

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING



present

“THUNDER ROCK”

by ROBERT ARDREY.

APRIL, 1946

PROGRAMME - - - THREEPENCE

THE PLAY.

"Thunder Rock" was written in 1939 by Robert Ardrey, an American, more than a year before Pearl Harbour, which brought the United States into the war. First produced in New York in the following year, it was a stirring call to his countrymen that they could not "just stand by and watch for ever." It was an immediate success, and was widely played at community theatres throughout America.

The first production in this country was at the little Neighbourhood Theatre, Kensington, in June 1940, and subsequently it had a long run in the West End, the play being enthusiastically acclaimed by critics and public alike.

We have been wanting to do the play since 1941. At first we could not get the rights. Then, when it became available, we could not cast it. Later it seemed that its message was less vital, because it had been already heard and heeded.

To-day, in an uneasy world still heaving in the aftermath of war, when civilisation is faced with the utter necessity of finding an answer to its problems if it is to survive at all, the individual is too often concerned primarily with his own "rights" and forgets his obligations to his neighbour and to society. The author's message is to the individual, to contribute as an active participant to the solution of these problems, in the knowledge that if he does so, and only if he does so, there is hope that answers to the problems will be found.

That message is not without point to-day.

DISCUSSION.

There will be a discussion on this production in this theatre on Tuesday, April 16th, 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.

"THUNDER ROCK"

THE CHARACTERS (in order of appearance) :

Streeter	...	...	...	...	...	JOHN MACGREGOR
Nonny	...	...	...	...	...	GEORGE MOONEY
Inspector Flanning	...	...	...	...	...	... TERENCE KIRK
Charleston	...	...	...	...	...	ALFRED EMMET
Captain Joshua	...	...	...	...	...	... PHILIP ALLEN
Briggs	...	...	...	...	...	DENIS NICHOLLS
Dr. Stefan Kurtz	...	...	...	...	...	FRANCIS W. SMITH
Melanie	...	...	...	...	...	SHEILA GOSLING
Miss Kirby	...	...	...	...	...	... BETTY OGDEN
Anne-Marie	...	...	...	...	...	BARBARA HUTCHINS
Chang	...	...	...	...	...	FRANCIS WILLIAMS
Cassidy	...	...	...	...	...	MICHAEL KELLY

The Play produced by ALFRED EMMET and
BARBARA HUTCHINS

The action takes place in Thunder Rock Lighthouse, Lake Michigan, during the late summer of 1939.

ACT I : Afternoon.

ACT II : One month later.

ACT III : The next morning.

The Setting Designed by HONOR O'NIANS and built by Maurice Ballinger, George Benn, Bert Cheek, E. G. Cordwell, A. W. S. Cowan, Peter Curtis, Alfred Emmet, A. C. Kingston, Brian Kirk, Terence Kirk, John MacGregor, George Mooney, Denis Nicholls, Denis Robinson and Frank White.

Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	...	GEORGE BENN
Lighting	...	...	...	...	...	MICHAEL KELLY
Properties	...	...	...	...	...	ISOBEL BENNS
Wardrobe	...	...	...	...	...	MEGAN MACGREGOR
Effects	...	...	...	...	...	PETER CURTIS

There will be a 15-minute interval after Act I, and a 5-minute interval after Act II.

TEA and soft drinks will be available in the first interval—orders should be given to the programme sellers. Refreshments will not be served at the counter.

New "Grampian" sound equipment installed by Western Wireless Co.

EARLY DAYS.

Historical Note No. 3.

For 1932-33 a programme was drawn up including two productions at the St. Martin's Hall and a number of play-readings, etc. The Finance and Business Committee, with recent experiences in mind, cautiously refused to sanction the second production until they saw the financial result of the first. Shaw's "You Never Can Tell" was chosen, and it was felt necessary in our programme note to make an apology for producing a "commercial play." The show made a profit of 6s. 7½d., so things were looking up. Our entry for the B.D.L. Festival was "The Far-away Princess," by H. M. Sudermann, which was interesting because of the experimental nature of the production. We had difficulty in finding a play for the Spring show, largely due to the fear of financial loss, but the situation was saved by Cyril Thomas' bright idea that the "competition" of the previous year be repeated as a public production, and so was held our first Annual Drama Festival, which was to become so popular an event in our yearly programme. Seven "teams" competed in that first Festival and, appropriately enough, the honours were won by Cyril and Gwen Thomas. At the end of the season we had a balance of some £13, which was riches indeed. Our Non-Acting membership was 27.

