THE RIOT ACT
by Tom Paulin
(After ‘Antigone’ by Sophocles)

HIGH TIME
a comedy by Derek Mahon
(After ‘The School for Husbands’ by Molière)

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CORK DRY GIN
By Tom Paulin
(After ‘Antigone’ by Sophocles)

A Comedy By Derek Mahon
(After ‘The School for Husbands’ by Molière)
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Sophocles (496 - 406 BC) was born at Colonus, near Athens. His life span covers almost the whole century of Athens’ rise to greatness and its fall. He was a well known public figure and held various administrative posts during his long life. He wrote more than a hundred plays of which only seven tragedies and part of one satyr-play survive. The extant tragedies are: Ajax, Antigone (The Riot Act), Trachiniae, Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Electra, Philoctetes. In his hands Greek tragedy developed in the direction of greater intimacy and more human interest: his plays are concerned with the subtleties of human character in the relation between people, or between individuals and fate or the gods.
Tom Paulin

Born in Leeds and grew up in Belfast. He has held the post of lecturer in English at Nottingham University since 1972. Publications include: poetry – A State of Justice (Faber & Faber 1977), The Strange Museum (Faber & Faber 1980) and Liberty Tree (Faber & Faber 1983); criticism – Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception (MacMillan 1977). Awards include the Eric Gregory Award – Poetry, the Somerset Maugham Award and the Geoffrey Faber Award. He has recently returned from a year in the USA as Visiting Associate Professor of English and Fulbright Scholar at the University of Virginia.

Molière

Molière (1622-1673) (pen name of Jean Baptiste Poquelin) was born in Paris, educated at the Jesuit College de Clermont and studied law for three years. Abandoned this to join a touring theatre company. In 1658 his troupe performed before King Louis XIV in Paris and was received enthusiastically. A succession of successful plays followed:– L'Ecole des Maris (High Time), L'Ecole des Femmes, Don Juan, Le Misanthrope, Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Le Malade Imaginaire, L’Avare, etc, etc. He was an excellent comic actor and a good director, but his great achievement was that by his own efforts he raised French comedy to the height attained by French tragedy.

Derek Mahon

Born in Belfast and educated at Belfast Inst. (RBAI) and Trinity College, Dublin. Since then he has lived chiefly in London working as a journalist and screenwriter. He was Writer in Residence at the New University of Ulster 1977-79. Adaptations for television include Jennifer Johnston’s How Many Miles to Babylon which was the BBC entry for the 1981 Emmy Awards in New York. Recent publications include Poems 1962-78 (OUP 1979) and The Hunt by Night (OUP 1982). A new collection of poems will be published next year.
The background to Antigone and The Riot Act

After the death of their father, Oedipus, Eteocles and Polynieces were to rule Thebes in alternate years, but Eteocles would not give up his throne at the end of his year of rule. This led to the expedition of the Seven Against Thebes, in which seven heroes fought bitterly to retain the throne for Polynieces. In a duel between Eteocles and Polynieces to decide the issue, the brothers killed each other. Their uncle, Creon, became King of Thebes.

Creon orders that Eteocles be buried according to the proper rites and customs, and he forbids the burial of Polynieces. It is the law of the gods that Antigone must bury her brother’s body. Ismene, Antigone’s sister, though she recognises the imperative force of divine law, opposes Antigone’s decision.

Tom Paulin

Under Creon

Rhododendrons growing wild below a mountain and no long high wall of trees either; a humped road, bone-dry, with no one – passing one lough and then another where water-lilies glazed, primed like traps.

A neapish hour, I searched out gaps in that imperial shrub; a free voice sang dissenting green, and syllables spoke holm oaks by a salt shore, their dark tinge glistening like Nisus in a night attack.

The daylight gods were never in this place and I had pressed beyond my usual dusk to find a cadence for the dead: McCracked, Hope, the northern starlight, a death mask and the levelled grave that Biggar traced;

like an epic arming in an olive grove this was a stringent grief and a form of love. Maybe one day I’ll get the hang of it and find joy, not justice, in a snapped connection, that Jacobin oath on the black mountain.

