



**RED BULL  
THEATER**

*Revitalizing the classics for today's audience.*

**THE RELAPSE,  
OR, VIRTUE IN  
DANGER**

**BY JOHN VANBRUGH**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2022**

**LEONARD NIMOY THALIA THEATER**

RED BULL THEATER IS SUPPORTED, IN PART, BY PUBLIC FUNDS FROM THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY COUNCIL, AND THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE.

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**DONATE TODAY** TO SUPPORT RED BULL THEATER AND INVEST IN THE VITALITY OF CLASSICAL THEATER FOR A CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE. FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS, RED BULL THEATER HAS TRANSFORMED THE CLASSICAL THEATER EXPERIENCE WITH SPECTACULAR, HIGH-OCTANE PRODUCTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES, RAUCOUS READINGS OF RARELY-PRODUCED PLAYS, AND VIVID REIMAGININGS OF ICONIC WORKS.

WE'RE DEDICATED TO REVITALIZING THE CLASSICS FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCES, AND WHILE WE TREASURE THESE CLASSICS, OUR APPROACH IS ANYTHING BUT PRECIOUS. **YOUR SUPPORT IS.**

**REDBULLTHEATER.COM**

# RED BULL THEATER

JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

# THE RELAPSE, OR, VIRTUE IN DANGER

BY JOHN VANBRUGH

DIRECTED BY MARC VIETOR

FEATURING

MAYAA BOATENG

ARNIE BURTON

CHRISTIAN DEMARAIS

STEPHEN DEROSA

JESSE EPSTEIN

JACOB MING-TRENT

JAY MYERS

AMELIA PEDLOW

REG ROGERS

CHAUNCY THOMAS

MICHAEL URIE

ARIELLE YODER

STAGE MANAGER | JENN MCNEIL

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER | JESSICA FORNEAR

MUSICIAN | SPIFF WEIGAND

VIDEO SERVICES | HELLO WORLD COMMUNICATIONS

SCHOLARS | KATHLEEN DIMMICK & STUART SHERMAN

GENERAL MANAGER | SHERRI KOTIMSKY

PRODUCING DIRECTOR | NATHAN WINKELSTEIN

THIS READING IS SPONSORED, IN PART, BY

**DEB AND JAY BAUM**

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**MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2022 | 7:30 PM ET**

LEONARD NIMOY THALIA THEATER | SYMPHONY SPACE

SIMULCAST ONLINE | A RECORDING WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 11:59 PM ET ON OCTOBER 30, 2022.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS

## WOMEN

Amanda, *wife to Loveless* .....ARIELLE YODER  
Berinthia, *her cousin, a young widow* .....AMELIA PEDLOW  
Miss Hoyden, *a great Fortune, daughter of Sir Tunbelly*.....MAYAA BOATENG  
Nurse, *her governant*.....JESSE EPSTEIN

## MEN

Sir Novelty Fashion, *newly created Lord Foppington*..... MICHAEL URIE  
Young Tom Fashion, *his brother* ..... CHAUNCY THOMAS  
Loveless, *husband to Amanda*.....REG ROGERS  
Worthy, *a gentleman of the town*.....CHRISTIAN DEMARAIIS  
Sir Tunbelly Clumsey, *a country gentleman* .....JACOB MING TRENT  
Sir John Friendly, *his neighbor* .....STEPHEN DEROSA  
Coupler, *a matchmaker* .....STEPHEN DEROSA  
Lory, *servant to Young Fashion*..... ARNIE BURTON  
Bull, *chaplain to Sir Tunbelly* ..... JAY MYERS

