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Director  
Simon J. Smithers

A Play written by  
John B. Keane

1996



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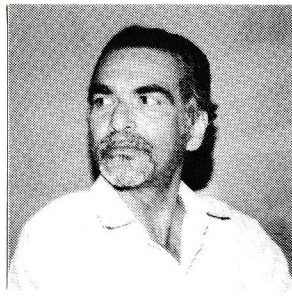
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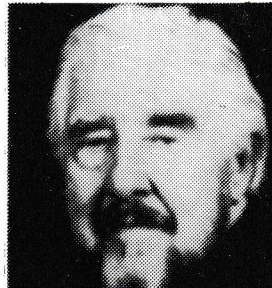
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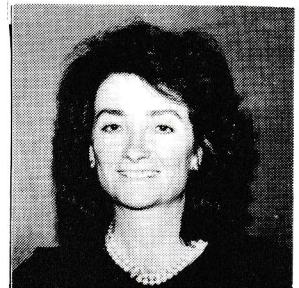
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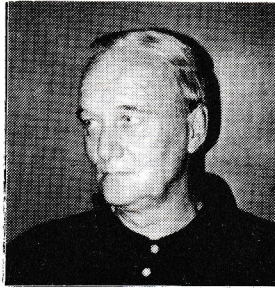
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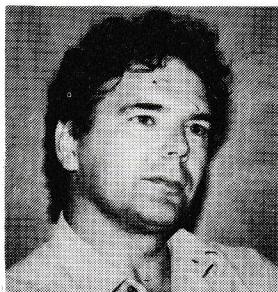
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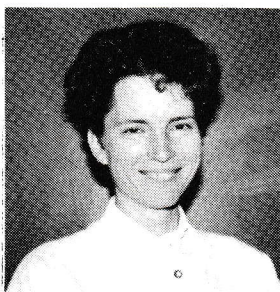
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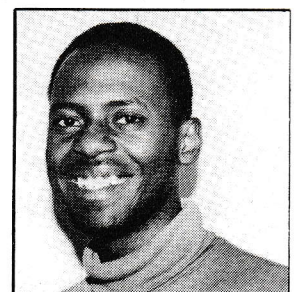
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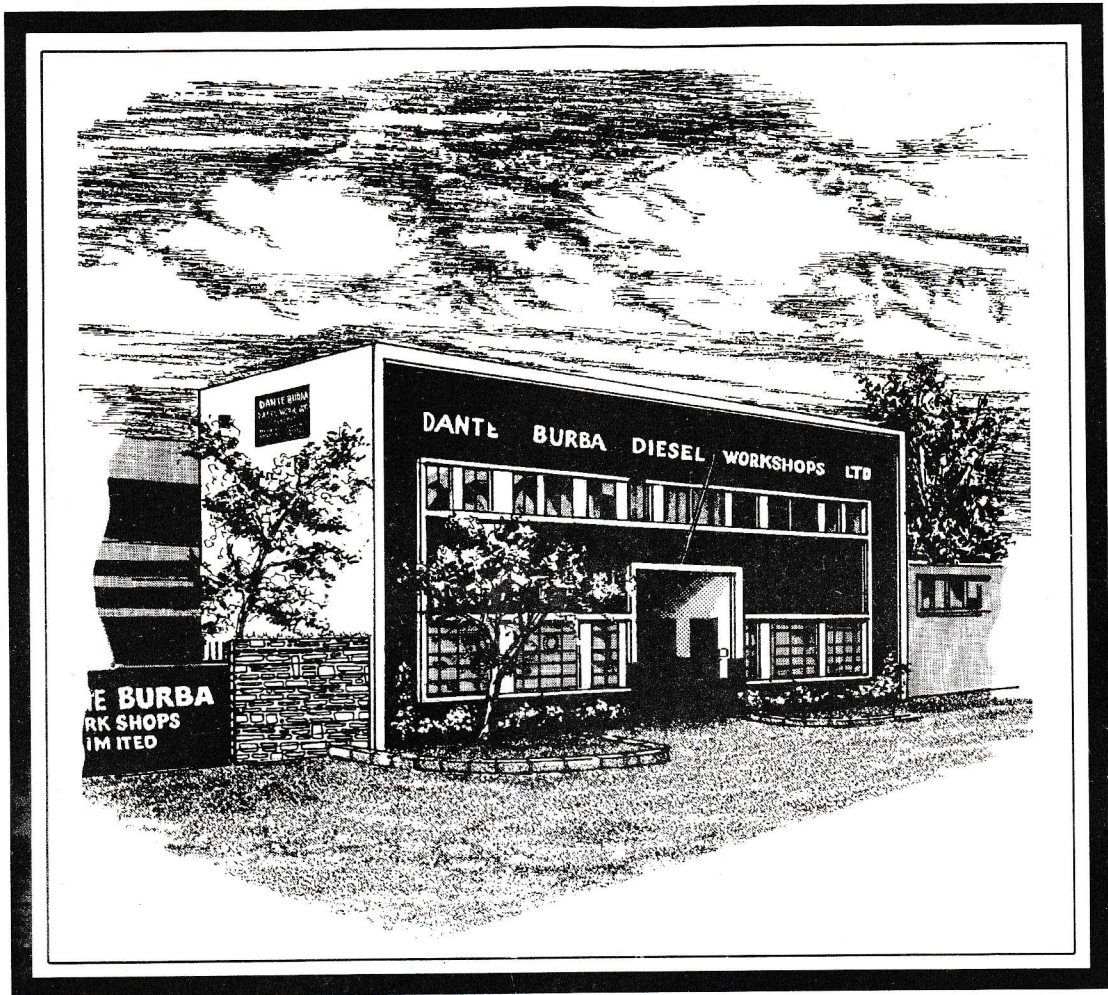
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## FORWARD



