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Director of Dance, Technique and Theory ... Danna Frangione
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Design (visiting) Richard Harmon
Secretary Chris Fry

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Peter Bandarenko	Eileen Marks	MaryBeth Sodini
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David Himmelreich	Jennifer Noa	

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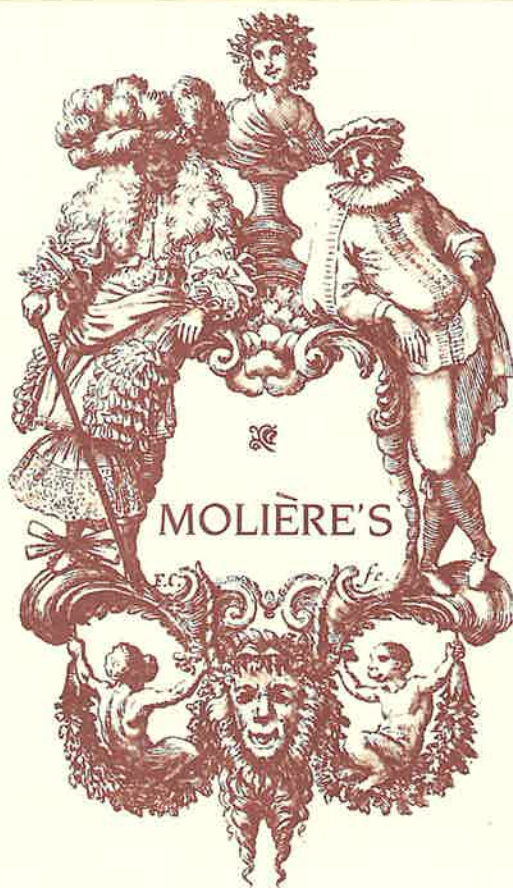
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The Wisanthrope

The Misanthrope

(The Irritable Lover)
by

MOLIÈRE

Translated by Richard Wilbur

CAST LIST

Characters in Order of Appearance

Alceste Chris Ludmer
Philinte Jonathan Uffelman
Oronte Peter Bandarenko*
Célimène Mary McGlynn*
Basque Greg Timpone
Eliante Tara Hart*
Clitandre Jose De La Mar*
Acaste John Burke*
Guard Richard Chew
Arsinoe Mary Ann Sigler*
Dubois Breton Blair

Musicians:

viola da gamba Zoya E. Jenks
recorder James R. Pusey
harpsichord Peter J. Latona

Director Robert Gainer
Scene Designer Richard Harmon
Lighting Designer Stephen P. Chené
Costume Designer Eileen Marks*
Period Movement Specialist Danna Frangione

The scene throughout is in
Célimène's house in Paris.

NOTES

THE AUTHOR



MOLIÈRE
playwright, actor, and producer
1622 - 1673

Biographical Connections:

1664 - Even before Molière completes TARTUFFE, the Society of the Holy Sacrament, with the support of the Queen Mother, obtains an interdiction against its performance. The Cure Roullé characterizes Molière as "a man, or rather a demon incarnate dressed in man's clothing, the most godless and irreligious man who has ever existed," and condemns him to the "flames of hell." The play is banned until 1669, when, with Louis XIV's approval, TARTUFFE enjoyed a run of 50 performances.

1665 - Again, pressure from powerful religious circles forces Molière to withdraw his play DON JUAN from the next season's repertory.

1666 - Molière faces difficulties with the infidelity of his wife, Armande, a woman 20 years younger than he.

1666 - June 4th, THE MISANTHROPE is first performed at Palais Royal with Molière in the role of Alceste.

1673 - It is more Molière's despised status as an actor than his controversial role as a writer that cause the church authorities to deny his corpse the right of burial in holy ground.

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Molière's characters, insofar as they are middle or upper-middle class, have no professions. In accordance with the times, they merely shared membership in a particular social class. They circulate in Parisian society or at court, they occupy themselves with the administration of their property or with their literary pretensions.

from Molière by Gertrud Mander

... if Versailles was not all France, it was at least the place to which all French eyes were turned, the concretion in stone and marble of apocryphal dictum *l'état c'est moi*, a theory of life made visible.

(In the 1660's)... the King's ambition had been to be the smartest of the smartest set, *homme à bonnes fortunes* in his own right, owing his successes not to his crown but to his own graces.

... what was the daily life of the courtier...? How did he live and what did he do? The answer is simple: he watched the King as a dog does its master whenever permitted to do so, and when the King was invisible, he talked about him to his fellow courtiers.

... It was a witty, eccentric, pleasureseeking little world... Through the seeming variety of designs of urban life, Court, fast set, magistracy, and *bourgeois*, runs, however, the unvarying pattern of comfort sacrificed to ostentation. "Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy" is the general rule of life, and an unflinching acceptance of it strained even the handsomest incomes; the Parisian *seigneur* strove to model his household on that of the King, the *bourgeois* aped, indeed often outdid, the *seigneur*,...

... Much as the Parisian esteemed good eating and drinking, he loved to talk even more; and conversation is essentially an indoor game.

from The Splendid Century
by W. H. Lewis

By the accession of Louis XIV, the snobbish citizen (of Paris) was a well-defined and very common type... Many of them tried to edge themselves into Court and society by acquiring country houses, struggling to talk the jargon of fashionable people, striving to learn to fence, to swear, to gamble, to write love-letters; in fact, to go against their natural instincts in every way possible... Others sat up all night inventing pedigrees for themselves, or conning books of manners and learning verses they did not understand, to recite to some "belle marquise" they did not love, but whom it was fashionable to court with desperate ardour. Family portraits might always be bought at the nearest picture shop, and the silver of a bankrupt noble looked well under the new chandeliers... Vanity abounded.

from Social France in the XVII Century
by Cecile Hugon

THE GENRE: COMEDY OR TRAGEDY?

... drama is essentially the conflict between the individual and the collective, between inner and external forces. Whenever the "chosen" man or the ideal actor becomes conscious of the silent murmers of his space-present, he will ... first feel anguish, then according to his temperament or his humor, he will either turn his anguish into metaphysical or divine drama attuned to esoteric liturgy, or in order to reassure himself he will take to whistling, telling stories or dancing "in order to forget his fright." Then his theatre adopts the free forms which one finds in farce, satyric drama and Bacchic ceremonies. Confronted with the type of life which strikes us as if it were an apparition, we adopt two lines of behavior, both dictated by our emotions. We either transform it into something divine which we can face and which is tragedy or we pretend to ignore it, and we can then indulge in all types of merriment, and that is comedy. In the first case we trust life, and in the second case we rather fly away from it. That is why tragedy is exalting while comedy is not so gay after all.

from The Theatre of Jean-Louis Barrault
by Jean-Louis Barrault (the legendary
French actor-director, who played the
role of Alceste in 1954.)

... We laugh ever time a person gives us the impression of being a thing... The comic is that side of a person which reveals his likeness to a thing, that aspect of human events which, through its peculiar inelasticity, conveys the impression of pure mechanism, of automatism, of movement without life. Consequently, it expresses an individual or collective imperfection which calls for an immediate corrective. The corrective is laughter...

from "Laughter" by Henri Bergson.