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PRODUCER
OF THE
YEAR

(See page two)

QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE W.5. 567 0011 Box Office 567 5184

FEBRUARY, 1968

Special February Production STUDENTS SHOP WINDOW

from the Editor . . .

An enormous amount of work with and for young people goes on at Mattock Lane, and the Student production which is featured in this issue, is the one occasion when we can all show our support by filling the Theatre for each performance - and incidentally spending an enjoyable evening. Members free seats are available, and all the normal facilities will be open. But there are only four performances; these run consecutively from the first night which is Wednesday the 21st February. David Pearson writes about the plays and some of the performances in the following paragraphs.

This seems an appropriate issue in which to feature RENA RICE who has given so generously of her time and talents to teaching young people about the theatre. In this same issue we are also printing a profile on Alan Clarke who has just been nominated as Redifussion's "Best Producer of the Year" (although to us he has been that on many occasions in the past.)

ALAN DRAKE

Have you ever envied the Questors' grey-beards - those pillars of the establishment who pour out reminiscences in the Grapevine at each other "Yes, I remember the first time Harold set foot on the Questors' stage. He rushed in, fell over the sofa and bent his scabbard." It's easy, and the beer is good. All you need to start is a ticket for the Student Group one-act plays in February. Here are some of the stars of the future. They are a particularly promising and attractive group. The three plays have been carefully chosen to display their undoubted talents and to provide an absorbing and varied evening's entertainment. Each student is given the chance to prove his mettle in at least two contrasting parts.

"CALL ME A LIAR" by John Mortimer is a telling study of the loneliness of a self-created extrovert. The kalaidoscopic episodes in the love-life of the main character are created in an ingenious simultaneous setting by Sheila Sorley. The main parts are played by Cherry Kane and Nick Hunt, both of whom are well-established figures at Questors. Nick appeared in a number of productions, and Cherry is the sister of ex-student Monyene Kane. The other major role is taken by Martin Rutherford, who was Perkin Warbeck in "A Crown for the Strong" and a murderer in "Macbeth". Film goers may also spot him in "The Billion Dollar Brain" and "Oliver".

The second play, "THE MAYOR OF TORONTAL", has been described as a comedy in the style of Tchekov. Although this may be a little presumptuous, it is a delightful fantasy which gives the whole cast a chance to enjoy themselves and to share their enjoyment with the audience. The setting is an imaginary Central European town about 1890 which is thrown into an indignant furore by the machinations of a beautiful femme fatale. The harrassed mayor is played by Richard Halberstadt, a lecturer in Law, who was a Young Questor. Pauline Brady, one of the trouble-making young ladies in the last student production, "The Crucible", stirs up more trouble as the lovely Madame Baranya. Ranged against her, with claws flashing, are Barbara Butters, Liz Symon and Avril Lotinga. As an exercise in style, the play is a challenge to the students.

The last play, "THE GIRL" by William Trevor, was originally produced on ITV last August Bank Holiday. Michael Hoddell was greatly impressed by it and saw it as ideal material for the students. So he persuaded the author to write a stage version specially for the Questors. So this is the stage premier of a play which deals sympathetically yet realistically with the conflicting attitudes of two generations. The callousness of youth and the unbending lack of comprehension of

Diary

February 14th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room New Members Meeting. An opportunity for new members to get to know The Questors.

February 17th at 3.0 p.m. - Ealonian Hall Questors Young Musicians Club presents a concert by The Ealing Youth Orchestra. Tickets 2/6d. from Mrs. Christine Glover. (see page 4)

February 17th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room Music Club - Piano Recital by Eileen Broster. (see page 3) Tickets 7/6d.

February 21, 22, 23, 24 at 7.45 p.m. STUDENT ONE ACT PLAYS directed by Michael Hoddell, asst. by Jill Champion-Torrance "Call Me a Liar" by John Mortimer "The Mayor of Torontal" by Gwynneth Jones "The Girl" by William Trevor. Members free seats available. (see page 1)

February 25th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room Film Society - "Siegfried". Members - season tickets. Guests 5/-.