Tom Paulin
from “LIBERTY TREE” by Tom Paulin
published by Faber and Faber 1963.
Antigones

In his diary for 17 September 1941, the German novelist and publicist Martin Rauschke recounts an episode in Nazi-occupied Riga. Caught trying to sprinkle earth on the publicly exposed body of her executed brother, a young girl, entirely unpolitical in her sentiments, is asked why. She answers: 'He was my brother. For me that is sufficient'.

The fascination of Antigone, the pressure which the myth has exercised on poetics and politics, are inseparable from the presence of Creon. Antigone herself is, in fact, absent from much of Sophocles' play. After her exit into night, the drama is Creon's. Pondering the dual or 'broken-backed' architecture of Sophocles' dramaturgy, commentators have repeatedly suggested that Antigone and Creon would be a more just title. In the elaborations of and variations on the theme after Sophocles, the role of Creon has been as densely argued as that of the heroine. The intimacies of conflict have knit and delineated their identities.

Readers of Greek tragedy, students, performers, know that the chorus lies at the formal roots and centre of the art. The Greek tragic chorus is a matchless supple instrument. Its role in the play can vary between utter involvement and indifference. The views voiced by the chorus can deploy every nuance of perception or myopia, of psychological acuity or uncanny blindness. The chorus can alter its very nature in the course of the drama. Far beyond any turning stage or proscenium arch, the chorus is a device whereby the antique playwright can exactly calibrate and modulate the distances, the sight-lines, between audience and myth, between spectator and scene... Thus it acts as a kind of drawbridge which the dramatist can raise or lower, shorten or lengthen at will by metrical and choreographic means. Via the chorus, the spectator can be drawn on to the stage or distance from it; he can be virtually enmeshed in the scenic situation or barred from (naive) access to it. Twenty-first-century experiments, aiming either at 'audience participation', for example through the covert location of actors in the pit and balconies, or at 'audience alienation', such as Brechtian placards and 'objective' commentators, are primitive compared to the formal and conceptual range of effects achieved by the chorus in Greek tragedy. In Sophocles, this range is masterfully exploited.

To 'understand' a text in classical Greek, to 'understand' any text in any language as formally and conceptually dense as is Sophocles' Antigone, is to oscillate between poles of immediacy and of inaccessibility. If we read well, if we make ourselves answerable to the text intellectually, if we discipline our sensibility to scrupulous attentiveness, if, in the final analysis, we make of our reading an exercise of moral trust, rendering our own risks of feeling concordant to those of the poet (though on a more modest, secondary level), this oscillation will find points of stability.

It has, I believe, been given to only one literary text to express all the principal constants of conflict in the condition of man. These constants are fivefold: the confrontation of men and of women; of age and of youth; of society and of the individual; of the living and the dead; of men and god(s). The conflicts which come of these five orders of confrontation are not negotiable. Men and women, old and young, the individual and the community or state, the quick and the dead, mortals and immortals, define themselves in the conflictual process of defining each other.

It is in Sophocles' Antigone that each of the five fundamental categories of man's definition and self-definition through conflict is realised, and that all five are at work in a single act of confrontation. No other moment that I know of, in either sacred or secular imagining, achieves this totality.
The play is a free translation of Molière's *L'Ecole des Maris (The School for Husbands)*. The original was first performed in the theatre of the Palais-Royal, Paris, on 24 June 1661, by the 'Troupe de Monsieur', with Molière himself in the role of Sganarel (Tom). 'Monsieur' was the court title of the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV and Molière's patron.

Previously an itinerant actor-manager, whose company made use of the standard plots and stock characters of the *commedia dell'arte* (the source, also, of the Punch and Judy show), Molière first established himself in Paris with *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1661), which mocked the fashionable pretensions of the capital.

The following year saw the first appearance of the Sganarel figure in *Sganarel*, a role Molière would always take himself; then came *L'Ecole des Maris* and *L'Ecole des Femmes (The School for Wives, 1662)*, both clearly inspired by his marriage to Armande Bajart, one of the troupe and 20 years his junior.

Why this particular play? I often thought vaguely of trying my hand at Molière, and when Brian Friel provided the opportunity I leapt at it. Almost immediately I knew which one I wanted to do and why. As far as I can discover, *The School for Husbands* doesn’t exist in any known English verse translation (prose yes, but not verse, and the original is in verse): *High Time* seems to be the first.

