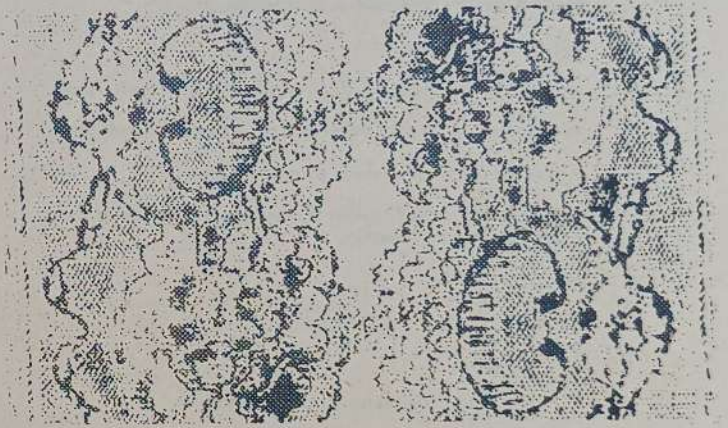




THE BY WILLIAM
WYGHERLEY
GOUNTRY PRESENTED TO YOU BY
WIFE THE NAIROBI
GITY PLAYERS



for the nairobi city players

stage manager mister ronald gray

assistant stage managers mister jeremy hurles and
mistress anne keighley-bell

property mistresses mistresses elizabeth garlick and
marilyn conway-shepherd

costumes designed and executed by mistress mary epsom

set designs mistress meryll evans

scenic artists mister hale tolleth, and mistresses
meryll evans and penny kirton

scenic assistants mister john robinson, mister william
whiston, mister peter chiarletti and
mistresses celia bridle, anthea kirton
and pam nelson

set construction mister fred veal
assisted by mister jeremy hurles,
mister ken latham, mister bill gibbs,
mister george o'hare, mister john
thompson, mister peter campbell,
mister ted hughes

backcloth painted by mister hale tolleth

portraits painted by mistress jill waldock

backstage team mister john thompson, mister george
o'hare, mister john robinson, mister
harry mayhew, mister adrian larkin,
mister nigel bramich, mister william
whiston, mister peter campbell, mister
ted hughes and mistresses penny
kirton, anne james and elizabeth
davie,

LONDON, 1675

SYNOPSIS OF THE SCENES

ACT I

Scene I. Horner's lodging.

ACT II

Scene I. A room in Pinchwife's house.

ACT III

Scene I. A room in Pinchwife's house.

Scene II. The New Exchange.

ACT IV

Scene I. Pinchwife's house in the morning.
Scene II. A Bedchamber in Pinchwife's house.
Scene III. Horner's lodging.

ACT V

Scene I. A room in Pinchwife's house.
Scene II. Horner's lodging.
Scene III. The Piazza of Covent Garden.
Scene IV. Horner's lodging.

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| mr. horner | mister alan simmance |
| mr. dorilant | mister robert butler |
| mr. sparkish | mister peter walker |
| major domo | mister jeremy hurles |
| mrs. margery pinchwife | mistress phina simmance |
| lady fidget | mistress dorothy gibbs |
| mrs. squeamish | mistress rosemary gardner |
| lucy (alitheas maid) | mistress pamela bull |

characters

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| mr. harcourt | mister frank horley |
| mr. pinchwife | mister edward scott |
| sir jasper fidget | mister kingston-davies |
| a quack | mister robert woodford |
| alitheas (sister of pinchwife) | mistress petal erskine |
| mrs. dainty fidget (sister of sir jasper) | mistress nancy roe |
| old lady squeamish | mistress june parker |
| parson | mister walter plinge |

servants and waiting maids

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| miss wendy owens | miss gina cox |
| miss louise bosch | miss carol nichol |
| miss susan thomas | miss chantal de chazal |
| miss karen christie | miss sarah james |
| miss laura marans | miss vivienne cresswell |

intervals

there will be an interval of 20 minutes after act III

the play directed by mister robert young

carriages at a quarter to twelve after the late performances, and at a quarter to nine after the early performances

the nairobi city players wish to acknowledge with thanks the valuable assistance given in the production of "the country wife" by the following:

mistress jennifer butler for the arrangement of the dance assisted by mistress anne price.

the mcmillan library for the loan of period furniture.

prison industries for the making and supply of 17th century footwear.

costume tailoring by messrs. p. d. bhadressa, nairobi.

wigs by nathanwigs of london.

costume materials supplied by chunilal bharmal and sons, nairobi.

poster design and art work for the programme by mister frank horley.

miss nancy roe for programme advertising sales.

the headmaster of the westlands primary school for the use of school premises for rehearsals.

for the nairobi city players

business manager mister bryan epsom

advertising and programme mister leonard pierrepoint

production secretary mistress christine ainsworth

for the kenya national theatre

manager colonel g. t. stoneham

theatre assistant mister ewart norris, m.b.e.