February 27, 28, 29, March 1, 2 at 7.45 p.m. The Cecilian Players present "The Beggars' Opera" (Britten version). Tickets 8/6d. and 6/- from Cecilian Players. (see page 3)

March 9th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room Music Club - Fidelio String Quartet (see page 3) Tickets 7/6d.

March 10th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room Film Society "Romeo and Juliet" "The Last Laugh" Members - season tickets. Guests 5/-.

March 13th at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room New Members Meeting. A further opportunity for new members to get to know The Questors.

March 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30 at 7.45 p.m. ROMEO AND JULIET by William Shakespeare. Directed by Alfred Emmet. Members free seats available.

March 31st at 7.45 p.m. - Shaw Room Film Society - "Foolish Wives". Members - season tickets. Guests 5/-.

Best Director of the Year

ALAN CLARKE

We have all come to recognise Alan Clarke as a talented and stimulating director of plays and it is our loss that he has not directed anything for us these twelve months past. Our loss has been the gain of millions of viewers however, for, during this period he has directed no less than ten television shows. One of these "WHICH OF THESE TWO LADIES IS HE MARRIED TO?" by Edna O'Brien, won him ITV's award for the "Best Director of the Year". The award was made also for work on other stories, one of which was "THE GENTLEMAN CALLER" written by Roy Minton whose "DEATH IN LEICESTER" was produced in last year's New Plays Festival.

Alan Clarke had the good fortune to be born in the Athens of this age - Liverpool - and into a family with no stage connections or interest in the theatre. On completing his grammar school course he did his National Service in Hong Kong. Getting his dates confused, he emigrated to Canada in search of gold. His career there was masterfully improvised, for he was in turn furniture remover, income tax assessor, miner, railway brakeman and chainganger, baker's assistant, dance M.C. and a disc jockey at a skating rink.

A comically geometric romance led maze-like to further education. He says that he went to college because everyone he knew was going and he was given a grant. These joint spurs took him through three year's study of radio and T.V. During vacations he trained as an actor at various American-styled 'method' schools, subsequently working in Buffalo, New York, in a theatre-in-the-round. One role during this six month's stint was as a eunuch in "The Desert Song" (so much for the Method!) which helped to interest him, paradoxically, in producing. He subsequently produced a couple of educational films and for no particular reason then returned to England.

After working for A.T.V. for eight months as an assistant Floor Manager, he read about QUESTORS in *Encore* and joined us. Flexible as ever, he left A.T.V. and joined



Sainsbury's as an invoice clerk simply to keep his evenings free for QUESTORS. He did a superb 'shop window' using a tape recorder plus Peter Whelan, and was quickly given his first production "Traveller Without Luggage". This for him, but not for the audience, was a disaster in that "I translated mechanically a proscenium arch production into the round". However, he put this experience to good account by learning to put the rule-book in the background of his mind. Later, after three months' rehearsal, he produced brilliantly "Long Day's Journey Into Night". He says that in this play he learned to stop worrying about making an impression and how to get on with directing actors.

Making towards a job in Morocco, he arrived, not unusually for him, somewhere else - in Greece, where he 'rested' for some months. On returning, he stayed with John Arden in Yorkshire where together they made a film that was never seen! In 1963 he went back to his old job in T.V., with Re-

beaten head of the household is played by Kevin Fells. His wife, is played by Hilary Ellwood, who was heard, if not seen, as the singer in "Mother Courage". Paul O'Connor, a wild Irish architect and the only married man in the group, plays the leader of the young tearaways. "The Girl" provides a fascinating end to what promises to be an entertaining and satisfying evening of theatre.

All three plays are produced by Michael

diffusion this time, continuing to produce at QUESTORS. He produced James Saunders' "NEIGHBOURS" at the QUESTORS and subsequently in Berlin where it was booed, and in Paris where it was cheered.

