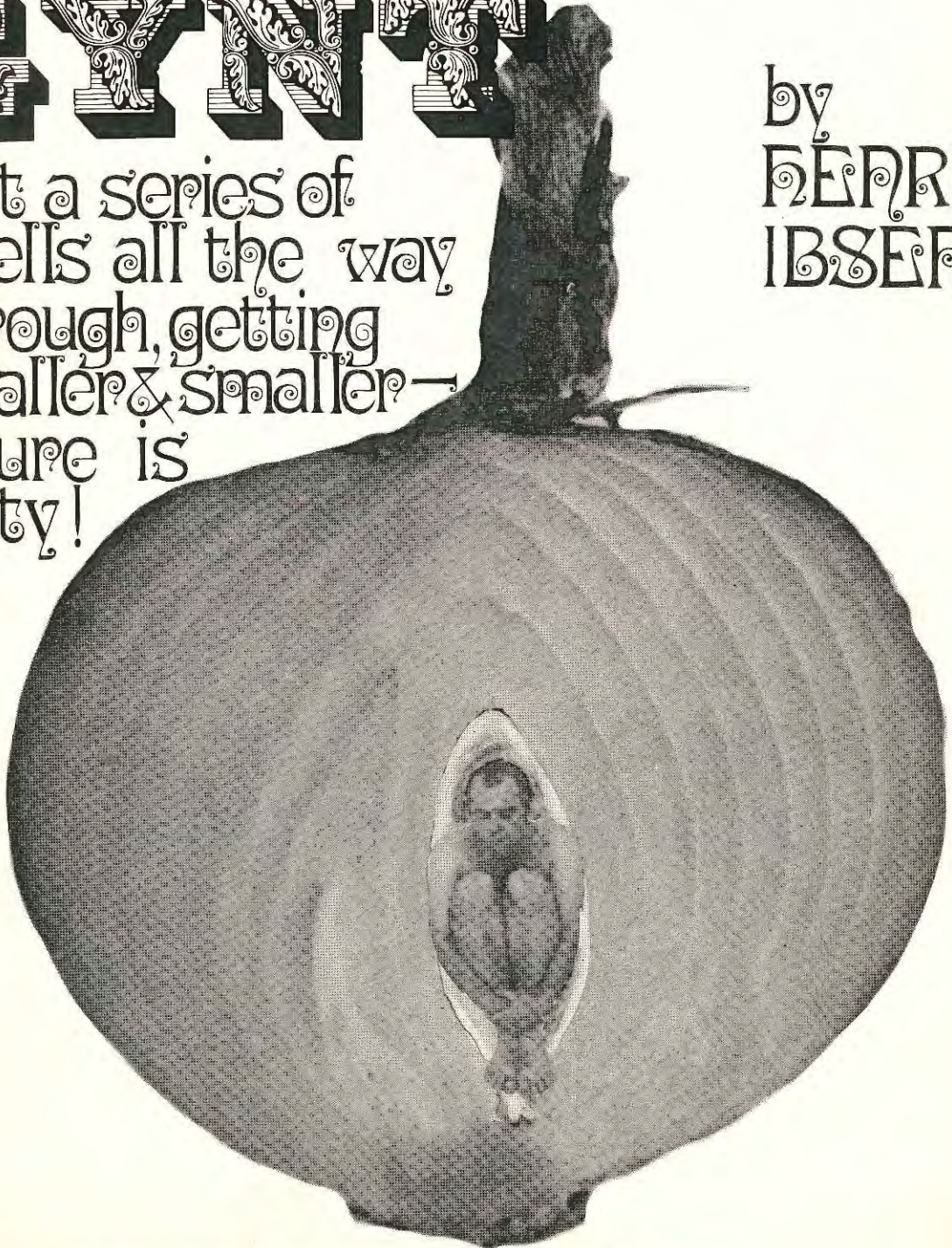


Nov 69

# PREER GYNT

by  
HENRIK  
IBSEN

Just a series of  
shells all the way  
through, getting  
smaller & smaller—  
Nature is  
witty!



