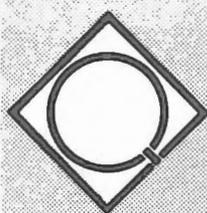


**SPECIAL  
STUDENT  
EDITION**



**QUESTOPICS**

**The  
Autumn  
Programme**

*see page four*

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

JULY, 1968

## July production

# THE MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT

*The Questopics management, in line with its policy of reflecting the social movements in the country, and paying regard to the current student violence in support of demands for greater control over the administration of their institutions, has more than willingly transferred the editorship of this edition to student representatives and gone into hiding.*

*The students intend to take control of the theatre during July and all members are invited to 'sit in' to observe their activities. On 10th July the first year group, under the direction of Alfred Emmet, will present a varied and mostly spontaneous programme of improvisations, dance, choral speaking etc. in the Stanislavski Room.*

*This is followed by the second year students presentation of 'The Mad Woman of Chaillot' in the theatre from July 20th to 27th. Jill Champion-Torrance, the Associate Director, writes about the production on this page.*

*Other contributions to this special student issue include a piece by John Rolfe, the theatre's Head of Design, on his experience of working with students—and a frank disclosure by Michael Langridge on the efforts of a student to sabotage major productions.*

Jean Giraudoux observed as early as 1915, when involved himself as a soldier serving France '.... I grow more and more bitter.... against humbugs and swindlers. We will kill them after the war, which fortunately will have already killed some of them.'

What Giraudoux feared, though at times unwilling to admit it even to himself, was a progressive erosion of the fibre of humanity through which in the end the whole value and beauty of life should disappear. 'It will not be so much a case of ugliness taking possession of the world', he wrote, 'as of a kind of paralysis which will remove from the world all flavour and all light, and make our state the most desperate of all, that of barbarism devoid of simplicity and naturalness.'

To attribute, as he does in *La Folle de*

Chaillot, the possibility of humanity relapsing into such a condition to the insidious yet brutal penetration of unscrupulous exploiters is perhaps not very far from the truth. It is certainly the idea of a crusading moralist intensely and humanly preoccupied with the state of the world and of his fellow beings, whether in 1944 or 1968.

Louis Jouvet presented *La Folle de Chaillot* for the first time in 1945, at the Athénée in Paris, following Giraudoux's death in 1944; for Jouvet it was a play ideally suited to the times,—he writes of it in *Témoignages sur le Théâtre*: ... 'The real use of a play is to warm one's body and one's heart.'

'The Madwoman' is the one of all Giraudoux's plays which comes closest to being an actor's play first and foremost: that in which the merit is more visible on the stage than in the peace and quiet of the study; there are few parts in this play which are not rewarding for the actors interpreting them.

We have found this in rehearsal: reading the play, although intensely rewarding, is not an experience to be compared with the warmth, humour and illumination of reality achieved by the involvement with character and mood. 'The Madwoman' is true theatre—both for audience and actors, and is a play that both producer and cast feel is yet a testament of our times,—as real today as it was for Giraudoux, for Louis Jouvet, who both produced the play, and created the role of the Raggicker, and for the audiences of Paris, who had survived a war of dreadful privations and destruction, and were faced with a breakdown of normal moral standards.

Louis Jouvet, returning to Paris after five years of occupation, felt surer than ever that in the great authors such as Molière and Giraudoux was to be found the salvation of the theatre and the justification for its existence: 'I have seen the romantic theatre of melodrama, the symbolist theatre, the realist theatre, the boulevard theatre, and the literary, the surrealist, the cubist. After two wars have passed over it, the Theatre remains the Theatre.'

*(continued page 2, col. 1)*

## Diary . . . .

July 10th at 7.45 p.m. in the Stanislavsky Room

### Students at Work

Annual presentation by the First Year Student Group.  
Tickets 2/6 from the Box Office.  
(see page 1)

July 17th at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room  
New Members Meeting.

July 20th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 26th and 27th

### THE MAD WOMAN OF CHAILLOT

A Student production.  
Members free seats available.  
Guest tickets 6/6 and 4/6  
(See page 1)

July 28th at 7.45 p.m. in the Stanislavsky Room

### PRODUCERS SHOP WINDOW

Tickets obtainable from the Administrator.

September 18th at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room

New Members Meeting.

September 21st, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 27th & 28th

### THE HOMECOMING

by Harold Pinter  
Members free seats available.  
Guests 6/6 and 4/6  
(see page 4)

September 29th at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room

The Film Society presents  
*Fan Fan la Tulipe*  
Members—season tickets.  
Guests 5/-.

September 30th at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room

Discussion on 'The Homecoming'.

