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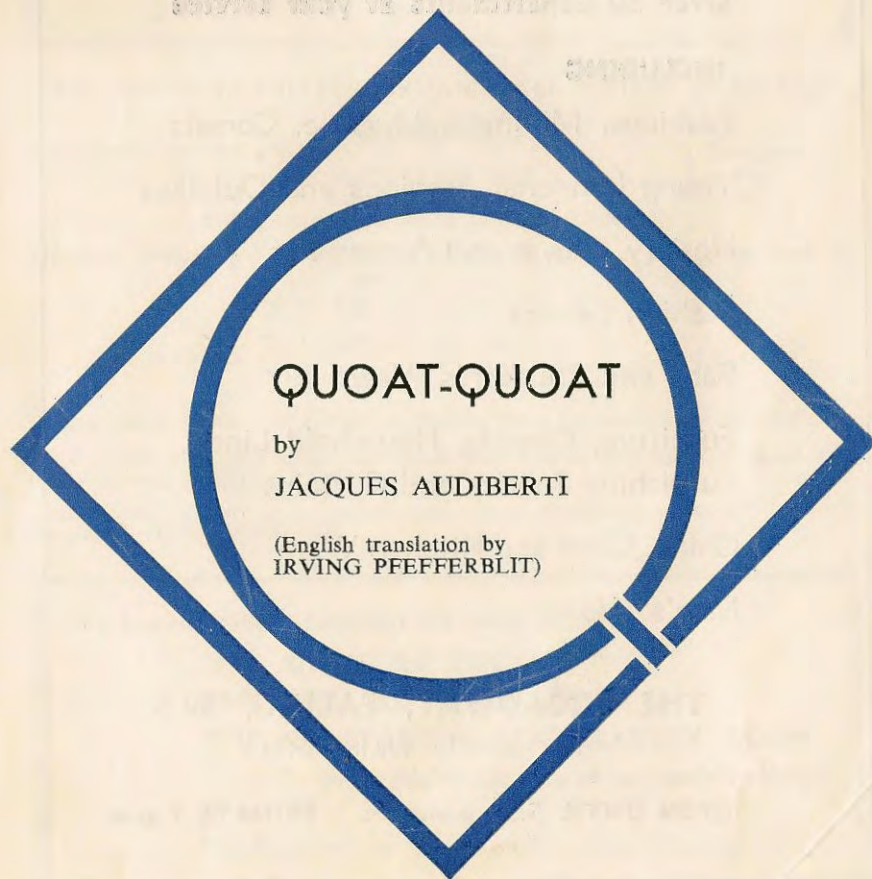
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Jan 65

The Questors Theatre



QUOAT-QUOAT

by

JACQUES AUDIBERTI

(English translation by
IRVING PFEFFERBLIT)

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THE QUESTORS NEXT PRODUCTION

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GREAT CATHERINE by Bernard Shaw

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January 23rd - 30th, 1965

THE QUESTORS present
The British Premiere of

QUOAT-QUOAT

by JACQUES AUDIBERTI

English translation by IRVING PFEFFERBLIT

Characters (in order of appearance)

Amédée MICHAEL LANGRIDGE
The Captain BILL PHILLIPS
Clarisse GILLIAN KERSWELL
The Gendarme JOHN TULLY
The Mexican Woman RACHELLE ELLIS
Madame Batrilant MARY HODLIN

The play produced by GEORGE MULLY
Designed by DACRE PUNT
Lighting by George Mully

A cabin on a Second Empire passenger ship

ACT I—Evening

Interval of 15 minutes

ACT II—Several hours later

A Discussion is held after each production by The Questors, which all members of the audience are cordially invited to attend. The Discussion on "Quoat-Quoat" will be held in The Bernard Shaw Room on

Monday, 1st February, at 7.30 p.m.

This is an excellent opportunity for audience, actors and technicians to discuss the merits and demerits of play and production.

THE ART EXHIBITION

in THE BERNARD SHAW ROOM
during the run of "Quoat-Quoat"
includes works by

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Members of the audience are requested to refrain from smoking in the auditorium.

