

QUESTORS ARCHIVES

A SURVEY OF STUDENT GROUP PRODUCTIONS

Part Five
1970-1973

compiled by
John Dobson

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STUDENT GROUP 23 (1968-1970)

Alumni from Group 23 include **Heather Tobias** and **John Wilson** (who had both appeared in the previous year's productions as first year students) and **Judy Lane** (repeating the course after Group 22).

February 1970 saw the marriage of two ex-students and cornerstones of Questors, **David and Sonia Pearson**.



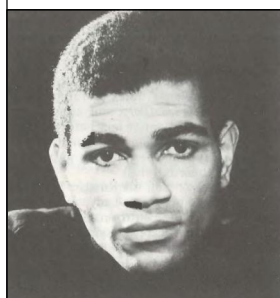
Hilary Liddell, a course tutor at Morley College and actress wife of **Bernard Hepton** (*Z Cars*, *Jackanory*, *Colditz* etc), briefly took over as speech tutor during 1969-1970.

Student Group 23 February 1970

THE RESURRECTION (Wakefield Mystery Plays)
AN OFFICE OF PROFIT by Peter Preston
BLACK COMEDY by Peter Shaffer



Questotpics February 1970



*This issue features **Wyllie Longmore's** production for the students. Wyllie, who was himself a student some 7 years ago is now a lecturer at Rose Bruford College. On the departure of **Michael Hoddell** for a headship in Brighton, Wyllie stepped into the breach last summer by taking over as Acting Tutor for The Questors Second Year Students. In this production members will have their first opportunity of studying the new field.*

Wyllie Longmore, faced with the problem of choosing three plays which would fully exploit and expose the talents of the Second Year Student Group and yet provide an entertaining evening for the audience, would appear to have found the ideal solution. The three plays which are discussed briefly on these pages could not provide a better contrast in style and content; they exploit all the emotions and provide as many as three plum acting parts for some of the 10 Second Year Students, a selection of whom we are presenting in this issue. Lack of space makes it impossible for us to show them all — these just happened to be rehearsing on the night our photographer was available.

THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection has been taken from its original context in the York Cycle of Mystery Plays. It stands apart in its medieval simplicity revealing the depth of feeling and involvement of the characters.

The cold calculating Pilate schemes with Annas and Caiphas; the soldiers boast proudly of their strength and reliability while Jesus, whose body they guard, begins to speak. The irony of his crucifixion becomes apparent as he forgives and offers to save mankind. The three Marys sharing their sorrow go to the tomb and find Jesus no longer there. Pilate is furious and makes excuses and the play ends as Mary Magdalene makes her triumphant reconciliation with Jesus after mistaking him for a gardener.

BLACK COMEDY

Peter Shaffer's play Black Comedy lets us see how people really behave when they think that no-one can see them. When the lights go up on stage the audience is asked to imagine that for the characters the lights have in fact just failed. As they grope blindly in the 'darkness' identities are mistaken, actions belie words and secret passions are indulged in.

AN OFFICE OF PROFIT

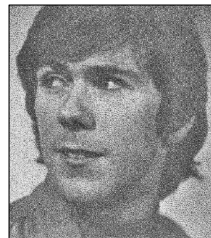
Written by Peter Preston An Office of Profit is unmistakably in the style of the Restoration with ladies taking walks in the park, having fits of the vapours and flirting with young gentlemen of the town, while the gentlemen forever gallant and eloquent in address are not past hiding in closets and muttering strange forsooths and poxes on everything when things do not go as they hoped they might.



Carol Wiseman



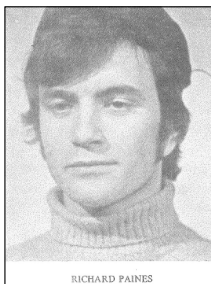
Christine Richardson



John Wilson



Mary Kennedy



RICHARD PAINES



YASMIN AHMED

February 18th 1970

The Questors Student Group

presents

THE RESURRECTION

from The Wakefield Mystery Plays
edited by Martial Rose

Pilate	SEBASTIAN VERGHESE
Caiaphas	RICHARD EARTHY
Ahnas	KEVIN FELLS
Centurion	RICHARD PAINES
1st Soldier	STEVEN HALLMARK
2nd Soldier	PETER COLEMAN
3rd Soldier	KEVIN BARRETT
4th Soldier	SAM SMALL
1st Angel	YASMIN AHMED
2nd Angel	MARY KENNEDY
Jesus	JOHN WILSON
Mary Magdalene	JUDY LANE
Mary Jacobi	CAROL WISEMAN
Mary Salome	CATHIE FRASER

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

AN OFFICE OF PROFIT or NEPOTISM TRIUMPHANT

by Peter Preston

Betsyey, a serving wench	CHRISTINE RICHARDSON
Lucy, daughter to Quibble	YASMIN AHMED
Quibble, a Crown Officer	KEVIN FELLS
Venai, his assistant	RICHARD EARTHY
Mrs. Quibble, his wife	CATHIE FRASER
Feckless	SEBASTIAN VERGHESE
Willcoat } gentlemen of the town {	JOHN WILSON
Christina, mistress to Quibble	JUDY LANE
The action takes place in an Office in Whitehall during the reign of Charles II.	

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

BLACK COMEDY

by Peter Shaffer

Brindsley Miller	RICHARD PAINES
Carol Melkett	CHRISTINE RICHARDSON
Miss Funnival	CAROL WISEMAN
Colonel Melkett	KEVIN FELLS
Harold Gorringe	JOHN WILSON
Clea	MARY KENNEDY
Schuppanzigh	RICHARD EARTHY
Georg Bamberger	SEBASTIAN VERGHESE

The action takes place in Brindsley Miller's apartment in South Kensington, London, 9.30 on a Sunday night.

The three plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Sets designed by JOHN ROLFE

Kevin Fells was a member of the Student Group 67/68. He appears with the present group in place of one of the original members who, unavoidably had to withdraw after the one act programme had been cast.

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Mixed grill at the Questors



Groping their way around in the dark in "Black Comedy" — one of three plays being presented by second year students at the Questors Theatre — are left to right, Kevin Fells, Richard Paines, John Wilson, Mary Kennedy and Christine Richardson.
Picture right in "An office of profit" are Yasmin Ahmed and John Wilson



Another scene (above) from "Black Comedy" with Christine Richardson, Richard Paines and Mary Kennedy. This is a play "in reverse", with the audience imagining the stage is in darkness.
On the left is Kathie Fraser as she appears in "An office of profit".
Two of the main characters in "An office of profit" are Judy Lane and Kevin Fells. The play is set in the style of the Restoration

THREE plays with plenty of contrast are running at the Questors Theatre until tomorrow night (Saturday). The plays are one-acters specially produced for the Questors' second year students.
The first is "The Resurrection," taken from the York Cycle of Mystery Plays.
This shows the scheming of Pilate with Annas and Caiaphas, the boasting of soldiers guarding Jesus's body, and Pilate's fury when the body disappears.
The second is "Black Comedy," by Peter Shaffer, which takes a look at how people behave when they are unobserved.

When the stage lights go up, the audience is asked to imagine the lights have gone out for the characters. As they grope blindly in the darkness, identities are mistaken, actions belie words, and secret passions are indulged.
The third play, again takes a wide swing out of the straight and narrow.
Entitled "An Office of Profit," it involves gallant and eloquent young men of the Restoration hiding in closets and cursing things that don't go their way, while the women are busy having "the vapours" and taking walks in the park.

Sebastin Vehgese, well wigged and in period costume, for his role in "An office of profit"

TUTOR PRODUCES

The producer is Wylie Longford, who is acting tutor to the Questors' second year students, and also a lecturer at Rose Bruford College.
He chose the three plays, which are designed to expose and exploit to the full the talents of his group.
Mr. Longford is a product of the 1962/63 Questors training course.
The programme opened on Wednesday.
Among the students taking part are: Mary Kennedy, John Wilson, Carol Wiseman, Richard Paines, Christine Richardson and Yasmin Ahmed.
The production is the first of the current season.
On March 1, a Schools Touring Company present excerpts from Irish plays by Irish playwrights — "The Playboy of the Western World" by J. M. Synge; "O'Flaherty, V.C." by George Bernard Shaw; "The Shadow of a Gunman" and "Juno and the Paycock" by Sean O'Casey.

Gloucester Road tube alterations

LONDON Transport announced this week that, starting on Sunday, March 1, all eastbound District and Circle line trains will serve the central island platform at Gloucester Road Station, instead of the northern outer platform.
As a result, passengers will board and alight from trains through the right-hand doors instead of the left-hand, as now.
The change is being made so that all doors of right-car Dis-





**Group 23 in
AN OFFICE FOR PROFIT**

QUESTOR STUDENTS IN TRIPLE BILL

THREE plays presented at the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, were specially chosen to sketch the talents of the theatre's second year students — and stretch them they did!

The plays were selected and produced by Wyllie Longmore, himself a product of one of the Questors' student courses. The plays were staged on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The first was "The Resurrection," a medieval play taken from the Wakefield Mystery Plays. It concerns the plotting of Pilate and the Pharisees to conceal the miracle of Christ's resurrection, and His meeting with Mary Magdalene.

The play is written in rhyming couplets, a factor which sometimes proved a stumbling block. Some of the actors had

not appeared on stage before.

It was difficult to avoid repeating the lines in a flat monotone, stopping at the end of each line to emphasise the limerick type meter.

But the students coped well, handling their parts with particular deftness were Judy Lane as Mary Magdalene, and Richard Paines as the Centurion, who declares his faith in Christ after witnessing the crucifixion.

OVER-EMOTIONAL

Sebastian Verghese, as Pilate, showed more feeling as the play went on, but his words sometimes tended to be lost when he put too much emotion into them.

In sharp contrast, the second play was full of the flowery language and gestures of the Restoration.

Written by Peter Preston, the play, "An Office of Profit," was difficult to fault. The cast carried off the grace and humour of the reign of Charles II with considerable aplomb.

Yasmin Ahmed, with her vapours and crafty asides to the audience, fitted her part beautifully. Her stage father, the pompous civil servant, Quibble, played by Kevin Fells, produced a nice character study.

This light comedy passed off smoothly and professionally, and led neatly into the last play, "Black Comedy," by Peter Schaffer.

This play was a fitting climax to the evening, producing some real belly laughs.

It opens in complete darkness, and when the lights go up, the audience is expected to imagine the

lights in the flat of young sculptor, Brindsley Miller, have fused.

Then the fun starts. Players grope about in full view of the audience, and some weird situations ensue.

WRY COMMENT

But underneath all the humour, there is some wry comment on human behaviour.

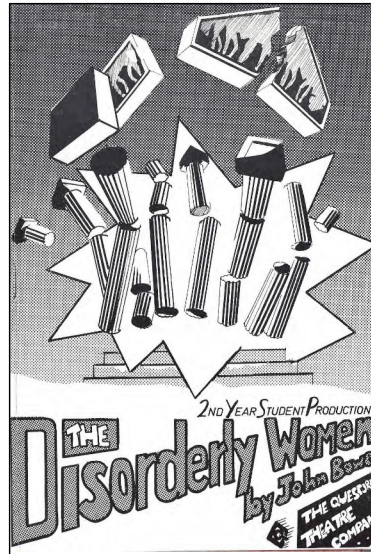
The situation gathers together a number of divers characters — a homosexual, a spinster who turns to the bottle, a deb, two Germans, a slinky ex-girl friend and a nervous wild-eyed sculptor.

Timing and delivery were exactly right, and every situation was exploited to the full.

This play completed a thoroughly enjoyable set and producer Wyllie Longmore should be well satisfied.

**Student Group 23
July 1970**

**THE DISORDERLY WOMEN by John Bowen
Directed by Wyllie Longmore
Designed by Cathie Fisher**



John Bowen's updated version of Euripides' **THE BACCHAE**, had received its first performance the previous year at the Stables Theatre, Manchester - so ours must have been amongst the first amateur productions. The Stage described the play as a "gory tale" with "a liberal sprinkling of hippy philosophy." The main protagonists in the Manchester production were John Fraser and, taking a break from Coronation Street, William Roache (aka Ken Barlow). I am pretty sure that John Wilson was a match for him in the part of Pentheus.

Our production included a filmed sequence by **Paul Smith**, though how it was incorporated into the performance is not clear. **QUESTOPICS** included the following description of the shoot:

One day in Spring, one of those days of tempestuous showers and glimpses of dazzling sunshine, 1970 Student Group switched on at dawn and zoomed off in tuned-up minis and beat-up Chevrolets to some wild open space for a groovy film session. Mr. Director said: "I want daffodils". So they just had to find some place where daffodils grew or else they had to do a transplant — at least they were in season. "There are lots in Kew Gardens" somebody brightly suggested. "Yes but you can't trample on them there. They are so particular — they're not switched on". The hippies were more interested in finding mushrooms but eventually some hill was found in the far away district of Hampstead, with hosts of golden daffodils or at least one or two and flower power was enjoyed. The filming began: the hippies, joined by the Queen Mother, tripped around, and became bespattered with mud and blood as they tore King Pentheus to pieces. Libations were made and after the Royal blood had been sprinkled and the last drop of milk had been drunk (no film location is complete without it) 1970 Student Group left.

QUESTOPICS also included this brief profile of the cast:

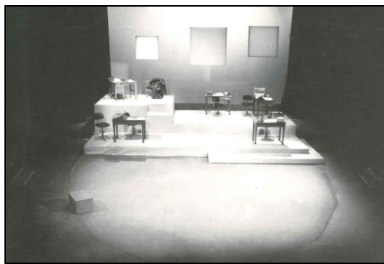
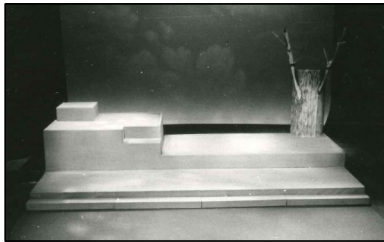
News of the stars

Agave, the smiling Queen Mother, will be played by Judy Lane, seen in the February production as Mary Magdalene and in Fall and Redemption of Man as a sheep — so convincing that she had three proposals from rams.

