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A Flea in Her Ear (2001)

Fall 11-1-2001

A Flea In Her Ear Playbill

Providence College

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*A Flea
In Her
Ear*

By Georges Feydeau

In a translation by John Mortimer

**Blackfriars Theatre
Providence College**

Providence College Department of
Theatre, Dance, & Film Presents

A Flea In Her Ear

By Georges Feydeau

In a translation by John Mortimer

Directed by
Brendan Byrnes

Scenic Design by
David Costa-Cabral

Costume Design by
David Costa-Cabral

Lighting Design by
Jamie Brink-Grant

*Produced by special arrangement with
Samuel French, Inc.*

Blackfriars Theatre
November 1-4, 2001

Cast

At Chandebise's House

Camille Chandebise, *the secretary*.....Conor Tansey
Nanette, *the maid*.....Katie McBrine
Etienne, *the valet & husband of Nanette*.....Kyle Pinto
Panache, *the doctor*.....Joe Kilner
Don Carlos Homenides.....Joe "Dice" Bonfiglio
De Histangua, *the Spaniard*
Lucienne Homenides De Histangua,.....Julia Barrett
the Spaniard's wife
Victor Emmanuel Chandebise,.....Ryan Brown
the innocent husband
Yvonne Chandebise, *the jealous wife*.....Katie Cheely
Romain Tournel, *the lover*.....Stephen Pollak

At The Pretty Pussy Inn

Augustin Battalion, *the owner*.....Daniel Janeiro
Babette, *the maid*.....Megan Peters
Olympia, *the owner's wife*.....Meridith Hernandez
Baptistin, *the decoy*..... Michael Propster
Herr Schwarz, *a Prussian, guest at hotel*.....Chris Deely
Dodo, *the porter*.....Ryan Brown

"There are two principal characters in my plays:
the one who delivers the kicks to the backside,
and the one who receives them. . . ."

—Georges Feydeau

Setting

Paris in the Nineteen-teens

Act I **The drawing room of Victor Emmanuel Chandeise. MIDDAY.**

Act II **The Pretty Pussy Inn. That Evening.**

Act III **The drawing room of Victor Emmanuel Chandeise. Immediately following.**

There will be two ten-minute intermissions.

Patron Information

Refreshments will be sold before the performance and at intermission. Proceeds support THE FRIAR'S CELL, Providence College's student-run theatre group.

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In order to avoid disrupting the performance, patrons who arrive at the theatre after the show has begun will be asked to view the remainder of the act from the side balcony.

*

The taking of photographs during the performance is strictly prohibited.

*

Please mute all wireless communication devices or leave them with the House Manager.

*

For your convenience, the River Avenue gate will be open before and immediately after each performance.

Georges Feydeau (1862-1921)

In the last tragic phase of his life, confined in a sanatorium, Feydeau's mental illness took the form of believing himself to be the Emperor Napoleon III, to the extent of affecting the latter's goatee beard, and sending letters to his friends inviting them to attend his coronation at Notre Dame. By a bizarre twist, Feydeau was himself rumored to have been an illegitimate son of Napoleon III, and his upbringing was as curious, in many respects, as his plays.

By his own account, Georges Feydeau wrote his first play around the age of six or seven, following a visit to the theatre, and thereafter, with his father's encouragement, used his 'playwriting' to avoid doing his homework. Throughout his school years in Paris, first at the Lycée Saint-Louis, then the Collège Sainte-Barbe, Feydeau continued to write, and perform when the opportunity arose, and after leaving college, he joined an amateur theatre group.

In 1883, at the age of twenty-one, Feydeau had a one-act comedy, *Amour et piano* (Love and Piano), accepted for production by one of the leading Parisian companies, at the Théâtre de l'Athénée, and its success determined his long-term ambition to write for the stage. A few years later, in 1887, the spectacular triumph of his first full-length play, *Tailleur pour dames* (Ladies' Tailor), written while he was serving in the army, gave promise of a glittering career.

From then on, Feydeau could do no wrong, and one triumph succeeded another, at a work-rate that appeared to give the lie to his self-confessed pathological idleness. Rehearsals were regularly well advanced before the plays were completed, and in the case of *Occupez-vous d'Amélie* (Keep an Eye on Amélie, also known as Look after Lulu), for example, the actors had already spent several weeks rehearsing the first two acts, with no idea of how its intricate plot was to be resolved, until Feydeau appeared and wrote the final scenes in the course of an evening.