FRANCES CATTERMOLLE  
Chairman

Welcome to our second production of an Irish play "Big Maggie". The play we have chosen is a very powerful piece and with the extremely talented Simon Smithers who has directed the play for us, we hope that you the audience can appreciate the powers of change that took place not only in Ireland but every where during the period that the play was set. The cast who play the piece has been totally committed to ensuring that this production will be of the highest standards of theatre.

This production marks the first of the year for Nairobi City Players who are celebrating their 40th Anniversary and we hope that as with this play we will see you at our future productions. It is after all the audiences over the last 40 years that have allowed the NCP to continue to produce the musicals, comedy's, dramas and travelling shows that they have staged and to the standards that have been achieved.

May I also take the opportunity to thank the Sponsors, Director, Cast, Crew and everyone else "behind the scenes" for all their tireless efforts in producing this wonderful play.

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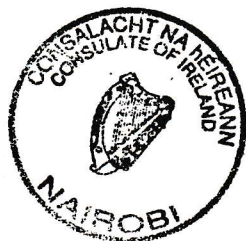
## CONSULATE OF IRELAND

*Two years have past - "Dancing at Lughnasa" encouraged the Nairobi City players to try again. They chose "Big Maggie" by John B. Keane, better known as the author of "The Field".*

*We congratulate their confidence in staging Irish theatre in Kenya, a country with little more than two thousand Irish Citizens. "Big Maggie" is representative of rural life as it existed in many parts of Ireland over thirty years ago and indeed, is still to be found in some areas.*

*Although its' Irishness is undisguised, many of those with rural backgrounds will recognise the attachment of country folk to their land and the extent to which they will go to "hold on".*

*We hope the interpretation by Director, Simon Smithers, will give great pleasure to Nairobi audiences. It is appropriate this year, that the play is all about the emergence of woman from her traditional role in male dominated communities.*



**J.T. O'BRIEN**

**HONORARY CONSUL OF IRELAND**

**7TH MARCH, 1996 - NAIROBI**

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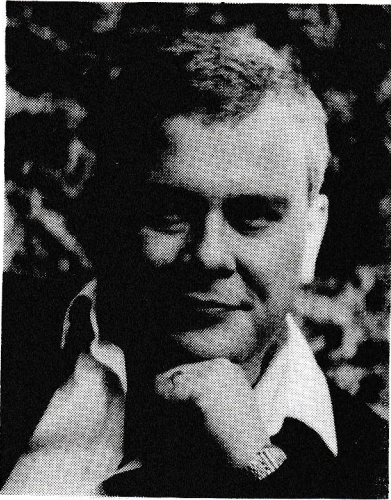
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## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



SIMON SMITHERS

"At the beginning and at the end, things often look the same" (Fintan O'Toole) "Big Maggie" is just one of the many bestsellers by John B. Keane, one of Ireland's most recognised playwrights. "The Field", "The Man from Clare", "Letters of an Irish Publican" and "Sive" being just some of his many other successes.

Time, place and the asking may be varied but as indeed Keane needed to explore changes from one end of an ever-changing Ireland, so too must we seek out a solution in this our ever-changing world.

In "Maggie" we see a woman who is trapped between an old world and the new. Seeking self-awareness after the death of her persecuting husband, her tragic plight leads her to find a need to escape from the set of social values that accompanied her upbringing and strive towards that belief that she is acting for the best.



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KSHS 6,000 SINGLE (SUPERIOR ROOM)  
CHILDREN 2 - 20 SHARING KSHS 1,000

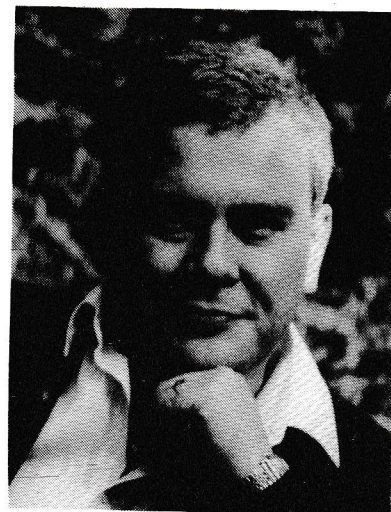
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CHILDREN 1 - 12 KSHS 6,350

