

THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1947—48

FIRST PRODUCTION



open

their Nineteenth Season

with a presentation of

“THE DISCOVERY”

By

FRANCES SHERIDAN

SEPTEMBER 1947

PROGRAMME

- -

SIXPENCE

THE SEASON OPENS

As the curtain goes up for this, the opening production of the 1947-48 Season, we invite the attention of our members and their friends to a number of considerations affecting the Club and its work.

We are now happily installed in the additional premises at the rear of the Theatre and, during the weeks of the Summer recess, great efforts have been made to adapt the Annexe—late Barn Club—for our purposes. We have acquired a large rehearsal room, a workshop and a wardrobe—all these meet long-felt wants and there can be little doubt that the Club will benefit greatly from these amenities. We invite our members and their friends to see for themselves during the interval or at any other time how valuable an acquisition has been made. For it should be understood that the Annexe is not the special preserve of a section of the Club membership—it belongs to us all, though in the nature of things those who are able to contribute actively to the work of the Club will have more occasion to use it than others. We hope that, incidentally, the existence of the Annexe will see a further increase in the number of our active membership—there can never be too many pairs of hands for all the ancillary jobs which our ambitious programme creates.

The general outlines of the programme for the Season will be familiar to our members; it was set out on the special leaflet which accompanied the notice for "The Discovery." In devising the programme the Committee have tried to cater for a variety of tastes within the general ambit of the Club's policy and objects. It is their wish that members and their friends should participate in the activities of The Questors to the fullest extent that their inclinations and leisure time allow. There has sometimes in the past been the feeling that there was an inner circle within The Questors. It is true that, as a matter of convenience, the label "active members" has been applied to all those members who have been able to contribute something more to the Club than simple attendance at productions and discussions. But there is no kind of test applied, such as is, for obvious reasons, required for acting members. You can be as "active" as you choose in the Club and, of this you may be sure, that you will find a generous welcome from those who are already "active" in pursuit of "The Quest."

There is one aspect of the Club's affairs in which all can be of help. The Hon. Treasurer has been drawing up his budget for the year. He has increased commitments to face and on the basis of the present membership a deficit on the year's working is probable. For The Questors difficulties only exist to be surmounted, and we have no doubt but that our members will rise to this occasion as they have done before. The taking of the additional premises was an act of faith—faith in ourselves and faith in the significance of our work. But faith doesn't pay bills. We need an influx of new members of the order of 200. It is our present members who must bring in new members. You can speak from personal knowledge of the standard of our work and the comradesly atmosphere in which it is performed. You have enjoyed coming to our Theatre—there must be many among your friends who would get no less enjoyment. If you are a visitor on this occasion, we invite you to consider joining us—the friend who introduced you will be glad to arrange for you to become a member. If you are already a member, we ask you to bring your friends to performances and to invite them to consider joining the Club after they have sampled The Questors' fare.

THE PLAY AND THE AUTHOR

MRS. FRANCES SHERIDAN was born in 1724, the daughter of a dignitary of the Irish Church. She married Thomas Sheridan, who had a successful career as an actor, both in Dublin and London. In 1761, Sheridan joined Garrick's company at Drury Lane, giving fine performances of Hamlet and other leading parts. Differences soon arose between him and Garrick, however, Sheridan considering the great actor-manager to be jealous of his success.

Meanwhile Mrs. Sheridan had written a successful novel, "Sidney Biddulph," which gained her high repute, and when she tendered her comedy, "The Discovery," to Garrick, it is recorded that he received it "with every mark of favour," and declared it to be "one of the best comedies he ever read." Evidently the coolness between him and Thomas Sheridan did not extend to the wife. Garrick produced the play at Drury Lane in 1763.

Mrs. Sheridan wrote one other play, "The Dupe," and one other novel, "Nourjahad," the whole of her literary output being written within the last six years before her death in 1766.

Garrick himself played Sir Anthony Branville, and it is recorded that it was one of his favourite parts. Incidentally, it was the last part he ever acted in a new play.