With success came fame and riches, and there is some truth in Feydeau's claim to be fundamentally lazy. Little is known in detail about his private life, but he was virtually a fixture in the café-bars and restaurants of Belle Epoque Paris. Gifted with the kind of looks

often described as 'devilishly handsome,' Feydeau was the epitome of the sophisticated *boulevardier*, and his image even graced the Illustrated Larousse encyclopaedia under the entry on moustaches.

During this time, Feydeau gambled heavily in the stock market, losing a fortune in the process, and it may be argued that it was only his mounting debts that kept him writing, as he created the great plays of his maturity - *Un Fil à la patte* (Cat Among the Pigeons), *L'Hôtel du Libre-Echange* (Hotel Paradiso), *Le Dindon* (The Dupe), *La Dame de chez Maxim* (The Lady from Maxim's), *La Main passe* (It's Your Deal), and *La Puce à l'oreille* (A Flea in Her Ear).

To a considerable extent, Feydeau's comedic mission might be summed up in Chaucer's phrase, 'to speak of the woe that is in marriage', and his own home life was far from idyllic. Between 1908 and 1916 Feydeau wrote several one-act plays, widely regarded as among his best, and featuring a shrewish wife, said to be modeled on his own wife Marianne, whom he married in 1889. Feydeau even proposed publishing these in a separate collection, to be titled 'From Marriage to Divorce'.

In 1910, following a violent domestic row, Feydeau took up permanent residence in the Hotel Terminus, near the Gare Saint-Lazare, in a room eventually so crammed with books, and his precious collection of paintings and perfumes, that he had to write on a drawing-board propped up on his knees. Feydeau's habit was to stay on at Maxim's or the Napolitain until the small hours, then walk his friends home, reluctant to return to his lonely hotel room.

Feydeau wrote nothing after 1916, and the play he left unfinished, *Cent millions qui tombent* (A Hundred Million Windfall), in fact dates back to 1911, when the first two acts had been rehearsed at the Théâtre des Nouveautés. In 1919, diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia, Feydeau entered the sanatorium at Rueil, and there this most cerebral of dramatists passed his final, tragic years, progressively losing his reason, until he died on 5 June, 1921.

--taken from the introduction by Stephen Mulrine of the Nick Hern Books Drama Classic 2000 publication of *A Flea In Her Ear*.

Crew

Stage Manager.....Sarah Orr
Assistant Stage Manager.....Marisa McGrody
Properties Crew.....Mary Manning,
David Quinn
Light Board Operator.....Betsey Jensen
Sound Operator.....Michelle Capolongo
Scene Shop Crew.....Spencer Crockett,
Patrick Donohue, Kimberly Dubuc,
Robyn Forcier, James Frascatore,
Paul Larochele, Crystal Paul, Kim Sagan,
Brendan Strieff, Jason Zybert
Set Crew.....Liz Larsen-Silva, Mary
Manning, David Quinn, Peter Waugh
Set Crew Head.....Crystal Paul
Costume Crew.....Jane Lewis, Stephanie Power,
Kathleen Seagriff, Anne Marie Shaw
Wardrobe.....Stacey Prefontaine,
Katie Latimer, Amy Hayes, Kathleen Seagriff
Box Office Manager.....Elizabeth Delmage
Box Office & Publicity Assistants.....Shannon Gadoury,
Jenny Ferrara, Kevin McHugh,
John Neubauer
House Manager.....Lauren Germain
Ushers.....Providence College Friars Club
Concessions.....Friar's Cell
Sound recorded at.....Red Dog Studio
Archive photography.....Randall Photography
Poster.....Stephen Cabral

Special Thanks

Robert Byrnes and Helen Lynch Byrnes

Doreen Cabral

Evelyn Cabral

The Costume Collection

John Garrity

Rev. Leonard Hindsley

Peter Garofalo , Providence College Security

Dr. Christopher Kelton & The Dept. of Music

Stephanie Neal

Clara Walker

And a very special thanks to

Stephen Cabral

Brendan Byrnes (Director)

A resident of New York City, Brendan returns to Providence College as a guest director after directing the Blackfriars production of *Meet Me in St. Louis* in 1994. Other directing credits include *Baby*, the PC lab production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and *Lizzie Borden's Tempest*, a new play he both wrote and directed as part of the New York International Theatre Festival, soon to be produced by the New Jersey Playwrights Theatre in 2002.

