

ABOUT THE THÉÂTRE DE L'AQUARIUM:

Théâtre de l'Aquarium works from its own building at the Cartoucherie near Paris. The company has been in existence as a professional theatre collective for ten years. Although they occasionally work from a text, most of their shows are created from improvisations based on research, interviews, newspaper articles, etc. Shakespeare's Sister was devised and produced by them at The Cartoucherie in 1978-79 and subsequently toured through Europe and France.

The Théâtre de l'Aquarium has achieved a level of funding and recognition of their structure and method of work that is the envy of many English companies, but this has been the result of a long and hard struggle. The following is an extract from a statement they published in January 1980 in resistance to a proposed cut in their subsidy which they feared would lead to a lowering of their standards:

"What makes Le Théâtre de l'Aquarium special is our structure as much as our style of work, and we will not allow our creativity to be crushed by the weight of the Institution . . . we want to reflect contemporary reality. This aim means that problems of creativity and artistic choices are never finally resolved. Our shows deal with contemporary reality in differing ways, both direct and indirect and we hope that they always express our continuing taste for the paradoxical, the strange and the humorous.

Our shows are enriched by the knowledge and skills we have gained through the artistic work of the company. We don't want to lose any of this. We can say in all modesty that we have created precedents by forcing the cultural establishment to acknowledge that texts have been written collectively; that it can take a year to produce one show; that a permanent group should be kept together over a period of several shows. Our first paradox is doubtless that we have tried to avoid constraints by basing the work on a permanent group, some members of which have worked together for years. Perhaps this is why we have developed a Strangeness of style . . . a Strangeness born, sometimes, from a desire to surprise ourselves, to be constantly re-examining ourselves theatrically, and to avoid stagnation. In order for this to happen we must be able to open our doors to people from outside the company; we must prevent the smallest idea from coming to grief for financial reasons; we must have the freedom to make mistakes and start again; to change the very architecture of our building for a show without being accused of capriciousness. . .

In short we refuse to allow things to be done for purely financial reasons, or to allow the structure of the company to be turned into a bureaucracy that would destroy our creativity."

On January 1st 1982, the French Government doubled the sum of money it, allocates to the Ministry of Culture for subsidising the Arts.

**MONSTROUS
REGIMENT**
PRESENTS

SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION BY THEATRE DE L'AQUARIUM

SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION DEvised BY
LE THÉÂTRE DE L'AQUARIUM, PARIS.
TRANSLATED BY GILLIAN HANNA.

CAST:

COTCHIE D'ARCY
AVIVA GOLDKORN
ANNE HAYDN
STEPHEN LEY
MARY McCUSKER
JOHN SLADE

Director:	Jan Sargent
Designer:	Gemma Jackson
Assistant Designer:	Chris Bowler
Lighting Designer:	Veronica Wood
Technical and Stage Management:	Janet Ball, Mel Nortcliffe
Administration:	Gus Garside, Dianne Robson
Graphic Designer:	Angela Stewart-Park
Photos:	Jane Harper
Printer:	Calverts: 01-278 7177
Set Construction:	Miraculous Engineering: 01-359 1807

The original Monstrous Regiment production was directed by Hilary Westlake, designed by Gemma Jackson, with lighting by Steve Whitson. It was presented for three weeks in December 1980 at the ICA Theatre, London.

"It is not . . . possible to isolate the effect of the changing status of women on our society. Nevertheless, if we are to shape our future we must take a dispassionate look at what has happened to the structure of society across the century . . .

Indeed I wonder whether the family has been sufficiently highly regarded in recent years. Much emphasis has been placed on individual rights, less on our duties to each other.

Children have been encouraged to grow up faster and see themselves as independent of parents, parents have been told by self-appointed experts that their duties to each other and to their children should be balanced by more emphasis on self-fulfilment. In other words, we have seen the birth of the permissive society. Has this benefited women?

Far from it.

Women know that society is founded on dignity, reticence and discipline . . .

The battle for women's rights has been largely won. The days when they were demanded and discussed in strident tones should be gone forever. We must now see them in perspective and turn our attention to how we use human rights to build the kind of world we wish our children to inherit . . .