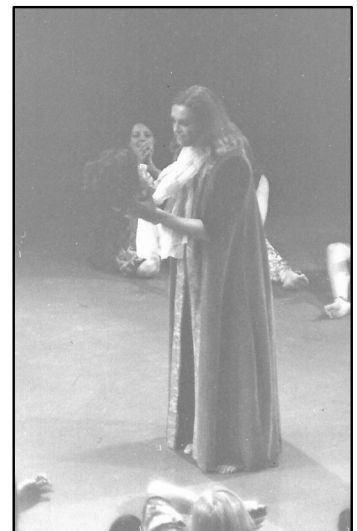
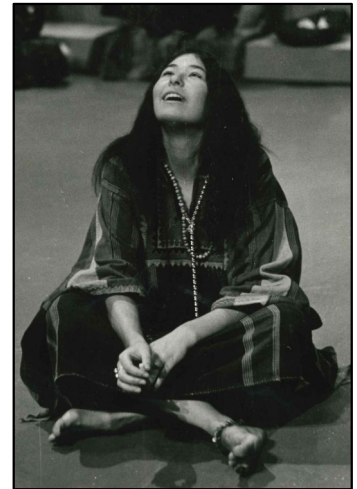
John Wilson, who in Black Comedy tripped delicately across the stage in Italian white shoes as the delicious Harold, now plays Pentheus — recreated and redistilled since the filming.

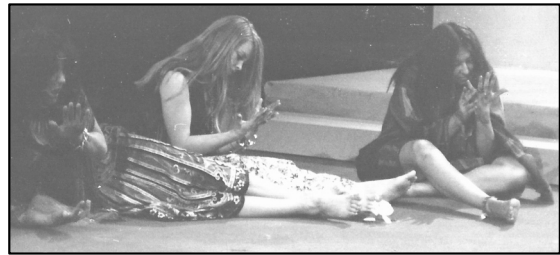
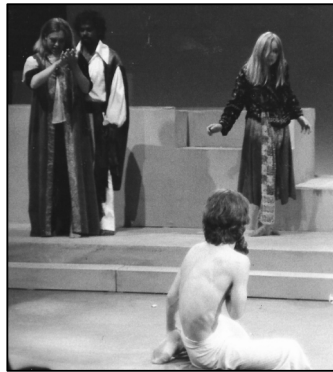
Sebastian Verghese, last seen as Pontius Pilate, now rises to the ranks of Deity as Dionysus. The Junior Secretary, one of the government set, is played by Richard Paines. He was specially chosen for this part because of his gleaming white teeth. His superior, the Senior Secretary, is Richard Earthy (Caiphas in the February production).

The hippies include Carol Wiseman, who was the furtive Miss Furnival in Black Comedy, Cathie Fraser who has also designed the set, Christine Richardson (Dumpling in Black Comedy) and Mary Gilbert, (the enticing Clea). Christine, together with Pat Condon, has designed the costumes. Peter Garrett, Steve Hallmark, Liz Graham, Carolyn Hayfield, Pat Condon and Tom Jennings complete the cast.



Group 23 in THE DISORDERLY WOMEN





Middlesex County Times
17 July 1970

Play's Hippie Cult Expresses Freedom

JOHN BOWEN'S modern adaptation of "The Bacchae of Euripides" began a weeks ran at the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, on Saturday.

The play, "The Disorderly Women" is present by the Questors Student Group.

It follows the original very closely, though playwright John Bowen has made one significant change: the women are now modern-day hippies who eat a type of mushroom with L.S.D. properties.

CONFLICT

The play's basic conflict is, on the one hand, between Pentheus, played by John Wilson. and his ministers, who believe in a rational, stable society where the individual is free to do what he likes as long as he does not go to excess and remains within the law, and Dionysus played by Sebastian Verghese; and the women, on the other hand, who

believe in the total freedom of the individual – that is, pure instinctive behaviour.

Bowen, himself, describes the play as a "tragic story about a good man...destroyed by... the fatal flaw in his own nature...his refusal to accept the imperfectibility of man, his denial both in himself and others of what is instinctive, irrational, irresponsible, selfish and destructive.

He uses the hippie cult as an equivalent that both fits the Bacchic legend and is a recognisable part of our own world.

The decision as to whether the play is pro - or anti-drugs (or instinctive behaviour to be more precise) is left to the individual playgoer to decide

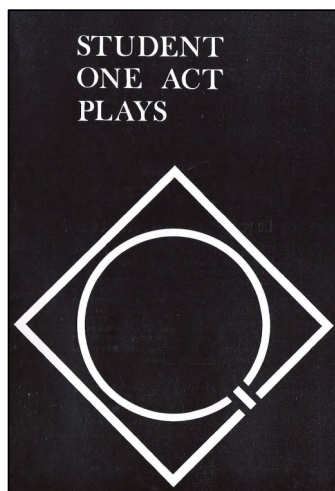
D.W.

STUDENT GROUP 24 (1969-1971)

8 first year students from Group 24 appeared in the 1970 student productions. Of these 4 went on to complete the second year – **Peter Garrett, Steven Hallmark, Caroline Hayfield** and **Tom Jennings**. Tom was an American from Kentucky who continued to perform at Questors until 1983.

Student Group 24 February 1971

PRESS CUTTINGS by Bernard Shaw
THE ROOM by Harold Pinter
THE EUNUCH by Terence



QUESTOPICS, January 1971

February Production Student One Act Plays

The Second Year Student Group one-act programme aims at giving the students an opportunity of tackling contrasting parts in plays of different styles and periods within the one programme. It is also an opportunity — as has been said on previous occasions — for members of the theatre to see young actors half-way through their training, young actors who will eventually add to the strength of the main acting group.

Last season's production (**The Resurrection, An Office of Profit, and Black Comedy**) was very well supported, to the extent that people were being turned away on the last two nights. Consequently, the run has been extended this season to five nights: from February 23 - 28.

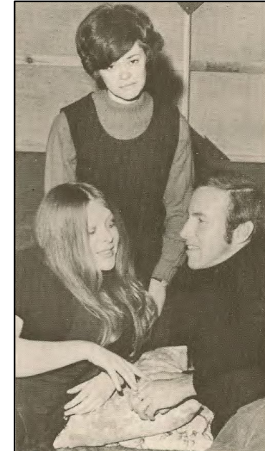
The programme will consist of: **Press Cuttings** by George Bernard Shaw (Edwardian), **The Room** by Harold Pinter (Modern) and **The Eunuch** by Terence (Roman).

Press Cuttings is one of Shaw's 'tomfooleries'; a farcical piece subtitled 'A Topical Sketch compiled from the editorial and correspondence columns of the daily papers during the Women's War in 1909'. Its first performance was private: the play was refused a licence because of its political references. It was later granted a licence on

condition that the names of the characters Mitchener and Balsquith were changed.

It abounds in Shavian puns and witticisms (and much verbal indulgence); the social comment is often biting. One might be tempted into regarding it as a bit of nonsense from an age gone by, were it not for the fact that the political moments are often recognisable; and in these days of women's liberation movements the Suffragettes are still relevant.

The plot (?) revolves round a room in the War Office where General Mitchener whose answer to every problem is 'Shoot them down!', and Prime Minister Balsquith try to cope with the Suffragettes and the Anti-Suffragettes. Also moving in and out of the action are a disorderly orderly, and an Irish charlady who, at the end of the play, becomes engaged to the General.



The Eunuch in rehearsal. Jeanne Smith exercises her charms on Tom Jennings. Carolyn Hayfield looks on

The Room was Pinter's first play, written in 1957, and first professionally performed by the Hampstead Theatre Club. It contains many of the themes Pinter has since developed in greater depth and subtlety: the ever-present, but unexplained, feeling of menace; unanswered questions; deceptive dialogue; the sudden eruption of violence. It is a taut little play that should keep audiences talking for some time.

Six of Terence's plays have survived. **The Eunuch** is considered to be his second. Written in 161 B.C., it is a witty, lighthearted play; a gentle comedy that aims at arousing smiles — not laughter.



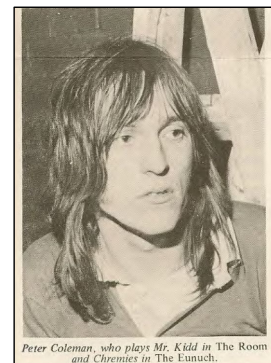
Susan Reeve, who plays Rose in *The Room*.

Adapted from the Greek original of Menander, it concerns the efforts of Thais, a courtesan, to return a young slave girl to the brother from whom she was parted as a child. The characters, though often not very subtle, are credibly drawn and are delightful: the brother of the slave girl — a country bumpkin unused to 'city' ways; Thais' admirers, vying with each other for her favours — the one young and handsome, the other gross; the parasite; the sharp-tongued maidservant: all

recognisable to a modern audience.

Terence's plays were not the crowd-pleasers that those of Plautus were, being too delicate for the Roman palate. But he came into his own after his death.

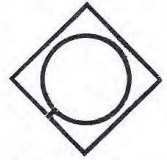
This year's Student Group consists of seven men and four women. Their acting backgrounds are variable — from one who has never appeared on the stage before, to one who has had much experience with amateur groups outside The Questors. **Tom Jennings, Steven Hallmark, Bruce Cowan, Jose Alfano, Carolyn Hayfield** and **Jeanne Smith** appear in the Shaw; **Susan Reeve, Peter Coleman, Paul Lewis, Peter Garrett** and **Trevor Small** in the Pinter; and the whole company, with the addition of **Richard Halberstadt** (an ex-student) and Penny Darch (first year), appear in the Terence.



Peter Coleman, who plays Mr. Kidd in *The Room* and Chremis in *The Eunuch*.

The sets and costumes are designed by **Mavis Armitt**, Mary Todd is Stage Manager.

WYLIE LONGMORE



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

FIRST PERFORMANCE

February 23rd, 1970 1971

The Questors Student Group
presents

PRESS CUTTINGS

by George Bernard Shaw

Characters in order of appearance

General Mitchener	TOM JENNINGS
Orderly	STEVEN HALLMARK
Balsquith, the Prime Minister	PETER GARRETT
Mrs. Farrell	CAROL WISEMAN
Mrs. Banger	JEANNE SMITH
Lady Corinthia Fanshawe	CAROLYN HAYFIELD

Scene : General Mitchener's room at the War Office.

Time : A forenoon in April, 1909.

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

THE ROOM

by Harold Pinter

Characters in order of appearance

Bert Hudd	PAUL LEWIS
Rose	SUSAN REEVE
Mr. Kidd	STEVEN HALLMARK
Mrs. Sands	CAROLYN HAYFIELD
Mr. Sands	PETER GARRETT
Riley	SAMMY SMALL

Scene : A room in a large house

Time : The present

INTERVAL OF 5 MINUTES

THE EUNUCH

by Terence, translated by Betty Radice

Laches, an Athenian gentleman	GARRY BROOKING
Phaedria, his elder son, in love with Thais	TOM JENNINGS
Chaerea, his younger son, in love with Pamphila	STEVEN HALLMARK
Antipho, a friend of Chaerea's	GARRY BROOKING
Chremes, a young countryman of Attica, brother of Pamphila	MICHAEL FENDER
Thraso, a retired army officer	PAUL LEWIS
Gnatho, his hanger-on	PETER GARRETT
Dorus, a eunuch	RICHARD HALBERSTADT
Parmeno, Laches' chief slave, attendant on Phaedria	SAMMY SMALL
Thais, a courtesan	JEANNE SMITH
Pythias, her maidservant and chief slave	CAROL WISEMAN
Dorias, a slave	SUSAN REEVE
Pamphila, Chremes' young sister, at present a slave	PENNY DARCH
Sophonra, her old nurse	PENNY DARCH
Attendant to Thais	CAROLYN HAYFIELD

The action takes place in an enclosed terrace in front of the houses of Thais and Laches.

The three plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Sets and Costumes designed by MAVIS ARMITT

Carol Wiseman was a member of the Student Group 1969/70.
Richard Halberstadt was a member of the Student Group 1967/68.

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Due to sickness, **Jeanne Smith** and **Sammy Small** had to withdraw from the last few performances. **Susie Bruce** read in for Jeanne's part in **Press Cuttings**, and **Susan Reeve** took her part in **The Eunuch**, leading to a number of other substitutions in that play. **Wyllie Longmore** took over Sammy's part in **The Room**.

**The Middlesex County Times
26 February 1971**



pictured here in Harold Pinter's "The Room" are Carolyn Hayfield as Mrs. Sands, Peter Garrett as Mr. Sands and Susan Reeve as Rose Hudd (right)

[The caption above is wrong. The actors shown are Steve Hallmark, Paul Lewis and Susan Reeve.]

Three contrasting plays

THREE one-act plays at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, this week by the theatre's student group provides good, all-round entertainment.

The first deals with the Suffragettes and the stupidity of the Army and politicians in coping with them. The second is a kitchen sink drama involving human relationships, and the third is a bawdy, classical comedy reminiscent of television's 'Up Pompeii'.

The first play, George Bernard Shaw's "Press Cuttings," banned when first presented in the 1920's, because of its allusions to living public figures — Kitchener and Asquith.

ROUGH START

This play got off to a rough start at the opening night on Tuesday. Lines were mumbled and beautiful phrases thrown away.

General Mitchener (Tom Jennings) is an authoritarian soldier who treats his subordinates like children. His orderly, Steven Hallmark, rebels when he is subjected to the same treatment.

Mitchener, who says he was trained to obey and not to use his brain, bawls, "shoot them down." Balsquith (Peter Garrett) wonders how to contain his political opponents over the question of the Suffragettes, in a clever illustration of a weak, impressionable premier.

Enter the anti-Suffragettes, the formidable busty, masculine Mrs. Banger (Jeanne Smith) and her partner, the completely feminine Lady Corinthia Fanshawe (Carolyn Hayfield).

GUNPOINT

They hold Mitchener at gunpoint, claiming women don't need the vote. With Mrs. Banger on top of his desk, Mitchener demands his slightly-built orderly shall remove her. Instead, the orderly himself is smartly carried out by Mrs. Banger.

Alone with the beautiful Lady Corinthia, Mitchener hopes to take advantage of her. He is duped into giving her his loaded pistol, but soon finds she is a worse opponent than Mrs. Banger.

Both ladies advocate women controlling the country through their influence on men and not by getting the vote. Almost forced into marrying Lady Corinthia, Lord Mitchener, to thwart her, proposes to his Irish charlady, Mrs. Farrell. With her bossy manner and authentic accent in this role, Carol Wiseman was the star of the play.

It was a pity Tom Jennings could not overcome his American accent.

STARK

The second play, Harold Pinter's "The Room" is a stark impression of poverty and insecurity. The mono-dialogue is full of dull, ordinary phrases and non-sequiters.

Rose Hudd (Susan Reeve) plays a drab, brooding housewife whose only communication with her husband is to feed him.

