

**Working It Out:  
AHRB Innovation Research Project**

**Investigators:  
Gilli Bush-Bailey & Jacky Bratton**



**Friday 26th July 2002: The Boilerhouse, Royal Holloway**



## Programme:

This research project has focussed on collaborative group rehearsal as the place in which Jane Scott's plays were finally shaped and may still be rediscovered. The workshop has sought to apply the still-developing procedures of 'practice as research' to theatre history, and is something of a high-risk undertaking.

The direction of the four week workshop has been informed by scholarly research from a range of academic disciplines and performance practices. The day will begin with short presentations from each of the contributors and following a showing of the practical work in the afternoon you are invited to participate in a plenary session with the full company.

- 10.00: Arrival, coffee and welcome at The Boilerhouse, RHUL.
- 10.30: Introduction to the Project by Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacky Bratton
- 10.50: Dick McCaw - Movement trainer
- 11.10: Sarah Hibberd - Music
- 11.30: Valerie Cumming - Costume
- 11.50: Lucy Nevitt - Combat / fight arranging
- 12.00: Giannandrea Poesio - Dance - mime
- 12.20: Peter Hulton - Documentation process

Introduction to the afternoon showing followed by

- 1.00: Lunch - Board Room / Conference Room, International Building, RHUL
- 2.30: Showing of scenes from The Old Oak Chest & The Inscription - Boilerhouse
- 4.00: Tea
- 4.30: Plenary session with contributors and the company
- 6.00: Close



## The Plays:

The Inscription was a successful stage confection, based on Arthur Murphy's 1770 verse tragedy *The Desert Island*. To Murphy's 'very dull' (Genest) four-hander Scott added stage interest in exactly the way he himself rejected, in his Preface, as the crude suggestion of a friend: "Can't you," said he, "throw in something here and there to season it more to the public Appetite? – Suppose you were to change the Title, and fix the Scene among the Anthropophagi ... a few of those extraordinary Personages exhibited on the Stage, will prove very acceptable: – What think you of an Irish servant in it? ... add some aerial beings, and conclude the Whole with a drunken Song by the tars of Old England."

Following this prescription closely – who knows how ironically? – Scott has created a subplot in which comic/heroic sailors tangle with preposterous cannibals; she herself played a mischievous midshipman, putting in his mouth outrageous patriotic claptraps only imaginable in 1814. It's interesting that her burletta/burlesque line in the play actually mirrors the tragic main plot, with a native woman attempting in vain to recapture the jack tar who married and deserted her, while the tragic European wife Matilda is actually reunited with her husband Henry.

We are presenting a heavily cut version of the whole play, whose simple story will, we hope, be intelligible in this form, even if its threads are left a little loose.

Jane Scott's only published play, *The Old Oak Chest* was written in February 1816, during the crisis following the Napoleonic wars, and its political potential made it a favourite of the illegal Radical theatres. Its unified and coded plot, disguised by the stage Gothic mode, revolves around an exiled General, Almanza, whose child and fortune have been secretly preserved from the depredations of the present ruler, Count Lanfranco, by a band of smugglers. Smugglers were popular figures in British culture for many years, and at this point represented the ideal of Free Trade, as songs and toasts make plain within the play. They are opposed to a band of robbers, encouraged by Lanfranco himself – whom we may read as an oppressive and rapacious government. Jane Scott's own role was Roda, the daughter of an ambiguously violent woodcutter allied to Lanfranco's robbers. In the scenes we are presenting, Roda protects the young Henrico de Rosalva, who is carrying Almanza's pardon from the court, and Roda and Tinoco, a smuggler, the brother of her fiancé, are carried off by force to the kitchens of Lanfranco's castle.



