

QUESTORS' CALENDAR.

- March 25th to April 3rd *Paradise Street*. Fifth production. Season 1949-50.
- April 4th SPECIAL BUILDING FUND PERFORMANCE OF ABOVE.
- „ 26th CONCERT in aid of Building Fund. 7.30 p.m. at the Theatre.
- May 3rd JACK MIDGELEY, County Drama Adviser to Norfolk, will speak about the Arena stage.
- „ 15th First night of *The Gentle People*, by IRWIN SHAW.
- June 3rd *The Gentle People*. Two performances at Palace Court Theatre, Bournemouth.
- „ 7th Dance and Movement Class No. 1.
- „ 24th MIDSUMMER DAY.
- „ 28th Reading of a new play by Richard Wood.
- July 8th First night of Student production.

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THE QUESTORS.



PRESENT

“PARADISE STREET”

BY

ANTONY BROWN

SEASON 1949—50

FIFTH PRODUCTION

PRICE 6d.

HAMLET'S ADVICE TO THE AUDIENCE

To boo or not to boo, that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in silence to suffer
The gibes and slanders of outrageous playwrights ;
Or to take arms against a cast of actors,
And by opposing stop them ? To shout ; To boo ;
No more ; and by that boo to hope we end
The long run of a thousand and one nights
That plays are prone to : 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To shout : To boo—
To boo ; perchance to scream. But stop to think,
For to that boo of death what plays may follow,
When we have shuffled from our seats in rage,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of the long run :
For who would bear the acts and plots of time,
The playwrights' quips, the producers' contumely,
The pangs of forgotten lines, and prompts' delay ;
The insolence of actors with their ' ham '
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
By merely booing ? Who would all this bear,
To sit and watch a dreary play ;
But that the dread of something after this,—
The unproduced play whose first night merits
The critics argue—puzzles the mind ;
And makes us rather bear those plays we have
Than look for others that we know not of.
Thus conscience makes applauders of us all ;
And thus the gallery's boo of condemnation
Is sicklied o'er with stalls' polite applause ;
And enterprises of no pith or moment,
With this regard, their current runs enjoy ;
But lose the name of Drama.

PAUL BEDFORD

A NEW PLAY

One reads play after wearisome play. Sometimes they are beautifully typed with all the stage directions neatly underlined in red and a fresh, mint appearance like a shiny new chestnut just burst from its pod ; others are scruffy, dog-eared carbon copies, typed on paper surely destined for a less elevated purpose, on a machine with one letter missing and three bent, which should long ago have found its way into a museum as an historical relic. But all have this in common : that they are equally dull, boring and mediocre. Then suddenly and quite unexpectedly one play makes you sit up and take notice, it has you excited. You cry " Eureka " if it occurs to you to do so, and from that moment you become convinced that you have discovered a masterpiece and that at least as much credit is due to you for your perspicacity as to the author who wrote it.

Such a play was *Paradise Street*, gradually working its way up to the top of a pile of scripts, until the day it got me excited. It also got him excited. It got her excited. It got them all excited. No : let us be accurate—not all. Only a majority. On the day we find a play which literally gets us *all* excited, we shall know that we have indeed found a masterpiece. Or will it be only a Popular Success ?

What is it that this play has that the others have not got—that we select this one for production while the other ninety and nine are returned to their respective authors with the politest of regrets ? If I knew the answer, the ultimate answer to that, we could raise the money for our new theatre in a few months. I can only point to some of the things that appealed to me about the play, giving as incomplete an answer to my question as does the lover to the everlasting question of " Why do you love me ? "

Firstly, then, I like the zest and ebullience of the play and of the characters ; the hearty robustiousness so seldom found in the theatre these days, which is reminiscent of the Elizabethan spirit—a spirit which is perhaps still alive among people such as those in the play. Secondly, I like the language of the play. Perhaps some of it is what could be described by the conventional as " bad language " : certainly, as in the course of rehearsals, we have become more absorbed into the life and background of the play, many strange, unaccustom edoaths have burst startlingly into the usually rarified atmosphere of The Questors Theatre. But whether the language is " bad " or not, I certainly think it is good—that is to say, it is expressive of something more than the mere thought it conveys ; it is language that *enriches* thought. Antony Brown is one of those who feel that words, or rather the stringing together of words which is language, is vitally important to the theatre, which has tended, in recent decades, to reject speech which rises above the matter-of-fact. In this respect he is travelling in the same carriage as, for instance, Christopher Fry, Ronald Duncan, Norman Nicholson and others who are trying to bring beauty of language back into the theatre.

If these answers to my question seem inadequate, I can only hope that the play itself, as you share its performance, may give you the answer. Which is only another way of saying ' I hope you enjoy yourselves.' A.E.