## WORKING WITH STUDENTS

In 'The Madwoman', we are presented with a unique experience,—for those who had not read Giraudoux previously, or seen any of his plays in performance, it has proved to be a fascinating journey, into a bright reality, unlike any other the theatre can offer. The 'miracle of Giraudoux' is still alive, in the words his characters are called upon to speak, and only from the text springs the life of the play. We are fortunate, or unfortunate, in never having seen a Jouvett production of Giraudoux's plays. We even precede the film, being shot in France with Katharine Hepburn in the title role. None of this is a deterrent—the play lives,—for the actors and the audience, and that is enough for us.

The Student Group could not be presented with a bigger or more exciting challenge by Michael Hoddell the director, via Giraudoux whose conception of the theatre is where 'all is nothing save for the need for communication and communion.' For the second year Students, 'The Madwoman' will be the crowning achievement of two years hard work,—for us all the astonishing opportunity to share in the makings of a play in which none involved feel superfluous or without value. With such a large cast our resources have been strained to the utmost: first year Students have been recruited, and some ex-Students, to contribute to the herculean task of 'going up'.

Hilary Ellwood takes the title rôle of the Madwoman, Countess Aurelia. Paul O'Connor plays the Ragpicker, with Barbara Butters as Mme. Constance, Avril Lotinga as Mlle. Gabrielle, and Cherry Kane as Mme Josephine. Jane Rhydout plays Irma, Richard Gaunt, Pierre; Martin Rutherford the President; Richard Halberstadt, Baron Tommard; Nicholas Hunt, the Prospector, and Kevin Fells, Dr. Jadin, to mention but a few of the large assembled cast.

Michael Hoddell directs: Sheila Sorley the designer, is assisted by Nigel Cowell, and John Rolfe has designed the costumes, with Maire Steadman to interpret his ideas from Wardrobe. To John Stacey and Nigel Cowell has gone the exciting task of constructing Sheila's imaginative settings. With David Evans as Stage Manager, lighting by John Winder, and sound by Graham Evans, we are promised a smooth technical background to what we hope will be six memorable evenings of theatre.

We leave the last words to Louis Jouvett, who wrote in *Réflexions du Comédien*: 'We all need to feel that faces and hearts are turned towards us, to be sure of that. The baker who sells his bread, the flower-girl who sells her flowers, do so not so much in order to live as in order to feel themselves less alone'.

Jill Champion-Torrance,  
*Associate Director*

'Write something about the students', said the editor, 'You have worked with them before'.

This is a fact.

I can remember spreading sand in the Stanislavsky Room for barefoot students in 'Liola', making mobile mountains for their first show in the new theatre, 'Dark of the Moon', suspending the rafters for 'The Crucible' and now designing costumes for 'The Mad Woman'. Why do I work so often with the student group?

There are two reasons, I think. The first is that sense of belonging to an interested team. Students' team playing has been mentioned frequently enough for Questors to be tired of hearing about it, but it remains a fact, particularly for those working in the team.

It would be difficult for any group of people meeting three or more times a week, sharing the same interest and similar experiences not to develop a sense of understanding of each other. With students I feel this understanding is more than a conscious anticipation of another's reaction, it is a response to each other on an intuitive level.

This is heightened by the fact that students are more or less within the same age group. This gives students an ease of communication among themselves which is the vital spark of drama. I am fascinated as I see a play growing in the imagination of this particular age group. This was one of the most intriguing aspects of 'The Crucible'. You may remember the selection of newspaper clippings display-

ed in the foyer during the run. These had been collected by the cast who were delighted with the parallel between the word 'witch' in the play and 'drugs' in the newspapers. The context was different but the hysterical reaction was the same.

The interest that produced that flood of clippings seems to work on every aspect of student shows. They are interested in the design and construction of the set. They want to understand and so want to be there helping when the job is being done. They want to provide parts of costume and props. In fact so many seemingly unavailable objects turn up that one wonders at the range of friends that students seem to have.

There is a tremendous enthusiasm about getting the complete show on stage that one sometimes does not find in non-student productions. Students expect to help in other departments. This results in real co-operation back-stage. Something of the team spirit spreads into wardrobe and workshop and stage even and one often finds the same Questors working together with the students.

This has something to do with providing students with the best that the theatre can provide, to match their enthusiasm with our own, but also has something to do with Michael Hoddell who has led the students over a number of years. In fact the second reason for my working so often on student shows is the same as many others have, I find Michael Hoddell very easy to work with.

