

COMING EVENTS

June 5th-12th. Borough of Ealing Arts and Civic Week.

In addition to their production of "The Apple Cart," The Questors are taking part in the Exhibition throughout the week in the Town Hall. All members should try and visit the Town Hall during the week, and should make a point of seeing The Questors' Exhibit.

Sunday, June 6th, at 6.30 p.m. Active Members' Meeting.

This meeting will be concerned with matters which are mainly of interest to those who are able to play an active part in the life of the Club. It is not, however, an exclusive gathering, and any member who is prepared to help forward the work of the Club will be welcome.

Wednesday, June 23rd, at 7.30 p.m. Club Night.

Details to be announced by the Programme Director in due course.

Saturday, July 10th. Opening Night of the Club's Sixth Production:—

"THE PLEASURE GARDEN," by Beatrice Mayor. Presented by: The Questors' Student Group.

Thursday, July 22nd, at 7.30 p.m. Annual General Meeting.

Please note the change of date.

Preliminary Announcement.

The opening production of the 1948-49 Season in September next will be:—

"PASTORAL SYMPHONY," by Millicent George, based on the story of the same name by André Gide.

"Times," Ealing

THE QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1947—48

FIFTH PRODUCTION



present

"THE APPLE CART"

A POLITICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

by

G. BERNARD SHAW

*Being also the Questors' contribution to
EALING'S ARTS AND CIVIC WEEK.*

MAY-JUNE 1948

PROGRAMME

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SIXPENCE

THE PLAY'S THE THING.

The purpose of The Questors is "to further the interests of dramatic art." How is that purpose best achieved? Questors' policy finds its most significant expression in the kind of play selected for inclusion in the Club's programme. It is round the choice of plays that, in consequence, the most heated, albeit friendly, controversy rages.

The business of play selection is, however, a most tricky one. Quite apart from technical considerations such as the resources of The Questors' stage and the availability of casts, there is plainly no means by which the membership as a whole can be consulted in detail about future plans. To choose plays it is essential to have a small working body, all of whose members can acquaint themselves with all the plays—including many original manuscript plays—under consideration and to delegate to them the duty of preparing future programmes. That duty falls to the Plays Committee.

The General Committee, who bear the ultimate responsibility, have thought it wise, however, to make some attempt to gauge the feeling of the membership as a whole in this important matter by inviting members to declare themselves in regard to the plays presented in the current season's programme. This method will at least provide a common basis as between one member and another. A voting slip is accordingly enclosed with this programme.

It is, of course, impossible to suggest by what standards members should decide their order of preference. For some the intrinsic merits of the play will be decisive; for others the quality of The Questors' production of the play; others will judge by its value as entertainment. We can give no guidance on how you should balance these factors—we can but give this opportunity to our members to vote according to whatever standards seem to them, as Questors, to be right.

A space is also provided on the voting paper on which you are invited to write down the name of any play or plays which you would like to propose for future presentation by The Questors. The Plays Committee will carefully consider all such suggestions.

It is the Committee's hope by these means to get some better idea of the broad trend of Club opinion than is possible even at the best attended discussion. It is most important that the greatest possible number of our members should take part in this ballot. Arrangements will be made for the collection of voting slips in the second interval at each performance

NOTE ON "THE APPLE CART."

According to Shaw's preface, the first performances of "The Apple Cart" gave rise to speculations why he, "formerly a notorious democrat," had "apparently veered round to the opposite quarter and become a devoted Royalist." In other words, what was the "old Tory," as he had already been called, up to now? The play is not, however, as some sober (perhaps too sober) critics have suggested, a "boost" for absolute monarchy (or dictatorship) and the divine right of kings.

