

THE HOPEFUL TRAVELLERS

"To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive. . . ."
—(Robert Louis Stevenson)

"The Hopeful Travellers" is a translation by Lady Iris Capell of a French play by G. M. Martens and André Obey. The title, however, is her own, aptly based upon the quotation from R. L. Stevenson's essay "El Dorado." The French play is called "Les Gueux au Paradis," which could perhaps be literally translated as "Beggars in Heaven." André Obey made the French version of G. M. Martens' original Flemish piece, and it is interesting to speculate on how much of his own creative genius went into the play—one certainly seems to sense the authentic Obey touch in places.

Obey is probably best known in this country for his "Noah," which has been widely played in the English version of Arthur Wilmurt. It was one of The Questors' biggest pre-war successes when produced in 1939. His "Rape of Lucrece" (of which Thornton Wilder made the English translation) was more recently used by Benjamin Britten as the basis of his opera of the same name. These earlier plays of Obey's should not, however, be considered in isolation; their greater significance is that they were written especially for the famous Compagnie des Quinze, with which he was closely associated. The association between Obey and the Compagnie des Quinze of Jacques Copeau and Michel Saint-Denis is comparable with that between Tchekov and the Moscow Art Theatre of Stanislavsky and Nemirovitch Danchenko for its fruitfulness and long-term influence on theatre development. It is doubtful whether Obey would have written successfully for the theatre had it not been for his association with the Compagnie des Quinze; it is doubtful whether the Compagnie des Quinze would have achieved the undoubted success it did had it not been for André Obey as their group dramatist. As it was, these productions of Obey's plays did much to revolutionize the conception of a true "ensemble" of theatre, and to lead the theatre away from the naturalistic rut in which it was threatening to bury itself.

Lady Iris Capell, the translator, has been deeply interested in the theatre for many years. Before the war she ran a successful amateur drama group in Kensington, producing and occasionally writing plays herself. For some time she has been actively concerned in the administration of the Windsor Repertory Theatre, and other ventures have included the running of a Theatre Bookshop.

"Les Gueux au Paradis" was produced for the first time in France at the Studio des Champs Elysées in February, 1945. This date is significant, because the play is not a little influenced by the Nazi Occupation. Not only, in the scene in hell, is the Duke of Alba, a former invader and conqueror of Flanders, identified with a Nazi gauleiter, but one feels that the hellish torture chambers derive much from institutions nearer to the Flemish and French audiences of 1945. The forces against which Boule and Rietje are resisting in hell would be readily identified with the occupying Nazis, and one can imagine the delight with which the first audiences reacted when "Gauleiter" Alba receives from Boule a "jolly good kick in the pants."

The play has seldom been performed in England. Indeed the only production of which we have positive knowledge is one three years ago by our friends, the Tavistock Repertory Theatre. For that we are grateful, because it first brought the play to our notice.

A. E.

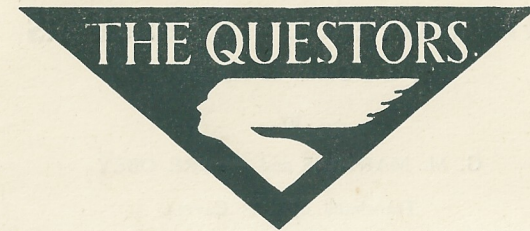
SAVE - OUR - STAGE APPEAL

At the time of going to press, negotiations for the purchase of our theatre are still proceeding. They may come quickly to a head or they may drag on. If we do not succeed in buying, our theatre may close. Our need for money is urgent and great. Our calculation is that we shall need £5,000 in addition to our past savings. The amount we have so far raised towards this is shown on the blackboard on the wall of the theatre. The gap is still large.

CAN YOU DO ANY MORE TO HELP?

The Save-Our-Stage Appeal has benefited to the extent of over £20 in three months from the sale of waste newspaper.

Please keep sending your old newspapers to the theatre.



THE QUESTORS

THEATRE

p r e s e n t s

THE HOPEFUL TRAVELLERS

MATTOCK LANE, EALING, W.5

JANUARY 5th to 16th, 1952

PROGRAMME PRICE SIXPENCE

THE HOPEFUL TRAVELLERS

(" Les Gueux au Paradis ")

by

G. M. MARTENS and ANDRE OBEY

Translated by IRIS CAPELL

Cast in order of appearance:

The Four Companions of the Road	KATE ONLEY, MARGOT SHIELDS, ERIC KIRBY, EDMUND SCRIVENER
Boule Verbuyck	- - - - - FRANK WHITE
Flavie, his wife	- - - - - ELIZABETH ODDIE
Goeleke, their daughter	- - - - - JENNIFER OSCARD
The Sacristan	- - - - - LEON HANICK
Rietje Rans	- - - - - WILFRID SHARP
Manse, his friend	- - - - - RUBY FEAST
Djakke, his son	- - - - - ANTHONY HOLLOWAY
Martin, a donkey	- - - - - NED GETHINGS
The Constable	- - - - - ROY AMBROSE
A Negro Page	- - - - - GAY RORKE
A Barman	- - - - - WILLIAM ELKIN
The Duke of Alba	- - - - - REGINALD HAMLYN
Baltie, Boule's father	- - - - - NED GETHINGS
Lucifer	- - - - - ROY AMBROSE
Demons	- - - - - JOAN BATE, JENNIFER OSCARD, GAY RORKE, ELIZABETH WELLMAN
The Crier	- - - - - EDMUND SCRIVENER
The Archangel Michael	- - - - - HARRY IVES
Saint Nicholas	- - - - - DAVID LORRAINE
Saint Nicodemus	- - - - - WILLIAM ELKIN
Saint Peter	- - - - - FRANCIS W. SMITH
Saint Mary the Virgin	- - - - - SHEILA WALLIS
Marietje	- - - - - DIANA GILBERT
Angels	- - - - - JOYCE HORNETT, KATE ONLEY, MARGOT SHIELDS
Children	- - - - - SUSAN GILLET, CAROL HEWETT, CAROLYN SMITH, JANE SHARP, JUNE SCRIVENER
A Nurse	- - - - - JOYCE BASS
Mentie, the undertaker	- - - - - HARRY IVES
Wies, the barber	- - - - - DAVID LORRAINE
A Child	- - - - - ROBIN DUKE, ANDREW MONTGOMERY or STEPHEN PARISH

The Play produced by ALFRED EMMET

Decor by BERYL ANTHONY

The Play begins and ends in Boule's Tavern in a small village of Flanders—St. Nicholas's Day

There will be an interval of five minutes after Act I and an interval of fifteen minutes after the second scene of Act II

Stage Manager: STELLA BIRKETT

Assistant Stage Managers: EILEEN FISHER, PAMELA WOOLLARD, LOLA SALEMMI

Sets built in The Questors Workshop

Costumes executed by THERESA HEFFERNAN and THE WARDROBE STAFF

Songs written and composed by ERIC KIRBY

Assistant to Producer: NOREEN ROBINSON

Sound - - - - - ERIC KIRBY

Lighting - - - - - GERRY ISENTHAL and DENIS FISHER

Props - - - - - KATHLEEN HARRINGTON and MARGARET ELLIS

Production Secretaries - DOROTHY BARNETT and NELL CRUSE

Theatre Manager - - - - - RENA RICE

House Manager - - - - - ARCHIE COWAN

Box Office (Ealing 5184) - - - - - C. H. PRATT

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

You are invited to attend a discussion of this play which will be held in the theatre on Thursday, January 17th, at 7.30 p.m.