

QUESTORS CALENDAR.

- February 11—19 "Shadow and Substance," fourth production. Season 1949 50.
.. 20 SPECIAL BUILDING FUND PERFORMANCE OF ABOVE
.. 15 Theatre Party. Visit to "Hamlet" at New Theatre.
- March 16 THURSDAY. "Prose or Poetry." A talk by Wilfrid Sharp, M.A. Illustrated by readings from pairs of plays having same theme and written in prose and verse respectively.
.. 25 First night of new play "Paradise Street" by Antony Brown.
- May 3 Jack Midgeley will speak on the arena stage.
.. 13 First night of "The Gentle People" by Irwin Shaw.
- June 28 Reading of a new play by Richard Wood.
- July 8 First night of Student production.

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THE QUESTORS

PRESENT

SHADOW

AND

SUBSTANCE

BY

PAUL VINCENT CARROLL

SEASON 1949—50

FOURTH PRODUCTION

PRICE 6d.

I would like to see . . . several apprentice dramatists learning their job . . . painting the sets . . . scrubbing the floors, anything, through which they can get the smell of the theatre into their lungs and the feel of the theatre into their bones.

. . . ALFRED EMMET, B.B.C. Third Programme, December, 1949.

THE PLAYWRIGHT REPLIES.

"You asks why I'm scrubbin' this stage, sir?
I'm a playwright wot's bein' done good.
The face of Will Shakespeare himself, sir,
Beams at me from every sud.

"No, I don't think 'e started this way, sir.
But, then, times is so different now.
It seems you must start on your knees, sir,
If you 'opes to acquire the know-'ow.

"Wot name is this method called by, sir?
Stanislavsky, I s'pose you might say.
But diff'rent in this big respect, sir,
It's an 'eck of a round-about way.

"And wot do I think while I scrubs, sir?
As a playwright wot's *still* got *some* 'ope,
Of the fame that may come to me soon, sir,
From this pail and this brush and this soap.

"Oh, no, no, I never complains, sir,
'Cos the theatre must get in me blood;
Though, between me and you and that flat, sir,
I'm sweatin' back more than I should.

"Well, sometimes I 'as little doubts, sir,
As to 'ow I shall finish me days,
While they'll 'ave me to scour an scrub, sir,
But never to put on me plays."

ERIK HUTCHINSON.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR NEW MEMBER YET?

THE PLAY'S THE THING.

The 1949-1950 season has been so far very satisfactory; with membership increasing slowly since September and all audience records being broken by the "Othello" production. "Shadow and Substance" is the fourth play this season, being the last of four revivals of plays which are of a very high standard in their own class.

The Plays Committee has at last been able to recommend a new play by a new author to be considered for production by the Questors. The General Committee has decided to alter the season's programme in order to include it, and it is with great pleasure that we announce the intended production of "Paradise Street" by Antony Brown. This will be our next production opening on March 25th and it is expected that all members will support this play with enthusiasm. It is that rarity a contemporary English comedy; written pungently with acute observation of the characters, who are taken from London's dockland. The author has an excellent sense of humour and an awareness of comic situation.

It is interesting to note here that seventy-four new plays have been received by the Little Theatre Guild as entrants for its competition. The judges are Esmé Church, producer of the Bradford Civic Playhouse, L. Du Garde Peach and Alfred Emmet, Hon. Director of the Questors Theatre, and they hope to announce the result at the end of April.

Considerable criticism has been levied on the theatre, both amateur and professional in recent months because of alleged lack of enterprise and courage in presenting new plays. The amateur little theatres can probably do more than anyone to help prospective dramatists, and help the theatre in general to overcome the impasse caused by the dearth of new plays.

Further good news regarding future productions come from America where the agents have at last granted us permission to perform "The Gentle People" by Irwin Shaw. This is the first amateur production of this play in London and should be an exciting theatrical event. Many members will recall that the play was broadcast in the Home Service "Saturday Night Theatre" series last year, and booking is expected to be heavy.

This play although a contemporary American one has warmth, humanity, humour and sentiment—qualities which many critics consider are lacking in such plays as "Death of a Salesman" and "A Streetcar Named Desire." It has been our intention to produce this play for some time and it is with considerable pleasure that we learn that permission has been given to do so.

This is the last play of the season opening on May 11th except for the Student Production, details of which will be given shortly. This will be a full length, three act play and will open on July 8th.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR NEW MEMBER YET?

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE

A play in four acts

by

PAUL VINCENT CARROLL

"Oh what a power has white simplicity" . . . KEATS.