"The Apple Cart" is the first in a series written by Shaw since about 1930 of pessimistic political and religious dramas, which have also included "Too True To Be Good," "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles," and "Geneva"—pessimistic, that is, in their implications rather than in their own actual dramatic atmosphere and situations, which remain as Shavianly comedic as ever. But listen, for example, to the Shavian king in "The Apple Cart," especially in his famous eight-minute speech near the end of Act I, and to the outburst of Lysistrata, his most devoted follower, against Breakages, Ltd.—the latter speech an impassioned appeal for the nationalisation of all our vital industries—and you will hear the graver Shavian earnestness flooding in.

We say "Shavian king" advisedly, because we can think of no ruler in history (with the possible exceptions of Shaw's own Caesar and his King Charles II) who combines such charm with such ability. It is almost as if Shaw, whom the poet A. E. once called "a suffering sensitive soul," had said: Here is a man with all the democratic qualities I have been preaching for half-a-century; let us, for the sake of Shavian paradox, imagine him as King; let us surround him by an on-the-whole self-seeking and somewhat foolish Cabinet—though not more so, perhaps, than the general run of Cabinets; let us match them not so much against one another as against the great capitalistic monopoly, Breakages, Ltd., the unseen "villain" of the play, the common enemy of us all; let us then see what the outcome will be. The outcome is, of course, reflected at the end of the play in the isolated and almost tragic figure of King Magnus, who despite his Shavian wit and gaiety of heart remains, also like Shaw, a "suffering sensitive soul"—who sees that his plea for an enlightened political science, "the science by which civilisation must live or die," and for a reformed electoral system has been in vain. The apple cart has not been upset after all, and the political parties will remain the same "parcel of sillies playing at ins and outs" as before.

In this play Shaw subjects democracy to-day to a vigorous analysis, and implores us, like Dr. Johnson, to "clear our minds of cant"; like Wells, to cleanse our minds "bogged up with mud"; and in his own words "to take command of our schools and put a stop to the inculcation upon our unfortunate children of superstitions and prejudices that stand like stone walls across every forward path."

The play, far from being a Shavian "freak," is not only very topical, but the mature result of over 50 years' political advocacy of an educated self-critical, humane and good-humoured socialistic democracy.

Technically, the play reveals Shaw to be as great a master as ever of what Mordecai Gorelik has recently called "muted spoken action." Edmund Wilson, who compares it to a musical concerto, declares it to be one of Shaw's greatest artistic triumphs—even if the "propaganda" fails! The Interlude, incidentally, "non-political" and entirely delightful, might be construed as a "skit" on the romantic and Ruritanian misconception of the private life of kings.

We hope you will be provoked, stimulated—and entertained.

E. B.

“ THE APPLE CART ”

A POLITICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

by

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Cast (in order of appearance):—

PAMPHILIUS	...	...	...	...	PHILIP ALLEN
SEMPRONIUS	...	...	...	...	DICK WOOD
BOANERGES	...	...	...	...	FRANK WHITE
KING MAGNUS	...	...	...	...	ERIC BATSON
PRINCESS ALICE	...	...	...	...	RITA DEVOTI
BALBUS	...	...	...	...	ALAN FULLER
NICOBAR	...	...	...	...	CYRIL BOX
CRASSUS	...	...	...	...	FRANCIS W. SMITH
PLINY	...	...	...	...	JOHN HOWARD
PROTEUS	...	...	...	...	WILFRID SHARP
LYSISTRATA	...	...	...	...	BETTY OGDEN
AMANDA	...	...	...	...	PAMELA RICHARDS
ORINTHIA	...	...	...	...	PEGGY POPE
THE QUEEN	...	...	...	...	BLISS BARRETT
VANHATTAN	...	...	...	...	TOM W. FRANKLIN

The play produced by:

ALFRED EMMET

Associate Producer: ABRAHAM ASSEO

The settings used in this production are those which took first place in the Stage Design Competition, adjudicated by Miss K. Ankers, and submitted by:

BERYL ANTHONY

The set constructed by:

DENIS ROBINSON, PETER ELLIS and the STAGE STAFF

STAGE MANAGEMENT:

Stage Manager: GORDON MACWILLIAM assisted by
KATHERINE ONLEY

Lighting: GERRY ISENTHAL and CARL JOHNSON

Wardrobe: AUDREY HOUNSLOW and the Wardrobe Staff

Properties: DOREEN COATES and PEGGY FANCETT

Sound: ALBERT GIBBS

House Manager: ARCHIE COWAN

The action of the play takes place in the Royal Palace late in the Twentieth Century.

