TOM STOPPARD

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour &

Professional Foul

EVERY GOOD BOY DESERVES FAVOUR
and
PROFESSIONAL FOUL

by the same author

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

ENTER A FREE MAN

ALBERT'S BRIDGE

IF YOU'RE GLAD I'LL BE FRANK

AFTER MAGRITTE

JUMPERS

ARTIST DESCENDING A STAIRCASE
and WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

TRAVESTIES

DIRTY LINEN and NEW-FOUND-LAND

NIGHT AND DAY

and a novel

LORD MALQUIST AND MR MOON

TOM STOPPARD

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour

A PLAY FOR ACTORS AND ORCHESTRA

and

Professional Foul

A PLAY FOR TELEVISION

FABER AND FABER
LONDON & BOSTON

First published in 1978
by Faber and Faber Limited
3 Queen Square London WC1N 3AU
Reprinted 1978 and 1979
Printed in Great Britain by
Redwood Burn Ltd., Trowbridge and Esher

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Stoppard, Tom
Every good boy deserves favour; and,
Professional foul.
I. Title II. Stoppard, Tom. Professional foul
822'.9'14 PR6069.T6E/

ISBN 0-571-11225-0
ISBN 0-571-11226-9 Pbk

INTRODUCTION

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour is the title of a work of which the text is only a part. The sub-title, 'A Play for Actors and Orchestra', hardly indicates the extent to which the effectiveness of the whole depends on the music composed by André Previn. And it is to him that the work owes its existence.

As the principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Mr Previn invited me in 1974 to write something which had the need of a live full-size orchestra on stage. Invitations don't come much rarer than that, and I jumped at the chance. It turned out to be the fastest move I made on the project for the next eighteen months.

Usually, and preferably, a play originates in the author's wish to write about some particular thing. The form of the play then follows from the requirements of the subject. This time I found myself trying to make the subject follow from the requirements of the form. Mr Previn and I agreed early on that we would try to go beyond a mere recitation for the concert platform, and also that we were not writing a piece for singers. In short, it was going to be a real play, to be performed in conjunction with, and bound up with, a symphony orchestra. As far as we knew nobody had tried to do anything like that before; which, again, is not the preferred reason for starting a play, though I confess it weighed with me.

Having been given *carte blanche*, for a long time the only firm decision I was able to make was that the play would have to be in some way *about* an orchestra. For what play could escape *folie de grandeur* if it came with a hundred musicians in attendance but outside the action? And while it is next to impossible to 'justify' an orchestra, it is a simple matter to make it essential. Accordingly, I started off with a millionaire who owned one.

My difficulty in trying to make the cart pull the horse was

aggravated by the fact that I knew nothing about orchestras and very little about 'serious' music. I was in the position of a man who, never having read anything but whodunnits, finds himself writing a one-man show about Lord Byron on a *carte blanche* from an actor with a club foot. My qualifications for writing about an orchestra amounted to a spell as a triangle-player in a kindergarten percussion band. I informed my collaborator that the play was going to be about a millionaire triangle-player with his own orchestra.

This basic implausibility bred others, and at the point where the whimsical edifice was about to collapse I tried to save it by making the orchestra a mere delusion of the millionaire's brain. Once the orchestra became an imaginary orchestra, there was no need for the millionaire to be a millionaire either. I changed tack: the play would be about a lunatic triangle-player who thought he had an orchestra.

By this time the first deadline had been missed and I was making heavy weather. I had no genuine reason for writing about an orchestra, or a lunatic, and thus had nothing to write. Music and triangles led me into a punning diversion based on Euclid's axioms, but it didn't belong anywhere, and I was ready to call my own bluff.

This is where matters stood when in April 1976 I met Victor Fainberg. For some months previously I had been reading books and articles by and about the Russian dissidents, intending to use the material for a television play, and so I knew that Mr Fainberg had been one of a group of people arrested in Red Square in August 1968 during a peaceful demonstration against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. He had been pronounced insane—a not unusual fate for perfectly sane opponents of Soviet tyranny—and in 1974 he had emerged into exile from five years in the Soviet prison-hospital system. He had written about his experiences in the magazine *Index On Censorship*, an invaluable, politically disinterested monitor of political repression the world over. For Mr Fainberg freedom was, and is, mainly the freedom to double his efforts on behalf of colleagues left behind. His main concern when I met him was to secure the release of Vladimir Bukovsky, himself a victim of the abuse of psychiatry in the USSR, whose revelations about that abuse

had got him sentenced to consecutive terms of prison, labour camp and internal exile amounting to twelve years.