## ***The Old Oak Chest***

**Henrico de Rosalvo:** *The King's messenger*

**Gemma Baxter**

**Rodolph:** *A robber in league with Lanfranco*

**Robert Sterne**

**Roda:** *His daughter (played by Jane Scott)*

**Sarah Greene**

**Governor Lanfranco:** *Local ruler*

**Ben Duke**

**Rufus:** *and 1st robber*

**George Mann**

**2nd Robber:**

**Gemma Richardson**

**Shabrico:** *Captain of Robber Band*

**Richard Grey**

**Tinoco (disguised as Dame Jugget):** *Smuggler*

**Luis de Abreu**



## ***The Inscription***

<b>Matilda:</b> <i>Deserted wife</i>	<b>Lizzi Kew-Ross</b>
<b>Rosa (1):</b> <i>Her innocent daughter</i>	<b>Gemma Richardson</b>
<b>Henry:</b> <i>Matilda's husband</i>	<b>Ben Duke</b>
<b>Maitland:</b> <i>Ship's Captain</i>	<b>Robert Sterne</b>
<b>Dan Dock:</b> <i>Jack Tar</i>	<b>Luis de Abreu</b>
<b>Sydney Nelson:</b> <i>Midshipman (played by Jane Scott)</i>	<b>Sarah Greene</b>
<b>Doctor (Styptic)</b> <i>Ship's doctor</i>	<b>Richard Grey</b>
<b>Rosa (2)</b>	<b>Gemma Baxter</b>
<b>Wowsky:</b> <i>Native/Indian from nearby island</i>	<b>Gemma Richardson</b>
<b>Quashee:</b> <i>Dan Dock's native wife</i>	<b>Lizzi Kew-Ross</b>
<b>Muska:</b> <i>Native/Indian boy</i>	<b>George Mann</b>
<b>Namasket:</b> <i>Chief Native/Indian</i>	<b>Ben Duke</b>



