

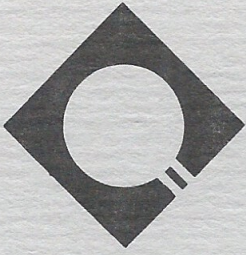
A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

BY ROBERT BOLT



THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

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THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

First performance March 10th 1979

Director's Note

SIR THOMAS MORE

'More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning; I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And as time requireth a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes; and sometimes of a sad gravity: a man for all seasons.'

ROBERT WHITTINTON 1520

The fact that Sir Thomas More has been admitted to the Calendar of Saints may blind us to his essential characteristics. Saints seem so often to be withdrawn from the world, remote from the affairs of ordinary men. Nothing could be less true of More. A brilliant and successful lawyer, heaped with honours by his King, renowned for his wit and learning, his house was home to a constant stream of visitors from home and abroad, including his life-long friend Erasmus and the young Dutch painter Holbein.

More was an intensely loving man, with a large family, including his beloved eldest daughter Meg and his sharp-tongued second wife, Alice Middleton. To visitors, More's house at Chelsea was known as 'The School', for all there were engaged in the joyful pursuit of knowledge, including the women, a courageous innovation in Tudor times. "Almost everyone thinks learning useless to the reputation and good name of women" wrote Erasmus, "but More repudiates this idea and considers idleness a greater snare to them than literature."

Yet under the surface of this urbane and pleasure-loving man who, according to one contemporary "... had such a passion for jokes, that one might suppose he had been born for them", there was an ascetic streak which had forced him to spend four years as a young man in the life of a Carthusian monk. More's religion was austere and unshakeable. It is said that he would allow himself only three or four hours sleep a night, fasted and flagellated himself regularly and wore a hair shirt next to his skin for the whole of his life.

It is this mixing of the life of a secular lord with the spirituality of a religious which is the key to More's downfall. For him, the Catholic faith was not a matter of debate, but an absolute authority, something without which, as Bolt observes in his preface to the play, he could have no notion of selfhood. It is More's tragedy that he lived at a time when such religious conservatism was inappropriate and that he was subject to one of the most capricious monarchs ever to occupy the English throne.

N FOR ALL SEAS

by **ROBERT BOLT**

Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509, when he was 19 (and More was 31) following the death of his elder brother Arthur. He rapidly married his brother's widow, the devout and intelligent Catherine of Aragon; for this marriage he obtained a papal dispensation. From now until the late 1520s, Henry was, apart from the occasional flirtation, a model husband. More gradually became a confidant of the King and Queen Catherine, joining them in their private apartments to 'make merry' and to discuss with them 'matters of astronomy, geometry, divinity and other such faculties'.

The storm clouds began to gather as the King, nearing forty, found himself without a male heir. Catherine had had many pregnancies, but all her children were stillborn or had died in infancy, with the exception of one daughter, Mary. Up till now an enthusiastic Catholic, Henry began to fear that his union with Catherine had been against God's law after all and that he was subject to divine punishment. And there were, of course, political considerations. The only previous experience of a female monarch had been the disastrous reign of Mathilda in the twelfth century, and the absence of a male heir, in a dynasty as recently established as the Tudors, could only have grave consequences. "Do you remember the Yorkist wars?" Wolsey asks More in the play. "Let him die without an heir and we'll have them back again."

For Henry, the only way out was to divest himself of Catherine and to find someone who could bear him a son, a conviction much enhanced by his increasing attraction to Anne Boleyn. He instructed his Chancellor, Wolsey, to obtain a declaration from Pope Clement VII that his predecessor's dispensation had been invalid. But Clement, whatever his private opinions, was not a free man. The Emperor Charles V ruled over Rome and he was Catherine's nephew. The appeal for a new dispensation failed, Wolsey was dismissed by an irate King, and executed shortly afterwards.

For More, there could be no doubt about the validity of the King's marriage; to put away Catherine and take another wife would be bigamy. It was only his great loyalty to his sovereign which persuaded him to accept the Chancellorship, at the King's insistence, in 1529. Even so, that acceptance was a great mistake. The King, now thoroughly incensed against Rome, forced Parliament and the clergy to vote him Supreme Head of the Church in England. In 1533, he married the now pregnant Anne Boleyn and in 1534 an Act of Succession proclaimed the issue of Anne as heirs to the throne.