JOHN ROLFE

## Questors Questionnaire

749 questionnaires - covering 30% of the membership - have satisfied even your Secretary's appetite for Questors statistics, at least for the time being. My grateful thanks are due to everyone who filled in the questionnaire, and to the evening office staff who did so much of the preliminary work in analysing the results.

A vast amount of information has been obtained from the questionnaires - much of it for the first time - which will be of the greatest importance in our future programme building and policy decisions. We know now that 56% of the membership live in what was the old borough of Ealing, with a further 22% living in what was formerly Middlesex, while a close analysis by postal districts has indicated a number of areas upon which our coming membership drive might well be concentrated. In the light of the draft Town Centre Plan for Ealing the fact that two thirds of our audience come to the theatre by car will be of great importance in future negotiations with the Local Authority. For

the first time we have some indication of what proportion of members survives the first year of membership - between 35% and 40% in fact, and we now know that over half our members have joined us since the opening of the new theatre four years ago.

The question which undoubtedly aroused most interest was the voting for the 'best productions' of the year. Bearing in mind the fact that the phrasing of this question was certainly open to criticism, any conclusions from the answers should be carefully qualified, but for what it is worth, the 'best production' - by a substantial margin - was 'Mother Courage' followed by 'Hedda Gabler', 'Private Lives', 'An Italian Straw Hat' and 'Romeo and Juliet'.

For the first time we are in possession of information which will enable us to answer the question - who are the Questors? - and the ability to answer that question can only be of the greatest value in the future deliberations of the Committee of Management.

MARTIN BOWLEY

## Student at Work

### The Testimony of Michael Langridge

I turned the wind machine with my left hand, delicately varying the speed of revolution to prevent the contraption sounding too much like a coffee grinder and more like the phenomenon it was intended to create. My right hand had a piece of cotton around one finger which was attached to an insignificant fishing net draped over two poles out on the stage, and by jerking my arm every now and again I could flap the net in full view of the audience in order to convince them that the dreadful sound emanating from the wings was indeed a light to moderate gale. Whilst I was attempting to synchronize my grindings with my flappings I had to let forth the muted cry of a man drowning in the sea three miles away, a sound almost impossible to produce when one's arms are flailing around like something possessed.

This sequence of events occurred during my first year as a Questors student and I was assisting backstage on the second year student group One Act Plays. The contortions described above were part of the sound plot for 'RIDERS TO THE SEA' by J. M. SYNGE, and on the second night I over enthusiastically jerked my arm, resulting in chaos. The fishing net nearly came off its poles and finished in a horizontal position as if it were frozen stiff. To justify this rather sudden freak weather I turned the wind machine like a dervish, furiously trying to hide my mistake, only succeeding in making a noise like ten coffee grinders. At this point in the proceedings the cotton broke from the extreme tension and the net gracefully collapsed on the stage taking two of the cast with it. I had sufficient presence of mind to cease the operation of the wind machine and at the time noted a distinct sigh of relief from the audience, who, I was later to learn, had not heard a single line since the curtain went up. Perhaps this was the reason why the programme had me listed as 'lighting assistant'.

A first year student gets many opportunities to work on major productions and this had not been by any means my debut at the Questors. My first play was 'Henry IV Pt One' and I had been given the part of John of Lancaster. One night during the second



Students Langridge & Turner

(by kind permission of Criminal Records)

week of performances I managed to get caught in a traffic jam in Southwark having accepted a lift from a colleague at work, who insisted that he could get me to the theatre much faster than any tube train. Back at the theatre it was ten minutes before curtain-up and our very competent stage manager had got hold of John Turner who up to then had been playing Hotspur's servant, Third Traveller and Hotspur's army. 'You're playing Lancaster', the stage manager said 'get his wig on.' Reluctantly John climbed into my costume and put on the blonde wig I had to wear for the part. I arrived at the theatre just in time to hear the dying chords of the National Anthem. I submitted my abject apologies to the stage manager and learnt what measures had been taken to cover my absence. When John came off the stage he offered a few obscenities in my direction and religiously returned my costume. 'I stood with my back to the audience all through the first scene,' he said 'with any luck no one will notice you've grown six inches in the next council scene.' He was right, no one did notice. The last production I was allowed in during my first year was a very memorable production in the New Plays Festival, a play called 'The Children of Saturn' - a title that brings tears to the eyes of many a member even now. One incident from this play that I remember vividly happened during a scene which re-created the storming of the Winter Palace by the peasants during the Russian revolution. The set for the play was divided into three sections, a drawing room at the front of the stage, an attic at one side and a large rostrum standing about five feet off the ground upstage. For some reason only known to the producer the peasants, of which I was one, had to negotiate arm-chairs, sofas and tables, etc. which remained