In Terence's "The Eunuch", Jeanne Smith appeared as Thais, a sexy siren, playing off her suitors. Fully aware of herself, she gave a professional performance. There was clever acting by Peter Garrett as Gnatho, the oily, crafty, hanger-on of Thaos's elderly suitor, Thraso (Paul Lewis).

Cleverly made up, Richard Halberstadt was a pitiful, cringing eunuch. Garry Brooking as Antipho, a young man with orange curly hair, sported a superb Grecian hair style.

All three plays were directed by Wyllie Longmore, a credit to any director. Mavis Armitt was responsible for the costumes and for the simple easily interchangeable sets. C.R.

The Surrey Mirror March 1971

Students score with group of one-act plays

THERE was not an empty seat on Friday for the Questors' students performance of three one-act plays. They were Shaw's Press Cuttings, Pinter's The Room, and Terence's The Eunuch, translated by Betty Radice.

The producer was Wyllie Longmore. A number of cast changes had to be made from those in the programme.

The Shaw play, of 1909, a skit on the Suffragette movement of those days, was given a lively reading. Tom Jennings was a very suitably pompous General Mitchener (meant for Kitchener) and Peter Garrett, a much younger man, made Prime Minister Balsquith (Asquith) a typical Edwardian politician with Shavian leanings.

"Twenty years in the army, and they think they know everything. But twenty years in the Cabinet and you know you know nothing". Bravo, GBS!

Steven Hallmark showed a gift for comedy as the Orderly though his khaki uniform and anklets seemed to strike a wrong note.

ANTI-FEMINIST

Carolyn Hayfield and Susie Bruce, substitute for Jeanne Smith, as the anti-feminist leaders, were intensely funny. And Carol Wiseman, servant, accepted the General's proposal to the manner born.

The Room seemed the most accomplished performance of the three. A sordid tale but doubtless very real.

Paul Lewis imparted grim sloth to Bert Hudd. Never uttering a syllable while his wife waits on him hand and foot, he makes a brutally savage attack on the blind, coloured Riley when he returns to see them tenderly poised. This was enacted with chilling realism.

Susan Reeve was very sweet, and foolish, as the wife, Rosie. Wyllie Longmore, substitute for Sammy Small, was most effective as the blind man. Carolyn Hayfield and Peter Garrett, coming after the room, were nicely vulgar and common. And Steven Hallmark simulated crippled old age very convincingly.

Perhaps it was not surprising that, with four substitutes, each reading their part, The Eunuch lost some of its barb and edge. Particularly in the part of Thais the courtesan.

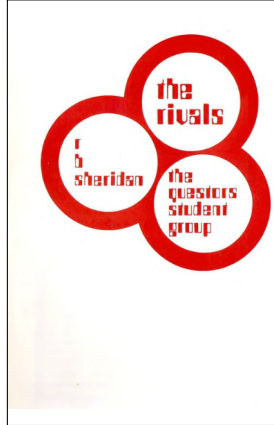
BRAVE EFFORT

While Susan Reeve, standing in for Jeanne Smith, made the bravest of brave efforts, not without some success, to impart realism to the role, it was incongruous, to say the least, to see a lady of that character reading from a book while charming her suitors.

But "the play must go on" and we all enjoyed it nonetheless.

**Student Group 24
July 1971**

**THE RIVALS by Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Directed by Wyllie Longmore
Designed by Jeanne Smith**



Following the disruptions caused by sickness during the performance of the One Act Plays, understudies were arranged for the production of the Rivals.

QUESTOPICS

June 1971

**STUDENT GROUP
The Rivals**

As a climax to their acting course, the second year student group will be presenting Sheridan's comedy of manners and situation, *The Rivals*. **Wyllie Longmore**, who is directing the play, considers it a particularly fitting choice for the students, as the principal parts cast well within the group. His situation is very close to that of the author, who tailored the play to fit the talents of a specific company of actors.

Encouraged by the manager of the Covent Garden theatre, Sheridan wrote *The Rivals* in 1774, when he was only 22. It was his first play and was not a success at its opening night — possibly this was the fault of the actors. Let us hope that **Paul Lewis** (Sir Anthony Absolute - *photo*) and **Tom Jennings** (Sir Lucius O'Trigger) do not emulate their illustrious predecessors in the original cast, as it is said the prompter could be heard constantly when they were on the stage.



Weak in humour!

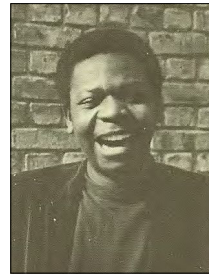
At the time, the play was also considered too long and weak in humour. However, Sheridan, who thought of his first night audience as a '.... candid and judicious friend attending on behalf of the public....' revised the comedy and it has delighted audiences ever since.

The second year student group are anxious to convey the techniques they have learnt during their course and Wyllie considers *The Rivals* an ideal play for them to put on as it combines the three main activities of the group, period movement, speech and acting.



Jeanne Smith has the enviable opportunity of portraying Mrs Malaprop, **Susan Reeve** (*top photo*) is her niece, Lydia Languish and the romantic Julia and Faulkland who so moved the 18th century audiences are played by **Carolyn Hayfield** and **Bruce Cowan**. The dashing Captain Absolute is played by **Steven Hallmark** (*top photo*), whilst **Peter Garrett** considers himself typecast as Bob Acres. The other member of the group in the play is **Sam Small** ******(*bottom photo*).

The rest of the cast is filled by members of the first year student group and three Acting Members of Questors. the illnesses which dogged the student major player has an understudy.



Perhaps as a result of one-act plays, every

Apart from one innovation of is not empowered to disclose, Wyllie wishes of the author in his production. audience should have an enjoyable and Sheridan's view was 'the scope and play is to please a mixed assembly in representation'.

presentation which he hopes to follow the In which case the amusing evening, for immediate object of a

The Rivals will play on July 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24.

** Despite his mention in the QUESTOPICS article, Sam Small's name doesn't appear on the The Rivals programme.



Group 24 in The Rivals



Second Year Student Group Production

THE RIVALS

by Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Sir Anthony Absolute PAUL LEWIS
Captain Jack Absolute STEVEN HALLMARK
Faulkland BRUCE COWAN
Bob Acres PETER GARRETT
Sir Lucius O'Trigger TOM JENNINGS
Fag TREVOR HOPKINS
David KEVIN FELLS
Thomas, the Coachman PETER HARBORNE
Mrs. Malaprop JEANNE SMITH
Lydia Languish SUSAN REEVE
Julia Melville CAROLYN HAYFIELD
Lucy HILARY ELLWOOD
Servants PENNY DARCH, IRENE MACDONALD,
ROSEMARY PARRY-JONES, MICHAEL FENDER,
PETER HARBORNE

The play is set in Bath.

Scenes

1. A Street
2. Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings
3. Captain Absolute's Lodgings
4. The Parade
5. Julia's Lodgings
6. Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings
7. Acre's Lodgings
8. Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings
9. The Parade
10. Julia's Lodgings
11. The Parade
12. King's Mead-Fields

There will be an INTERVAL of 15 MINUTES after Scene 7
(A warning bell will be rung 3 minutes before the play recommences)

Directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE
Design Consultant JOHN ROLFE
Set and Costumes designed by JEANNE SMITH

Hilary Ellwood, Trevor Hopkins and Kevin Fells are past members of the Student Group.

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Lighting PETER TRIGG and Assistants

Sound TONY BLAKE, JOHN STOTHART

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The Acton Gazette

29 July 1971

**STUDENTS SPARKLE IN
CLASSIC SATIRE**

Reviewed by David Lewis

The costumes may have been modern, but none of the original wit and satire was missing from The Questors Student Group's recent production of Sheridan's "The Rivals."

To a packed house, the group put on a thoroughly enjoyable performance of the play, which can so easily become a crashing bore if the character acting is not strong enough.

In fact, it was quite the opposite, with some excellent verbal and facial expression by Jeanne Smith (as the grotesque Mrs Malaprop). Paul Lewis (for his portrayal of the crusty and cantankerous father) and Kevin Fells (as the foppish manservant).

The highest praise, however, must undoubtedly go to Steven Hallmark for his lively performance in the often difficult role of Captain Jack Absolute.

As any actor will admit, the easiest role to play is that of a humorous caricature, like Mrs Malaprop, while a long "straight" part requires a great deal more acting ability to prevent the audience's interest from waning.

It was in just this aspect that Steven Hallmark excelled, whereas one or two of the other actors unfortunately fell short.

Sheridan's plot, although complex in its way, could well have been the stereotype mould from which many of the present-day Whitehall farces have been written.

Lydia Languish is having an affair – against the wishes of her aunt, Mrs Malaprop – with a poor Ensign, who is

Captain Absolute in disguise. The reason for the deception is that Lydia is really obsessed with the romantic idea of impoverished love and is repelled by the thought of marrying some rich young suitor, such as Captain Absolute.

At the same time, a rough country squire and a swashbuckling Irish Casanova are seeking the lady's hand in marriage, hence the title "The Rivals".

Confusion sets in when Captain Absolute's father threatens to disinherit him unless he marries the woman he has chosen for him, who turns out to be none other than Miss Languish herself.

When the Captain is forced to face his loved one in his true identity [and] his duplicity is discovered. Lydia decides that she no longer wants to marry him.

This fickleness of a lover's heart, as demonstrated by Lydia, forms the theme, if in fact theme is the right word, for the whole play.

By the interaction of his characters, which may sometimes be said to lack any great depth, Sheridan manages to display the absurd and jealous nature of people in love, as applicable to the present day as it was to his time.

Like any good story about lovers, though, the play eventually ends with the couple resolving to forgive and forget and live happily ever after.

This production of "The Rivals" gave the Student Group yet another opportunity to show what a fine collection of promising young actors they are.

Apart from the excellent standard of the onstage performances a great deal of credit must go to Neville Bradbury and Cathie Fraser for their unusual but effective stage managing of the play.

The continuity and atmosphere of the play

was not in the least marred by the modern dress and sparse but effective scenery, largely due to some ingenious use of the lighting facilities.

As a whole, the production left little or nothing to criticise, and without a doubt, many of the cast will prove just as successful when they join the ranks of the older and more experienced actors and actresses at The Questors.

Ruislip Weekly Post

July 1971

"THE RIVALS"

THE QUESTORS Student Group, of Ealing, present Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals" as their latest production at the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, on July 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24 at 7.45 p.m. This was Sheridan's first play, written in 1775, when he was 24. Although it is not in the same class as his most famous work, "School For Scandal", it is nevertheless a play full of wit and comedy situation. And it contains one of the most famous characters in English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, who so slaughters the language with her misapplication and mispronunciation of words.

Mrs. Malaprop has come to Bath to try and marry off her eligible niece, and herself falls for an Irish fortune hunter. The play is a clever satire on the state of the society of Bath, which attracted both the fashionable and the unfashionable.

Brentford and Chiswick Times

July 1971

NEW RIVALS STILL GOOD

IN an attempt to put new life into an old chestnut, the Questors' student group did "The Rivals" last week in modern dress.

The result may have been lacking in the period atmosphere that would seem to be

essential for the play, but it provided an offbeat originality which held the attention and inspired plenty of laughter.

It took a while to adjust to a Mrs. Malaprop in modern dress, looking like a respectable tart, if that's not a contradiction in terms, but Jeanne Smith gave such an authoritative and amusing performance that it was worth adjusting.

The standard of performance generally was excellent and we shall certainly be seeing most of the leading members of the cast in subsequent productions by the Questors proper.

Trevor Hopkins, late of Teddington Theatre Club, contributed a very funny, camp version of Fag, Captain Absolute's precious valet, who was like something out of a Joe Orton play clad in a spivvy pinstripe suit, black shirt and white tie. Sounds ghastly, but the clothes matched the performance.

CARICATURE

Steven Hallmark's Captain Absolute was a lively schemer and Peter Garrett gave a delightful rustic caricature of Bob Acres, who started off as a country yokel and changed into a trendy, coiffured product of any London boutique.

Other notable contributions were made by Paul Lewis as the irascible Sir Anthony Absolute, reprimanding his son like a demented magistrate, Hilary Ellwood as Lucy, Susan Reeve as Lydia Languish, and Tom Jennings as Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Twickenham Chronicle

July 1971

Charming Rivals by Questors

THE Ealing Questors second year student group gave a charming performance last week of Sheridan's delightful comedy The Rivals!

Directed by Wyllie Longmore, with Design

Consultant John Rolfe and set and costume designer Jeanne Smith, the programme told us that the "trappings" which usually surround 18th century comedy were being discarded.

Certainly, the varied modern dress did nothing to violate the spirit of the play, as it does with Shakespeare (where it is pure rape). But there is something incongruous in having the manners and speech of those times in 20th century garb.

As it was, we had a foot in each world for, during gaps between scenes, lovely period items were brought on: even to Sir Lucius writing with a quill pen.

The set, consisting of just three tall Corinthian columns. plus the front of a little house on either wing, was quite sufficient to suggest Sheridan's Bath.

Jeanne Smith's Mrs. Malaprop was a nicely conceived, extrovert performance, loud and blatant, and with the famous Malapropisms well pointed. These last, of course, have made the lady one of the most famous in all English drama.

Steven Hallmark played captain Absolute in rather a quiet key, Having to challenge his father, make false love to Mrs. Malaprop and real love to Lydia gives the actor in the part a whale of a chance for raising laughter and showing off generally.

Mr. Hallmark has a quiet authority and speaks splendidly. But this particular part could have done with a bit more variety and swagger.

Paul Lewis made a splendid job of crabbed and arthritic old age as Sir Anthony Absolute. He disowned his son with no end of gusto, and one is almost tempted to say, relish.

The adjective excellent can be applied to all the others. Susan Reeve was attractively romantic as Lydia Languish. Carolyn Hayfield and Bruce Cowan as Julia

and Faulkland, made a nice pair of sentimental lovers.

Tom Jennings as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, writing amorous letters to Mrs. Malaprop, was very amusing. Bob Acres, also in love with Lydia. was very well played. Trevor Hopkins, Kevin Fells, Peter Harbourne, Hilary Ellwood, and those playing the five servants. all contributed to this very enjoyable evening.

Weekly ?

July 1971

Questors' students tackle "The Rivals"

THE student group of the Questors Theatre, Ealing, are presenting "The Rivals", by Sheridan, on six days this month.

This was Sheridan's first play written in 1775 when he was 24. First performed at Covent Garden, it was not initially a success, due to its length and the poor playing of one of the central characters.

