

MONSTROUS REGIMENT

PRESENTS

MORE THAN ONE ANTOINETTE



TUES 27 MARCH-SAT 14 APRIL at 7.45pm
(PRESS NIGHT 27 MARCH 7.00pm, NO PERFORMANCE 13 APRIL)

The Young Vic Studio

66 THE CUT, LONDON SE1 BOX OFFICE 01-928 6363

MONSTROUS REGIMENT

presents the second production in
its Fifteenth Anniversary Season.
THE PREMIERE OF

MORE THAN ONE ANTOINETTE

by Debbie Shewell

Directed by **Debbie Shewell**

Set and costume design by **Geraldine Pilgrim**

Lighting design by **Beth Hardisty**

Music by **Joanna MacGregor**

With **Abigail Bond, William Gaminara, Marsha Millar
and Geraldine Somerville.**

**'I dreamed that I was walking in the forest. Not
alone. Someone who hated me was with me.
Out of sight. I could hear heavy footsteps
coming closer and though I struggled and
screamed I could not move. I woke crying.'**

MORE THAN ONE ANTOINETTE is about two very different women. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, and Antoinette – the first Mrs. Rochester whom Jean Rhys gave voice to in her novel WIDE SARGASSO SEA. Through a strong and startling visual and musical collage we follow the journey of two women born into widely differing cultures. Antoinette is a Creole woman growing up in the West Indies just after the Emancipation Act, and Jane is the poor relation of a stolid Northern family. Antoinette's marriage to a young Englishman is the first step on a journey which throws the two women's lives into collision – a journey of secret fears, lies and betrayals. MORE THAN ONE ANTOINETTE is an original and powerful exploration of women's struggle to find an identity and a sense of belonging and the price which sometimes has to be paid to achieve this.

Monstrous Regiment is a member of ITC and is sponsored by

HILTON NATIONAL

for its 'Women in the European Context Season'.
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MORE THAN ONE ANTOINETTE
by Debbie Shewell

Jean Rhys gave a voice to Charlotte Bronte's "mad wife in the attic" - a voice which compels us to look very differently at the romanticism of Jane and Rochester.

Through a strong visual and musical collage the piece charts the journey of two young women born into very different cultures- Antoinette, a Creole woman growing up in the West Indies just after the Emancipation Act, and Jane, the poor relation to a stolid Northern family. Similar experiences could serve to bring the two women together, but by the time they meet they have been forced into competition by their relationship to Rochester.

Antoinette and Rochester are married through a financial deal between their families. He finds himself plunged into an alarming and alien world in Antoinette's childhood home - she is already struggling to establish an identity for herself between being a "white nigger" and a member of the white ruling class. Her relationship with Rochester is full of secrets, and suppression of real feelings which, finally unleashed, destroy her sense of identity as well as their marriage.

Twenty years later Rochester meets Jane. In wooing her, and attempting to atone for his past life the pattern of lies and secrets continues. Jane is faced with acknowledging that this is the price she must pay for a future with the man she loves.

The project uses visual imagery and music to chart the secrets, silences and dreams which exist between the characters, finding theatrical images for the secret story in Jane Eyre. Rather than being an adaptation of a frequently told story, the project takes as its starting point a tangle of relationships which throws up a resonant exploration of women's struggle for identity and sense of belonging, and the price they can be forced to pay for this.

Antoinette's journey is about risks and connecting with the questions that are kept hidden. Jane's journey leads her to realise that the price of sanity may be higher than she thought.

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