ACT. 1. An Office in the Palace—morning.

THE INTERLUDE: Orinthia's Boudoir—afternoon.

ACT 2. The Terrace of the Palace—towards 5 p.m.

There will be an interval after Act 1 during which refreshments will be served.

There will be an interval of five minutes after the Interlude.

Costumes used in this production by:

C. I. SAMUELS, LTD.

Furniture by the Old Times Furnishing Co., Ltd.

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 in the theatre on Thursday, June 10th, at 7.30 p.m. All members of the audience are invited to be present and to express their views. Written criticisms, which must be signed, will be welcomed. Refreshments will be served.

A. G. M.

The habit of referring to things by initials is now deeply ingrained. From A.R.P. to E.R.P. all are expected to respond instinctively to the image that the initials represent. So it should be with the initials A.G.M., but, for the benefit of the uninstructed, we should perhaps explain that they mean Annual General Meeting. For The Questors this important event is arranged to take place on July 22nd—a Thursday—in the Theatre at 7.30 p.m. (not on July 5th as first announced).

There is another habit scarcely less deeply ingrained, of regarding these necessary gatherings as tedious and dull. Obviously insofar as a certain amount of formal business has to be transacted, there is a certain risk that this may be so. But we cannot stress too strongly how vital to a well conducted Club these annual stocktakings are. This is the occasion when your Committee report to the membership, and when you have your chance to influence the composition of the body that will direct the Club's activities in the season which is ahead of us.

This alone would be sufficient reason for coming. But on the present occasion there will also be important developments under discussion which will be of great interest to every member of the Club.

Note the date *now* in your diary—THURSDAY, JULY 22nd., at 7.30 p.m.

THE QUESTORS' REVUE.

It will not be news to our members that a Revue is planned for next Season's programme. We want to make this a combined effort on the part of as many of the Club's members as possible. Among our large membership there must be many who have talents which do not often find an outlet in the normal run of plays—people who can sing, play a musical instrument, tell a funny story, compose lyrics and so on. Tom Franklin will be very glad to have offers and suggestions from any of our members.

THE SHAW SOCIETY.

We think that the following note about the Shaw Society will be of interest to Questors.

The Shaw Society (President: Mr. David Hardman, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education) meets regularly to discuss the plays and prefaces of Bernard Shaw, as well as to hear lectures on different aspects of his work and on allied topics. It seeks to promote a wider and clearer understanding of his work and provides a "rallying point for the co-operation and education of kindred spirits and a forum for their irreconcilable controversies."

Further particulars may be obtained from the Hon. London Secretary, Mr. Eric Batson, 89c, Croftdown Road, N.W.5, or at the June meeting (in the Hall of the Institute of Journalists, Tuesday, June 22nd, at 6.30 p.m.), when Miss S. D. Neill will speak on "Shaw versus Shakespeare" with Mr. David Hardman in the Chair. All Questors will be especially welcome at this meeting.

"EALING'S OWN LITTLE THEATRE."

Under this title we have just produced an attractive leaflet designed to show at a glance what the Club is and what it stands for. We hope it will be the means of attracting many new members. It will be, if those who already belong give copies to their friends, and then use their powers of personal persuasion to get them to join.

ARE YOU DOING YOUR BIT TO HELP THE QUESTORS?

This is your Club, and it depends on the enthusiasm of its members if it is to develop as it should. We have ambitious plans which will require the backing of a stronger membership than we have at present.

DON'T KEEP A GOOD THING TO YOURSELF

Take a copy of the leaflet home with you and persuade your friends to join.