

THE QUESTORS

REHEARSED READINGS IN THE UPPER FOYER.

6th NOVEMBER 1988

A reading of

" THE MADRAS HOUSE "

by

Harley Granville Barker.

C A S T

HENRY HUXTABLE.....	Mr. John Kearns.
KATHERINE HUXTABLE.....	Miss Catherine Grubb
LAURA HUXTABLE.....	Mrs. Ffrangcon Whelan
MINNIE HUXTABLE.....	Miss Ann Marie Tighe
CLARA HUXTABLE.....	Miss Sarah Andrews
JULIA HUXTABLE.....	Miss Catherine Grubb
EMMA HUXTABLE.....	Miss Sarah Andrews
JANE HUXTABLE.....	Miss Ann Marie Tighe
MAJOR HIPPISLY THOMAS.....	Mr. Roy Law
PHILIP MADRAS.....	Mr. Jon Sayers
JESSICA MADRAS.....	Miss Sarah Andrews
CONSTANTINE MADRAS.....	Mr. Tony Worth
AMELIA MADRAS.....	Mrs. Ffrangcon Whelan
EUSTACE PERRIN STATE.....	Mr. Peter Healy
MARION YATES.....	Miss Ann Marie Tighe
MR. BRIGSTOCK.....	Mr. Brian Ingram
MISS CHANCELLOR.....	Mrs. Ffrangcon Whelan
MR. WINDLESHAM.....	Mr. Brian Ingram
MR. BELHAVEN.....	Mr. Peter Healy
MAID.....	Miss Ann Marie Tighe
DIRECTED BY	Mr. Gene Foad
Stage Management.....	Miss Helen Pullin
Catering.....	Mr. Brian Moorhouse
Rehearsed Reading Organiser.....	Miss Jane Dewey

Special Thanks to - Miss Jane Dewey for her invaluable assistance and to the cast for their enthusiasm and participation.

COMING EVENTS.

The next reading features two One Act Plays by Harley Granville Barker -

November 27th "Rococo" & "Vote by Ballot" - Directed by Simon Higginson.
7.45pm in the Upper Foyer.

And for Christmas a special event -

A reading packed with seasonal mirth and general jollity - directed by Phill Sheahan.

Harley Granville Barker - 1877-1946 - was born in London and started his acting career at the age of 14. He was in his day, the most famous and respected director in the British Theatre and his reputation as an actor stood almost as high. Today, he is known, if he is known at all, as the author of such plays as "The Madras House" (National Theatre 1977), "The Voysey Inheritance", and "Waste" (BBC T.V. 1977), together with his "Prefaces to Shakespeare". Although his active career in the theatre was relatively brief, ending after 1921, the influence he exerted was a major factor in the development of Twentieth Century theatre.

My first impression of "The Madras House" was that it was a comedy about the position of women in contemporary Victorian/Edwardian society. However, on closer inspection, I now believe the play to be a comedy concerned with "SEX" in society and the freedom of the Human Spirit (but not politically) and not the Feminine Spirit in preference to the Masculine Spirit.

The play has no real plot to speak of - it does not tell a story - but the four acts, each dealing with a separate situation are held together by the central themes of SEX, MONEY, & IDEALISM. Barker achieves the play's forward movement via a range of passionately perceived ideas. The characters remain unchanged throughout the play, and we can only surmise that those destined to develop will do so in the future. Of the twenty five "portraits" that we meet, only three - Miss Yates, Jessica and Philip have the ability to change their status quo - perhaps - there is hope for them.

In Act One we are introduced to the Huxtable family; a fairly typical middle class Victorian/Edwardian family, with six unmarried daughters, varying in age from 26 - 39. Barker presents the the "family" as a prison which incarcerates the daughters, stifling their creativity both sexual and cerebral.

In Act Two the "prison" is Roberts and Huxtables drapery shop in Peckham. Here we find that the inmates are both male and female - employed in the shop by day and sleeping on the premises in supervised dormitories.

Act Three is set in the Madras House gown shop in Bond Street, and is concerned more with commercial exploitation than imprisonment.

Act Four, which I have omitted from this reading, due primarily to the shortage of time, looks at women in marriage - in particular with regards to Jessica's relation to Philip.

FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO ATTEND THERE WILL BE A SHORT DISCUSSION AFTERWARDS.

More lengthy discussion will follow the readings of "Rococo" and "Vote by Ballot" on 27th Nov.