

HAPPY  
END



BRECHN  
& WEILL

THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY



# THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

First performance November 6th 1982

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## BERTOLT BRECHT

Bertolt Brecht was born on February 10th 1898 in Augsburg. Both his parents came from Achern in the Black Forest, and though Brecht preferred to talk of his peasant origins on his mother's side, his father worked in the Heindel paper factory and eventually became its managing director. By 1913 Brecht had already published remarkably accomplished works in prose and verse as well as his first play.

During the First World War he was a student and pacifist, escaping imprisonment only through the intervention of his headmaster, and by becoming a medical orderly (he had begun to study medicine in Munich in 1917). His famous poem, *Legend of a Dead Soldier* dates from this period, and was the only work of his cited by the Nazis as their reason for depriving him of his German citizenship in 1935. His association with Communism also dates from this time, when he joined the Independent Social Democratic Party.

In the early 1920s Brecht's plays met with considerable success in Munich, before he moved to Berlin where *Happy End* was first produced on August 31st 1929. In 1928 he married Helene Weigel, a convinced Communist. Appalled by the economic and political crises racking Germany after World War I, Brecht had undertaken an intensive and systematic study of Marxist philosophy and economics. He concluded that the only solution to the problems besetting both his country and the world was Communism.

With the rise of Nazi power, performances of Brecht's plays were frequently interrupted by the police or forbidden, and the day after the Reichstag Fire (which occurred on February 27th 1933) Brecht fled from Germany. He settled in Denmark where he became co-editor of a German-language periodical published in Moscow. The six years in Denmark were richly creative, but in 1939, anticipating the German entry into Denmark, Brecht travelled via Finland and the U.S.S.R. to California, arriving on July 2nd 1941.

American audiences were reluctant to accept Brecht's disturbing plays, though *Galileo*, with Charles Laughton in the title role, received critical acclaim. In October 1947 Brecht was called before the Un-American Activities Committee, to testify about his Communist Party affiliations. His interview was a triumph of Schweikian evasion. He was even thanked for his help. The next



*Rehearsal Pianists* . . . . . Robin Duval, Chris Waite  
*Stage Manager*. . . . . Bron Beckford  
*Deputy Stage Manager* . . . . . Angie Elton  
*Properties* . . . . . Joan Curry  
    *assisted by* . . . . . Heather Dowling  
*Construction* . . . . . Colin Horne  
*Wardrobe* . . . . . Anna Piet  
                    and Members of the Wardrobe Department  
*Lighting Assistants*. . . . . Dave Ellis, Angela Taylor,  
                                    Helen Feather, Les Smith  
*Sound Operator* . . . . . Annie Williams  
*Assistant Stage Managers*. . . . Rona Christie, Jenny Richardson,  
                                    Dorothy Wood, Helen Sniadek, Anne O'Brien,  
                                    Sue Hamilton Miller, Jan Morgan, Michael Ohl

### Acknowledgements

*Champagne by courtesy of Moët et Chandon*  
*Trombone – Derek Critcher*  
*Choreography by Gordon Caleb*

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## YOU ARE INVITED

to come to a

## DISCUSSION

on this play and its production, which will be held on **TUESDAY, 16th NOVEMBER**, at 7.45 p.m. in the **BERNARD SHAW ROOM**.

Part of the pleasure of theatre going is talking about it afterwards and exchanging views with others. You may enjoy finding that others have shared your reactions; or you may get fresh insights from the views of others.

To lead our discussions we seek the help of some well-known theatre personality. This ensures that the discussion is on an interesting level and worth coming to. On this occasion we are particularly pleased that

### MARTIN ESSLIN O.B.E.

has agreed to lead the discussion. There is probably no-one in this country who knows more about Brecht, his plays and his work, than Martin Esslin, whose book *BRECHT: A Choice of Evils*, published in 1951, is still the standard work on the subject. As author of many other books on the theatre, as Head of B.B.C. Radio Drama for many years, as visiting professor of Drama at American Universities, as member of the Arts Council of Great Britain and Chairman of its Drama Panel, Martin Esslin's distinguished career covers many facets of the theatre. The opportunity of hearing him and discussing with him is not to be missed.

