



RedNeedle Productions presents



Picasso's Artful Occupation



written by
IAN BUCKLEY

directed by
KENNETH MICHAELS

**11th - 30th
March 2014**

Barons Court
Theatre

'The Curtain's Up' 28A Comeragh Road, London W14 9HR
(tube: Barons Court/West Kensington)

Box Office: 0208 932 4747





Ian Buckley

Ian went to Christ's College Cambridge from the Elliott Comprehensive in Putney and, having obtained an Honours degree in English Literature and a soccer blue, he then gained an MA from The University of Kent, researching the works of Sean O'Casey. Now it was time to change course. Be creative not critical. Be a playwright. That's what he's been doing ever since.

Ian has had a number of plays performed on the London fringe: *The Tailors' Last Stand* (RedNeedle Productions, Barons Court Theatre); *Keeping Faith* (The Kings Head); *First Timers* (The Dukes Head); *Suits and Blouses* (The Room at The Orange Tree); *Down The River* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East, touring show); *Tainted Love* (The Young Actors' Theatre).

He's been shortlisted for the following playwriting competitions: the Verity Bargate Award; the Maddermarket Award; The Bruntwood Manchester Royal Exchange (long-shortlisted with *The Return*); the Brockley Jack 'Write Now Three' competition.

He's had a play on BBC Radio Four, *Changing Gear*, re-broadcast in translation on Hessische Rundfunk in Germany, who also broadcast *The Revolutionary*.

The rumour that he's made any money from his pen is entirely unfounded.

How this play came about

'I was brought up in a communist family, and the fact that Picasso joined the French Communist party six weeks after the end of the Second World War, and remained in it for the rest of his life, gave me a particular interest in this most wonderful and iconoclastic of artists. It was a short step from there to wondering how he lived his life under the Nazi occupation. For five long years, 1940 to 1945, he lived and worked in Paris, forbidden to exhibit his bolshevik-degenerate art to the public.

How did he, the best-known artist alive, deal with a capricious and all-powerful German regime? What choices did he make? Was he protected by sympathetic members of the occupying regime or did he survive by luck, cunning and discretion?

In my play set in the shady vaults of a Paris bank where Picasso has been summoned for the grand inventory of his works, I hope I'm able to give some 'answers' to these questions. The play is based on an actual historical event.'

Picasso's Artful Occupation
by
Ian Buckley

Cast

Pablo Picasso	Gary Heron
Officer Willi Frisch	Roberto Landi
Officer Franz Hebbel	David O'Connor

Director	Kenneth Michaels
Production Design	Cleo Harris-Seaton
Lighting and Stage Management	Phoebe Salter
Artwork Design	Paul Vine

The action takes place in a vault of the Banque Nationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie in occupied Paris in 1940, shortly after the Armistice between France and Germany.

Picasso's Artful Occupation will last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes without an interval



Gary trained at London University in English Literature and Theatre Arts. He has been on stage in London since 2011 as Humbert in *Lolita*, Barry in *Conjugal Rites* and Emil in *The Duck Variations*. He has played Bennett Hawkins in *Black Chiffon*, Papa in *The Days of the Commune* and Hugh in *Chasing Beckett*, all at The White Bear. His Shakespeare includes *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry VI Part 1*.

Feature films include *The Real Bronson*, *Ill Manors* and *The Wedding*.



David is a graduate of Drama Studio, London, and the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts. Credits include Charles Dickens in *A Little Bit of Dickens*; Antonio in *The Witch*; Hector Brabant in *The Bright and Bold Design*; Henry in *Love, Love, Love*; Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*; Henry VIII in *All is True*; Harcourt in *The Country Wife*; Angelo in *Measure for Measure*; Tusenbach in *Three Sisters*.

Film includes *The Rise* and *They're out of the Business*.



Roberto recently graduated from Arts Educational with an MA in Acting. Since graduating he's appeared in a number of student films for the London Film Academy and the London College of Communication, amongst others, and has performed in a new short play at The Drayton Theatre.

Roberto is really excited to be making his debut on the stage of the Barons Court Theatre with such an amazing, thought-provoking play.

