

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13th, at 7.30 p.m.

Discussion on "The Thracian Horses."

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The importance of this event needs no stressing. In addition to receiving the annual report and accounts for 1948-49, there will be the annual election of officers and members of the General Committee and a general discussion of policy.

SATURDAY, JULY 23rd, at 7.30 p.m.

Opening night of The Questors' Student Production :

"THE CONFEDERACY," by Sir John Vanbrugh.

Further performances will be given on July 25th, 26th and 27th. The Box Office is now open.

(See also special note on page 7 within.)

FINAL THOUGHT FOR THE 1948-49 SEASON

The growth and further progress of The Questors depend on the zeal of our members in bringing in new members. The modest annual subscription of 15s., when related to the benefits it confers, makes easy the task of persuading friends and relations who are interested in the theatre to join the Club as members. We rely on our members to secure recruits. Have you done your bit? The General Manager will gladly provide you with a pamphlet descriptive of the work of The Questors and an application form for membership.

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THE QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE, EALING

SEASON 1948—49

SEVENTH PRODUCTION



present

"THE THRACIAN HORSES"

by

MAURICE VALENCY

JULY, 1949

PROGRAMME

SIXPENCE

WHY DO WE DO IT?

Why do we do it?

We have worked hard all day, at office desk or at work bench, in factory or in home. The evenings and week-ends are our leisure hours. Any sane person would sit back with his feet on the mantelpiece, reading a good book or listening to the wireless (or both). Then why do we who are pleased to call ourselves Questors trail down to Mattock Lane night after night, when we might be taking our ease in comfort? Why do we spend long hours toiling with hand or with brain, performing perhaps unfamiliar tasks, sometimes doing for nothing the same sort of jobs as we are paid to do during the day?

By many people's standards, we are no doubt just a little bit mad. Not least because few of us could give a really cogent answer to the question why we do it. Maybe we haven't thought much about it—we only know that there is some damnable impulse which drives us even against our will down to our beloved theatre.

That, I suppose, is one of the chief reasons—that in some crazy way we are all in love with the theatre. That love takes different forms—it may be love of the theatre in general, or of The Questors in particular, love of acting, or of making, or of doing—who can analyse a lover's emotions? Each of us will find something different in our common love, just as two men in love with the same woman will love her for quite different qualities and may entirely disagree as to her true nature.

Yes, gentle reader, let us face it. We are in love! You and I and all of us. Like all lovers, we are a little bit mad. And we suffer both the agonies and the joys, the frustrations and the satisfactions of all true lovers. Like all lovers, we do things we neither mean to do nor want to do. Our mistress tantalises us, infuriates us, occasionally satisfies us, but never bores us, and never, never, lets us go.

But we have one advantage over the ordinary lover—we can shape the object of our love to our own desire. Like Pygmalion who fashioned Galatea to his liking, we are in love with our own creation, we can mould it and shape it to our liking. Is her nose too retroussé? We can give it a more classical profile. Her skin too swarthy? We can lighten it. Her conversation pedestrian? We can endow her with wit. We can make of her what we will.

If we have that power, we must know what we want. Our ideal must be clear in our mind's eye. The wise Pygmalion will fashion a Galatea in a mould he can love for ever, will rate qualities which will give a deep and lasting satisfaction above the glamour that will titillate the senses only for a time. Let us go on making something of The Questors that we shall love (and be proud of) to-morrow as well as to-day, because it is built on permanent values. Then we can long enjoy the continued agony of being in love.

And if that sounds sententious—well, it is after all a failing of most lovers!

A. E.

SOME THOUGHTS, PARTLY ABOUT THE PLAY

It does not often happen that a play meets with unanimous enthusiasm from both the Plays Committee and the General Committee, but that was the remarkable reception given to "The Thracian Horses," when a somewhat battered script borrowed from our friends, The People's Theatre, Newcastle, wended its tortuous way through the labyrinthine course that has to be followed by any play seeking the lofty distinction of a production by The Questors. There was even an eager queue of would-be producers. That I was given an opportunity of producing was, I take it, a kind of reward for leaving The Questors and going abroad for three months.

Having come back refreshed from sunnier climes where rationing is unknown, I certainly approached my assignment with considerable enthusiasm. It is a long time since I came across such a delicious modern comedy—for the play, though set in mythological Greece, is as modern as Anouilh's "Antigone," recently seen at the New Theatre. Incidentally, it is curious how many critics missed the point of Anouilh's play, and insisted on regarding it as an attempt to improve upon Sophocles.

It is an interesting field of speculation as to why there has been such a vogue in recent years for modern treatments of the ancient classical myths and legends. Most recent London productions of such "new plays for old" include "Cage me a Peacock," the Britten opera "The Rape of Lucretia," and Thornton Wilder's adaptation of Obey's play "Lucrece," from which it was derived, and an isolated performance or two of Jean-Paul Sartre's "The Flies" (from the Orestes story). Cocteau has done it with "Orphee" and "The Infernal Machine," Giraudoux with "Amphitryon 38," Denis Johnston with "A Bride for the Unicorn" (produced by The Questors in 1938), O'Neill found a similar inspiration for "Mourning Becomes Electra" and T. S. Eliot for "The Family Reunion,"

(Continued on page six)

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“ THE THRACIAN HORSES ”

A Comedy by MAURICE VALENCY

Characters in order of Appearance :

