

## THE QUESTORS CALENDAR

**SEPTEMBER 24th—OCTOBER 3rd—**

Production of "The Little Dry Thorn."

**SEPTEMBER 30th—**

Theatre Party to "Death of a Salesman."

**OCTOBER 4th—**

Building Fund performance of "The Little Dry Thorn."

**OCTOBER 5th—**

Discussion: "The Little Dry Thorn"; 7.30, Theatre.

**OCTOBER 29th—30th—**

Little Theatre Guild Conference at Bradford Civic Theatre.

**NOVEMBER 9th—**

Club Night (to be announced).

**NOVEMBER 19th—**

Opening Night of "Othello."

If you have enjoyed this production why not buy another ticket either for yourself or friends for the special performance on October 4th, and so add your valuable contribution to the Building Fund?

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present

## "THE LITTLE DRY THORN"

by

GORDON DAVIOT

SEASON 1949—50

FIRST PRODUCTION

PRICE 6d.

## THE 1949-1950 SEASON

With the start of a new season it is customary to review the plans for the coming year. The Questors open with this production of Gordon Daviot's "The Little Dry Thorn," a note about which appears on the opposite page. At about the same time the Course in Play Production organised in conjunction with the Middlesex County Drama Committee is taking place. Alfred Emmet is taking the class on the Interpretation of the Play and two well-known lecturers from outside the Questors are taking classes on Theatrical Interpretation and on Production Organisation. This ambitious project it is hoped will result in the selection of four students for further training at the Questors' Theatre in close association with its producers. In November the production of Shakespeare's "Othello" will be presented and we feel sure that this will arouse great interest and enthusiasm amongst our members. The January production will be that delightful French play, "Christmas in the Market Place," by Henri Ghéon. This will be preceded by Tchekhov's "The Bear" as a curtain raiser.

In 1950 there follows a number of very interesting and rather unusual plays in sharp contrast to each other—one from America, one from Ireland, and one from Italy. The American one is very topical and is a strong indictment of force and cruelty—"The Gentle People," by Irwin Shaw—this play has not had a professional production on the English stage. The Irish play is "Shadow and Substance," by Paul Vincent Carroll—a beautifully moving story of a Catholic Canon and his little servant girl, Brigid, who sees visions of the Saint after whom she is named. Then to bring the season to an end the Questors will revel in the fireworks of Goldoni's harlequinade, "A Servant of Two Masters." We are promised an exciting and unusual production of this and it may well challenge "The Thracian Horses" for bringing the season to a happy culmination.

Throughout the year the Student Group attached to the theatre will be functioning—auditions have recently been held in the theatre. The Student production will take place in July, 1950, after "A Servant of Two Masters."

The Plays' Committee can justly claim that this play programme is a very balanced one and although there are no completely new plays as there have been in the past two years, yet they are carefully chosen and are the type of play which members are unlikely to see in the commercial theatre.

## PRODUCER'S NOTE ON THE PLAY

"Gordon Daviot" is the nom de plume of a Scottish playwright, whose real name is Elizabeth Mackintosh. She is best known for her play, "Richard of Bordeaux," which was beautifully produced and presented at the New Theatre in 1932-3. It at once established John Gielgud as one of our leading young players and anyone who saw the production will remember with great pleasure the scenes between Gielgud as the misfit King Richard II and his Queen. Another chronicle play or historical romance which was also popular was "Mary Queen of Scots." A little later "The Laughing Woman," the life story of the sculptor Henri Gaudier and Sophia Beyeška, brought that exquisite actor Stephen Haggard into prominence.

Since these plays, Gordon Daviot has written a number which have not had such great success on the professional stage. Her latest plays, however, on Biblical themes and characters, have created much interest. "The Stars Bow Down," a story of Joseph, is running at the moment at the Malvern Festival, and the play we are presenting to-night was first produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, in 1947.

The author says in her notes that "... to look at, this play should be a miracle of light and colour." We have tried in this production to paint this picture and to present the vivid colours and images in the playwright's mind.

Gordon Daviot has used her imagination to fill in the missing gaps in the story as told in the Old Testament, and she is not mainly concerned with the great happenings in the known world at the time, but builds her play on character—tracing the lives of Abraham, Sara and Hagar from the time they lived in Ur until Isaac's first birthday. We have followed the development of Sara's character, subjecting as we think the author intended, everything to her. Our aim has been to present the play simply and sincerely, sacrificing as the playwright does the apparent realism for the deeper reality which arises from the sense of the close connection between the world of 2500 B.C. and to-day.

