

WILD OATS

Or, The Strolling Gentlemen

BY
JOHN
O'KEEFFE

The original production opened at
Covent Garden, April 1791

CAST LIST

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF SPEAKING



JOHN DORY, valet de chambre to
Sir George Lawrence Hochman
SIR GEORGE THUNDER, a retired naval
officer Dennis Baumwoll
EPHRAIM SMOOTH, a Quaker, and steward to
LADY AMARANTH Devin Ward
LADY AMARANTH Mary McGlynn*
ZACHARIAH, servant to Lady Amaranth David Mitchell*
MUZ, servant to Harry Thunder Ramon Ruiz*
HARRY THUNDER, son to Sir George J.D. Keefe
JACK ROVER Douglas Montgomery*
FARMER GAMMON Matthew Andersen*
SIM, son to Farmer Gammon Jose De La Mar*
JANE, daughter to Farmer Gammon Jennifer Clarke*
BANKS, an unbeneficed clergyman Karl Patten
TWITCH, a baliff John Shinske*
WAITER Chris Armstrong
LANDLORD, of "The Sun" Ian Hall*
TRAP, partner to Lamp David Himmelreich*
LAMP, a theatrical manager Peter Bandarenko*
MAIDS, to Lady Amaranth Christine Berninger, Jennifer Noa*
AMELIA, sister to Banks Eileen P. Cunningham*
SHERIFF'S OFFICER John Burke
FIRST RUFFIAN Ian Hall
SECOND RUFFIAN David Mitchell
THIRD RUFFIAN Chris Armstrong
MUSICIANS Lawrence Hochman, Christina Berninger

Director Robert Gainer
Scene & Costume Designer F. Elaine Williams
Lighting Designer Stephen Chené
Dramaturgical Advisor Linda Merians

The play takes place in Hampshire around 1790
There will be one intermission of ten minutes

NOTES

THE AUTHOR



John O'Keefe, born in Dublin, 1747, was a writer of dramas, farces, pantomimes and comic operas numbering well over seventy. In assessing the comic writers of the 18th century, William Hazlitt wrote:

"O'Keefe might well be called our English Moliere. The scale of the modern writer was smaller but the spirit is the same. In light, careless laughter, and pleasant exaggerations of the humours we have had no one equal to him.

There is no labour or contrivance in his scengs, but the drollery of his subject seems to strike irresistibly upon his fancy and run away with his discretion as it does with ours. He is himself a Modern Antique. His fancy has all the quaintness and extravagance of the old writers, and the ease and lightness which the moderns arrogate to themselves. All his pieces are delightful."

Oxberry's English Drama, 1820

The Tragedy of O'Keefe's life was his blindness, an affliction which came upon this one-time actor and student of painting in his late twenties, thereby cutting off most other means of employment other than playwriting. He never was able to see the majority of his dramatic works in performance.

Inchbald's British Theatre, 1808

The theatre was O'Keefe's passion. Every character within its walls received his due from O'Keefe's pen in his *Recollections*, from the great actors: Garrick, Spranger Barry, William Lewis, and the great writers: Congreve and Sheridan, to the lowly small part players and the many cogs in the theatre machine. He said of himself:

"Perhaps I may not be accused of much vanity when I state that Sheridan often gave his full opinion that I was the first that turned the public taste from the dullness of sentiment into which it was rapidly falling, towards the sprightly channel of comic humour, and that I was the only one that could do this."

He died in 1833.

ON ACTORS

They live from hand to mouth: they plunge from want into luxury; they have no means of making money "breed." Uncertain of the future, they make sure of the present moment. Chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, they sometimes pass into the sunshine of fortune, and are lifted to the very pinnacle of public favour yet even there cannot calculate on the continuance of success.

If there is any tendency to dissipation beyond this in the profession of players, it is owing to the prejudices entertained against them, to that spirit of bigotry which in a neighbouring country would deny actors Christian burial after their death and to that cant of criticism which in our own slurs over their characters, while leering with a half-witted jest.

