

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING



present

THE
ARBITRATION

by MENANDER.

Translated and conjecturally completed
by GILBERT MURRAY.

FEBRUARY 1946

PROGRAMME

THREEPENCE

THE PLAY.

In introducing "The Arbitration" to our audiences we probably can do no better than to quote Professor Gilbert Murray's own words :—

"There is great fascination in the fragments of Menander. I find it not merely in the ease and 'Attic salt' of his style, or the subtle and kindly realism of his characters. There is a charm even in his conventionalities—the situations and stage tricks, now old-fashioned, which he caught at a moment when they were still young and fresh"

Free and natural as it is in outward appearance, there can be little doubt that the New Comedy, like all, or almost all, Greek Drama, was in its essence the performance of a religious ritual. It took the form of what we may call a Nativity Play, celebrating the annual discovery, when all earth seems dead, of that Renewal of Life which we think of as the New Year, or the Spring, but which was to the Greeks a Being far more personal. This ritual, in its simplest shape still to be found in some Easter celebrations in Italy and Eastern Europe, used the symbol of a divine babe or lamb or young animal to typify the new life

"At another stage, the rite developed into drama, and the birth into an heroic myth. An outcast babe found in the wild woods . . . is really the son of a god and a royal maiden and, after suitable adventures and sufferings, is duly 'recognised.' The baby, though its presence is essential, is no longer the centre of interest Here the ritual is transferred from the tragic to the comic stage and the story brought down to a human level. In New Comedy, the outcast babe is the fruit of some forbidden or secret amour, and the recognition exalts him, not to divinity, but merely to wealth and fortune"

DISCUSSION.

There will be a discussion on this production in this theatre on Tuesday, February 19th, at 7.30 p.m.

Refreshments will be served, and all members of the audience are cordially invited to come along and give their views and hear the views of others.

Written criticisms are also welcomed and will be read anonymously at the discussion.

THE ARBITRATION

THE CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Onesimus , slave to Charisius and as crafty as they made 'em in 300 B.C. ...	TOM W. FRANKLIN
Carion , a professional cook, and what a cook!	FRANK WHITE
Sophrone , Pamphile's old nurse; she has pulled a few strings in her time! ...	SHEILA GOSLING
Simias , who tries to keep the peace, a guide, philosopher and friend to Chaerestratus	FRANCIS W. SMITH
Chaerestratus , who loses his head over a pretty girl who plays the harp ...	PETER CURTIS
Charisius , Pamphile's husband, a worthy young man, but he does get himself into the most dreadful tangles ...	JOHN MacGREGOR
Duenna , you want to look sharp whilst she's about!	ISOBEL BENNS
Habrotonon , the pretty girl who plays the harp—she goes to a party too! ...	LONA HALKETT
Callisto , the Prologue with a grievance; an Arcadian nymph transformed into a bear by Artemis	MARY HILLS
Smierines , Pamphile's father; don't be fooled by his bad temper, he has to put up with a lot!	ALBERT HOOPER
Syriscus , a charcoal-burner with the gift of the gab	MAURICE BALLINGER
Davus , a shepherd, a firm believer in "finding's keeping"	DENIS ROBINSON
Syriscus's Wife , who has given up the unequal struggle; two talkers in a family is one too many	JOAN PYLE
Pamphile , Charisius's wife; her baby son is the cause of all the trouble ...	JEAN McCONNELL

and finally

CHORUS OF REVELLERS, "young lads and not too sober"—Anthony Allen, Alfred Emmet, Terence Kirk, George Mooney and Francis Williams.

The Play is produced by
BARBARA HUTCHINS

THE ACTION takes place before the neighbouring houses of Charisius and Chacrestratus in Athens, about the year 300 B.C.

The setting designed and painted by **ERNEST IVES**

and constructed by Maurice Ballinger, Bill Collins, Alfred Emmet, Ernest Ives, A. & E. Kingston, George Mooney, Denis Nichols, Denis Robinson and Eric Voce.

