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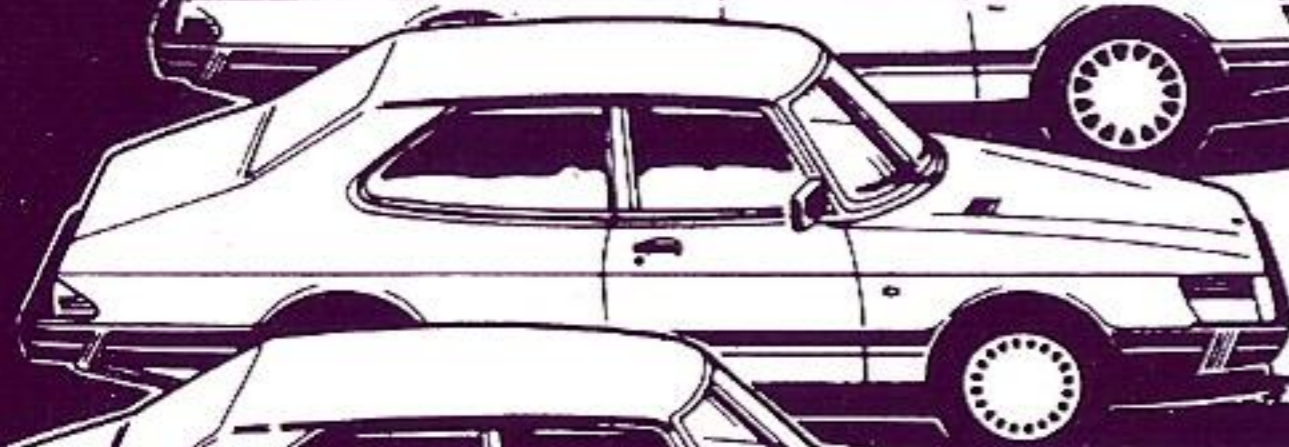
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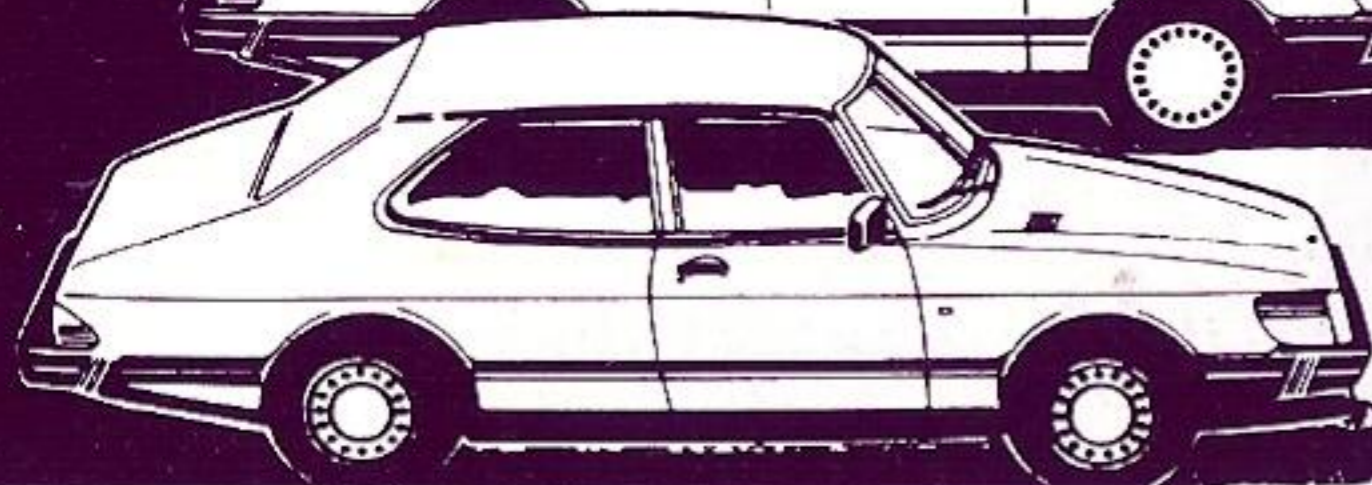
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# THE QUESTORS THEATRE