**Gemma Baxter**

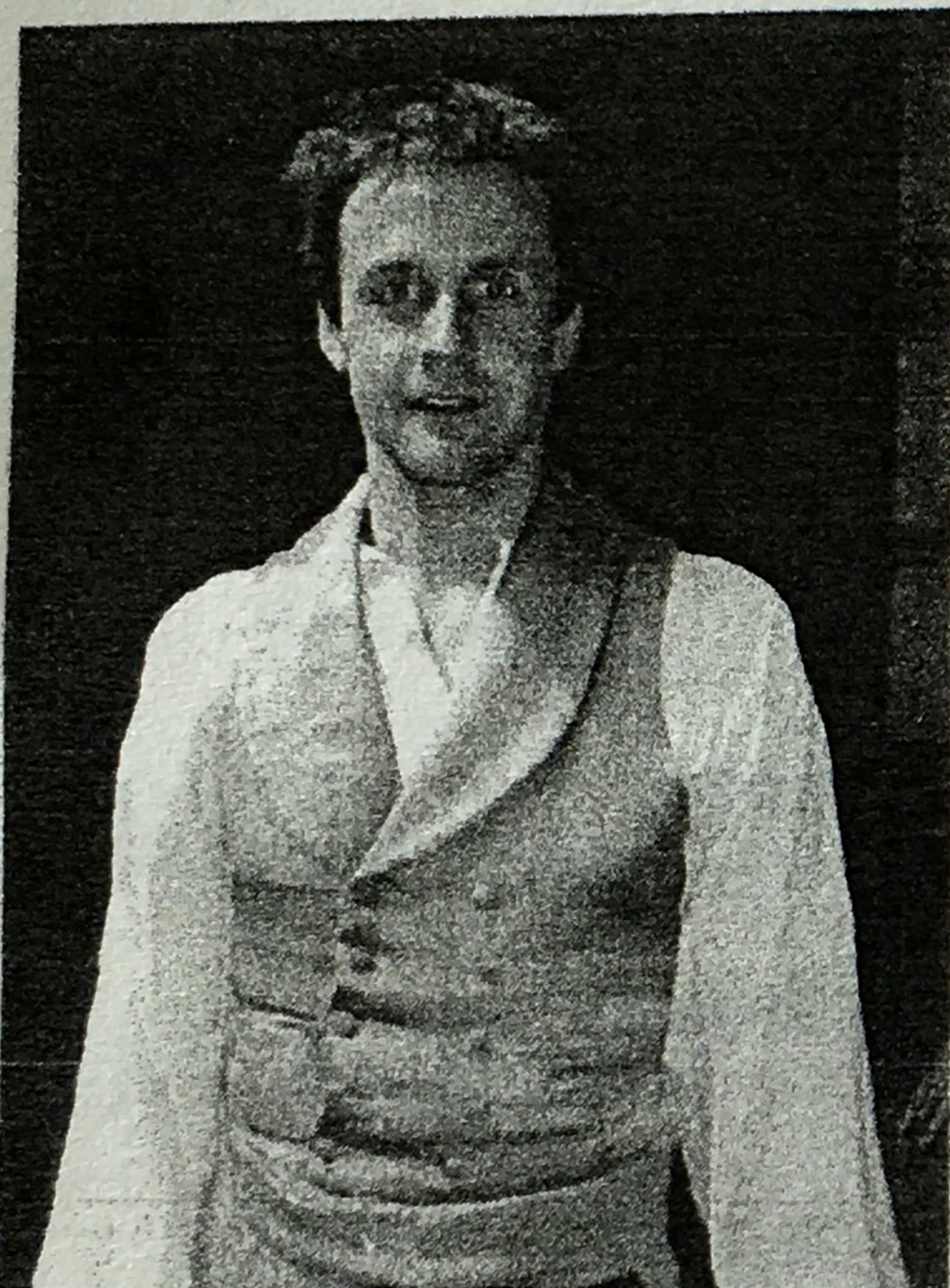


**Henrico de Rosalvo** (Old Oak Chest)

**Rosa (2)** (Inscription)

Gemma has just graduated from Royal Holloway with a joint honours degree in Drama and Music. She is going on to do a PGCE in Secondary Drama at Reading University.

