

COMING EVENTS AT THE QUESTORS.

Thursday, November 28th, at 7.30 p.m.

TALK—"Producing the Play," by JOHN ALLEN.

After the highly successful Brains Trust at the Theatre on October 14th, it is hoped that there will again be a packed house for the second function arranged for the Club's 1946/47 season by the Programme Director. John Allen requires no introduction—his adjudication of this year's Festival is still fresh in our minds. His subject is one which ensures that it will be of interest to all our members, for without an understanding of the problems facing a producer no intelligent criticism of any play can be made.

Admission to this function will be restricted to Questors. Refreshments will be served in the course of the evening.

Please note that the date is November 28th and not November 25th as originally announced.

NEXT PRODUCTION—OPENING DECEMBER 14th.

The third production of the 1946/47 season will be:—

SHAKESPEARE'S "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Preliminary Announcement.

A production by the Questors Student Group has been arranged to take place in January—further details will be included in the next programme.

The formation of a new student group will shortly be put in hand. Applications should be addressed to the General Manager, who will be glad to give details to anyone interested

THE QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1946—47. SECOND PRODUCTION



present

"CHILDREN IN UNIFORM"

BY

CHRISTA WINSLOE

translated from the German and adapted by

BARBARA BURNHAM

NOVEMBER 1946

PROGRAMME

- - - FOURPENCE

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP.

In the short period since the war ended, the Questors have reaped the harvest of steady perseverance in their "Quest" during the difficult war years in the shape of an unprecedented influx of new members. That is encouraging and reassures (if reassurance were needed) those whose efforts kept the Club going during the war that their aims and objectives are such as to command wide interest and support. But such a rapid expansion of the Club brings problems of its own. Not merely is the Club putting on more productions and more performances of each production with all that such an increase involves in the way of additional work for the untiring band who assist the Stage Director, but the increased membership entails extra work in the circulation of announcement leaflets, in the maintenance of membership registers, in the organisation of special functions, in the management of the Box Office, in stewarding and in the serving of refreshments. For all these and other tasks the Club must depend on the willingness of those who are prepared to play an active part in the life of the Club.

No one would underestimate the value of the support of those who, for good reason, can give only passive support as regular members of Questor audiences. But the Club will develop and prosper only as there is an increase of active members. For the Questors is a theatre club—not a mere association of theatre goers. Its reputation, its scope, its atmosphere, its place in the local community—all these things are in the hands of those who have the privilege to claim membership of the Questors.

This is no appeal for Questors to volunteer for a particular job. It is something deeper than that. All who read this programme should consider whether they do not owe it to themselves to seek out the niche in the Club organisation in which, according to their talents, they can find the personal satisfaction of aiding in the "Quest."

THE PLAY—AN APPRECIATION.

"Night after night, month after month, through all the sops and timidities and pretentiousness that are turning men and women of quality away from the theatre, one waits for such an evening as this—holding back from the carpentry that is without design, the flaccid trumped-up passion that is without feeling, the glitter that is without warmth or fire, holding back so long from the daily chorus of praises that one begins to ask if one's faculty of delight is perished. But the reward, when it comes, is worth the vigil and it came last night . . .

"The personal tragedy of Manuela is not personal only; it is the core of the tragedy of an idea. Her love for Fräulein von Bernburg, the young mistress's love for her, the ruin that befalls them both in an organisation where all individual distinctions are forbidden—these happenings are as beautiful as they are terrible, but their significance is not in themselves alone. They speak the tragedy of a school, of a tradition, of an ideal; and that this ideal, which causes suffering so profound, is neither mean nor petty, but endowed with the splendours of loyalty and self-discipline, gives to the play a poignancy that reaches far beyond the range of dramatic anecdote . . .

"Only to those who know the outline of the play, without having discovered its spirit, can the story seem morbid or hysterical. It has that quality of glowing fierceness, of tears wrung from the stone of experience that is the mark of tragedy. It has too much wisdom to be bitter and too much beauty to be cruel."

(Reproduced from "The Times," October 8th, 1932.)

"CHILDREN IN UNIFORM"

Translated and adapted by Barbara Burnham from the play
"Mädchen in Uniform," by Christa Winsloe.

Characters:

Fräulein von Nordeck, the Headmistress ELIZABETH DIXON
Excellency von Ehrenhardt, Manuela's Aunt JOAN CARLIN
Grand Duchess, Patroness of the School RENA RICE
Countess Kerwitz MADGE DOLMAN

Mistresses at the School:-

Fräulein von Bernburg BETTY OGDEN
Fräulein von Gaerschner KATHERINE MCKINNEY
Fräulein von Kesten RUBY FEAST
Mlle. Alaret PAMELA RICHARDS
Miss Gibson BARBARA JAMES
Frau Alden, Ballet Mistress GWEN THOMAS
Martha, Sewing Woman ROSEMARY GRANT
Hanni, Nurse CAROLYN SHERWOOD
Johanna BRIDGET SPALDING

Pupils at the School:-

Manuela FIONA FRASER
Marga ISOBEL BENNS
Ilse FLORENCE CHEDZEY
Treischke VERA LOVELOCK
Lilli IRENE FOSTER
Oda JOAN PYLE
Edelgard DOREEN COATES
Anneliese JOYCE GAPP
Mia JUNE SIBLEY
Paula ROSEMARIE BALLARD
José JOYCE WHEELER
Maria CARMEN NISBET

The play produced by ERIC VOCE.