## DANGEROUS CORNER

by JB Priestley

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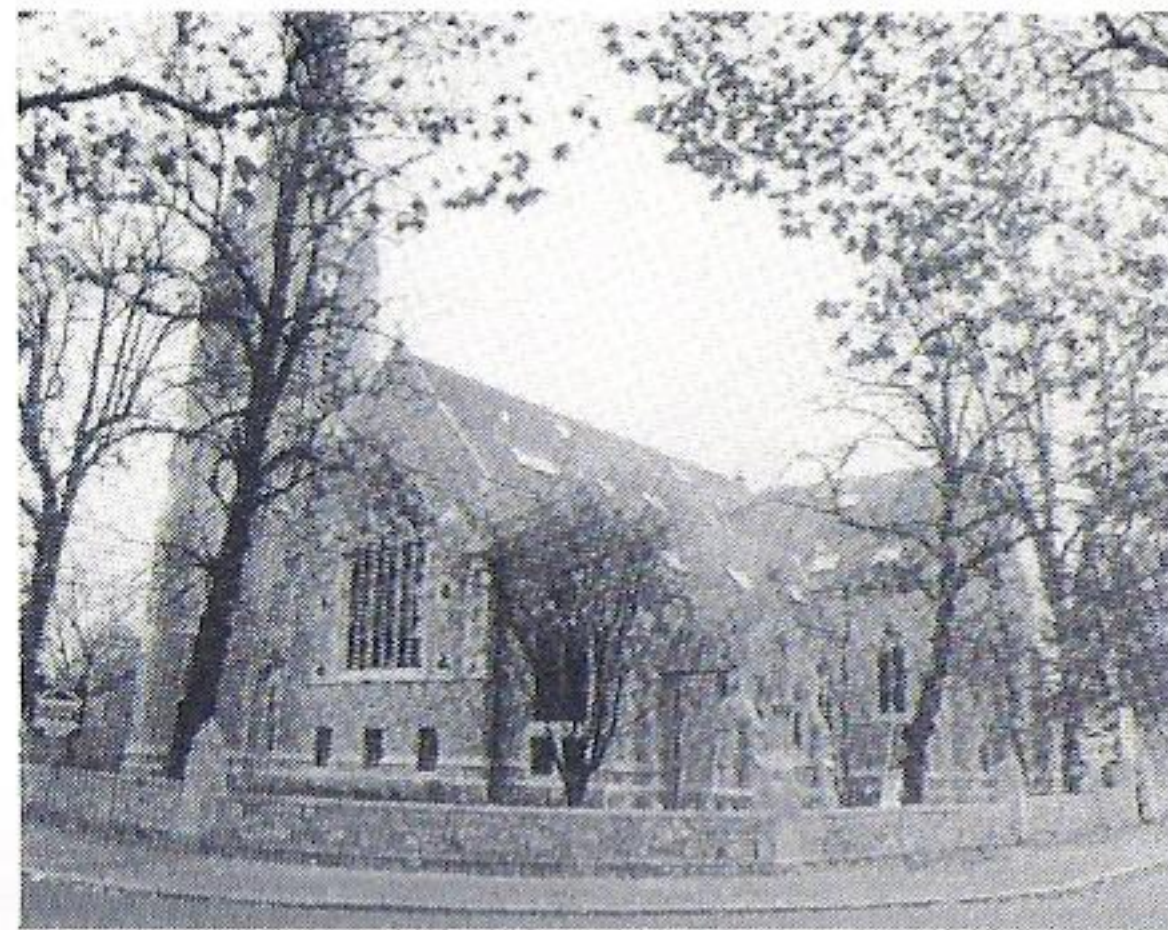


