

「ピグマリオン (Pygmalion)」
～ 演出家 Peter Joucla のコメント～

Pygmalion
By George Bernard Shaw
Directed and Edited by Peter Joucla

Directors Notes.

I am delighted to have the opportunity of directing George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* once again.

Written in 1913, it is a play about a professor of phonetics who makes a bet that he can train a cockney flower girl called Eliza Doolittle to pass for a duchess at an ambassador's garden party.

The story of how Eliza succeeds in transforming her accent and her manners, and the problems this creates for her, is familiar to many. The play was adapted first into a musical – *My Fair Lady* and then a film of the same name, starring Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn.

I first directed *Pygmalion* in 1996, adapting the play for a cast of five, and adding original incidental music. The production has since been performed in Japan, Germany, France and a dozen other countries, and is always a favourite, particularly for students who are grappling with the English language.

My aim with this production is to bring out the comedy in a delightfully clear and refreshing way, highlighting the visual elements of the drama as much as the dialogue. I hope too that the production underlines the deeper themes of the play which deal with language, class and equality. Eliza wishes to speak proper English in order that she may get a better job and prospects, but as she steps into the world of upper class London society she finds she is lost and rejected and afraid of the future. The climax of the play focuses on her relationship with the enigmatic Henry Higgins and it is in the final scene where Eliza finds her real voice and is able to decide on her destiny.

A British theatre director John Dexter recently suggested that the theme of *Pygmalion* is '*..the creation of a woman of independence*' and I am very much of a similar opinion.

Several years ago, Tour De Force Theatre performed '*Pygmalion*' in Kuwait in the very week that women's groups were demonstrating in the streets, demanding the right to vote. Our performances caused a minor stir. Parts of it had to be censored for fear of offending religious groups. But the message was never lost and I was delighted that the piece inspired discussion and debate. Once again, the play was as potent as it was when it opened in London in 1914.

I hope very much that it continues to entertain and to provoke.

Peter Joucla.