

Henry Fielding's dramatic writing coincided with a theatrical explosion in London. The years 1729 to 1737 experienced surprising increases in the number of playhouses and the size of the theater-going public. The excitement of experimentation and innovation was palpable. However, freedom and unpredictability are concepts that frighten established power; and reaction is the response by "the great" to revolution. The ruling administration along with the managers of the patent theater houses didn't much like being satirized — Fielding's stock in trade — or having to add the newer work to their repertoire of tired old stock plays, puppet shows and the stilted imported operas of the day. The heavy hand of the censor descended in 1737 and that was that.



Henry Fielding

Just what do we mean when we say, "The Great"? More than one student of history has noted that having this moniker attached to someone's name does not indicate that they were a particularly nice person. Alexander, Charlemagne, Peter and many other favorites racked up considerable body counts in order to achieve this title. Our little hero has done as much and deserves no less. We seem to be in awe of those who can acquire inordinate power over the life and liberty of multitudes. We don't talk about whether we would want them over for tea; but, as long as they are kept an historical distance from us, we do admire them. It isn't going too deeply into psychology to recognize the need to imagine oneself standing among the powerful and great, for a moment, when one's powerlessness is most obvious and painful. However, this can get us into trouble if the aspirant to greatness holds office in our own time. Democracy and the rights and welfare of the individual usually suffer while a cult of personality runs its course. Victory, whether real or an elaborate photo op, tends to relieve people of their critical faculties and the presence of mind to consider motive. Somehow we become willing to sacrifice the very things we started out defending just so we can feel we are part of a winning team — the one with the conquering hero. Well, enough of that. This is a farce after all, and a satirical burlesque at that. We are supposed to be amused; and that may be for the best. If we learn to recognize what in human behavior is truly ridiculous, perhaps we can also learn to spot what is truly great.



THE AUTHOR'S THUMB

written and directed by Dennis Gersten

adapted from the writings of Henry Fielding

Cast

Mrs. Moneywood.....	Carol Sigurdson*
Luckless.....	Christopher Le Crenn*
Harriot.....	Elaine Capogeannis*
Jack.....	Andrew Graves
Witmore.....	Jon Mullich*
Doodle.....	James Kevin Ward*
Noodle.....	Christopher Le Crenn*
Foodle.....	Andrew Graves
Sir Hugh Mullet as King Arthur.....	Steve Peterson*
Lady Sylvia Mullet as Queen Dollalolla.....	Elizabeth Wells*
Tom Thumb.....	Blake Walker
Glumdalca.....	Noel Evangelisti*
Lord Grizzle.....	Jon Mullich*
Bailiff.....	James Kevin Ward*
Follower.....	Andrew Graves
Cleora.....	Elaine Capogeannis*
Huncamunca.....	Lyndie Renee
Mustacha.....	Andrew Graves
Parson.....	Andrew Graves
Ghost.....	Andrew Graves
Soldiers.....	Elaine Capogeannis*, Christopher Le Crenn*, Carol Sigurdson*
Merlin.....	James Kevin Ward*
Gonsalvo.....	James Kevin Ward*

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

* Member of one or more of the 4-A performing arts unions



Production Staff

Set Design.....Dean Cameron
 Costume Design.....Don Nelson
 Lighting Design.....Derrick McDaniel
 Sound Design.....Brad Benedict
 Composer.....William A. Reilly
 Stage Manager.....Caroline Morgan
 Special Effects.....John Zuehlke
 Choreography.....Livia Treviño
 Set construction.....Gary Lamb
 Publicity.....Phil Sokoloff
 Program and poster design.....Jon Mullich
 Fight Choreography.....Dennis Gersten & Jon Mullich
 Special Thanks.....Terry Evans and Maaren Edvard

THEATRE ROYAL,
 CAMARIL LANE
 One night only
 Benefit Performance
 for
Mr. Luckles
 who will perform his new tragedy starring
Sir Hugh Mullet
 as Arthur, King of the Britons
 with his Company of Morris St. Andrews
The Tragedie of Tragedies
 or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb, the Great
 Friday Evening, Sept. 17, 1977

King Arthur, Tom Thumb, Lord Glatton, Mr. Noodle	Sir Hugh Mullet Mr. Noodle Mr. Hammer Mr. Luckles
Mrs. Doodle Miss Muff Miss Muff	Mr. Muff
Mr. Poodle Miss Muff Miss Muff Miss Muff	Mr. Poodle
Queen Doodle, Princess Hammer, Clara, Clara	Lord Muff Mrs. Noodle Miss Hammer Miss Hammer



Theatre Unlimited



Shoe Man



Move Over, Mrs. Markham



Fearless Follies



The Keys to the Kingdom



Theatre Unlimited was created in early 1993 by a group of actors who found themselves bound by frustrations common to theatre artists in Los Angeles: the emphasis on film and television, a lack of viable performance venues, the difficulty in attracting audiences from across the L.A. area and the many factors that conspire to delay or defeat creative projects.