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THE COUNTRY WIFE



L. to R. Nancy Roe as Mrs. Dainty Fidget, Dorothy Gibbs as Lady Fidget and Rosemary Gardner as Mrs. Squeamish.

Nancy Roe is a well-known local actress who is regularly seen on V.O.K. Television. She is the current holder of the Best Actress Award presented at the annual Drama Festival. She won this for her brilliant portrayal of the girl in the City Players production of "The Valiant". She has appeared with great success in many previous productions of The Nairobi City Players.

Dorothy Gibbs is a former professional actress who has previously appeared locally only in the City Players production of "Oklahoma".

Rosemary Gardner has been associated with the Nairobi City Players since their formation in 1956. She has scored outstanding successes in "Ring Round the Moon", "See How They Run", "The Proposal", "Romanoff and Juliet" and "The Paragon".

The Nairobi City Players

MOST regular Nairobi theatregoers will know something of the work of the Nairobi City Players and have, we sincerely hope, enjoyed the various productions we have presented regularly at the Kenya National Theatre since 1956. Whilst we have offered a wide range of theatre in the past, including five full-scale musicals, this is the first occasion on which we have turned to Restoration Theatre, an omission we now rectify with this production of William Wycherley's "The Country Wife", one of the wittiest of Restoration classics.

It is said of "The Country Wife" that it would certainly not pass the censor if submitted as a new play in this day and age, but bawdy as it is, it is exceedingly well contrived and, in the view of many, is a forerunner of farce as we know it today.

The most recent revival of Wycherley's famous comedy was at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1957 when Joan Plowright (now the wife of Sir Lawrence Olivier) scored a great success as the roughish "Country Wife", a part which was a favourite with so many of the great comic actresses of the past.

The Nairobi City Players have never been afraid to present controversial plays and this, our 37th production, is no exception. Theatregoers will remember Robert Beaumont's daring production of "Six Characters in Search of an Author", a play with no sets, no costumes, no programmes and (some undiscerning people said) no plot. Also, Mr. Beaumont's direction of a mixed African, European and Asian cast in Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra", probably the first full-scale multi-racial production on the Nairobi Stage.

It is interesting to look back on some of the highlights in the history of the Nairobi City Players. Of recent years we have achieved a considerable following for our musical productions but this is by no means our only field of interest. Our first production, Peter Ustinov's "The Love of Four Colonels", was acclaimed by all the critics and brought

forth comment by the Editor of the *East African Standard* who wrote a leading article welcoming the emergence of a new group. This was followed in succession by "The Man Who Came to Dinner" and Jean Anouilh's delightful fantasy "Ring Round the Moon".

A number of well-known theatre personalities have directed productions for the group. Leonard Pierpoint, our Chairman, was responsible for some memorable straight plays including "The Man Who Came to Dinner", "Carrington V.C.", "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial" and, more recently "Ross", in which Donald Whittle made a notable appearance as Lawrence of Arabia.

Robert Beaumont worked regularly with the group at one time and, in addition to the plays mentioned above, was also responsible for our first musical, Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The King and I" which broke all existing records at the National Theatre, with Peter Pearce and Dulcie Atwell in the two main roles.

Eric Royston Prince made an invaluable contribution to many City Player's presentations and will be best remembered for his delightful production of "Annie Get Your Gun" with Jack Lockhart as Musical Director. He was subsequently Musical Director himself for "South Pacific" and "Irma La Douce".

Of recent years Robert Young has become associated with the group. At very short notice he took over the production of "Irma La Douce" when Robert Beaumont became ill, and worked miracles in the limited time available. Then came "South Pacific", in which his wife Petal Eakins, played the lead. In December of last year he directed "Oklahoma" with outstanding success.