## A PROFILE

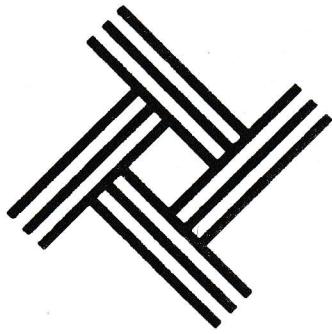


SIMON SMITHERS  
Director

Simon J. Smithers showed an early interest in theatre watching his mother perform Gilbert and Sullivan with a local Operatic Company. After a varied and active association with the amateur stage Simon went on to train professionally at the Guildford School of Acting. His professional debut came shortly after at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Ray Cooney's "Two Into One" which premiered with the author. Simon considers himself a character actor and his many roles include: Bamforth; "The Long and the Short and the Tall", Captain Corcoran; "H.M.S. Pinafore", Hastings; "Richard III", Will Parker; "Oklahoma", Sir Hugh Devon; "Bitter Sweet" Captain Hook; "Peter Pan", Danny; "Night must fall" commended by Emlyn Williams himself.

Moving to theatre management, Simon retired from his position four years ago to concentrate upon Directing. Since 1991 Simon has directed: "Aladdin", "Oklahoma", "Carousel", "The Boyfriend", "Anything goes". Simon is delighted to be directing for Nairobi City Players for the first time, and looks forward to a continued relationship later this year, and indeed in the years to come.

Upon his return to the U.K. in July, Simon begins work on "Iolauthe", "Move over Mrs Markham" and an original works to be premiered in November 1997 working closely with the author. Whilst here Simon has been invited to play Gary in "Noises Off" at the Professional Centre with Phoenix Players in April, which he hopes you will enjoy as much as this, his first project with NCP .

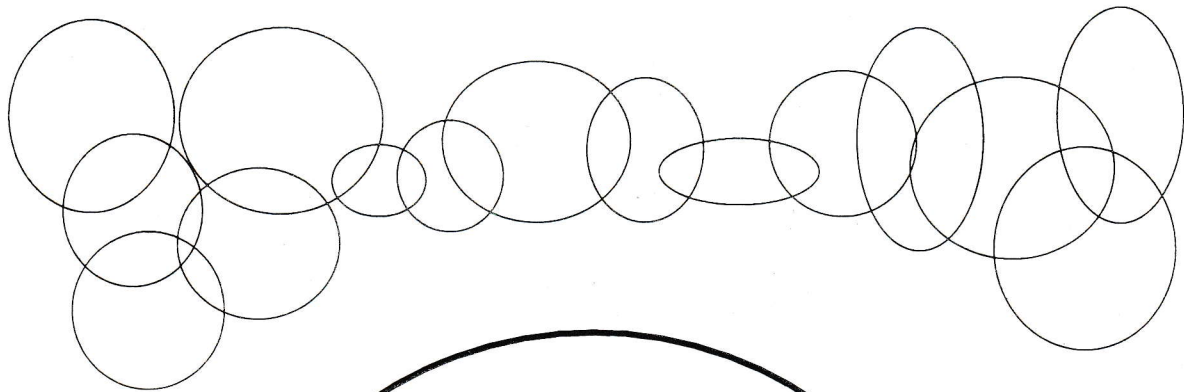


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*John B. Keane  
37 William St.  
Listowel  
Co. Kerry  
Ireland*

*Congratulations to all involved with the African Premiere of "Big Maggie".  
May the frost never afflict your spuds, may your she goats never dread the  
puck and should you come into possession of mare donkeys may they be in  
foal.*

*The real Maggie Polpin was made up of many matriarchs who refused to  
bend their heads and you could say that Maggie was one of the begetters  
of Women's Lib. I was reared and loved by her likes and you might say that  
I understood the Maggies of Ireland and what they endured when I was a  
boy and a young man.*

*My best wishes to all of you tonight.*

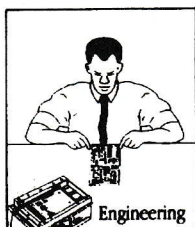
*Enjoy yourselves*

*Sincerely*

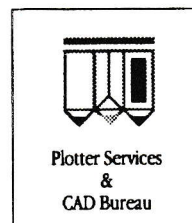
*John B.*

*P.S. I feel greatly honoured that the Nairobi City Players are performing  
"Big Maggie"*

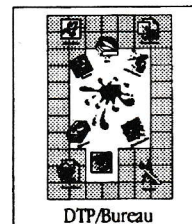
*John B.*



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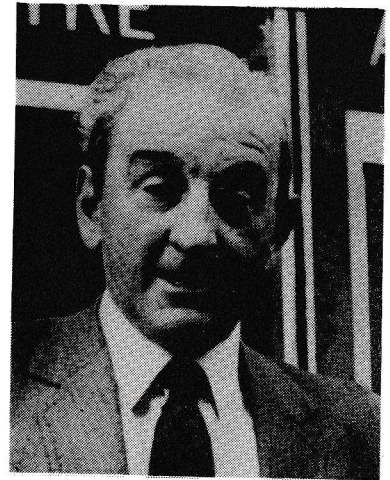
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JOHN B. KEANE