**Robert Sterne**

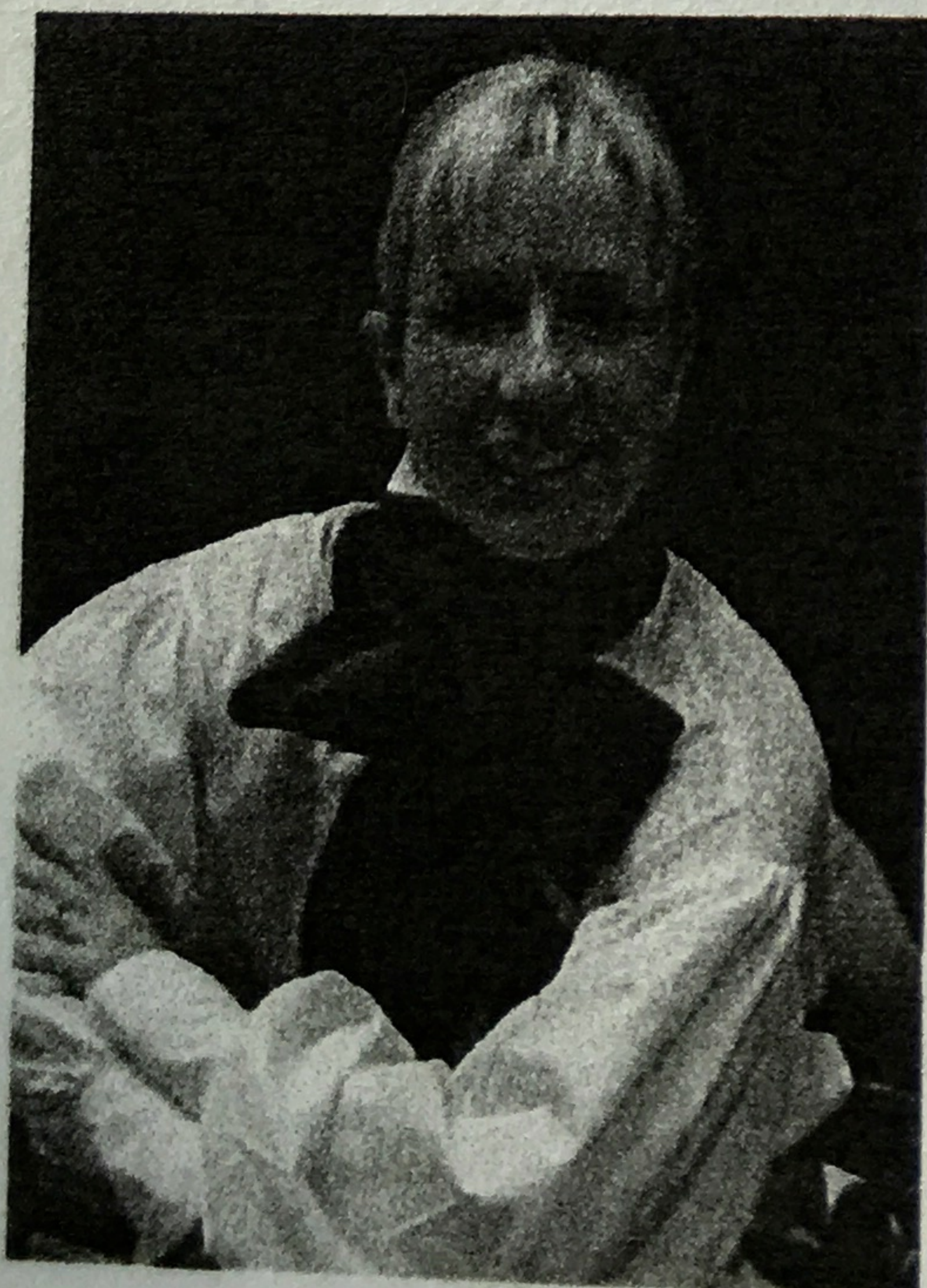


**Rodolph** (Old Oak Chest)

**Maitland** (Inscription)

Robert read English at New College, Oxford and trained at RADA. Theatre work includes plays at Richmond, Salisbury, York, Basingstoke, Newbury, Stratford