For "Quoat-Quoat"

Stage Manager JAY HILLAN
Deputy Stage Manager ESTELLE HAMPTON
Assistant Stage Managers LAURENCE PHILLIPS, MALCOLM HIGNETT,
HELEN SOROKOU, VERONICA BREND,
Lighting BOB ANDERSON, JO PHELPS
MALCOLM FERGUSON, KEITH LANGDALE BROWN,
J. D. MALONEY
Sound FRED BENNETT, FRANK HILLIER, DAVID ROWE
Construction FRED CANN, VIVIEN WEEKS
Properties IRIS PHELPS, MALCOLM HIGNETT
Production Secretary JUDY BOGOD
Stage Director TONY SHIPLEY

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presents on

Sunday, 31st January, at 7.30 p.m.

LA GRANDE ILLUSION

and on

Sunday, 21st February, at 7.30 p.m.

THE WAGES OF FEAR

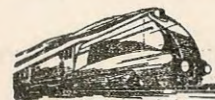
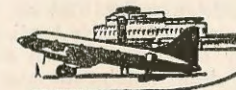
Hon. Secretary—GEO 4615

Sandwiches and coffee are obtainable in The Bernard Shaw Room before performances, and refreshments will be served there during the interval.

The Grapevine Club is open each evening to its members from 7.00 to 10.30 p.m. (11.00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays)

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PRODUCER'S NOTE

When Amédée, the young archeologist (or poet, or man), embarks for Mexico on the mixed steamer Myrmidon (driven by the cold wind as well as by hot fire), he goes, not as an innocent voyager, but as a man with a mission. His explicit mission, he is alarmed to learn, is known to all—but, his investigation of transcendent power, of pagan truths, his questioning of authority and its maddening, throttling lucidity—his real quest—will goad him into a tortured probe of himself. He knows all there is to know about Quaat-Quaat, the god, and pre-Columbian America, but like any young symbolist poet, he is determined to know all he can about the forces beyond man.

But QUOAT-QUOAT is, withal, a farce. A poetic, cosmic, farce and Napoleon III, Amédée's monarch, would recognise some of the Offenbachian jibes at the sovereign—whichever sovereign you have in mind. And Audiberti takes many Olympian figures to task in this play, Quaat-Quaat himself, for one. Remarkably similar to the Quetzlcoatl of myth and legend, he may or may not exist (like any god), but he is a force to be reckoned with. Like Quetzlcoatl, he had disappeared long before the Spaniards, in the name of Christianity, brought torture and slavery to the Aztec. Some of the conquerors brought honest redemption, some were opportunist adventurers, but whatever their motives, the minute band of invaders were incredibly successful against the mighty Aztec kingdom. And this was to some extent the fault of Quetzlcoatl. He had promised to return—even the date was known, given by him before he disappeared. Cortez answered to the description of the culture-hero. Was he not Quetzlcoatl, the god of goodness and light, discoverer of the sciences and the arts? Was this pale complexioned, god-like, thundering man not him?

This play, this incongruous parody, this lighthearted grotesquerie or meta-physical cascade or symbolic vaudeville, call it what you will, has the "indefiniteness" that Poe called the true music of poetry or, as Amédée would have it, the "music of life." What is imaginary, what is real? We are confused. Many have gone to Mexico to seek the truth about the pagan myths. The early conquerors triumphed. Maximilian on the uneasy throne provided by the European powers, was destroyed. Quaat-Quaat has his ups and downs. One of the great influences on today's French theatre, Antonin Artaud, fascinated by the Aztec legends, had himself made the trip in his later years. The theatre of cruelty and QUOAT-QUOAT ask many of the same questions. Audiberti's responses, though, are more optimistic and certainly more torrential than others of France's avant-garde.

It has been said that an Aztec sacrificial victim would refuse any clemency on the grounds that it would be contrary to his destiny. Whose confusion is greatest, his or ours?

Jacques Audiberti is relatively unknown to English audiences. Journalist, poet, essayist, author of more than twenty plays and almost twenty novels, Audiberti has provoked, shocked, scandalized, horrified, delighted and dismayed French playgoers from the left bank to the boulevards and in the august precincts of the Comédie Française. Winner of many prizes for poetry, novels and plays (from the Prix Mallarmé (1935) to the Prix National des Lettres this year), he has become one of France's leading playwrights. In 1962, he was represented simultaneously on three Parisian stages. No doubt, the difficulty of translating his fanciful, droll, ambiguous and rich language, has stood between his plays and English productions.