John B. Keane, one of Ireland's most prolific writers was born in Listowel, County Kerry on 21 July, 1928. He has written several full-length plays which include MANY YOUNG MEN OF TWENTY, SHARON'S GRAVE, BIG MAGGIE, THE YEAR OF THE HIKER, THE CHASTITUTE, SIVE, THE FIELD and THE MAN FROM CLARE. He has also written five books of essays, two of short stories and eight books of his best-selling LETTERS, adapted for RTE in the series TALES OF KILNAVARNA. The Abbey productions include HUT FORTY TWO (1962), THE FIELD (1980/1987), THE MAN FROM CLARE (1963/1984) AND SIVE (1985/1986), His first novel THE BODHRAN MAKERS, an Irish best-seller, was published by Vanguard Press, New York in the spring of 1988. In 1987 he received a Special Award for his enduring place in Irish life and letters from the Sunday Independent/Irish Life Arts Awards as well as the Sunday Tribune Arts Award for Literature. More recently he has been chosen as the recipient of the Irish American Fund Award for Literature 1988.

# BIG EYES

By  
John B. Keane

Maggie Polpin	MARGARET CURRAN
Katie Polpin	MARIA CUNNINGHAM
Gert Polpin	MINNIE WALLINGTON
Maurice Polpin	PETER WALSH
Mick Polpin	JON FREEMAN
Teddy Heelin	JOE McDONOUGH
Byrne	JOE O'BRIEN
Mary Madden	TRACY VAUGHAN
Mrs. Madden	JENNY DUNNET
Old Woman	JAN COHEN
Old Man	FERGUS DIGNAN
Priest	ROY LAWERENCE

## The Action

### Act I

Scene I:	A Village Graveyard; early 1960's
Scene II:	The Polpin Store; Later that night
Scene III:	The Polpin Store; Noon, Three months later

### Act II

Scene I:	The Polpin Store; Later that night
Scene II:	The Polpin Store; Evening, a year on.
Scene III:	The Polpin Store; That night

---

*There will be one interval of fifteen minutes.*

---



Director:	<b>SIMON J. SMITHERS</b>
Business Manager	<b>RAJ THAKAR</b>
Stage Director	<b>FRANCES CATTERMOLLE</b>
Stage Managers	<b>ROB DUGAND INGRID DUGAND</b>
Stage Crew	<b>ROB DUGAND INGRID DUGAND DANIEL MBUGUA TAMMY DAWSON</b>
Lighting	<b>NEIL DAVIDSON JASON MWAI</b>
Properties	<b>INGRID DUGAND TAMMY DAWSON</b>
Set Design	<b>CHRIS MECK</b>
Set Construction	<b>CHRIS MECK BRENDA GOODMAN</b>
Sound	<b>JON FREEMAN</b>
Costumes	<b>LESLEY MULLAN</b>
Programme	<b>RAJ THAKAR</b>
Press Advertising and Publicity	<b>JENNY DUNNET CLEO O'REILLY RAJ THAKAR</b>
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Front of House Manager	<b>JACQUI MASON</b>
Production Secretary	<b>GAIL LANGTON</b>



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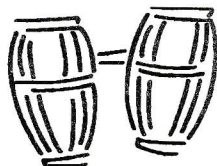
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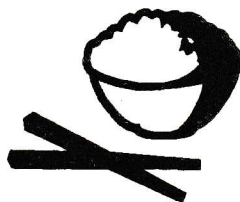
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## THE CAST



MARGARET CURRAN  
"Maggie Polpin"

Margaret Curran was born in Waterford , Ireland and is a speech and Drama teacher . She graduated from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and the Leinster School of Music and Drama , Dublin and also studied under James Dodding , a Producer / Director of Drama at the BBC.

Involved in theatre in Ireland for over 20 years , Margaret was a member of a number of Drama Groups in Waterford and Dublin and acted in a multitude of plays including " The Glass Menagerie " , " Kennedy 's Children " , " The Factory Girls " , " Lovers " , and John B Keane's " The Field " . This will be her second time to play " Big Maggie " as she also played the part in Dublin in 1990.

In 1992 , she was the sole narrator of several ancient Irish fables including the stories of Cuchullain , Setanta et al , on a set of six children's audio tapes which were marketed and sold throughout Ireland that year.

Arriving in Kenya almost 3 years ago , she quickly got involved in theatre and was first seen on stage as " Kate " in " Dancing at Lughnasa " , the first NCP production of an Irish play. Nairobi audiences will also have seen her more recently with the Phoenix Players in " Black Comedy" and "The Bed Before Yesterday".

A committee member of NCP, Margaret was Assistant Director for NCP's most recent panto "Little Red Riding Hood". This maybe the last time audiences will see Margaret on stage in Nairobi as she is due to return to Ireland later this year.



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## THE CAST



MARIA CUNNINGHAM  
"Katie Polpin"

Maria arrived in Nairobi on 13 February 1987, from Sligo, in the North-West of Ireland. Three months later she appeared in her first performance with Nairobi City Players - "Old Time Music Hall" where she displayed her tap dancing ability and introduced Irish dancing to audiences in Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret and around Nairobi.