Although it achieved a considerable success in its time, "The Discovery" appears to have fallen into oblivion, until it was rescued some years ago by the late Sir Nigel Playfair, who turned it over to Aldous Huxley to make a modern stage version. This was published some twenty years ago, but has not, we believe, been at all widely performed, if at all. Huxley adapted the play somewhat freely, writing in additional scenes and even additional characters. If the result seemed to us lacking in unity and not altogether satisfactory, we are at least grateful for his version, for it put us on the track of a play we feel to be well worth rescuing from limbo.

When we read the original script we realised Aldous Huxley's difficulty. While passages of the play, and some of the characters, have a charm, a freshness, a vivacity, a delicious sense of comedy, which are as alive to-day as when the play was first written, other passages are larded with a sugary, false sentimentality which is hardly acceptable to modern taste, unless as a vehicle for burlesque. This canker we have endeavoured to cure, firstly with the knife, by ruthlessly cutting the offending passages, and secondly by a few small, but important, emendations to the script. The play you see to-night is therefore, we must confess it, not entirely the play that Mrs. Sheridan wrote. Indeed, it seems probable that the passages we have eliminated or twisted are just those which most moved and delighted her contemporaries, whose taste in these matters was somewhat different from our own. Arthur Murphy, Garrick's contemporary biographer, and himself a successful dramatist, describes the play thus:—

"It is one of the best sentimental plays in our language; it abounds with moral sentiments, and strokes of the pathetic artfully intermixed. Sir Harry and Lady Flutter give life and spirit to the piece. To them may be added Sir Anthony Branville, a solemn coxcomb of antiquated manners, performed by Garrick in a whimsical and entertaining manner."

The moral sentiments, the pathos, are gone. But the freshness and charm which first delighted us—these, we hope, remain for *your* delight and entertainment.

A. E.

"THE DISCOVERY"

by

FRANCES SHERIDAN

CHARACTERS (in order of their appearance)—

Lord Medway	FRANCIS W. SMITH.
Lady Medway	BETTY OGDEN.
Sir Harry Flutter	PETER CURTIS.
Louisa, daughter to the Medways		JEAN McCONNELL.
Col. George Medway, her brother		PETER BOWEN-EVANS.
A Servant	JOHN HOWARD.
Lady Flutter	BETTY MERCY.
Sir Anthony Branville	WILFRID SHARP.
Mrs. Knightly	MURIEL LANDERS.
Miss Richly	VERA LOVELOCK.
A Maid	JOYCE WHEELER.

The Play produced by ALFRED EMMET and MINNA WARNER.

Décor by BERYL ANTHONY.

STAGE MANAGEMENT.

Stage Manager: Cyril Stephens.

Costumes: Terry McConnell and the Wardrobe Staff.

Lighting: Gerry Isenthal and Carl Johnson.

Properties: Barbara M. Hutchins.

Sound: Barbara M. Hutchins and Albert Gibbs.

House Manager: Archie Cowan.

Set constructed by Peter Ellis and the Stage Staff.

Some costumes kindly loaned by Mr. J. Cyril Nairne.

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

ACT I.

Scene 1 Lord Medway's Study. Morning.

Scene 2 A room in Lord Medway's House. A few minutes later.

ACT II.

Sir Harry Flutter's Dressing Room. The same afternoon.

INTERVAL OF 12 MINUTES.

ACT III.

Scene 1 Mrs. Knightly's Apartments. Later the same evening.

Scene 2 A room in Lord Medway's House. The next morning.

INTERVAL OF 5 MINUTES.

ACT IV.

Scene 1 Lord Medway's Study. Later the same day.

Scene 2 Mrs. Knightly's Apartments. An hour later.

ACT V.

A room in Lord Medway's House. An hour later.

DISCUSSION.

There will be a discussion on this production in the theatre on Monday, September 29th, at 7.30 p.m. All members of the audience are invited to be present. Written signed criticisms will be welcomed. Refreshments will be served as usual.

THE COST OF A PROGRAMME

Having bought this programme, you will have discovered that the cost is sixpence. You may feel you would like to have an explanation of this increase.

It became clear when the Hon. Treasurer presented his accounts at the Annual General Meeting in July last, that there was a deficit on the programmes. There seemed to be a general wish that the style of our programmes should not be revised and, in order to balance the account, it was resolved in due form that the price should be raised.