and Hampstead. TV work includes *Quayside* (Tyne Tees) and *The Way We Live Now* (BBC) and, for film, *Cromwell* and *Fairfax* (Natural Nylon).

**Sarah Greene**



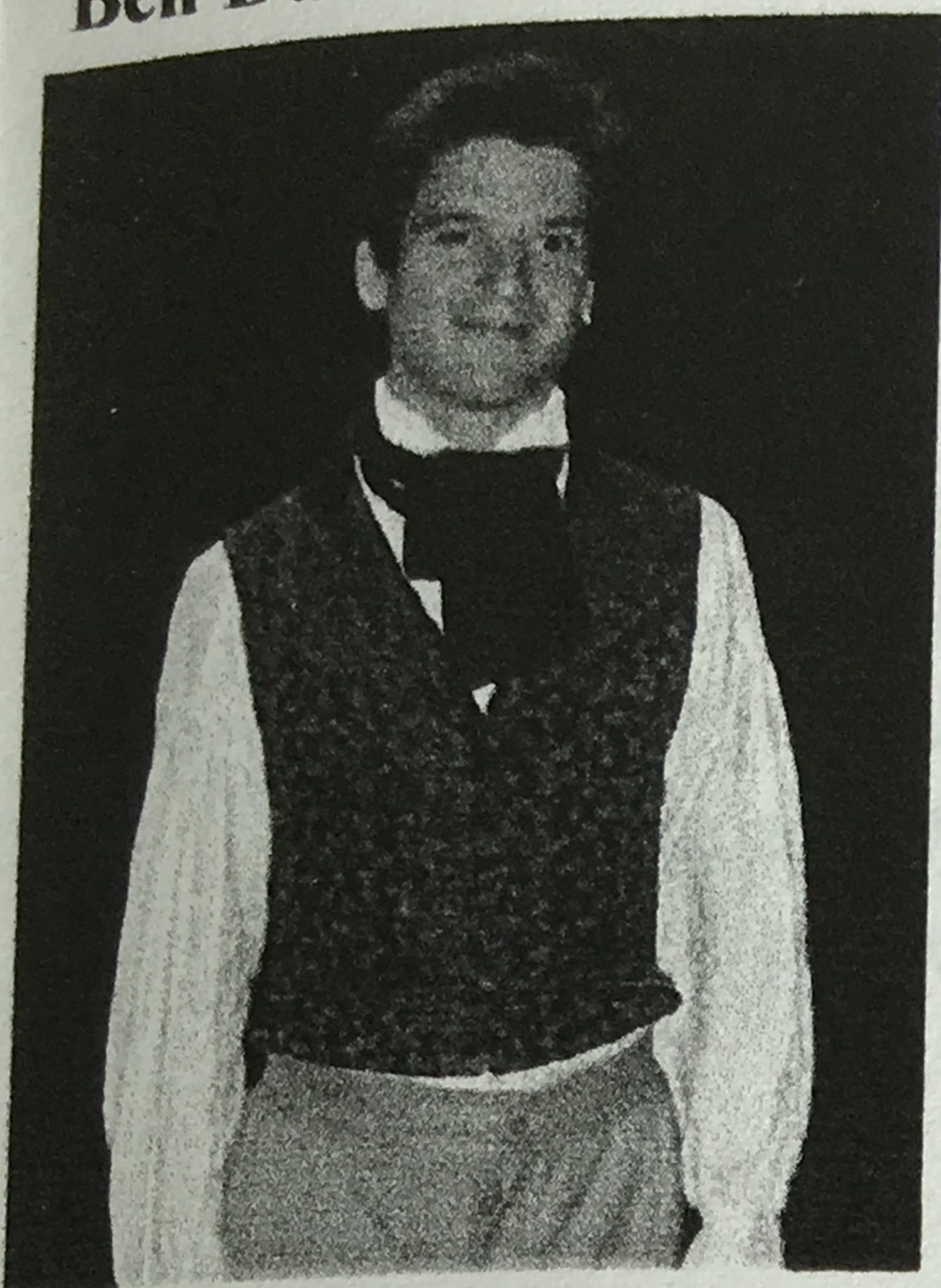
**Roda** (Old Oak Chest)