But with revision and a change of cast, it was to become one of the most popular comedies of its time and a favourite with audiences to this day.

Teacher

Sheridan came from a theatrical background. His mother was a playwright and his father was an actor and teacher of elocution.

Originally from Dublin, the family settled in Bath, a town famous in the 18th century for its spa, which attracted visitors from all over the country.

It is here that "The Rivals" is set among characters and places with which Sheridan was familiar.

The play is a clever satire on the state of the society of this popular resort, which attracted both the fashionable and

unfashionable.

Mrs. Malaprop has come to Bath to try and marry off her eligible niece, Lydia Languish, first to a boorish country squire, Bob Acres, and then to Captain Jack Absolute, son of her close friend Sir Anthony Absolute.

Wooring

But unknown, to them, Jack is already wooring Lydia in the guise of a poor ensign to satisfy Lydia's sentimental whim. Meanwhile, Mrs. Malaprop herself has fallen for an Irish fortune hunter, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

The intrigues that result keep the play bubbling along until the plot is finally resolved.

Though "The Rivals" is not in the same class as Sheridan's masterpiece "The School for Scandal," it is nevertheless a play-full of wit and comedy situation.

And it contains one of the most famous characters in English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, who so slaughters the language with her misapplication and mispronunciation of words.

The play is being staged on July 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24 at 7.45 p.m.

Brentford & Chiswick Times
July 1971

Sheridan's first play

THE Questors' Student Group is presenting "The Rivals" by Sheridan from July 17th to 24th.

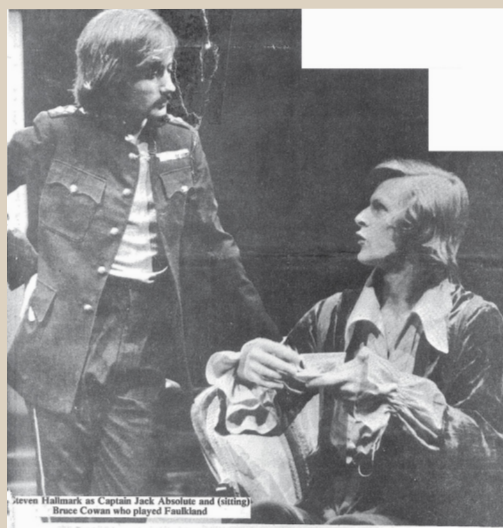
This was Sheridan's first play, written in 1775 when he was 24. First performed at Covent Garden, it was not initially a success due to its length and the poor playing of one of the central characters.

But with revision and a change of cast it was to become one of the most popular comedies of its time and a favourite with

audiences to this day.

It may not be in the same class as Sheridan's later "School for Scandal," but "The Rivals" contains one of the most infamous characters of English drama, Mrs. Malaprop, whose verbal bloomers have won her a place in the Oxford dictionary.

County Times and Gazette
23 July 1971



Questors bring a golden age to life!

THE golden age of Bath, with its variety and contrast, was brought to life again at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, with a performance of Sheridan's "The Rivals" on Saturday.

The production was unusual in that period dress and extravagant scenery were abandoned in favour of modern clothing and the minimum of furniture and props.

The result was a complete success, which brought the 18th century play right up to date. Sheridan's wit and his interpretation of comic situations is as relevant today as it was during his lifetime, a fact emphasised by the modern dress.

VIGOUR

Without doubt the star of the play was Mrs. Malaprop, played by Jeanne Smith.



a drink are Paul Lewis, who took the part of Sir Absolute, and Jeanne Smith, who portrayed Mrs. Malaprop

The vigour and enthusiasm with which the outlandish character was portrayed held the play firmly together.

Paul Lewis and Steven Hallmark gave an admirable performance as Sir

Anthony Absolute, and his son, Captain Jack Absolute, who was in love with Lydia Languish, well played by Susan Reeve.

CONVINCING

A striking performance was given by Tom Jennings, as the pugnacious Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and by Kevin Wells as the timid Welshman, David.

Bruce Cowan, as Faulkland, gave a convincing portrayal of a man so cautious and confused he nearly estranged the girl he loved, Julia Melville, played by Carolyn Hayfield.

In contrast to the more sophisticated characters, Peter Garrett gave a lively performance as Bob Acres, a rough country squire, who is nearly tricked into fighting a duel with what he thinks is his best friend.



Susan Reeve, who took the part of Lydia Languish, sits with a cup of tea and has a chat with Carolyn Hayfield, who played Julia Melville

Trevor Hopkins also gave a good performance as Fag, an effeminate

serving man.

Clever use of lighting and the front of the stage allowed the scenes to merge into one another smoothly, and kept the action flowing for the duration of the play. Directed by Wyllie Longmore.

The play is running today (Friday) and Saturday, and is well worth watching.

I.N.

Steven Hallmark made quite an impression in his role as Captain Jack Absolute and gave the following interview to the Acton Gazette.

Acton Gazette

5 August 1971

I CAN'T ENVISAGE DOING ANYTHING BUT ACTING

Steven Hallmark, of the Questors Student Group, can undoubtedly be called one of the most promising young actors in the area at the moment.

At the age of 24 he is passionately involved with the theatre and is hopefully on the brink of a career as a professional actor.

Coming from a long line of actors – both his father and grandfather were no strangers to the footlights – Steven is at present earning his living as a clerk in the Children's Department of Ealing Borough Council.

If things go as planned, however, and he manages to get a grant from the local authority, he intends accepting an offer of a drama course at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts.

In fact, as far as Steven is concerned, he has refused to even consider the possibility of not going to LAMDA.

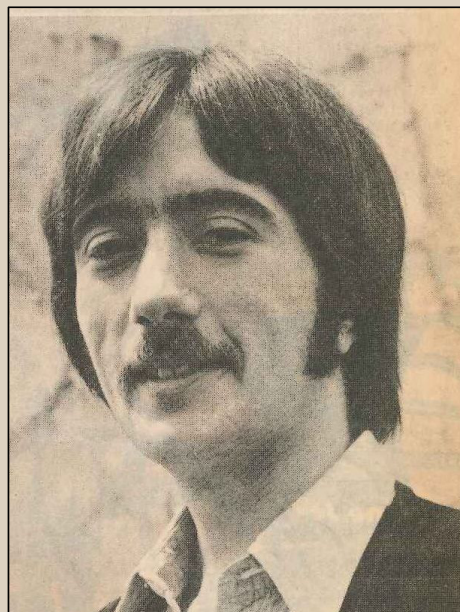
"I can't envisage doing anything but acting as a profession," he said firmly. "If the worst came to the worst I would try and join a small repertory company, but that would obviously be much harder."

He explained that he had already tried training as a teacher, doing social work and a variety of other jobs, but had found none of them suited to his personality.

Not even the daunting prospect of trying to find work in an already overcrowded profession discourages him.

"I'm not married and have no-one dependent upon me at all," he said, "so I've only myself to worry about. And I don't mind starving for a while if it means I can take up acting as a living."

Since coming to London from Devon in 1969, Steven has been a member of the



Student Group at the Questors theatre in Ealing. His recent performance as Captain Jack Absolute in Sheridan's "The Rivals", was his last with the Group and he must now decide whether he wants to move up to the ranks of the seniors.

"I certainly have not regretted the time I've spent at the Questors," he said. "They are probably one of the best amateur groups in the country and have taught me an awful lot about acting."

"Their training is extremely thorough as far as it goes, but it is naturally very limited and you have to do a tremendous amount of work on your own if you really want to improve."

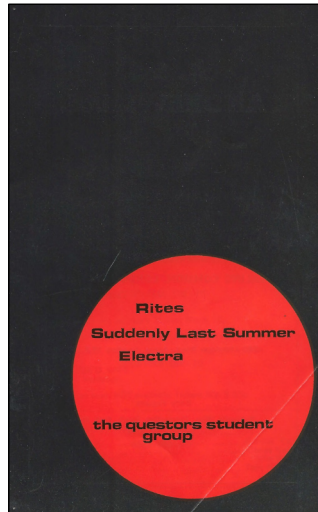
"I feel I need a lot more detailed and better training, which is why I'm hoping to become a student at LAMDA."

STUDENT GROUP 25 (1970-1972)

Of the 8 students in this group's second year, there was only one man, **Peter Harborne**. The only other group, up until this point, that had had only one man in the second year was Group 15 (1960-1962). While we're on the subject - there had been 5 previous Groups with more men than women (including the one before this, Group 24) and only 2 where there had been an equal balance of men and women. I don't know what this proves, if anything, but it's interesting. The only group to have all women was of course the very first one in 1946-1947.

Student Group 25 February 1972

RITES by Maureen Duffy
SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER by Tennessee Williams
ELECTRA by Sophocles



Directed by Wyllie longmore
Designed by Peter Sennett

Peter Harborne, the sole male in the group (see above) wrote this introduction to the three plays for QUESTOPICS.

February Production
STUDENT ONE-ACT PLAYS

The moment of truth is drawing near, as we all start work on our first substantial part at Questors — for some of us, our first substantial part ever. The crucial 'as if', units and objectives, lines of action and the other aspects of technique we read, heard and talked about last year take on added meaning as we begin to apply them to what is an increasingly daunting problem. Touch wood, no illness this year. But no chances, which means that, with understudying, some of us have four parts to learn.

One soon begins to see why Greek tragedy is often regarded as most challenging

to the actor. In its structure and style *Electra* contains all the elements of classical Greek drama. It is another, and final, chapter in a history of suffering in which all the protagonists have endured great pain and are called on to suffer even further before its end. *Electra* has had to endure for 20 years the memory of a father murdered by mother and separation from her young brother, smuggled away as a baby to escape death. Her strength and integrity are revealed in her refusal to compromise and her unswerving belief that Orestes will return to avenge their father. Tension builds throughout with the ever-present knowledge of an unavoidable conclusion. But the resolution is not simply the timely and inevitable reward of virtue. Right is not entirely on one side, as the clash between *Electra* and *Clytemnestra* reveals.

Maureen Duffy's *Rites* is in strong contrast in form and style. It looks at rites — repetitious role-playing, time-honoured rituals, forced on women by Society — and rights — women's rights and responsibilities both in relation to themselves and to Society. All the characters are women who have been abused by men in, the implication being, a society controlled by them. The superintendent of the 'superloo', where the play is set, thinks she's cracked it through the use of her overblown sexuality. Her devoted assistant, kissed once in her life, "and 'e was a bit simple". Two old ladies who don't know the questions, two middle-aged housewives who aren't aware there are any, three office girls who think they know the answers but can't ask the right questions and thus end up with the wrong answers too. The ones who think they know what to do with men are in fact as dependent on them as the others. Meg needs them to exist. Her answer is to screw them before they can screw you while they screw you. The office girls take the pill, don't give a damn for their job. But they're only waiting for a ticket to Bromley, the semi and the soggy nappies. Why? Because that's all society has led them to expect. Sexual freedom is an illusion turning their eyes from reality and thereby performing the function of all illusions, of distracting the observer and persuading her that something real has happened. A pessimistic view, with an ironic sting in its tail.

Suddenly Last Summer is both modern and highly stylized. Tennessee Williams conceives the part of the elegant New Orleans where it takes place as 'blended with a fantastic garden like a tropical jungle... The colours of this jungle garden are violent... massive tree flowers that suggest organs of a body, torn out, still glistening with undried blood.... harsh cries and sibilant hissings and thrashing sounds... as if it were inhabited by beasts, serpents and birds, all of savage nature'.

The house and people have a surface gentility. But the garden, even in the background, mirrors their true nature. Ostensibly met to discuss the best treatment for the mental illness of one of their number, they are there in fact to pick over a corpse. The son has died abroad in mysterious circumstances, the only witness his young cousin Catherine. The experience has unbalanced her, no one believes the story she has told. Now she is brought from one asylum by her aunt to meet a doctor from another. She is on trial. Will she stick to her story or recant? In the process we see a domineering mother and a weak son, living off each other and their charmed circle. Catherine, frightened and lost, looked to him for succour. Her mother and brother, having long lived off the aunt, are now bent on living off the dead son. They are all cannibals engaged in a brutal business, which moves ineluctably to its savage climax.

Despite the differences in style and form, there are striking similarities between

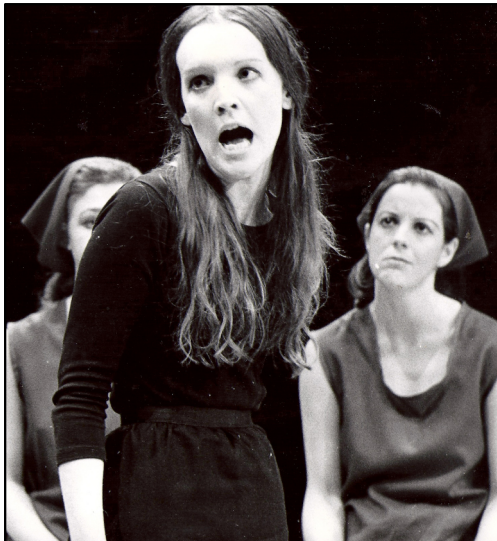
the three plays. All three deal with violence suffering and vengeance.

While in *Rites* the horrifying climax is on us with no warning, in *Electra* and *Suddenly Last Summer* it builds, step by step, and is the foreseen and inescapable conclusion. In these two latter there is, finally, a moment of revelation and self-knowledge, after which nothing will ever be the same again. Integrity and endurance is put to the test, with two women locked in a fight to the death.

It's the ladies' year alright. One play all-women, and in the others, the dominant roles. Wylie remains, as ever, the island of calm amidst the storm. If he looks miserable, it's not solely because of our rapidly manifesting limitations. Can you think of a full-length play with eight women and two men?

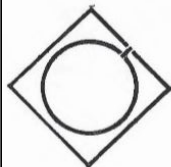
PETER HARBORNE

Joining the cast of *Rites* were ex-students **Lyn Langridge** (Group 20), **Maggie Turner** (Group 22) and **Carol Wiseman** (Group 23), while first-year students **Tony Hill** and **Margaret Halberstadt** joined the cast of *Electra*.



**Group 25
in
ELECTRA
(top left)**

**UTES
(top right)
SUDDENLY LAST
SUMMER
(left)**



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Tuesday, 15th February, 1972

The Questors Student Group
presents

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

by Tennessee Williams

Characters in order of appearance

Mrs. Venable IRENE MACDONALD
Doctor Cukrowicz PETER HARBORNE
Miss Foxhill CAROLINE FINCH
Mrs. Holly DANA STUCZYNSKA
George Holly STAN MCGOWAN
Catherine Holly ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
Sister Felicity CLARE PATRICK

Scene: The garden of a Victorian Gothic Mansion in the Garden District, New Orleans.

