

THE AUTHOR

R. B. Rigby—"Ray" to his friends—was born at Westcliff-on-Sea on 13th November, 1916. He celebrates this year's birthday by attending the première of his play *Better A Dead Hero . . . ?*—a novel, if not altogether unique, form of birthday party.

After suffering a minimum of education Ray left the last of several nondescript schools at the age of 14, since when he has drifted in and out of numerous jobs, including work as a salesman, in a laundry, at office cleaning, even as a butler (partnered by his wife as cook); and he is now a hospital porter. Five wartime years as a private in the R.A.S.C. included 3½ years in the Middle East, where he sets the play we see this evening.

Interests apart from playwriting are negligible: even the early crop of short stories has now dried up. Ray collects nothing; his pursuit of the other arts is limited by lack of time; but he adores cricket and boxing—two sports he follows but does not indulge. Favourite novelists are Hemingway and Steinbeck; dramatists Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Andre Obey and Anouilh: these he admires without emulating. An instinctive writer, he started to write before he had read any plays, and without technical knowledge.

Ray has written thirteen plays so far (including five "exercises"), one of which, *Public Lives*, was produced at the New Gateway Theatre last August. He is under contract to Alec Clunes for nine plays—a similar agreement, I gather, to that drawn up for Christopher Fry—and it was a stroke of ill luck indeed when Clunes sold the Arts Theatre last year.

His wife, Jean, whose close collaboration is an integral part of all Ray's work, he met in 1947 and married the following year. Jean was trained as an actress at the Old Vic Theatre School, but abandoned her stage career on the arrival of Jacqueline, five years ago. Her theatre experience is now directed exclusively to the furtherance of Ray's career as a dramatist—a career in which it is to be hoped our current production may play a part of some genuine significance.

B. H.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

The third production of our Silver Jubilee programme is to be the English première of Alexander Reid's delightfully fantastic comedy, *The World's Wonder*. This is a most appropriate choice for the Christmas and New Year season. Opening performance: Saturday, 8th January; Box Office opens 29th December.

THE NEW THEATRE FUND PERFORMANCE

If you have enjoyed the performance this evening why not come again and bring a friend with you? Provided you have already seen the show once, you can obtain two tickets for the price of one for the New Theatre Fund Night during the Silver Jubilee Season. This is one for yourself; one for your friend. This means you can enjoy the play again, give your friend the same pleasure, and help towards the building of the new theatre—all at the same time, and for the outlay of the cost of one seat only. New Theatre Fund Night for *Better A Dead Hero . . . ?* is Wednesday, November 24th.

"AFTER-THE-SHOW" PARTY

It is customary for us to have an informal party on the discussion night after each play. If you would care to come along, please see the Chief Steward before you leave to-night. He will take your name and give you details.

The discussion of "*Better A Dead Hero . . . ?*" will take place in the theatre on Thursday, November 25th, at 7.30 p.m. All members and friends welcome.



present

A SILVER JUBILEE SEASON OF NEW PLAYS

The World première of

BETTER A DEAD HERO . . . ?

by

R. B. RIGBY

AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING, W. 5
NOVEMBER 13TH TO 24TH, 1954

SECOND PRODUCTION
SILVER JUBILEE SEASON
1954-55

PROGRAMME
SIXPENCE

BETTER A DEAD HERO . . . ?

BY

R. B. RIGBY



Cast in the order of their appearance:—

Bill Shout	GERALD RAWLING
Victor	VINCENT McQUEEN
Ali	DAVID LORRAINE
Clive Metcalfe	JOHN CLEMOW
Sergeant Williams	HARRY MERCER
Joe	ROGER FLEMING
Private Henry Smith	EDWARD PITT
Pat Fleury	NED GETHINGS
A Military Policeman	PETER HOWELL
Olga Beck	BARBARA HUTCHINS
Tiger Lil	SYLVIA JARVIS
Snotty Smith	JOHN SPRINGALL
Three R.A.F. Men	MICHAEL GREEN GERALD RAWLING VINCENT McQUEEN
Sergeant Wells	MICHAEL GREEN
A Corporal, Military Police	HARRY MERCER
R.S.M. Willard	JAMES DRINKWATER
Captain Stannard	ROBERT JONES
Soldiers, etc.	ROY DEELEY, MICHAEL GREEN RALPH ALDER, PHILIP GREEN
Cabaret Girls	SHIRLEY SIMMONDS, JUDITH ROGERS MABS CLIFTON, MADGE DOLMAN ANN WATERS

The play produced by ... ALFRED EMMET

The settings designed by ... MADGE TURNBULL

The scene is laid in Cairo.

PROLOGUE: The Paradise Bar, 1947.

SCENE ONE: The same, August, 1942.

INTERVAL OF FIVE MINUTES

SCENE TWO: Olga's flat, next morning.

SCENE THREE: The same, one week later.

SCENE FOUR: The same, three weeks later.

INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES

SCENE FIVE: Military Police Headquarters.

EPILOGUE: The Paradise Bar, 1947.

During the second interval you may remain in your seats and be served with tea and biscuits, or cross to the Lounge, where coffee and light snacks may also be obtained.



We are indebted to:—

United States Army Air Force, Fortes Company Ltd., Victoria Wine Company Ltd., M. Bravo, of Churchfield Road, Acton, Ealing Technical College and 67 A.A. (M.) Sign. Sqn. T.A. for the loan of properties.

Stage Manager ... IAN JONES

Assistant Stage Manager ... ROY DEELEY
assisted by MABS CLIFTON and ROSEMARY RUTTLE

Scenery constructed by the workshop staff

under the direction of JOHN GOLDRICK
assisted by PETER TALBOT

Wardrobe Mistress ... MADELEINE RODWELL

Assistant Wardrobe Mistress ... JOYCE HORNETT

Lighting ... GERALD ISENTHAL, DENNIS FISHER

Sound ... JOHN VERNON, ANTHONY BEZANT

Properties ... YVONNE HOLMAN, OLIVE ELSBURY



Theatre Manager ... RENA RICE

House Manager ... ARCHIE COWAN

Press Representative ... BASIL HULL

BOX OFFICE (6.30—7.30 p.m.) ... EALING 5184

MEMBERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REMINDED THAT SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE THEATRE WHILE THE PLAY IS IN PROGRESS.