This is surprising, given Molière’s perennial popularity; it’s a fact. All the others have been done, often several times. The American poet Richard Wilbur translated most of the major verse plays during the 1960s, and his versions are distinguished if rather academic. The most successful Molière of recent years was probably Tony Harrison’s *The Misanthrope*, which opened at the National Theatre, London, in 1973, with Alec McCowen and Diana Rigg.

We never considered doing *High Time* in period; a stylized costume drama seemed like a sterile exercise. We toyed with the Nineties, the Twenties, and paused for a long time at May, 1968: in fact, it was written for May, 1968, the young people gentle hippies instead of the tough punks they finally became. May, 1968, because that was the *mai de les événements*, when the students erupted on to the streets of Paris and the French police appeared with riot gear.

I liked the idea of May, 1968, partly because there was this background of student revolt and educational reform (educational theory is an important theme in the play), but more particularly because that student revolt, ancient history though it seems now, had interesting side-effects in Ireland. There was 'student unrest' everywhere then – in New York, Berlin – and eventually, in 1969, there was student unrest in Belfast and Derry. The young became political, seriously so, and heads got broken: the rest we know.

Mark Long and Emil Wolk had a better idea, however; make it *now*, not hippie; go for immediacy instead of nostalgia. Have the boys speak prose to each other, as if to deflate, swiftly and brutally, the verse twitterings of the more polite characters. So now the play takes place at the present time. You are, of course, asked to suspend your disbelief in various ways. You would be unlikely, today, to come upon a guardian-ward arrangement like that of Tom and Isabel; but, then, you would be unlikely to hear verse spoken in the street either.

*Derek Mahon*
Molière’s company, the Illustre Théâtre, had to adapt continually to the differing natures of the spaces they played in. The company’s material changed from day to day as the cast reacted to the social and political nuances of any particular place or time. The plays we have received as written by Molière are purely texts taken down by scribes on a particular evening. They do not reflect the continually changing nature of the work, a process that added so much to its comedy. It is this original flux of feeling that we are trying to recapture.
by Tom Paulin
(after ‘Antigone’ by Sophocles)

Chorus: The COMPANY
Chorus leader: CIARÁN HINDS
Antigone: VÉRONICA QUILLIGAN
Ismene, her sister: HILARY REYNOLDS
Creon, King of Thebes: STEPHEN REA
Guard: MARK LAMBERT
Haemon, Creon’s son: JOE CRILLY
Teiresias: DES McALEAR
Messenger: KILLAN McKENNA
Eurydice, Creon’s wife: NUALA HAYES

Director: STEPHEN REA

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes.
High Time

a comedy by Derek Mahon
(after 'The School for Husbands' by Molière)

High Tech  Ciarán Hinds
Val        Kilian McKenna
Mr Clarke  Mark Lambert
Helen      Hilary Reynolds
Liz        Nuala Hayes
Isabel, Helen's sister  Veronica Quilligan
Tom        Stephen Rea
Ernie      Joe Crilly
Archie, Tom's brother  Des McAleer

Directors  Mark Long
           Emil Wolk

Time: the present, in Ireland

fifteen minutes between the plays.

Brien Vahey
Rory Dempster
Keith Donald
Bo Barton
Michael Foyle
Alison Kelly
Dennis Martin
Set Up
Julie Barber
Bridie Gallagher
Jude Bowles

Painting is the work of Basil Blackshaw. Direction by David Hammond. Production photographs by Fergus Bourke. Supported by P.J. Carroll and Co. Ltd. and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Sponsored by Irish Shell.
Field Day Theatre Company 1984

From left to right, back row: Bo Barton, Brian Friel, Bridie Gallagher, Julie Barber, Alison Kelly, Michael Foyle, Des McAleer, Veronica Quilligan, Ciarán Hinds, Kilian McEenna, Jude Bowles, Stephen Rea.

Front row (kneeling): Nuala Hayes, Mark Lambert, Hilary Reynolds, Joe Crilly.

Photograph by Larry Doherty.

