

Le Médecins Malgré Lui

Le Médecin Malgré Lui in Eastern Europe

The Theatre aux Eclats version of Moliere's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* is now in production: So, are we all headed off to France to see Marie Fournier get the rest of that exciting spanking?

Maybe... even though it seems more exciting in that rehearsal video than it does in full costume:



But today I'm going to take you further east, to begin an intermittent run of posts that will occasionally appear instead of the usual Sunday theater series.

Le Médecin Malgré Lui begins with a marital argument between the lazy, drunken woodcutter Sganarelle and his wife Martine, in the course of which he threatens her repeatedly with a beating ('your skin itches,' he says at one point), and eventually gives it to her. A passer-by, Robert, comments on this disgraceful behavior, but Martine says she *likes* to be beaten by her husband, and slaps Robert's face for sticking his nose in where it wasn't wanted. Partly this is about not letting a stranger come between husband and wife... but it also establishes that the marriage has an element of role-play about it, and that, like Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Martine accepts blows as a form of marital attention, and therefore welcomes them, however equivocally. And indeed Sganarelle tells her the very same thing: it is a normal part of a loving relationship for a husband to beat his wife, and five or six whacks can add spice to affection. Nevertheless, Martine decides to get her own back on him ... and this is where the story really starts. When she encounters some servants who are looking for a doctor to cure their master's daughter, who has been struck dumb, she convinces them that an extremely learned physician lives in the woods, living a simple life as a woodcutter. Sganarelle is forced into the role of a doctor, which he pulls off because, as it happens, he was once the servant to a famous doctor and remembers the medical lingo. It turns out that the daughter had not lost the use of her tongue at all: she was just pining for love, and Sganarelle's intervention creates the chance for her to elope...

For our purposes, the first important question is, what sort of a beating is this? The stage direction reads, 'Il prend un bâton, et lui a donne' (He picks up a stick and 'gives it to her'). Some translators render the word *bâton* as 'cudgel', and some productions make it a very *big* cudgel; the scene can be presented as a kind of 'Punch and Judy' slapstick beating, or, worse, as serious domestic violence, often aimed at her back or head rather than her bottom. But on the other hand, there are productions that do away with the stick, and the beating has even been done as an Apache dance (in Russia, in 2012). And some productions, of most interest to us, play it as a spanking across his knee, with or without the stick.



What's really at issue is how to strike the right balance in Martine's mixed feelings: productions that overdo the brutality may amply justify her vindictive reaction that sets the plot in motion, but they also make her rejection of Robert's intervention harder to understand. Playing it as a spanking may in fact offer the best route through the contradictory complexities of her attitude.

Molière wrote the play in 1666, and he himself played Sganarelle when it opened in August. Of course, the play has remained popular in France to this day. But this series is going to follow the play's many productions in the rest of the world, and the various versions in which Martine gets something closer to a spanking than a beating.

This first installment takes us to the lands beyond what used to be the Iron Curtain. Our journey will take us almost round in a circle. It begins in Romania, where the play is entitled *The Unlicensed Doctor* (but in Romanian, obviously).

Our first stop is in 1976, when the Romanian National Theater's production was televised. Amza Pellea plays Sganarelle, with Ileana Stana Ionescu as Martine:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN3D3VNXp4o&t=12m51s>

Leaping forward to the year 2000, we find the play in production at Birlad, with Andrei Ciubotaru and Diana Lazăr

Ten years later, a school production won an award. And things are getting a little less casual as Sganarelle lifts Martine over his shoulder to spank her:

Martine went properly OTK at Gilau in 2011, though we only have photos, not video. Here Andrada Bordai plays Martine, and she is being spanked by Marian Orbulescu as Sganarelle:



And in 2014 the play was staged by the Municipal Theater in Vanatori Neamt:

What's amusing about this one is how he moves the chair so that, when she comes around, he's sitting in her path ... she effectively walks herself into a spanking!



There's a little more from Romania [here](#).

Now we travel westward to Hungary. Here's a trailer for a television production in 2011, with a heftier than usual Martine:

And this 'making of' film includes two outtakes from the scene:

(The first one aborts during the chase, but keep watching after the talking head...)

North now to the Czech Republic, where our first port of call is the 2008 Suchdol Festival, where the play, by a weird literary coincidence, was directed by one Josef Konrad:



What's that no-good husband of hers going to do with that stick?



Ah... that's alright, then!

Next stop Broumov, for an open-air festival production in the monastery courtyard by the Little Theater. This has another plus-size Martine, and if you look carefully you can see she's being spanked on her bloomers:



And so to Poland. First, a school production from Ryczywole in 2008, in which it's not so much a spanking as a few smacks during an over-the-shoulder carry:

Now for a 2011 production by Teatr MIST in Krakow, directed by Michno Stanisław; Sganarelle was Michno Wojciech, and several different actresses played Martine, including Aleksandra Barczyk. Here's a trailer:

Here's Aleksandra being spanked at the dress rehearsal:



They used a different stick for the opening night... and made one other important change:



If you look closely at the first photo, you can see Aleksandra's own white panties under her bloomers! Careless? Maybe, but let's have a look at Aneta Stachyra playing Martine in a later performance of the same production:



And from the other side:



Very careless! But very, very welcome!

And most recently, a 2014 production by Teatr XL of Warsaw, directed by Sergei Timofeev, in which Magdalena Łoś receives the husbandly attentions of Zbigniew Pożoga, first in rehearsal...



... and then in performance, with two views from opposite angles:



We next arrive in Russia, where the play is called *Doctor Like-It-or-Not*. Here's a television production from 2002:

Now for something really rather splendid from Tolyatti in 2005, in a production by the town's Youth Theater directed by Leonid Titov:

Just for once Sganarelle throws away the stick and does the job properly by hand. There's even a clue in Martine's performance that secretly she enjoys the spanking, as she later tells Robert: she must know what's going to happen to her as soon as she goes across her husband's knee, but she only actually protests, with pleasing vigor, after each smack! In other words, it's consensual pretending to be non-consensual, which is exactly the best way to play the character...

And here's another nice one from a 2013 stage school production, from Tver, north of Moscow. Elena Veselkova is being spanked by Pavel Mischenko:

Yes, the smacks are perhaps imperfectly simulated, and, yes, the OTK positioning is somewhat less than excellent... but a skirt-up spanking on short bloomers is *always* welcome!

Still in Russia, this production from 2014 has such an exciting buildup that the actual spanking, when we get to it, is something of a disappointment:

You also have to wait longer than usual for the spanking, because (in common with some recent productions) things get a bit frisky at the moment where the spanking happens in Moliere's original. Jump directly to 7m 30s if you just want to see the spanking, and if you're taking the longer, more exciting route, be warned that you will encounter a bit of F/M on the way.

And finally to Ukraine, whose second city, Kharkov, was the venue for a 1999 student production with a rather striking Martine with pretty bloomers:

Admittedly we *have* seen Ukrainian students getting even better spankings on their even prettier undergarments... but that was **FEMEN**, and this has been Moliere!

Courtesy of Mainstream Spanking