

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1946-47.

SIXTH PRODUCTION



present an entirely original play

“FINAL DIVIDEND”

A comic tragedy in a Prologue and Two Acts

by

MICHAEL E. KELLY

JUNE - 1947

PROGRAMME - - - FOURPENCE

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

The visit of "De Plankeniers" to The Questors on May 19th was an occasion of which the memory will long remain—and a very pleasant memory, too. In a house crowded to capacity those who were lucky enough to get tickets saw an impressive performance; it was a pity that the Dutch company were not able to make a longer stay and allow more of our Questor members to see "Rembrandt."

Watching a play in a strange tongue proved to be an exhilarating experience. It had the effect of compelling a concentration of attention on movement, gesture, facial expression, tone and pace—in fact, on the essentials of interpretation. It was from characterisation that the audience had to deduce the sense of the play, and it was remarkable how clearly this sense came across. The members of the Dutch company were well worth all the rapt attention that the audience gave them.

Herman Planten's performance as Rembrandt himself, the rugged genius, enthusiastic only for his art, indifferent to the material factors of the world about him and oblivious even to his wife's suffering, was the work of a consummate artist. Eline Pisuisse was well matched with him and gave a delicate and understanding interpretation of her part as Hendrickje. Perhaps all the supporting cast were not up to the level of their principals, but the admirable cameo provided by Haaring, the auctioneer, and the Disney-like quality of the three creditors were nearly perfect of their kind and quite international in their humour.

The portable set which the company brought with them from Holland was admirably designed for its purpose and the high casement windows through which the sunlight streamed especially delightful. The whole performance was on a high level of artistic achievement.

The Questors were honoured that the Mayor and Mayoress of Ealing came to the theatre to welcome the visitors to the Borough on the Sunday evening of their arrival. The readiness of many of our own members to provide hospitality in their own homes for the visitors was also a matter for congratulations and thanks. The presence of His Excellency the Netherlands Ambassador at the performance itself with members of his staff lent distinction to the proceedings.

It was an act of enterprising courage on the part of our friends at Highbury to arrange this exchange visit, and The Questors can count themselves lucky indeed to have been able to snatch a glimpse of the Dutch company. We may hope that "De Plankeniers" took back with them to Holland memories as pleasant of their flying visit to Ealing as those which The Questors will long hold of them. They will certainly remember the austerity of The Questors' dressing room accommodation—but that is a familiar story!

"FINAL DIVIDEND"

The Author introduces his Play

A critic remarked recently that the relationships of the characters in a certain broadcast play were developed with the greatest subtlety and skill, yet what they were in the end he neither knew nor cared. The dominant trend in serious modern drama has indeed been the elaboration of the emotional entanglements of two or three main characters; my own view is that this theme is just about played out as a basis for original work. There is more in life than can be depicted by churning the secondary sexual emotions in the confines of a box set.

This play is an attempt to present one aspect of modern life without depending on the direct emotional relationships of the characters for the mainspring of the action. Frankly it doesn't matter a hoot how the various persons represented get on with each other—it remains to be seen if the result is entertainment. The action is more or less continuous, change of scene being indicated by change of detail; a succession of box sets—even if mechanically possible—would be too cramping.

The theme is, at least in intention, the position of the common man, whose century this is. Since the common man came into his own, he has appeared at intervals on the stage, but on the whole his appearances have been most unsatisfying, for they seem designed to flatter and reassure his opposite number in the audience, to persuade him that he is really a most uncommon fellow. I have attempted to indicate the origin of this acutely felt need for reassurance. The result is, I think inevitably, a tragedy. For I do not consider the situation of the man-in-the-street—our street—is anything but tragic, and to show it otherwise would be a falsification.

M. E. K.

“FINAL DIVIDEND”

A comic tragedy in a Prologue and Two Acts, by

MICHAEL E. KELLY

CHARACTERS :

In the Prologue.

The Captain	PETER CURTIS
The Scribe	FRANCIS W. SMITH
The Artist	PHILIP ALLEN
The Craftsman	ALFRED EMMET

In the Play.