He had by now attracted the attention of the Royal Shakespeare Company and he spent two months with them at Stratford doing a workshop production of "THE BACHAE". From this he returned to QUESTORS and produced another Greek play "HECABE". And then came his break. He received two offers of work; to direct the R.S.C.'s Theatre-Go-Round or to become a director for Rediffusion. Somewhat uncharacteristically he took one of these, the latter, and the last year has amply justified Rediffusion's offer. Eventually he plans to work as a Freelance Director in T.V. Films and the Theatre.

Although disclaiming any desire to be a theorist, he has some spikily unorthodox opinions. He thinks QUESTORS are still hampered by over-attention to realism. Our stage, he feels, has yet to be fully exploited. He would like to see on stage the spontaneity and uninhibited enthusiasm of a football game. As he puts it "Kick hell out of sacred cows."

Alan Clarke is obviously going to be so much in demand professionally during the next few years that the prospect of police dogs patrolling the terraces of QUESTORS during one of his productions is a long way off. However, he continues to serve the Theatre on the Plays and Production Committee.

N.B. In February another of Alan Clarke's productions, "GEORGE'S ROOM" by Alun Owen, is I.T.V.'s drama entry for the Montreux T.V. Festival.

ART EXHIBITIONS

The Art Exhibition in the Shaw Room during the run of the Student One-Act Plays will be by the Students of Battersea College of Education.

One of the tutors from the College, Bert Isaac, will be mounting an exhibition of his own work in the Shaw Room during the run of "The Way of the World" in May.

Hoddell, assisted by Jill Champion-Torrance with sets designed by Sheila Sorley, constructed by Bob Stock. Wardrobe is in the capable hands of Jacqueline Learner, and lighting is by John Winder.

Members free seats are available for this triple bill but you should note that there are only four performances and that the first night is on *Wednesday* the 21st February.

▶ their elders are contrasted sharply in this story of the intrusion into a peaceful middle-class home by a young girl who brings in her wake a gang of hooligans bent on violence and destruction for kicks. The pathos of the attempt by this apparently sophisticated but basically naive girl to communicate with a world far beyond her is the task set Jane Ridout, the youngest member of the group and another Young Questor. The brow-

Bridging the generation gap

RENA RICE

QUESTORS MUSIC CLUB

If you have just won a crock of gold on the 'Pools', you could do little better with it than to build a Children's Theatre - for RENA RICE. That is what she is going to do if her 'treble chance' comes up. Having watched her in action with her Junior Workshop Group, aged 15 - 19, I have yet to meet anyone better equipped to run a theatre for the young.

Teaching is an art difficult to define, but easy to recognise. There are a few rare birds who are 'naturals', and Rena is one of these. It is almost impossible when dealing with adolescents to avoid cliches and patronage; but somehow she manages it. Twenty five teenagers would be loath to give up an evening unless they enjoyed what they were going to do. Half an hour is enough in Rena's class to convince anyone that enjoyment is the over-riding response to her teaching. These young people are being given first rate leadership in their difficult quest of learning to control all the disciplines that make acting an art.

Rena started this group in 1953, and whilst she naturally hopes her students will eventually become acting members of Questors, she is quite content if they pursue their theatrical interests elsewhere. Dorothy and Tony Barber, Michael Langridge and John Turner, all of whom have played major roles at Questors, are former pupils of hers. Under Rena's leadership the Junior Workshop Group has won its class at successive Ealing Youth Drama Festivals so regularly, that success has become almost monotonous.

Preparation for teaching this group must be a considerable chore, but somehow Rena finds time to run three other adult groups outside of Questors. Her ability is recognised nationally, for she is an assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh's Drama Award, and an examiner in verse for a nationwide girls' organisation. Small wonder that Rena says, with engaging simplicity, "I have a full life".

Rena Rice came to Questors in 1944; she was then a professional singer and she joined both to sing and to act. She was also the Theatre Manager from that date until



1963, and I suspect that she, and many others look back with happy nostalgia to those less grand days when from her tiny office in the old tin shack which served as our theatre, Rena ruled us all with a rod of iron.

