

July 1977

The Sea

by Edward Bond

Something Unspoken

by Tennessee Williams

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The Questors Theatre Company



The Questors Student Group

First performance Saturday July 16, 1977

SOMETHING UNSPOKEN

by Tennessee Williams

Cast

Cornelia Scott KATY BUTLER
Grace Lancaster SANDIE RIX

Scene: Miss Scott's Residence — somewhere in the American South.

THE SEA by Edward Bond

Cast

Willy Carson IAIN REID
Evens LENNOX THOMAS
Hatch DAVE GOODWIN
Louise Rafi MARGARET McDONALD
Jessica Tilehouse ANGELA WILKES
Hollarcut CHRISTOPHER WELLS
Thompson DEREK LONGHURST
Carter BRIAN MURPHY
Rose Jones MAGGIE HOSKIN
Mafanwy Price SUE SCOTT
Jilly SANDIE RIX
Rachel KATY BUTLER
Vicar FRANK WYSE
Davis NIKOLA WILLIS
Townspeople JEREMY BENTHAM, DIANA FARLEY,
CATHERINE GRUBB, SARAH JANE HALL, TARI KHAN.

A village on the East Coast of England. Spring, 1907.

Scenes: 1. Beach
2. Draper's Shop
3. Beach — Evens' Hut
4. Park House
5. Draper's Shop
6. Beach
7. Clifftop
8. Beach — Evens' Hut

There will be ONE INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES after Scene 4 of *The Sea*.

The plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE
Designed by CHRIS HARRIS · Costumes by CATHERINE GRUBB
Iain Reid and Frank Wyse are past members of the Student Group.

'.....You mustn't expect me to give bold answers to questions that make the house shake with silence. To speak out things that are fifteen years unspoken. That long a time can make a silence a wall that nothing less than dynamite could break through.....'

— Grace Lancaster, *Something Unspoken*

'.....I'm tired of them. I'm tired of being a side-show in their little world.I can't love them. How could I? But that's a terrible state in which to move towards the end of your life: to have no love. Has anything been worth while? No. I've thrown my life away.'

— Mrs Rafi, *The Sea*

EDWARD BOND (1935 -) is a fiercely controversial playwright whose work has attracted a great deal of critical attention. His first play, *The Pope's Wedding*, was performed first at the Royal Court Theatre in 1962 as a Sunday-night production without decor. With *Saved* (1965), also at the Royal Court, Bond first came to prominence, mainly because of the scene in which a baby is stoned to death in its pram. In 1968 Bond won the George Devine Award for his *Early Morning* and the association with the Royal Court continued when *Saved*, *Early Morning* and *Narrow Road to the North* were revived in 1969 as an 'Edward Bond season'. *Saved* was also chosen as the English entry for the 1969 Belgrade Festival during a European tour. In 1971 and 1973 respectively *Lear* and *The Sea* were first staged at the Royal Court and the first performance of *Bingo* was given at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter in November 1973.

<i>Stage Manager</i>	. . . . .	CHRISTOPHER H. LEE
<i>Wardrobe Mistress</i>	. . . . .	CATHERINE GRUBB
<i>Deputy Stage Managers</i>	. . . . .	CHRIS HARWOOD LESLEY MONTGOMERY
<i>Prompt</i>	. . . . .	MONIQUE FARE
<i>Lighting</i>	. . . . .	CHARLES LACAILLE
<i>Assisted by</i>	. . . . .	MALCOLM ROBERTSON
<i>Sound</i>	. . . . .	NICK LONDON LIZ CHISHOLM
<i>Construction</i>	. . . . .	RICHARD LEWIS

The Questors Student Group Staff

Director of Studies	. . . . .	ALFRED EMMET
Acting	. . . . .	WYLLIE LONGMORE
Speech	. . . . .	SUE PIPER
Movement	. . . . .	IRENE BRADSHAW
Make-up	. . . . .	JULIE CRUTTENDEN

NEXT PRODUCTION

In The Studio

KENNEDY'S CHILDREN by Robert Patrick

A tribute to the valour and suffering of a generation who have so very much to offer one another and are held away from one another by fear and despair, the theme of the play is the death of the idea of heroes as guides for our lives. Through the recollections of the five characters we catch a fascinating glimpse of a rich period of America's social history and grow to understand the effect on their personalities which such heady influences created.

COMING SOON

September 10

SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS by Tennessee Williams

October 1

ROOKERY NOOK by Ben Travers

October 29

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE by William Shakespeare

November 26

HOME by David Storey

December 31 – CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

TOAD OF TOAD HALL

EXHIBITION

During the run of the Student Group Production there will be an exhibition in the Foyer of work by the Ealing Photographic Society.

**PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE IN THE AUDITORIUM.
PLEASE DO NOT TAKE DRINKS INTO THE
AUDITORIUM.**

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

We apologise to members for any inconvenience caused during the present period of work on Mattock Lodge. For the greater comfort and convenience of all, would those in seats nos. 1 - 31 please leave the Foyer by the Stanislavsky Block staircase at the end of the performance.

