

SHATTERED WINDSCREEN theatre company

present



**MINACK
THEATRE**



**30th July -
3rd August
2023**

CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN

**Based on the novel by Louis de Bernières
Adapted by Rona Munro**

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Nick Hern Books

CAST

Dr Iannis	Des Turner
Pelagia , his daughter	Josie Melton
Mandras , a fisherman	Gavin Palmer
Drousoula , his mother	Helen Budd
Velisarios , a street performer	Andy Howell
Father Arsenios , a priest	Alex Brace
The Goat	Jo Manser
Psipsina , a pine marten	Calypso Powell
Lemoni , a village girl	Florence Andrews
Young Iannis	Charlie Evans/ Harrison Evans
Captain Antonio Corelli	Sean Scotchford
Sergeant Carlo Piero Guercio	Jonathon Wallis
Corporal Francesco	Arthur Roberts
Günther Weber , a German officer	Liam Evans

ENSEMBLE

Julia Arundale, William Barnes, Darren Barsby,
Ashleigh Bassett, Tom Budd, Ian Evans, Chloë Evans,
Owen Freeman-Howell, Chris Janes, Harry Janes, Sharon Jolly,
Arianna Kennedy, Charlie Lee, Hannah Leonard,
Martyn Leonard, Laurence Lowe, Paul Morton, Paul Russell

Live music by **The Korreliz**
Pete Dawson and Chris Andrews
Additional vocals by Julia Arundale and Calypso Powell

CREATIVE & TECHNICAL TEAM

Musical Direction	Pete Dawson
Choreography	Ashleigh Bassett
Stage Direction	Derek Palmer
Lighting Design	Ken Allford
Set Design & Construction	Steve Onyon, Malcolm Budd, Robert Charville
Sound Design	Andy Lee
Sound Operator	Dawn Meadowcroft
Stage Manager	Brenda Onyon
Deputy Stage Manager	Madeleine Evans
Costumes	Loretta Freeman, Rosamund Barnes, Sarah Budd
Uniforms	Khaki Devil
Properties Team	Jenny Allford, Sheila Grimmant, Olga Janes, Julia Lee
Technical Team	Tristan Cameron, Maddie Lee Nik Mayes, Andy Pierce
Backstage Team	Melanie Andrews, Drew Arundale, Rosamund Barnes, Connor Bassett, Cherie Duffy, Jenny Lynch
Publicity and Programme Design	Simon Wallace, Melting Pot Pictures Hannah Leonard

Directed by **Jan Palmer Sayer** assisted by **Chris Janes**

There will be a 20 minute interval between the two acts

*"Until now, we would say that Greeks fight like heroes. From now on,
we will say that heroes fight like Greeks"* Winston Churchill, 1941

OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Linda and Jeremy Secker for the use of their lovely garden at Amores
David Gorton of St Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury
Hertford Dramatic and Operatic Society for workshop facilities
The Barn Theatre Club, Welwyn Garden City
The Company of Players (Hertford)
Richard Hale School, Hertford
Shelagh Maughan, Angela Reiss, Rob Stone, Rob Wallace

The Greco-Italian War

Our story is set during World War II, a point in history that still looms large in our collective memory, but its characters, locations and events may feel less familiar. The setting is not the beaches of France or the Pacific Ocean; instead, the white sands and turquoise sea of the Greek island of Kefalonia. So how did a slice of island paradise get drawn into a devastating war that began hundreds of miles away? The unsought destruction WWII brought to Kefalonia's shores arrived in April of 1941 in the form of Italian military administration.

Benito Mussolini ('Il Duce'), Italy's fascist Prime Minister, had been in power since 1922 and was riding a wave of populist extremism that had been stirred up by the economic uncertainty that followed World War I. He had grand plans to copy the Ancient Roman Empire by expanding Italy's overseas territories. Although Nazism and Italian Fascism differed, Mussolini found enough common ground with Germany's Chancellor Adolf Hitler to sign the Pact of Steel in May 1939, which saw both states agree to support the other during war.

WWII began in September of that year, but Italy didn't enter the conflict until June 1940 due to a lack of meaningful military preparation and resources. Their first significant contribution to German forces followed in October, when Mussolini ordered an attack on Greece, using troops already based in Italian-controlled Albania. The Greeks heroically defended their homeland, but their bravery and military prowess was

eventually challenged by the arrival of the German and Bulgarian armies. A puppet government, the Hellenic State, was established and King George II of Greece was exiled.

Then began the delegation of control of the islands and mainland. It was mostly the Germans and Bulgarians who occupied the mainland, where rule with an iron fist saw minorities sent to concentration camps and over 300,000 Athenians die of starvation following the Allied blockade and the Great Famine of 1941-2. It fell to the Italians to set up military administration on some of the Ionian islands, including Kefalonia, where the tale of *Captain Corelli* unfolds.