Characters :

Brigid	...	...	...	...	...	JOYCE HORNETT
Dermot Francis O'Flingsley	...	...	...	...	...	ERIC BATSON
Thomasina Concannon	...	...	...	...	...	THERESA HEFFERNAN
Father Corr	...	...	...	...	...	ROY AMBROSE
Father Kirwan	...	...	...	...	...	GREGORY COKER
Very Rev. Thomas Canon Skerritt	...	...	...	...	...	JOHN HOWARD
Jemima Cooney	...	...	...	...	...	ELIZABETH WELLMAN
Francis Ignatius O'Connor	...	...	...	...	...	BILL BEESLEY
Martin Mullahone	...	...	...	...	...	PETER BOWEN-EVANS
Rosey Violet	...	...	...	...	...	STELLA LEWIS

The play produced by	...	...	...	...	...	ERIC VOCE
Décor	...	...	...	...	...	MARION VOCE
Wardrobe	...	...	...	...	...	HILDA COLLINS

Assisted by THERESA HEFFERNAN.

Set constructed by STAGE STAFF.

Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	...	RUTH MILNER
Lighting	...	...	...	...	...	GERRY ISENTHAL
Music	...	...	...	...	...	ALBERT GIBBS and ELSA SANDER
Props.	...	...	...	...	...	MURIEL RUSSELL

The furniture used in this production has been kindly loaned by BRYANTS, 46, The Mall, Ealing.

ACT 1. Mid-day late in January.

INTERVAL (5 MINUTES).

ACT 2. Evening of the following day.

INTERVAL (15 MINUTES).

ACT 3. Morning, a few days later.

INTERVAL (5 MINUTES).

ACT 4. The following morning, February 1st.

The action of the play passes in the living-room of Canon Skerritt's parochial house in Ardmahone, one of the small towns lying round the feet of the Mourne hills in County Louth, Ireland.

NOTE.—A legend connected with St. Brigid relates how, in order to escape the attentions of her persistent suitors, she disfigured the loveliness of her face.

The Discussion on this play will be held in the theatre on Tuesday, February 21st, at 7.30 p.m. All members and friends are invited.

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

AMATEURS

Two comedians, probably prodigiously paid to be wearisome in such a manner as would make a percentage of their audience mistake tedium for wit, exchanged the following remarks:—

A. My Brother worked in a circus. He used to chew hammers.

B. Was he professional?

A. Oh no. He was an 'ammer chewer (amateur)!

The implication that "amateur" is a valid antonym to "professional" would possibly have widespread approval. But if we pause to consider the question, we soon find it is fundamentally false.

The derivation of the word "amateur" is the Latin "amo," meaning "I love," and in its truest sense it should only be used to refer to those who approach their task in the spirit of love; whose main compensation is the satisfaction they find in accomplishment. The idea that this attitude is essentially unprofessional (i.e. unpaid) has evolved from that unhealthy mercenary standpoint from which so many consider monetary reward the only form of payment worthy of attention. Whereas, really, the fact that an amateur is paid cash, in addition to the reward he finds in merely doing his job, while it may make him a professional, does not necessarily involve any change from his amateur status. To put this another way, "professional" is a concrete term defined solely by a financial transaction: "amateur" is an abstract term defying true definition outside the bounds of the person's attitude to what he is doing.

Perhaps the cruelest remark ever made about amateur actors was James Agate's dictum: "A professional is a man who can do his job when he doesn't feel like it. An amateur is a man who can't do his when he does feel like it." Although this is made far less cruel, as much by its stark in-accuracy as its manifestly jesting epigrammatic form, it is surprising how many people genuinely hold similarly unkind and fallacious views.

Possibly the kindest valuation was George Bernard Shaw's affirmation, over fifty years ago: "I have never, I hope, underrated the importance of the amateur; but I am now beginning to cling to him as the saviour of theatrical art. He alone among the younger generation seems to have any experience of acting." I do not propose to discuss how far this may be true today. But there is another Shavian quotation that is quite as apt now as when it was penned: "The one advantage that amateurs have over professionals—and it is such an overwhelming advantage when exhaustively used that the best amateur performances are more instructive than the most elaborate professional ones—is the possibility of unlimited rehearsal." Dare I suggest that this point is often overlooked, even by the Questors?

Another advantage the amateur has, especially today, is the fact that he need not look primarily to his box office receipts. He can afford to produce plays of merit, at least occasionally, without being hemmed in by the commercial yardstick of success. This is a point the Questors always keep in mind, of course.

Only vaguely relevant though it may be, I cannot resist the story, told by Alexander Woolcott, of the old broken-down tragedian sharing a park bench with a bedraggled and unappetising street-walker. "Ah madame," says the tragedian, 'Quelle Ironie'! The two oldest professions in the world—ruined by amateurs."

To return to my theme, I would ask that everybody associated with the Questors be very careful how they apply the much-abused word "amateur." Just to think what it means, and resist the contemporary inclination to use it apologetically, will help a lot towards forming a true estimate of the very real value we should attach to the Club.

PAUL BEDFORD.

MIDSUMMER DAY

JUNE 24th

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