

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE



COMMUNITY THEATRE FESTIVAL

1987

FOREWORD

THE British Drama League Community Theatre Festival takes place annually in response to an invitation by the League to Amateur Dramatic Societies throughout the country that they should each prepare a short play, or plays, with very special care and submit the result to expert criticism. By so doing, amateurs assert their faith in Drama as being something more than a "passing show," and proclaim their desire to improve themselves in one of the most difficult of the Arts.

At each stage of the Festival, which is open to teams of every kind both in cities, towns and villages, an Adjudicator is provided from Headquarters whose duty it is to view the performances in reference to a standard laid down beforehand and, at the conclusion of the performance, to criticise the work presented in the presence of the audience. The standard of marking is printed on the third page of this cover, and provides a general indication both of the aims of the Festival and of the qualities of play-production and choice, which are regarded as of prime importance.

As a result of the adjudication, and without detriment to the Festival spirit, a process of elimination takes place at each stage of the Festival whereby five teams are chosen to appear in the Final Festival in London, in May, 1937, in competition for the Howard de Walden Cup. Each of these teams will represent one of the five Areas into which the country is divided, and these Areas are again sub-divided into divisional and preliminary festivals. The atmosphere of the Festival throughout is thus an atmosphere of friendly emulation, but its fundamental aim is similar to the League itself: to assist the development of the art of the Theatre and to promote a right relation between Drama and the life of the community.

It will be seen that the amateurs who take advantage of this test join up with fellow-amateurs in a common effort, and each learns from the others as well as from the critic. The audiences find their attitude towards the Drama to be quickened, and their interest and—most important of all—their own critical faculty to be strengthened. Thus the whole community takes part in an event rightly termed a "Festival of Drama."

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Scene 3—The same (two hours later)

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Scene 5—Olivia's garden (same afternoon)

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THE Questors have been in existence for about eight years and have entered for the Festival every year since 1931. In 1934 we reached the Divisional Final with Pirandello's "The Doctor's Duty." Our Headquarters are at Ealing, where since 1933 we have worked in our own theatre. We are at present engaged on a two years' historical programme from the Greek Theatre to the present day.



Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society

"The Long Christmas Dinner"

by Thornton Wilder

Lucia	...	...	Myfanwy Farmer
Roderick	...	...	Percy Coomber
Mother Bayard	...	...	Grace Brunson
Cousin Brandon	...	...	Leslie E. Williamson
The Nurse	...	...	Gladys Grist
Charles	...	...	Fred Brunson
Genevieve	...	...	Margaret Dick
Lenora	...	...	May Aldworth
Cousin Ermengarde	...	...	K. Whitfield
Roderick (The Second)	...	...	Bernard Low
Sam	...	...	Kenneth Churchouse
Lucia (The Second)	...	...	Gwen Dennis

Producer: Cedric Aldworth

Scene—The dining-room of the Bayard home.

Time—Ninety years are traversed, representing in accelerated motion ninety Christmas dinners in the Bayard household.

THE Loughton Amateur Dramatic Society was formed in 1924. Its activities have been confined to one or two productions each year which have varied from Shakespeare to modern comedy and farce. Performances are given at the Lopping Hall, Loughton. This is the first occasion which the Society have entered the British Drama League Festival.

ADJUD

ROBERT N

MR. ROBERT NEW judges appointed by the and will adjudicate in a marking which is maint and which awards a po thirty for Production, t for Choice of Play and t

Of the four plays tha judge to-night, two h Norman Marshall from in Central London ("C Mr. Howieson Culff fro held in Outer London, Essex ("Outer Section"

The company placed fr Newton will go forward the Eastern Area Final, winners of the Ced H present held by "The P

Cedric Har

Mr. AL

has kindly promised to winning society on beha

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dance with the system of
ed throughout the Festival
le forty marks for Acting,
For Stage Presentation, ten
for Dramatic Achievement.

Mr. Robert Newton has to
e been selected by Mr.
e Preliminary Festivals held
entral Section") and two by
the Preliminary Festivals
ast Middlesex and South

to-night by Mr. Robert
o represent the Division in
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dwich Trophy which is at
engers"

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resent the Trophy to the
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Midland Bank Dramatic Society

"Where the Cross is Made"

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Nat Bartlett (his son)	Charles Trott
Sue Bartlett (his daughter)	Constance Knight
Doctor Higgins	...	...	J. K. Keating
Silas Horne (mate)	} of the schooner 'Mary Allen'	George Wright	Charles Thorell
Cates (bo'sun)			Richard North
Jimmy Kanaka (harpooner)			

Producer: A. H. Wharrier

Scene—Captain Bartlett's 'Cabin' at the top of his house on the California Coast.

