

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 1944

QUESTORS' THEATRE

To-night, the Questors are presenting at their theatre in Mattock-lane, a new comedy by Michael Kelly, entitled "Sea Flood," for the first time on any stage.

This is the second full length play from the pen of this clever young playwright to be produced at this theatre. It is a witty, modern treatment of a story of very early times, and is based on an incident that occurred in Wales during the sixth century. The intention, however, is to draw a parallel with events in this country during the last decade, and particularly emphasising the part played by Civil Defence in the present struggle. For this reason, one of the characters, although obviously a Welshman, speaks in the modern idiom of a cockney throughout the play.

Evening performances at 7.30 will be held on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, April 22, 24, and 25, and in addition there are to be two matinees on Sunday, April 23, and Saturday, April 29, at 3 in each case.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1944

QUESTORS IN "SEA FLOOD"

New Play By Mr. Michael Kelly

"Sea Flood," the second full-length play from the pen of Mr. Michael Kelly, presented for the first time by The Questors at their theatre in Mattock-lane, Ealing, on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, is somewhat of a dramatic "mixed grill"; yet it is undeniably arresting, witty and interesting. So the various audiences found it, judging by the laughter evoked by the witticisms put into the mouth of Dai Dyfed, a hybrid character and cross between a trusty peasant of the seventh century and a Civil Defence Warden of 1944, capitably played by Mr. Tom Franklin.

The second and third acts of this play by a member of The Questors and their lighting manager do not quite live up to the intensely dramatic and effective first act with its dual scenes on the mountain top at St. Bedwini's seat above Gwythne and the interior of Prince Seithenyn's castle, where a fine dramatic crisis is built up. The effect of the sea, first gently lapping the shore and then thunderously striking the seawall and breaking far into the land with the high spring tide, was extremely realistic. Both the subsequent acts would be better for cutting, which would emphasise their higher lights, such as Prince Elwin's communing in the barn with the shadows of Doubt, Fear and Despair, the sterling human wisdom and faith of Dai Dyfed, the worldly wisdom of King Marsil of Pomitain and his oily Chancellor, Helius. The play's ending seemed

unnecessarily abrupt, and the turning-up in the last act of the drunken Prince Seithenyn Ap Seithyn Saida, as butler to King Marsil, struck an incongruous note. So, to some extent, did the very pert and modern treatment of the boy Egbert, played with a sure touch by Joyce Bass, and the introduction in the first act of a party of Welsh sight-seers shown round by a monk, in itself quite an amusing episode.

CYMRIC PRINCES

The hero in this essentially man's play for men was played with a charming mixture of youthful poetic fervour and bonhomie by Mr. Alfred Emmet. He was the remote bardic prince to the life. Mr. Lempriere Hammond's acting as the drunken and yet royal Prince Saida had power and dignity; Mr. Tom Franklin's Dai Dyfed has already been mentioned, and Mr. Francis Smith and Mr. Patrick Day, as King Marsil and Helius, played excellently together. Mr. Bill Bayling and Mr. Douglas Blackwell made good in the roles of the pessimistic and truthful Teithrin Ap Tathral and the Egyptian commercial. Only one of the four feminine characters in the play, the old nurse Tannwen, played by Miss Eleanor Bishop, had flesh and blood, but the author, not the actresses, was to blame for somewhat cardboard characters. Miss Ruby Hodson looked most charming as the royal Angharad; Miss Barbara Hutchins was coldly aloof as the narrow-minded Abbess of Melvas, and Miss Madge Dolman was the masterful wife, Megan Dyfed.

The cast of 21 could be cut down with advantage by a stray character or two, but Eric Vocce, who produced, kept his well-versed team well in hand.

A final matinee will be given this afternoon.