P. C.

# “ THE LITTLE DRY THORN ”

By  
GORDON DAVIOT

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## Characters :

Sara	...	...	...	...	...	...	GWEN THOMAS
Abraham	...	...	...	...	...	...	FRANCIS W. SMITH
Hagar	...	...	...	...	...	...	PEGGY HEDGES
Larsa	...	...	...	...	...	...	JOHN HOWARD
Milcah	...	...	...	...	...	...	BETTY OGDEN
Lot	...	...	...	...	...	...	GREGORY COKER
Scribe	...	...	...	...	...	...	ERIC VOCE
Ishmael	...	...	...	...	...	...	ANTHONY WEEKS
Boy	...	...	...	...	...	...	CHRISTOPHER WEEKS
Woman Servant	...	...	...	...	...	...	MADGE DOLMAN
Herdsmen	...	...	...	...	...	...	RICHARD TOPPS

<i>Producer</i>	-	-	-	-	PETER CURTIS
<i>Settings</i> : Designed by	-	VIVIAN ISENTHAL			
Constructed by	-	PETER ELLIS and Stage Staff			
<i>Costumes</i> : Designed by	-	JENNIFER CRAIG			
Executed by	-	HILDA COLLINS and Wardrobe Staff			
<i>Music</i> : Compiled by	-	BARBARA HUTCHINS			
<i>Stage Manager</i>	-	BEN BOLT			
<i>Asst. Stage Managers</i>	-	JOHN KNIGHT and JUDITH DAVIES			
<i>Lighting</i>	-	GERRY ISENTHAL			
<i>Properties</i>	-	MARGARET DAVIS			

## ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: A house in Ur in Mesopotamia about 2000 B.C.

SCENE TWO: The same. A few days later.

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## INTERVAL

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## ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: A tent near Bethel in Syria a few years later.

SCENE TWO: The same. One year later.

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## INTERVAL

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## ACT THREE

SCENE ONE: The same as Act Two. Eight years later.

SCENE TWO: The same. Two years later.

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There will be an interval of fifteen minutes after Act One, during which refreshments will be served.

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

## “ DRAMATIC CRITICISM ”

“It has always been my belief that the least important part of criticism is the verdict : good : bad : or something in between. Anyone can say these short words : and almost anyone can ‘sum up’ in a smart epigrammatic form . . . Criticism should have more in common with science than with poetry for it is the subject you are discussing that is important and not the thing you write about it.”

—Patrick Heron, “New Statesman,” August, 1949.

Although the above words were written specifically about art criticism, how well they apply to all forms of criticism, particularly dramatic criticism. Anyone who is familiar with many of the dramatic critics of to-day will shake his head vigorously in approval when reading the above. Ossia Trilling, the editor of “Theatre News-Letter,” considers that the phrase “dramatic criticism” is misleading and the term “dramatic appreciation” should be substituted. The Questors has always welcomed appreciation or criticism of its work and it is perhaps unique among the theatres in London in that a discussion is held after each production when members of the audience are invited to send in written reports or come along and discuss the play and the production with the producer, designers and cast, and sometimes the author. At these discussions the written reports from the audience are read out together with professional “appreciations” taken from such leading theatre publications as “The Stage,” “Theatre News-Letter” and “New Theatre,” and from the local Press. A well-known professional producer or actor is invariably invited to one of the performances of each production and asked to give a report on the acting, presentation, etc.

The discussion on “The Little Dry Thorn” production will be held on Wednesday, October 5th, 1949, at 7.30 p.m., in the Theatre, and everyone who has seen the play is invited to come and give their views on the play and its production, so that we may start the season’s discussion evenings in the right way and the right spirit.

## FORESTAGE

In the programme to “Prophesy to the Wind” in April this year, the first publication of the magazine was announced and Richard Wood stated that the first two issues were to be regarded as experimental and that the magazine was to be properly launched during the 1949-50 season. The experience gained by the publication of the first two issues has been very valuable and it is with great pleasure we announce that the first issue of “Forestage” will be published on November 1st, 1949.

The Magazine will be larger and more comprehensive in scope than previously and will contain in the first issue an article by Ossia Trilling, the Editor of “Theatre News-Letter,” on “Dramatic Appreciation,” and an article by Rosalie van der Gucht, of Cape Town Little Theatre, on “Drama in South Africa.” The following issue will be published just before Christmas and will be devoted to “Movement in the Theatre”—there will be a number of articles by members and non-members who are authorities on the subject. It is hoped sincerely that “Forestage” will become something of real force and value in the little theatre world.

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*The General Manager would like to draw attention to the fact that the Questors cannot sponsor any production given in this Theatre unless it is specifically stated that “The Questors present . . .”*

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