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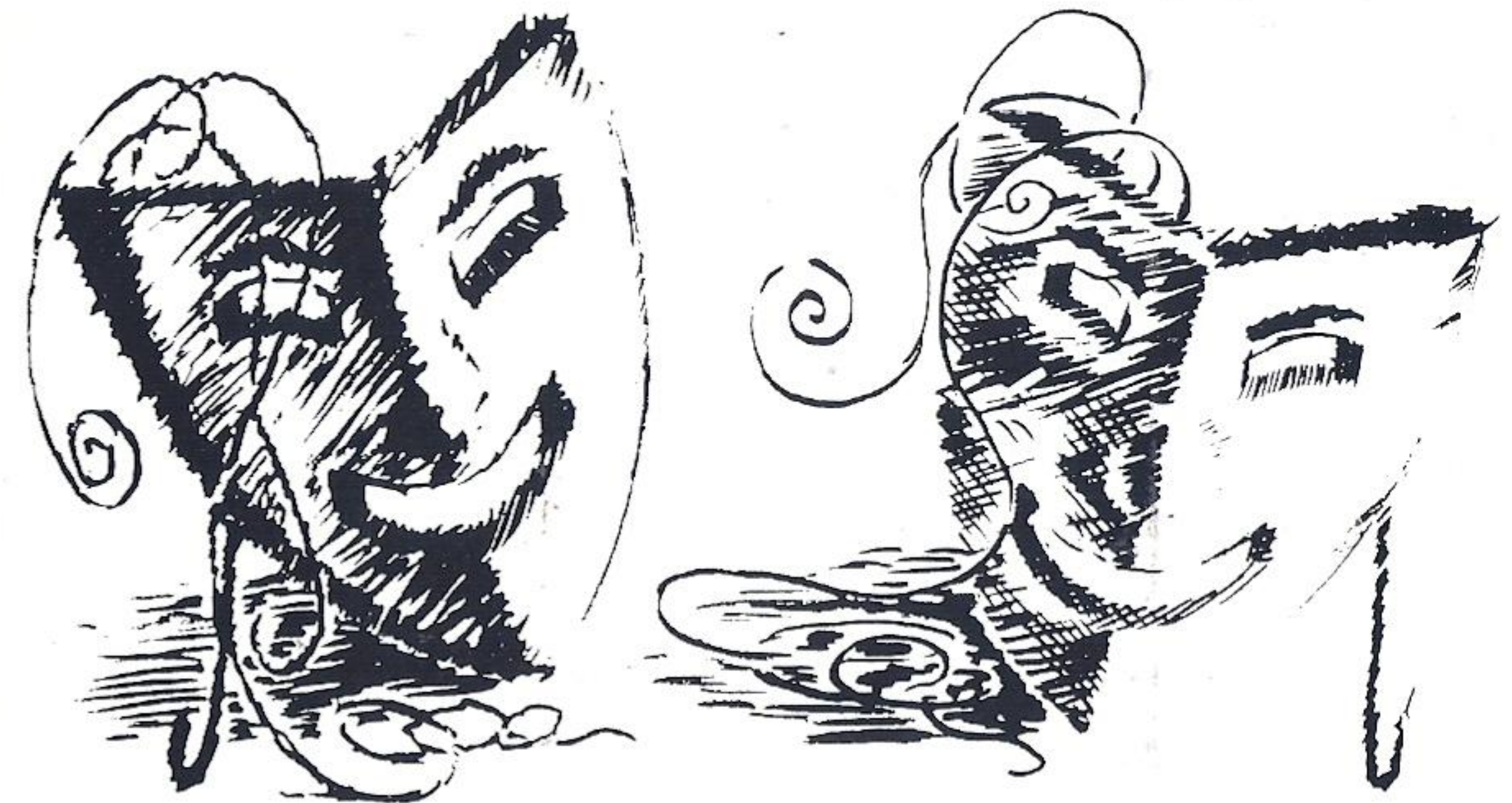
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# THE QUESTORS THEATRE

