

# NETWORKING

## The Newsletter of the Network Theatre Company

NETWORK THEATRE, 246A LOWER ROAD, WATERLOO, LONDON SE1 8SJ

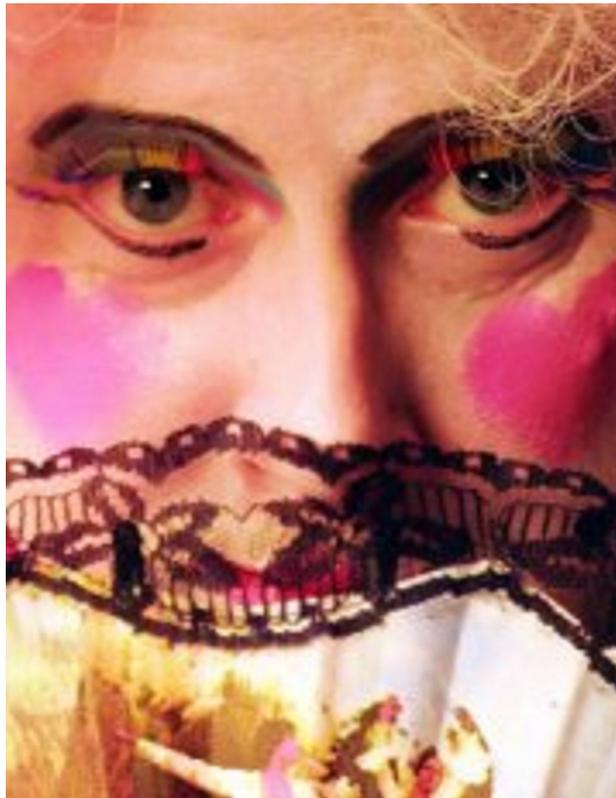
WWW.NETWORKTHEATRE.ORG



January 09

### ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!

A review of The Three Musketeers



Queen Anne: Andy Bradshaw

Happy New Year Networkers!

Hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and are finding ways to burn off the mince pies ☺

Welcome to the first of our new monthly e-newsletters, ensuring that you are regularly kept in the loop with Network Theatre goings-on.

This edition brings you a review of The Three Musketeers along with dates for your diary. Our next production will be An Ideal Husband, which will be performed from Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February.

You will also see what plans we have in store for the celebration of Network Theatre's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Best Wishes and all the best for a cracking 2009!

Kirsty ☺  
The Editor

**All submissions are welcome.**

Please send to the editor at [newsletter@networktheatre.org](mailto:newsletter@networktheatre.org). © 2009 Network Theatre Company.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Network Theatre Company, its committee or its members.

## The Three Musketeers: A review by Ian Smith



**The Three Musketeers (who can't count):**  
Mary-Alice Stack, Kirsty Eyre, Emily Godowski

If, like me, your knowledge of nineteenth century French fiction can fit on the back of a postage stamp you'll know this story through the film with Charlton Heston, Faye Dunaway and Oliver Reid. If, also like me, you look forward to everything Leigh Shine gives us at Network you won't be surprised to learn that "The Three Musketeers" was busy, visually exciting, imaginative and well presented by all of its enormous cast. What might surprise you is while that film wasn't a pantomime this play was. It was Christmas after all. So did it work? Yes and no.



**D'Artagnan:** Matthew Griffiths

On many levels it did. There were numerous memorable details like the wonderful sword fights, the necklace card table, the "It's a Knockout" arm delivering a poisoned chalice, the clapperboard-like scene setters and the soundman's nightmare of about 100 cues encompassing spaghetti westerns, Star Wars and the theme from Dallas.

It was wonderfully innovative at times. For example the Evil Richelieu (Michael Mayne) was handicapped when the actor playing his sidekick Rochefort was taken ill at the last moment. As a result we were given a puppet monkey perched upon his arm, Emu style, delivering the lines off stage like Frank Spencer. It was an opportunity handled with great aplomb-literally.

The eponymous characters were played by women and they were excellent. Emily Godowski (Athos) was ever so cool, Mary Alice Stack's (Porthos) expressions of earnest bewilderment were hilarious and Kirsty Eyre (Aramis) was precise and elegant. Set against these was Imelda Maguire as Planchet, their reluctant servant, balancing the fire crackers going off around her with a deadpan reticence which worked a treat. Andy Bradshaw excelled as the Queen of Austria, a sort of cross between Lily Savage and the wigmaker from "Amadeus".

But as mentioned before, they were all good and there were too many in it to praise them all. Despite Leigh's rather downbeat programme notes the energy displayed by all made it appear that everyone had a lot of fun making this play. And that is such a good thing.

It is a long play with a complicated plot and many, many characters. The drive to sustain a high tempo led to it all being a wee bit rushed. Characters came and went before you knew who they were. Lines delivered that quickly often get lost, a blessing in a classic pantomime but a disappointment here.

And there, you suspect, lay the rub. It was difficult to believe that this well-written play was intended to be a pantomime. You know that Jack is going to get to the top of the beanstalk, but here you really had to concentrate on what was going on. Maybe this is why much of the desired audience participation died an early death. Additionally the cast interaction with the audience before both bells was fun at first but after ten minutes became a little bit irritating.

So it is not really clear what "The Three Musketeers" was. Too long, unfamiliar, dense and smart to be a panto, too stylised and over-played to be anything else. What it was, though, was a great night out.



**The Cardinal** (Michael Mayne) **and his 'men'** (Jennie Rich, Judith Denwood, Jo Bunnell and Juliet Heap)

With thanks to Jo Bunnell and Andy Bradshaw for use of their photographs