Exceptional courage is a quality drawn from certain people in exceptional conditions. Although British society is not free of abuses, we are not used to meeting courage because conditions do not demand it (I am not thinking of the courage with which people face, say, an illness or a bereavement). Mr Fainberg's single-mindedness, his energy (drawing more on anger than on pity) and his willingness to make a nuisance of himself outside and inside the walls of any institution, friend or foe, which bore upon his cause, prompted the thought that his captors must have been quite pleased to get rid of him. He was not a man to be broken or silenced; an insistent, discordant note, one might say, in an orchestrated society.

I don't recall that I consciously made the metaphor, but very soon I was able to tell Mr Previn, definitively, that the lunatic triangle-player who thought he had an orchestra was now sharing a cell with a political prisoner. I had something to write about, and in a few weeks the play was finished.

Not that the prisoner, Alexander, is Victor or anyone else. But the speech in which he describes the treatment he received in the Leningrad Special Psychiatric Hospital is taken from the article in *Index*,* and there are other borrowings from life, such as the doctor's comment, 'Your opinions are your symptoms.' Victor Fainberg in his own identity makes an appearance in the text as one of the group 'M to S' in the speech where Alexander identifies people by letters of the alphabet.

The off-stage hero of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, referred to as 'my friend C', is Vladimir Bukovsky. The Bukovsky campaign, which was supported by many people in several countries, achieved its object in December 1976, when he was taken from prison and sent to the West. In June while we were rehearsing I met Mr Bukovsky in London and invited him to call round at the Royal Shakespeare Company's rehearsal rooms in Covent Garden. He came and stayed to watch for an hour or two. He was diffident, friendly, and helpful on points of detail

* Vol. 4, no. 2, *Index on Censorship*, published by a non-profit-making company, Writers and Scholars International, 21 Russell Street, London WC2.

in the production, but his presence was disturbing. For people working on a piece of theatre, terra firma is a self-contained world even while it mimics the real one. That is the necessary condition of making theatre, and it is also our luxury. There was a sense of worlds colliding. I began to feel embarrassed. One of the actors seized up in the middle of a speech touching on the experiences of our visitor, and found it impossible to continue. But the incident was not fatal. The effect wore off, and, on the night, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* had recovered its nerve and its own reality.

* * *

The television play which I had hoped to write from the Russian material still had to be written. At least, I had promised myself that I would write a TV play to mark Amnesty International's 'Prisoner of Conscience Year' (1977), and I had promised the BBC that I would come up with something by 31st December 1976. On that day I had nothing to show, nothing begun and nothing in mind.

On 6th January in Prague three men, a playwright, an actor and a journalist, were arrested in the act of attempting to deliver a document to their own government. This document turned out to be a request that the government should implement its own laws. It pointed out that the Czechoslovak people had been deprived of rights guaranteed by an agreement made between nations at Helsinki, and that anyone who tried to claim these rights was victimized by the government which had put its name to the agreement. The document, initially signed by 241 people, was headed 'Charter 77'.

I had had ill-formed and unformed thoughts of writing about Czechoslovakia for a year or two. Moreover, I had been strongly drawn to the work and personality of the arrested playwright, Vaclav Havel. Thus it would be natural to expect that the setting and subject matter of *Professional Foul* declared themselves as soon as the Charter story broke, but in fact I was still sifting through a mass of Amnesty International documents about Russia, and when a friend invited me to keep him company on a week's visit to Moscow and Leningrad, I went hoping that the trip would unlock the play.

Perhaps predictably, the trip made the play much more difficult, since it brought me too close to the situation to leave me with any desire to trick it out with 'character', 'dramatic shape', 'dénoument', and so on, but not close enough to enable me to write about it from the inside. Instead, the trip to Russia unlocked a play about Czechoslovakia: there was an Archimedean footing, somewhere between involvement and detachment, which offered a point of leverage. By the beginning of March the general scheme of *Professional Foul* had been worked out, and after that the play was written very quickly, the first draft in about three weeks.

Meanwhile, Vaclav Havel was in gaol, on charges devised to dissociate his arrest from his activities as a spokesman for Charter 77. After four and a half months he was released, pending his trial; which took place while this Introduction was being written. For 'attempting to damage the name of the State abroad', Mr Havel was sentenced to fourteen months, suspended for two years.