Loudspeaker Voice	RENA RICE
Enquiry Girl	JOAN PYLE
Bone, the Commissioner	TOM W. FRANKLIN
*William Brown, the Shareholder	DENIS NICHOLLS
Jackson, General Relations Superintendent	FRANK WHITE
Auntie, the Lady with a Collecting Tin	DOREEN COATES
J. Mortimer Harvey, Progress Superintendent	PETER CURTIS
Miss Jorgen, Stenographer	BETTY OGDEN
Dr. Akemann, Research Superintendent	PHILIP ALLEN
Dr. Obolski, Research Assistant	FRANCIS W. SMITH
Graham Hilliard, Art Director	MICHAEL KELLY
Samuel Pollock, Commercial Designer	DICK WOOD
Model	ROSEMARY GRANT
Dr. Carslaw, Medical Superintendent	BARRIE PITT
Old Man, Gardener	DICK WOOD
*Livia Weston-Childers, Health Leader	ELIZABETH ODDIE
Miss Carver, Stenographer	PAMELA RICHARDS
Waitress	JEAN CANDY
Typist	BARBARA HUTCHINS
Firemen	LISTER BECK
Ma, a Cleaner	DENIS ROBINSON
Driver	MARY HILLS
Painter	ALAN FULLER
Cokey	JOHN GRAY
Electrician	MICHAEL KELLY
Miss Benson, Secretary	DICK WOOD
*Mr. Van Heim, Business Man	RUBY FEAST
Nurse	ERIC VOCE
Stretcher Bearers	RENA RICE
	MIKE GOLDING
	DENIS ROBINSON

All the above except those marked * are employees of the Monoversal Company Limited.

STAGE MANAGEMENT :

Stage Manager	MIKE GOLDING
	(Assisted by PETER ELLIS)
Costumes	JOAN PYLE and the Wardrobe Staff
Lighting	GERRY ISENTHAL, CARL JOHNSON
Properties	DOREEN COATES
Sound	PAMELA RICHARDS, BARBARA HUTCHINS
House Manager	ARCHIE COWAN

Set constructed by DENIS ROBINSON and the Stage Staff.

Steel Furniture by Old Times Furnishing Co., Ltd.

We are indebted to Mr. F. C. Palethorpe for the loan of gramophone records used during this production.

The Play produced by ERIC VOCE, assisted by the Author.

The setting of the Prologue is at night on the edge of the Plain of Shinar.

The action of the play itself takes place on various floors of the Head Office of the Monoversal Company Limited during an afternoon in late Spring. The time is the present.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes between Acts I and II during which light refreshments will be on sale from the Stewards.

In the interests of both players and audience, you are requested to restrict smoking in the theatre while the play is in progress.

DISCUSSION.

There will be a discussion on this production at the theatre on Tuesday, June 17th, at 7.30 p.m. Refreshments will be served, and all members of the audience are warmly invited to attend and contribute their views on the merits of this original production.

THE STORY OF THE "QUEST"

Historical Note No. 10

In 1943, with the somewhat easier conditions then ruling, and the phenomenal expansion of the Club, we began to set ourselves seriously to think of the future. So far, during the war years, it had been as much as we could do to look forward to the next show, and snatch a sigh of relief that we had managed to get it on, before throwing ourselves into preparations for the following one. Now, however, we felt it necessary and possible to look ahead and try and lay the foundations to enable The Questors to play its part in the cultural (can no-one find a happier word?) renaissance which we believed would follow the war—which was indeed already beginning. So it was we adopted the now familiar 5-Point Programme, which has largely determined the course of our subsequent policy, and, as a corollary thereto, and to enable us to cope with this rapid expansion (the non-acting membership increased four-fold within two years), we appointed a full-time General Manager. The first and foremost consideration was to be that of improving the quality of our work, and to that end the following seasons saw some extension of our rehearsal schedules, and the development of regular training work with our actors and producers; this was followed in 1946 by the inauguration of our first Student Group. Secondly was placed the increasing of the quantity of our work, but here, partly due to the longer run of our productions, and the first emphasis laid on quality, we have made little further progress, and for the present seem to have reached saturation point with the acting and working personnel available. The third point was the important one of assistance to other dramatic groups, and particularly to youth groups, and much useful work has been done in this direction during the past few years as we have developed a sense of civic responsibility. Fourthly, we aimed to increase the size of our audience, and on this point the figures of average audience per production may speak for themselves:—