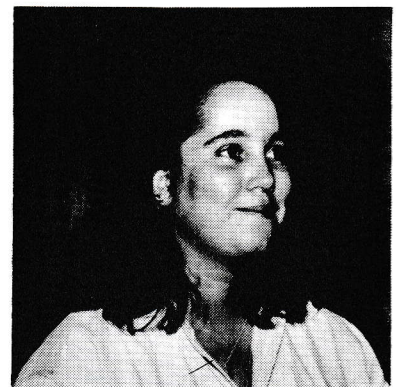
Following her performances as a member of the chorus in the musical "How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying" and in the pantomime "Dick Whittington" she proceeded to play her first speaking part as "Dorothy" in "Stepping Out", and rattled the floor boards in the tap dancing numbers. Her most recent appearance with NCP was as "Chris" in "Dancing at Lughnasa" in which she choreographed the Irish dance sequence and even danced on the kitchen table! Maria was last seen by Nairobi audiences in the Norfolk Cabaret "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" which was produced by her husband, Gerry.

When she is not performing Maria is kept busy with her three children - Grace (13), Stephen (12) and Clare (7), and the rest of the time she is an Administrative Assistant in UNEP.

Minnie has lived in Kenya all her life. She attended St. Andrews Turi Prep School and then onto St. Michaels Burton Park in England. Professional qualifications (after the ever useful Secretarial course at Marlborough College Oxford) include Gold medals in verse and prose and acting followed by an Acting Diploma from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. She is currently teaching Speech and Drama in Nairobi for Drama Development. The age range of her students is five to eighteen-and she loves them all!.

Performances of note so far are "An Ideal Husband", "Oliver", "An Inspector Calls", "Daisy Pulls it Off", "Ali Baba & The Forty Thieves", and "Jack & The Beanstalk".

She has also written and directed a play called "Inconsistency". She was Assistant Director for "A Taste Of Honey". Her hobbies include Scuba Diving & Horse riding .



MINNIE WALLINGTON  
"Gert Polpin"

## THE CAST



PETER WALSH  
"Maurice Polpin"

Having always had a rather small part for most of his life, it came as something of a surprise when Peter was offered such a loud one in "Big Maggie" Encouraged by his wife to take it, this is his first ever production and as the time draws nearer to opening night, the more he curses Mags and Maria. He never had the slightest notion of acting in his life (although teaching must be the greatest act he has ever performed specially as he has got away with it for so long), until he was called during a kiddies Christmas party when he can't even remember saying yes. All in all though its been a mighty crack and just watch out Broadway.

Up Arsenal ..... Eire Abu.

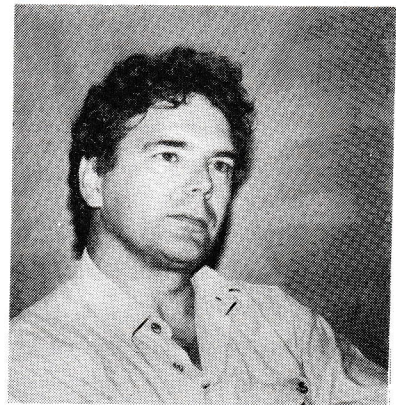
Jon has lived in Kenya for the last four and a half years where he works at the German School. He has worked on many productions for the German community and also for other theatre groups during this time, not only performing on stage but frequently designing and constructing sets, sound, lighting and also doubling as a musician when required.

Jon has also worked as an actor in various films which include "For a Few Dollars More", "The Indiana Jones Chronicles" and "The Ascent".

His stage credits include: "The Three Penny Opera", "Fiddler on the Roof", "Andorra". "West Side Story", "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Cabaret Magic". His last performance for N.C.P. was in "A Taste of Honey".

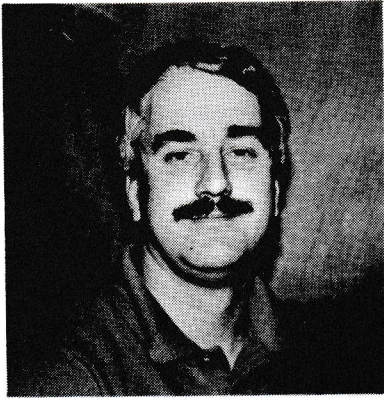
He was instrumental in setting up the technical equipment for "The Messiah", "The Last Night of the Proms", "The Boyfriend", and many other N.C.P. productions

He is married to Judith who is a German Drama Teacher. In his spare time he plays in a local Rock Band called "Foreign Affaires"



JON FREEMAN  
"Mick Polpin"

## THE CAST

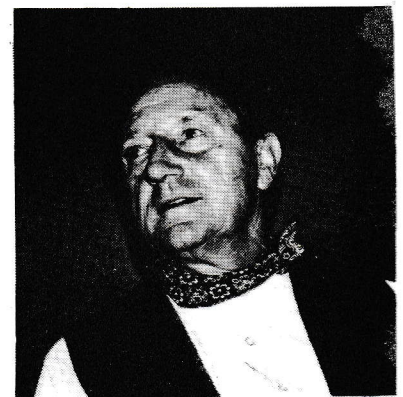


JOE McDONOUGH  
"Teddy Heelin:"

Joe joins this NCP production as a complete novice having never trod or trampled the boards previously. This role offers a complete change of pastime, with many challenges never before experienced. Joe is an Army Warrant Officer based here in Kenya with his family. He is currently serving with the British Army Training Liaison staff located here in Nairobi.

