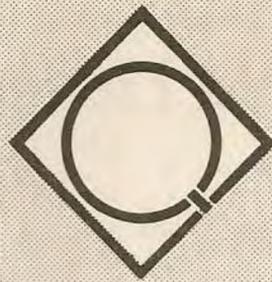


Student Group
Production

see page two



QUESTOPICS

KEEP
THIS COPY
BY YOU

see page three

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

No.55 JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1971



Above: Ffrangcon Whelan and David Lorraine rehearse a scene from Oedipus.

Below: Michael Langridge, who plays the title role. The rest of the cast includes Martin Bowley, John Robb, Kevin Fells, Betty Ogden, Estelle Longmore, Michael Noakes, Roberta Hornstein, Carol Metcalfe, Philip Irving, John Wilson, Roger de Toney, Gill Redhead and Richard Lewis. David Gower directs and Norman Barwick designs.

Fighting that Pinch

Questopics has changed. If you're not sure how, look inside. You will see that two forthcoming productions are being reviewed instead of the usual one, and that the postal booking forms are now in a new place.

The reason is simple – MUNNY – and the need to save it. For a trial period at least, Questopics will be appearing every two months and the effect of this will be to throw new demands on you, the audience member.

A bi-monthly news sheet means that you will have to either book by post for two productions at once or book now for the first show and keep this issue of Questopics in a safe place and book later for the student production when you know which dates you have free.

If you don't book for both shows at once remember that you will get no further reminders about coming events at the theatre until the next issue of Questopics in March, so tie a huge knot in your handkerchief and don't forget to come and see the second show.

A Happy new year to you all.

RICHARD GAUNT

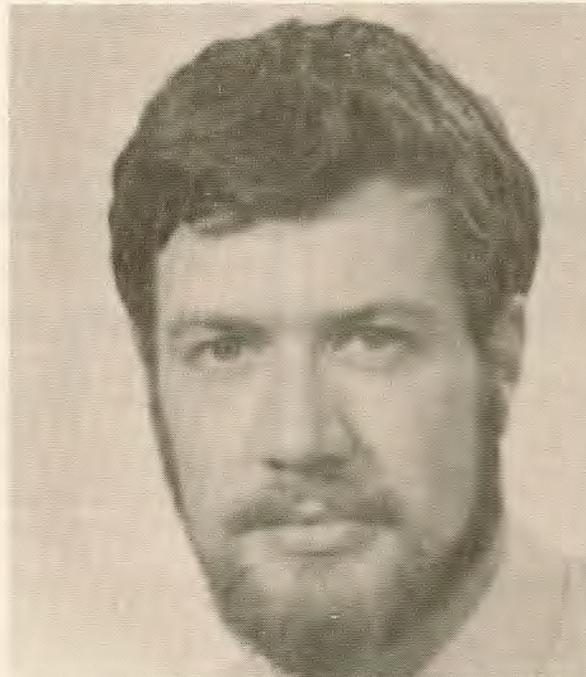
January Production

OEDIPUS

Ted Hughes' version of Seneca's tragedy

Oedipus: perhaps no other name in European literature has the same evocative power, more especially since Freud made it a household word, and told us that it had, or would have, implications for any household from Ealing to Peru: for it evokes recollection of the universal taboo, 'Do not sleep with your mother'. However remote in time and place the story of the Sphinx, of the slaying of Laius, of the incestuous marriage of Oedipus and his mother Jocasta, may seem to us, the story is nevertheless the concern of the human race, in Acton as well as Africa.

But why Seneca's *Oedipus*? Come to think of it, why Seneca's anything? He was a philosopher, teacher of rhetoric, tutor and minister to the Emperor Nero – and playwright: and such a playwright that he influenced European drama wherever it flourished. In the Renaissance, and in England his legacy can clearly be seen, even in Shakespeare himself: yet it is doubtful if his tragedies were ever given a stage performance, and indeed he is rarely performed now, so that this production provides a rare opportunity to become acquainted with a writer who has to some degree become part of our literary heritage.