**Sydney Nelson** (Inscription)

Sarah graduated in Drama from Hull University. Since then she has worked in theatre in Manchester, Birmingham and London, playing roles ranging from Anne Frank and Polly Peacham to Margaret Thatcher and the Queen! Her career has mainly been in television for the last twenty years- one of her earliest roles was "Trishe" in *Together* (ITV), a seminal series in which she starred opposite Gilli Bush Bailey.



**Ben Duke**

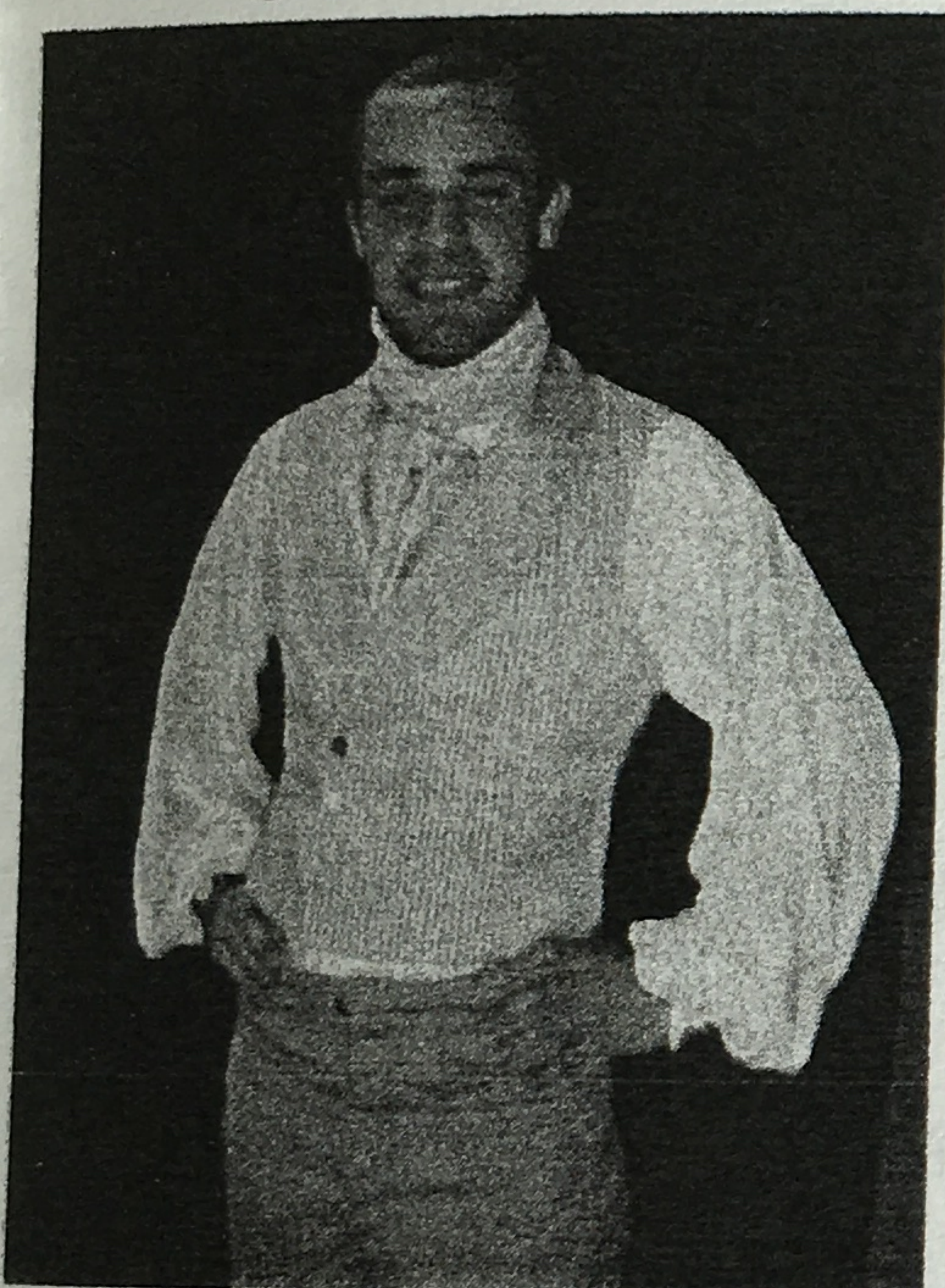


**Governor Lanfranco** (Old Oak Chest)

**Henry / Namasket** (Inscription)

Ben graduated from Guildford School of Acting in July 1999 and is currently studying at the London Contemporary Dance School.

