

COMING EVENTS AT THE QUESTORS

Monday, October 14th, at 7.30 p.m.

A BRAINS TRUST on "The Theatre and the Allied Arts."

For this feature the Programme Director has invited a number of guests who, together with some of our own members, will attempt to answer, without preparation, questions put to them on a wide range of subjects covering music, literature, painting, films, and, of course, the theatre. A highly instructive and entertaining evening is expected with some confidence—it will be a strictly popular occasion.

It is hoped that Questors will take this opportunity to introduce new friends to the Club. Admission will be free to members and their friends. Refreshments will be served in the course of the evening—price 6d.

The success of this function depends on the co-operation of Questors. Your co-operation is invited, not merely by coming along on October 14th, but by contributing questions to be put to the Brains Trust. Questions—which may be serious or flippant as long as they fall within the general description "The Theatre and the Allied Arts"—should be addressed in writing to the Programme Director at the Theatre before October 5th.

Monday, November 25th, at 7.30 p.m.

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

Questors will remember the excellent adjudication of this year's Festival by Mr. Allen. His views on production will be awaited with keen interest by all who heard him then. To those who did not, we suggest they book this date and take the opportunity to get to know an accomplished speaker and discerning critic.

THE QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1946—47. FIRST PRODUCTION



*have the privilege to present
for the first time in this country*

"DIARY OF A SCOUNDREL"

BY

RODNEY ACKLAND

from the original comedy by

OSTROVSKY

SEPTEMBER 1946

PROGRAMME

- - -
FOURPENCE

NO CLUB MAGAZINE

In a recent programme the idea of a Club Magazine was mooted. The proposal did not, however, find favour at the Annual General Meeting, when it was formally moved. The possible cost was plainly a factor which weighed heavily with the meeting and, not without encouragement from those who hold the hammer a more nimble instrument than the pen—as indeed it is for driving nails—a majority was declared against the idea.

We shall accordingly follow, during the current season at least, the established practice of brief announcement leaflets of productions and other activities, and use the medium of an enlarged programme to make known various aspects of the Club's life which might not otherwise come to the notice of the growing company of non-acting members.

We hope that Questors will consider the programmes in their present shape worth the additional penny it is proposed to charge in future to avoid dipping into the general funds of the Club to cover the cost of printing.

COMPETITION IN STAGE DESIGN

A chance for Questors to show their skill

The Club's production in February, 1947, will be Tchekov's "The Seagull." The General Committee have decided to invite members to compete in designing the setting to be used in this production. Full particulars and rules for this intriguing competition can be obtained from the office. It is hoped that there will be a large entry.

About the PLAY — Its AUTHOR — and its English ADAPTOR

ALEXANDER NIKOLAYEVICH OSTROVSKY was born in 1823, and between 1847 and his death in 1886 he wrote some 50 original plays in addition to a number of translations. He became the acknowledged head of the Russian stage, being particularly associated with the famous Maly Theatre in Moscow, which is often called "The House of Ostrovsky." Most of his plays were comedies, and have had an enormous and lasting success in the Russian theatre from his own time down to the present day: their popularity is unrivalled. A typical list of the repertoires of Moscow theatres for one recent season, for instance, includes no fewer than twelve different productions of Ostrovsky's plays. The play from which "Diary of a Scoundrel" was taken was in the repertoire of three different theatres in 1943.

It is surprising, therefore, that Ostrovsky should be so little known in this country. As far as we have been able to trace, our production in 1943 of "It's a Family Affair—We'll Settle it Ourselves," was the first time any one of his comedies had been performed here. In that production we were much handicapped by an indifferent translation, and the absence of satisfactory English versions is no doubt the main reason why Ostrovsky's plays have received so little attention in the English theatre. An adaptation by a dramatist of the stature of RODNEY ACKLAND is a theatrical event of importance.

The Questors already have, therefore, a special link both with Ostrovsky and with Rodney Ackland, whose play "The Dark River" received its first presentation here in May, 1943. So it seems particularly appropriate that we should give the first production of "Diary of a Scoundrel."

“DIARY OF A SCOUNDREL”

Adapted by Rodney Ackland from a Comedy by Ostrovsky.

Characters (in order of appearance):

Styopka, a servant PHILIP ALLEN
Yegor Dimitrich Gloumov ALFRED EMMET
Glaflra Klimovna Gloumova JOAN PYLE
Yegor Vassilyevitch Kourchaev PETER CURTIS
Alexander Golutvin PETER BRYANT
Maniefa, a fortune-teller JANE CAMPBELL
A footman ANTHONY WALTER
Neel Fedoseitch Mamaev NORMAN BRANSON
General Kroutitzky HUGH ROUSE
Kleopatra Lvovna Mamaeva DIANA RUTLAND
Ivan Ivanovitch Gorodoulin FRANK WHITE
Matriosha BRIDGET SPALDING
Lubinka MADGE DOLMAN
Sophia Ignatievna Tourousina RUBY FEAST
Mashenka ROSEMARY GRANT
Grigori BARRIE PITT

The play produced by ALFRED EMMET and
GRAHAM HEYWOOD.

