

**The Minack Theatre  
Porthcurno**

**The Questors, London**

**present**



THE QUESTORS THEATRE, London, was founded in 1929 and has been established at its present home in Ealing, in West London, since 1933. The original theatre was a converted chapel, shared with the local Boy Scouts and equipped at a cost of about £75. This building continued in use until 1963, when it was demolished to make way for a new theatre. The new building is an adaptable theatre, with facilities for apron, arena and proscenium staging, and together with its ancillary buildings cost £90,000. It was opened in April 1964, and has attracted interest from theatre people all over the world. The Questors company is entirely amateur, and presents some fourteen plays each year at the theatre. In addition there are occasional performances by visiting professional companies.

**Background to the action:**

Greek mythology, like the Arthurian legends of this country, combines historical facts of the lives and times of real people with fables and fantasies about the powers of those same people and their relations with the gods. Thus it happens that the well-known, and seemingly supernatural, stories of the ancient Greeks contain the outlines of the early history of the Northern Mediterranean region, which in turn produced the origins of our Western Civilisation.

Theseus was the son of Aegeus, King of Athens. One of his earlier exploits was the slaying of the fire-breathing white bull, sent by the god Poseidon, which had killed men by the hundred, among them the son of Minos, King of Crete. Pasiphae, Queen to Minos, had coupled with this bull and borne the Minotaur, a bull-headed monster which King Minos kept in a labyrinth at his great palace. Minos demanded seven youths and seven maidens every ninth year from Athens, as a sacrifice to the Minotaur. Theseus travelled to Crete and with the help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, entered the labyrinth and killed the Minotaur. In return for her help, he promised to take Ariadne back to Athens as his wife, but he abandoned her on the island of Naxos. He returned to Athens with black sails hoisted and Aegeus, recognising this as the signal for failure in their mission, threw himself into the sea.

Theseus succeeded Aegeus as King of Athens and proceeded to unify the city-states of the Athenian peninsula, known as Attica. He led an expedition to Amazonia, and took Antiope, Queen of the Amazons, as his wife. She bore him a son, Hippolytus.

When Theseus later entered into an alliance with King Deucalion of Crete, he married Deucalion's sister Phaedra, who was also a daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, and Antiope was killed. Hippolytus was sent to Troezen, where he was adopted as heir to the throne. Phaedra became strongly attracted to Hippolytus while Theseus was on an expedition in Epirus, and the play recounts their fate thereafter



THE QUESTORS

FIRST PERFORMANCE

MONDAY, 14th AUGUST, 1967

at The Minack Theatre, Porthcurno,

# PHAEDRA

A verse translation of

RACINE'S PHÈDRE

by

ROBERT LOWELL

For The Questors Ltd.:

*Tour Manager* ..... Tony Shipley  
*House Manager* ..... Clifford Hampton  
*Publicity Manager* ..... Marie Crabb

After a period of seventeen years 'running with the wolves', as he himself described it, Racine, in 1677, returned to his Church and to the Jansenist sympathies that had moulded his youth. It was in this year that he wrote his masterpiece 'Phèdre', and there can be little doubt that his own guilt at his way of life and his struggles to come to terms with his faith are mirrored in the play. Jansenism regarded man as fundamentally corrupt, and the sect was obsessed with predestination; their outlook was one which came near to believing that human beings were damned or saved for all eternity. They believed that men had small chance of salvation if unaided by divine grace.

Phaedra shows Racine's attitudes to these problems. The main character has been described as 'one of the just to whom grace has not been vouchsafed', for Phaedra spends the entire play struggling with desires that the Goddess Aphrodite has visited upon her. Her tragedy lies not in her death but in the fact that beyond death she must confess her sins before her father Minos, who holds the judgement seat in Hades.

Racine has rightly been considered untranslatable. There is no equivalent in the English verse tradition for the syllabic alexandrines in which he wrote; his virtues of discipline and restraint have often led to translations seeming flat and limping. Robert Lowell, perhaps one of the greatest living American poets, has created, however, a verse form for the play which allows the language to do the work that it did in the original. It is a magnificent achievement. We hope our performance can come somewhere within reach of matching it.

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*The play will be presented with one interval of 20 minutes.*

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## PHAEDRA

- |   |                         |             |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| THESEUS .....   | Ivan Pinfield           |             |
| <i>son of Aegeus and King of Athens</i>                   |                         |             |
| PHAEDRA .....   | Peggy Butt              |             |
| <i>wife of Theseus and daughter of Minos and Pasiphae</i> |                         |             |
| HIPPOLYTUS .....  | Peter Healy             |             |
| <i>son of Theseus and Antiope, Queen of the Amazons</i>   |                         |             |
| ARICIA.....   | Mavis Sage              |             |
| <i>princess of the royal blood of Athens</i>              |                         |             |
| OENONE .....  | Mary Jones              |             |
| <i>nurse of Phaedra</i>                                   |                         |             |
| THERAMENES .....  | Martin Bowley           |             |
| <i>tutor of Hippolytus</i>                                |                         |             |
| ISMENE .....  | Sandra Wainwright-Fahey |             |
| <i>friend of Aricia</i>                                   |                         |             |
| PANOPE .....  | Jean Harding            |             |
| <i>waiting-woman of Phaedra</i>                           |                         |             |
| Guards .....  | }                       |             |
|   |                         | John Stacey |
|   |                         | Eric Smith  |
|   | Dick Bennett            |             |

DIRECTED BY ALAN CHAMBERS

COSTUMES DESIGNED BY MARGARET REICHLIN  
and made in The Questors Wardrobe

MUSIC COMPOSED BY DON KINCAID



## For 'Phaedra'

Stage Manager ..... Gerry Blake  
Deputy Stage Manager ..... John Stacey  
Assistant Stage Managers ..... { Dick Bennett  
Patricia Ferriday  
Peter Wall  
Dorothy Wood  
Properties Mistress ..... Iris Phelps  
assisted by ..... { Hilary Ellwood  
Frances O'Neill  
Wardrobe Mistress ..... Eleanor Panayi  
Lighting ..... Tony Shipley  
Sound ..... David Edwards

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The Questors wish to acknowledge the help and assistance received from local organisations in connection with this production.

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Members of the audience are respectfully requested not to leave litter at the theatre, or to walk on the stage area at any time.

All photographic rights are retained by the owners of The Minack Theatre.

The taking of flash-light photographs during the performance is strictly forbidden.

## Next week at The Minack :

The Interluders, Hertford,  
present 'Dr. FAUSTUS',  
by CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

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NEXT SEASON  
at  
THE QUESTORS

The Questors Theatre  
Mattock Lane  
Ealing, London, W.5

September 23rd—30th

'PHAEDRA'  
by *Racine/Lowell*

October 21st—28th

'THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT'  
by *Labiche and Michel*

November 15th—18th

A Questors Workshop  
Production

December 2nd—9th

'MOTHER COURAGE'  
by *Berthold Brecht*

THE QUESTORS is a Club Theatre. Details of membership may be obtained from the Administrator—Telephone 01-567 0011.