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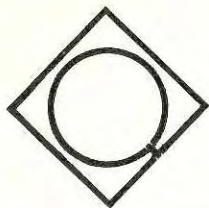
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present

# PEER GYNT

by HENRIK IBSEN

Translated by MICHAEL MEYER

Directed by DAVID GOWER

Designed by MARY ANDERSON

Associate Director TONY WORTH

Lighting designed by TONY SHIPLEY

Sound by ROGER DRIVER

Anitra's Dance arranged by ERNA KENNEDY

Hymn Tune composed by ELIZA GARRETT

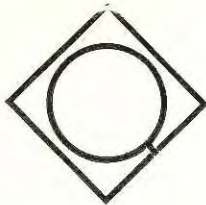
Programme cover designed by NICK ELLIS

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Box Office Manager .....	JOAN HOCKRIDGE
Stage Director .....	TONY SHIPLEY





## THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Saturday, 8th November, 1969

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### THOUGHTS ON A FORTIETH BIRTHDAY

Traditionally, a birthday celebration tends to be an occasion for looking back and reminiscing about the past. This can indeed be enjoyable (if not necessarily fruitful), and I feel both stirred and humble as I think back on all those hundreds of people who have contributed in one way or another, some with outstanding service and talent, to that past which is The Questors' history.

A birthday celebration is also a reunion occasion, when friends of the family gather around, partly from a sense of duty, but on this occasion at least, I hope, with pleasure. It is exciting that so many old members are to be with us again during this birthday production, including not a few of those first, founder members who started they-knew-not-what in 1929.

To me, however, the point of a birthday is to look forward rather than back. It is the beginning of a new year, in this case of a new decade. The past is past and its present value lies only in the service it can be to the future. Our past has given us, among other things, this beautiful and adventurous playhouse. But the value of that playhouse is the use that will be made of it in the future, neither more nor less.

The past is with the old. The future is with the young. The old, who made the past, look to the young to give meaning to that past. It will happen if we make it happen.

Now, as we start our fifth decade, we look more than ever to the young, and to our work with youth of all ages, in school and out, in the hope of introducing them to and inducing them to share that enriching experience of the spirit which is theatre.

So, into the future!

ALFRED EMMET.



**PEER GYNT** was written in 1867, and followed immediately upon "Brand." The theme of man's quest for his true self runs through both plays: to be oneself ("all or nothing") is the highest fulfillment—to be oneself, and oneself alone is the ultimate egotism. In contrast to the earlier play, "Peer Gynt" tackles its theme satirically and as we watch Peer's progress through life, from his days as a youth, over-imaginative and feared by his neighbours, to the moment of revelation when he sees the star fall, we also watch our own progress in the form of an allegory.

This huge play was not written for the theatre and would take over five hours to perform in its entirety. The present version lasts for three and a half hours, and loses only three scenes in the process: the Saeter girls, the Statue of Memnon, and the Auction scene. The rest of the play has been cut down so that all the remaining scenes are there in essence. The play has sometimes been presented rather like a pantomime, complete with the familiar music of Grieg, but for a modern audience the play is best approached as a tragi-comedy and the sentiment expressed in some of the scenes is strong enough to warrant discarding most of this music, which only over-sweetens the taste and takes up time that can be used in presenting a fuller text. In this production only the tune of Solveig's song has been used.

The cast of fifty has been drawn from all the various sections of the Questors. Apart from the members of the main acting group, there are representatives from the Under-Fourteen Club, stages of the Junior Workshop, and both the First and Second Year Student Groups appearing in the production.

**HENRIK JOHAN IBSEN** (1828-1906) was born at Skien, Norway, of wealthy parents. His parents lost their fortune soon afterwards so that his early years were spent in poverty and his early youth in a slow fight for recognition. His first real success came in 1865 with the publication of "Brand" and two years later he was awarded a state pension and his future was secure.