Time: Late afternoon, between late summer and early fall, 1935.

INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

rites

by Maureen Duffy

Characters in order of appearance

Meg CAROLINE FINCH
Woman CAROL WISEMAN
Ada DANA STUCZYNSKA
Old Woman MARGARET TURNER
First Office Girl MAUREEN CONNEW
Second Office Girl (Norma) JANICE STANLEY
Third Office Girl LYN LANGRIDGE
Nellie CLARE PATRICK
Dot IRENE MACDONALD
Girl MARGARET HALBERSTADT
Woman with Doll ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
Another Woman CATHIE FRASER

Scene: A ladies' lavatory, somewhere in London.

Time: Today.

INTERVAL OF 5 MINUTES

THE ELECTRA of Sophocles

Translated by E. F. Watling

Orestes, son of Agamemnon PETER HARBORNE
Electra, daughter of Agamemnon MAUREEN CONNEW
Chrysothemis, her sister JANICE STANLEY
Clytaemnestra, her mother CLARE PATRICK
Aegisthus, second husband of Clytaemnestra TONY HILL
Pylades, friend of Orestes STAN MCGOWAN
A Tutor to Orestes TOM JENNINGS
Attendant to Clytaemnestra MARGARET HALBERSTADT
Chorus of Women of Mycenae IRENE MACDONALD
ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
CAROLINE FINCH
DANA STUCZYNSKA
SUSAN REEVE
CAROL WISEMAN

Scene: Before the palace of Agamemnon, now the palace of Aegisthus, at Mycenae, overlooking the plain and city of Argos.

The three plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Sets designed by PETER SENNITT

Costumes by PETER SENNITT & JACQUELINE LEARNER

Margaret Turner, Lyn Langridge, Cathie Fraser, Carol Wiseman, Susan Reeve and Tom Jennings are past members of the Student Group.

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Acton Gazette
10 February 1972

One-act plays by students

THE Questors' highly successful student group will be presenting three one-act plays at the theatre on February 15/19.

The first play will be "Suddenly Last Summer", Tennessee Williams' powerful drama set in the Southern United States and concerning a man's escape from the influence of his mother, and the mother's hatred for the girl who helped him to freedom.

The second play on the programme will be "Rites" by Maureen Duffy. In many ways the play could be taken as a plea for Women's Lib, as all the women in the story-line have been exploited, in some way, by men.

The action takes place in a ladies' lavatory and, though the play is funny the climax is unexpected and tragic.

The last in the trilogy of plays is "Electra" by Sophocles. Based on the famous legend of Orestes, the play tells of Orestes' efforts, with the help of his sister Electra, to avenge the murder of their father Agamemnon.

Acton Gazette
24 February 1972

Questors students put on display

Reviewed by BERNARD TAYLOR

A curious mixture of pathos and mirth made up the programme presented by the Questors Theatre last week as a showcase for the talents of its student group.

The diversity of this programme — which contrasted the smoky atmospherics of Tennessee Williams' "Suddenly Last Summer" with the glib contemporary style of Maureen Duffy's "Rites" and the heavy drama of Sophocles' "Electra" — was obviously designed to show the range of the group's capabilities.

But it also severely tested their limitations, which were most apparent in the darker moments of their material.

While they were all very successful in the lighter territory of the very amusing "Rites" — the general rendering of which was virtually faultless — they failed, on the whole, to attain the right emotional pitch in the other two plays, both of which suffered in these interpretations from overstatement and a lack of shading.

This was largely the fault of the director, Wyllie Longmore, who could have scaled down some of the performances, done a better job of casting some of the parts, and orchestrated these two plays with more restraint and subtlety.

* * *

It must be pointed out, however, that Mr. Longmore is a student himself. And while the lack of experience was clearly obvious, he nevertheless showed himself to be a director of some promise — particularly in his deft handling of "Rites".

The presentation also indicated a shortage of male students, for they were outnumbered by at least three to one among those taking part.

Those who emerged from this showing as the bright prospects of the student group were headed by Maureen Connew, who showed considerable promise both in her comic role in "Rites" and in the title role of "Electra".

Her performance in the Sophocles play was overcharged and consequently melodramatic to some degree, but as



these adjectives are more strongly applicable to the production as a whole, the blame cannot be laid entirely at her door.

If her performance had been toned down slightly, and been given better support, it could have resulted in a very fine piece of acting. She has an expressive face and an excellent voice, and firm command of her physical movements and gestures, and she combines all these qualities with a natural stage presence.

With more experience and polish, she could well become an actress of some stature, particularly, I think, in roles calling for a degree of urbanity and sophistication — two qualities which were needed in the role of Mrs. Venable in the Williams play.

As it was, however, the role was taken by Irene Macdonald and it was a definite case of miscasting. Miss Macdonald's portrayal of an elderly divorcee was commendable in its own way — it could have been perfectly right in another play — but in "Suddenly Last Summer" it was quite wrong.

Her portrayal lacked the air of worldliness, emotional command and intellectual ruthlessness which are the essential qualities of this part.

* * *

In the same play, Rosemary Parry Jones fared exceptionally well in what was probably an even more demanding role — that of the distraught niece and potential victim of Mrs. Venable.

It is a role that requires the actress to steer a thin line between drama and melodrama, and in which it is extremely difficult to find balance. Miss Parry Jones deserves a lot of credit for the fact that she failed only by a very narrow margin.

"Rites" was by far the best ensemble effort of the programme and everyone concerned deserves a mention. Irene Macdonald was much more at home in her

part as an elderly widow. Among others who particularly caught the eye were Janice Stanley as Norma, Dana Stuczynska and Caroline Finch as the ladies in charge of the women's public toilet in which the play is set, and, again, Maureen Connew as an office girl.

Putney Herald

4 February 1972

Students' jungles of tragedy and comedy

THREE jungles were created on the stage of the Questors Theatre last week when Suddenly Last Summer, Rites, and Electra were performed there by the Questors student group.

Suddenly Last Summer by Tennessee Williams presented us with a tangled jungle of cloying emotionalism. A possessive, near-incestuous mother grieved for her son, Sebastian, who had died far from her grasp in New Orleans.

His strange death was witnessed by his cousin Catherine. The experience, rife with Williams' usual body punches of paederasty, homosexuality and cannibalism, had driven the girl into a state of mental unbalance.

The mother refused to believe the circumstances of Sebastian's death. By using the influence of her money she tried to have the dreadful story lobotomised from Catherine's brain.

The main part of the play was taken up with the deranged girl's tale of her cousin's death. It was to Rosemary Parry Jones as Catherine that the honours went for a powerful performance in this tense play.

The mother was played by Irene MacDonald, who was almost convincing in the difficult role of the domineering matriarch which she marred by allowing her Southern accent to slip.

Relief

The second play of the evening, chosen to

provide comic relief between two heavy dramas, was Rites by Maureen Duffy. Set in a ladies' lavatory, this piece mixed character comedy with a jungle of primitivism.

As in Golding's novel, *The Lord of the Flies*, we saw how the basic savagery in us all is never far beneath the patina of civilisation.

In Rites it was the battle of the sexes that stirred up the bestiality which only ended with the brutal slaying of a lesbian who was mistaken for a hated male intruder.

Fine characterisations were given by Claire Patrick and Irene MacDonald as Nellie and Dot. Their scene in which one of them described her sole visit to a gents provided a high point to the humour.

Dana Stuczynska gave a commendable performance as the manageress of the convenience, Ada. Her ego and bosoms were equally inflated, a man-trap, produced by her reading of the benefits of thinking big!

The tight direction of the dialogue by Wyllie Longmore, produced the desired comedy and horror but the climax of the killing and the subsequent disposal of the corpse in the incinerator came without sufficient build-up to justify the change in mood.

Blood-lust

The last jungle we explored was in Sophocles' *Electra*. In this, vengeance wove a black maze of blood-lust around the daughter of Agamemnon. He had been murdered by Aegisthus who usurped his throne and wife, placing Electra in a Hamlet-like position of being alone in upholding her dead father's honour.

Unlike Hamlet, it was not lack of decision that stayed her hand, but the lack of her brother, Orestes, who had been living as an exile for many years.

Orestes returned, having sent word that

he had been killed. that he might catch Aegisthus off guard. This news brought Electra to a pinnacle of grief and gave us the best minutes of the play as she lamented the loss of father, brother, and all hope of revenge for her family's honour.

Inevitably. Orestes revealed himself to his sister and slew his treacherous mother and step-father as the malefactors of the piece.

The play centred very much around the title role and this was fortunately well played by Maureen Connew. She managed to capture the style of acting demanded by Greek tragedy.

Other performances of note were given by Peter Harborne as Orestes, and Clare Patrick as Clytaemnestra, his mother. The latter attained the regal authority required by the part and was especially good in her confrontation scene with Electra.

If a fault could be found in the production it would be with the Chorus as is usual in all performances of classical drama in this country.

Choral speaking is an art, more difficult than choral singing. It requires endless rehearsals to perfect. and anything less than perfect is bad. Perhaps directors would be best advised to replace this difficult convention with a narrator who is unlikely to be out of key or synchronisation with himself.

D. A.

Acton Gazette
9 March 1972

HER ROAD TO THE STAGE WAS PAVED WITH POETRY



Maureen Connew is one of a dying breed of young actors and actresses who just want to act and act...and act.

Maureen (pictured here) who is a student at Questors Theatre, attracted praise for her recent performances in "Electra", the Sophocles tragedy, and in "Rites", the Maureen Duffy comedy.

The Gazette said: "Those who emerged from this showing as the bright prospects of the students group were headed by Maureen Connew who showed considerable promise both in her comic role in "Rites" and in the title role of "Electra".

In the light of this praise, it's remarkable to discover her number of leading roles can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

However, partly due to the wanderlust of earlier years, she became involved with the stage relatively late, and did not go to an acting school or take any other of the conventional routes to a stage career.

Her main love was poetry and she enjoyed reading poets like Shelley in coffee bars up and down the country. Her acting was confined to one or two farces like "Rookery Nook" and a couple of revues. Her main serious role was in Chekhov's "Three Sisters."

After she completes her two year part-time course at Questors, her ambition is to enter a rep company.

Maureen spends 10 hours at Questors on average a week learning acting theory and various exercises. Her next appearance with the Questors students is in their main production in the summer. Its title has not yet been decided.

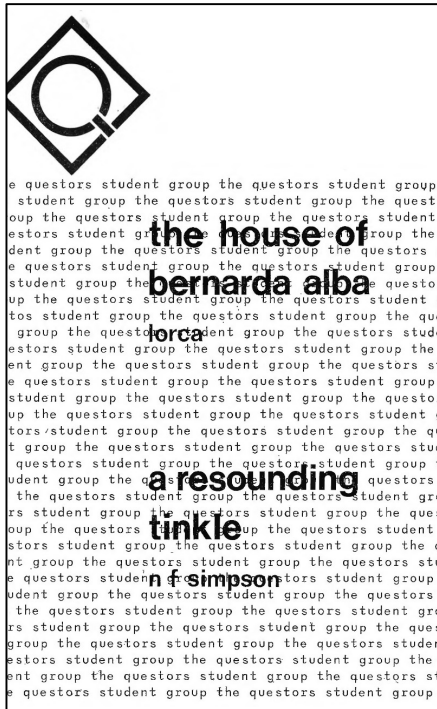
Maureen's face is one that screams out Greek Tragedy as soon as you catch sight of those exotic deep set eyes and that sad mouth. She admires writers such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, who in their works deal with the darker sides of life.

When she leaves Questors, Maureen's aim is [to] get "on the ground floor" of some new activity. One ambition is to start a small theatre in St Ives - where she used to live - and get the local community more involved with this side of the arts.

It wasn't at all difficult for her to talk about the roles she most wanted to play. Lady Macbeth is her prime ambition. Hedda Gabler her second choice.

**Student Group 25
July 1972**

**THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA by Federico Garcia Lorca
A RESOUNDING TINKLE by N F Simpson
Directed by Wyllie longmore
Designed by Nigel Cowell**



An article in QUESTOPICS discussed the difficulties of choosing a play for a company of 7 women and 1 man. The outcome was described in one newspaper review as “*a curious mixture of pathos and mirth.*” First year student **Margaret Halberstadt** and ex-student **Barbara Marker** (Group 21) were brought in to swell the ranks for Lorca’s all-female drama, and a shortened version of N F Simpson’s surreal comedy gave Peter Harborne his opportunity to shine.

QUESTOPICS

July 1972

JULY STUDENT GROUP PRODUCTION

The House of Bernarda Alba

by F. Lorca

with short version of

A Resounding Tinkle

by N. F. SIMPSON

The unusual composition of this year's second year Student Group (7 women and 1 man), has caused more complications than previously in trying to find a suitable full length play for their final production. It is always a problem to find a play that will suit the students' capabilities and one that will cast satisfactorily within the group, giving equal opportunities (as far as is possible) to each member. But seven women!

We are resolving the problem by presenting as our main production The House of Bernarda Alba by Federico Garcia Lorca, and following it with an 'after-piece', A Resounding Tinkle by N. F. Simpson.



CAROLINE FINCH

Lorca's play, 'a drama about women in the villages of Spain', is a powerful study of a household ruled by a bigoted and tyrannical mother. The whole action takes place inside the house of Bernarda Alba, where her five daughters — ranging in age from 20 to 39 — are fighting to free themselves from the rigid discipline, the stifling sterile atmosphere in which they are forced to exist. The results are explosive and tragic. It is a play of frustrated passion, of rigid social conventions; of tradition and pride.

Bernarda's household is one of women without men: 'in all such matters even blood is forgotten'; a household where outward silo' and an appearance of decency is paramount even though 'you rot inside'.

A Resounding Tinkle is a small absurd joke. Set in the apparent reality of the living room of a suburban home, it is not long before we discover certain peculiarities of the couple who live there. This is the one-act version of Simpson's longer play, and in it he satirises deftly and with an unusual comic style, the inanities and absurdities of a certain type of existence.



ROSEMARY PARRY-JONES & MAUREEN CONNEW

The members of this year's student group are — **Clare Patrick, Irene Macdonald, Janice Stanley, Maureen Connew, Rosemary Parry Jones** and **Caroline Finch**, and **Peter Harborne**.

