

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. 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 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 the scenery to be manhandled. When a player steps over an imaginary threshold, it conveys to the audience that he is entering or leaving a room. The actor flourishes his 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 on 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.

THE QUESTORS THEATRE EALING



present

THE ROMANCE OF THE WESTERN CHAMBER

A 13th CENTURY CHINESE PLAY

Translated by S. I. HSIUNG

FEBRUARY 1944

PROGRAMME TWOPENCE

THE ROMANCE OF THE WESTERN CHAMBER

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ACT I

Beauty's Enchantment
A Poem and its Response
Alarm at the Monastery
The Breach of Promise

ACT II

Love and the Lute
The Fuss about the Billet-Doux
The Repudiation of the Billet-Doux
The Fulfilment of the Billet-Doux

ACT III

Hung Niang in the Dock
A Feast with Tears
The Glorious Home-Coming

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Costumes kindly loaned by Cyril Nairne
Wigs by "Bert"
Records of Chinese music by S. I. Hsiung

THE PLAYERS

(In order of appearance)

MADAM TSUI	PEGGY COOPER
YING-YING (Her daughter) ..	MARY CHANTER
HUNG NIANG (her maid)	EILEEN CLARKE
CHANG	PHILIP ALLEN
HIS LUTE BEARER	BETTY HOOKEY
INNKEEPER	PHILIP PATTERSON
FA PEN	BILL BAYLING
SUN, THE FLYING TIGER	MAURICE BALLINGER
HIS SOLDIERS	MARY HILLS
	DENISE GIBBONS
	RUBY HODSON
HUI MING	DOUGLAS BLACKWELL
GENERAL TU	MICHAEL KELLY
HIS SOLDIERS	BETTY HOOKEY
	PETER HOLLOWAY
	BETTY MERCY
CARRIAGE DRIVERS	MARY HILLS
	RUBY HODSON
AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER ...	PHILIP PATTERSON
PROPERTY MEN	JEAN SHERIDEN
	GRAHAM MATTHEWS

THE PLAY PRODUCED BY ALFRED EMMET

STAGE MANAGER	HONOR O'NIANS
LIGHTING MANAGER	MICHAEL KELLY
WARDROBE MISTRESS	BARBARA HUTCHINS
PROPS	GEORGE FROST

SETTING designed by FRED ROBINSON

For an understanding of the conventions
of the Chinese theatre, you are
recommended to read the note over-
leaf.