The Company is dedicated to promoting and encouraging interest in the performing arts and to providing an outlet for artists to create and express their creativity in a public forum.

Having debuted with a production of one-act plays, including *Bad Brad* by Brook Berry, in 1995 we staged a “rambunctious” production of George M. Cohan’s *Seven Keys to Baldpate* which Robert Windeler placed 5th on his KCRW top 10 of the year list.

In 1996 we built T.U. Studios, the old site of the Wildside Theatre and the Iguana Cafe, popular Noho landmarks, containing a 53-seat theater and a 460 square foot studio and opened with productions of the critically acclaimed world premieres of *The Keys to the Kingdom* by Mark McQuown and *Urned Happiness* by Ernest Kearney.

Over the next few years we produced several plays including the Ray Cooney farce *Move Over, Mrs. Markham*, which garnered four ADA awards from the Valley Theatre League including Best Ensemble and Best Production of a Revival Comedy, and the West Coast premiere of *Shoe Man* by Jeff Daniels.

At T.U. Studios, Theatre Unlimited has co-produced a diverse variety of shows with other companies as culturally diverse as the Celtic Arts Center and the Armenian Theatre Company. Last year our audiences were thrilled by the world premiere of Mark Knowles’s new musical *Angry Young Teen-Age Girl Gang*, a multi-ADA winner.

Quite a few film and video projects have been shot here and we are called home by teachers offering a variety of acting techniques as well as classes covering working in the industry, commercial acting, improvisation and Alexander technique.



Elaine Capogeannis (*Harriot/Cleora/Soldier*) Hailing from Northern California, Elaine knew exactly what she wanted to be - a doctor. Five years at UCLA cured her of that. EMT certified and internships from CBS to NBC news, she finally found acting - and a Career. *Dear Jimmy*, a film festival contender, just filmed her as a reporter while evenings at the Woodland Hills Playhouse’s *Anatomy of a Murder* had her as an attorney, Mitch. Last month was *Macbeth*, three days outdoors in Brentwood as: stately Lady MacDuff, Sexy-Evil Witch, and boy Seward. This duplicity originated in KJAZZ Borger’s *King Lear*, where she played Cordelia and the acrobatic Fool, and at Knightsbridge’s *Henry IV Part II* in Doll Tearsheet and the comedic Old Man Davy. Reviews liken her to Rosalind Russell, Bacall, and Hepburn combined. She is South Coast Rep certified and has a B.A. from UCLA in History. Gentle Harriot is dedicated to my family’s Aunt Harriet - a beam of laughter in the dark.



Noel Evangelisti (*Glumdalca*) is delighted to be working on this production with Theatre Unlimited. She has a Masters Degree in acting from California Institute of the Arts and has worked with numerous theater companies in LA. Some of the roles she enjoyed bringing to life are: Liz in *The Philadelphia Story*, The Pope in *Red Noses* and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Noel can be seen in *LA Confidential*, *Terminator 2*, *Pacific Heights* and *The Babysitter*.

Andrew Graves (*Jack/Foodle/Follower/Mustacha/Parson/Ghost*) Since being deported from the UK, Andrew has most recently appeared in *Bedroom Farce* and *Henry V* for The Pasadena Shakespeare Company; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Taming of the Shrew* for the Canyon Theatre Guild; and *The Comedy of Errors* for Santa Clarita Rep. He also appeared briefly on Jack Osbourne’s TV Show, *Union Jack* - but as that was only shown in the UK, you probably didn’t see it. He is honored to be making his Theatre Unlimited debut with such a great team.