Then came our big opportunity.* The Ealing Boy Scouts Association was in occupation of what is now The Questors Theatre, but, as their use of the building was only limited, they were having difficulty in meeting expenses. Mr. E. Stuart Monro, at that time District Commissioner of the Scouts, suggested that The Questors might share the building with them. There was no stage, no lighting, only wooden chairs; but the building seemed admirably suited for conversion to a theatre. A General Meeting unanimously resolved to go ahead, deterred not a whit by the fact that we had but slender funds to back such a venture, involving substantial expenditure not only for conversion, but also on rent and upkeep. But we not only knew what we wanted—we meant to have it! So a "marriage" with the Scouts Association was duly arranged.

All that summer our members toiled with a will, planning the details, building the stage, making and installing the lighting equipment, stage curtains, etc., doing the work with our own hands, so that it cost us only about £75. To pay for this, "Founders' Shares" in £1 units (to be repaid "as and when finances permit") were issued, and eventually some £57 was raised in this way. The opening was scheduled for October, and the programme was to include a Masque, especially written for the occasion. The Masque, alas! was never produced, as time could not be found for rehearsals. Work went on literally until the last minute, with a final spurt of a non-stop 24 hours all through the night, and when after the official speeches the Chairman hopefully announced that the next item on the programme would be a demonstration of the stage lighting, he turned to discover, with relief, that the wiring had been completed just two minutes before.

So, on 14th October, 1933, The Questors Theatre opened and we faced an exciting future.

(To be continued.)

A. E. J. E.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Tuesday, April 16th, at 7.30 p.m.

Discussion on this Production.

Monday, April 29th, at 7.30 p.m.

Talk—"Poetry in the Theatre."

MR. E. MARTIN BROWNE

Saturday, June 1st, for seven days :—

"GHOSTS"

by **HENRIK IBSEN**

Saturday, July 6th.

Opening night for the ANNUAL DRAMA FESTIVAL.

We have complaints from time to time from members who have not received notices of the productions. This, we agree, gives solid ground for complaint, for to miss a Questor production is a loss indeed. We can assure members that every such complaint is most carefully looked into to make sure there is no error or omission in our registers. Moreover, all the registers are regularly checked with the same object in view.

The human element is there—no one can swear with absolute certainty that a notice has in fact been posted to every member. But every care is taken, and we believe that cases of non-despatch are very rare. We know that they are for more rare than cases of non-delivery, and it does happen that notices which have been posted never arrive.

This is small consolation to the member who does not receive his notice. However, the date of the next production is always given in the programme of the preceding one. Booking normally opens about three weeks before the opening date. May we suggest that you note the date, and, if you have not received a notice before the bookings should have opened, that you should ring up or call in at the theatre for information.

We do not want you to miss a show any more than you do yourselves.

The telephone number is EALing 5184.

CLUB MEMBERSHIP.

Have you ever given a thought to helping in the development of the Club by introducing a new member? The membership has been rising steadily and is now over 900, and we believe that the reputation of the Questors has been growing as knowledge of the standard of our work gets around. A steady progress of this kind is a healthy and encouraging sign, but now we want to make a special drive to bring the number of non-acting members to well over four figures. Will you see what you can do to help achieve this before the summer? If each member were to bring along only one new member, we should achieve our aim comfortably, but it cannot be done if all the work is left to a small minority of enthusiasts.

In approaching possible new members the salient points to remember are: that membership of the Club confers the privilege of a free numbered and reserved seat for every show and for each night of the Drama Festival ; that membership admits to all discussions and talks and gives a right to a voice in the management of the Club's affairs ; and that the subscription of 10s. for a non-acting member runs for a twelvemonth from the date on which it is paid. The Membership Secretary will gladly send leaflets giving details about the Club to any member who will undertake to place them in the hands of likely recruits.