Throughout all this, More maintained a stony silence. Despite all the appeals of the King to his former friend, More would not give his approval to the marriage. The irresistible force really had met the immovable object and the story of that collision is the substance of the play.

RON BLOOMFIELD

SONS

Cast in order of appearance

The Common Man	TONY MATHER
Sir Thomas More	FRANK DI RIENZO
Richard Rich	GATELY FREEMAN
The Duke of Norfolk	MICHAEL HOWARD
Alice More	ROSEMARY PURKIS
Margaret More	VAL FITZPATRICK
Cardinal Wolsey	MICHAEL GODLEY
Thomas Cromwell	PETER HEALY
Chapuy's, the Spanish Ambassador	TONY WORTH
William Roper	ALAN CHISHOLM
Chapuy's attendant	DEREK LONGHURST
King Henry VIII	MICHAEL DAVIS
Catherine Anger	JENNIFER SAMUEL
Archbishop Cranmer	VIC POMPINI

Directed by RON BLOOMFIELD

Sets designed by DAVID GILBERT

Costumes designed by DAPHNE MARLER

The action of the play covers a period of roughly fifteen years from about 1520 (when More was in his early 40's) until his execution in 1535.

The scene is set variously at More's house in Chelsea, and at Hampton Court; later at the Tower of London and Westminster Hall.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERVAL OF
FIFTEEN MINUTES

<i>Stage Manager</i>	—	Mike Garcia
<i>Deputy Stage Managers</i>	—	Jackie Todd, Paul Fodrio
<i>Assistants</i>	—	Mandy Fodrio Simon Crombie Larry Tiger Paulette Cidere John Fleming Terry Parsons Jackie Hazle Jenny Pulsford Terry Morris David Morgan Martin Woodruff Sue Lumsden
<i>Lighting</i>	—	Frank Wood
<i>assisted by</i>	—	Doug Brown
<i>Sound</i>	—	Colin Horne
<i>Properties</i>	—	Barbara Sexon
<i>assisted by</i>	—	Kath Harrington
<i>Wardrobe</i>	—	Daphne Marler
<i>assisted by</i>	—	Spike Bromley and members of the Company
<i>Construction</i>	—	Mike Garcia
<i>assisted by</i>	—	John Freeman, Larry Tiger Jenny Pulsford

RUSTIC BENCH KINDLY LOANED BY MR BLOCK

DISCUSSION

ALL ARE INVITED

COME TO LISTEN

OR COME TO JOIN IN !

Continuing our successful series of public discussions on each main theatre production, we are pleased to announce that the Discussion on *A Man for All Seasons* will be led by

LESLIE FRENCH

To many older playgoers, Leslie French was the definitive Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a part that he played on many occasions. His identification with that particular role has tended to obscure the fact that in a long and distinguished career in the theatre, he has not only played a range of parts (both classical and modern) that would be hard to match, but has also had wide and almost as varied experience as a director. To, the task of leading this critical discussion, Mr French will bring an unrivalled wealth of theatre experience.

Note the date:

TUESDAY 20th MARCH at 7.45p.m.

in the

BERNARD SHAW ROOM

WHAT'S NEXT AT QUESTORS

In the main theatre

IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST

by Steve Gooch

An adaptation of Voltaire's CANDIDE

APRIL 6, 7, 8, 19, 20 & 21 at 7.45p.m.

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE WEEK

APRIL 23rd – 28th

FROM BELGIUM:

THE PROVINCIALE TONEEL GROEP OF ANTWERP
(performing in Flemish)

DE BOKKEN (THE GOATS)

by Johann Boonen

A re-working of THE AGAMEMNON

TUESDAY 24th and FRIDAY 27th APRIL at 7.45p.m.

FROM ITALY:

THE PICCOLO TEATRO CITTA DI CHIOGGIA
(performing in Italian)

I PETTEGOLEZZI DELLE DONNE

by Carlo Goldoni

MONDAY 23rd and THURSDAY 26th APRIL
at 7.45p.m.

FROM IRELAND:

THE SUNDRIVE PLAYERS OF DUBLIN

THE HEART'S A WONDER

*A Musical Version of J.M. Synge's THE PLAYBOY OF
THE WESTERN WORLD*

WEDNESDAY 25th APRIL at 7.45p.m.

SATURDAY 28th APRIL at 4.30p.m. and 7.45p.m.