Well – what's he like? For instance, his language? It is powerful, sonorous, and frequently rhetorical – and it is Latin, which rules it out for most of us these days: it needs a highly sensitive craftsman in words to translate the pulsing sonority into English which will be not a mimicry, or an exact rendering of the powerful Latin, but a version which will parallel its harsh vividness and sombre resonance.

This, Ted Hughes, who has done the verse adaptation, has effected in verse which claims attention in its own right: and attention to the spoken words is a very proper thing in a play directly descended from the Greek theatre, which was a place where people went to listen rather than to see, where the arguments, the laments and prayers, the choric observations, were all of more significance than the appearance of the actors, or even the action, of which there was little or none.

Come to listen, then: but come also to watch, because David Gower, the producer has rightly decided, given the conditions of a modern theatre and audience, that movements of a formal and ritualistic kind should stress and illuminate the words – and should not distract the ear from apprehending what the play is about: ritual is in place, because the drama that Seneca inherited was religious, and because, whatever your belief or disbelief in this century, the story unfolded in this play is of such significance for humanity that it merits the title 'religious' in its widest sense.

Oedipus will be an event, then, of great interest to all students of theatre who, in all probability, have never seen a Senecan tragedy, and all others who want to add to their theatrical experience a presentation of the story which has to be admitted as relevant to all humanity. It will be an experience in English poetry, in significant movement, light and darkness: it will be provocative, and may well be disturbing. GEOFFREY GRIMSEY

February Production

Student One Act Plays

The Second Year Student Group one-act programme aims at giving the students an opportunity of tackling contrasting parts in plays of different styles and periods within the one programme. It is also an opportunity — as has been said on previous occasions — for members of the theatre to see young actors half-way through their training, young actors who will eventually add to the strength of the main acting group.

Last season's production (*The Resurrection*, *An Office of Profit*, and *Black Comedy*) was very well supported, to the extent that people were being turned away on the last two nights. Consequently, the run has been extended this season to five nights: from February 23 - 28.

The programme will consist of: *Press Cuttings* by George Bernard Shaw (Edwardian), *The Room* by Harold Pinter (Modern) and *The Eunuch* by Terence (Roman).

Press Cuttings is one of Shaw's 'tomfooleries'; a farcical piece subtitled 'A Topical

Sketch compiled from the editorial and correspondence columns of the daily papers during the Women's War in 1909'. Its first performance was private: the play was refused a licence because of its political references. It was later granted a licence on condition that the names of the characters Mitchener and Balsquith were changed.

It abounds in Shavian puns and witticisms (and much verbal indulgence); the social comment is often biting. One might be tempted into regarding it as a bit of nonsense from an age gone by, were it not for the fact that the political moments are often recognisable; and in these days of women's



The *Eunuch* in rehearsal. Jeanne Smith exercises her charms on Tom Jennings. Carolyn Hayfield looks on.



Peter Coleman, who plays Mr. Kidd in *The Room* and *Chremies* in *The Eunuch*.



Susan Reeve, who plays Rose in *The Room*.

liberation movements the Suffragettes are still relevant.

The plot(?) revolves round a room in the War Office where General Mitchener whose answer to every problem is 'Shoot them down!', and Prime Minister Balsquith try to cope with the Suffragettes and the Anti-Suffragettes. Also moving in and out of the action are a disorderly orderly, and an Irish charlady who, at the end of the play, becomes engaged to the General.

The Room was Pinter's first play, written in 1957, and first professionally performed

by the Hampstead Theatre Club. It contains many of the themes Pinter has since developed in greater depth and subtlety: the ever-present, but unexplained, feeling of menace; unanswered questions; deceptive dialogue; the sudden eruption of violence. It is a taut little play that should keep audiences talking for some time.

Six of Terence's plays have survived. *The Eunuch* is considered to be his second. Written in 161 B.C., it is a witty, light-hearted play; a gentle comedy that aims at arousing smiles — not laughter.

Adapted from the Greek original of Menander, it concerns the efforts of Thais, a courtesan, to return a young slave girl to the brother from whom she was parted as a child. The characters, though often not very subtle, are credibly drawn and are delightful: the

continued →

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

OEDIPUS January 30, 31, February 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
					10/- 7/-	

Box Office next open to personal callers and for telephone bookings: From 25th January to 6th February — 6.45 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

I enclose cash/cheque/P.O. value £ & S.A.E.
 Name Mem. No. Tel. No:
 Address.....
 Other members seats for: Name Mem.No.....