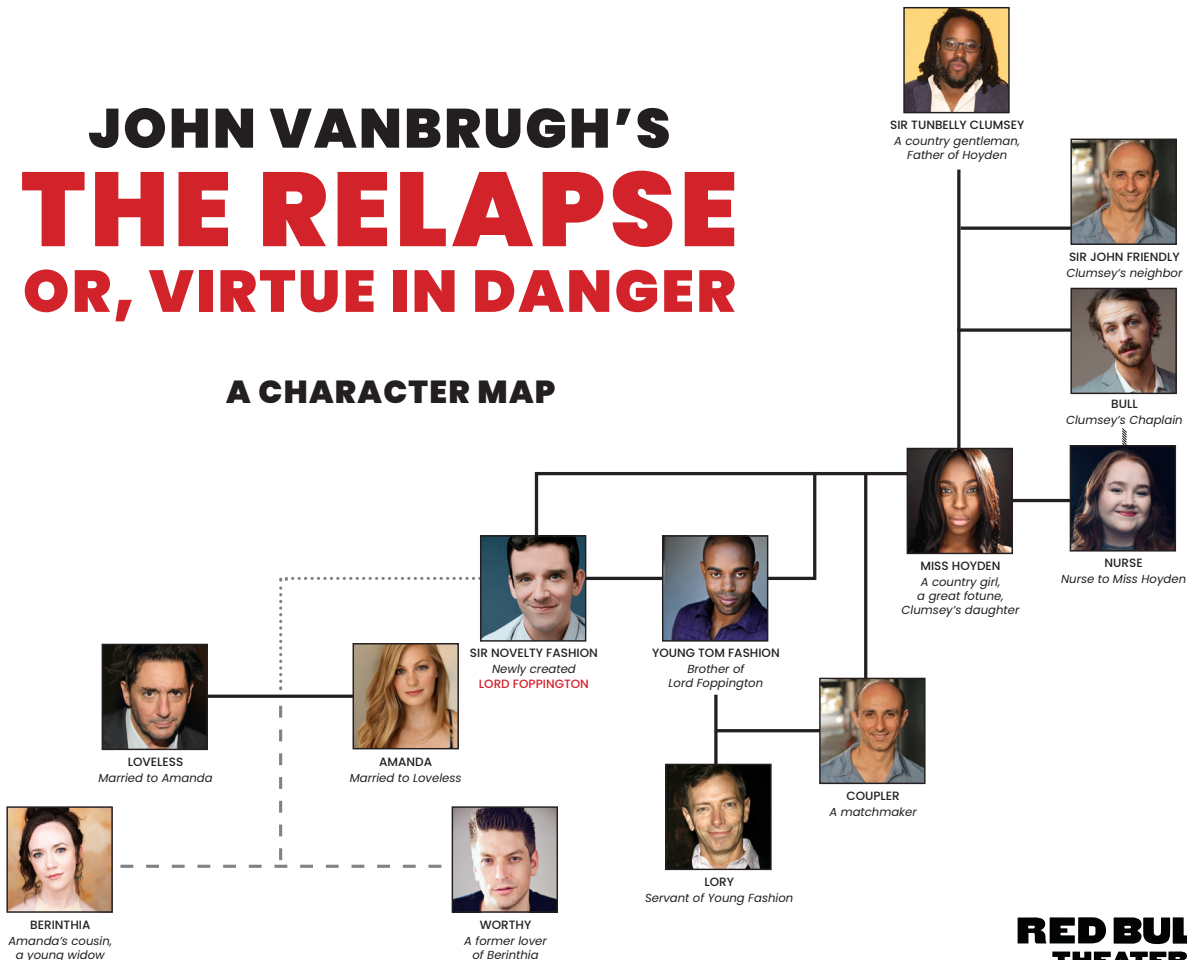
—THERE WILL BE ONE 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION—



Please join us following the reading for a discussion with director MARC VIETOR and scholar STUART SHERMAN.

# JOHN VANBRUGH'S THE RELAPSE OR, VIRTUE IN DANGER

## A CHARACTER MAP



**RED BULL  
THEATER**

SAVE THE DATE | MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2022

**THE DUCHESS OF MALFI** by John Webster

IN-PERSON & ONLINE | A great romance turns to horror as the Duchess of Malfi seeks true love in a world of forbidden passions. This explosive drama of Italian intrigue examines sexual repression, honor, class, and the true value of the human spirit.

# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

JOHN VANBRUGH (1664-1726), playwright, theater manager, and architect, was the eldest surviving son of twenty (!) children of a London cloth-merchant of Flemish descent. A committed Whig, he supported the armed invasion of William of Orange, the deposition of James II, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He was arrested in France, charged with espionage, and imprisoned for four years. His two best-known plays, *The Relapse* and *The Provok'd Wife*, were very successful and remained in the repertoire for seventy-five years. Vanbrugh designed and built the Haymarket Theatre, which he managed along with William Congreve and the actor Thomas Betterton. Their intent was to improve conditions for actors, which had deteriorated under the monopoly on theater production held by the United Company under the unscrupulous management of Christopher Rich, and to compete with other increasingly popular forms of entertainment: pantomime, juggling, animal acts and traveling opera companies. Vanbrugh also designed Blenheim Palace, even though he had no formal training as an architect. The Duke of Marlborough met him at the theater (or at the Kit-Kat-Club, a social club for prominent Whigs) and was so charmed he offered him the job. The Duchess, however, was unhappy with the choice. She wanted Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, and criticized the extravagance of Vanbrugh's design. At age 55, Vanbrugh married a woman half his age. He was knighted in 1714.

## ABOUT THE PLAY

*The Relapse, or, Virtue in Danger* (1696) was written in response to Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift, or, The Fool in Fashion*. Cibber's play is often referred to as a Restoration Comedy for the first four acts and a Sentimental Comedy in the fifth act when Loveless, the philandering husband, repents, thanks to an extraordinary "shift" or trick, in which his abandoned wife impersonates a high-class whore and wins him back following a night of exquisite sexual pleasure. In this reversal, the patient wife's virtue penetrates the wayward husband's (basically decent) heart and brings about the sentimental conversion.