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The Questors presents

## DANGEROUS CORNER

by

**J B PRIESTLEY**

Directed and Designed by

**JEFFREY SMITH**

Costumes **BRIAN MOORHOUSE**

Lighting **ANDREW DIXON**

Sound **MAURY HORWICH**

This production is sponsored by



**GREENE KING**

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**Dangerous Corner** was Priestley's first play, written he says, to prove to himself that he could produce a theatre piece as well as the very successful novels such as **The Good Companions** and **Angel Pavement** which already stood to his credit.

Completed within a week - an extraordinary burst of creative activity even for Priestley - the play was first produced in 1932 at the Lyric Theatre, London, directed by Tyrone Guthrie. The cast included Esme Church, sometime Director of the Bradford Civic Theatre School, (which produced amongst others Tony Richardson, Edward Petherbridge and Bernard Hepton), and a young Flora Robson, seizing gleefully the splendid dramatic opportunities offered by the part of Olwen.

The production had mixed notices, but Priestley's determination - he had formed his own production company to present the play - coupled with some very favourable comments by the influential James Agate and Ivor Brown, carried the play through a comfortable run and on to a series of revivals. Revivals continue 50 years later, and have made it one of the author's most successful plays.

Priestley saw the play as "a trick thing in which time divided at the sound of a musical box." - the first example of his recurring fascination with time warps as evidenced by the theories of J W Dunne. But John Braine, in his book on Priestley, has expressed the view that the play is much more than this, focusing on the fact that in each of our lives a dangerous corner can be on the way. We hope it won't happen to us, but to see it happen to others gives an edge to life - which is what theatre is all about.

The play observes the unities of place and time - subject only to intervals for the convenience of the audience - and is unusual in the extent to which the plot depends on action performed by the characters prior to the opening of the situation depicted.

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What we see as the action unfolds is not so much a pursuit of the guilty party as in the traditional detective story, but rather a gradual revelation of the truth about a certain situation. We have been fascinated in rehearsal to establish exactly what each character knows at the beginning of the play and how the revelations which follow affect their attitude to each other and their estimations of themselves.