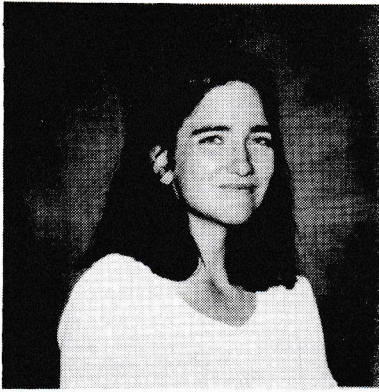
Joe's career started at the age of five in musicals as lead tambourine in the kindergarten school production of "Goldilocks". Such was the critics acclaim that he was signed up for school drama productions of Shakespeare and Gilbert and Sullivan - ten years later! After leaving University he tried the London Stage not quite the West End - West Hampstead players in the "Crucible". He did not make that either as he was transferred to Kenya only one week after opening. The stage was forsaken for 'Bush' life until years later, he was persuaded by his wife to join her in the Ruiru Amateur Dramatic Society. There followed a series of revues as actor, director & producer. So much fun was had by all that he returned to amateur acting.

Nairobi audiences have seen him in Phoenix Player's production of "Roar like a Dove" and with the Nairobi City Players in "The Business of Murder", "Twelve Angry Men", "Robinson Crusoe" and "Dancing at Lughnasa".



JOE O'BRIEN  
"Byrne"

## THE CAST



TRACY VAUGHAN  
"Mary Madden"

Before coming to Kenya Tracy travelled quite widely doing an assortment of different jobs, but now teaches drama in schools around Nairobi, as well as spending time singing with "The Racket" - a rock band which plays around Nairobi, running with the Hash and enjoying Africa.

Tracy's previous performances include "The Rose Tattoo", "Suddenly Last Summer", "Fen", "Winter's Tale" among others at both University and in the London and Bristol fringe. She has also toured the UK and Germany with Children's Theatre Companies.

Here in Kenya, Tracy has taken part in "The Bed Before Yesterday" for Phoenix Players and for Nairobi City Players, this is her first performance.

Jenny Dunnet comes from a theatrical family in Dorset, England. She has appeared in many productions in the UK, including Principal Girl and Principal Boy in Pantomimes. One of her most successful productions in England was as "Judith Bliss" in Noel Coward's "Hay Fever".

While in Cairo her productions in dinner-theatre included "Billy Liar", "Tomb with a View", "Someone Waiting", "Absurd Person Singular", "The Wizard of Oz" and many revues.

Now back in Nairobi after twenty three years, she has appeared in "Half way up the Tree" for Phoenix Players and "Hedda Gabler", "Fiddler on the Roof", "Habeas Corpus", "Cabaret Magic", "Dancing at Lughnasa", "A Taste of Honey" and in Pantomimes for Nairobi City Players.



JENNY DUNNET  
"Mrs Madden"



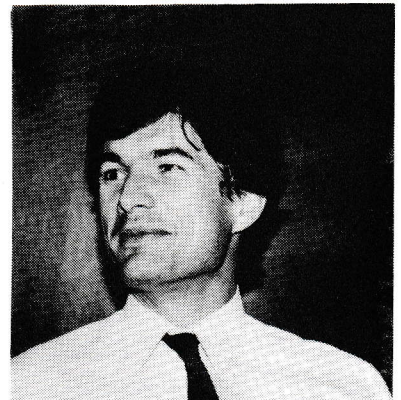
## THE CAST



JAN COHEN  
"Old Woman"

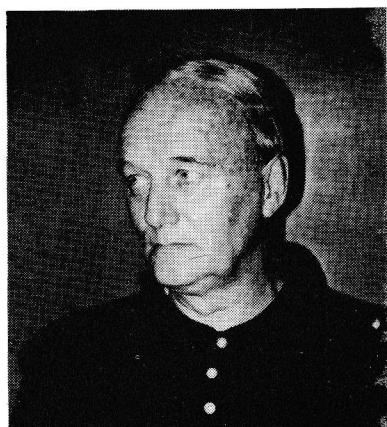
Jan Cohen has been involved in theatre all her life, for the last 22 years in productions around the world. Favourite acting roles were Miss Adelaide in "Guys and Dolls", Hecuba in "Trojan Women", Madame Arcati in "Blithe Spirit" and Jessie in "Night Mother". Directing "Tamara" (the play you experience from room to room) was also a high point. If you ask her about it she would be happy to bore you on that subject! A newcomer to Nairobi, Jan has appeared in one other show here - The Phoenix Theatre Production of "84, Charing Cross Road".

Fergus has been living in Nairobi for a number of years and has been involved on the periphery of some past productions. This is his first stage appearance.