Christopher Le Crenn (*Luckless/Noodle/Soldier*) is a classical actor from New York, with a background in theatrical clowning, performance in mask, and unrehearsed First Folio Shakespeare. As artistic director of Rabbit in the Moon, he has produced five plays in NYC. Since moving to LA last year, his film roles have included a narc, a slow redneck, and an inebriated Jesus Christ. He impersonates Steve from Blue's Clues and is a professional Tarot card reader. Christopher will next be seen as an insane director in the Internet pilot *Reel Hollywood*.

Jon Mullich (*Witmore/Lord Grizgle*) has been seen across the western United States in such theatres as the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, Actors Lab Arizona, Actors Alley, Theatre Exchange, the Arroyo Repertory Theatre and Nevada Shakespeare. Favorite roles include Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, Abel Drugger in *The Alchemist*, Gloucester in Reza Abdoh's avant garde staging of *King Lear*, a six month stint as Christopher Wren in *The Mousetrap*, the title role in *Sherlock Holmes*, and the title role in *Hamlet* (a performance he repeated in the Shakespeare pastiche *Just Desserts*). A member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Jon's plays include the romantic comedy *The Lipstick Lesbian* and his adaptation of the Italian farce *A Servant of Two Masters* set in Prohibition-era Chicago, in which he created the lead role of Truffaldino Bottachio. Check out Jon's web site www.madbeast.com.



Steve Peterson (*Sir Hugh Mullet as King Arthur*) most recently appeared at the Autry National Center portraying George Catlin as part of the Smithsonian exhibit *George Catlin and His Indian Gallery*. He also was seen this spring as Stanley in *The Body* at the Matrix Theatre. He is a member of Write/Act Repertory Theatre Company in Hollywood where he has been seen in *Murder, Mayhem and the Macabre*, *A Patriot for Me*, *Transports of the Heart*, and *Bleak House*. Other Los Angeles stage appearances include *A Month in the Country* at the Odyssey Theatre, *The Letter Writer* at The Santa Monica Playhouse, and Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee* at the Sierra Madre Playhouse. He has appeared in numerous productions at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, at the Grove Shakespeare and Nevada Shakespeare



When the Fielding family money was lost through the dishonesty of a broker the twenty-year-old Henry found he needed an income and turned to the most lucrative genre of the time, drama. But Henry never would write a tragedy. His early farces were a great success; and two of these plays make up tonight's adaptation — "*The Author's Farce*" and "*The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*" — both written in 1730. This successful first season of four plays launched Fielding on a prosperous career in the theater. He wrote twenty-five plays during those eight years in London, including two adaptations of Molière. In 1736 his already satirical writing became more pointedly political as he attacked the corrupt administration of Prime Minister Walpole in sharp burlesques. Walpole responded with the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, which put drama under the direct control of the Lord Chamberlain and remained there until 1968. As Walpole intended, these censorship laws effectively ended Fielding's dramatic career, even closing down the theater in the Haymarket where he made his living as manager and chief playwright.

Although extremely popular in the 18th century, his satirical farces and burlesques have rarely received high praise from critics, with the notable exception of George Bernard Shaw who considered Fielding the greatest practicing dramatist, excepting Shakespeare, produced by England between the Middle Ages and the 19th century. It was unfortunate for Fielding, but he had inherited the decaying form of comedy from Congreve and the Restoration playwrights. New comic forms were developing under these new restrictions that would lead to the plays of Sheridan and Goldsmith; and besides, Henry was soon to become one of the greatest artists among English novelists of the eighteenth century.

Fielding soon took up the study of law and graduated in record time even while writing for newspapers and becoming editor of the opposition journal *The Champion*. Although a hard worker, Fielding was rumored to have been a drunkard and a womanizer; and perhaps it was this lifestyle that led to the increasing gout and asthma that rendered his legal career ineffective. But who's complaining? Henry Fielding's first novel, *Joseph Andrews*, was published in 1742 and written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote* as a comic epic poem in prose. The favorable reception inspired him to bring out a collection of essays, poems, plays and prose fiction under the title *Miscellanies*. He continued writing fiction, publishing his last novel, *Amelia*, in 1751. His comic masterpiece and best known work, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, came in 1749. In the previous year Fielding became a magistrate, thereby ending his financial woes.