THE Society which was formed in 1923 has a membership of forty-eight, drawn from the clerical staff of the Bank in the London Area. Monthly play-readings are held, and thirty-five full-length plays have been produced. The Society has entered the Festival three times. In 1935 the team reached first place in the 'D' Division and in 1936 were placed fifth. Although professional producers are often engaged for the Society's west-end productions, its Drama League entries are, in the spirit of the Festival, entirely amateur. Recent productions—The Good Companions, and The Rose Without a Thorn.



The Blackfriars Society

"A Family Comedy (1840)"

By Marjorie Bowen

Mr. John Porter (a Tea Merchant)	...	G. G. Kirkpatrick
Mrs. John Porter (his wife)	...	Ethel Whitbread
Miss Emily Porter (his sister)	...	Sylvia West
Miss Maria Porter (his younger daughter)	...	Greta Bowron
Miss Matilda Porter (his elder daughter)	...	Dorothy Leonard
Mr. Henry Porter (his son)	...	Harold Cooper
Miss Sarah Speed (his son's fiancée)	...	Connie Bunce

Producer: Harold Cooper

Scene—A parlour in Mr. Porter's house in Islington. Early morning.

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EASTERN AREA FINAL

THE winning team from each of the four Divisions in the Eastern Area will meet at the **SCALA THEATRE** on **Monday, 3rd May**, when Mr. F. Sladen-Smith will select one team to go forward as the Eastern Area representative in the National Final. Tickets for this event are **NOW ON SALE** at the Box Office.

NATIONAL FINAL FESTIVAL

THIS will be held at the **OLD VIC** on the evening of **Monday, 31st May**, when teams representing the five Areas will compete under a panel of three Adjudicators for the Howard de Walden Cup, which is now held by the Guild of Abbey Players, Abingdon for their presentation last year of "The Spartan Girl." Tickets will be obtainable in due course from—

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FESTIVAL

ADJUDICATION is carried out by Judges appointed by the Central Festival Committee, and is based on a maximum of one hundred marks allocated under the following headings :

(1) **CHOICE OF PLAY, 10**

The marks under this heading will be allocated for the dramatic merit of the play and the originality shown by the Society in its choice.

Entrants who contemplate the presentation of an extract from a longer play are reminded that an extract which is complete in itself as regards plot and characterisation is desirable.

While entrants should guard against allowing their ambition to outrun their capabilities, they should realise that credit will be freely given to experimental work, whether in the choice of new plays, translations or examples of new forms of technique and stage craft.

It should be remembered that one of the aims of the Festival is "*To encourage the progressive element in the Amateur Theatre.*"

(2) **STAGE PRESENTATION, 10**

Includes such factors as stage setting, properties, lighting, costume and make-up.

While the adjudicators will appreciate the fact that the effect of plays must often suffer as a result of being presented under strange conditions, the stage setting and lighting should contain sufficient indication of what the producer would achieve under ideal conditions. Within these limitations, adjudicators will be on the look out for touches of detail such as give atmosphere to a production. They will also look for indications of an appreciation of the value of lighting, other than simply as a means of illumination.

Costumes and Make-up. The difficult conditions obtaining in the case of settings and lighting do not apply in the case of costumes and make-up, and therefore a high standard in this respect will be expected. Credit will be given for the appropriateness of the costumes to the characters and to the play, and the manner in which they have been designed and made.

(3) **PRODUCTION, 30**

Includes attention to such essentials as—Interpretations of the spirit and meaning of the play. Team work. General pace and variation in tempo. Grouping and movement. Making of points and sense of climax. Adjudicators will take account of the greater difficulty of a play with a large cast.

(4) **ACTING, 40**

Includes characterization—naturally a very important factor. Audibility of speech, variation in tone, emphasis, gesture and movement will also be closely watched. The acting will be adjudicated on the general level, *e.g.*, two entrants may present plays with six characters in each: in one case two of the six parts may be played to perfection and four badly, and in the other case all six parts may be played with average ability; adjudicators will favour the average, smoother performance. For this reason adjudicators will expect a very high level indeed from societies who present a play with a minimum cast allowed by Rule B2.

(5) **DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT, 10**

A good standard in the above sections is possible and yet the performance may lack that unity and effectiveness which turn a satisfactory production into one of outstanding dramatic achievement. This section covers the general impression made upon the judge by the performance as a whole.

President :
LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN

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THE aim of the British Drama League is to assist the development of the Art of the Theatre and to promote a right relation between Drama and the Life of the Community.

MEMBERSHIP of the League is open to all persons who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by the payment of an annual subscription of £1 1s.

SIMILARLY, any organised society or group of not less than ten persons may become affiliated to the Drama League, and as an affiliated body shall acquire and exercise all the privileges afforded by the League. These include free receipt of "Drama" monthly, the use of the League's Library, Costume Department, Information Bureau, etc. The minimum affiliation fee is £1 1s.

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