The translator of QUOAT-QUOAT is Irving Pfefferblit. As QUOAT-QUOAT was the first of Audiberti's plays to be produced in France (1946), so is it the first on an English stage. Mr. Pfefferblit is an American writer and translator living in New York.

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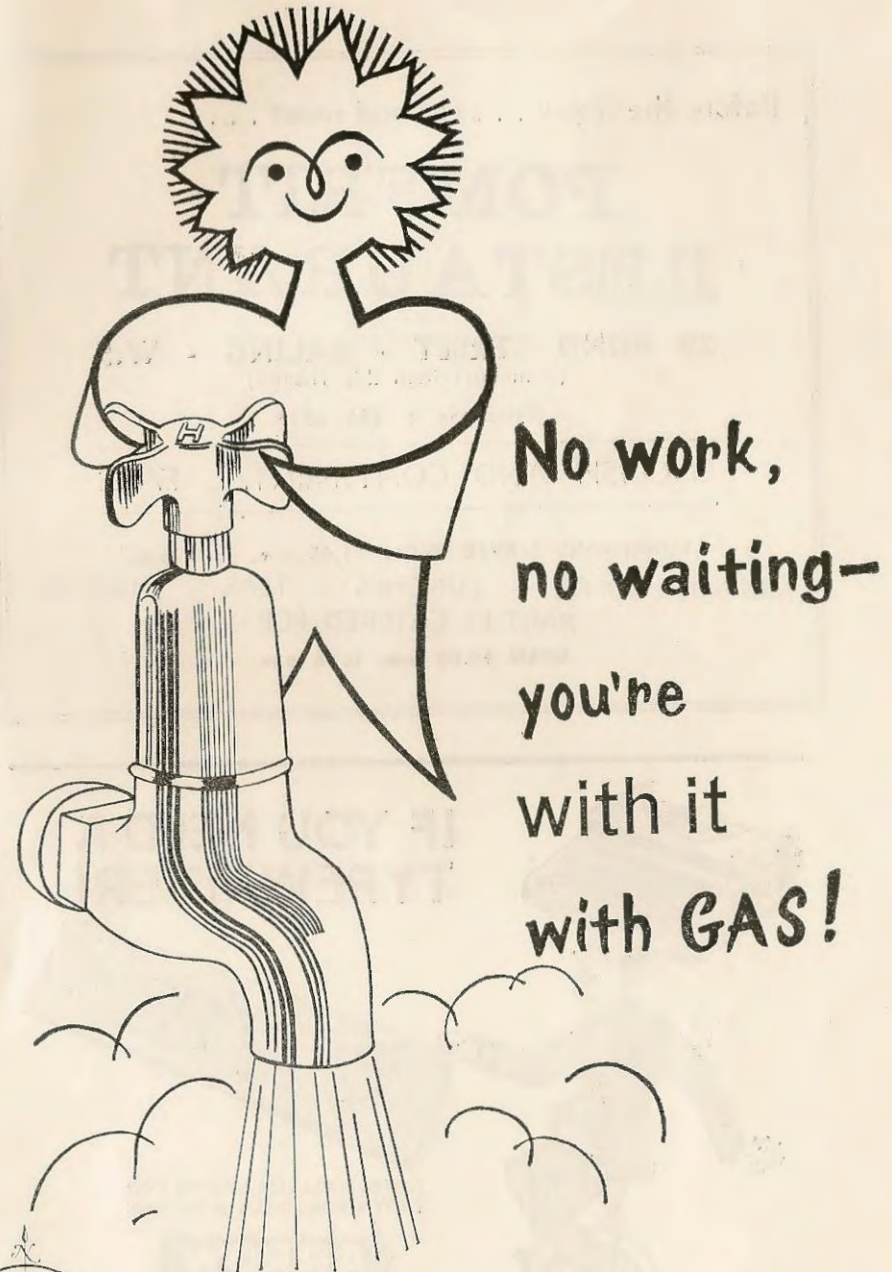
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