on stage throughout the play, even in the outdoor scenes. The incident I am referring to occurred when the peasants entered following their leader Father Gapon. The cast of peasants numbered about twenty-five and before going on we had to line up outside the theatre (there were no wings in the old Theatre), sometimes in the pouring rain, having been called at least half an hour before we were due to go on. Eventually we got our cue, and we filed onto the stage; that is to say, some of us. Most of the crowd never got there, because of the size of the stage, and remained in the pouring rain, waving their icons for the duration of the scene. Those who managed to get in front of the audience did not last very long; they were instantly massacred by another two first-year students, who mowed them down to an unconvincing recording of gunfire, which seemed to have been extracted from the '1812'. At the sound of the guns, we had to fling ourselves into the cyclorama pit to clear for the next scene, and crawl out over broken gelatines and lights making sufficient noise to wake, not only the dead, but half the audience as well.

### Junior Workshop

The Questors Junior Workshop Groups together with the Under-Fourteens recently held an inter-group session in the theatre one Saturday morning. Some sixty children turned up ranging in age from about nine to sixteen years old. Working in three groups, they improvised scenes from 'OLIVER TWIST'.

This gathering was so successful that another session is to be held on the sixth of

(Continued page 4, col.3)

# THE AUTUMN SEASON 1968

by ALFRED EMMET

The Autumn season will start with Harold Pinter's strange and evocative play 'The Homecoming' (September 21st). This is a play about which so much has been written, of which so many interpretations and explanations have been given by critics (apart from those who have admitted that, though deeply impressed and disturbed, they had no idea what it is about), that a fresh look at it after only three years (it was presented by the R.S.C. at the Aldwych theatre in 1965) may reveal some fresh facets, some new meanings. It is emphatically a play to keep in the repertoire. Pinter, is of course no stranger to The Questors' stage. We produced 'The Birthday Party' in 1959, before the success of 'The Caretaker' put Pinter's star into the ascendant. More recently 'The Collection' and 'The Lover' (April, 1967) was a considerable success with our audiences. 'The Homecoming', by the way, is an adult play and not suitable for young children.

This will be followed by Marlowe's 'Edward II' (October 19th). This is a play which was all but chosen for the opening production of our new theatre in 1964. It is a play for which our theatre should be exceptionally suitable, with the facility for a swift moving flow from scene to scene. It is in no spirit of temerarious challenge to the National Theatre that we present this play while the Brecht version will still, we hope, be in its repertoire. But it would seem particularly apt to produce a play we have long

wanted to do at a time when such an interesting comparison between Brecht and the original Marlowe can be made. It is with some shame that we have to own that this will be the first production of a Marlowe play in the course of our 39 years.

The programme for the November production has yet to be determined. This will be something more experimental, more unusual than the normal run. Details will be announced later.

Every theatre must keep on returning to Chekhov, indubitably one of the greatest dramatists who ever wrote. On December 7th we will revive 'Uncle Vanya', which we first produced in 1941. Since then some of our greatest successes have been scored with Chekhov. 'The Cherry Orchard' (1943 and again in 1965), 'The Seagull' (1947) and 'Three Sisters' (1960). Our first production of 'Uncle Vanya' was given in circumstances of great difficulty during the war. The sets were barely completed in time - indeed they were being assembled for the first time on the first night. This took so long that the intervals were unduly prolonged and brought a slow handclap from the audience. Despite this, the performance took such a hold that at the final curtain, after one of those pauses long enough to make the cast feel it must have been a complete flop, there followed an ovation such as has seldom been heard at the Questors before or since.

## Am I Talking to Myself ?

DON KINCAID

Producers and directors in the theatre are often very cautious about the use of music.— Perhaps they are right. But as a musician I believe much can be done to interest them in the possibilities that music can offer, so that music at Questors could become—shall I say it?—part of the scene. I too would like to discover what those possibilities are and therefore, in September, I propose piloting a musical workshop at Questors where musicians could explore and experiment. Meanwhile would any composers and performers (and directors?) who are interested in the idea please write to me at the theatre so that I can see whether I am talking to myself or not before planning further.

## Junior Workshop

(continued)

July. This time the groups have been asked to bring their friends who can either watch or participate. The improvisations will be based on an historical theme and it is hoped to use all the children at once in three separate scenes. Perhaps in the future these sessions can be extended to take in other groups outside the theatre and neighbouring schools might be interested in sending a small party along.

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

ATTRACTION	Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Cash	Total Cash
Students at Work 7.45 p.m.	July 10th			2/6		2/6	
The Mad Woman of Chaillot. July 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27						4/6 6/6	
The Homecoming Sept. 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28						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.