Past Productions

TOP
LEFT: BOESMAN AND LENA
Stephen Rea
RIGHT: BOESMAN AND LENA
Des McAleer and Deirdre Donnelly

CENTRE
LEFT: TRANSLATIONS
Roy Hanlon and Nuala Hayes
RIGHT: THE COMMUNICATION CORD
Ian McElhinney and Stephen Rea

BELOW
THREE SISTERS
Niall Buggy, James Ellis, Patrick Waldron, Olwen Fouere, Colm Meany, Sorcha Cusack, and Stephen Kelly
Biographies

Joe Crilly
actor

Born in Lurgan, Co. Armagh. A member of the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain from 1979-83 where his appearances included Zigger Zagger and Macbeth. Also worked with the Old Vic Youth Theatre, the Lyric Hammersmith Youth Theatre, and has just finished training at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts. This is his first fully professional role.

Nuala Hayes
actor

Born in Dublin and studied at UCD. Joined the Abbey School of Acting and became a member of the company for six years. Was involved with the Young Abbey Theatre-in-Education group and subsequently Team Educational Theatre. Worked with RTE as a presenter of magazine and children’s programmes. Stage appearances include The Plough and the Stars, Exiles, The Morning after Optimism, The White House, Diamuid agus Graíne, Mairé in Translations and Natasha in Three Sisters both for Field Day. Toured with the Abbey in The Factory Girls, to America with Gemini Productions in I Do Not Like Thee Dr Fell and this year in Boat People. This summer appeared in Is Glaas Iad Na Cnuic at the Peacock Theatre, Dublin. TV and film work includes John, Love and Glenroe.

Des McAleer
actor

Born in Belfast. Played many roles with the Lyric, Belfast. Among his favourites are Shakespeare’s Hotspur, Bottom, Caliban and Brutus. Played the narrator in Stravinsky’s The Flood at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, a live broadcast with the Netherland’s Radio Orchestra, and was recently seen on Channel 4 in The Writing on the Wall a film by Frenchman, Armand Gatti. Directed Friends and Relations by St. John Ervine at the Lyric, Belfast, played in The Rivals with Druid Theatre Company, and played Wabatutu in Field Day’s 1983 tour of Boesman and Lena. He appears in Pat Murphy’s new feature film Ann Devin and recently completed a new improvised film by Mike Leigh.

Kilian McKenna
actor

Born in Dublin. Trained at RADA from where he went to the Royal Shakespeare Company appearing in Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Richard II and Richard III, Troilus and Cressida, Shadow of a Gunman and The Lovegirl and the Innocent. TV work includes The Young Ones, Jove in June and The Old Men at the Zoo for BBC, Harry’s Game for Yorkshire TV, and episodes of Brookside for Channel 4. Recently appeared in the TV film John Paul II. Most recent stage appearances include Tom in The Glass Menagerie at Westcliff Theatre and The Hitch-Hiker at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs.

Veronica Quilligan
actor

Born in Dublin. Made her debut in Edna O’Brien’s A Pagan Place at the Royal Court Theatre, London. Worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, London where she played Juliet, Bristol Old Vic where she played Mairé in Translations and regularly on the fringe at the Bush Theatre, and the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs. She has worked in London’s West End and has appeared in numerous TV plays including The History Man. Films include Neil Jordan’s Angel.

Stephen Rea
actor/director and co-founder of Field Day


Hilary Reynolds
actor

Born in Dublin. Worked extensively in theatre in Dublin, toured England with the Old Vic Company and Ireland with the Irish Theatre Company. Travelled to Hong Kong with Siobhán McKenna’s Playboy of The Western World. Last year she played Agnes in Agnes of God at Greenwich and has recently finished a five month run of The Country Girl at the Apollo Theatre, London. TV and films include Educating Rita, The Outcasts and The Unknown Soldier to be screened in the autumn on BBC.

Mark Long
director

One of the founder members of the People Show in 1966 since when he has witnessed a theatrical revolution – the moving of theatre out of the prosenium arch to everywhere else imaginable. With the People Show he has travelled round more than half the world including Western and Eastern Europe, North and South America and Australia.
EMIL WOLK

director

Born in New York. His wide training experiences include working with a circus family and a Romanian tumbler. Studied mime with the teacher of both Marcel Marceau and Jean Louis Barrault, Etienne Decroux. Worked with the original Traverse Theatre Workshop, The Freehold Company and the Pip Simmons group. For the last eight years he has been part of the People Show which has taken him all over the world.

