

Gilgamesh

This is the oldest story in the world; the Sumerians wrote it down before the time of Abraham, and in Homer's day it was already as old as his *Odyssey* is now.

In our time the Epic was recovered from the ruins of the library of King Assurbanipal or Sardanapalus at Ninevah, in the shape of fragments of clay tablets. There were evidently several sets of the Epic in that library; the complete version covered twelve tablets, about three thousand lines in all, and from the Ninevah fragments and other material, in various languages from Sumerian to late Babylonian, well over half the text is available.

Of the twelve tablets, the last is clearly a separate tale tacked on to the main sequence, and I have therefore not used it in the play. Otherwise, I have followed the story closely; all the main episodes and all the named characters are from the original. I feel that in presenting a story which was popular for twenty centuries or more one should follow the text as far as possible, in the hope that whatever gave it life will once more be evident.

The historical Gilgamesh was in fact king of Uruk, a town on the Euphrates not far from Ur of the Chaldees and Babylon (both of later date). Then, as now, the district was a flat and featureless mud plain, with no natural resources but clay, water and their products—no minerals nor metals, no stone, no good timber. Civilised life therefore involved a considerable trade with other areas.

As to religion, Babylonian worship revolved round the ceremonial pouring of water—in the rainless plain of Shinar water was, and is, of supreme importance. The gods of the time seem to have been regarded as decidedly limited in actions and powers. One account tells of a great god not only getting very drunk but suffering from a hangover next morning. There is nothing out of keeping in representing Shamash and Ishtar as loggerheads, or as surprised by the turn of events.

Like all legends, the Epic is, of course, symbolic, but I think that the question of the different levels of significance can be left to the discussion after the production. I have, I believe, a fairly clear idea of what I have tried to convey, but first and foremost the play is meant as a play. If it doesn't go as that, it hasn't any other meaning.

MICHAEL KELLY.

SUNDAY CLUB NIGHT

On Sunday, October 7th, in the Lounge at 7.30 p.m. Miss JANET DUNBAR will talk about "The Theatre in Turkey—Amateur and Professional," based on her impressions during a recent visit. Miss Dunbar has already given two broadcast talks on this subject and is writing articles on it for the National Press. While in Turkey she spread the news of our New Theatre project, which aroused lively interest.

"THE MASTER BUILDER"

By HENRIK IBSEN

Opens on Saturday, October 20th, and will run for the usual ten performances

THE LAST NIGHT AND THE DISCUSSION

If you have enjoyed the play this evening, why not come again on the last night, and bring a friend? Members may obtain two tickets for the price of one for the last performance, which is given in aid of the New Theatre Building Fund. The date: Wednesday, September 26th.

The discussion of *Gilgamesh* will take place in the theatre on Thursday, September 27th, at 7.30 p.m. All members and friends welcome.

King & Hutchings, Ltd., 57, The Mall, Ealing, W.5

THE QUESTORS



present

the World Première of

Gilgamesh

BY

MICHAEL KELLY

AT THE QUESTORS THEATRE
MATTOCK LANE, EALING, W.5

SEPTEMBER 15TH TO 26TH, 1956

FIRST PRODUCTION
TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON
1956-57

PROGRAMME
SIXPENCE

Gilgamesh

BY
MICHAEL KELLY



Characters in order of their appearance:

Shamash, <i>the Sun God</i>	WILFRID SHARP
Ishtar, <i>the Babylonian Aphrodite</i>	BETTY WHITE
Ninsun, <i>mother of Gilgamesh</i>	GILLIAN ANDREWS
Old Man, <i>representing the city council</i>	REGINALD HAMLYN
Saidu, <i>a hunter</i>	PAUL IMBUSCH
Gilgamesh, <i>King of Uruk</i>	JOHN HOWARD
Servant	KEN BAIN
Ukhut, <i>a temple dancer</i>	RUTH TREMAYNE-SMITH
Enkidu, <i>the original wild man</i>	NED GETHINGS
Shepherd	ERIC KIRBY
Scorpion Man	DOUGLAS THOMAS
Scorpion Wife	THERESA HEFFERNAN
Siduri, <i>cup-bearer of the Gods</i>	JO ARUNDEL
Ursunabi, <i>pilot of the Ark</i>	EDMUND SCRIVENER
Ut-Napishtim, <i>Commander of the Ark</i>	MAURICE HILL
Ut-Napishtim's wife	VALERIE HOWSE
Another Old Man	ROGER FLEMING
Townsfolk and Small Boys	STEVE KIRBY, MARK KIRBY, RICHARD CANN, ROBERT WALKER
Voice of Ea	NEVILLE BRADBURY

The play directed by	COLETTE KING
The setting designed by	NORMAN BRANSON
Costumes designed by	JOANNA TUCKER
Lighting devised by	MARTIN CARR
Music composed by	WILLIAM SKINNER

The action takes place in and around Sumeria about five thousand years ago.

ACT ONE

The play opens in the temple of Shamash in the City of Uruk.

ACT TWO

The play continues at The Gate of the Underworld.

There will be one interval of fifteen minutes, between the two Acts, during which you may remain in your seats and be served with tea and biscuits, at the fixed price of 6d., or cross to the Lounge where coffee and light refreshments may also be obtained.



Stage Manager DAVID WEDMORE
Assisted by COLIN JAMES, BILL BARTLETT
MESDAMES FERRIDAY and FUSSELL

Setting constructed in The Questors' Workshop under the direction of KEN BAIN and painted by MARJORIE GOLSBY.

Costumes made in The Questors' Wardrobe under the direction of
THERESA HEFFERNAN
Assisted by HILDA COLLINS, LENA CANN and SALLY GREENFIELD
Properties JOSE ROBERTS
Sound NORMAN GRANGER
Technical Sound Adviser DOUGLAS WEARE
Mobile pieces controlled by ... SYLVIA LANGDON-DOWN, NEVILLE
BRADBURY, MOLLY DALE, MARJORIE
McGARRICK, DOROTHY BOYD-TAYLOR,
MICHAEL GREEN



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.