We hope that you will still feel that the programme is worth the money—it certainly can stand comparison with what you get for a similar outlay in the West End. And, if this line of argument doesn't appeal, perhaps you will capitulate to the plaintive cry from the House Manager: "It's so much easier to give change for 6d."

THE LITTLE THEATRE GUILD

It is now well known that The Questors has accepted the Secretaryship of that most important movement, the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain. We think, therefore, that members may be interested to know something of the Guild's activities in the near future, and accordingly append a list of September productions of its affiliated members.

September 10th—14th, 17th—24th, 28th.

Highbury Little Theatre—HEDDA GABBLER.

September 15th—20th.

Leicester Little Theatre—MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION.

September 20th—October 4th.

Crescent Theatre—THE WIND OF HEAVEN.

September 30th—October 11th.

Crompton Little Theatre—CHILDREN IN UNIFORM.

September 15—20th, 22nd.

Maddermarket Theatre—TWELFTH NIGHT.

September 20th—27th.

People's Theatre—SKIPPER NEXT TO GOD.

There will be a Conference of Little Theatre Guild members at the Great Hucklow Village Playhouse on October 25th and 26th.

FOR YOUR ATTENTION

The Secretary wishes it to be known that within the next few weeks a Notice Board will appear at the gates of the theatre giving full details of the Club and its programme for the current season.

OFFICERS FOR THE SEASON 1947-48

MR. JOHN BURRELL has very kindly consented to continue as President. At the Annual General Meeting held in the theatre on July 7th, 1947, the following officers were appointed:—

Hon. Director	ALFRED EMMET.
Hon. General Secretary	JOHN MAYO.
Hon. Treasurer	FRANCIS SMITH.
General Committee	ERIC VOCE (<i>Chairman</i>) and Messrs. TOM FOLEY, TOM FRANK- LIN, MICHAEL KELLY, DICK WOOD, Mrs. B. W. PITT.
House Manager	ARCHIE COWAN.
Box Office	Mrs. T. FOLEY.
Programme Director	TOM FOLEY.
Membership Secretary	Mrs. G. F. H. CCATES.
Plays Secretary	BETTY OGDEN.
Secretary for Little Theatre Guild	JEAN CANDY.
Wardrobe Mistress	JOAN PYLE.
Props Mistress	PAMELA RICHARDS.
Training Secretary	BARBARA HUTCHINS.
Stage Committee	MIKE GOLDING, DENNIS ROBIN- SON, PETER ELLIS.
Lighting	GERRY ISENTHAL, CARL JOHNSON.
Publicity Manager & Programme Editors	DICK WOOD, PHYLLIS PITT.
Plays Committee	MESSRS. ALFRED EMMET, PETER CURTIS, GRAHAM HEYWOOD, MICHAEL KELLY, R. MARCUS and Miss M. VOCE.

THE NEW STUDENT GROUP

Following the success of last year's Student Group, a new Group has been formed for the 1947-1948 season under the auspices of the Middlesex County Council Education Committee. The Director of Studies is Alfred Emmet, with Miss Anny Boalth (Movement) and Miss Sascha Rares (Speech).

The course is intended for those genuinely interested and anxious to develop their talents in all branches of dramatic art, and includes: Acting, Movement, Speech, Make-up, Theatre History, Stage Management, etc.

Enthusiasm is an excellent basis for study, but cannot replace actual technical knowledge and experience. Enthusiasm there certainly is, as many more applications were received than there were vacancies to fill. Auditions have already been held and "old" Questors would like to offer the new students their very best wishes for a successful course.

COMING EVENTS

The Questors offer a particularly interesting programme this season, which they hope will win the support and approval of members and friends. Audiences are welcomed to all discussions and meetings, and are invited to express their opinions freely.

1947.

OCTOBER 15th.

Reading of "Portrait of Imogen," by Isobel St. Clair, a new manuscript by a new author, will be given in the theatre at 7.30 p.m. on this date, and all members and friends are welcome to come along.

NOVEMBER 1st.

Second production opens—"MR. BOLFRY,"
by James Bridie.

NOVEMBER 21st.

Club Night—A discussion on the Nature of
Dramatic Art is planned.

DECEMBER 6th.

Annual Drama Festival opens.