

questopics

QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE W5 5BQ 5670011 Box Office 567 5184

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APRIL PRODUCTION - 10th BIRTHDAY

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

by TOM STOPPARD

It's the 10th Anniversary of the Opening of our new playhouse, and we're celebrating it with a party on the 20th as well as the production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Alfred Emmet introduces the latter below. Incidentally, in the theatre programme for this production, Martin Bowley publishes the results of his poll of 10-year members to choose the 10 best productions in the new playhouse - so, if you don't come to the play, at least buy the programme!

10 years on seems a good time to discover and welcome a new, young playwright. Typically we're doing just that as you'll see in this issue. Looking forward, it will be interesting to see how he and others develop theatre and drama over the next ten years, and how we, The Questors, adapt and develop ourselves to meet the new demands presented to us.

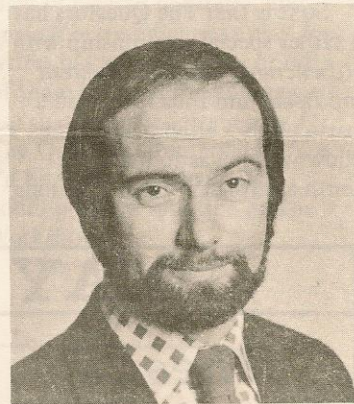
.....Ed.



Rosencrantz
NEVILLE CRUTTENDEN

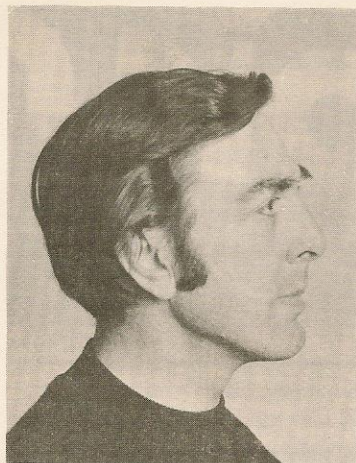
It was at the end of 1963 or early in 1964 that we had a visit from Walter Hasenclever, Director of the Literarisches Colloquium in West Berlin. He was looking for an English playwright to lead a seminar of young playwrights. We suggested James Saunders who happened at the time to be in Brussels for the production of one of his plays. Hasenclever re-routed his return to Berlin via Brussels, met Saunders at the airport, and agreed arrangements with him.

Among the five young playwrights who participated in the seminar that May was Tom



Guildenstern
DUNCAN LIVINGSTONE

Stoppard (also Derek Marlow, who had started his theatrical career as a Questors student, whose play *How I assumed the role of the popular dandy for purposes of seduction and other base matters* was presented at our New Plays Festival in 1965, and who since had a great popular success with his novel and film *A Dandy in Aspic*). A group of Questors actors was invited to Berlin to rehearse and present some of the short pieces which came out of the work done during the seminar, and then in October 1964 they presented a programme of five of the playlets



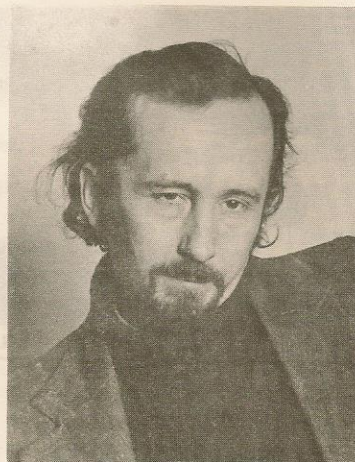
The Player
DAVID GOWER

in the Stanislavsky Room. Among these was a short piece by Tom Stoppard called *Guildestern and Rosencrantz*. This was the seed which later germinated and blossomed into one of the most brilliant plays of the decade.

So it is that *The Questors* has a rather special relationship with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and thus it seemed a particularly apt choice for the show which was to mark the tenth anniversary of the opening

of our new theatre (that was in April 1964 with Ibsen's *Brandt*, in the presence of the Queen Mother). The choice was not, let me hasten to add, just because of the association, but primarily because of the quality and entertainment value of the play. It was first presented, in a superb production by Derek Goldby, at the National Theatre in April 1967 and remained in the repertoire for three years. I personally enjoyed it so hugely that I went to see it no less than four times, a thing I have never done in any other single production of any play. Each time I found I relished it as much as ever. I have since seen the play also at the Young Vic and found it still stood up to less highly skilled production and acting.

