

The Questors Theatre Archives

Questories

The Fourth New Plays Festival 1963

FESTIVAL NEWS NO.2

We are just entering the last week of rehearsals and in another ten days the Festival will begin to coalesce as a whole. Seven separate plays, separately rehearsed and in different places do not easily fall together as a unity as naturally every individual is concentrating on his own little bit, as it were, and is hardly aware of the whole. Those concerned with the triple bills are now beginning to get the sense of belonging to their particular evenings as their plays are put together in a single rehearsal. I do believe this sense of belonging, however intangible, is important to us all. The next step is for those concerned with each bill to get the sense of belonging to the Festival, and in this connection I would like to suggest that everybody books to see the other plays as soon as possible and attend their discussions. In this connection, of course, there is no restriction on the number of discussions you attend, for the discussion on any particular evening is by no means confined to the audience of that night. It is good also to help with Front of House, Refreshments, Information Desk or what have you on nights when your show is not playing (it always gives the audience a great kick for instance to buy a programme or a cup of coffee from someone they recognise as having been acting on the play the previous night). It is even good just to be around on other nights and chat to people - members of the audience or anybody - for it greatly helps the social and Festival atmosphere.

Most of the Discussion Leaders are now fixed and you will be interested in enclosed, not unimpressive list.

There have been a few changes in personnel since the first Festival News - Ned Gethings has joined the cast of "The Things" as a Removal man. Nevill Bradbury has at short notice taken over the stage management of the Saunders and Campton plays as Victor Mitchell dropped out. Carol Smith is working with him and will take over during the run.

Naturally, difficulties crop up, but on the whole it seems to me, considering the magnitude of the task, rehearsals have been moving forward pretty smoothly. Perhaps some awful calamity has yet to occur! For the dogsbody drifting around, the most striking feature of the festival plays appears to be the sound tracks, which assail one from all sides with a conglomeration of noises and music(?) which might fairly be described as unusual. Dennis Comper and others have been putting in some stalwart work here.

THE THINGS. The author, Colin Finbow, was at the first rehearsal and expects to attend others. Tony Barber and Dorothy Boyd Taylor are playing the newly married couple and wish to make it clear this is not to be regarded as a trial run! Tom Mercer is the conjurer and has been having lessons in magic from club member and magician Geoffrey Culliford. The boy is played by Pat and Peter Ferriday's boy Martin and Mrs. Martin by Susan Tylor, her first part since graduating recently from the Student Group. Ralph Cottrell plays a Furnishing Man. Kit Emmet is producing, Jay Hillan is stage managing and other members of the stage team are Jenny Pettit, Pat McGrail, Gerry Isenthal, David Cook, Iris Phelps.

SAUNDERS AND CAMPTON is the easiest way of describing the second programme. In addition to "Who Was Hilary Maconochie?" (Dorinne Ingram, Alex Turner and Sandra Turner), James Saunders has written a short comedy of menace called "The Pedagogue" to complete the bill. This was specially written for Larry Irvin who plays it - there are no other characters, or, more accurately, there are no other actors. James Saunders also will be in touch with rehearsals, under Miles Brown's direction. David Campton was able to look in recently at a rehearsal of his play "Don't Wait For Me", in which Liz and Eddie are being played respectively by Mary Jones, her first part for The Questors, and Myles McDowell, who has had to sacrifice for it his magnificent growth of beard. He goes about the theatre unrecognised, Margaeret Taylor and Sheila Bray complete the cast, with student Wendy Jolly as the small girl.

"NORFOLK AND BERMEL" At the first rehearsal it was found that the two Norfolk plays were too short to make a reasonable evening's entertainment, so there has been added to the programme "THE WORK OUT" by Albert Bermel, in which the two parts are being played by Kay Eldridge and John Howard. "The Exhibitionists are Among Us" is played by Ruth Lister and Noel Collins, another Questors debut. The cast of "Goodness Gracious! Is That Really ME?" (these long titles will add seriously to our Festival printing bill) consists of Jane Hodlin, Joan Pyle, Carol Allen, Bill Baker, Douglas Thomas, James Smith and Peter Healy.

Assisting Alan Chambers in the production of these plays is Roger Saxton-Howes. Pat Ferriday is Stage Manager with Jill Champion Deputy Stage Manager and assisted by Colin Grigg, Sheila Carlisle, Diane Williams, Pat McNamara, Roger Emmet and Maire Steadman.

Helping to coordinate the whole Festival are Ruth Lister as Production Secretary, David Evans as Festival Stage Manager, Tony Shipley as Festival Lighting Manager and Graham Evans as Festival Sound Director. And I'm a sort of dogsbody barking in the dark corners.

[AE?]