

COMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 26th, at 8.30 p.m.

The drawing of tickets in The Questors' Derby Draw will take place in the Theatre.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st, at 7.30 p.m.

Discussion on "The Beaux' Stratagem."

MONDAY, JUNE 13th, at 7.30 p.m.

Play-reading: "GOOD ENGLISHMAN," by Richard F. Wood.
Presented by Philip Allen.

Note the date—No other notice will be issued.

SATURDAY, JULY 2nd.

Opening Night of the Final Production of the 1948-49 Season:—

"THE THRACIAN HORSES."

Production by Alfred Emmet.

MONDAY, JULY 18th, at 7.30 p.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

SATURDAY, JULY 23rd.

Opening Night of Special Production by The Questors' Student Group.
Details to be announced.

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THE QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1948—49

SIXTH PRODUCTION



present

"THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM"

by

GEORGE FARQUHAR

MAY, 1949

PROGRAMME

SIXPENCE

A QUESTION ON PERIOD COSTUMES

Considered by GRAHAM HEYWOOD

I have been asked a rather complex question: Why is it that in the production of a period play, the costumes, though definitely in period, nevertheless seem dated to the time of the play's presentation?

At an early theatre visit of mine when seeing a classical revival, my father was deeply disturbed by the costume and hairstyle of the heroine, which did not tally with his recollection of the part seen about twenty years before that date. To me it seemed a wholly satisfying effect and in its design genuine period. Looking back now—twenty-five years later—I realise that the costume and hairstyle had the unmistakable flavour of the 1920s.

This, then, is a question which only arises in retrospect. At the time of seeing a play we may be quite conscious of the effects the designer intended and of his particular style, yet convinced that they are true to the period presented. It is only many years later that there seems to be a certain relationship between, say, Cecil Beaton's costumes for a Wilde production and the same year's autumn collection by Christian Dior. And I would like to add—it is this very relationship which pleases us—subconsciously at the moment.

Though this seems very flippant and perhaps just a statement, a look at a photograph of any actress about the beginning of the century, wearing what was believed to be a period costume, will bear out my point. Similarly, no Rosalind or Viola has ever been as boyish as in the 1920s.

Let me be explicit: I am referring to the costume as such and not to the style chosen for a revival. Illustration: Anthony Quayle's production of "Antony and Cleopatra" in 1947 seemed a weird mixture of styles in costumes. I am not questioning here its choice; when chosen I am contemplating its design.

At first sight one may be tempted to find an easy answer in the choice of new materials; on the successful side Lynn Fontanne's Greek silk jersey garments for her pre-war presentation of "Amphitryon 38"; on the unsuccessful side the Questors' attempt to clothe Poseidon, the Prologue in "The Trojan Women," in plastic material; but the answer remains unsatisfactory. There are always rich companies investing in beautiful materials and able artists who can turn drab cottons into gorgeous silks.

No, the answer must be found elsewhere.

Obviously it cannot be found in the artist's vision alone, but it must be part of the artist's vision as well as the audience's. I should think it is a kind of—what I should like to call—period taste, an answer to the period's aesthetic visual demands.

That there is such a thing has been abundantly shown by the art historian's research in period vision, which has established that by studying the conception of a picture alone and not its costumes or architectural hints, one is able to place it in its right period; that, therefore, any artist, however great, is subject to his period and its currents.

How much more is the less ambitious art of theatrical costume design subject to this poignant though ephemeral influence!

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR AND THE PLAY

"It appears from the matriculation-register of Trinity College, Dublin, that "Georgius Farquhar, Sizar, filius Gulielmi Farquhars, Clerici" entered that seat of learning on July 17th, 1694. It further records that he was born at Londonderry and we find the entry "Annus 17," whence the year of his birth is usually given as 1678. When he entered Trinity College, it was with a view to studying for the Church, in which he would have had good chances of preferment through his relationship to the Bishop of Down. But that prelate died in 1695, and in the same year Farquhar's academic career came to an end. He is said to have "acquired a considerable reputation" at college; but other traditions represent him as "dull." What is certain is that he began very early to apply himself to the stage" and became an actor at the Smock Alley Theatre, where he is said to have made his first appearance as Othello!

Farquhar's words were produced in a few years of comparative immaturity between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-nine and he was in the full flush of production when his life was cut short.

He was much less nauseous in his consciences than Wycherley, Congreve and Vanbrugh; he showed clear traces of an advance in moral sensibility, nowhere discernible in the other three; and the alleged lack of "sparkle" in his dialogue in reality means a return to nature, an instinctive revolt against the sterilising convention of "wit." The ethical standards of "The Beaux Stratagem" cannot certainly be called high, but there is a general tone of humanity which is far above the level of the age and even above that of Farquhar's early plays. There are traces in this play of an actual interest in moral problems, wholly different from the downright contempt for the very idea of morality which pervades the Restoration Comedy as a whole. When Farquhar seriously (and wittily) set himself to show that a certain type of marriage was loathsome and immoral, he broke once for all with the irresponsible licentiousness of his school. He admitted a moral standard, and subjected social convention, not to mere cynical persiflage, but to the criticism of reason. Having reached this point at twenty-nine, how far might he not have advanced if another twenty years had been vouchsafed him?"

