



Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Directed by Malcolm Brown

7th to 11th October 1997

Frankenstein

Frankenstein is the story of a young man who tries to play God. He unravels the secret of life, but succeeds only in creating a terrifying monster. He disowns his creation and drives it away into the mountains, but it returns to exact a hideous revenge on him, his family and friends.

Although *Frankenstein* was written 180 years ago, the story has a particular relevance for the world in which we live today, where such topics as organ transplants, surrogacy and cloning are a constant source of heated debate. The lesson of *Frankenstein* is clear: interference with nature - trying to play God - can only lead to disaster and tragedy; it is a lesson which human beings have still to learn.

The Genesis of the Story

The original story of *Frankenstein* arose from a gathering, one stormy night in 1816, at the Villa Diodati in Switzerland. The poets Byron and Shelley, Mary Shelley and Dr John Polidori were discussing the topic of the supernatural, and they decided that each of them should write a ghost story. Mary's dreams eventually brought forth her story:

"I saw with shut eyes, but acute mental vision - I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together - I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion...

"What terrified me will terrify others; and I need only describe the spectre which had haunted my midnight pillow." *Mary Shelley*

The Story on Stage and Screen

The first theatrical adaptation of *Frankenstein* by Richard Brinsley Peake opened in July 1823. It scored a great success, and met with Mary Shelley's approval, despite the sweeping changes that were made to the plot. A rival version by H M Milner opened shortly afterwards, and there were also three burlesques on the *Frankenstein* theme in the same year.

In the following years increasingly spectacular stage versions moved further and further from Mary Shelley's original story. In 1887, London's Gaiety Theatre presented *The Model Man* as a Christmas pantomime with Nellie Farren playing *Frankenstein* as a principal boy and the Monster presented as an automaton.

by Mary Shelley

In 1901 The Edison Company made a silent film version of *Frankenstein* with Charles Ogle as the Monster. No prints are known to have survived, and all that remains is a still photograph of Ogle in his Monster makeup.

In 1927 the actor-manager Hamilton Deane presented a more conventional stage version of the story, with himself as the Monster. This was restaged in 1930, and successfully toured the provinces in tandem with an adaptation of *Dracula*.

In 1931 the classic version of the story was filmed with Colin Clive as Frankenstein and Boris Karloff as the Monster. Live theatres could not compete with the effects achieved in the cinema, so *Frankenstein* virtually vanished from the stage.

In 1957 Hammer Films made *The Curse of Frankenstein* with Peter Cushing as a ruthless Frankenstein and Christopher Lee as the Monster. It was condemned by nearly every critic, but audiences loved it. The film became an international hit and was followed by a whole series of Frankenstein films.

The ultimate satirical comment on the Frankenstein myth came in 1973 with Richard O'Brien's *The Rocky Horror Show* which was filmed in 1975 as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. In 1994 Kenneth Branagh retained most of the elements of the original in his film version of the story with himself as Frankenstein and Robert de Niro as the Monster.

The version of the story being performed by Leeds Arts Centre was written by David Campton and first produced at the Library Theatre, Scarborough on 16th July 1959, with Stephen Joseph, Alan Ayckbourn and the author himself in the cast.

Costume Hire

Costumes of various types and period can be hired at reasonable rates from the Leeds Arts Centre costume collection by drama societies or by individuals for fancy dress occasions. Please telephone Mrs Margaret Rhodes, our wardrobe mistress, to discuss your requirements.

Leeds (0113) 275 6796

Cast

Victor Frankenstein	<i>Mark Clay</i>
Henri Clerval	<i>Alastair Watson</i>
Elizabeth	<i>Maureen Gokhale</i>
Justine	<i>Kerrie Barr</i>
Mme Couper	<i>Monica Brown</i>
M Clerval Senior	<i>Martin Key</i>
The Creature	<i>Mark Coward</i>

Production Team

Production Co-ordinator	<i>Richard Francis</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Martyn Drake</i>
Assistant Stage Managers	<i>Gwyneth Hadley, David Mallinson</i>
Properties	<i>Mary Nelson, Marie Lindley, Sasha Bennett</i>
Prompt	<i>Joyce King</i>
Sound Operation	<i>Trudy Stewart</i>
Sound Recording	<i>Jim Marshall</i>
Lighting	<i>Peter Waddicor</i>
Costumes	<i>Jean Blundell and Team</i>
Set Design	<i>Malcolm Brown</i>
Front of House Manager	<i>Denise Davies</i>
Box Office Managers	<i>George Judd, Betty Triggs</i>

Director **Malcolm Brown**

The action of the play takes place in and around a small town in Switzerland in 1817

There will be an interval of fifteen minutes

Civic Theatre

Theatre Manager - *Steven Cartwright*
Assistant Manager - *Vivien Simpson*
Chief Technician and Lighting - *Peter Waddicor*
Technicians - *Sandy Clark, Chas Elliott*
Catering for Crown Point Foods - *Shirley Tarran*
Box Office - *Helen Richmond, Shirley Shortall, Sylvia Gooding*

In accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Sub-Committee of Leeds City Council:

- The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open. All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions.
- Persons shall not be permitted to stand in any of the intersecting gangways, or stand in any other unseated space in the
- auditorium, unless standing in such a space has been specially allowed by the Licensing Committee. A notice is exhibited in that part of the auditorium in which standing has been sanctioned.
- The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before the commencement of each performance to show that it is in proper working order.

Next Week: **Leeds Art Theatre** present

Jack and the Broomstick by Pam Jones

from Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th October 1997

Leeds Arts Centre

Leeds Arts Centre was formed in 1945 as an amateur society. Our members come from all walks of life and include some who have worked in the theatre and others who hope to make a career on the stage. We are a friendly company who work together to maintain the high standards for which our productions are well known and enjoy ourselves very much in the process.

Each year we produce four plays here at the Civic Theatre and for the past two years have entered the 'Walk the Plank' play festival in Wakefield where we have won at least one prize each year.

Our Green Room Group is very active with plays, readings and other forms of entertainment in the rehearsal rooms, giving members who are not in the current theatre production the opportunity to develop their acting or directing abilities and entertain the rest of us.

Our Fine Arts Group meets regularly throughout the year for life drawing, sketching and painting.

Last, but not least, we enjoy a variety of social activities including theatre visits, outings, parties etc.

We are looking for new members...

...so if you are interested in any of the following:

**acting, directing, producing, set building
painting (scenery or pictures)
making and repairing costumes
helping back stage or front of house
or even with publicity**

...why not have a chat with one of our members front of house this evening or in the bar after the show.

Or write with a contact telephone number for further information to:

**The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre
c/o Civic Theatre, Cookridge Street,
Leeds LS2 8BH**

Forthcoming LAC productions:

Alan Bennett's

Talking Heads

Originally written for television, these six playlets have now been adapted by Alan Bennett for the stage. Three will be performed on Wednesday and again on Friday and the other three on Thursday and Saturday evenings.

Directed by:

Pam Wilson, Mary Nelson and Tony Nelson

28th to 31st January 1998

Terry Pratchett's

Mort

Adapted by Stephen Briggs

Directed by Laurie Ball

23rd to 29th March 1998

Les Liaisons

Dangereuses

By Christopher Hampton

Directed by Joyce King

16th to 20th June 1998

Friends of Leeds Civic Theatre

**Please join the friends and
support this theatre**

Application forms available from the foyer