THE SEA

a programme note by the Author

The sea could be a negative image. It washes everything away and stands for nothing itself. The tide washes out everything written on the shore. You can't shape it with your hands yet it wears down rocks. It lets nothing be permanent and so makes nonsense of human effort.

But I see it another way. Living involves failure. Evolution is the record of failure at the same time as it's the record of success. So is history. So is moral action. No action is wholly pure. No action except death is final. So there are no supernatural guarantees for the strength and endurance of moral actions, and no actions that protect our sanity except our own. This idea depressed the nineteenth century. They called it god being dead. They thought of human beings as dwarfs isolated in an empty world, and human action as morally meaningless and fundamentally irrational. They saw the universe as a coffin. In our time that becomes the commonplace idea that life is absurd, that we can't prevent suffering except of the most elementary sort — and then only if the economics of charity don't disrupt our own security. In the play Evens argues against this pessimism. The universe spontaneously produces life. It's said there are many other inhabited worlds. We may never contact them, but at least we're not biologically freaks cowering in the corner of a vast and otherwise empty lunatic asylum. It suggests we're not the only world in which moral problems arise. The universe produces minds with moral consciousness. When we look at the night sky there are other moral beings, an infinity of space and time away, looking at the night sky in our direction and asking the questions we ask.

Moral actions have meaning because we give them meaning. We act morally because we're concerned for others' happiness. Or if that's too ambitious for our society, at least for their freedom from obvious pain and need. What gives living a meaning and stops it being absurd? our happiness and pain, the happiness we feel when others are happy, the pain we feel when others despair. It's a natural human reflex to smile when others smile. It's also naturally human to shudder when they suffer — only we're taught not to, it costs too much. Happiness and pain are the things that give social life meaning, and it's wrong to ignore this and say: No, life is absurd. We can't avoid our moral element. People who live by the sea never get away from its sound. It murmurs, roars, soothes, threatens, and shifts like an unanswered question. And we, who live with other men and women, never get away from moral involvement with them. Some try. But you deny the humanity of others only by destroying your own. And when you destroy your humanity you destroy the most characteristic mark of your species. You cripple yourself. And then — because when you subvert moral concern you subvert your own intelligence — you end by asking why your life is empty and trivial, and why you've created a society threatened by political gangsters.

The sea also stands for hope. It doesn't accept error. It's always new. It washes itself — just as in us the act of consciousness purifies consciousness. The surface of the sea changes as much as anything except the human face. When we despair it's as if the sea dried up. When we're cynical it's as if whole oceans turned sour. So the sea

is a symbol of our strength and resourcefulness, as well as a description of our lives as moral animals. It describes the solution as well as the problem. Evolution proceeds by solving problems. You could almost say moral evolution proceeds by making mistakes. Without problems our species would stagnate and probably regress. The act of solving is almost as important as the solution itself — because it means we keep the ability to grow. In a scientific age we should remember that we may reach a time when science will make more problems than it solves. I'm not denying the value of science and technology. But scientists work in a society which includes politicians, sick people, rabid militarists and commercial imperatives. These impose their own characteristics on the social use of science. And because our institutions were evolved by pastoral communities there are no democratic institutions for the control of science and technology — even though they change our lives more than anything else. There is no pure science because all science takes place in a social context, no such thing as the abstract search for knowledge because knowledge becomes technology and so changes our lives. Science for science's sake is as misleading (and unobtainable) as art for art's sake. When scientists talk of pure science, or knowledge for its own sake, they're asking to be allowed to act like apes. Apes make H-bombs. Being human is a matter of choosing to be human.

Our species doesn't have to avoid problems. We have to make our problems fruitful. Human beings mustn't be reduced to two dimensional cut-outs for politicians to tinker with. The danger of science is that it makes politicians too powerful. They can start to dream of final solutions, and under pressure of economic and social crises begin to create the people they need to make their systems work — instead of people choosing the governments they want to make them happy and which will respect human dignity. Our species is open-ended. No man is god-like enough to lay down its final goals.

We even need a sense of tragedy. No democracy can exist without that. But tragedy as something to use in our lives, that gives us sympathy and understanding of other people. Only a moron wants to grin all the time, and even he weeps with rage in the night. Tragedy in this sense is necessary for moral maturity, it doesn't lead to despair, and it certainly has nothing to do with a catharsis that makes us accept abominations to which there should be political solutions. It leads to knowledge and action.

So the sea is a symbol of hope justified by constant new chances and opportunities. Life becomes meaningless when you stop *acting* on the thing that concerns you most: your moral involvement in society. Indifference and cynicism, and pseudo-philosophy (we're all animals), pseudo-psychology (we're all basically selfish) and pseudo-science (we all have a need to act aggressively) add up to that pseudo-profundity: life is absurd.

If I had to name my theatre I would call it a rational theatre.

Edward Bond, 1974.