

## IBSEN IN CLOSE-UP

FOR his production of Ibsen's "The Master Builder" (Questors Theatre, Ealing, till next Wednesday, October 31) director Alfred Emmet has dispensed with the picture-frame stage.

He brings his actors right up to the audience by use of an extended platform so that everyone present has a feeling of intimacy with the characters.

When the actors are so close to the audience all manner of defects are liable to become noticeable. It is, therefore to the credit of Mr Emmet and his cast that so few become apparent.

Symbolism aside, the actors, particularly the women, Diana Benn (Aline Solness) and Ffrangcon Price (Hilda Wangel) are convincing. Miss Price terribly so, especially when, at the end, Solness falls to death from the tower of his newly built house.

As Halvard Solness, Gerald Rawling did very well. But why did he have to pace about so much and fumble with the chairs?



☆  
DIANA  
BENN  
—in Ibsen  
at Ealing  
next week







# Amateur . . . . . . Theatre

## IMPRESSIVE PRODUCTION OF "THE MASTER BUILDER" ON AN APRON STAGE

THE symbolism of "The Master Builder" has a peculiar significance for the Questors and it is appropriate that they have chosen Ibsen's superb drama for their second production of the season.

Alfred Emmet's direction emphasises the vividness of the characterisation. Also, I have never known the stage protrude so far into the auditorium. The first five rows of seats have been taken up and placed on either side of the "apron."

This allows for a freedom of set design which otherwise would have been impracticable. And Billee Lawrence has taken advantage of the facilities afforded her to create a most imaginative design which in the intervals, in full view of the audience, changes from Solness's office to his drawing room and, most delightful of all, his garden with miniature fences and pot plants.

FROM the acting point of view, the outstanding success is the Hilda Wangel of Frangcon Price. Gifted with beautifully mobile features this young actress epitomises the spirit of youth and the determination to let nothing stand in the way of the realisation of her dreams. It is a memorable study.

Gerald Rawling's work is familiar enough to members of the Questors. As Halvard Solness, the master builder suffering from a sick conscience, afraid of youth knocking at the door, he has some enthralling duologues with Miss Price.

Diana Benn makes a tragic figure of the wife, Aline, and Edward Pitt is just right as the young designer denied a chance to make good on his own account. But Maureen Price seems miscast as the book-keeper. She does not look young enough.

Following the final performance to-night, the garland which Solness is supposed to hang at the top of his new house is to be hung at the topmost point of the meeting room, the first of the new theatre buildings to be erected. Dame Sybil Thorndike has promised to attend the ceremony.



COUNTY TIMES AND GAZETTE, SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1957

## *'I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER....'*



To mark the year's progress in the building of the Questors new theatre Dame Sybil Thorndike gave her blessing to the work and saw a Questors' production of "The Master Builder."



27 OCT 56

## A NORWEGIAN CUSTOM COMES TO EALING

### Garland to be hung on Questors roof

An important factor in the plot of Ibsen's "The Master Builder" is the old Norwegian custom of hanging a garland on the topmost point of a new building when the roof is completed and the shell of the building is finished.

Indeed, it is in hanging the garland on the tower of his new house that Halvard Solness, the master builder with no head for heights, falls to his death to bring this strange and haunting play to a close.

The Questors are bringing this Norwegian custom to Ealing. At the conclusion of the final performance of their current run of Ibsen's play, on Wednesday, October 31, the garland used in the play is to be ceremonially hung at the top of the first building to be roofed in their new theatre scheme.

This will be a considerable landmark in the progress of the scheme to provide Ealing with what was described recently in an evening newspaper as "the latest thing in theatre design."

#### And now the roof

For many months members of The Questors have been at work in their spare time, building with their own hands the first instalment of their new theatre. Gradually the walls have risen as thousands of bricks have been laid by amateur bricklayers of both sexes; the roof girders have been hoisted into place, "trued" and cemented in; the windows have been fitted, and now the roof is going on.