"Peer Gynt" followed in 1867, but after this Ibsen wrote no more plays in verse. His other plays include "The Pillars of Society" (1875), "A Doll's House" (1878/79), "Ghosts" (1881), "An Enemy of the People" (1882), "The Wild Duck" (1883/84), "Rosmersholm" (1885/86), "Hedda Gabler" (1890), "The Master Builder" (1891/92), "Little Eyolf" (1894), "John Gabriel Borkman" (1895/96), and "When We Dead Awaken" (1897/99). The first productions of "Peer Gynt" in Great Britain were undertaken by amateur theatres. Productions were mounted in 1908 in Edinburgh; in 1909 it was mounted in London when a woman played Peer Gynt, and again in 1911, 1912 and 1913. The Old Vic presented the play in March 1922, with Russell Thorndike as Peer Gynt (and John Gielgud as a troll); it was produced at Oxford in 1925 with Robert Speaight, Cambridge in 1932 with Peter Godfrey, and again at the Old Vic in 1935 with William Devlin in the name part. A revival of this production was given in 1936, when for four of the 10 performances the play was given in its entirety for the first time in Great Britain. In more recent times it has been given by the Old Vic Company at The New Theatre in 1944 with Ralph Richardson as Peer, Sybil Thorndike as Aase and Laurence Olivier as the button moulder. B.B.C. television gave the play a production in 1954 and presented it in two weekly parts with Peter Ustinov as Peer. In September 1962 The Old Vic again presented the play with Leo McKern as Peer Gynt. The translation commissioned for and used in that production was the one by Michael Meyer that The Questors are using in this production. And in late November this year, The Oxford Playhouse is presenting the play with Lewis Fiander as Peer Gynt.



The following extract from the introduction by Michael Meyer to his translation of PEER GYNT is reproduced by kind permission of the publisher Rupert Hart-Davis.

"Peer Gynt" is unusual among Ibsen's plays in betraying an apparent debt to certain literary influences. Ibsen owed less to other authors than almost any other writer of comparable stature; he was an unwilling reader, at any rate of books (though he read newspapers most minutely, including the advertisements). Four works, however, all of them Danish, would seem to have left their mark on "Peer Gynt." One was Frederik Paludan-Müller's epic poem "Adam Homo," published some twenty years previously, which had already had its effect upon "Brand." Adam, like Peer, is a weak character who deserts his true love, loses his grip on life, gains riches and worldly success at the cost of his soul, and finally, in the presence of death, senses the possibility of salvation through the love of the woman he had deserted. Another influence, noted by Brandes, appears to have been Oehlenschläger's "Aladdin." Aladdin, like Peer, is a dreamer; when contemplating suicide he says, in a phrase which has its echo in the last act of "Peer Gynt":

Receive this wretched, failed experiment  
Into your crucible. Melt me down again.

The phrase 'at vaere sig selv,' to be oneself, appears in "Aladdin"; and Aladdin's mother, Morgiane, alternates like Aase between admiration and despair at her son's unpredictability. Aladdin, however, is presented as a heroic character, the apotheosis of the dreamer, where Peer is a 'reductio ad absurdum' of the type. Oehlenschläger regarded the life of the imagination as the highest form of existence; Ibsen knew its dangers.