"The Country Wife" is Mr. Young's first "straight" production for the City Players, and provides him with considerable scope to display his imaginative talents as a producer. For his is the task of bringing the London of 1670 to life and to make Wycherley's drolls and buffoons dance for your entertainment.

The Country Wife

THE rakish ladies of the Restoration did not care what mischief they engaged upon, so long as their good name — their "honour" as they called it — remained unsullied. Neither anxious husbands in their homes, nor the gossips of the censorious world outside, were likely to trouble their heads if the ladies entertained effeminate fops over the teacups. Where there was no threat against "honour", there was no danger — and no demur.

Horner, Wycherley's gallant in the play, hits on the brilliant idea of persuading a doctor to report him (falsely) throughout the town as impotent.

Husbands scurry to thrust him on their wives. "If I can but abuse the husbands, I'll soon disabuse the wives."

Horner is soon at loose with them over the teacups, and it is not long before Lady Fidget is able to report that he has had her "toiling and moiling over the prettiest piece of china in the next room."

Set against the free-roving Horner is a 'reformed rake' of forty-nine, Pinchwife. He, that "knew the town so much, and women so well" has, with "grave circumspection", married a country wife. Under the happy delusion that, "he that marries is a fool; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool", he thinks to keep her to himself by proclaiming her as ugly, ill-bred, foolish and innocent.

Margery Pinchwife, the country girl, has her own reasons for coming to town, and we are soon made aware that blood races as fast for the simple as for the sophisticated.

Her husband, a growing slave to jealousy, forces her to dress as a man, thinking with ironic naïveté thus to keep her safe from Horner's growing interest and attention.

Few things in this play are better than the comedy which Wycherley achieves by contrasting Margery's simple blunt candour with the elegant artificialities of the town ladies . . . but they all go the same way.

The play ends with a cuckold's dance.

William Wycherley

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY (1640 — 1714) the Restoration dramatist was for many years in high favour at Court. His genius for comedy writing was remarkable and readily adapted itself to the Restoration atmosphere; thus while he provided wit and intrigue, plot and characterisation in plenty, and of great merit, the taint of the time was over it all.

His plays include "The Country Wife", "Love in a Wood", and "The Plain Dealer". He lived recklessly, was generally in pecuniary difficulties, and marrying the Dowager Countess of Drogheda late in life, placed

himself in bondage to a highly jealous woman.

"The Country Wife" was his most successful play. The hero, by pretending to be a eunuch, secures admission to privacies which enable him to seduce women; one is expected to admire his character and behaviour, but it is doubtful if in any other age, before or after, would such a plot motive have appealed to any English audience.

(English Social History,
G. M. Trevelyan.)



Edward Scott, who is seen as Mr. Pitchwife at top left is a former professional actor who had considerable experience in all forms of theatre, particularly in entertaining troops during the last World War. He has appeared in a number of City Players productions, notably the Japanese soldier in "The Long and the Short and the Tall" during which he travelled down from

Nyeri every day for rehearsal and for the performances. He has also appeared in "See How They Run" and "Annie Get Your Gun".

June Parker who is seen at top right appears as Old Lady Squemish is a local schoolteacher who has given much time to the local theatre. She has previously been seen in the City Players production of "South Pacific".

Frank Horley at left appears as Mr. Harcourt, a 17th century gallant. Frank has assisted in several recent City Players productions, including "Oklahoma" and "The Vaillant". In addition to his acting, Frank has assisted valuably with his clever and artistic designs for our posters, both for "Oklahoma" and "The Country Wife". He also contributes the art work for the programme. He is employed as a commercial artist with a well-known local firm of advertising agents.

ROBERT YOUNG

Robert Young who directs this production of "The Country Wife", was trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art from 1955 to 1957. His professional experience has included The Rapier Players at Bristol and the Old Vic Company in 1956/59 with whom he toured in America and Yugoslavia. From 1959 to 1962 he worked mainly as an actor on T.V. and films, with some appearances in provincial repertory. He was a member of the Donovan Maule Company in 1962.

At right is Miss Nancy Roe as Mrs. Dainty Fidget, sister of Sir Jasper Fidget.

Mr. Young has already assisted the Nairobi City Players with his outstanding productions of "Irma La Douce", "South Pacific" and "Oklahoma".



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