Costumes designed by **MARJORIE IVES**

and executed by Brenda Allen, Hilda Collins, Marjorie Ives, Diana Kelly, Megan Macgregor and Joan Pyle.

Music selected and arranged by	...	...	...	...	...	DIANA RUTLAND
Stage Management	...	...	...	...	...	ERNEST IVES GEORGE MOONEY
Lighting	...	...	...	...	...	MICHAEL KELLY
Properties	...	...	...	...	...	JOYCE HARLAND

The play will be presented in two parts with one interval of 15 minutes during which TEA will be served.

All members of the audience requiring tea must give their orders to a programme-seller and it will be brought to them. NO teas will be served at the counter.

S.O.S.—More volunteers are urgently needed to help with selling programmes and serving teas; will any members interested please give their names to one of the stewards.

EARLY DAYS.

HISTORICAL NOTE NO. 2

The Autumn of 1931 saw an important development, the institution of a regular programme of monthly play-readings and other functions. These were held at the Girl Guide Hall, Warwick Road. "The Romantic Young Lady" was scheduled for production in the Autumn of that year, but in September it was solemnly resolved that "on account of the Financial Situation of the Country it is considered advisable to postpone the Autumn Production until the second week in April." This play was eventually performed at St. Martins Hall, with H. C. G. Stevens' "To Meet the King!" as a curtain raiser (the latter was Alfred Emmet's first essay at production). It was in September, 1931, that the familiar Questors emblem, designed by Frank Cockburn, was adopted. That the Club's policy was unconsciously forming itself is evidenced by the fact that of the four plays read during that season, three have been produced by the Club in recent years.

An entry was again made for the British Drama League Festival early in 1932, with Gordon Bottomley's "Gruach," with an encouraging degree of success. Among the devices resorted to in those days to help the Club's rocky finances was the imposition of an "acting fee" payable by any member who played a part, on a sliding scale in accordance with the size of the part! This invidious custom did not last long, nor does it seem to have achieved its purpose, for the April, 1932, production resulted in another heavy loss, and once again the Club was well and truly on the rocks. £8—in those days a princely sum—had to be raised immediately if the Club was to go on; moreover, and this was a more serious matter, the work involved in running the Club had got to be divided up among more members. An historic meeting of the Acting Members was held on the 24th May, 1932, when it was decided to carry on. This meeting was an important milestone, for it was there that the Club's policy of doing only "worth-while" plays became explicit, though not without some opposition; from this meeting also grew the tradition of co-operation and team-work, which has helped the Club through so many difficult periods since. An anonymous friend who had faith in the Questors donated £5, the immediate financial difficulty was overcome, and the Questors walked out of the nursery, a sturdy toddler of three.

Among those whose names figure in the programmes of the late nursery stage are Gwen Thomas, whose name will be familiar to most present members for her recent performance as Hesione Hushabye; others still associated with the Club in one way or another are Phil and Hilda Elliott, Tom Saunders, Frank Cockburn, Cyril Thomas and the present writer.

It was in April, 1932, that the Questors Drama Festival was born: an informal Club evening when four pairs of members competed before an admiring (?) audience of about ten, and were adjudicated by Miss Valentine Dunn.

The Committee's report for the season recorded that Mr. Robert Atkins had accepted the Presidency of the Club, and that the number of Acting Members was twenty-three, and the number of Non-Acting members twenty-five. The possibility of our own Club premises was still being discussed; in the meantime we were making our scenery in small garages, back-yards, even bed-rooms.

But we were beginning to know where we wanted to go.

A.E.J.E.

(To be continued)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
AT
THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Tuesday, February 26th, at 7.30 p.m.

Talk : " The Old Vic."
by John Burrell.

Saturday, April 6th, for seven days :

"THUNDER ROCK"

by ROBERT ARDREY

NON-ACTING MEMBERSHIP

of

THE QUESTORS

—costs only

10/-

for 12 months

and entitles you to a free 3/6 seat for every show during that period.