(Extracts taken from William Archer's book on George Farquhar.)

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"THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM"

BY

GEORGE FARQUHAR

Characters in order of Appearance:

BONIFACE	FRANK WHITE
CHERRY	DOREEN COAT
AIMWELL	WILFRID SHARP
ARCHER	PETER CURTIS
MRS. SULLEN	DIANA BENN
DORINDA	VERA LOVELOCK
SQUIRE SULLEN	HENRY HEILPERN
SCRUB	DENIS ROBINSON
GIBBET	MICHAEL SEGAL
GIPSY	PEGGY MARSHALL
COUNTRYWOMAN	IRENE PIERIONS
LADY BOUNTIFUL	RENA RICE
HOUNSLOW	JOHN HITCHES
BAGSHOT	RICHARD TOPPS
SIR CHARLES FREEMAN	HARRY COLLINSON

Producer: ABRAHAM ASSEO.

Associate Producer: RENA RICE.

Decor: MARION VOCE.

Sets constructed by PETER ELIIS and the Stage Staff.

STAGE MANAGEMENT:

Stage Manager: MARY DEAN.

Assisted by R. BOLT and C. GOIDING.

Lighting: GERRY ISENTHAL, DENNIS FISHER and MIRIAM DAVIS.

Properties: MURIEL RUSSELL and MARGARET DAVIS.

Wardrobe: THE WARDROBE STAFF.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Cyril Nairne for kindly lending some of the costumes used in this production.

ACT I	Scene 1	The Inn.
	Scene 2	Lady Bountiful's house.
	Scene 3	The Inn.
ACT II	Scene 1	Lady Bountiful's house.
	Scene 2	The Inn.
	Scene 3	Lady Bountiful's house.
ACT III	Scene 1	The Inn.
	Scene 2	Lady Bountiful's house.
	Scene 3	Idito.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes after Act I, during which refreshments will be served, and a 10-minute interval after Act II.

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 Wednesday, June 1st, 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—price 6d.

THE PLAY READING CIRCLE

We think members of the Club will be interested in the following report by Mrs. Locke, the Hon. Secretary of the Play Reading Circle, on its activities during the season:—

"After a very good start in one of The Questors' latest experiments, the Play Reading Circle has decided to suspend activities for the Summer months.

There were a number of absences at the last meeting after Easter and the members present agreed that as ours was essentially an indoor activity it would be wiser to return with renewed zest in the Autumn.

Although I took on the secretaryship with no experience whatever, I think the members who have supported this new venture have quite enjoyed the evenings and have very loyally excused any shortcomings.

I could not have carried on but for the great help I received from Mr. Wadsworth and Mrs. McFarland on our little Committee.

Our choice of plays was very catholic, ranging from Priestley's 'Laburnum Grove' to Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night,' and as one of us remarked, our casting of parts had its humorous side. Our tower of strength in male parts is one of our eldest ladies, and an example of good elocution to all.

We would nevertheless be very pleased if some of the gentlemen Questors would emerge from their shells to join us, so that we do not have to put our imaginations to such severe tests.

Miss Rice has done her best to add comfort to our meetings, but we have felt the need of a room more conducive to the intimate atmosphere of a Circle to that provided by the Annex, especially when we are reminded very forcefully of the energetic activities of the stage carpenters, etc.

So to all those who have formed the Circle I hope they will complete yet another in September and that others will join us in widening it."

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As we get to the end of another year in the life of The Questors, we prepare for the annual event at which we review the year behind us and, in the election of officers and approval of the draft programme, look forward to a further year's rewarding effort. No good Questor will miss the A.G.M.—so book the date now: Monday, July 18th, at 7.30 p.m.

L. T. G. NEW PLAY COMPETITION

In the first issue of The Magazine we published the rules of the New Play Competition which is being organised by the Little Theatre Guild. We hope that our members will make this competition widely known, so that the judges may have a full, representative range of plays before them from which to make their final selection. Broadly, the competition is for full length plays, hitherto unpublished and unproduced, and with no restriction as to subject matter. The closing date is November 30th, 1949, and entries should be sent to the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, with a reading fee of 10s. 6d.

CLUB NIGHT—MONDAY, JUNE 13th

For the last Club Night of the season, the Programme Director is arranging a play reading. It will not be possible to issue a special notice about this event, and you are asked to make a note of the date now.

The play to be read will be an original play by a member of the Club:

"GOOD ENGLISHMAN," by RICHARD F. WOOD.

The great Duke of Marlborough is world renowned for his victories at Blenheim and Ramillies; but the earlier career of John Churchill and in particular his part in the events of 1688, the Glorious Revolution, is less generally known. The play studies a man torn between conflicting loyalties—loyalty to King and loyalty to Country.

This will be a rehearsed reading with movement. Philip Allen will be in charge of the arrangements.

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