His experience with crime and law enforcement brought forth pamphlets calling for sweeping changes in the laws governing crime. They resulted in reforms that reduced robberies in his district and improved the state of the prisons. Several large gangs were broken up by offering money and immunity to those who would turn in their fellow criminals. One pamphlet led to the formation of the Bow Street Runners, Britain's first professional police force. He was directly responsible for improvements in record keeping, founding what was later to become the Criminal Record Office of Scotland Yard. Henry's health continued to deteriorate, so in 1754 he packed up his wife, one daughter, his gout, asthma, jaundice, dropsy and crutches, and sailed to the warmer, healthier climate of Portugal, which killed him in two months. But wit is hard to do in. Published posthumously, his final work, recorded with charm and good humor, *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, has been described as a classic example of the horrors of traveling.



Don Nelson (*costume design*) has been in Theatre in Southern California both on and off the boards for many years. He has designed costumes for more than three hundred production. Some of the favorites include, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Calamity Jane*, *Shoe Man*, *Move Over Mrs. Markham*, and the Award winning environmental production of "The Scottish Play." Favorite roles include the Boy's Father in *The Fantasticks*, Peter Shirley in *Major Barbara*, and Pete in *Little Mary Sunshine*. Don is please to be working again with Theatre Unlimited.

Livia Treviño (*choreography*) is a founding member of Theatre Unlimited and has appeared in several TU productions including the award winning *Move Over Mrs. Markham*. Most recent appearances: *She Stoops to Conquer*, Attic Theatre and *Baggage*, Hudson Theatre. She received Ovation Award nominations for both *The Hostage* (ensemble), and *Coyote on a Fence* (lead actress), at the Alliance Repertory Theatre. Critics acclaimed her "wit and energy" as Mrs. Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol* at South Coast Repertory. Livia is a Nosotros member and has performed in many theatres in the LA area, including Playwrights Arena, Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Knightsbridge Theatre, Powerhouse Theatre, and in theatres throughout the United States.

John Zuehlke (*special effects*) In addition to serving as the Technical Director of Theatre Unlimited and Hollywood Actor's Theatre, he has supplied technical assistance in lighting, sound, special effects, and/or staging systems to various theaters around the Los Angeles area. These include City Garage (various productions), Interact, Candlefish (Michael Butler's production of *Hair!*, directed by its co-author, James Rado), Morgan Wixon (David Mamet's *The Poet and the Rent* - West Coast premiere), Nosotros (*Wyandotte* - world premiere), LAVC (Chaul's *The Phantom of the Opera* - world premiere), and ARK (Mays' *A Clockwork Orange*). His sole on-stage appearance was with Julie Newmar in *In the Boom Boom Room* at H.A.T., and he holds the dubious distinction of being commented about on Jay Leno's Tonight Show by Shannen Doherty.

Please turn off your cell phones and pagers



Festivals, and the UK/AZ Festival in Phoenix, as well as Glendale's A Noise Within. Steve's TV credits include appearances on the daytime serials *Days of Our Lives* and *General Hospital* as well as primetime series *Murphy Brown*, *Murder, She Wrote*, and *Mama's Family*, to name a few. Steve can be seen in the cult film classic *Lobster Man from Mars*, and as one of the many Elvi in *Honeymoon in Vegas*.



Lyndie Renee (*Huncamunca*) A veteran of the stage, Lyndie has appeared in over 60 productions since she first stepped on stage at the tender age of 8. Recent favorites are: Martha in *The Secret Garden* at Glendale Centre Theatre, Tzeitel in *Fiddler on the Roof* at Musical Theatre West, Jo in *Little Women* at Laguna Playhouse, Polly in *Crazy for You* and Sandy in *Grease* at the Candlelight Pavilion. She toured as lead singer for Holland America Cruise Lines. She can be seen on in commercials, game shows and every Christmas you can catch her in *The Glory of Christmas* on Pay Per View. She can be heard on sweetener tracks and voice-overs, and you can hear her feet tapping on the CD, *LA Supper Club*. Lyndie has her AS in Early Childhood Education and is working toward her BA in Human Development at Pacific Oaks College. She spends her days teaching three year olds at The Neighborhood School and has also taught ballet, tap, jazz, ballroom dancing and gymnastics. Thanks to Dr. N. for giving me my voice.

Carol Sigurdson (*Mrs. Moneywood/Soldier*) is proud to be joining Theatre Unlimited in its first production of its 2004-2005 season. A two-time Drama-Logue Award winner and a member of many a critically acclaimed production with various theatre companies throughout the Los Angeles area, she is also a veteran of innumerable student films, independent television and films. A special thank you to her wonderful husband, Dale, for his tolerance with her theatre addiction. And if I may be so bold as to be political for an instant, please register to vote and please vote. It is so very important every voice be heard!