Two other works that need to be studied by anyone interested in the origins of "Peer Gynt" are J. L. Heiberg's poem "A Soul After Death" (1840) and Hans Egede Schack's novel "The Fantasts" (1858). Johan Paulsen, who knew Ibsen intimately, has recorded that these were two of the few books that he ever heard Ibsen praise; and that Ibsen once told a young poet that he ought to read everything that Heiberg had written. In "A Soul After Death," the soul, like Peer, is condemned, not for great sins, but for common bourgeois pettiness; it had lived only for material comfort, and had never tried to be itself. And there are two meetings in Heiberg's poem, one between the Actor and Death, and one between the Soul and Mephistopheles, which carry strong echoes of Peer's encounters with the Button Moulder and the Thin Person. "The Fantasts," a remarkable psychological analysis of the danger of daydreaming, would seem to have exerted a general rather than a particular influence. It is also perhaps worth noting that Hans Andersen's story "Elverhoej," itself an earlier satire on Norwegian nationalism, also contained a character named The Old Man of the Mountains. A sixth Dane, Soeren Kierkegaard, is supposed by some to have influenced "Peer Gynt"; but the exact measure of Ibsen's debt to Kierkegaard, if any such debt existed, must remain in doubt. Ibsen once stated that he had "read little of Kierkegaard, and understood less"; but many writers have been unconsciously influenced by authors whom they only partly understood.

Some of Ibsen's rough notes for "Peer Gynt" have survived, plus one draft and the fair copy. The notes were long assumed to have been lost, but as late as 1932 fragments of them were discovered among papers in the



possession of his daughter-in-law, Bergliot Ibsen. The first "ark" of four pages is unfortunately missing, and the manuscript begins in the middle of Act 2, where Solveig asks Aase to tell her more about Peer, and ends in the middle of Act 4. Since nearly three sides of this last four-page sheet are left blank, it would seem that Ibsen had made no further notes before beginning to write his first draft. Neither the notes nor the draft contain any very significant differences from the play as we know it. The state of the draft suggests that it was a first one; some sections were originally written in prose, others in regular trochaic and iambic metres which he later worked into a looser rhythm.

The main differences from the final version occur in the first two acts. Originally, Peer's father was not a wastrel but a "man of honour" whom "Our Lord cut off in his prime," and Peer was not an only son but had an elder brother, a very different character, who was killed in war. The troll scene as at first conceived contained a good deal of satirical matter which Ibsen later deleted; for example, it opened with the trolls irreverently singing "For Norway, the birthplace of heroes," presenting the anthem as a symbol of chauvinism. And there was a scene in Act 2 on the mountain (after Peer's renunciation of Ingrid) between Peer and Solveig, who are later joined by Aase and Solveig's parents; her father tells Peer that he can marry her if he is prepared to go to prison as a penance for his crime, an offer which Peer refuses. Most interesting from a psychological viewpoint is the fact that as originally conceived the Boyg stands outside Aase's house and prevents Peer from returning home to his mother after he has left the troll palace. The notes for this scene read: "He stands in pitch darkness outside Aase's house and finds his way blocked by the Great Boyg. Fights with the Great Invisible One. He wins his way in. It is empty. Fights his way out again. The Boyg is everywhere. Despair seizes him. Alone, alone! Everyone has abandoned him."

A curious fact about these notes is that they partly give the lie to Ibsen's account of how he wrote the play, as described in his letter to Peter Hansen and also as reported by William Archer. On Ibsen's death in 1906, Archer wrote an article in the "Monthly Review" entitled "Ibsen as I knew Him" in which he stated: "He wrote 'Brand' and 'Peer Gynt' at very high pressure, amounting to nervous overstrain. He would go on writing verses all the time, even when asleep or half awake. He thought them capital for the moment; but they were the veriest nonsense. Once or twice he was so impressed with their merit that he rose in his nightshirt to write them down; but they were never of the slightest use. . . . He began 'Peer Gynt' at Ischia and finished it at Sorrento. He set to work on it with no definite plan, foreseeing the end, indeed, but not the intermediate details. For instance, he did not know that Peer was to go to Africa. 'It is much easier,' he said, 'to write a piece like 'Brand' or 'Peer Gynt,' in which you can bring in a little of everything, than to carry through a severely logical scheme, like that of 'John Gabriel Borkman,' for example.'"