It is the romantic mixture of the hero and the vagabond that constitutes the essence of the player's life. It is the transition from their real to their assumed characters, from the contempt of the world to the applause of the multitude, that gives zest to the latter and raises them as much above common humanity at night, as in the daytime they are depressed below it.

William Hazlitt, 1817

ON QUAKERS

The best recreation of a Christian is the relief of stress; and his chief delight to promote the knowledge, and to exalt the glory of his Heavenly Master; and this is most effectively done under his holy influence, by a life of faith, purity and general benevolence.

Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Quakers, 1799

Modesty is particularly conspicuous in their looks and in their whole outward demeanor. It is conspicuous in their conversation. It is conspicuous also in their dress.

A Portraiture of Quakerism
Thomas Clarkson, 1806

QUAKERS ON THE THEATRE

Avoid sports, plays, and all such diversions as tending to alienate the mind from God. . . . It is apparent to our very great grief, that the simplicity and *distinguishing* plainness of our profession respecting language, apparel and behaviour is too much departed from us.

Epistle of the Yearly Meeting, 1738

Frequent and earnest have been the Advices of former Yearly Meetings, that all under our name may avoid the attendance of vain sports and places of amusement, which divert the mind from serious reflection and incline it to wantonness and vanity. Understanding that diversions of this kind are spreading and playhouses increasing in various places, we are concerned to renew a caution on this subject: being clearly convinced of the pernicious effects of these evil practices; the inventions of degenerate men.

Epistle of the Yearly Meeting, 1785





PRODUCTION STAFF



Technical Director Stephen Chené
 Stage Manager Eileen Marks*
 Assistant State Manager Dawn Albert*
 Assistant Costume Designer Nancy Florent*
 Assistant Set Designer David Himmelreich*

SET CONSTRUCTION

Matthew Andersen*, Peter Bandarenko*, Pamela Brooks,
 Craig Campbell, Charles Cookson, Joseph Cresko, Barry
 Davis, Dave Douglas, Jose De La Mar*, Larry Feidelseit,
 Stacey Gilfillan, Neil Greenspan, Nina Karanik, Lauren
 Keller, Dennis Kirkpatrick, Kib Kleine, Ken Mead*, Janet
 McCumber, Lisa Miller, Douglas Montgomery*, Molly
 Mudd, Beth O'Connor, Ric Ruedy, Geoff Sefert, Joanna
 Schneiderman*, John Shinske*, Stephanie Snyder*,
 Jennifer Stoke*, Andy Swales, Grant Tormey, April Tufts,
 Karen Walker, Peter L. Wert*, Mimi Wry

LIGHTS Joanna Schneiderman*
 Peter Bandarenko*, Dave Douglas, Larry Feidelseit,
 Douglas Montgomery*, Jennifer Stoke*, Peter L. Wert*

SOUND Wayne Williams

PROPS Karen Reabuck* Marjorie Myers

COSTUMES Rosa Joshi*
 Nancy Florent*, Jennifer Fortin, Stacey Gilfillan, Lara
 Kelly, Eileen Marks*, Jennifer Noa*, Mimi Wry,
 Arlene Zavocki*

MAKE-UP Carolyn E. Ball* Nancy Florent*, Molly Mudd

STAGE CREW Dave Douglas, Jane Guzi

POSTER AND PROGRAM DESIGN Nancy Cleaver

HOUSE MANAGER L. Brian Koss

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 Design & Technical Director F. Elaine Williams
 Associate in Acting & Directing Robert Gainer
 Associate Technical Director Stephen Chené
 Secretary Chris Fry
 Box Office & Publicity Managers Carolyn E. Ball, Jane Guzi

Technical Assistants:

Carolyn E. Ball, Jane Guzi, Douglas Montgomery, Jose
 De La Mar, Eileen Marks, Rosa Joshi, Joanna
 Schneiderman, John Shinske, Jennifer Stoke, Peter Wert



CAP & DAGGER OFFICERS

President Peter L. Wert
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 Secretary Jennifer Stoke
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 Play Selection Rosa Joshi
 Activities Nancy Florent
 Publicity Eileen Marks, Douglas Montgomery

* Member of Cap and Dagger

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