, EMMERDALE FARM, CORONATION STREET and ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL. Films include WETHERBY and NATURE OF THE BEAST.

SANDRA MAITLAND

Margarita

Previously a research chemist, Sandra Maitland trained at Manchester Polytechnic Theatre School. Her theatre work includes: Lucy in THE RIVALS, Chester Gateway; Clytemnestra in ELEKTRA, Helen of Troy in ORESTES, Toinette in THE HYPOCHONDRIAC and Diana in ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, Leicester Haymarket; Dainty Fidget in THE COUNTRY WIFE, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry; Margarita in CAN'T PAY? WON'T PAY! and Mrs Shin in THE GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN, Theatre Foundry; LOVE OF DON PERLIMPLIN, Battersea Arts Centre and Marion Crane in MARION'S REVENGE, Manchester Green Room. Television includes: CORONATION STREET, CENTRAL LOBBY, THE PRACTICE and CASUALTY. On Radio she has been heard in THE DEAD LETTER BOX (BBC). Sandra is a member of Manchester's new improvised comedy group COMEDY EXPRESS.

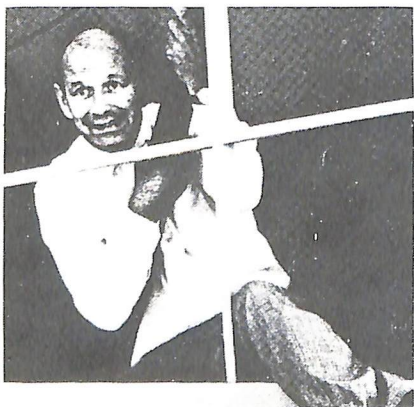


Back row going left to right: Reg Stewart, Barbara Peirson, Gary Lucas
Front row: Sandra Maitland, Romy Baskerville (director), Howard Crossley

BARBARA PEIRSON

Antonia

This is the third time that Barbara Peirson has worked for The Young Vic, previously appearing in *THE ENEMIES WITHIN* (1985) and *NO WORRIES* (1987). She has done a variety of theatre work both here and abroad including a year touring the outback in Australia and a winter touring barn dances around the Lake District. She has worked in theatres all over the country including a year at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool where she played Maureen in the original *STAGS AND HENS*. Amongst her most recent theatre credits are Nora in *A DOLLS HOUSE*, Cora in *THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS* and Joan in *TOUCHED*, Derby Playhouse; the title role in *MOLL FLANDERS*, Swan Theatre, Worcester and Barbara in *SELF PORTRAIT*, Theatr Clwyd. Television work includes Eileen Trevis in *ALBION MARKET*, Annette Charnley in *BLIND JUSTICE* and several plays for both BBC and ITV. She is currently appearing as Mrs McKaye in *BROOKSIDE*. Films include *HOPE AND GLORY*. Barbara also works regularly for BBC Radio Drama.



Stewart in rehearsal

GARY LUCAS

Luigi

Gary Lucas studied for a degree in Drama and Theatre Arts at Birmingham University and then at the E15 Drama School. He worked at the Duke's Playhouse, Lancaster for two years appearing in main house, studio, touring and Theatre-in-Education productions. He then appeared in twenty-five productions at Contact Theatre, Manchester and has worked at the Chester Gateway, Derby Playhouse and Oxford Playhouse. Previous work at The Young Vic includes *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* and *ROMEO AND JULIET*. He has recorded five plays for BBC Radio and was seen in Central Television's *HARD CASES*. His recent work includes *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* at Greenwich Theatre and a three month spell in brown fun-fur on a national tour of *WINNIE THE POOH*.

REG STEWART

Sergeant/Inspector/Old Man

Reg Stewart has been an actor since leaving E15 Acting School in 1968. He has worked in many repertory companies and on television. Amongst his major roles in theatre are Lenin in *TRAVESTIES* and Truscott in *LOOT*. At the Young Vic he has played Sergeant Hayes in *SOME KIND OF HERO*, Bottom in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* and the Dame in *JACK AND THE BEANSTALK AND THE WILD WILD WEST* and more recently Estragon in *WAITING FOR GODOT* and Pompey in *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, both of which toured nationally and in Europe.

Gary Lucas as Luigi and Howard Crossley as Giovanni in rehearsal



BILL MITCHELL

Designer

Bill Mitchell graduated from Wimbledon School of Art in 1975 and now lives in Cornwall. He spent five years with Perspectives Theatre Company and seven with Theatre Centre as resident designer. He has also designed shows at the Soho Poly and JCA, London and has worked with Avon Touring in Bristol and Theatre Foundry in Walsall. His work at the Young Vic includes designs for *SOLOMON AND THE BIG CAT* – a show which toured nationally from March to July of this year and *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* both in '88 and the new production in '89. He is currently working with Truro based Knee High Theatre on large scale, long term projects. Bill also directs and lectures on visually based events.

ROMY BASKERVILLE

Director

Romy Baskerville has been Associate Director at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton since 1987. She began working in the theatre in 1964 and spent 15 years as an actress. She began directing in 1979 for M6 Touring Theatre Company and has since directed for Pit-Prop Theatre Company, The Duke's Playhouse, Lancaster (where she was Assistant Director for two years), and for Theatre Foundry – the touring theatre company of the West Midlands, where she was Artistic Director for four years. Since going to the Octagon her directing credits have included: *AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE*, *SOME KIND OF HERO*, *HARD TIMES*, *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* and *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*.



Dario Fo – cont'd from page 3

collective, *La Comune*, based in Milan has been responsible for Fo's greatest plays, amongst which are *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Can't Pay Won't Pay*, *About Face* and *Mistero Buffo*. For many years the U.S. State department had refused Fo permission to perform in the United States because of his politics. His reply was *Almost by chance a woman: Elizabeth*; a scathing satire on ex-president Ronald Reagan.

In my opinion Dario Fo is the most accomplished practitioner of the Brechtian epic theatre combining an incisive intelligence, passionate humanity and a joyful comic spirit. Having seen him once on the live stage and several times on television I have to confess at being overwhelmed by his astonishing display of theatrical virtuosity with the tone constantly ranging from wild slapstick to tragic desperation with a dizzying velocity. If his genius has created him enemies in high places it is because his theatre has this uncanny knack of proving very valid in this *oh so very democratic and civilised world that we live in!* Moreover, it is also highly prophetic. For example, this evening's play, about housewives who fight inflation by stealing food from supermarkets, preceded the actual phenomenon in Italy, and was cited as evidence during the trials of women who were arrested for liberating groceries in the seventies!

TCD

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THE YOUNG VIC, LONDON, in

Dario Fo's

C A N ' T P A Y ? W O N ' T P A Y !

This version of Dario Fo's Italian play is in the very English tradition of music-hall and "low comedy" farce.

However, there is a serious side, too, and part of Dario Fo's skill is in making us think and laugh at the same time.

What the Press says -

"Dario Fo's crazy comedy of social rebellion and political awakening is still as sharp and entertaining as ever..... his farce, shot through with intelligent wit and political debate, is given the pace and exaggerated style it requires in this exuberant Young Vic production."
Time Out

"All good stuff, fast, furious and occasionally outrageous."

What's On in London

"Excellent set, by Bill Mitchell. It looks a little like one of those pop-up books for kids and matches the action very well, which bounces about all over the place."
City Limits

"It's great fun, what a clever company...."
Ocean Sound

"..fast moving and brilliantly acted by The Young Vic cast."

Guernsey Evening Press