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

STUDENT ONE ACT PLAYS February 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
					35p	

Box Office next open to personal callers and for telephone bookings: From 18th February to 27th February — 6.45 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

I enclose cash/cheque/P.O. value £ & S.A.E.
 Name Mem. No. Tel. No:
 Address.....
 Other members seats for: Name Mem.No.....

Drake revitalised !!

Questopics may have lost an editor – Alan Drake, who retired from the editorial chair in December after five years hard labour, but the Questors as a whole will still be benefiting from his energetic talents for many years to come. TONY SHIPLEY explains the what and why of Drake.

The letter was addressed to 'Tony Shipley (The Poor Man's Michael Green)', and that, together with the typing being in italics, meant that the sender was Alan Drake. Alan Drake's typewriter always writes in italics, as though it were continually amazed by the outrageous material it is required to type. The letter itself was in true Drake style, commencing with a grossly exaggerated flattery, moving with indecent haste into an urgent request for material for his literary monthly, and ending with a threat. A postscript gave firm instructions for posting to meet his deadline.

The interesting thing about Alan Drake is that his victims respond cheerfully, indeed almost eagerly. In my case, I ignored the threat (of suicide by Drake) but nevertheless wrote.

Alan is grand master of the art of cajoling people into doing those things that in their right minds they would not even contemplate. He achieves this by a compound of flattery and insult which has the effect of instant brain-washing.

The chairman of those committees of which he is a member mutter darkly about wanting his resignation when he misses six meetings in succession, and then welcome him with sincere warmth when he arrives twenty minutes late for the seventh. One chairman even went so far as to apologise for trespassing upon his valuable time in inviting him to attend committee meetings, although I am myself inclined to doubt the sincerity of that particular utterance.

The Questors were not slow to realise what a formidable weapon they possessed in Drake. The one thing that every theatre wants is money; the one thing that sends shivers down the spine of every self-respecting actor is the speech from the stage after a performance. So when The Questors is particularly in need of money, it puts Alan, who has never been

a self-respecting actor, on the stage to make this speech.

Alan's acting talents are well known to Questors audiences. Like the troupers of old, all he requires is a splendid costume, a stage and a pink spotlight. A script is useful but by no means essential. Supporting actors, provided they know their place, are welcome but in their absence Alan is master of monologue. If all else fails there is always the Death Scene.

I have a novel proposal for a fund-raising venture for the Appeal – let us stage a contest between Drake and Martin Bowley to see which of them can sustain the longer Death Scene, slow poisoning and repeated miraculous recoveries being barred.

Alan's resignation from the editorial chair of *Questopics* does not mean that his ever-youthful countenance will no longer be seen in Mattock Lane; indeed, quite the reverse.

It cannot have escaped your attention that the Appeal Season is here again, and after a short but intensive decimalisation course a fully converted Alan Drake will be let loose on Questors audiences with the object of separating them from their loose change before they have time to realise its value. Although temporarily redundant as a melodrama hero, we may safely expect to see him again in his favourite role when the present vogue for vegetarianism has passed and ham is again in favour.

That rather devious mention of foodstuffs brings me to another aspect of Drake; Drake the Caterer. His organisational expertise has been brought to bear on many Questors occasions, from Theatre Guild conferences to wedding receptions. With quasi-military precision, he has arranged for such things as the simultaneous roasting of many chickens in ovens all over Ealing, each chicken being then

brother of the slave girl – a country bumpkin unused to 'city' ways; Thais' admirers, vying with each other for her favours – the one young and handsome, the other gross; the parasite; the sharp-tongued maidservant: all recognisable to a modern audience.

Terence's plays were not the crowd-pleasers that those of Plautus were, being too delicate for the Roman palate. But he came into his own after his death.

This year's Student Group consists of seven men and four women. Their acting backgrounds are variable – from one who has never appeared on the stage before, to one who has had much experience with amateur groups outside The Questors. Tom Jennings, Steven Hallmark, Bruce Cowan, Jose Alfano, Carolyn Hayfield and Jeanne Smith appear in the Shaw; Susan Reeve, Peter Coleman, Paul Lewis, Peter Garrett and Trevor Small in the Pinter; and the whole company, with the addition of Richard Halberstadt (an ex-student) and Penny Darch (first year), appear in the Terence.