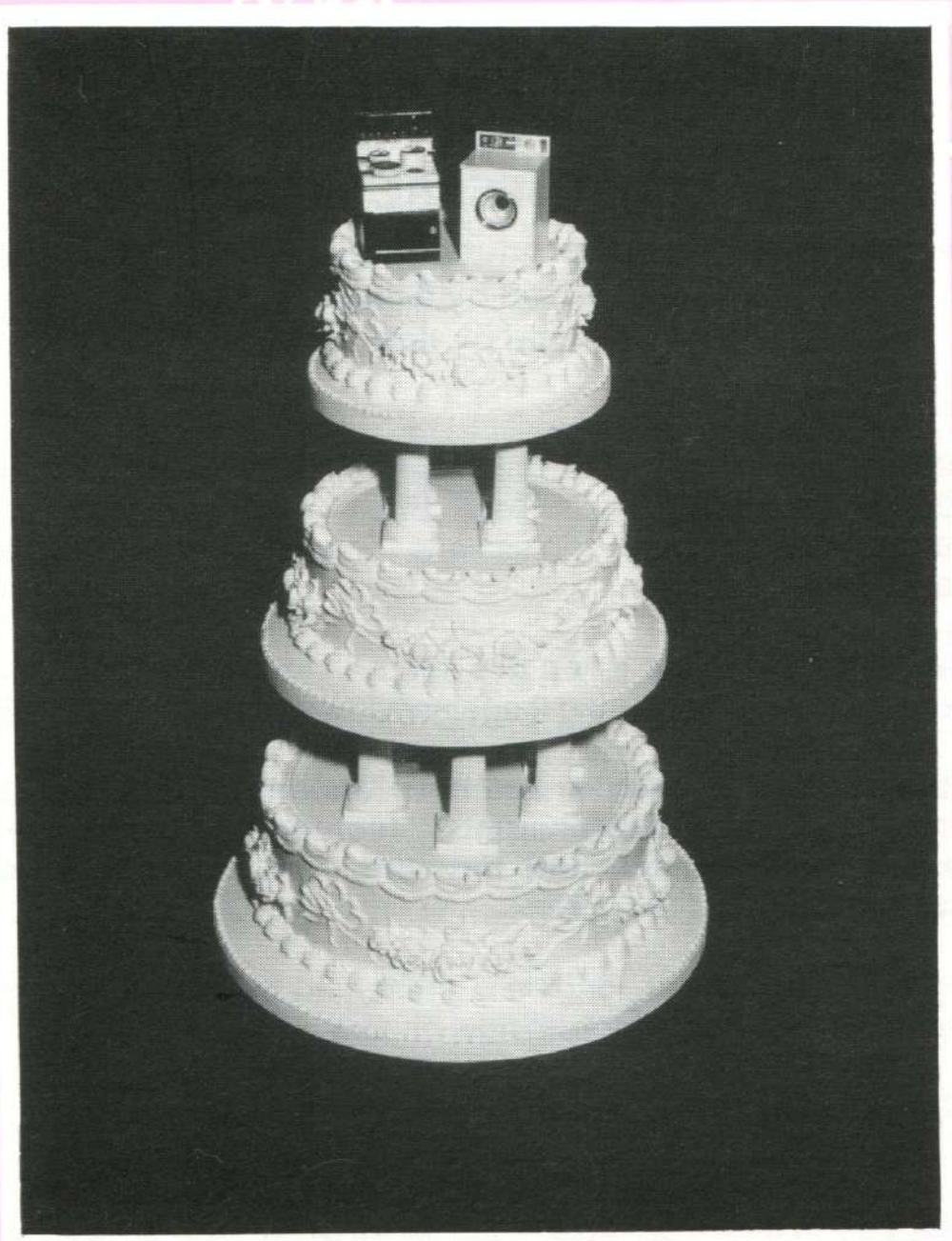
It is a rare honour to be Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. It is a supreme privilege to occupy that high office when great human causes have to be defended."

From "Women in a Changing World" the first Dame Margaret Corbett-Ashby Memorial Lecture
Delivered by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP, 26th July 1982.

THE MONSTROUS REGIMENT was created in 1975 by a group of women who wanted to make high energy, exciting political theatre, based on women's experience and using live music. In the six years since then we have explored many different theatrical forms—the epic style, the well-made play, surreal images, naturalism. We have looked at women in revolution, in history, at work; and violence, and women and feminism. Monstrous Regiment, constitutionally, will always have more women than men in it. We are a collective.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT GUS GARSIDE OR DIANNE ROBSON
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TEL: 01-247 2398

**MONSTROUS
REGIMENT**
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION BY THEATRE DE L'AQUARIUM

DESIGN: A STEWART-PARK PHOTOGRAPHY: JANE HARPER

Monstrous Regiment is a collective, a member of the Independent Theatre Council and receives financial assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain

MONSTROUS REGIMENT

presents

SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER

based on the original production by Theatre De L' Aquarium

translated by Gillian Hanna

directed by Jan Sargent

Shakespeare's Sister is a tragic fantasy figure created by Virginia Woolf in "A Room of One's Own". She is a gifted woman, born in the wrong age and of the wrong sex and therefore was never allowed the chance of self-fulfilment.

Shakespeare's Sister takes this image and explores it in relation to marriage today, measuring it against views of contemporary women.

"Superb . . . it is a joy to see how Monstrous Regiment exploit surrealistic and expressionist techniques and give them blazing theatrical life and function. The cumulative effect is devastating." *The Guardian*

Shakespeare's Sister, originally presented by the Monstrous Regiment at the ICA in London, is now on tour.

"Stunning theatrical punch." *New Standard*

THE LITTLE LYCEUM, Cambridge Street, Edinburgh.

August 17-Sept. 5 at 5.00pm Box office phone 031-229 1159

Box office opens 10.00am

LIBRARY THEATRE, Manchester Festival, Manchester.

September 9-11 at 7.30pm Box office phone 061-236 7110

Box office opens 10.30am-5pm,
Monday-Saturday

Monstrous Regiment receives financial support from the Arts Council of Great Britain and is a member of the Independent Theatre Council. For further information phone 01-247 2398.