

A PROGRAMME OF THREE PLAYS
The Questors Student Group
February 1958
Press cuttings

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Versatile drama students in a triple bill at the Questors

Variety underlines the programme mapped out by The Questors for their Student Group. In the three plays presented by second year students, we heard (very creditable) Irish accents in Lady Gregory's "The Full Moon"; burned and suffered in the torrid atmosphere of Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba"; and laughed while accepting the absurd conventions of Molière's "Sganarelle."

Irish plays of the type of Lady Gregory's the writer cannot stomach, which makes it difficult to assess the production. One was, however, greatly pleased with Barbara Turpin's "Mrs Broderick." She not only spoke, but looked and (rarer) stood and moved, in the manner of the character she represented, and possessed a happy knack of throwing off remarks such as "Murder is (gone?) out of the way this long time since. It's the administration!" in just the right, easy manner.

As Hyacinth Halvey, Kenneth Kane managed the accent successfully but did not seem to have quite the presence to have carried off his role among the townfolk. "Crackled Mary" (Helen Blatch) looked well but was somewhat too sane for one's liking. There might have been earlier indication of insanity - a sidelong glance, a slewed head: after all art is larger than life. But she produced a fine, crazy laugh eventually.

The action of the play takes place in a shed near a railway station in Western Ireland. This makes it difficult to provide variety in movement and grouping, though more would certainly have been welcome.

Other parts were played by Philip Clark, Derek Morris, Stuart Hartley, Hilary Sheath and Graham Evans. Stage management was by Sonia Frisell.

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Evocative atmosphere
The second play was notable for its evocative atmosphere. The iron rule of convention in Spanish domestic life, with its resultant effect on passionate Southern natures, was implicit all through. The subtle but maleless sisters were well presented by Sonia Frisell, Hilary Sheath, Dorothy Boyd-Taylor and Helen Blatch, and Sandra Turner was excellent as the self-righteous spinster about to receive her matrimonial reward. The right notes were struck by Barbara Turpin as the shrewd, earthy old servant and by Linda saw Bouvier as the iron widow. Josephine Rowbottom played a maidservant, and Stuart Hartley was responsible for the stage management.

In Molière's "Sganarelle" the heroine, Celie, was delightfully presented by Dorothy Boyd-Taylor. She looked and acted well, moved gracefully, and was never out of period. Sandra Turner, on the other hand, though most amusing and lively as Sganarelle's wife, failed to reconcile the modernity implicit in the "plus ça change, plus c'est le même chose" of all good comedy with a feeling for the actual period portrayed and Letie (Graham Evans) was too hobbledohoy for a dashing young Parisian; he did not carry himself with the grace nor the swagger of the part.

Sganarelle himself, the red-faced, comfortable, chicken-hearted merchant who does not trust his pretty young wife, was well visualized by Derek Morris, who made effective use of his asides. Other parts were played by Stuart Hartley, Sonia Frisell, and Kenneth Kane. Stage management was by Barbara Turpin.

All the plays were produced by Geraldine Alford. Costumes, designed by Helen Blatch, were made in The Questors' wardrobe by Veronica Meredew and Eileen Wooder. Settings were designed by Madge Turnbull and built in the theatre workshop by Graham Harrington. General stage management was by John Coates, assisted by Deana Lindie, Vivien Innes, and Maureen Stears. Lighting was by Colin James and sound by Row Montgomery. Rena Rice and Archie Cowan were responsible for theatre and house management.

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