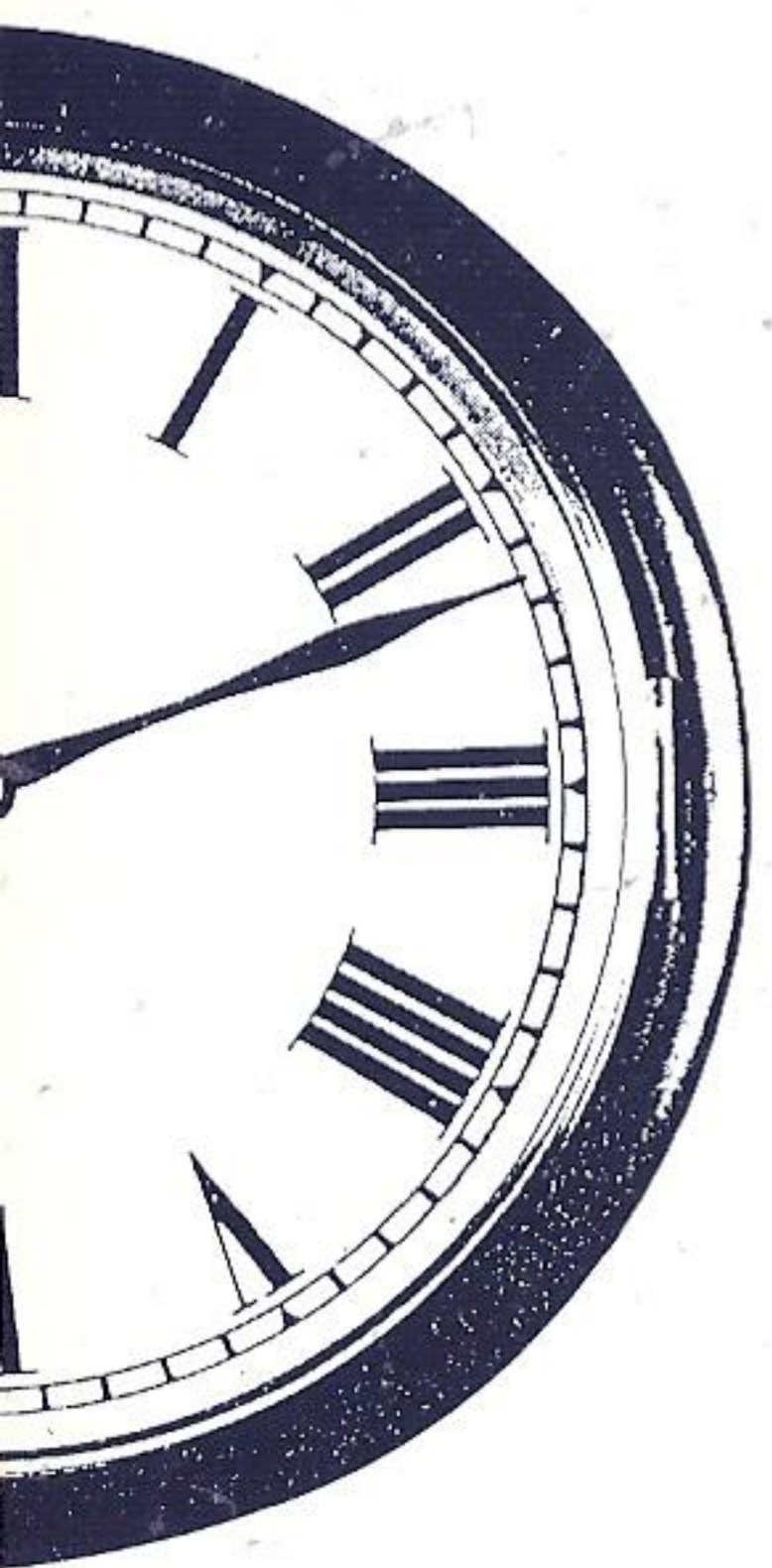
Those familiar with earlier productions of the piece may be surprised that we have departed from the usual chintzy-comfortable home counties setting, dressed in great detail with a wealth of realistic props. It seemed to me that another approach was possible. In his thoughtful study of Priestley and his plays, Gareth Lloyd-Evans notes that the play opens on a stage in darkness and that when the lights come on, no nicely-furnished lounge is provided for us by the author, whose naturalism is largely assumed by the audience. The details of the set are sparsely mentioned, with only five indications of a setting - a fireplace, a window, a table on which stands a wireless, a telephone and a dining room off stage. These elements, says Lloyd-Evans, could in fact be spotlit as they are required and then allowed to fade into a faceless background, resulting in a sort of grim charade in a limbo only alleviated occasionally by firm reminders of palpable living.

Whilst not going all the way with this space - staging concept, it did seem to me that a stripped down version of the set, with echoes of the art deco style so popular at the time, might perhaps focus more on the essentials of Priestley's time-warped whodunnit and that **Dangerous Corner** which the characters approach twice in the course of the play.

How often have you said "If only I had my time over again?" As Stephen Sondheim observed, "The door you didn't open, the path you didn't take, where might it have led?" Fascinating isn't it? As you reflect on your New Year resolutions, we wish you all the best for 1988. May you negotiate all its dangerous corners successfully and with no regrets.

