

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
[Third New Plays Festival 1962](#)

The Times, 18 June 1962

STAGE PICTURE OF RUSSIA IN 1905

Questors Theatre, Ealing: *The Children of Saturn*.

Miss Lydia Ragosin's play, the first to be presented at this year's festival of new plays at the Questors, was commissioned after the broadcast of her radio play of the same name. Yet another version has now been commissioned by B.B.C. Television. On Saturday "live" actors on an open stage brought something of special authenticity to a few scenes in this "moving picture" of the agony of the Old Order in Russia in 1905.

First, to the opening, where peaceful demonstrators stood out in their physical massiveness against a reddening backcloth, though their leader, Father Gapon, was so placed that he seemed not to belong with them. Again, whenever an individual performance was satisfying, it was reinforced by that privileged awareness of a spectator in the "live" theatre that this character was flesh and blood and the props being handled were concrete.

It was objects on the stage, as tangible as if in a shop-window, that made the gestures of Mr. Alan Chambers, as the chief of a local terrorist group, so telling as he sat at a table arguing or stood behind it packing a bag, and those of Mr. Thomas Mercer as an old General seem part of everyday life, even in that familiar scene of his parting from his son, when the latter was arrested.

There were moments of drama in both the background and the foreground of this production, but the switching of interest from one to the other was, seemingly, on the author's side, rough.