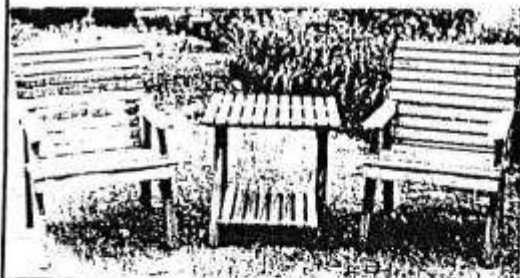


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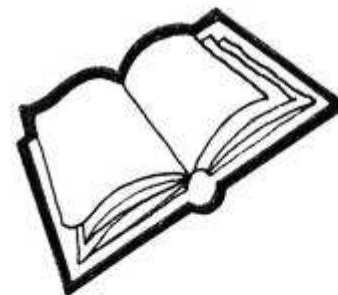
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CHARACTERS

LORD GEORGE BYRON was born in 1788. At birth his right foot was deformed a disability he fought against all his life with violent exercise. Described by a lover as 'Mad, bad, and dangerous to know'. He was the most commercially successful poet of his day earning huge sums from his poems, 'Childe Harold' and 'Don Juan'. To his contemporaries he was both idle and bogey man, a profligate talent with a rakish reputation - he once said "What I earn by my brains I spend by me bollocks". He was a victim of a sexual scandal a love affair with half sister Augusta Leigh, causing him to leave England in 1816. He died in 1824 of a Marsh Fever while organising a brigade in support of the Greek forces in the ultimately successful revolution against Turkish rule.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was born in 1792 and for some with the exception of John Milton he is the greatest poet in the English language after Shakespeare. In 1812 he travelled to Dublin where he published his "Address to the Irish People", a tract against British rule in Ireland. His early poem "Queen Mab", became an inspirational text for early trade unionists. He also wrote "The Mask of Anarchy", written in protest at the Peterloo Massacre and the unfinished allegory "The Triumph of Life" in 1822. He drowned in that same year in a boating accident in Italy at the age of twenty-nine. His body was recovered and burnt on the beach in the presence of a few of his friends, Byron among them.

MARY the daughter of Mary Woolstonecraft and William Godwin - it was a family of radical political thinkers. Mary met Shelley, then married to Harriet in 1813. She was the author of "Frankenstein" a parable attacking some basic beliefs of the romantic movement. After Shelley's death she gradually became estranged from Claire and Shelley's friends. She died in 1851.

CLAIRE was christened Jane but changed her name to Claire because it means light. Her mother married William Godwin, his second wife - she and Mary were therefore sisters by marriage. Her affair with Byron began in April 1816 their child Allegra was born the following year. She never married and died in genteel poverty in Florence 1879.

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Managers	JOHN CZERNIECKI
Production Manager	ROBYN WEIDLICH
Lighting/Design	PETER NICHOL
Sound/Design	JULIE BAILEY, PETER NICHOL, DAVID ANTHONY
Set Construction	CAST & CREW
Wardrobe	MARGARET MCGOWAN, BONNIE BRYANT, BARBARA OLIVER
Programme	LEIGH COLLINS
Publicity & Posters	ROBYN WEIDLICH
Front of House	MEMBERS OF WYONG DRAMA GROUP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CENTRAL COAST PUBLICATIONS, THE ADVOCATE,
FAY CARTER of 2CCC FM, THE SUN WEEKLY,
TUGGERAH LAKES NEWS, CLEAR HAZE RECORDS,
MACRON MUSIC & GREG NEEDHAM DISCOUNTS

'At the end of Howard Brenton's new play, Byron attends the cremation on the Viareggio beach. He delivers an oration: "Burn him. Burn us all. A great big bloody beautiful fire." Radicalism, artistic defiance, an intellectual rage. These are the virtues celebrated in this extraordinary dream play which begins as it ends, on a foreign shore.' Michael Coveney, *Financial Times*

CHRONOLOGY

- March 1812 - "Childe Harold" published and Byron woke to find himself famous.
- June 1813 - Shelley's first major poem "Queen Mab" published.
- January 1814 - Byron marries Annabella Millbank. The marriage lasts one year.
- July 1814 - Shelley and Mary Godwin elope.
- March 1816 - Claire Clairmont and Byron engage in a brief affair in London.
- April 1816 - Byron flees England after a scandalous affair with his half sister Augusta.
- May 1816 - Shelley and Byron meet for the first time on a beach at Lake Geneva.
- September 1816 - Byron ventures to Venice.
- December 1816 - Shelley's first wife Harriet drowns herself in the Serpentine, London.
- December 1816 - Shelley and Mary marry.
- January 1817 - Claire gives birth to Byron's child. The child is christened Allegra.
- June 1817 - Mary completes "Frankenstein".
- August 1818 - Shelley writes "Julian and Madallo", dramatising a debate with Byron on human nature.
I met pale pain my shadow...
- September 1819 - Shelley writes "The Mask of Anarchy" after the "Peterloo Massacre".
- June 1819 - Byron publishes his most famous poem "Don Juan".
- January 1822 - Shelley's daughter Clara dies.
- April 1822 - Byron's daughter, Allegra dies.
- July 1822 - Shelley drowns in a boating accident in Italy.
- April 1824 - Lord Byron dies of Marsh Fever at Missolonghi.