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27 OCT 56

## ROUNDABOUT NOTES

### A QUESTORS' GARLAND DAY

Nearly everybody comes to Ealing sooner or later. Next Wednesday Dame Sybil Thorndike is coming. She will be at the Questors' Theatre at 7.30 p.m. to take part in proceedings to celebrate the completion—roof and hall—of the first section of the new theatre buildings. As the roof will be on, it will be formally hung with a celebration garland.

The completed section comprises a meeting room for Questors and their friends, where no doubt many animated discussions upon the theatre will take place hereafter and many parts will be read. As was arranged when the new theatre project was decided upon, work will be completed section by section and each be brought into use as it becomes available. The completion of the first section is an earnest that the whole scheme is going through.

A last-minute spurt will ensure that the roof on what will eventually be the Meeting Room will be finished by Wednesday. The roof of the remaining rooms in the same block (kitchen and cloakrooms) will follow in a week or so.

This block of buildings when finished is to be linked up with the existing theatre to provide foyer space and facilities not at present available, and will add much to the amenities of Ealing's theatre.

Meanwhile, work has already started on clearing the site for the next stage in the work—a large rehearsal room, essential for the running of any theatre.



MDX COUNTY TIMES

10 Nov '56

## DAME SYBIL'S BLESSING



Dame Sybil Thorndike gave her blessing to the garland hanging ceremony, on the Questors new building, when she visited their theatre to see "The Master Builder." After the performance she congratulated the cast.



3 NOV 56

## DAME SYBIL IN EALING

### Gives Questors her blessing

Dame Sybil Thorndike graced Ealing's "little theatre" in Mattock-lane on Wednesday night. She gave her blessing to the garland-hanging ceremony on the topmost point of the Questors' new building.

Present were the actors, actresses and audience members who only minutes before had seen the curtain rung down on the final performance of Ibsen's "The Master Builder."

The novel ceremony has its origin in Norway. It indicates that the roof and shell of a new building has been completed. For the Questors Theatre it signalled a milestone in the communal task of erecting a new home.

#### Glare of floodlights

Architect Mr. Norman Branson had the honour of placing the beribboned garland on the scaffolding. He scaled the 20 foot ladder in the glare of floodlights and to the cheers of 150 onlookers.

Dame Sybil expressed great pleasure at being present and congratulated the cast on a "lovely performance." She said she was "more than excited" at the prospects of the Questors' new theatre.

The function of theatres of this kind was to experiment, she said. Let producers and actors keep that in mind.

Dame Sybil told the Questors' company that they should be extremely proud. They had a lovely theatre in the making, a talented company, and a fine future.

She was introduced by Mr. Alfred Emmet, who described her as the "best loved and dearest respected" actress in the theatre world. "We are proud and privileged to have her present," he said.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

31 OCT 56

## LONDON DAY BY DAY

### Not For Climbing

DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE takes part in an unusual ceremony this evening at the little Questors Theatre at Ealing.

This will follow the last performance of their production of Ibsen's "The Master Builder."

In the play, according to Norwegian custom, Master Builder Solness fastens a garland to the vane of his new house.

To-night this garland will be hung over the newly completed roof of the first of the buildings comprising this enterprising company's ambitious project for a new, adaptable theatre.

Solness, of course, falls to his death from the scaffolding. In the floodlit ceremony at Ealing, I am assured, it will be no part of Dame Sybil's duties to climb the ladders.

That will be the function of the architect, Mr. Norman Branson.

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STAR

31 Oct 56.

# STAR MAN'S DIARY

## *Repeat Performance*

**N**EW role for Dame Sybil Thorndike tonight.

She is going to the Questors Little Theatre, Ealing, to see a performance of Ibsen's "The Master Builder." In the play a Norwegian builder climbs to the top of a newly-completed building and hangs a garland there.

After the show the garland used in the play will be hung on top of the Questors' newly-built hall, to mark one stage in the building of their new theatre. Dame Sybil will act as "Master Builder" and preside at the ceremony.

But she will not climb the ladder and hang up the garland. Mr Norman Branson, the architect, will do that.