Also an actor, Brendan's credits include the pre-Broadway/regional premiere of the new Burt Bacharach musical, *What the World Needs Now* at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, directed by Gillian Lynne and co-produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company, and the off-Broadway production of *The Baker's Wife* at the Mint Theatre. Regional acting credits include *The Lion in Winter* with Ed Asner, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* with Joe Morton and Cotter Smith, *True West*, Harold Pinter's *The Collection* (Luna Stage), *Cabaret*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Arrow Rock Lyceum), *Falsettos* (Gorilla Theatre), *Pal Joey* (Washington Jewish Theatre), *The Boyfriend* (Burt Reynolds Theatre), *Singin' in the Rain* (North Carolina Theatre), and the tours of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* with Loni Anderson and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* with Barbara Eden.

This past summer he participated in the workshops of *Night of the Foolish Moon* with Pamela Payton Wright and Mason Adams, and *The Cherry Orchard* with Judd Hirsch. Recent television and film credits include "Oz", "Sex and the City", *Box Marley*, and *Friends & Family*. Brendan graduated magna cum laude from Providence College in 1992, winning the Alembic Award for excellence in creative writing.

Jamie Brink Grant (*Lighting Designer*)

Jamie is delighted to be returning to the Blackfriars for his second production. He received his undergraduate training at Washington University in St. Louis, and after graduating, designed for a number of theater and dance companies, including residencies with New Line Theatre and A-TREK Dance Co. Locally, his work has also been seen at SFGT. He thanks the cast, crew, and staff for welcoming him back, and Sara for her long-distance support.

David Costa-Cabral (*Scenic & Costume Designer*)

David Costa-Cabral joined the Providence College faculty in the fall of 1984 with a production of *Godspell* directed by Barry Marshall. He joined the staff as a one-semester replacement, which developed into a tenure-track faculty position. As a member of the Providence College faculty, David served as Managing Director of the Blackfriars Theatre and currently serves as the Chair of the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film. David received his MFA in Theatrical Design from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, under the tutelage of the Broadway design team of William and Jean Eckert.

David is frequently invited to design in venues off-campus. Most recently, he designed the costumes for *Street Scene* at the Boston Conservatory of Music. A frequent designer at BCM, his credits there include *Brigadoon*, *Follies*, *Side Show*, *The Three Sisters*, and *Bye Bye Birdie!*. David spends his summers as the resident costume designer for the Walnut Hill School in Natick, MA, where he is responsible for the costume design for 7 productions in 6 weeks featuring 70 high school students: a feat of great magnitude. Among his favorite designs for Blackfriars are *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Into the Woods*, and *Macbeth*.

Dept. of Theatre, Dance, & Film Faculty & Staff

**David Costa-Cabral.....Theatre Dept. Chair,
Associate Professor**

Mary G. Farrell.....Associate Professor

**John Garrity.....Managing Director,
Associate Professor**

Fr. Kenneth Gumbert, O.P.....Associate Professor

Wendy Oliver.....Associate Professor

Fr. Matthew Powell, O.P.....Associate Professor

**David Sullivan.....(Acting) Managing Director,
Adjunct Instructor**

Kate Ambrosini.....Special Lecturer

George Marks.....Technical Director

Sue Spencer.....Costume Shop Supervisor

Cheryl Barry.....Theatre Department Secretary

John Vieira.....Blackfriars Theatre Production Assistant

Friar's Cell Board

President: Michael Propster '03
Public Relations: Courtney Cullinan '02
Secretary: Peter Brodbeck '02
Treasurer: Sarah Orr '03

Upcoming Events
Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film

Fall Dance Concert

'64 Hall

December 1-2

***How to Succeed in Business
Without Really Trying***

A Friars Cell- Concert Production

December 7-9

Never the Sinner

By John Logan

February 22-24

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

by Bertolt Brecht

April 18-21

Blackfriars Dance Concert

Choreography by Wendy Oliver & Guest Artists

April 27-28



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The HRH Foundation

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KC/ACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KC/ACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2002.

Last year more than 1,200 productions and 198,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KC/ACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

