

THE QUESTORS present

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THE WESTERN CHAMBER

a 13th Century Chinese Romance

translated by S.I. HSIUNG.

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October, 1940.

Non-Acting Membership of The Questors costs only 7s/6d per annum. Members are entitled to a free 3s/6d seat for each production.

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ACT I

Beauty's Enchantment.

A Poem and its Response.

Alarm at the Monastery.

The Breach of Promise.

Interval of Ten Minutes

ACT II

Love and the Lute.

The Fuss about the Billet-Doux.

Repudiation of the Billet-Doux.

Fulfilment of the Billet-Doux.

Interval of Ten Minutes

ACT III

Hung Niang in the Dock.

A Feast with Tears.

The Glorious Home-Coming.

Tea will be served in the intervals.

Circumstances unfortunately prevent the usual  
discussion on this production.

THE PLAYERS (in order of appearance)

MADAM TSUI .. .. .	PEGGY COOPER
YING-YING (her daughter) .. .. .	MARY CHANTER
HUNG NIANG (her maid) .. .. .	YVONNE ANGEL
CHANG .. .. .	ALFRED EMMET
HIS LUTE BEARER .. .. .	J. COWDEROY
INNKEEPER .. .. .	T. GORDON
FA PEN .. .. .	L. E. BAYLING
SUN, THE FLYING TIGER .. .. .	FRED GREENFIELD
HIS SOLDIERS .. .. .	(E. BISHOP
	(B. TURNER
HUI MING .. .. .	JOHN TURNER
GENERAL TU .. .. .	ANTHONY RICKARDS
HIS SOLDIERS .. .. .	(J. COWDEROY
	(T. GORDON
AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER .. .. .	FRED GREENFIELD
PROPERTY MEN .. .. .	(FRED ROBINSON
	(B. SHARP

The play produced by ALFRED EMMET.

STAGE-MANAGER .. .. .	FRED ROBINSON
LIGHTING MANAGER .. .. .	MICHAEL KELLY
WARDROBE MISTRESS .. .. .	MILDRED EMMET

Wigs by Bert.  
 Chinese costumes kindly loaned by Mrs. Simpson.  
 Records of Chinese music kindly loaned by the  
 Author.

For an understanding of the conventions of the  
 Chinese Theatre, you are recommended to read the  
 note overleaf.

In the Western Theatre, if the producer wishes to indicate to the audience that the scene is a certain room, it is usually necessary to represent it by scenery painted more or less realistically. If that room has a door, a door there must be which the actors can open and close, and which certainly should "click" realistically when pushed to. If the action requires the presence on the stage of a horse, either the play will be altered, or the Drury Lane Theatre taken and a horse duly provided. A carriage would be similarly dealt with. A garden wall would be represented brick by brick.

In the highly conventionalised traditional Chinese Theatre, however, none of these things is necessary. The scene is left entirely to the imagination of the audience: thus the scene can be changed at will, with no irksome delays to enable scenery to be man-handled. When a player steps over an imaginary threshold, it conveys to the audience that he is entering or leaving a room: if it is desired to indicate the opening or closing of a door, the action is mimed. The actor flourishes a whip, and lo! he is handsomely mounted on a spirited steed. Two flags with embroidered wheels indicate a carriage. A chair brought forward at the appropriate moment by one of the Property Men will represent a wall, or a mountain, or what you will. Moreover, the actors have no need to bother about properties, for the Property Men bring on and remove as required whatever may be needed.

It would seem that the Chinese convention should solve all the problems of the Producer. But not those of the Producer of a bedroom farce with its multiplicity of wrong doors, for it is a strict convention that the players always enter from the right and exit on the left.

But that does not matter, because the Chinese would not care about a bedroom farce. They prefer poetry.