

Middlesex County Times

13 Sept 1952

QUESTORS OPEN NEW SEASON NEXT SATURDAY

THE first production of the 1952-53 season opens at the Questors Theatre, Mattock-lane, next Saturday, at 7.30 p.m. The play will be "Right you are (if you think so)," by Luigi Pirandello, and the run will continue until September 30.

Although Luigi Pirandello, who died in 1936 at the age of sixty-nine, is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in modern Italian literature, and his prolific output has had a striking influence on the modern drama, he shares the fate of many writers in other languages insofar as his work is comparatively little known in this country. If there had been a champion for Pirandello—as there was William Archer for Ibsen—it is not unreasonable to suppose that his status would be considerably greater.

As it is, however, one imagines that most people would be capable of naming about four of his plays: "Right you are," "Six characters," "As you desire me," and probably, "Henry IV." It is not widely realised that his output rivals Shaw's; his plays fill thirty volumes, in addition to which he wrote seven full-length novels, more than three hundred and fifty short stories, and several miscellaneous works, including a translation of "The Cyclops"

of Euripedes into Sicilian dialect.

"Right you are" may well be considered the quintessence of Pirandellism—if one may employ Shavian phraseology—as it is the work in which he most clearly expresses his peculiar philosophy (which was so strongly stimulated by the circumstances of his private life) of doubt and uncertainty.

But if Pirandello insists on the overwhelming uncertainty of everything, we may be tempted to present a counter-argument based on one immediate certainty; which is that no one interested in the theatre can afford to miss seeing this absorbing comedy during its forthcoming run at the Questors Theatre.

The box office is now open, and members are urged to make early application for their free seats. Non-members desirous of joining the Club are invited to apply to the Theatre Manager at the Questors Theatre, Mattock-lane, Ealing, W.5 (Ealing 5184).

Immediate application will enable new members to be enrolled at the commencement of the new season and in time to obtain their seats for the opening production. The subscription of £1 a year entitles members to a free seat for each production (approximately seven each year).

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RIGHT YOU ARE (IF YOU THINK SO)

QUESTORS THEATRE

IT has been left to the enterprising amateurs of the Questors Theatre at Ealing to give playgoers the chance to see a Pirandello play rarely performed in this country. *Right You Are (If You Think So)*—*Cosé è, se vi pare*—was written and first produced in 1918 and is therefore one of the earliest of Pirandello's plays. It is also the first in which he presents that theme to which he returns in every subsequent play: the contrast between Appearance and Reality. It is not, I think, unfair to say that his philosophy was one of despair and in this—as Roy Walker has observed—he may be regarded as a forerunner of the existentialist playwrights of to-day. His despair arises from the inability of man to be certain about human relationships as he is certain, let us say (he says it himself) about the days of the week or the months of the year. In *Right You Are, If You Think So* he is concerned to show that in any human situation there is no objective Truth—with the capital T, but only the truth as it presents itself to each observer.

The plot—too tangled for any exact precis—involves a group of characters in a small provincial town in Italy in the 1920's who are ridden with curiosity about the exact relations existing between a man, his wife and mother-in-law who have recently come to live. Their cruel and blundering attempts to get at the TRUTH result only in an increase of their bewilderment and distress of the family concerned.

In all this Pirandello shows himself as a shrewd psychologist, a craftsman of the first order and a master of the dialectical drama.

The producer, Mr. Abraham Asseo, has been enthusiastically supported by a hard-working company. He is also to be congratulated on an amusing and imaginative use of puppets at the beginning and end of each act.

The warm reception given to this play by a crowded house suggests that the commercial theatre would not be taking too grave a risk if they presented Pirandello to a West-End audience. Why not *Henry the Fourth*?

K. B.

Questors' first night to-night

OPENING NEW SEASON

Tonight (Saturday), at 7.30 p.m. the Questors present the opening performance of the first production of their 1952-53 season. The play is Pirandello's famous piece, "Right you are (If you think so)", and it will run until Tuesday week, September 30.

Readers are reminded that the Questors is a club theatre, and only members are entitled to purchase tickets for their productions. Full club membership, however, which costs only £1 per annum, automatically provides for one free seat at each production; in addition to which members may buy seats, at 5s., 4s., and 2s. 6d., for their friends. Associate members pay the nominal sum of 5s. per year, which gives them all the facilities of membership, with the sole exception of the quota of free seats for shows.

Last year, in a commendable attempt to create a young audience, with a view to later developments, the Questors introduced a third type of membership, the junior. This is open to all persons under the age of eighteen, and offers full club membership, including free seats for each production, at half the normal subscription; that is, ten shillings.

All classes of member are notified of forthcoming events, and entitled to vote at the annual meetings of the Club, as well as attend such extra events as are arranged from time to time by the various people working in the club. These include dances, outings, talks, discussions, and a variety of other functions.

Full particulars of all club activities may be obtained from the theatre manager, the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, W.5. (telephone Eal 184).