The Questors Student Group

THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA

by Federico Garcia Lorca
Translated by James Graham-Lujan & Richard L. O'Connell

Characters :

Bernarda Alba	CLARE PATRICK
Maria Josepha, Bernarda's mother	BARBARA MARKER
Augustas	IRENE MACDONALD
Magdalena	JANICE STANLEY
Amelia	MARY GILBERT
Martirio	MAUREEN CONNEW
Adela	ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
A Servant	MARGARET HALBERSTADT
La Poncia	CAROLINE FINCH

Scene: The House of Bernarda Alba in a village in Spain.

Time: Summer

A RESOUNDING TINKLE

by N. F. Simpson

Characters:

Bro Paradock	PETER HARBORNE
Middle Paradock	JANICE STANLEY
Uncle Ted	CAROLINE FINCH

Scene: The living-room of the Paradocks' suburban home.
Time: Now.

There will be ONE INTERVAL of 15 MINUTES between Act II and Act III of The House of Bernarda Alba.

The Plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Sets and Costumes designed by NIGEL COWELL
Barbara Marker and Mary Gilbert are past members of the Student Group.

Stage Manager RICHARD LEWIS

Deputy Stage Manager FRANCES OMMANNEY

Assistant Stage Managers LAURIE BELLINGER,
LEZEK BURZYNSKI, HEATHER SHEDLOCK
GAIL DONALD, KEVIN FELLS

Wardrobe MOIRA FITZGERALD

Sound TONY BLAKE, EILEEN BROUGH

Construction DENNIS BLAKELOCK, LAURIE BELLINGER,
DAVID ANNING, DICK BENNETT,
NICHOLAS BEARD

Lighting PETER KENDRICK, GRAEME HOLFORD

Cook KEVIN FELLS

Properties MARY COMMON, JANET HOLLOWAY

The Questors Student Group is organised under the auspices of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing Education Committee and Ealing Technical College.

Staff :

Alfred Emmet (Director of Studies)

Wyllie Longmore (2nd Year Acting)

Diana Robson (Speech)

Percy Steven (Movement)

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Richmond Herald
13 July 1972

Daughters fight for

From July 15-22 the Questors Student Group present "The House of Bernarda Alba" by F G Lorca, followed by a short version of "A Resounding Tinkle" by N F Simpson.

This play by Lorca is a drama about women in the villages of Spain. It is a powerful story of a household ruled by a bigoted and tyrannical mother.

The action takes place inside the house of Bernarda Alba, where her five daughters – ranging in age from 20-39 – are fighting to free themselves from the rigid discipline and the stifling sterile atmosphere in which they are forced to exist. The results are explosive and tragic.

It is a play about frustrated passion of rigid social conventions of tradition and pride. Bernarda's household is one of women without men, a household where outward show and an appearance of decency is paramount.

The Middlesex County Times
21 July 1972

'Disappointing' dual production by Questors students

"THE HOUSE of Bernarda Alba" and "A Resounding Tinkle," dual productions by the Questors Student Group, left me feeling a little disappointed after Tuesday's performance.

Not so much through any fault of the cast, as it was a result of the choice of material.

Federico Garcia Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba" appeared to me an immensely subtle work, relying for much of its effect on the heat and repression generated among the cloistered Spanish women in their airless villa.

Although the cast worked valiantly to

build up the atmosphere, the tension that should have been created by passion, jealousy, frustration, and the whispering servants, was not quite achieved.

At one or two points, however, the tension that should have been there all the time broke through to the surface.

The most noticeable of these was at the beginning of the third act, when Bernarda Alba and her five daughters sat in complete silence at the dinner table for a long period.

The rather ponderous action of the play was held together largely by Clare Patrick, who did her best to portray the iron-willed Bernarda Alba.

CONTRAST

Rosemary Parry Jones made an exciting contrast as the passionate and sensual Adela. Margaret Halberstadt made a good effort as the evil-minded La Poncia.

Overall it appeared the material was slightly beyond the scope of the cast, which can only be praised for the way it went about a very difficult task.

The same can be said of the second production, N. F. Simpson's "A Resounding Tinkle." Written in 1956 as a caustic comment on suburban life, I felt it lacked the expert handling needed to make it truly funny today.

Peter Harborne, the only male actor who took part in either production, as Bro Paraddock, and Janice Stanley as Middie, struggled to make their lines come to life, but somehow the inherent humour of the situation was often lost.

A bright spot in the production was provided by Caroline Finch as Uncle Ted. She appeared, natural and spontaneous, carrying off her part as if she had played it all her life.

I.N.

The Acton Gazette
21 July 1972

Quite a contrast between boredom and absurdity

REVIEW BY DAVID LEWIS

THE Questors student group could hardly have chosen two more contrasting plays than those which they have been performing this week at their Ealing theatre.

Whether the choice was the right one, though, is a matter of opinion and, personally. I found the art display in the theatre foyer more interesting than the slow plod of Federico Lorca's sociological study of puritanical Spain, in the shape of 'The House of Bernard Alba'.

Not unique

Nor was my feeling of boredom unique, judging by the facial expressions of some of the audience sitting near me.

It would be wrong to assume, though, that the fidgetings and yawns of the audience were in any way due to the individual performances of the students — who each made the most of their parts, particularly Caroline Finch as the lowly Poncia, and Clare Patrick as the tyrannical mother, Bernarda Alba.

But the play itself was written specifically to show the boredom and hypocritical puritanism of agricultural Spain in the 1930's and in this it was a thundering success.

I suppose it also achieved its aim in providing a stiff test for the students' acting abilities, but it would have been so much better if a slightly more enjoyable play had been chosen.

The plot was insubstantial, though quite complicated — the complication arising more from the inter-relation between the mother and her five daughters, than any actual course of events.

With her husband dead, Bernarda — who believes implicitly in the old traditions of family honour — takes over as head of her household. She has an inbred distrust of men and does everything in her power to closet her daughters within the sterile cell of their home — believing that no man is good enough for them.

Not unnaturally their mother's domineering suppression of their natural desires only leads the daughters to thirst even more for marriage and an escape from their enforced celibacy.

Matters come to a head when Angustias (Irene Macdonald), the eldest and least attractive of the daughters, manages to land the best-looking man in the village by virtue of her inheritance from her late father.

The jealousy of her sisters grows to fever pitch, particularly in the case of the pretty and salacious Adela (Rosemary Parry Jones) and the ugly, but love-sick, Martirio (Maureen Connew).

Seducing

Adela even goes as far as seducing the fiance when he comes to visit her sister one evening, and the two become passionate lovers.

Her clandestine affair is discovered, however, and the bitter Martirio reveals all to their mother, who puts an end to it by frightening off the lusty youth with a gun and telling Adela she has killed him.

This is too much for Adela, who commits suicide in despair for her lost love, and the play closes, not with the mother grieving over her daughter's death, but maintaining her concern for family honour and declaring that Adela shall be buried as a virgin, and that no one be told what really happened.

With the serious part of the evening over, things took a distinct turn for the better with a hilarious performance of N. F. Simpson's "A Resounding Tinkle".

There is absolutely no way to describe this crazy, totally ridiculous comedy, which pokes fun at insignificant but pretentious lives of the suburbanites.

Considered very avant-garde when it was first performed, the absurd dialogue in the play bears a very close resemblance to that used in the zany comedies which have since become very fashionable.

Peter Harborne, Janice Stanley and Caroline Finch were all excellent in their

dead-pan delivery of their totally inexplicable lines, and it was their performance which, for me, saved what could have been an otherwise rather disappointing evening.

This production marked the 25th anniversary of the Student Group and was followed on the last night by a student reunion.

The Middlesex County Times

28 July 1972

The world's a stage to the Questors' boss

A leading personality in Ealing's theatre world held a special celebration for his 500 strong "family" on Saturday.

It was Mr Alfred Emmet's 25th anniversary as Director of Studies of The Questors Student Group.

Many of the 500 students who have taken the course since its inception were at the theatre for the celebrations.

Mr Emmet was a founder member of the Questors as long ago as 1929. He points out the primary aim of the students course is not necessarily to prepare people for the professional theatre.

NO AGE BAR

"It is surprising the number of people who have told me how valuable the course has been in developing their personalities," he says.

"They have grown in confidence individually and in their relationship with other people as a result of the course."

He believes age need be no limit to success on the course. One student who joined at the age of 30 was now making a considerable name for himself on the Canadian stage.

Mr Emmet selects about 24 out of 60 applicants for the two year course.

Recently he has been involved in organising another Questors venture "Questabout." A circus type show enthusiastically received in Ealing's primary and secondary schools.

QUESTOPICS

July 1972

Twenty-five Years of Students

The first Questors Student Group was formed in 1946, finishing a year's work with a production in January 1947. In the following autumn a more comprehensive one year's course was inaugurated under the auspices of the Middlesex County Council Education Committee. Three years later the course was extended to two years, as it is now. 1971/72 is the 25th year of our Student Group.



FIRST STUDENT GROUP PRODUCTION, JANUARY, 1947
THE CRADLE SONG

During this time some 500 would-be actors have passed through the Student Group. Of course, not all completed the course: some fell by the wayside for one reason or another; some were inevitably eliminated by the selection process for membership of the Second Year Group.

What has happened to the 500?



10th Anniversary Production
July 1957
THE FAR OFF HILLS

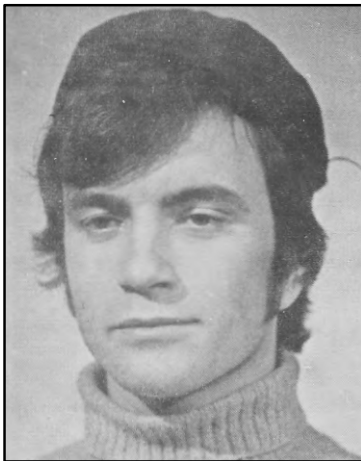
Although it is no part of the aim of the Student Group to train actors for the professional stage, nevertheless, quite a sprinkling have, in fact, 'gone professional', usually progressing to one or other of the professional Drama Schools after a year or two at The Questors. Some of these have made their mark and others doubtless will.

Some ex-students have moved away and work with drama groups in other parts of the country. Others have been unable to reconcile the demands of work in an amateur theatre with career or domestic life, though many of these continue as members of The Questors. Of those who have stayed to work with The Questors, a glance through the programmes of the past season reveals that over the year no fewer than 29 parts in the major productions, including many leading roles, were played by ex-members of the Student Group. What would we do without them?

STUDENT GROUP 26 (1971-1973)

Balance is more or less restored, with 6 men and 5 women. And it is another vintage year, introducing **Julia Cooke, John Davey, Margaret Halberstadt** and **Tony Hill**, though Margaret and Tony had both already appeared in the previous student production as first-year students and Margaret had joined husband Richard in Alan Chamber's Christmas production of the Feydeau farce **Ding! Dong!**

First year student **Tony Hunt** was making himself useful by taking over as Questors programme editor.



Ex-student **Richard Paines** (Group 23) was in the local news (Middlesex County Times, 23 March 1973). He'd gone on to study at Rose Bruford, and was appearing in their production of "**The Clandestine Marriage**" - coincidentally matching the theme of this year's February set of one-act plays, "**Love and Marriage.**"

An actor is going to Town

A former member of the Questors Student Group will appear next week in a play in London presented by Kent speech and drama college, where he is studying.

Richard Paines, aged 21, of Millet Road, Greenford, of the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama, Sidcup, will appear in the college production of "The Clandestine Marriage", at the Collegiate Theatre, Gordon Street, Bloomsbury, from March 28 to 31.

A third-year student, he has already appeared in five college plays, including Vic in "A kind of Loving", and George in "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

He describes himself as "a product of the Questors Student Group. His biggest success was as Brinsley Miller in "Black Comedy".

Questors Student Group

MARRIAGE

by Nikolai Gogol

translated by Bella Costello

NO WHY

by John Whiting

MISS IN HER TEENS

by David Garrick

Student Group 26 February 1973

MARRIAGE by Nikolai Gogol
NO WHY by John Whiting
MISS IN HER TEENS by David Garrick
Directed by Wyllie Longmore
Designed by Mary Anderson

QUESTOPICS 77
February 1973

February Production — The Student Group

MARRIAGE by Gogol translated by Bella Costello
NO WHY by John Whiting
MISS IN HER TEENS by David Garrick

A satirical parody, a disturbing drama, an out and out comedy make up this year's entertaining programme from The Questors second year student group. You may remember that last year's group professed some difficulty due to lack of males making play choice a problem. This year the group presenting these 3 outstanding 'One-Acts' consists of 6 men and 5 women: almost as perfect a balance as one could seek. The three plays are linked by a common theme - LOVE and MARRIAGE.

Marriage by Nickolai Gogol was written in 1833, that is before *The Government Inspector*, but was not performed until 1844, The play was written as a parody of the artificial comedies of the time in which 'cardboard' loves scaled a situational and verbal obstacle course to reach the inevitable happy ending of marriage.

Gogol was also describing the people he could see around him being propelled towards the altar for reasons quite unrelated to love, and in *Marriage* he exposes the real motives of such people: financial greed, position and security.

Agafya Tikhonovna, a merchant's daughter, is 27 and desperately anxious to get married to anyone, as long as he's a nobleman. The Matchmaker provides her with four suitors: a fat, boorish civil servant whose first consideration is the girl's dowry; a retired infantry officer who wants a wife who speaks French; a shabby, retired naval man, making his seventeenth attempt to get married; and, finally, a vain, indecisive court councillor who gets within an inch of the altar and at the last moment escapes.

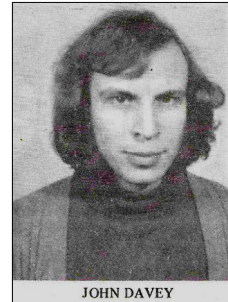
Gogol's satire bites deep and would explain why the play met with no more critical success than did *The Government Inspector*. Both plays were disliked at the time. Critics misunderstood the characters and missed the conventional plot with compulsory happy ending. Much of the play is hilarious; the action almost farcical; consequently audiences should find it most enjoyable.

Margaret Halberstadt plays Agafya; Judy Radcliffe the Matchmaker; and the four suitors are Tony Hill, John Davey, John Slavin and Paul Ekins.

No Why by John Whiting was first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych in 1964. It is a short, enigmatic, very disturbing play. A small boy sits alone in the attic. He has been sent there because of something dreadful he's done, and won't be allowed downstairs to rejoin the family party until he says he's sorry. We are never told what the crime is, nor is the act itself important, as one by one the family vent the frustrations and

failures of their lives upon the boy who remains silent throughout. They all condemn him finally because 'He exists... He is'. The end is a shock, but inevitable.