**George Mann**

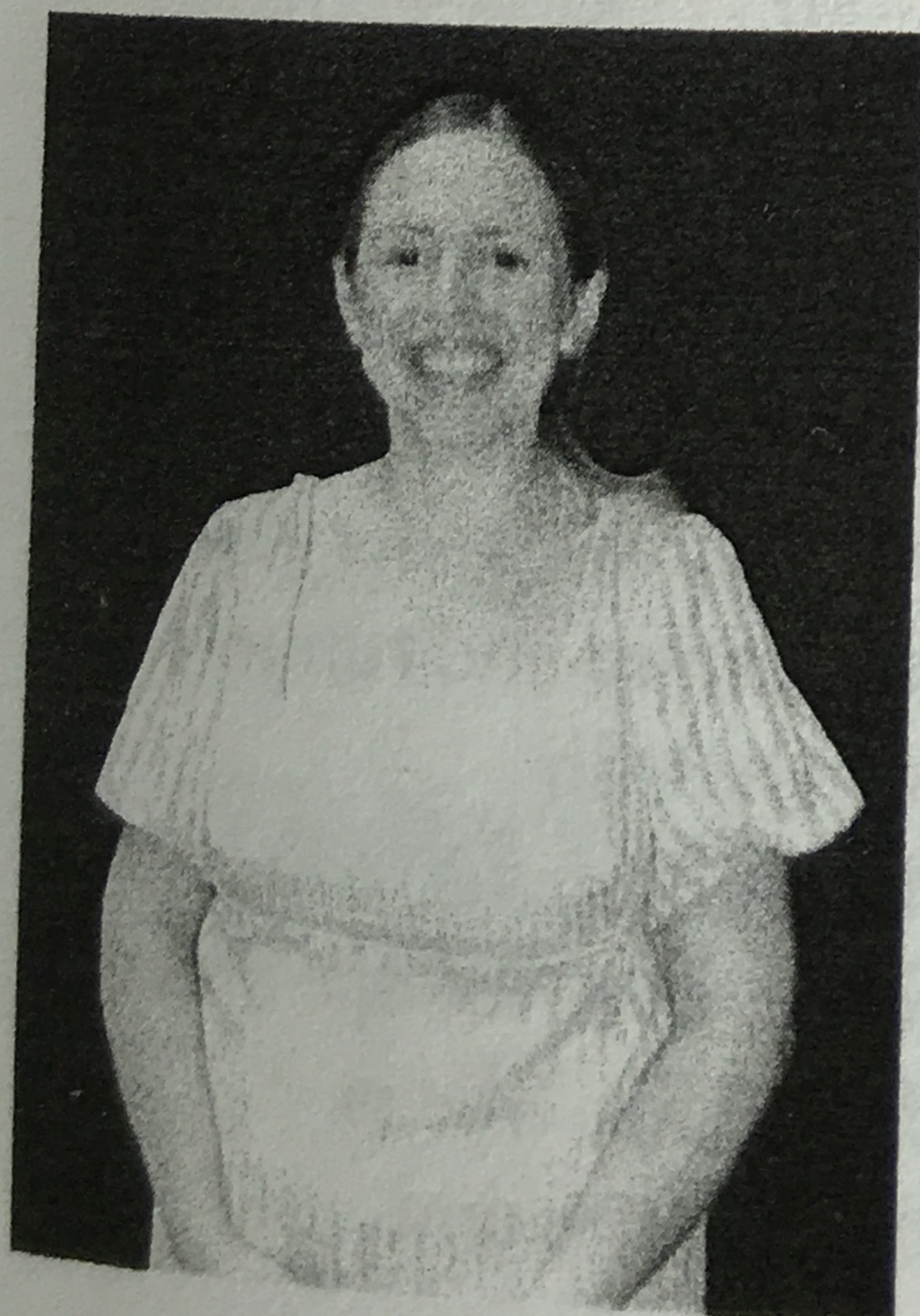


**Rufus / 1<sup>st</sup> Robber** (Old Oak Chest)

**Muska** (Inscription)

George is currently studying for a BA Honours in Drama and Theatre Arts at Royal Holloway. His main interests are in writing and performance.