Décor by GRAHAM HEYWOOD.

DISCUSSION

There will be a discussion of this production at the Theatre on
Monday, September 16th, at 7.30 p.m. Refreshments will be
served, and all members of the audience are cordially invited.
Written criticisms will be welcomed and will be read anonymously
at the discussion.

The action of the play takes place in Moscow about 1870.

Act 1. Scene i. Gloumov's apartments.
Scene ii. A conservatory at the Mamaev's house.
Interval of Ten Minutes.
Act 2. The drawing room of Madame Tourousina's house.
Interval of Five Minutes.
Act 3. Scene i. Gloumov's apartments.
Scene ii. Madame Tourousina's house.

Stage Director George BENN
Stage Management Hal MORRIS, Phyllis PITT,
Vera LOVELOCK
Lighting Gerald ISENTHAL, C. E. E. JOHNSON
Wardrobe Joan PYLE, Bridget SPALDING
Properties Pamela RICHARDS

The set built by Bert Darlison, Peter Ellis, Hal Morris, Jean
Richards, Carmen Nisbet and Lister Beck and painted by
Peter Bryant, Graham Heywood and Rena Rice.

Russian music records by courtesy “Columbia.”

Wigs by “Bert.”

Tea and soft drinks will be on sale from the stewards during
the first interval—advance orders will not be taken on this occa-
sion. Refreshments will not be served at the counter.

EARLY DAYS

HISTORICAL NOTE No. 5.

In the 1934/35 season (the second in our own theatre) we increased our programme from two to three productions, together with the Annual Drama Festival, in addition to which we had some five or six play-readings. The first production was Masefield's "The Witch," for some years remembered as one of our artistic high spots. Incidentally, the two leading players in that production are still working with us—Gwen Thomas and Cyril Box. This was followed by Romains' satirical comedy, "Dr. Knock," and the season closed with our first Shakespearean production, "The Taming of the Shrew." The latter had also a performance at Swakelys House, Ickenham, intended to be given in the open air, but driven indoors at the last minute by the weather, and played in the beautiful Renaissance hall. This necessitated frantic last-minute adjustments to entrances and exits, and legend tells of one player who, unwittingly making an exit on the wrong side, had to climb through a window and be carried pick-a-back through the rain for her next entrance: it was unfortunate that her bearer dropped her in a puddle just before she was due to come on!

Two performances of each production were still all we could find support for, and even so the Committee's report for the year commented on the poor houses. Nevertheless, there was a surplus on the year's working of some £34. On the strength of this, half the "Founders' Shares" were drawn for repayment, and the holders so informed with a *very* polite note, suggesting that if they cared not to claim their money we could find a very good use for it. As most of them had never really expected to see their money back anyway, this rather dubious financial stratagem was quite successful, and further small improvements to the theatre could be carried out. These included a sound equipment which has only recently been replaced after ten years hard service.

1935/36 saw one or two innovations. The first of these was the introduction of the discussion on each production, which has been a regular feature of our work ever since. Another was the establishment of "Surprise Night," which developed as a kind of informal original revue, and became a popular feature of the annual programme in the years before the war. Incidentally, it was the fact that we had material ready for a projected "Surprise Night" in 1939 that enabled us to put on our revue in the early days of the war.

The first production in that season was of F. Sladen-Smith's "Wonderful Zoo," which further enhanced our reputation for doing unusual and experimental work. The set designs by Dudley Clark were exhibited at a British Drama League Exhibition in London and Manchester. This was followed by George Preedy's "Captain Banner," and finally our second Shakespeare comedy, "Twelfth Night." Our wardrobe was by now getting firmly on its feet, a fact we were to be devoutly thankful for in later years, for in the difficult war period it is hard to see how we could have carried on had we not had the wardrobe to fall back on.

The season showed another small financial surplus, which enabled us to repeat our *coup* with the remainder of the "Founders' Shares," and we were free of debt. The non-acting membership increased during the year by 40 per cent., but still stood no higher than 141. The Questors were still a small band, but enthusiasm was high.

(To be continued.)

A. E. J. E.

KEEPING THE WHEELS TURNING

Our recent appeal for members to help actively in the work of the theatre has met with an encouraging response. The Wardrobe Department is now adequately staffed, but we still need more helpers back stage and more helpers for the kitchen. The Membership Secretary's Department is short of helpers to address envelopes. And are there any shorthand typists able to give a regular evening from about 6 o'clock?

NEXT PRODUCTION—OPENING NOVEMBER 2nd.

The Second Production of the 1946/47 season will be the famous play by CHRISTA WINSLOE in its English adaptation by BARBARA BURNHAM:

"CHILDREN IN UNIFORM."