FERGUS DIGNAN  
"Old Man"

## THE CAST



ROY LAWRENCE  
"Priest"

From an early age in Manchester, England, Roy took an interest in Theatre assisting back-stage and playing "bit"parts whenever possible. He came to East Africa as a young man where he worked in Kampala, Dar-es-Salaam and finally Nairobi. He has produced, choreographed and taken part in several successful productions including "Kiss Me Kate", "The Rivals", "Guys and Dolls". "A Funny Thing.....", "Wait Until Dark" and "Man For All Seasons". His pantomimes include "Sinbad the Sailor", "Cinderella", "Aladdin", "Dick Whittington", "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Little Red Riding Hood". The latter three he directed, and in each one had to step in to play one of the leading roles.

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*Welcome to*  
*"Big Maggie"*

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**NAIROBI CITY PLAYERS  
PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS**

- 1956 "The Love of Four Colonels"
- 1957 "The Man Who Came to Dinner"  
"Ring Round The Moon"  
"Payment Deferred"  
"Will any Gentleman"
- 1958 "Romanoff and Juliet"  
"Two Gentlemen of Soho"  
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1958)  
Carrington V.C."  
"Will any Gentleman"
- 1959 "Rope"  
"You Can't Take It With You"  
"The Paragon"
- 1960 "The Diary of Anne Frank"  
"Six Characters In Search of An Author"  
"A Farrago" Comprising  
    "The Proposal"  
    "Uneasy Lies The Head....."  
    "Red Peppers"
- 1961 "The King and I"  
"The Caine Mutiny Court Martial"  
"The House by the Lake"  
"The Bespoke Overcoat"  
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1961)  
"The Hole"  
(Drama Festival Entry, 1961)
- 1962 "Ceasar and Cleopatra"  
"The Long and the Short and the Tall"  
"Men Without Shadows"  
(Placed Third Winning Entry Kenya Drama  
Festival, 1962)  
"No Fixed Abode"  
(Drama Festival Entry, 1962)
- 1963 "See How They Run"  
"Annie Get Your Gun"  
"Irma La Douce"  
Excerpts from "St. Joan"  
(Placed Second Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1963)  
"The Resounding Tinkle"  
(Drama Festival Entry, 1963)
- 1964 "South Pacific"  
"Rose"  
"The Valiant"  
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival 1964)  
"The Scar"  
(Placed Third Winning Entry Kenya Drama  
Festival, 1964 and also Best Original Play)  
"Oklahoma!"

**NAIROBI CITY PLAYERS  
PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS**

- 1965 "The Country wife"  
"The Duchess of Malfi"  
(Placed joint Third Winning Entry Kenya  
Drama Festival, 1965)  
"The Wizard of Oz"
- 1966 "A View From The Bridge"  
"The Man Who Came To Dinner"
- 1967 "Twelve Angry Men"  
A Double Bill of -  
    "Lunch Hour"  
    "Our Way Pendulum"  
"The Sound Of Music"
- 1968 "A Streetcar named Desire"  
"Guys and Dolls"  
"My Fair Lady"
- 1969 "The Affair"  
"How to Succeed in Business Without Really  
Trying"  
"After the Fall"  
"Kiss Me Kate"
- 1970 "The Magistrate"  
A Double Bill of  
    "The Dock Brief"  
    "The Real Inspector Hound"  
"The Lion and the Jewel"  
"The Pyjama Game"
- 1971 "Hadrian VII"  
"Fiddler on the Roof"  
"Kismet"
- 1972 "Under Milk Wood"  
"Salad Days"  
"Saint Joan"  
"Hello, Dolly"
- 1973 "Conduct Unbecoming"  
"Man of La Mancha"  
"A Voyage Round My Father"
- 1974 "Minstrels 1974"  
"Everything in the Garden"  
"Godspell"  
"The Rainmaker"  
"Oliver"
- 1975 "Minstrels 1975"  
"The Masters"  
"Genesis"  
"An Inspector Calls"  
"Another Opening"
- 1976 "Hostile Witness"  
"Cabaret"  
"A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum"

**NAIROBI CITY PLAYERS  
PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS**

- 1977 A "Trio" Season of Productions including -  
    "The Man in the Glass Booth"  
    "The Fantasticks"  
    "The Desperate Hours"  
    "The Merry Widow"  
    "The King & I"
- 1978 "Minstrels 1978"  
    "The Barber of Seville"  
    "Oklahoma!"
- 1979 "The Pirates of Penzance"  
    "Guys and Dolls"
- 1980 "Side by Side by Sondheim"  
    "H.M.S. Pinafore"  
    "Crown Matrimonial"  
    "Toad of Toad Hall"
- 1981 "The Lady of Camellias"  
    "Savoy Knights"
- 1982 "The Fantasticks"  
    "Canterbury Tales"
- 1983 "Happy as a Sandbag"
- 1984 "The Gondoliers"  
    (With Nairobi Music Society)  
    "Cinderella"
- 1985 "Alladin"
- 1986 "Annie"  
    "Jack and the Beanstalk"
- 1987 "Old Time Music Hall"  
    "The Business of Murder"  
    "Mother Goose"
- 1988 "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying"
- 1989 "Godspell"  
    "Twelve Angry Men"  
    "Robinson Crusoe"
- 1990 "Stepping Out"  
    "Sleeping Beauty"
- 1991 "Fiddler on the Roof"  
    "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves"
- 1992 "Habeas Corpus"  
    "West Side Story"  
    "Dick Whittington"
- 1993 "Cabaret Magic"  
    "Cinderella"
- 1994 "Dancing at Lughnasa"  
    "Alladin"
- 1995 "A Taste of Honey"  
    "Little Red Riding Hood"