He would be the first to object that in mentioning his name only, I am putting undue emphasis on his part in the Czechoslovakian human rights movement. Others have gone to gaol, and many more have been victimized. This is true. But I have in mind not just the Chartist but the author of *The Garden Party*, *The Memorandum*, *The Audience* and other plays. It is to a fellow writer that I dedicate *Professional Foul* in admiration.

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour

A Play for Actors and Orchestra

To Victor Fainberg and Vladimir Bukovsky

Characters

ALEXANDER

IVANOV

SACHA

DOCTOR

TEACHER (female)

COLONEL

Although in this edition only the text is printed, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* is a work consisting of words and music, and is incomplete without the score composed by its co-author André Previn.

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour was first performed at the Festival Hall in July 1977, with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by André Previn. The cast was as follows:

ALEXANDER	Ian McKellen
IVANOV	John Wood
SACHA	Andrew Sheldon
DOCTOR	Patrick Stewart
TEACHER	Barbara Leigh-Hunt
COLONEL	Philip Locke
Director	Trevor Nunn
Designer	Ralph Koltai

Three separate acting areas are needed.

1. *The* CELL *needs two beds.*
2. *The* OFFICE *needs a table and two chairs.*
3. *The* SCHOOL *needs a school desk.*

These areas can be as small as possible but each has to be approachable from each of the others, and the lighting on each ought to be at least partly controllable independently of the other two and of the orchestra itself, which needless to say occupies the platform.

The CELL *is occupied by two men,* ALEXANDER *amd* IVANOV. ALEXANDER *is a political prisoner and* IVANOV *is a genuine mental patient.*

It will become clear in performance, but may well be stated now, that the orchestra for part of the time exists in the imagination of IVANOV. IVANOV *has with him an orchestral triangle.*

The OFFICE *is empty.*

In the SCHOOL *the* TEACHER *stands, and* SACHA *sits at the desk.*

CELL

The OFFICE *and* SCHOOL *are not 'lit'. In the* CELL, ALEXANDER *and* IVANOV *sit on their respective beds. The orchestra tunes-up. The tuning-up continues normally but after a minute or two the musicians lapse into miming the tuning-up.*

Thus we have silence while the orchestra goes through the motions of tuning.

IVANOV *stands up, with his triangle and rod. The orchestra becomes immobile.*

Silence.

IVANOV *strikes the triangle, once. The orchestra starts miming a performance. He stands concentrating, listening to music which we cannot hear, and striking his triangle as and when the 'music' requires it. We only hear the triangle occasionally.* ALEXANDER *watches this—a man watching another man occasionally hitting a triangle.*

This probably lasts under a minute. Then, very quietly, we begin to hear what IVANOV *can hear, i.e. the orchestra becomes audible. So now his striking of the triangle begins to fit into the context which makes sense of it.*

The music builds slowly, gently. And then on a single cue the platform light level jumps up with the conductor in position and the orchestra playing fully and loudly. The triangle is a prominent part in the symphony.

Now we are flying. ALEXANDER *just keeps watching* IVANOV.

IVANOV: (*Furiously interrupts*) —No—no—no—

(*The orchestra drags to a halt.*)

(*Shouts.*) Go back to the timpani.

(*The orchestra goes back, then relapses progressively, swiftly, into mime, and when it is almost inaudible* ALEXANDER *coughs loudly.* IVANOV *glances at him reproachfully. After the cough there is only silence with* IVANOV *intermittently striking his triangle, and the orchestra miming.*)

IVANOV: Better—good—much better . . .

(ALEXANDER *is trying not to cough.*

IVANOV *finishes with a final beat on the triangle.*

The orchestra finishes.

IVANOV *sits down.* ALEXANDER *coughs luxuriously.*)

IVANOV: (*Apologetically*) I know what you're thinking.

ALEXANDER: (*Understandingly*) It's all right.

IVANOV: No, you can say it. The cellos are rubbish.

ALEXANDER: (*Cautiously*) I'm not really a judge of music.

IVANOV: I was scraping the bottom of the barrel, and that's how they sound. And what about the horns?—should I persevere with them?

ALEXANDER: The horns?

IVANOV: Brazen to a man but mealy-mouthed. Butter wouldn't melt. When I try to reason with them they purse their lips. Tell me, do you have an opinion on the fungoid log-rollers spreading wet rot through the woodwinds? Not to speak of the glockenspiel.

ALEXANDER: The glockenspiel?

IVANOV: I asked you not to speak of it. Give me a word for the harpist.