Blake Walker (*Tom Thumb*) is very happy to be appearing in his first production with Theatre Unlimited. A recent graduate of Southern Methodist University (BFA, Acting) in Dallas, Blake appeared in numerous classical and contemporary productions there, including *Heartbreak House*, *Anything Goes*, and the Dallas Shakespeare Festival, along with several student films. In LA, Blake also has starred in a music video for the band Curanderos and is an intermediate student with the Groundlings.

James Kevin Ward (*Doodle/ Bailiff/ Merlin/ Gonsalvo*) is an accomplished voice actor, having voiced numerous radio and TV spots, cartoons, animated features, computer games and books on tape. His on-camera credits include *ER*, *Alias*, *Becker*, *Ellen*, *The Smart Guy*, and the first *Spider-Man* movie (he blewed up real good!). He has been active in the LA theater scene since the 1980's, most recently with the Road theater (right up the street in NoHo); he has appeared (either in the main cast, or as understudy) in *An American Romance*, *Hitler's Head*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *David and Goliath in America*, *A Mislead Heaven*, *The Woman in Black*, *Napoli Millionaria*, and in this year's *The Pagans*. He also lampooned the alleged President in *Gore More Years*, or *Son of A Bush* at the Odyssey theater.



Elizabeth Wells (*Lady Sylvia Mullet as Queen Dollalolla*) is the founder and co-artistic director of Theatre Unlimited. She appeared in *Shoeman* and the multi-award winning *Move Over, Mrs. Markham* at Theatre Unlimited, as well as produced a variety of shows. She was seen in *Jubilee* at the American Renegade Theatre, for which she received an ADA award for best supporting actress, and *Much Adieu* at the Whitmore/ Lindley Theatre, an ADA winner for best ensemble. Elizabeth is a graduate of New York's American Academy of Dramatic Arts and has performed in stock and regional theatre in North Carolina and Florida. TV credits include *Another World*, *One Life to Live* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

Dennis Gersten (*director/playwright*) As an actor, writer and director, Dennis helped create Stagewrights, Inc. in NYC, a playwrights' theatre company now twenty-one years old. There, he wrote *Mine* and the one-acts *Rhetoric* and *Puppy Chow* and directed and performed in original works. Dennis attended the graduate program in acting at California Institute of the Arts where he wrote *Willie Said To*, a finalist with the LA Arts Council and other contests nationally and performed at Playwrights Arena and Unity Players; *Desert - Morning*, performed at the Gene Dynarski Theatre; and *Dirty Slut*. Primarily an actor, Dennis performed with Linda Hamilton in the world premiere of *Worse Than Murder: Ethel and Julius Rosenberg* at the Ventura Court Theatre and the west coast premiere of *David and Goliath in America* with the Road Theatre Company, for which he received his third ADA Award. He is a founding member of Theatre Unlimited, where he was seen in *Shoe Man* and *Move Over, Mrs. Markham*, and of the Michael Chekhov Studio. Dennis particularly enjoys performing, directing and teaching Shakespeare and other plays of style and thanks anyone who buys a theatre ticket anywhere for feeding the flame!

Dean Cameron (*set design*) has been wrecking havoc in the theatre world for over twenty-five years as both a costume and set designer. His designs have delighted audiences and annoyed critics at the Nevada Shakespeare Festival, the Arcadia Shakespeare Festival, and the Great American Melodrama. In addition, he is also a mosaic and mural artist of note. He refrains from saying what the note said, however.

Derrick McDaniel (*lighting design*) began his acting apprenticeship in 1990 at Theater East in Studio City, CA. This is where he honed the craft of stage lighting. A few of Derrick's lighting credits include *The Godfather Workout* for the HBO comedy festival in Aspen; *The Quiet Room* at the Whitefire Theater, *Worse Than Murder* at the Ventura Court Theater, and *Eubie Weller* at the Stella Adler Theater; *Among The Thugs* at the Odyssey Theater- and many others. Derrick was nominated for a 2004 Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle award for lighting in 2004, for his lighting in *Among The Thugs*. The NOHO Awards committee has nominated Derrick twice for his lighting and stage managing work. Enjoy the farce and the show.