The sets and costumes are designed by Mavis Armitt. Mary Todd is Stage Manager.
WYLIE LONGMORE



New Booking Form system

In this and future issues of *Questopics* the booking forms for the current productions will appear adjacent to the articles reviewing them. Cut out the current forms and send them off as soon as possible and keep the rest of *Questopics* and the other booking forms for when you need them.

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

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI March 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31
April 2, 3

Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
			50p 35p		50p 35p	

I enclose cash/cheque/P.O. value £

& S.A.E.

Name Mem. No. Tel. No:.....

Address

Other members seats for: Name Mem. No.....

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

JOE ORTON PLAYS April 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24

Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
					50p 35p	

I enclose cash/cheque/P.O. value £

& S.A.E.

Name Mem. No. Tel. No:.....

Address

Other members seats for: Name Mem. No.....

QUESTOPICS

(from page three)

conveyed by express motor transport to Mattock Lane to be carved and served whilst still hot.

There is something mildly surrealist about Alan Drake, not that you would suspect so from his immaculate and eminently respectable appearance, but somehow no encounter with him is ever uneventful. With his disarming charm he could, and probably does, sell instant coffee to the Brazilians and leave them thinking that he is doing them a great favour.

Although he has resigned from *Questopics* and from the Committee of Management, it is to be hoped that The Questors will be favoured with his presence for many a year to come.

QUESTORS

STUPENDOUS DRAW

Sunday, 28 March '71

Hundreds of valuable prizes to be won. Sell your tickets and come back for more!

Help Quentin to build that bridge to the Stanislavsky Room.

March Production

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

by JOHN WEBSTER

produced by Alan Chambers

March 20·21·23·24·26·27·30·31 April 2·3

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

BRITISH DANCE DRAMA THEATRE	Date	Alter. Date	Members Tickets	Price	Guest Tickets	Price	Total Cash
February 5 & 6 at 10.30 a.m. (4-8yrs)				4/-		4/-	
February 4, 5, & 6 at 2.30 p.m. (9-13yrs)				4/-		4/-	

Box Office next open to personal callers and for telephone bookings: From 25th January to 6th February - 6.45 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

I enclose cash/cheque/P.O. value £

& S.A.E.

Name Mem. No. Tel. No

Address

Other members seats for: Name Mem. 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 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 1/- 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.

Diary

- January 17 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
The Film Society presents *Ivan The Terrible* Part 2.
Members - Season Tickets. Guests 5/-
- January 20 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
NEW MEMBERS MEETING
- January 23 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
A Concert of Music by the Priory Concertante
Admission by Programme - 7/6 at the door.
- January 24 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
ACTIVE MEMBERS MEETING
- January 30, 31 February 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 at 7.45 p.m.
OEDIPUS
by Seneca, adapted by Ted Hughes
Members free seats available. Guests 10/- & 7/-
- February 4, 5, 6 in the Theatre
BRITISH DANCE DRAMA THEATRE
5th & 6th - 10.30 a.m. (4-8 year olds)
4th, 5th & 6th - 2.30 p.m. (9-13 year olds)
Tickets 4/-
- February 8 in the Shaw Room at 7.45 p.m.
Discussion on 'Oedipus'
- February 17 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
NEW MEMBERS MEETING
- February 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 at 7.45 p.m.
STUDENT ONE-ACT PLAYS
PRESS CUTTINGS by Bernard Shaw
THE ROOM by Harold Pinter
THE EUNUCH by Terence translated by Betty Radice
Members free seats available. Guests 35p
- February 28 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
The Film Society presents *The World of Apu*
Members - Season Tickets. Guests 25p
- March 10 at 7.45 p.m. in the Shaw Room
NEW MEMBERS MEETING

April Production

FUNERAL GAMES

and

The Good and Faithful Servant

by JOE ORTON

produced by ROBIN DUVAL

APRIL 17 · 19 · 20 · 21 · 23 · 24