The parents are played by John Davey and Janice Culling; Julia Cooke and Cathie Jones play the boy's aunts; and Peter MacNamara and Tony Gariff his cousin and his grandfather.



Miss in her Teens is by David Garrick, the 18th century actor. It was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in 1747 and was an immediate and lasting success.



The play inaugurated the germ of the English short comedy and the formula, used by Garrick, recurs dozens of times in the 18th century after 1747 (there is much similarity between this play and *The Rivals*).

The Miss of the title is Biddy Bellair. She has recently come to town with her aunt, after meeting briefly, but falling in love with a young man who almost immediately (and unknown to her) had to go abroad with his regiment. She is being courted, with her aunt's approval, by an aged, near-senile widower, Sir Simon Loveit. But in order to divert herself (and unknown to her aunt), she is also encouraging the suits of a primping fop, Fribble; and a brash, loudmouthed soldier, Captain Flash.

Needless to say the young lovers are reunited, the suitors are discredited, and true love triumphs.

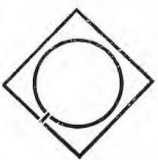
The plot of this delightful 'little piece' is inconsequential, but much of the comedy derives from Garrick's fun-poking at character types so familiar to the 18th century audience. Garrick himself played Fribble. It was to become one of his most popular roles.



Cathie Jones and Paul Ekins play the lovers; John Slavin and Tony Hill are Captain Flash and Fribble; and John Davey, Sir Simon.

Designer for the whole production is Mary Anderson. Jack Walsh stage manages.

Three different moods, three different styles, three very worthy and enjoyable plays compounded into the promise of a very entertaining evening.



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Tuesday, 13th February, 1973

The Questors Student Group presents

MARRIAGE

by Nikolai Gogol, translated by Bella Costello

Characters in order of appearance :

- Ivan Kuzmich Podkolyosin, court councillor PAUL EKINS
- Stepan, his servant PETER MACNAMARA
- Fyokla Ivanovna, a matchmaker JUDY RADCLIFFE
- Ilya Fomich Kochkaryov, Podkolyosin's friend TONY GARIFF
- Agafya Tikhonovna, a merchant's daughter MARGARET HALBERSTADT
- Arina, Pantaleimonovna, her aunt JANICE CULLING
- Dunyasha, a maid JULIA COOKE
- Ivan Pavlovich Kustard, civil servant TONY HILL
- Nikanor Ivanovich Anuchkin, retired infantry officer JOHN DAVEY
- Baltazar Baltazarovich Zhevakin, naval man, retired JOHN SLAVIN

The place is St. Petersburg in the 1830's: first in the house of Podkolyosin, thereafter in the house of Arina Pantaleimonovna.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes (A warning bell will be rung three minutes before the performance recommences).

NO WHY

by John Whiting

Characters in order of appearance :

- Henry, the father JOHN DAVEY
 - Eleanor, the mother JANICE CULLING
 - Max, the cousin PETER MACNAMARA
 - Sarah) the JULIA COOKE
 - Amy) aunts CATHE JONES
 - Gregory, the grandfather TONY GARIFF
- Place: An Attic. Time: Now

MISS IN HER TEENS

by David Garrick

Characters in order of appearance :

- Captain Lovell (Rhodophil) PAUL EKINS
- Puff, his servant PETER MACNAMARA
- Jasper, servant to Sir Simon TONY GARIFF
- Tag, servant to Biddy JULIA COOKE
- Aunt JUDY RADCLIFFE
- Biddy Bellair CATHE JONES
- Fribble, a fob) Suitors to TONY HILL
- Captain Flash) Biddy JOHN SLAVIN
- Sir Simon JOHN DAVEY

Setting: London, 1747

The three plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Sets designed by MARY ANDERSON

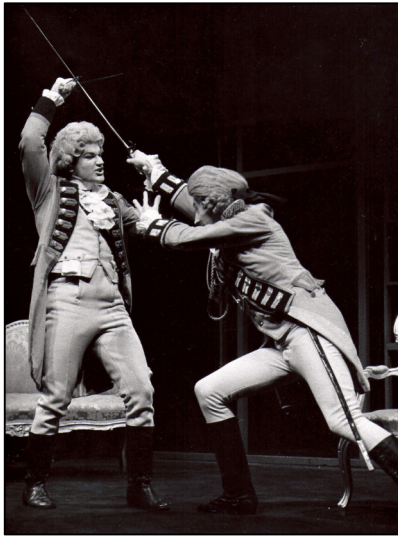
Costumes by MOIRA FITZGERALD

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**Group 26 in
MISS IN HER TEENS**



**Group 26 in
NO WHY**



ACTON GAZETTE
22 February 1973

Three from Questors students

"MATCHMAKER, Matchmaker make me a Match . . ." In this age of permissiveness and equality for women matchmaking has all but faded. If, in certain circles, it exists at all it is done with the utmost delicacy and subtlety.

But in 1833 in Russia the activities of matchmakers were far from being subtle. Families even employed professionals to arrange suitable matches for their daughters.

"Marriage," by Gogol, is one of three plays that make up the one-act programme by this year's Questors Student Group.

It concerns the efforts of a matchmaker to get a young, but very silly girl, married.

Written by the Russian playwright in 1833, it is a satiric comedy set in the City of St. Petersburg and the Questors did it more than ample justice.

The girl, Agafya Tikhonovna, a merchant's daughter, played by Margaret Halberstadt, has no less than four suitors – a fat, pompous, boorish civil servant, a shabby retired infantry officer, a pathetic retired naval man (making his

seventeenth attempt to get married), and a vain, indecisive court councillor.

It is the court councillor (Paul Ekins) who comes nearest to marrying the girl, spurred on enthusiastically by his friend, played by Tony Gariff.

But just when everything has been arranged, the councillor gets cold feet and flees from a window, leaving his future wife reading and waiting in her wedding dress.

However, before that happens there is some immensely amusing dialogue and fine comedy situations handled with ease by the cast.

Second play in the programme is "No Why," written by John Whiting in 1961 and produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1964.

It is a mysterious piece of theatre revolving around a child, who remains silent throughout the whole play.

He has committed a crime in his parents' eyes and has been shut in the attic.

We are never informed what the crime was. All we know is that the family want the child to confess his sin. Or do they?

I think not. Rather, it gives them a chance to bare the frustrations and failures of their lives and throw them mercilessly on the innocent boy.



Above: Cathie Jones, as Biddy Bellair and Julia Cooke as Tag, in "Miss in Her Teens". Right: Peter Macnamara as Paul the servant, and Julia Cooke as Tag.

Ultimately, his only crime is that he is alive . . . Some telling performances, John Davey and Janice Culling, as the parents.

"Miss In Her Teens," by David Garrick, perhaps the most brilliant English performer of his time, is a happy little production with a theme similar to "Marriage."

Young girl (Cathie Jones) discovers herself with four suitors. She has to put up with the antics of three of them, while the fourth, her true love, fights at the wars.

Much light-hearted comedy. with all ending happily for everybody concerned.

The three plays are directed by Wyllie Longmore, with sets designed by Mary Anderson. S. McC.

RUISLIP WEEKLY POST

14 February 1973

QUESTORS

In Ealing the Questors in Mattock Lane are putting on three plays that make up the One-Act programme this year linked by a common theme: Love and Marriage. The first play is in fact called Marriage. This play was written in 1833 by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol and is a satiric comedy set in the city of St Petersburg. The plot centres around the efforts of a matchmaker to get a young, but very silly girl, married. Gogol's intention was not to write a romantic comedy but the way he unmasks the real motives that underlie the characters' actions result in being funny although there is a very biting social comment.

The second play in the programme is No Why, an enigmatic little play written by John Whiting in 1961. The centre piece of the play is a child who remains silent throughout. He has been put in the attic after committing a dreadful crime and will only be allowed downstairs to his grandfather's party if he says he's sorry. What the crime is exactly we are never told; nor do the family really want him to 'repent': it is an opportunity for them to vent the frustrations and failures of their lives upon the helpless boy.

The final play is Miss in Her Teens, the

theme also being of a young girl and her suitors. It was written in 1747 by David Garrick, one of the most brilliant English actors of his day. As in the first play a young girl finds herself with four suitors. Three of them have been paying court to her while her own true love is away at the wars. But they are reunited when he returns and all ends happily

The plays can be seen as of February 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, commencing at 7.45pm.

ACTON GAZETTE

8 February 1973

Students on love and marriage

NEXT WEEK'S annual production by The Questors student group will be a programme of three one-act plays on the theme of Love and Marriage.

The first play is, in fact, called "Marriage" and was written in 1833 by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol. It is a satirical comedy set in St. Petersburg and concerns the efforts of a matchmaker to get a young, but very silly, girl married off.

Next in the programme is "No Why", which tells the tale of a family's determination to vent their frustrations and failures on their helpless child.

And the final play is entitled "Miss In Her Teens", which returns to the theme of a young girl and her suitors. It was written in 1747 by David Garrick as a simple light-hearted comedy to be performed after the main play of an evening, and designed to send the audience away happy.

The programme will be presented on February 13-17, beginning at 7.45 p.m., at The Questors' Theatre in Mattock Lane, Ealing.

STAINES CHRONICLE

9 February 1973

Love and marriage theme for three plays

THREE one-act plays linked by a common theme, love and marriage, are to be performed by the Student Group of the

Questors, Ealing, from February 13-17.

The first, Marriage, was written in 1833 by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol, and is a satirical comedy set in the City of St. Petersburg. The plot centres around the efforts of a matchmaker to get a silly young girl married.

The second play is No Why, an enigmatic little piece written by John Whiting in 1961 and posthumously produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1964. The figure is a child who remains silent throughout. He has been put in the attic after committing a dreadful crime and will be allowed downstairs to his grandfather's party only if he says he's sorry.

The final play is Miss in Her Teens or The Medley of Lovers, the theme of which is also that of a young girl and her suitors. It was Written in 1747 by David Garrick, the most brilliant English actor of his day.

His play is hardly more than a bit of fluff, a light-hearted comedy, one of several known in the 18th century as an "after-piece" which was put on after the main entertainment of the evening, and which was designed to send the audience away happy.

SOUTH KENSINGTON NEWS & CHELSEA POST

9 February 1973

Love and marriage

LOVE and marriage are the themes which link three forthcoming productions at the Questors Theatre in Mattock Lane, Ealing.

The first play in the student group one-act programme is just called "Marriage."

"Marriage" was written in 1833 by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol. It is a satirical in the city of St. Petersburg.

The plot centres around the efforts of a matchmaker to get a young but very silly girl married. She is presented with no less than four suitors: A fat, pompous. boorish civil servant, a shabby, retired infantry officer, a pathetic retired naval man (making his 17th attempt to get married), and a vain, indecisive court councillor, who gets nearest to marrying the girl.

It is not Gogol's intention to write a romantic comedy. He unmasks the real motives that underlie the characters' antics and the result is a funny, but very biting social comment.

The second play in the programme is "No Why" — an enigmatic little piece written by John Whiting in 1961 and posthumously produced by The Royal Shakespeare Company in 1964.

The centre-piece of the play is a child who remains silent throughout.

He has been put in the attic after committing a dreadful crime and will only be allowed downstairs to his grandfather's party if he says he's sorry.

What the crime is exactly we are never told; nor do the family really want him to "repent."

It is an opportunity for them to vent the frustrations and failures of their lives upon the helpless boy. In the end, his crime is that he exists.

The final play is "Miss in her Teens" or "The Medley of Lovers," the theme of which is also that of a young girl and her suitors.

It was written in 1747 by David Garrick, the most brilliant English actor of his day. His play is hardly more than a bit of fluff, a light-hearted comedy, one of several known in the 18th Century as an "after-piece," which was put on after the main entertainment of the evening and which was designed to send the audience away happy.

As in the first play, a young girl finds herself with four suitors. Three of them (a doddering old widower, a fop, and a braggart captain) have been paying court to her while her own true love is away at the wars. But, of course, they are reunited in the end and all ends happily. The play was a great success in its time and provided Garrick himself with one of his most celebrated characterisations: that of the fop, Fribble.

Performances begin at 7.45 p.m. from February 13th to 17th.

THAMES VALLEY TIMES

20 February 1973

Student plays on marriage

THE fruits of the Questors' second-year acting course were sampled last week in a programme of three one-act plays — two period, one modern.

Ironically it was the period pieces by Gogol and David Garrick that provided the best vehicles for the star pupils. The modern one-act by John Whiting was perhaps too ambitious for such a showcase presentation.

Gogol's "Marriage," written in 1833, parodies the love and marriage comedies of the period, and reveals the playwright's personal antipathy to the all too common motives for marriage: financial greed, position and security.

A merchant's daughter, fast approaching thirty, is desperate to be married, so the local matchmaker fixes her up with four suitors, all of whom arrive at the same time. Amid the ensuing chaos, only one suitor emerges as a likely candidate and he turns out to be inexorably marriage-shy.

Margaret Halberstadt was very amusing as the featherbrained girl eager for the altar, and Paul Ekins echoed convincingly the fears of many a carefree bachelor as the eligible Ivan Kuzmich.

It was no coincidence that the theme of David Garrick's "Miss In Her Teens" strongly resembled "Marriage." It was almost as if Whiting's "No Why" was an interval piece put in to separate two halves of the same play.

In the Garrick play, Cathie Jones made a rather more nubile miss desirous of being Mrs. and once again Paul Ekins was favourite in the suitor stakes.

What distinguished it from the Gogol piece was Anthony Hill's masterly interpretation of Fribble, a part Garrick obviously wrote for himself.

Fribble is one of those rampant pansies one finds in Restoration comedy, whimpering and simpering like a butterfly

on heat.

Tony Hill, an ex-member of Teddington Theatre Club's Workshop, brought the play alive each time he fluttered on to the stage. His sword fight with Captain Flash (John Slavin) was superbly arranged by Peter Gallagher.

It was unfortunate that a large section of the audience greeted the strange and enigmatic "No Why" with a kind of jocular contempt, which must have been off-putting for the small cast.

Personally, I found it stilted and unconvincing. A boy had been banished to the attic for some unnamed misdemeanour, so dire that his parents would not release him until he apologised.

John Davey failed to convince as the father, torn between stern reprimand and gentle pleading, and Janice Culling made little impression as the mother. I should add that both John and Janice distinguished themselves in the other plays.