Vanbrugh wrote *The Relapse* in six weeks after seeing Cibber's play to address what he considered to be an unconvincing depiction of the reformation of Loveless. He added a new character, Berinthia, who fashions her own notions of desire following a typically "loveless" arranged marriage. While the patient wife Amanda still manages to retain her virtue and persuade her aggressive suitor, Worthy, of the greater good of faithfulness, at the very same moment, in the very same house, Berinthia is seducing the unreformed Loveless away from Amanda – or rather they are happily seducing each other though the

play of erotic medical terms: she offers to give him ‘ease’; he is ready to lay his ‘case’ before her. As Loveless bears her into her closet, she protests: (Very softly): “Help! Help! I’m ravished! Ruined! Undone! Oh Lord, I shall never be able to bear it.”

After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, economic and political power began to shift from the aristocracy to the burgeoning middle class with increased attention devoted to values of religion, morality, and conventional depictions of gender. Likewise, the theater moved away from Restoration comedy’s sexual frankness toward the more conservative postures of sentimental comedy. This “bloodless revolution” reinforced a puritan, anti-theatrical prejudice, expressed most virulently in Jeremy Collier’s attack on the theater, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), in which he condemned Vanbrugh’s play for its explicit sexuality and defense of women’s rights in marriage. Vanbrugh responded with a comic defense, but public opinion was already trending away from Restoration style. Playwrights adopted Collier’s criticisms and embraced the new sentimental ethic; the Act V tears of Loveless in Cibber’s play spelled the end of Restoration Comedy.

Before its demise, however, we have the pleasure of meeting perhaps the greatest of all Restoration fops in the subplot of *The Relapse*: Sir Novelty Fashion, from Cibber’s play, has bought himself a title and is now Lord Foppington, with Cibber himself reprising his role. After his younger brother steals his intended bride (and more importantly, her substantial dowry), Foppington’s imperturbable selfishness allows him to weather all humiliations: “I think the wisest thing a man can do with an aching heart is to put on a serene countenance; for a philosophical air is the most becoming thing in the world to the face of a person of quality.”

Although Lord Foppington may seem “very industrious to pass for an ass,” he is also a superb embodiment of the Restoration code, where freedom of choice remains absolute: to preserve the integrity of the self, one must avoid all constricting social definitions – be they husband, wife, brother or sister. The code is also Epicurean: since sensations of pleasure and pain are the ultimate measures of good and evil, pleasure should be actively pursued. During his astonishing levee, Foppington describes his day: “My life is a perpetual stream of pleasure, that glides through such a variety of entertainments, I believe the wisest of our ancestors never had the least conception of any of ‘em.” Here, at the end of the century, this not-so-witless fop offers a particularly pleasurable eulogy to a very robust era in theatrical history.

— KATHLEEN DIMMICK, dramaturg

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JESSE BERGER | FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Red Bull Theater brings rarely seen classic plays to dynamic new life for contemporary audiences. Our work unites a respect for tradition with a modern sensibility.

Red Bull Theater is named for the rowdy Jacobean playhouse that illegally performed plays in England during the years of Puritan rule, and was the first London theater to reopen after the Restoration. This bold spirit is central to our identity. With the Jacobean plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as our cornerstone, Red Bull Theater is New York City's home for dynamic performances of great plays that stand the test of time. The company also produces new works that are in conversation with the classics.

Red Bull Theater delights and engages the intellect and imagination of audiences. A home for artists, scholars and students, we strive to make our work accessible, diverse, and welcoming to all theatergoers. Educational as well as entertaining, our work keeps a rich and vital tradition thriving.

Red Bull Theater believes in the power of great classic stories and plays of heightened language to deepen our understanding of the human condition. We believe in the special ability of live theater to create unique, collective experiences. And we believe in the timeless capacity of classical theater to illuminate the events of our times.

Founded in 2003 with a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Red Bull Theater has been acclaimed by The New York Times as "a dynamic producer of classic plays" and by Time Out New York as "the most exciting classical theater in New York."

Red Bull Theater serves adventurous theatergoers with OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS, REVELATION READINGS, and the annual SHORT NEW PLAY FESTIVAL. The company also offers outreach programs including SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS, bringing professional actors and teaching artists into public school classrooms, BULL SESSIONS, free post-play discussions with top scholars, and MASTER CLASSES in classical actor training led by veteran theater professionals.

In our 19-year history, Red Bull Theater has produced 21 Off-Broadway Productions and nearly 200 Revelation Readings of rarely seen classics, serving 5,000 artists and providing quality artistic programming to an audience of 65,000. The company's unique programming has received ongoing critical acclaim, and has been recognized with Lortel, Drama Desk, Drama League, Calloway, Off Broadway Alliance, and Obie nominations and Awards.

Visit [REDBULLTHEATER.COM](http://REDBULLTHEATER.COM) for more information.