Bill McLaughlin, who directs the play for *The Questors*, has enlisted an experienced cast, including Nevile Cruttenden and Duncan Livingstone in the title roles, David Gower as *The Player*, Richard Gaunt as *Hamlet*, Ken Ratcliffe and Ruth Tremayne Smith play *Claudius* and *Gertrude*.



Director
BILL McLAUGHLIN

Wyllie Longmore, who directs the 'play' within the play, also acts one of the tragedians. David Waterhouse designs the sets, Mary Anderson the costumes, which come from the R.S.C. My clumsy pen cannot adequately describe the play: I can only urge you to see it and promise you an evening of sheer delight. You may find your pleasure and enjoyment enhanced if you re-read *Hamlet* before you come.

ALFRED EMMET

MAY PRODUCTIONS

Theatre

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

by Luigi Pirandello
translated by Frederick May
directed by Suzanne Gregerson

MAY 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24 & 25

Members free seats not available
Guests 80p & 50p

Workshop

THE FRIENDS OF THE FRIENDS

Two short stories
by Henry James
*Adapted and
Directed by*
ALAN CHAMBERS

MAY 10, 11 & 12

Members FREE
Guests 30p

JIM'S NEW PLAY

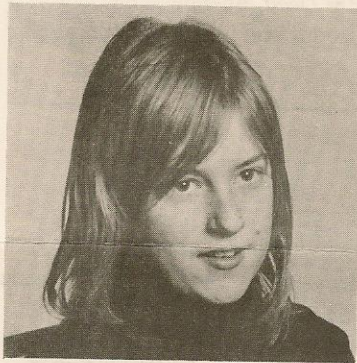
No, it's not James Saunders, but James Irvin, fourteen-year old son of Jo and Larry Irvin, two of our best-known acting members.

Jim has won one of 6 'Observer Young Playwrights' Awards' with his play *The Errand*. The competition is run by The Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in conjunction with the *Observer Magazine*. It will be performed at The Theatre Upstairs from April 2nd to 13th – a run of 16 performances, including matinees, and produced by John Barlow.

It was a bit of a last minute decision to enter on Jim's part, consequently Larry found himself typing the last few pages from various scraps of paper late into the night to meet the closing date for entries. This wasn't the end of the saga however. Having received the play, The Royal Court, who were in charge of judging the 100-plus entries, then lost the Irvin's address. It took them two weeks to find it, and tell Jim of his success.

The play itself involves an old man and an errand boy, who delivers goods to the house every week. And every week he gets involved in conversation with the old man, or rather is talked at by the old man about the time when he was young and his experiences as he got older, 'fragments of memory' as Jim puts it.

Jim developed his play from an essay he wrote at school; he says it is not based on his personal experience or anyone he knows, which is itself unusual for a first



JAMES IRVIN

work. It is the first complete play that Jim has written, although he does a lot of poetry and short story writing in his spare time.

But Jim is no stranger to the theatre, as he said himself, "I've been coming to The Questors since I was in the womb". He has been a Young Questor some 5 years and sees most of the main group productions. "I get lots of ideas by watching other people's plays" he says. "Quite often I sit there thinking what I would like to happen. Really its taking things, or situations, and exploring them that I enjoy".

As for Jo and Larry, well they're pleased naturally, and are half hoping the next play Jim writes has a part for one or both of them in it. As for the suggestion that he now write a play for The Questors, Jim replied, "Yes, I'd like that – perhaps Dad could produce it in one of The Workshops".

Over to you, Larry!

NOTING THE MINUTES

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

4th March

No more drips? It was reported that the final estimate for re-roofing the theatre was £2,411, that work had started on 4th March and was not expected to take more than 6 weeks.

Active Members' Meeting

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Active Members' Meeting to be held on 31st March. It was hoped a large number would attend.

Lobby V.A.T.

It was noted that the Chairman would remain active in lobbying for V.A.T. zero-rating for theatres.

Who Else?