ALCESTIS, Queen of Pherae and wife of Admetus	...	...	...	...	BARBARA HUTCHINS
MYRTILLA	} Ladies-in-Waiting to the Queen	...	...	...	JUNE NEAVE
RHODANTHE					BETTY WALKER
MELITA					ELECTRA JARAS
WATCHMAN					PHILIP HOARE
CRATYLUS, Steward in the house of Admetus	...	...	...	...	DONALD MANNING
ADMETUS, King of Pherae	...	...	...	...	ALBERT HOOPER
ZOILUS, a general	...	...	...	...	JOHN SAWKINS
CRITO, a philosopher and physician to Admetus	...	...	...	...	FRANCIS W. SMITH
PERES, father of Admetus	...	...	...	...	ALAN FULLER
CRITIAS	} Senators	...	...	...	ERIC VOCE
PHILODORUS					GREGORY COKER
ARISTODEMUS					WILFRID SHARP
HERACLES					FRANK WHITE
DEATH	...	...	...	...	BETTY OGDEN
ANOTHER WATCHMAN	...	...	...	...	GREGORY COKER
A SCAVENGER	...	...	...	...	PETER BOWEN-EVANS
HOPLITES, soldiers of the King's guard	}	...	...	...	PETER BOWEN-EVANS
					GREGORY COKER
ACASTUS, King of Iolchis, brother of Alcestis	...	...	...	...	TREVOR ELDRID
ZEUS	...	...	...	...	WILFRID SHARP

The Play produced by : ALFRED EMMET

Associate Producer : JOAN SAWKINS

Décor by : ERNEST IVES

Set constructed by the Stage Staff

Costumes designed by : MARJORIE IVES
and made by the Wardrobe Staff

STAGE MANAGEMENT :

Stage Manager : CYRIL STEPHENS, assisted by JOHN KNIGHT

Sound : ALBERT GIBBS

Lighting : GERRY ISENTHAL and DENNIS FISHER

Properties : PAMELA RICHARDS, assisted by SUSAN HOWARD
and RUTH MILNER

The action of the play takes place in the courtyard of the
Royal Palace of Pherae.

ACT I Scene 1 An hour before sunset.

Scene 2 Two hours later.

ACT II Scene 1 The following morning.

Scene 2 Three days later.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes after Act I, 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.

DISCUSSION

There will be a discussion on this production in the theatre
on Wednesday, July 13th, 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.

FORMATION OF 1949-50 STUDENT GROUP

Looking ahead to next season plans are already on foot for the formation of a further Student Group. Our members will be generally familiar with the aim of the Group which is to provide preliminary training for amateurs, especially such as may desire to graduate to acting membership of The Questors. A leaflet fully describing the syllabus is available on application to the General Manager, and it is hoped that our members will make the formation of the Group known to any of their friends who may be interested.

SOME THOUGHTS, PARTLY ABOUT THE PLAY—*contd.*

to mention only the examples that come most readily to mind. We have found that of original play scripts sent to us to read in the last year or two, quite a remarkable proportion have been based upon legends of ancient Greece. Indeed, "Greek plays" as a genre are rapidly becoming the Plays Committee's *bête noire*.

What is the reason? Is it that we are so confused and bemused in our own time that we turn back with longing to the simplicity that was Greece? Or is it just that someone has started a fashion as unaccountably followed as new fashions in dress? Personally, I have not the least idea, and I leave it to the philosophers and social thinkers to advance their theories. Some of them no doubt would be amusing.

This *divertissement* was penned in response to a request by the Editor for "a note about the play." I seem to have left my theme a long way behind and my space is well nigh exhausted. But to satisfy the Editor, let me write about the play.

It is by Maurice Valency, who is an American, and whose translation of Giraudoux' "The Madwoman of Chaillot" has been recently running in New York. The play was presented at the Lyric Theatre, Hammer-smith, some two or three years ago, and has been produced also by a number of other Little Theatres, including the Norwich Maddermarket, The Newcastle People's, the Bradford Civic and the Stockport Garrick. So we follow worthy footsteps.

We think the play is particularly delightful, which is why we are doing it. We hope you will share that delight, which is presumably the purpose for which you have come. And what more can we say than that?

A. E.

THE STUDENT PRODUCTION

The recent issue of the Magazine contained details of the forthcoming Student Group Production of Vanbrugh's "The Confederacy." Four performances will be given on July 23rd, 25th, 26th and 27th. We are sure that our members will find an interest in this demonstration of the work of the students and that all who are not on holiday by the seaside or elsewhere will want to reserve their seats for a performance. The Box Office is open throughout the run of "The Thracian Horses."

For those who are not familiar with the play, we append a note by Mariel Dexter, who is producing, about it.

"THE CONFEDERACY"

"Sir John Vanbrugh, Architect and Founder of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, is amongst the foremost of the late Restoration dramatists.

"Though less polished than Congreve, less coarse than Wycherley, he abounds in fun and good humour, has a terrific sense of the theatre and can create character in bold outline. He sends his work bouncing along with immense vitality and drive.

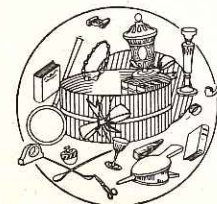
"These virtues are well to the fore in 'The Confederacy,' a play less known than its deserts warrant. This was written in 1705 (Queen Anne's reign). It is a play with a variety of good parts. That of 'Flippanta' was created by the famous Mrs. Bracegirdle. Her contemporary, Mrs. Elizabeth Barry, was the original 'Clarissa,' with Mr. King as 'Brass.'

"Our present company of Questors' Students have greatly enjoyed studying the play and the period, and have also created their own ideas of Dress and Stage Design for it.

"They will, within the limits of their experiences, strive to follow the stars of the past, and trust to please you with this modest but, we hope, gay presentation."

M. D."

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