The Junior Workshop Group are enthusiastically preparing for the Ealing Youth Drama Workshop evening to be held at Questors on February 6th. The themes they intend to improvise are those bedrocks of our society, greed, righteous anger and injustice, qualities, exempting righteous anger, missing from Rena's personality.

When I asked Rena what she got out of working with the young, she replied that her own ideas were refreshed, they relaxed her and gave her much back in companionship. Her work is surely proof that the generation can be bridged.

On looking through the files, it seems that the Music Club has had little publicity in Questopics. It may be worthwhile, therefore, to remind members of the objectives and organisation of the Club.

The Club, whose president is the distinguished pianist, Louis Kentner, aims to provide a season of six concerts of varied character by high level professional performers. An inclusive subscription of £2 gives membership of the Club and admission to each concert, but tickets for individual concerts may also be purchased by Questors members for their own or their friends' use.

As four of this season's concerts have already been given, it is not to be expected that further membership will be taken out, but tickets for each of the remaining two concerts are on sale at 7/6d.

The next concert - on Saturday 17th February will be a Piano Recital by EILEEN BROSTER, who has an extensive repertoire both of concertos and solo items. She began her musical career at the Royal College of Music at the age of ten with Frank Merrick and subsequently gained a special award enabling her to study with Cyril Smith. In 1961 and 1962 she gained high place in a number of Competitions including the first prize in the Concerto Competition at Hastings, which consisted of a concert with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. She has toured in several European Countries besides appearing at the Proms., at the Royal Festival Hall with leading orchestras and on B.B.C. television. She has also broadcast on numerous occasions. Soon after her appearance in the Shaw Room on the 17th February, she will be playing again at the Royal Festival Hall and with the Jacques Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The final concert of the season will be given on March 9th by the Fidelio String Quartet - of which more in the next issue.

'Beggar' my neighbour

Members who remember Barbara Hutchins' highly successful version of "The Beggar's Opera" in 1961 will especially be interested to note that the Cecilian Players are performing the piece at Questors from the 27th of February to the 2nd of March.

They will be using the much admired Benjamin Britten version which gives a contemporary acidity to the traditional melod-

ies. The Company is produced by Jon Slaven, who produced their "Brigadoon" and "Flower Drum Song", both performed at Questors. When not pulling punches at the Cecilians, Jon can frequently be seen pulling pints in the Grapevine.

A special booking form is enclosed with this issue enabling Questor members wishing to attend this production to buy tickets directly from the Cecilian Players.

Coming shortly

Opening Saturday, 16th March for 14 performances - ROMEO JULIET - producer Alfred Emmet. Richard Gaunt and Lorna Watson play the title roles. Ruth Tremayne appears as the Nurse and David Gower as Mercutio; Mary Jones and Ben Keen (The Capulets); Dorinne Ingram and David Lorraine (The Montagues). Friar Laurence is played by Philip Wright.

International Amateur Theatre Association

Young Musicians

The I.A.T.A., the amateur counterpart of the International Theatre Institute, was formed in Brussels in 1952. I signed the Articles of Association on that occasion on behalf of The Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain - and then flew hurriedly home for an emergency committee meeting which decided to buy our theatre premises. The 8th Congress was recently held in Hamburg, when again I represented the Little Theatre Guild. The Conference was attended by representatives of 24 national federations from 15 countries, including U.S.A. and New Zealand, and observers from three other countries. The main theme was 'Youth and Amateur Theatre', which is one of particular interest to The Questors at this time when we are in course of re-examining our own policy in this connection. Helped by a most efficient simultaneous translation system, the discussions were stimulating, if along somewhat stereotyped lines. Certainly they made me more aware of problems and helped me to see possible solutions, though not necessarily along the lines advocated.

I came back with at least one bright idea - an Amateur International Season at The Questors, a sort of mini version of the Aldwych International Season. If, say, three foreign companies from different countries can be brought over to play for a week in

repertoire, two performances each, what a real international occasion it could be! An essential condition would be that Questors members would be willing to put up our foreign visitors in their houses for a week; it could then be a financially self-supporting undertaking.