On the Greek Islands, snails were freedom fighters' food; you could harvest them on the run and they'd go dormant and stay fresh in your pocket until you were in the clear to cook. The Germans didn't eat them, so villagers could gather them by the bushel without fear they'd be seized, and sneak them to guerrillas without food supplies looking suspiciously low.

So kohli me sitari was a favourite meal on the Greek islands – snails stewed in a broth of garlic, tomatoes and olive oil, with maybe an onion and some torn mint thrown in and a fistful of coarse cracked wheat to thicken it into a paella-like porridge.

"Kefalonia was part of the Venetian Empire from 1194 until 1797... to all intents and purposes, Kefalonia was Italian for about 600 years"

Dr Iannis, whose fictional history of Kefalonia frames the play, describes the historical context of these two proud ancient civilisations forced into uncomfortable proximity against the backdrop of the militaristic jingoism of WWII. The conquest and expansion of Ancient Greece and Italy's Roman Empire in the classical era led to an intermixing of cultures which is still visible in the parallel myths, architecture, food and dialects of the two states that survive into the modern day. The two cultures have a rich shared history which meant the Italian invasion of Greek territories was not, perhaps, met with the ferocity of animosity experienced in other invaded lands during WWII.

Kefalonia was no exception and the Italians' treatment of its people allowed them to live their lives relatively peacefully in occupation. It was certainly a far cry from the suffering of those on the mainland at the hands of the Nazi German army. Greco-Italian kinship endured, even in the face of a brutal modern war, allowing an unlikely and unexpected affinity to flourish between invader and invaded – the incongruous relationship that's at the heart of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

Arthur Roberts

From Page to Stage

Louis de Bernières' best-selling fourth novel, released in 1994, was an instant hit, winning him the Commonwealth Writers prize. Echoes of his own history run throughout the story – his was a military family, with his father having fought in WWII, though de Bernières himself changed path after just four months of officer training at Sandhurst. His father even had a wartime love affair with an Italian local that would have ended in marriage if it weren't for her Catholic family's objections. De Bernières has always said Corelli himself isn't based on any one person, but it's clear his father was at least part of the inspiration, and the book is dedicated to both his parents for the part they played in the war.

It didn't take long for *Captain Corelli* to be lifted from the page – John Madden's film version was released in 2001, starring Nicholas Cage and Penelope Cruz. It was far less well received than the novel, however, not least by the author himself. When asked how he felt about the film, he once replied, "*It would be impossible to be happy about your own baby having its ears put on backwards*".

The first full scale stage version came in 2011, a collaboration between Georgian and British theatre companies that brought many of the characters to life as puppets, alongside live actors and music. Writer Mike Maran had already been performing the story for more than ten years in a one-man-two-musician touring show. Rona Munro's more reproducible but no less demanding adaptation toured in 2019 before its run in London's West End. Its mandolin caused quite a stir in rehearsals, when the lead actor misplaced it on his train home – producers had to launch a public appeal for its safe return! Hopefully Shattered Windscreen's production of Munro's script will have made it to the Minack's stage without mishap.



Why Kefalonia?

Hitler counted the Greek Islands as a crucial transit point for German troops and supplies heading to the Russian front under Operation Barbarossa – a plan to grab control of Russia's oil fields, farms, tanks and soldiers. He had to move fast. Russia, as Napoleon learned the hard way, is a mousetrap that only opens briefly each summer before snapping on your neck. So Mussolini decided to deliver Greece to Hitler as a sort of Christmas present.

But they hadn't counted on the ingenious resistance of the Greeks. *"The unbelievably strong resistance of the Greeks delayed by two or more vital months the German attack on Russia. If we did not have this long delay, the outcome of the war would have been different... and others would be sitting here today"* said Hitler's Chief of Staff General Wilhelm Keitel, shortly before he was led out to be executed at the Nuremberg trials.

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Next week at the Minack

A Streetcar Named Desire
by Tennessee Williams

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Next Stage Theatre Company



SHATTERED WINDSCREEN theatre company

In 2001, Shattered Windscreen made their début at the Minack with a stage adaptation of Peter Barnes' TV play *Arabian Nights*. They returned in 2003 with that epic of the French cinema, *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Then followed *Peter Pan* (2005), *The True Story of Martin Guerre* (2007), *Coram Boy* (2009) and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (2011). In 2013 came the rib-tickling spoof western, *Wild Oats*, and in 2017 Bryony Lavery's adaptation of *The Wicked Lady*. Such ventures typify the company's commitment to developing and adapting new and existing works for the stage, playing to full and appreciative audiences.

In 2015, Shattered Windscreen won the Minack Trophy with John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Grapes of Wrath*, the story of the Joad family's flight from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California's golden west. They were named runners up for their 2019 production of *I, Don Quixote*. *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* was originally due to be performed in 2021 until the pandemic hit – but a gap in the schedule that year did allow them to squeeze in an unexpected show, *The 39 Steps*. They are thrilled to finally be bringing *Corelli* to the Minack's stage.



The Grapes of Wrath at the Minack, 2015