It was agreed that on the Saturday of the first night of a Questors' production, priority use of the Theatre would be given to the production. (Don't say they don't plan at the C. of M. – Ed.)

Overtime

It was agreed that the Statement of Aims and financial reports

should be considered by a meeting of the Committee to be held at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, 6th April.

Minack '75

It was agreed that a production be taken to Minack in 1975, but it should not necessarily be the September play.

Crescent, Birmingham

The Committee records its congratulations to The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, on their Golden Jubilee.

THEM AND US

THE THEATRE OF WESTERN SPRINGS, in Illinois, USA, from one of whose leading members we had a visit a little while ago, has much in common with The Questors. For one thing, it was founded in the same year—1929. As did we, it planned and built a new playhouse for its needs, anticipating ours by three years. As we can reasonably claim that The Questors Theatre when planned was the most advanced design of playhouse in the UK, so Western Springs can claim that their delightful open-stage theatre was certainly in the very forefront of design in the USA when it was opened in 1961. Their theatre

consultant, James Hull Miller, who was responsible for the design, shared a platform with The Questors architect, Norman Branson, at the London Congress of the International Association of Theatre Technicians on Adaptable Theatres in 1961 (with Alfred Emmet in the Chair). Now they write to us that 'inspired perhaps in part by your example' they have decided to add a new wing to their theatre building and have launched an appeal for funds (\$200,000). And finally, their next production is to be *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, opening while our production is actually running!

Words Move

On Thursday 27th June, as part of the New Plays Festival, 1974, there will be an evening of poetry and verse, with a difference. The difference is that we are asking you to choose the poems.

I would ask you to send me the author and title of any poem you would like to hear read, with, if possible, the details of the collection or anthology in which it may be found. If you have any particular reasons for your choice you may care to add them to your request and they might be discussed after the reading of the piece.

I do hope the idea appeals to you. The success of the evening will depend on your response. I cannot, of course, promise that all the requested poems will be read. A selection will be made that we hope will provide an interesting and enjoyable presentation.

'Words Move' will take place in the Shaw Room at 7.45 p.m.

Please send requests to Carla Field at the Theatre.

HINTS FOR NEXT SEASON

Rumours of plans for next season are beginning to trickle through. Rumours like *Forget-me-not Lane* by Peter Nichols in September. *Old Times* by Harold Pinter in December and *King Lear* by Shakespeare in November.

October remains something of a mystery, the notes seen, said something about 'probably small cast and foreign' — the mind boggles.

STOP PRESS

Please book early for

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

First and last nights already SOLD OUT

Diary . . .

April 10th in the Shaw Room at 7.45 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

April 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 25 & 27 at 7.45 p.m.

ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD

by Tom Stoppard
Members free seats available
Guests 80p & 50p
Special Gala Performance —
Saturday April 20th, 7 p.m.

April 27th in the Foyer after the Performance

Discussion on 'Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead'.

April 29, 30 May 1, 2, 3, 4 at 7.45 p.m.

THIRD INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR THEATRE WEEK
Companies from:

U.S.A. —

April 29 & May 2 at 7.45p.m.
Rulsa Little Theatre presents
INDIANS by Arthur Kopit
and
AMERICA HURRAH

POLAND

April 30 & May 3 at 7.45p.m.
Theatr Stu of Warsaw presents
THE POLISH DREAM BOOK

FRANCE —

May 1 & 4 at 7.45p.m.
Le Cercle d'Art Populaire
of Paris presents
PANTAGLEISE
by Michael de Ghelderode
Members free seats NOT available
Tickets 80p & 50p
Season tickets for all 3 plays
£1.60 & £1.00 (3 for the price
of 2).

May 8th in the Shaw Room at 7.45 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS MEETING

May 10, 11, 12 in the Stanislavsky Room at 7.45 p.m.

Workshop Production
THE FRIENDS OF THE FRIENDS
Members free. Guests 30p

May 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 at 7.45p.m.

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR
by Luigi Pirandello,
translated by Frederick May.
Members free seats NOT available.
Tickets 80p & 50p

May 25th in the Foyer after the Performance

Discussion on 'Six Characters in Search of an Author'.