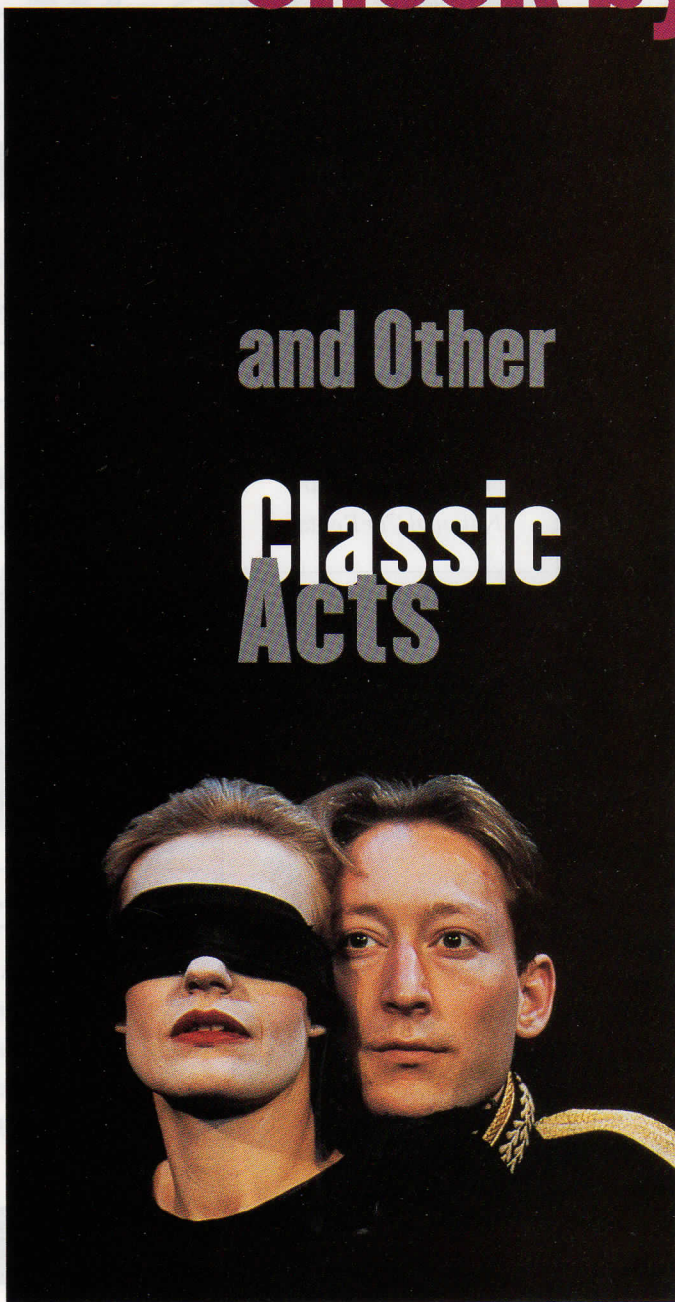


# Cheek by Jowl

The Duchess of Malfi (Anastasia Hille) and her brother Ferdinand (Scott Handy) play a ghoulish game of guess who?

and Other  
Classic  
Acts



The millennium approaches, but the most alluring plays in New York this winter are all more than three centuries old. *The Duchess of Malfi*, performed by Cheek by Jowl, the British company whose all-male *As You Like It* won wide acclaim last year, opens for a two-week run this month at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Written by 17th-century dramatist John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* tells the story of a Renaissance noblewoman whose two brothers wreak vengeance when she marries without their consent. Webster was a playwright who never settled for one corpse when three would do, and in *Malfi*, all six leading characters are brutally murdered.

Webster shares top billing this season with his better-known contemporary Shakespeare: The Royal Shakespeare Company takes its *Midsummer Night's Dream* on an American tour that ends on Broadway in March. And *The Tempest*, starring *Star Trek: The Next Generation* captain (and RSC member) Patrick Stewart, is already playing to sold-out houses on Broadway. This is not the Shakespeare you know. *The Tempest* features Indonesian hand puppets and Brazilian jazz. And in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom and Titania mate unabashedly in a large upside-down candy-red umbrella rising to the rafters. "I wanted this production to bring wonder back into a rather cynical and jaded world," says Adrian Noble, the RSC's artistic director. ■

By Gerard Raymond