

in 18 months.

ANOTHER FIRST BY QUESTORS

Once again the Questors Theatre, Ealing, who have a reputation for the production of new plays, will make theatrical history with their production of the European premiere of "The Cave Dwellers," by the well-known American writer and playwright, William Saroyan.

The play, the first of the new season, opens on Saturday, September 19, for a run of 10 performances. It recently finished a six-month run on Broadway where it was highly acclaimed by the American critics. The Questors' production will not only be the first production of the play in Britain, but also the first outside America.

"The Cave Dwellers" deals with a group of down-and-outs living in a derelict theatre—an old actor, an old actress and an ex-boxer, who are joined by a homeless girl and other visitors.

The play tells of their conflicts and how they resolve them, and stresses Saroyan's favourite theme that people should learn to live together in love.

"The Cave Dwellers" will be produced by a new Questors' producer, Mr. Michael Sisk, who is an American professional producer in Europe on a year's course of drama study. He was recommended to the Questors while in Paris earlier this year, and has been living in West London for the past two months while working on the production.

The Questors is a membership theatre with members all over the country, but principally in West London. New members are welcome and should inquire at the theatre.

FIRST ENGLISH PRODUCTION OF SAROYAN PLAY

THE first English production—in-
deed, the first outside America
—of William Saroyan's "The Cave
Dwellers" was given at the
Questors, Ealing, last Saturday,
where it will continue to run for
ten days.

This is a thrilling play in the
best sense of the word. It is even
a "thriller" in the sense that all
really important plays are, for it
deals with the mysteries of human
behaviour within contemporary en-

"THE CAVE DWELLERS"

Play by William Saroyan. Presented
for the first time in England at the
Questors, Ealing, on September 19.
Scenery by Norman Branson and
costumes by Joan Pyle. Directed by
Michael Sisk.

vironment, yet keeping the
modernity of the setting super-
imposed on the timelessness of the
emotional and philosophic frame-
work.

The chief characters are an aged
actor and actress, who auto-
matically become King and Queen
—or father and mother—who have
taken up lodging in a derelict
theatre in the middle of a slum
clearance area. There, discarded
by the world, they keep up their
pretences along with the practical
business of keeping alive, and al-
though by now professional beggars
and buskers by day, maintain a
dignity and a theatricality by night.
They are determined that theirs
shall be a theatrical community,
however small; yet they are pre-
pared to compromise when a down-
and-out ex-prize-fighter joins them,
as his business is deemed to be
"show-business" as well.

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He brings to them a young
woman, also one of the world's
victims, pretending that she, too, is
an actress, and they are eventually
joined by another busking family,
including Gorki, a tame bear, who
produce a baby on the stage door
step.

But no mere description can en-
compass the glories of this play
which, as those acquainted with the
author's work will expect, comes
as much from the balanced beauty
of the dialogue as from the ex-
pression of human dignity with
which it is concerned.

Michael Sisk's production is
admirably conceived and makes
fine use of the theatre's limitations
and advantages, and the décor by
Norman Branson and costumes by
Joan Pyle add much to the total
effect.

Ned Gethings is intensely moving
as the sad, pugilistic "Duke" and
Gay Rorke does well as the girl he
befriends and loves. Dorinne
Ingram as the Queen and Frank
Smith as the King are outstanding
and there are notable supporting
performances from Michael
Kennedy, Michael Elton, Peter
Hutchins and Tony King.

L.G.S.

DELEGATES VISIT THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Delegates from all over the country, as well as from France and America, attending the British Drama League's annual conference, began their programme with a visit to the Questors' Theatre, Mattock-lane, Ealing, on Thursday last week.

They saw the final performance of "The Cave Dwellers," by American author William Saroyan, which was being performed for the first time in this country, and gave the play an enthusiastic reception.

Before the show Mr. Alfred Emmett, hon. director of the Questors, welcomed the visitors and read a telegram of welcome from the president of the theatre, Sir Michael Redgrave.

RECEPTION

After the performance, members of the cast and other members of the Questors joined the delegates at reception in the Bernard Shaw room.

Mr. Robin Whitworth, vice-chairman of the British Drama League, and son of its founder, the late Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, thanked the Questors on behalf of the guests.

The delegates were taken on a conducted tour of the new buildings and shown models of the new theatre. They showed great interest in the foundation stone of the new rehearsal theatre, which was laid by members of the Moscow Art Theatre during their visit to this country.

Questors' staging for contemporary cavemen

GAY RORKE ACTS WITH NED GETHINGS IN PREMIERE

EARLY man, sheltering from the ice age, lived in the caves, which he adorned with the first works of art. Modish playwrights in the nuclear age seek their effects by grouping characters in some venue that can pass for a cave—or should one say a bomb shelter!—where they talk about life and love and tell a tale shadowing things beyond the cave mouth.

Recent recruit to the game is William Saroyan, a play by whom entitled "The Cave Dwellers" was given its English premiere—it has had a run in America—by the Questors last Saturday. His cave is the stage of an abandoned theatre so that he is able to double his shadow motive with the play within the play.

The opportunities are exploited with a good bit of skill, though there is nothing like the depth of "The Iceman Cometh"—the masterpiece to date in this genera. A happy ending is also permitted; and there is a good deal of fun and fooling on the way as well as a number of literary echoes, both introduced in a manner that periodically recalls Joyce.

Michael Sisk has risen to the not inconsiderable demands made upon the producer. He has sensed what one may call the Cubist element in the author's thought and has arranged his groupings so that, like a Cubist picture, they evoke the dimension of time. He also makes the most of some Pirandellish entrances and exits stage-front. A first night patron remarked "I haven't quite made up my mind whether it's a good play, but it's an admirable production."

Acting honours go to Gay Rorke, who has come back to the Questors after an interregnum to give a lovely performance. Ned Gethings has powerfully grasped the male lead; and Dorinne Ingram, Frank Smith and Shaun Curry keep all ends up in the other parts that matter much.

The production is well worth seeing and contains lessons for the Questors' students.

W.H.

Four in coach sprayed by boiling water

Three women passengers and the driver of a coach were sprayed with water from the vehicle's overheated radiator in Newtree Bottom-road, Banstead, Surrey, on Friday. They were taken to hospital with scalds.

The driver of the coach was Mr. Ronald Fleet, 39, of Joan's-way, Hedgerley, Slough. The passengers were Mrs. Evelyn O'Keefe, 51, of Barley-crescent, Cowley; Mrs. Dorothy Hancock, 41, of Money-lane, West Drayton; and Mrs. Lily Burridge, 67, of Warwick-road, Ealing.

All were discharged after treatment.

Independent Ramblers

Members of the Independent Rambling Club started from Beaconsfield in bright sunshine. The walk continued through wooded countryside to Hedgerley. After dinner they walked through Egypt, Burnham Beeches, and Littleworth Common, back to Beaconsfield.

This week's ramble starts from Denham Station at 10.45 a.m. Intending members should write to Richard Messent, 51, Eaton-rise, Ealing, W.5.

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