1942-43	1943-44	1944-45	1945-46
380	730	1073	1196

The last of the Five Points—to fulfil to a greater degree the function of a "Tributary Theatre"—is one to which particular attention has been given more recently, notably through the formation in 1946 of The Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain, a body already widely recognised as a national organisation. To preserve a right balance in our work, it seems necessary to develop a sense of responsibility to the theatre as a whole, in addition to the emphasis on the quality of the immediate work in hand.

The productions from 1943-44 onward will still be fresh in the memories of many readers, so a bare list of the plays should suffice. They were:—

- 1943-44 { "The Bower of Wandel" (Gordon Bottomley).
"The Tinker's Wedding" (J. M. Synge).
"The Moon in the Yellow River" (Denis Johnston).
"The Cherry Orchard" (Tchekhov).
"The Romance of the Western Chamber" (Hsiung).
"Sea Flood" (the première of Michael Kelly's second full-length play).

- 1944-45 { "Martine" (J. J. Bernard).
"The Importance of Being Earnest" (Oscar Wilde).
"The Proposal" (Tchekhov).
"Sunday Costs Five Pesos" (Josephina Niggli).
"Lima Beans" (Alfred Kreymbourg).
Scenes from "A Midsummer Night's Dream."
"The Rivals" (Sheridan).
"A Doll's House" (Ibsen).
- 1945-46 { "But Now I am Returned" (Erik Hutchinson).
"Heartbreak House" (G. B. Shaw).
"Invitation to a Voyage" (J. J. Bernard).
"The Arbitration" (Menander).
"Thunder Rock" (Robert Ardrey).
"Ghosts" (Ibsen).

The Drama Festival continued to be held each year, the bumper festival being, perhaps, that of 1944, when 15 plays were submitted, no fewer than nine of which were original works.

Lack of space demands that this brief sketch of the "Story of the Quest" be brought to a close. But The Quest itself continues. There is much to be done, much that is new and exciting and adventurous. To you who read these words—are you helping? If not, won't you?

A. E. J. E.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Michael Kelly, born and bred in the West Country, has had a life of varied experience. He completed his education at the University of Birmingham, qualifying as an oil technologist and Honours graduate in Geology in 1933. This led him to a job in Persia with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company where he stayed five years. In 1939 he was holidaying in France on his way home to England which he reached just before the outbreak of war.

During the war he worked in London with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and it was at this time that he started play-writing—it passed the time necessarily spent in the Anderson shelter. In 1944 he married and his wife, Diana, joined The Questors also.

Recently he has abandoned the Oil Company and joined the ranks of the Civil Service. More recently still—on May 21st—a son was born to Michael and Diana, and all members of the Club will join in offering their congratulations.

FOR YOUR DIARY

The adjustment of the programme since "The Seagull" has made it impracticable to arrange the usual Drama Festival this year for July. "Final Dividend" will accordingly bring the 1946-47 season to a close. The season 1947-48 will open in September, and members will be notified of the details nearer the time.

Two important events, which no-one who really takes an interest in the Club should miss, will, however, be taking place shortly :—

On Sunday, June 15th, at 7.30 p.m., an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club will be held. This meeting will take place following the matinée performance of "Final Dividend" on that day—refreshments will be available at the theatre from 6 p.m. onwards.

This is the meeting which it was decided at the Extraordinary General Meeting, held on April 24th, should be arranged to take place before the Annual General Meeting this year.

On Monday, July 7th, at 7.30 p.m., the Annual General Meeting of The Questors for the 1946-47 season will be held. At this meeting the General Committee's Report and the Accounts will be received and Officers and Committee for the next season will be elected

Notices of both meetings will be sent to all members in the usual way, but the above will serve to remind you.