For our entertainment at Hamburg we saw a rather flat-footed production of "Love for Love" at the Thalia Theatre, which seemed to owe something in decor but nothing in style to the National Theatre's production, and a brilliant production of Edward Albee's new play, "A Delicate Balance", not yet seen in London. This was at the Schauspielhaus, with whose 'dramaturg' I was interested to discuss James Saunders' plays, most of which have been produced by the Schauspielhaus, including "Neighbours" of which we gave the German première (in English!) in 1965. Amateur productions were of Ionesco's "Victims of Duty" and a brilliant series of 'Exercises in Style' called "Autobus" by Raymond Queneau.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for recording that in the foyer of the Conference Hall a large selection of literature was on display, including various text books in German. Picking one at random, the first thing I saw was plans of The Questors Theatre (unacknowledged!)

ALRED EMMET

The Questors Young Musicians Club is sponsoring yet another orchestral concert for young music lovers and music-minded adults. This will be on Saturday 17th February, from 3 till 4 p.m. in the Ealonian Hall, Ealing Green (not to be confused with the Aeolian Hall, W.1, which is a much more rarefied place).

The concert will again be fittingly given by the Ealing Youth Orchestra under its conductor, John Railton, who will lead young minds sure-footedly down musical byways, aided and abetted by Vincent McQueen. The programme will include a movement from a piano concerto with Gillian Spragge as soloist. John Railton also promises us a 'surprise item'. So come prepared for anything!

The audience will rehearse two more songs for 'The Little Sweep', Britten's delightful opera which is to be the highlight of the summer concert and which introduces vigorous audience participation. If the singing of 'Sammy's Bath' at the last concert is anything to go by, we are in for some full throated chorus work!

Admission to the concert is 2/6. Tickets may be obtained from Mrs Christine Glover at 132 The Grove, W.5. (telephone 567 8596 and a stamped/addressed envelope would be appreciated) or at the door on the day. The Ealonian Hall is attached to the Boys' Grammar School, next door to the Central Library.

To: BOX OFFICE MANAGER, Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, W.5 567 5184

ATTRACTION	Date	Alter. Date	Members' Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
Music Club: Piano Recital - Eileen Broster	Feb. 17 7.45 p.m.			7/6		7/6	
STUDENT ONE - ACT PLAYS Feb. 21, 22, 23, 24						4/6 6/6	
Music Club Fidelio String Quartet	Mar. 9 7.45 p.m.			7/6		7/6	
ROMEO & JULIET Mar. 16, 17, 19, 22, 23 26, 27, 29, 30						4/6 6/6	

I enclose cash/cheque/P.P./M.O. value £ and stamped addressed envelope for the despatch of the above tickets.

Name

Address.....

Telephone No. Membership No.

Other members' seats are booked for: Music Club No.

Name: No.

WHEN BOOKING PLEASE NOTE

For the best seats BOOK IN COMFORT - BOOK BY POST but do remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope. POSTAL BOOKINGS ARE DEALT WITH BEFORE BOX OFFICE OPENS.

The Box Office is open for telephone bookings or personal callers from 6.45 to 8.45 p.m. on the evenings of performances and for five evenings prior to each major production ONLY.

It is regretted that tickets which have been paid for cannot be exchanged for another performance. Tickets will, however, be accepted for resale and and money refunded if sold.

MEMBERSHIP CARD must be produced before tickets are issued.

MEMBERS' FREE SEATS are not transferable.

TICKETS BOOKED BY TELEPHONE must be collected within 48 hours or by 7.15 p.m. on the night of the performance (whichever is the earlier), otherwise they may be sold.

BLOCK BOOKINGS of 10 or more tickets for any one performance may be made at a reduction of 6d per ticket. Not applicable to special children's matinees.

ON NIGHTS WHEN THERE IS A PERFORMANCE please do not call the Box Office by 'phone for Advance Bookings until after 7.45 p.m.

Members who have booked seats and later decide not to use them are requested to inform the Box Office as soon as possible or other people may be turned away resulting in a loss to the theatre and disappointment to others.

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