

Weekly Post  
RUISLIP 72-42-131  
Weekly Circulation

114 JUL 1971

#### "THE RIVALS"

THE QUESTORS Student Group, of Ealing, present Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals" as their latest production at the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, on July 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24 at 7.45 p.m. This was Sheridan's first play, written in 1775, when he was 24. Although it is not in the same class as his most famous work, "School For Scandal", it is nevertheless a play full of wit and comedy situation. And it contains one of the most famous characters in English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, who so slaughters the language with her misappication and mispronouclation of

words.

Mrs. Malaprop has come to Bath to try and marry off her eligible niece, and herself falls for an Irish fortune hunter. The play is a clever satire on the state of the society of Bath, which attracted both the fashionable and the unfashionable.

For further information on the play and the Questors, telephone 01-567 0611.

James  
BARENT FORD & CHRISTIE K

27 JUL 1971

## NEW RIVALS STILL GOOD

IN an attempt to put a new life into an old chestnut, the Questors' student group did "The Rivals" last week in modern dress.

The result may have been lacking in the period atmosphere that would seem to be essential for the play, but it provided an offbeat originality which held the attention and inspired plenty of laughter.

It took a while to adjust to a Mrs. Malaprop in modern dress, looking like a respectable tart, if that's not a contradiction in terms, but Jeanne Smith gave such an authoritative and amusing performance that it was worth adjusting.

The standard of performance generally was excellent and we shall certainly be seeing most of the leading members of the cast in subsequent productions by the Questors proper.

Trevor Hopkins, late of Teddington Theatre Club, contributed a very funny, camp version of Fag, Captain Absolute's precious valet, who was like something out of a Joe Orton play clad in a spivvy pin-stripe suit, black shirt and white tie. Sounds ghastly, but the clothes matched the performance.

#### CARICATURE

Steven Hallmark's Captain Absolute was a lively schemer and Peter Garrett gave a delightful rustic caricature of Bob Acres, who started off as a country yokel and changed into a trendy, coiffured product of any London boutique.

Other notable contributions were made by Paul Lewis as the irascible Sir Anthony Absolute, reprimanding his son like a demented magistrate, Hilary Ellwood as Lucy, Susan Reeve as Lydia Languish, and Tom Jennings as Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Towards the end of August, Phase Two Productions are presenting the musical with a conscience, "Oh What a Lovely War," at the Questors theatre in Mattock Lane, Ealing.

Applications for tickets should be made to Mr. K. Smith of 101 Hurlingham Road, S.W.6.

30 JUL 1971

# Charming Rivals by Questors

**T**HE Ealing Questors second year student group gave a charming performance last week of Sheridan's delightful comedy *The Rivals*!

Directed by Wyllie Longmore, with Design Consultant John Rolfe and set and costume designer Jeanne Smith, the programme told us that the "trappings" which usually surround 18th century comedy were being discarded.

Certainly, the varied modern dress did nothing to violate the spirit of the play, as it does with Shakespeare (where it is pure rape). But there is something incongruous in having the manners and speech of those times in 20th century garb.

As it was, we had a foot in each world for, during gaps between scenes, lovely period items were brought on: even to Sir Lucius writing with a quill pen.

The set, consisting of just three tall Corinthian columns, plus the front of a little house on either wing, was quite sufficient to suggest Sheridan's Bath.

Jeanne Smith's Mrs. Malaprop was a nicely conceived, extrovert performance, loud and blatant, and with the famous Malapropisms well pointed. These last, of course, have made the lady one of the most famous in all English drama.

Steven Hallmark played Captain Absolute in rather a quiet key. Having to challenge his father, make false love to Mrs. Malaprop and real love to Lydia gives the actor in the part a whale of a chance for raising laughter and showing off generally.

Mr. Hallmark has a quiet authority and speaks splendidly. But this particular part could

have done with a bit more variety and swagger.

Paul Lewis made a splendid job of crabbed and arthritic old age as Sir Anthony Absolute. He disowned his son with no end of gusto, and one is almost tempted to say, relish.

The adjective excellent can be applied to all the others. Susan Reeve was attractively romantic as Lydia Languist. Carolyn Hayfield and Bruce Cowan as Julia and Faulkland, made a nice pair of sentimental lovers.

Tom Jennings as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, writing amorous letters to Mrs. Malaprop, was very amusing. Bob Acres, also in love with Lydia, was very well played. Trevor Hopkins, Kevin Fells, Peter Harbourne, Hilary Ellwood, and those playing the five servants, all contributed to this very enjoyable evening.