**Gemma Richardson**



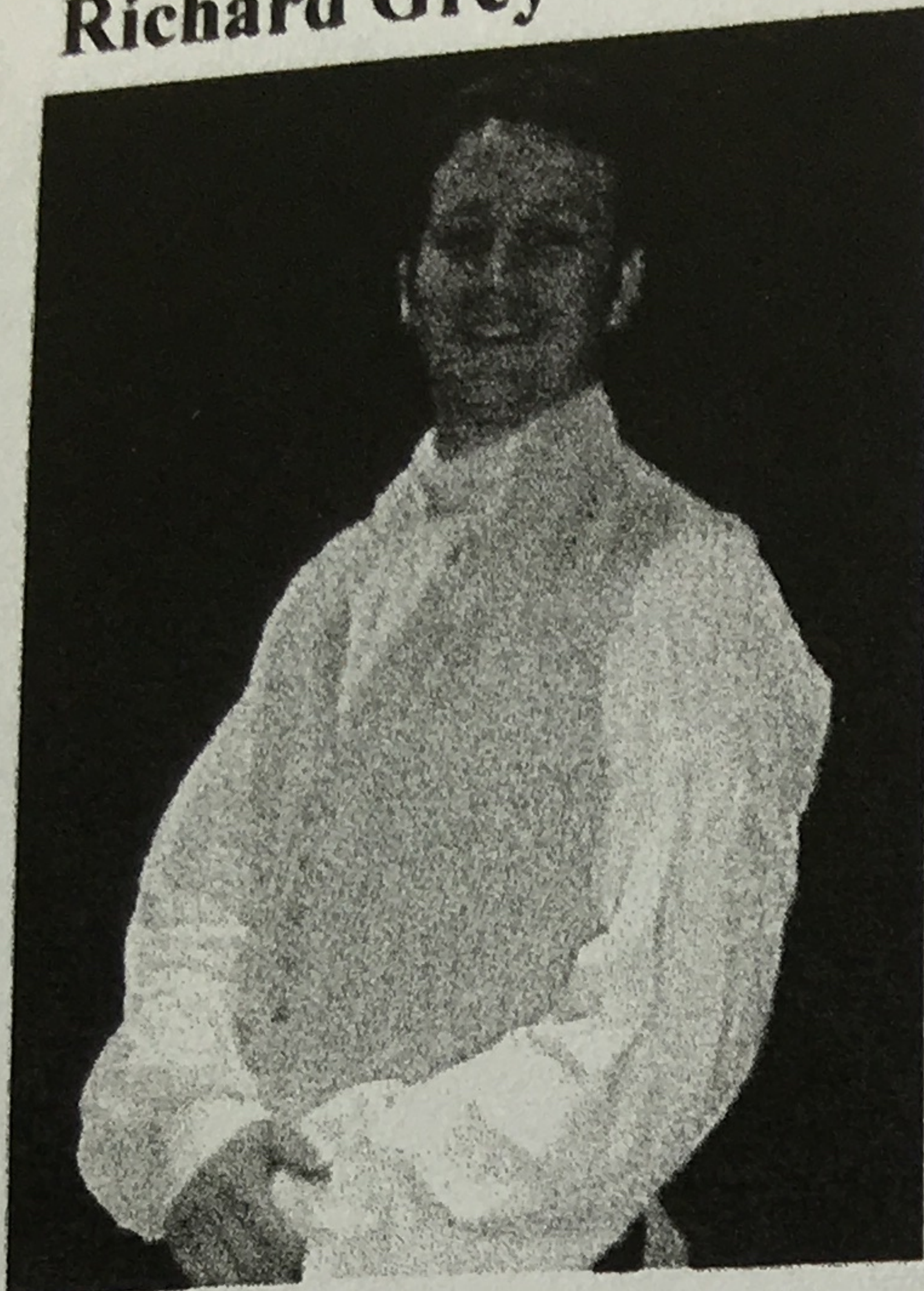
**2<sup>nd</sup> Robber** (Old Oak Chest)

**Rosa (1) / Wowsky** (Inscription)

Gemma graduated from Bretton Hall in 2001 with a BA Honours in Theatre Acting. Since that time she has been working, in the main, for Cragrats Theatre Company.



**Richard Grey**



**Shabrico** (*Old Oak Chest*)

**Doctor** (*Inscription*)

Since graduating from Bretton Hall College in July 2000, Richard has spent the majority of the time touring in various Theatre in Education productions for the Cragrats Theatre Company. Richard hopes to move into mainstream theatre as soon as the opportunity arises.

**Luis De Abreu**



**Tinoco** (*Old Oak Chest*)

**Dan Doc** (*Inscription*)

Luis is head of Performance Studies at Bird College and is currently studying for an MA in Physical Theatre at Royal Holloway.

**Lizzi Kew Ross**



**Matilda / Quashee** (*Inscription*)

Lizzi trained at the Froebel Institute and LCDS gaining an MA in Choreography. As a performer, teacher and choreographer she has worked in Uganda and London and as company teacher for Lucas Dance Company in Lancashire and run in-service training courses for teachers in Cambridgeshire. Credits include musicals at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, creative workshops and performances in schools and theatres. She is currently teaching at the Laban Centre and Birkbeck College.



**Ballet Master:**

**Giannandrea Poesio**

**Musical Director:**

**Nanette Partridge**

**Musicians:**

**Marian Givens (First Violin)**

**Martin Morgenstern  
(Viola)**

**Beale Schnaithmann  
(Violoncello)**

**Charlotte Tupper  
(Violin)**

**Fights arranged by:**

**Oonagh Phelan & Lucy Nevitt**

**Stage Management:**

**Jody Lorimer & Helen Weeks**

**Wardrobe mistress:**

**Alex Agg**

**Video Camera:**

**Peter Hulton &  
Claudia Kappenburg**

**Special Thanks to:**

**Rebecca Adams, Sean Brennan, Christie Carson, Jennie  
Clarke, Steve Johnson, Ann Ormesher, Nikki Small**

**And to the many friends and colleagues we have consulted  
in the course of our work.**