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nairobi City Players wishes to thank the following for their valuable assistance in staging the production of "Big Maggie"

Concern Worldwide

Gary Cattermole

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And To all those persons and organisations who gave their assistance after the programme went into print.



### Nairobi City Players: 1956 - 1996

*In celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Nairobi City Players, NCP is proud to announce the following presentations in 1996*

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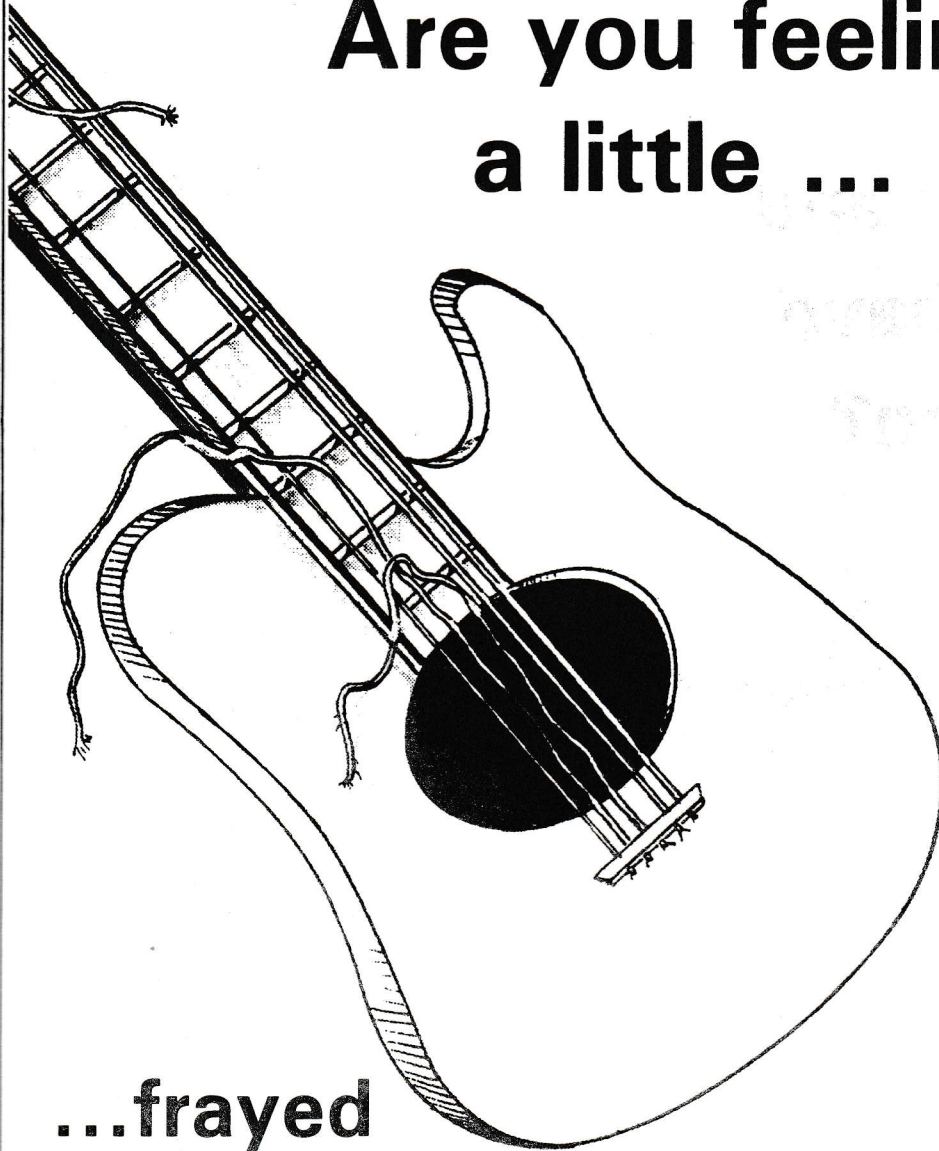
MARCH 1996: "BIG MAGGIE" Written by John B. Keane  
and directed by Simon J. Smithers.

JUNE 1996: "OUTSIDE EDGE" Written by Richard Harris and to be directed by  
Simon J. Smithers.

OCTOBER 1996: "The Review" highlighting NCP's contribution to the amateur theatre over the  
last forty years - to be written by Roy Lawrence and Richard Pitt-Kennedy.

DECEMBER 1996: The Tradition Christmas Pantomime.

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