**Jeffrey Smith**

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CAST

Freda Caplan

Miss Mockridge

Betty Whitehouse

Olwen Peel

Charles Stanton

Gordon Whitehouse

Robert Caplan

**SALLY COOPER**

**JANE DEWEY**

**LYN SCRIVENER**

**MARY DRAKE**

**VIC POMPINI**

**ROBERT GORDON CLARK**

**BRIAN INGRAM**

The scene is the drawing room of the Caplan's house at Chanterbury Close, after dinner.

The time is 1932

The action of the play is continuous.

**There will be two intervals of fifteen minutes each**

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Costumes **BRIAN MOORHOUSE**

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**PETER GIBBS**

**DOUGLAS MOODY**

**ARTHUR BOARDMAN**

**JOAN CURRY**

**BRIAN MOORHOUSE**

**JANE DEWEY**

**PETER GARDENER**

**GREASEPAINT**

**JOHN ROLF** for assistance in realising the set design

and to **STUART GRAY**

**DOUG KING**

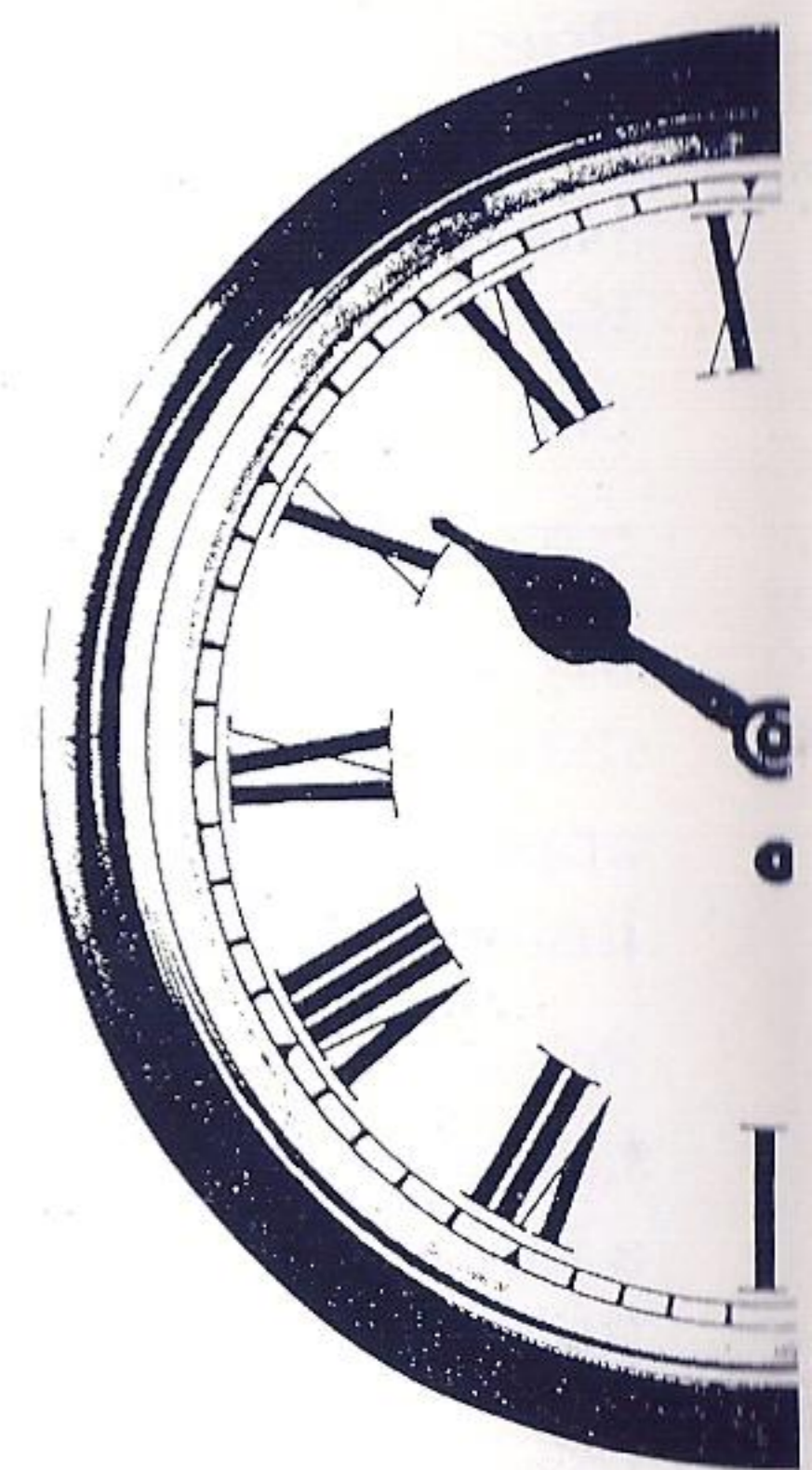
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## J B Priestley