In fact, we know from Ibsen's letters and from the dates on his manuscript that he began the play not in Ischia but in Rome, and that he had a detailed synopsis worked out well past the opening of the African sequence. The conversations reported by Archer, however, took place in 1898, over thirty years after the completion of "Peer Gynt," and it is not surprising that the old man's memory should have played him false.



# PEER

by Henrik Ibsen

Cast in order of appearance :

Peer Gynt .....	ROBERT BYRNE
Aase, his mother .....	BETTY OGDEN
Kari, a cottar's wife .....	SHEILA SORLEY
A woman .....	HILARY ELLWOOD
Two passers-by .....	CHRIS McDERMOTT, NINA WATTERS
Aslak, a smith .....	PAUL O'CONNOR
Three young men .....	RONALD LEE, RICHARD PAINES JOHN WILSON
Fiddler .....	BILL BAKER
Four girls .....	CAROLINE HAYFIELD, MARY KENNEDY JUDY LANE, ELIZABETH SUGGARS
Wedding guests .....	HILARY ELLWOOD, ALFRED EMMET, HARRY IVES, GARTH SPIERS, CLIVE MARTINEZ, TREVOR MORRIS, NINA WATTERS, CHRIS McDERMOTT, DAWN MASTIN, PAT CONDON, ALEX GRAJNERT, DAVID LORRAINE, JOHN ROBB, PETER LAMB
Master of Ceremonies .....	DEREK CHANDLER
Bridegroom's father .....	STANLEY GOODCHILD
Bridegroom's mother .....	BABS FOSTER
Bridegroom (Mads Moen) .....	MICHAEL NOAKES
Solveig .....	LESLEY GOLDIE
Helga, her sister .....	JANE RHYDOUT
Solveig's father .....	PATRICK BACON
Solveig's mother .....	BELLA BACKNER
Ingrid, the bride .....	PATSY HUTLEY
The Woman in Green .....	SANDRA HEALY
Boy troll .....	TREVOR MORRIS
Trolls .....	BELLA BACKNER, DEREK CHANDLER, PAT CONDON, CAROLYN CRUMLEY, ALFRED EMMET, KEVIN FELS, BABS FOSTER, STANLEY GOODCHILD, TONY GODEL, ALEX GRAJNERT, SUE GRAJNERT, CAROLINE HAYFIELD, PATSY HUTLEY, HARRY IVES, MARY KENNEDY, PETER LAMB, JUDY LANE, RONALD LEE, CLIVE MARTINEZ, DAWN MASTIN, MICHAEL NOAKES, RICHARD PAINES, JOHN ROBB, ELIZABETH SUGGARS, SEBASTIAN VERGHESE, NINA WATTERS
The Old Man of the Mountains .....	PHILIP WRIGHT
An old troll courtier .....	DAVID LORRAINE
The Green Woman's sister .....	HILARY ELLWOOD
A Voice in the Darkness .....	DAVID GOWER
Bird voices .....	STEPHANIE CLARK, ANNE CRUMLEY, LOUISE TEMPLE, FREYA MERCHANT, SARAH PLEYDELL, CAROLYN CRUMLEY, PAT CONDON
A young man .....	JOHN WILSON
The Green Woman's child .....	MICHAEL DOBBINS
Overseer .....	PATRICK BACON
Three slaves .....	RICHARD PAINES, STANLEY GOODCHILD, SEBASTIAN VERGHESE
Monkeys .....	TONY GODEL, PETER LAMB CLIVE MARTINEZ