'Brenton is, in fact, doing something markedly ambitious in this phantasmagoric play. He is celebrating the idea of the committed artist who seeks to stir and provoke sullen, defeated, bourgeois England. At the same time with clear-eyed honesty, he shows how difficult it is to upset the moral order.'

Michael Billington, *Guardian*

HARRIET eloped to Scotland in 1811 at the age of sixteen with the nineteen year old Shelley where they married. Shelley left Harriet for Mary Godwin when she was four months pregnant with their second child. In the summer of 1816 she sent the children to the country and cut her ties with the family to live with an army officer. When he was posted to India she found herself penniless and pregnant. She drowned herself in the Serpentine, London in 1816.

POLIDORI accompanied Byron to Europe in 1816 as his personal physician. At the same time unknown to Byron he accepted money from John Murray (Byron's Publisher) to write an account of the journey. A vain, highly strung man he became the butt of Shelley and Byron's cruel sense of fun. Biographers are in debt for his sensational account of the night of 18th, June 1816 when talk of ghosts induced a violent fit in Shelley. Mary with some malice used his name for Frankenstein's evil teacher - perhaps out of revenge Polidori claimed untruthfully to have given her the plot in the first place. He shot himself in 1827 because of gambling debts.

Director's Note

Very early within the plot the character Claire states, "*We are their great experiment. We will find out how to live and love without fear.*"

In many ways this play could also be said to be an experiment - for just as Claire, Mary, Shelley and Byron sought a change, a revolution in the heart and mind, our project also required a conscious change and a commitment by all to make the experiment work.

I am confident that you the audience will now see outcome of that effort. We are indebted to all those whose collective efforts have helped bring this brilliant play to life, and have made what you are about to see a truly challenging and memorable experience.

Adrian Adam

CAST

Percy Bysshe Shelley DAVID ANTHONY
Mary Shelley SUSAN REYNOLDS
Claire Clairemont GABBY SIMPSON
Lord George Byron ADRIAN ADAM
Dr William Polidori LASZLO WEIDLICH
Harriet Westbrook ANNE FARRELL

LOCALE

The entire play takes place between the summers of 1816 and 1822 in Switzerland, England and Italy.

There will be ~~one~~ 15 minute interval.

DAVID ANTHONY - Percy Bysshe Shelley

David has been working in theatre since 1985. He has appeared on ABC TV and in films. Last year he played Mozart in *Amadeus* at Laycock Street Theatre, and his most recent roles were with Wyong Drama Group as the sinister character Roat, in *Wait Until Dark* and as Sleek the Mouse in *The Gingerbread Man* at Laycock Street Theatre.

GABBY SIMPSON - Claire Clairemont

First performance with Wyong Drama Group, but has performed many roles in school productions. Gabby has a presence and freshness that shine through. Although she is treading boards for the first time - we are sure it won't be her last.

ADRIAN ADAM - Lord Byron

Adrian has appeared with Wyong Drama Group in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe*, *Kid Stakes*, *The One Day of The Year*, *Night Must Fall*, and *Zoo Story*. Also appeared with Woy Woy Little Theatre in *The Poker Session*, and Fourth Wall's *Look Back In Anger*. His most recent role was as the unforgettable Mr Markham in *Move Over Mrs Markham*, with Wyong Drama Group at Laycock Street Theatre.

SUSAN REYNOLDS - Mary Shelley

A relative newcomer to Wyong Drama Group, Susan appeared in *See If I Care*, at Wyong and the Port Macquarie Festival, and very recently as young Gloria in *Wait Until Dark*. Having proved to be a talented young actress, Susan is now keen for the opportunity to take on this more demanding role.

LÁSZLÓ WEIDLICH - Dr William Polidori

With Wyong Drama Group since 1987, has appeared in *Fractured Century*, *Happy Apple*, *The One Day of The Year*, *Pyjama Tops*, *Not Now Darling*, *Zoo Story*, *A Place in the Present* (Best Support Actor award at Festival) and most recently at Laycock Street Theatre in *Move Over Mrs Markham*.

ANNE FARRELL - Harriet Westbrook

Hails from *blac* (bellini's little acting company) in Sydney, and has appeared in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Tacit Stop 3*, is a member of Sydney Philharmonia Choir, and has performed in *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Madame Butterfly* at the North Shore Opera.