Décor by NORMAN BRANSON.

The action of the play takes place in a Prussian school for officers' daughters in 1932

The play will be presented in three Acts. In Act 1 there are four scenes; Acts 2 and 3 have three scenes each.

Behind the scenes:

Stage Manager DENIS ROBINSON
Assisted by C. G. GOLDING

Lighting MAURICE BALLINGER, PETER BRYANT

Costumes by WARDROBE STAFF

Sound PETER CURTIS

Properties ISOBEL BENNS, CARMEN NISBET

The set built by B. Darlison, Peter Ellis, C. Golding, John Gray, J. Mayo, J. Michell, Beadon Pitt, Dennis Robinson, W. H. Robinson,

House Manager ARCHIE COWAN

Stage Director GEORGE BENN

Uniforms by CHAS. H. FOX, LTD.

There will be an interval of ten minutes between Acts 1 and 2, and an interval of five minutes after Act 2.

Tea and soft drinks will be on sale from the stewards during the first interval—orders will not be taken at the counter.

DISCUSSION.

There will be a discussion of this production at the Theatre on Monday, November 11th, at 7.30 p.m. Refreshments will be served and all members of the audience are cordially invited.

THE STORY OF THE "QUEST."

HISTORICAL NOTE No. 6.

The years 1936/37 and 1937/38 saw a programme of very exceptional interest. It was decided to plan a series of productions and play-readings designed to illustrate the whole course of the history of drama in brief. This was a venturesome project, and added much interest to the production of certain plays which it might not otherwise have been possible to include in our programme. The scheme was launched with an original "Opening Night" programme in the autumn of 1936 and the series of plays for the two seasons were as follows—a production of Aristophanes' "The Birds," with an original musical score by Eric Evenden; next a production of the Wakefield Second Nativity Play with which we did, by way of contrast, an English translation of the von Hofmannsahl version of "Everyman"; play-readings of Marlowe's "Edward II" (c. 1592); Massinger's "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" (c. 1626); and Farquhar's "The Beaux Stratagem" (1707); finishing the first season with a production of George Colman's "The Jealous Wife" (1761); the second season opened with a reading of a mid-Victorian "weepee," "A Hard Struggle"; then a production of Pinero's "Dandy Dick," readings of Ibsen's "A Doll's House," and Henry Arthur Jones' "The Liars," a production of "Candida," a reading of Bridie's "Tobias and the Angel" and finally, to represent the avant-garde, a production of Denis Johnston's experimental play, "A Bride for the Unicorn." The latter was probably our most ambitious effort since "Dragon's Teeth," and this strangely beautiful (but to some people's way of thinking quite incomprehensible) play had many memorable moments.

In view of recent discussions on the subject, it is interesting to record that the idea of having a Club magazine was first discussed in 1936 but nothing came of it. It was in 1935 also that the first Association of Little Theatres was formed by our friends, the Crescent Theatre of Birmingham; this also petered out at that time. Another new development in 1937 was the inauguration of an annual competition in stage design, which has just been re-established after a gap in the war years.

The non-acting membership was increasing only slowly— at the end of the season 1937/38 it was just under the 200 mark—and we were getting concerned about the fact that we were still only able to run our productions for two nights. However, we were keeping our heads above water financially, turning in a small surplus each year and gradually improving our equipment. Little attention was given yet, however, to improving auditorium facilities, and our audiences still sat huddled together

in their wooden chairs with their penny cushions. An item of expenditure was sanctioned, however, for duck-boards for use in muddy weather on the path to the theatre entrance—it was not concreted in those days—and at times was almost impassable.

Each year we would set aside a week or more in the summer—known as "Work Week"—to carry out needed repairs and improvements, and in 1937 we undertook with our own voluntary labour the big task of re-painting the entire roof. Some of the timber work above the theatre entrance could not get finished and, alas! has not been finished to this day!

1938 saw another important milestone. We had the opportunity of taking over the sole lease of the theatre, bringing to an end our partnership with the Scouts. Not without some opposition by those who saw only the increased financial liabilities we should be shouldering, we seized our chance. The wooden chairs were going with the Scouts—this was another opportunity. This was not a moment for retrenchment but rather for the reverse, so we decided, despite our flimsy finances, to re-seat, decorate, and otherwise improve our theatre (for the first time giving real attention to the comfort of our audiences), to issue an appeal for funds and to make a big drive for new members. The appeal was launched in the summer of 1938 by our President, Mrs. Gwen Flanagan-Davies, and Past President, Miss Margaret Webster. The latter explained to the audience that the issue was quite simple—either they subscribed to the fund or when they came to the shows they would have to stand. Happily, they preferred to sit.

A. E. J. E.

(To be continued.)

AUTHOR and TRANSLATOR.

CHRISTA WINSLOE wrote "Mädchen in Uniform," and her work enjoyed a well-merited success both as play and film. We regret that we are unable, however, to offer any information about her or her background. Diligent search has failed to produce any details. If there is any Questor who is in a position to contribute to our enlightenment about her, everyone will be pleased to listen to a statement at the discussion following the show.

BARBARA BURNHAM is, happily, not so elusive and her work with the B.B.C. is widely known and appreciated. She comes from Bradford, where she was born in 1900. She studied at the Central School of Speech Training and joined the B.B.C. in 1933. She translated and adapted "Children in Uniform" in 1942.