# GYNT

Translated by Michael Meyer

Monsieur Ballon .....	JOHN ROBB
Mr. Cotton .....	CHRIS McDERMOTT
Herr Von Eberkopf .....	DEREK CHANDLER
Herr Trumpeterstraale .....	KEVIN FELS
Two Slaves .....	GARETH REES, DAVID CHAMBERLAIN
Body-servant .....	SEBASTIAN VERGHESE
Thief .....	MICHAEL NOAKES
Receiver .....	JOHN WILSON
Two Slaves .....	MIKE BRACE, RONALD LEE
Four dancing-girls .....	CAROLYN HAYFIELD, MARY KENNEDY, JUDY LANE, ELIZABETH SUGGARS
Anitra, daughter of a Bedouin chieftain .....	ANN BEVAN
Professor Begriffenfeldt, D.Phil., Director of the Cairo asylum .....	ALFRED EMMET
Three keepers .....	DEREK CHANDLER, GARTH SPIERS, CHRIS McDERMOTT
Lunatics .....	PAT CONDON, CAROLYN CRUMLEY, BABS FOSTER, SUE GRAJNERT, ALEX GRAJNERT, PATSY HUTLEY, HARRY IVES, RONALD LEE, DAWN MASTIN, RICHARD PAINES, JANE RHYDOUT, JOHN ROBB, JOHN WILSON
A Fellah carrying a Royal Mummy .....	JOHN TURNER
Hussein, a lunatic .....	KEVIN FELS
Ship's captain .....	MARTIN BOWLEY
Boatswain .....	PATRICK BACON
Watch .....	PAUL O'CONNOR
Cook .....	MICHAEL NOAKES
A strange passenger .....	DAVID LORRAINE
Cabin boy .....	CLIVE MARTINEZ
Crew members .....	MIKE BRACE, GARETH REES, DAVID CHAMBERLAIN
Priest .....	GARTH SPIERS
Mourners .....	BELLA BACKNER, JOHN TURNER, HILARY ELLWOOD
Voices in the air: Threadballs, withered leaves, lost songs, dewdrops, broken straws .....	CAROLYN CRUMLEY, CATHERINE JONES, JENNIFER GOODWIN, SARAH PLEYDELL, PAT CONDON, FREYA MERCHANT, STEPHANIE CLARK, ELIZA GARRETT, DAWN MASTIN, ALEX GRAJNERT, TONY GODEL, DECLAN DONNELLAN
Old man .....	PHILIP WRIGHT
A button-moulder .....	CLIFFORD WEBB
A thin person .....	STANLEY GOODCHILD

The action, which opens in the early years of the last century and closes about fifty years later, takes place partly in the Gudbrand valley in Norway and on the mountains around it partly on the Moroccan coast, partly in the Sahara desert, the asylum in Cairo, at sea, etc.

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**MICHAEL MEYER.** Born in London, 1921. Describes himself as self-educated, at Wellington College and Oxford University. 1947 - 50, Lecturer in English Literature at Upsala University, Sweden, where he began to learn the Scandinavian languages. Wrote a novel, **THE END OF THE CORRIDOR**, and a play, **THE ORTOLAN**; then in 1957 - 58 was roving correspondent for a Swedish newspaper in the Far East, and travelled 5,000 miles through Red China alone and without a guide. On his return to England was commissioned by an American publisher to translate the sixteen major plays of Ibsen, a task he recently completed. These translations have been widely described as "definitive"; and his translations of eight plays by Strindberg made him the first Englishman to win the Gold Medal of the Swedish Academy in 1964 (an honour awarded last year to Sir Laurence Olivier). In 1967 the first volume of Mr. Meyer's biography of Ibsen was published; he is now completing the second and final volume, which will appear next year. He has a one-year-old daughter, Nora.

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December 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th at 7.45 p.m.

### **PLAY (&) HAPPY DAYS**

by Samuel Beckett

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December 31st - January 10th (excl. Jan. 5th) at 7.45 p.m.

The Questors Annual Christmas Melodrama

### **BLACK-EY'D SUSAN**

by Douglas Jerrold

Directed by Alan Chambers

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January 24th - 31st, 1970 at 7.45 p.m.

### **THE RESTORATION OF ARNOLD MIDDLETON**

by David Storey

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February 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st at 7.45 p.m.

The Questors Student Group One-Act plays

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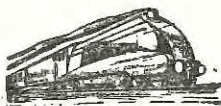
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