Priestley was born in 1894 at Mannheim Road, Bradford. His early childhood, because of the death of his mother, was not a happy one. His time in the infant class at Whetley Lane primary School was, as he remembered eighty years later, in **Instead Of The Trees**, a miserable one.

"The woman I remember there obviously disliked me . . . I remember my own terror and despair, at an age when you don't realise that time may soon change everything, when you feel small, helpless and apparently doomed, arriving day after day with fear curdling your inside . . ."

Priestley won a scholarship to Belle Vue Grammar School, where his father had once taught, and at the age of seventeen he went to work as a junior clerk with a wool firm, Helm and Company, Swan Arcade, Bradford.

In early September 1914 he joined the 10th Duke of Wellington's. He speaks about the 1914 War with pain and grief particularly when he was commissioned and came into contact with the English class system. In June 1916 he was badly injured and partly deafened by a big trench mortar, he was rushed back to England where he spent a long time in hospital and convalescent camps.

Priestley took his degree in modern history and political science at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1921. In 1919 he married Pat Tempest, the daughter of a neighbour, whom he had got to know by playing duets for violin and piano. He left Cambridge in 1922 to freelance in London with just fifty pounds capital; he already had a foothold in literary journalism, a degree and some experience in lecturing, and he had his first book, **Brief Diversions**, a collection of essays, published.

By 1925 he had published five books, three of them were collections of essays, two of them works of criticism. He was now a professional.

The enormous success of **The Good Companions**, published in 1929, marked the emergence of J B Priestley as a great and prolific talent.

Taken from John Braine's book **J B Priestley**

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## SOME SIGNIFICANT WORKS:

1929	THE GOOD COMPANIONS	(novel)
1930	ANGEL PAVEMENT	(novel)
1932	DANGEROUS CORNER	(play)
1933	WONDER HERO	(novel)
	THE ROUNDABOUT	(play)
	LABURNUM GROVE	(play)
1934	EDEN END	(play)
1936	BEEES ON THE BOATDECK	(play)
1937	TIME AND THE CONWAYS	(play)
	I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE	(play)
	PEOPLE AT SEA	(play)
	MUSIC AT NIGHT	(play)
1938	WHEN WE ARE MARRIED	(play)
1939	JOHNSON OVER JORDEN	(play)
1943	THEY CAME TO A CITY	(play)
1944	DESERT HIGHWAY	(play)
1946	AN INSPECTOR CALLS	(play)
1947	THE LINDEN TREE	(play)
1948	THE GOLDEN FLEECE	(play)
	HOME IS TOMORROW	(play)
1949	A SUMMERS DAY DREAM	(play)

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**David Gordon** specialised in painting urban landscapes until moving to Buckinghamshire and concentrating on more verdant scenes. He has exhibited at the Royal Academy, the R.B.S.A. and other London and Midland Galleries. He completed a large mural for Sandwell Council before moving from the Midlands. A member of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and The Birmingham Art Circle. At present he is Custodian of Hughenden Manor for The National Trust.

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2, 3, 9th January

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