

A NOTE ON THE PLAY

The Family Reunion was chronologically the second of the four major plays with which T. S. Eliot has made a dramatic experiment of the first importance. It was published and first performed—at the Westminster Theatre—in 1939, and, although it has never achieved the great commercial success of *Murder in the Cathedral* or *The Cocktail Party*, it displays, perhaps in fuller measure than any of Eliot's plays, his distinctive contributions to the modern drama. Chief of these is his development of dramatic verse based on everyday conversational phrases: transitions from verse of this kind to passages of altogether greater poetic intensity are used to indicate changes in the level of spiritual experience of the characters.

The story of the play closely parallels the myth of Orestes pursued by the Furies—which is the theme of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus—and Eliot even uses the Eumenides as symbols of “powers beyond us” springing from past evil, which first appear as avengers but, when their significance is understood, are transformed into guiding and protecting spirits. The play has also certain formal resemblances to Greek tragedy; notably in the use of a Chorus who comment upon the action and also take part in it. The feeling of the play, however, is far removed from that of Greek drama, and the underlying ideas of “sin and expiation” are essentially Christian—although no explicit reference to Christianity is made. In fact, as Helen Gardner has pointed out, “paradoxically, Mr. Eliot's Christian play *Murder in the Cathedral* is far more Greek in its spirit and form than this play . . . which at first sight demands comparison with the *Oresteia*.” Apart from the appearances of the Eumenides the interactions between the principal characters are interpretable in terms of modern psychological ideas, and the external events are presented naturalistically. Happenings in the conscious and sub-conscious minds of some of the characters are also revealed, however, and the drama thus proceeds on more than one level.

The author's objective is perhaps best indicated in his own words, in his lecture on *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*: “The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social usefulness for poetry, is the theatre . . . For the simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for the auditors of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which reveals itself gradually . . . The sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness.”

C. E. W.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

The next production will be a revival of Donagh MacDonagh's delightful Irish comedy, *Happy as Larry*, the play which charmed all who saw it when first produced at the Mercury Theatre in 1947, and at the Criterion in 1948. This will be preceded by a delicious new One-Act play, *The Secondary Wife*, by Dorothy Fisk. First night, May 1st, Box Office opens April 21st.

“BRING AND BUY” SALE

Mrs. Ted Robinson and Mabel Copperwheat are arranging another “Bring and Buy” Sale, in aid of the Building Fund, in the Lounge at 3.00 p.m., on Saturday, 20th March. Tea will be served during the afternoon, and it is hoped this sale will be even bigger and better than the last. All members and friends are invited.

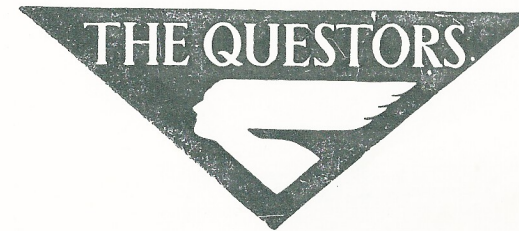
REFRESHMENTS BAR AND INTERVALS

Teas, coffees, and snacks are available on performance nights, between 6.45 p.m. and curtain rise, in the Club Rooms. In the interval you may remain in your seats and be served with tea and biscuits, or cross to the Lounge, where coffees and sandwiches may also be obtained.

“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 “*The Family Reunion*” will take place in the theatre on Thursday, March 18th. All members and friends welcome.



present

THE FAMILY REUNION

BY

T. S. ELIOT

AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING, W.5
MARCH 6TH TO 17TH 1954

FOURTH PRODUCTION
TWENTY-FIFTH SEASON
1953-54

PROGRAMME
SIXPENCE

THE FAMILY REUNION

by

T. S. ELIOT

Cast:

Amy, Dowager Lady Monchensey	EVE AIKMAN
Agatha	} <i>her younger sisters</i>	{ BARBARA HUTCHINS RUBY FEAST SHEILA WALLIS
Ivy		
Violet		
The Hon. Charles Piper	} <i>brothers of her deceased husband</i>	{ JOHN HOWARD NORMAN RUEL
Col. the Hon. Gerald Piper		
Mary, daughter of her deceased cousin	GILLIAN ANDREWS
Denman, a parlourmaid	YVONNE SEYRES
Harry, Lord Monchensey, Amy's eldest son	JOHN CLEMOV
Downing, his servant and chauffeur	JAMES DRINKWATER
Dr. Warburton	FRANK WHITE
Sergeant Winchell	EDMUND SCRIVENER

and The Eumenides

The play produced by CLIFFORD WEBB

The set designed by DENNIS FARR

The scene is laid at Wishwood, a country house in the North of England, on a day in late March.

ACT ONE: After tea.

ACT TWO: After dinner.

There will be an interval of Fifteen Minutes between the Acts

Your attention is specially drawn to the new arrangements for refreshments during the interval, which are given on the back page of the programme.



Furniture kindly loaned by A. J. Collis, furnishers, of 37, Kirchen Road, West Ealing.

Birthday Cake and Stand kindly loaned by Mills Cafe, Uxbridge Road, West Ealing.

Stage Manager STELLA BIRKETT

Assistant Stage Managers PAT DIGBY, ROSEMARY RUTTLE

Set constructed in The Questors workshops
under the direction of IAN JONES

Costumes made in The Questors wardrobe
under the direction of JOYCE HORNETT

Lighting GERALD ISENTHAL, DENNIS FISHER

Sound JOHN VERNON

Properties BETTY WALKER, THELMA DEERING

Production Secretary DOROTHY BARNETT



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.