“ PARADISE STREET ”

A Comedy

by

ANTONY BROWN

Characters in order of appearance :

Troop, *an evangelist*.....FRANCIS W. SMITH
Jack, *a sailor*RICHARD TOPPS
Philip, *an apprentice*DAVID ELDRIDGE
Joe Burke, *a lighterman*.....FRANK WHITE
Leonard Trotman, *known as “Parsnip Nose”*DENIS ROBINSON
Bert DiamondDOUGLAS THOMAS
Stella Burke, *Joe’s daughter*.....PEGGY POPE
“Ma” Trotman, *Parsnip Nose’s mother*RUBY FEAST

The play produced by.....ALFRED EMMET

Décor byBERYL ANTHONY

The scene is Joe Burke’s wharf at Ropemaker’s Yard, Rotherhithe. The time is the present.

ACT ONE.....SUNDAY NIGHT

ACT TWO.....MONDAY MORNING

ACT THREEMONDAY EVENING

There will be an interval of three minutes after Act One, and an interval of fifteen minutes after Act Two, during which teas will be served.

Stage Managers:

ELIZABETH WELLMAN and THERESA HEFFERNAN

assisted by SYLVIA HICKS

The set constructed by PETER ELLIS and the Stage Staff

Lighting .. GERRY ISENTHAL

Sound .. ALBERT GIBBS

Properties : RUBY FEAST and MARGARET DAVIES

Wardrobe : HILDA COLLINS and the Wardrobe Staff

House Manager .. ARCHIE COWAN

Stewards BILL COLLINS and Staff

Programmes .. VI MUSK and Staff

Refreshments .. MRS. MARCUS and Staff

DISCUSSION DATE : THURSDAY, MAY 25TH, AT 7.30 P.M.

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

TRAINING

One of the most important functions of The Questors apart from its productions is the training which it provides for its actors, producers and now, designers. The Questors has a flourished Student Group which is run in conjunction with the Middlesex County Education Committee, and this has gone from strength to strength in the past three years and now fulfils the important function of providing the theatre with a number of well-trained actors and actresses who have "grown-up" with The Questors and have absorbed its spirit and purpose. Next season it is hoped to extend the Student Course to two years, so that there will be a first and second year group running concurrently. Applications for next year's Student Group will be requested soon and full details will be available next month.

Apart from the Student Group The Questors is developing the training of actors; details of an Acting Class available to all members will be announced soon. It is also intended to commence Movement Classes in June, and a class will be held every week for six weeks.

The Hon. Director is also collecting information from those people who are anxious to study production or design. Special forms can be obtained from the Theatre Manager for those interested. The production course will be held under the direction of Alfred Emmet and it is intended to give prospective producers experience by letting them work as Associates to the theatre's established producers. Two Design Courses will be held under the direction of Ernest Ives and Beryl Anthony and these will cover all facets of theatre design from designing sets to the designing and making of costumes. Early next season a course in Stage Make-up is being held by Francis W. Smith, who is an expert in this field.

It will be seen that the training of students and actors in The Questors is an integral part of our work. An article describing all this work in greater detail will be published in "Forestage" later this year.

Although the initial effort required for the running of these courses and the strain incurred on a few members of the theatre is very great, as they become more established this will become easier. It is hoped that all members able to do so will avail themselves of these unique opportunities offered and The Questors will be fulfilling one of its primary aims: "To maintain and improve the artistic standard of our productions."

P.C.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE CONFERENCE

The British Drama League is holding a Conference at Bournemouth commencing on May 27th and running until June 3rd. The Questors has been invited to produce a play at the Palace Court Theatre in Bournemouth, one performance to be given in the afternoon to the general public and the other to the B.D.L. delegates in the evening.

The Questors has been delighted to accept this invitation and the production of *The Gentle People* will be transported there after its run at The Questors Theatre. The producer and stage staff will travel down with the scenery on Friday night June 2nd, and it is intended that the cast will go by coach early on Saturday morning and will return on Saturday night, after the performance.

It is felt that some members of The Questors not actively engaged on this production might like to travel to Bournemouth with the cast, spend a day at the sea, and attend the performance to give moral support to the cast, returning with them in the evening. Consequently, a number of seats are being reserved for members who would like to go. As the number will be limited you are asked to get in touch immediately with John Howard, Esq., Programme Director, The Questors, Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, W.5, if you are interested and you will be given full particulars at a later date.

**BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU GOT YOUR NEW
MEMBER YET? IF NOT, WHY NOT NOW!**

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EASTER WEEKEND ATTRACTIONS.

During the Easter Weekend it is hoped to be able to do a great deal of Exterior Maintenance on the Theatre and to commence getting the Garden tidied up for the Garden Party.

If it is wet, interior jobs will be done in the Theatre and Annexe.

Help is urgently required for all these undertakings and anyone who is able to assist on any day during the weekend is invited to come and help.

It is not necessary to be either a skilled craftsman or an active member, as every type of job has to be done and the Stage Committee will welcome any help.