### NOTE THE DATE

**TUESDAY, 16th NOVEMBER**  
at 7.45 p.m.  
in the **BERNARD SHAW ROOM**

*All are welcome*

*Admission is free*

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month he flew to Zurich, where he was welcomed, before being invited to establish the Berliner Ensemble in 1948. Even in East Berlin his battles were not over as he had to wheedle and fight against bureaucracy to survive, and develop his work.

During the early fifties Brecht and Helen Weigel converted their group into one of the most impressive theatre ensembles of the Western World. Brecht won the East German State Prize in 1951, the Stalin Peace Prize in 1955, and the Berliner Ensemble made triumphant appearances in Paris in 1954 and 1955.

In the spring of 1956 Brecht contracted a lung inflammation and died of a coronary thrombosis on August 14th 1956, in East Berlin.

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Brecht's influence on British theatre had at least five important consequences, which taken together made him the most dominant single personality to affect drama since the decline of Shaw. He encouraged dramatists and directors once more to turn their attention towards politics as a profitable subject for drama, after more than a decade of post-war theatre in which politics were regarded as being vaguely anti-art. His methods helped to extend the technical range of writers beyond the confines of the well-made play and in the general direction of Epic drama. The example of the Berliner Ensemble set standards towards which the new 'permanent' companies in Britain aspired and also changed the tone within theatre buildings and auditoria away from the formal and ornate, and towards the informal, functional and austere. One important result of this change in tone was an avoidance of both heavily stylised acting and highly emotional acting, and thus a preference for plain and simple statements. Directors and dramatists in Britain could not really avoid the influence of Brecht in the 1960s, for even when they chose not to follow his example, to ignore his work, this in itself had to be a definite rejection—which in turn forced them to indicate why Brecht had no appeal for them. This resulted in genuine and far-reaching discussions about the nature of the theatre, which was perhaps the most important consequence of all.

JOHN ELSOM in

*Post-War British Theatre.*

Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1976.

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**GIFT STALL** — Week commencing November 6

Weekdays 11.30 a.m. — 2 p.m. 6.30 — to close of show.

Saturday 11.30 a.m. — close of show.

Sunday 12 noon — 2 p.m. 6.30 — close of show.

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## THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING AT THE QUESTORS

### IN THE MAIN THEATRE

November 30 – December 4

#### BONJOUR, LÀ, BONJOUR

by Michel Tremblay, translated by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco

The British première of an unusual and rather beautiful play about love and conflict within a family, by the author of *Sisters*, seen at The Questors last February.

December 30 – January 8

#### ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

by Joseph Kesselring

Dear old Martha and Abby have three nephews, a drama critic, an international criminal and a *lad* who thinks he's Teddy Roosevelt; but none of them is half as batty as Martha and Abby. *Arsenic and Old Lace* is one of the great modern comedies.

January 1, 2, 3 & 8 (Children's matinées)

#### WILFRED AND THE WIZARD-HUNT

An original play for children, brimming with Magic, Mystery and Mayhem.

### IN THE STUDIO

November 25 – 28

#### YOUR GONNA BE ALRIGHT, JAMIE BOY

by David Freeman

A savagely funny exposé of Canadian family life. As we all know so well, problems loom larger when the telly won't work . . .

December 16 – 19

#### ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

A theatrical event based on the poetry of Wilfred Owen, forming the first part of an exploration of the issues of the First World War. The same cast will appear in the second part, Peter Whelan's play *The Accrington Pals* in the main theatre in February.

January 13 – 16

#### GLASSHOUSES

by Stephen Lowe

Will our Jim become the new D.H. Lawrence? Is he Nottingham's answer to Fellini? Will he make the Great Break-through, or will he turn out just like his Dad?

**HOTPLATE** – During the run of main theatre productions delicious food is available in the upper foyer.

**OPEN MEETINGS** – If you would like to know more about The Questors you are welcome to attend an OPEN MEETING, any Wednesday at 7.45 p.m.

**SPECIAL OFFER** – The entrance fee is suspended for any new member joining The Questors before November 30th 1982. (Students are not charged an entrance fee at any time.)