Kenneth Michaels went to Manchester University and obtained a BA (Hons) in Drama and English. He did a Postgraduate Diploma in Acting and Directing at the Drama Studio, and then Speech and Drama at LRAM. After realising his passion was for directing, he studied for an MA in Theatre Arts, Performance Theory and Practice at Goldsmiths College, London University. He works regularly as a freelance director. His experience includes Shakespeare, Chekhov, Ibsen, new plays, devised work and rehearsed readings. He is a regular director of new plays for Actors and Writers London. He has also directed in Germany and Denmark, and has taught at drama schools in London.



After studying Set Design at Wimbledon College of Art, Cleo went into freelance production design in film, theatre and TV. One of her early jobs was as a member of the Art Department on the CBBC show *Sadie J* and in 2011 Cleo worked as part of the team that both designed and built the set for the short film, *Mrs Bates*, which won the Diamond Award at the Bangkok International Film Festival. Cleo's most recent work consists of set designs for a number of fringe theatre shows in London, including Ian Buckley's last play at Barons Court *The Tailors' Last Stand*, as well as art directing and producing concept artwork for a couple of feature films which are currently in preproduction.

Cleo also designs event spaces and retail window displays, and has worked on windows for House of Fraser, Asprey and Miss Sixty.



Phoebe is currently studying Technical Theatre and Stage Management. She has worked on two productions with the Little Pieces of Gold Theatre Company as assistant stage manager, and she has worked at Upstairs at The Gatehouse.

This is her first professional stage management role and she is very excited to be working with this team and on this show.

Paris under German occupation

On 14th June 1940, the victorious German army marched into France and into Paris where they were to stay, for the most part unwelcome, for the next five years. Life for Parisians was to change unutterably!

German soldiers everywhere on the streets - in general polite and courteous, but armed and in charge. Swastikas flying on buildings the German High Command regarded as necessary to their requirements. Direction signs in German. The visible, painful marks of a conquered city. For the second time in their history, Parisians felt the deep sense of humiliation that comes with being a subject nation, serving an often arrogant, certainly confident, new ruler.

With efficiency and cunning, the Occupation regime's orders started to bite. One of the first was to summon any person living in Paris who had valuables in a bank vault to report to have them inventoried.

Among these was Picasso. In September 1940, in the vaults of the Banque Nationale du Commerce et de l'Industrie where he stored his works of art, he met with two young German officers. What could he rescue from this process? How high were the stakes for him?

Swirling threateningly in the air were rumours of events in Germany where Jews were being treated more and more harshly with every passing day. Stories circulated about the confiscation of art and other valuables from Jewish families. Museums and galleries in the already-conquered territories of Eastern Europe observed their precious masterworks disappearing. The perception that Goering and Hitler were desperate to get their hands on works of art, and would use any method to do so, was taking hold.

To complicate matters, the Nazis were very clear about the art they didn't like - the art they deemed immoral, an art that corrupted the Aryan spirit and weakened the Aryan race. Picasso, the most famous artist in the world in 1940, fell into this latter category. He had been labelled 'bolshhevik-degenerate' by Hitler who had declared 'merciless war' on art that 'insulted German feelings'. To begin the process of purification, an exhibition of 'degenerate' art had been organised in Munich in the summer of 1937. Attended by over two million people, it purported to show the German public examples of such degenerate work.

Picasso must have had very mixed feelings as he entered the bank vault where his works were to be catalogued. How was he to deal with the situation? How could he come out of it with the least damage to his person and his works?

My play shows in dramatic terms what might have happened on that important day.

A note about money

In 1940, £1 (240 pennies) was worth about 170 old francs. A loaf of bread cost 3.50 FF (about fourpence), a litre of milk 1.30 FF (about tuppence). Cigarettes were 4.50 FF a pack (about sixpence).

In 1938, Roland Penrose paid Picasso £280 for a painting, equivalent to about 47,600 francs. Penrose, biographer and friend of Picasso, thought he'd got a bargain!

The great humiliation, 1940



A Frenchman weeps for his country



An unwanted military parade



The German army marches past



Saluting an officer, who ignores you



The Germans in the streets of Paris



Buying trinkets to send home



Hitler with Arno Breker, his favourite sculptor, on his left



Hitler lords it over France



Picasso painting *Guernica*



Picasso and his concierge at the Atelier des Grands-Augustins, between 1937 and 1948