BRIEN VAHEY

designer

Born in Dublin and studied at Dun Laoghaire School of Art and the Theatre Design Course at the Riverside Studios, London. Worked as design assistant on John Boorman’s film Excalibur and at the Abbey Theatre. Resident designer at the Riverside Studios for the last year where he designed among others Moon for the Misbegotten and Sea Changes.

RORY DEMPSTER

lighting designer

His extensive lighting career includes work at the Adelaide and Edinburgh Festivals, the Nottingham Playhouse, the Aarhus Theatre in Denmark, the Royal Shakespeare Company, London’s Royal Court, the Lyric, Hammersmith and the Riverside Studios of which he is an Associate Director. Recent work includes David Hare’s A Map of The World at the National Theatre, London and Eugene O’Neill’s Moon for the Misbegotten in London’s West End. He designed the lighting for Field Day’s Three Sisters, The Communication Cord and Boesman and Lena.

KEITH DONALD

composer and instrumentalist

Born in Coleraine. Educated at UCD, TCD, and the University of Minnesota in Classics and Social Work. Has been interested in music since he was six, at eight years of age played jazz recorder on BBC NI radio, and appeared on UTV playing the jazz clarinet when he was thirteen. He now lives in Dublin, a full-time musician playing saxophone with Moving Hearts.

BASIL BLACKSHAW

artist

Born Glengormley, Co. Antrim. Studied at Belfast College of Art. In 1958 was represented at the Tate Gallery, London and exhibited for the first time with the Irish Exhibition of Living Art, Dublin. Had the first of many one man shows in Belfast 1961. Received Arts Council of Northern Ireland portrait commissions in 1970, 1973 and 1975. His work is represented in all the major public and private collections in Ireland. This is the fourth year he has painted the design for Field Day’s posters and programmes.

BRIAN FRIEL

co-founder of Field Day


BO BARTON

stage management

Born in Warwickshire. Worked in repertory in Glasgow, County, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and London. Most recently completed a course in Arts Administration and spent six months as Production Manager with Druid Theatre Company, Galway. She has worked on all Field Day productions.

MICHAEL FOYLE

stage management

Born in Belfast. Learned the basics of stagecraft as a youthful comedy magician. Became interested in drama at Stranmillis College and has played in dozens of amateur productions, most notably as Astrov in Uncle Vanya and as Lear at the New University of Ulster. Directed Leonardo’s Last Supper and Kennedy’s Children at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, where he also stage-managed Pinnochio, Peter Pan and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. Recently directed Mother Courage at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine. Toured with The Communication Cord and Boesman and Lena for Field Day.

ALISON KELLY

stage management and wardrobe

Born in Belfast. First worked with Field Day three years ago on the tour of Three Sisters. Since then has worked at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, The Arts Theatre and the Grand Opera House in Belfast and most recently with the Lyric Theatre on their tour of the North with Tea in a China Cup.

DENNIS MARTIN

lighting operator

Born in Belfast and started his career in radio and television commercial productions. Currently working in the Grand Opera House, Belfast as chief electrician and has been involved with many shows there including Jesus Christ Superstar, Elvis, Godspell and Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat.

JULIE BARBER

admin. assistant

Born in Bangor, Co. Down. After graduating working in various theatres in England, spent a year on the City University practical training scheme in arts administration, and worked as General Manager of the Actors Touring Company, London. Joined Field Day in 1982 as PRO for the tour of The Communication Cord and has been Company Manager since 1983.

BRIDIE GALLAGHER

press officer/PRO

Born in Derry. Having worked in Dublin and Guernsey returned to college in Derry as a mature student. Worked with various voluntary organisations including IVS and Holiday Projects West. This is her first experience of working in theatre.

JUDE BOWLES

press officer/PRO

Born in Shropshire. Moved to Ireland in 1974 to study at the New University of Ulster. First worked with Field Day as PRO in 1981 with the tour of Three Sisters before joining the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, as assistant Press Officer and then Press Officer/PRO.
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