8 JUL 1971

# Questors' students tackle 'The Rivals'

THE student group of the Questors Theatre, Ealing, are presenting "The Rivals", by Sheridan, on six days this month.

This was Sheridan's first play written in 1775 when he was 24. First performed at Covent Garden, it was not initially a success, due to its length and the poor playing of one of the central characters.

But with revision and a change of cast, it was to become one of the most popular comedies of its time and a favourite with audiences to this day.

### Teacher

Sheridan came from a theatrical background. His mother was a playwright and his father was an actor and teacher of elocution.

Originally from Dublin, the family settled in Bath, a town famous in the 18th century for its spa, which attracted

visitors from all over the country.

It is here that "The Rivals" is set among characters and places with which Sheridan was familiar.

The play is a clever satire on the state of the society of this popular resort, which attracted both the fashionable and unfashionable.

Mrs. Malaprop has come to Bath to try and marry off her eligible niece, Lydia Languish, first to a boorish country squire, Bob Acres, and then to Captain Jack Absolute, son of her close friend Sir Anthony Absolute.

### Wooing

But unknown to them, Jack is already wooing Lydia in the guise of a poor ensign to satisfy Lydia's sentimental whim. Meanwhile, Mrs. Malaprop herself has fallen for an

Irish fortune hunter, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

The intrigues that result keep the play bubbling along until the plot is finally resolved.

Though "The Rivals" is not in the same class as Sheridan's masterpiece "The School for Scandal," it is nevertheless a play full of wit and comedy situation.

And it contains one of the most famous characters in English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, who so slaughters the language with her misapplication and mispronunciation of words.

The play is being staged on July 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24 at 7.45 p.m.

Brentford & Chiswick Times  
72-42-12  
Weekly Circulation 8,312

8 JUL 1971

## Sheridan's first play

THE Questors' Student Group is presenting "The Rivals" by Sheridan from July 17th to 24th.

This was Sheridan's first play, written in 1775 when he was 24. First performed at Covent Garden, it was not initially a success due to its length and the poor playing of one of the central characters.

But with revision and a change of cast it was to become one of the most popular comedies of its time and a favourite with audiences to this day.

It may not be in the same class as Sheridan's later "School for Scandal," but "The Rivals" contains one of the most infamous characters of English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, whose verbal bloomers have won her a place in the Oxford dictionary.

# Questors bring a golden age to life!



Steven Hallmark as Captain Jack Absolute and (sitting) Bruce Cowan who played Faulkland

THE golden age of Bath, with its variety and contrast, was brought to life again at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, with a performance of Sheridan's "The Rivals" on Saturday.

The production was unusual in that period dress and extravagant scenery were abandoned in favour of modern clothing and the minimum of furniture and props.

The result was a complete success, which brought the 18th century play right up to date. Sheridan's wit and his interpretation of comic situations is as relevant today as it was during his lifetime, a fact emphasised by the modern dress.

## VIGOUR

Without doubt the star of the play was Mrs. Malaprop, played by Jeanne Smith. The vigour and enthusiasm with which the

outlandish character was portrayed held the play firmly together.

Paul Lewis and Steven Hallmark gave an admirable performance as Sir Anthony Absolute, and his son, Captain Jack Absolute, who was in love with Lydia Languish, well played by Susan Reeve.

## CONVINCING

A striking performance was given by Tom Jennings, as the pugnacious Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and by Kevin Wells as the timid Welshman, David.

Bruce Cowan, as Faulkland, gave a convincing portrayal of a man so cautious and confused he nearly estranged the girl he loved, Julia Melville, played by Carolyn Hayfield.

In contrast to the more sophisticated characters, Peter Garrett gave a lively performance as Bob Acres, a rough country squire, who is nearly tricked into fighting a duel with what he thinks is his best friend.

Trevor Hopkins also gave a good performance as Fag, an effeminate serving man.

Clever use of lighting and the front of the stage allowed the scenes to merge into one another smoothly, and kept the action flowing for the duration of the play. Director was Wyllie Longmore.

The play is running today (Friday) and Saturday, and is well worth watching.

**I.N.**



Having a drink are Paul Lewis, who took the part of Sir Anthony Absolute, and Jeanne Smith, who portrayed Mrs. Malaprop



Susan Reeve, who took the part of Lydia Languish, sits with a cup of tea and has a chat with Carolyn Hayfield, who played Julia Melville