The fault lay, I think, in the direction of Wyllie Longmore, whose forte would appear to be period comedy rather than contemporary drama. It is absurd to imply that a director is only fit for one form of theatre, but the contrast between period and modern direction was, in this instance, very noticeable.

The next major production at the Questors will be Shakespeare's "As You Like It" from March 3rd to 17th.

MIDDLESEX CHRONICLE (TWICKENHAM)

16 February 1973

Students excel in three plays

THE Questors' Students revealed more talents in their programme of three plays last week, Marriage, by Gogol, No Why, by John Whiting, and Miss in Her Teens, by

David Garrick.

Wyllie Longmore produced all three.

I thought No Why a very unpleasant piece and the audience, on Tuesday, seemed to agree with me. But the two others were charming, with Gogol's outstanding.

Paul Ekins had two successes, as Ivan, a court counsellor in Marriage, and Captain Lovett in the Garrick. Both in a sense, resembled each other in their pomposity and arrogance. Mr. Ekins showed an easy command of the stage and of his words, and he possesses a clear delivery and projection.

FOUR SUITORS

Cathy Jones had a big role in Miss in her Teens, as Bidy; she was also an aunt in No Why. Although she showed all the confidence in the world as an incorrigible flirt, I couldn't see why she played the part somewhat like an American floozie. She was never Russian.

To emphasise the similarities of character of the four suitors in the Gogol and Garrick plays, they were each played by the same actors. Mr. Ekins has been cited; the others, equally successful were Tony Hill, from Teddington Theatre Club, John Slavin and John Davey.

Margaret Halberstadt was excellent as Agatya in the Gogol. Julia Cooke, too, as the two maids, Bunyaska in that one and Tag in the Garrick.

Tony Gariff was admirable in both plays as an actor, but his voice projection was often under-pitched.

I can't think why the unfortunate boy with a wordless role wasn't in the cast list. He was very effective. Silence is sometimes golden!

MAURICE REEVE

COUNTY TIMES AND GAZETTE

16 February 1973

Three plays from the Questors

QUESTORS Student Group members must have been thinking of the song "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage" when they chose their programme of one-act plays for this year.

The programme offers three plays, linked by the common theme of Love and Marriage, which are being performed by the second year student group at the Questors this week (from Tuesday to Saturday nights).

Six men and five women present them, almost a perfect perfect balance for the theme.

"Marriage", was written by Russian playwright, Nikolai Gogol, in 1833.

It is a satirical comedy set in the city of St. Petersburg and concerns a silly girl's search for a husband, with the assistance of a matchmaker.

The play opens with Ivan Kuzmich Podkolyosin, a court councillor, played by Paul Ekins, who sits in his study day after day thinking it is about time he married.

MATCHMAKER

He is visited by the matchmaker, Fyokla Ivanovna, performed by Judy Radcliffe, who brings a list of suitable partners, the silly girl being one of them.

The councillor is finally cajoled into visiting the girl, a merchant's daughter, by his friend. Ilya Fomich Kochkaryov. Determined to marry the couple off quickly, the friend plans the wedding on the day of their meeting.

The daughter, a dumb blonde, is

amusingly portrayed by Margaret Halberstadt, who contributes some fascinating "empty headed" expressions.

NOT ALONE

When the councillor arrives at her house, he is not alone. Three other finger-nail biting suitors are waiting to meet the girl.

Here the play reaches a climax. Miss Tikhonovna enters and is introduced to her woovers.

Puzzled, she ponders over her possible partners; a fat, aloof, boring civil servant a shabby, retired infantry officer, a weak-looking retired naval man (making his 17th attempt to marry), and, of course, Podkolyosin.

Gogol portrays the times of "forced" marriages when spinsters and bachelors were dragged to the altar by those who thought marriage the ultimate aim.

COLD FEET

This attitude is shown when the councillor, who is chosen by the girl, develops cold feet as he waits for her to don her wedding and escaped from the house through a window. His friend is furious and calls him "a milksop, not a man". (The irony here is that the friend is unhappily married).

Gogol also shows how people married for reasons other than love. The four suitors show motives of financial greed — wanting to wed the girl for her dowry, position, and for security.

The play was well acted and entertaining. To appreciate it fully, one must understand the playwright's deep and biting message.

"MISS in her Teens" was written by David Garrick, the 18th century actor. Although

praised as a lasting success since it was first performed in 1747, it seems times have changed, and so have the tastes of audiences.

The play, intended as a comedy, is boring and slow. There were few laughs during the performance I attended.

It shows the style of the English short comedy of Garrick's era.

The theme, as in "Marriage", concerns a young girl and her four suitors. The girl, Bidy Bellair, played by Cathie Jones, has recently come to town with her aunt. She falls in love with a soldier, Captain Loveit, played by Paul Ekins, who has to go abroad with his regiment.

With her aunt's approval, she is being courted by an old man, ready for his grave, and it is learnt later he is the soldier's father.

The pretty, frivolous girl also encourages other men. Fribble (Tony Hill) is an effeminate gentleman who trots around the stage waving his lace cuffs. He promises Bidy he will "comb the dogs, make the tea, and dress the children" when they are married. This part is well acted and provides most amusement in the play.

The other man is Captain Flash, a saucy, loud-mouthed soldier, played by John Slavin.

When the girl hears of Captain Loveit's return, she sets the other men against each other, hoping they will die.

At this point, the audience sits up. Captain Loveit enters and a sword fight between him, Flash and Fribble, follows. The action is short lived. Flash submits and Fribble cowers in the corner.

HIS FATHER

That leaves one suitor, the old man. When Captain Loveit learns the old man is his father he offers Bidy to him. The old man refuses, Saying: "The girl is yours; she's too much for me."

It seems unfortunate the play was chosen as part of the programme because it does not give the group a chance for really good acting. The dialogue is flat and the plot is weak.



"Miss in her Teens" was written as an afterpiece to the main entertainment. It was designed to send the audience home feeling happy. I felt bored and disappointed.

Although a better choice of plays could have been made, the standard of acting and presentation still provides an entertaining evening.

All those involved deserve credit. Costumes, by Moira Fitzgerald, are excellent, and Andrew Dixon shows much talent with lighting, Particularly in the second play.

"NO Why", by John Whiting, is perhaps the most enjoyable of the three plays.

It was first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych in 1964. The play is short but disturbing. One tends to sit on the edge of one's seat throughout.

The theatre is plunged into darkness. Then the story opens with a single spotlight shining on a boy's expressionless face. Alone in an attic, he has been sent there because he has done something wrong, "something criminal" — but we never know what.

In pyjamas and a dressing gown, he never moves. His family is downstairs, enjoying itself. The boy will not be allowed out until he apologises for what he has done.

Mystery builds up as, one by one, the family visits him, trying to persuade him to repent.

WARMTH

His mother, played by Janice Culling, is a warm person, [sad] for her son's confinement, but upset.

"You have hurt me very much," she says.

The father, an austere man, acted by John Davey, tries hard to make the boy apologise.

He gets down on his knees and implores the child to do so, but it is no use. The boy remains silent. He is further reprimanded by other relations. The set has the atmosphere of a prison camp with the gestapo torturing the prisoner.

The family love shines through, but it seems the boy has no love.

"He does not understand the pleasure of love," says his aunt, played by Julia Cooke. The other aunt (Cathie Jones), calls the boy a "wicked sinner" who "loves only his mother".

GOOD BOY

The boy is contrasted with his cousin, played by Peter Macnamara, who shows almost perverted signs of love towards his mother, and is "always a good boy".

By the time the last member of the family, grandfather, enters, one feels chills running down the spine. The old man, played by Tony Gariff, is vague. He asks the boy "to come back to the family before it is too late." Still he is silent and motionless.

Finally, the boy is left alone with his father, who is running out of patience. His words are deep: "We have no hate, no love. We recognise each other for what we are."

The man's voice echoes in the child's ears. The last words are: "I wish you had never been born". He leaves and the boy suddenly moves. As the lights dim, he takes his dressing gown cord and hangs himself.

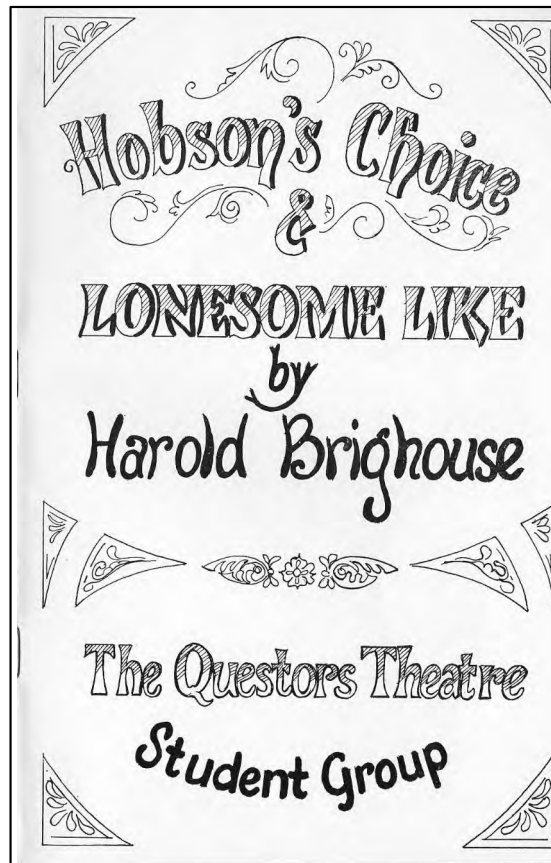
All the audience learns is that the boy's crime is that he exists.

This play enhances the group's talents. The life-like characters create a "genuine" situation. It is the best of the three plays because the audience actually feels involved in the story rather than just being an onlooker, as in the other plays.

J R

**Student Group 26
July 1973**

**HOBSON'S CHOICE &
LONESOME LIKE
by Harold Brighthouse
Directed by Wyllie Longmore
Designed by John Rolfe**



questopics

QUESTORS THEATRE MATTOCK LANE W5 5BQ 5670011 Box Office 567 5184

No.82 JULY 1973

July Production

HOBSON'S CHOICE and LONESOME LIKE

A Harold Brighouse double-bill by The Questors Student Group

The Questors ends a most successful season with these two most enjoyable plays by Mr. Brighouse. *Hobson's Choice* is certainly his most successful full length play and, director Wyllie Longmore tells us, *Lonesome Like* is probably his best one-act. Consequently our students have some excellent material to conjure with.

Harold Brighouse, who was born in Eccles, Lancashire in 1882 used his local surroundings, the local people, the Lancashire atmosphere as the raw material for much of his work. In this respect the plays do much to record the period in an historical sense. His brilliance however, emanates from the humorous, sympathetic and engaging presentation of his times.

Harold Brighouse had his first play produced in Manchester in 1909, he was then 27 years old. *Hobson's Choice* was written and produced in 1915.

The story of *Hobson's Choice* is simple enough: it is a comedy set in Salford in and about 1880. Henry Hobson is a boot (shoe) shop proprietor. He has three daughters, the eldest being Maggie who possesses a strong,



WYLLIE LONGMORE directs

sensible will-power. Maggie seduces her father's timid employee Will Mossop in marriage—this causes considerable outrage in her father and somewhat disgust in her two sisters.

However, it becomes increasingly obvious Maggie is no fool, she has recognised the intelligence in Will Mossop and soon provides him with enough confidence to demonstrate his business acumen: Mr. Mossop becomes a real business challenge to Mr. Hobson.

As a result we witness the birth of a truism into the English language, Mr. Hobson is left with no choice but to accept his

son-in-law Will as a partner in the reconstituted firm of 'Mossop & Hobson'—hence *Hobson's Choice*.

But to put the first last, *Hobson's Choice* is preceded by the one-act play *Lonesome Like*. This too, inevitably, is set in Lancashire, but this time in rural surroundings.

Sarah Ormerod is an old weaver whose hands are crippled by arthritis. Consequently her outlook is bleak so far as her job at the mill is concerned, the only alternative is the workhouse—the thought of which she regards with some understandable foreboding. Despite the sad background to the play it is 'gently' funny. Harold Brighouse here demonstrates the epitome of his skill in presenting an authentic piece of Lancashire life carefully balanced between humour and pathos.

Since our cast for this production is made up from the student group, most of the names mentioned will be unknown to you. However, they are recorded now since they will be forming the core of The Questors productions in years to come.

In *Hobson's Choice* Tony Hill will play Henry Hobson, Julia Cooke—Maggie, John Davey—Will Mossop, Cathie Jones and Margaret Halberstadt the other Hobson sisters.

In *Lonesome Like*, Rosemary Parry Jones takes the lead as Mrs Ormerod, supported by Judy Radcliffe, Peter Macnamara and Tony Gariff.

This production promises to be one of the best student offerings in years—support it!

LONESOME-LIKE

by Harold Brighouse

Characters:

Sarah Ormerod ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
Emma Brierley JUDY RADCLIFFE
Sam Horrocks TONY GARIFFE
The Rev. Frank Alleyne PETER MACNAMARA

Scene: The interior of a cottage in a Lancashire village. 1910.

HOBSON'S CHOICE

by Harold Brighouse

Characters:

Alice Hobson CATHIE JONES
Vickey Hobson MARGARET HALBERSTADT
Maggie Hobson JULIA COOKE
Albert Prosser PAUL EKINS
Henry Horatio Hobson TONY HILL
Mrs. Heeworth JUDY RADCLIFFE
"Tubby" Wadlow PETER HARBORNE
William Mossop JOHN DAVEY
Jim Heeler TONY GARIFFE
Ada Figgins JANICE STANLEY
Fred Beenstock JOHN SLAVIN
Dr. MacFarlane PETER MACNAMARA

The play is set in Salford, Lancashire, in the year 1880

Act I Interior of Hobson's Boot Shop in Chapel Street.

Act II The same, a month later.

Act III Will Mossop's shop in Oldfield Road, some hours later.

Act V Living room of Hobson's Shop, a year later.

There will be one interval of 15 minutes between Act 2 and Act 3 of "Hobson's Choice." (A warning bell will be rung before the performance recommences.)

The plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE

Set designed by JOHN ROLFE

Costumes by MOIRA FITZGERALD

Rosemary Parry Jones, Peter Harborne and Janice Stanley are past members of the Student Group.

Stage Manager JACK WALSH

Deputy Stage Manager SUE HAUGE

Assistant Stage Managers TRICIA GARNER

SUE SOTHERAN, PETER WALTON

FRANCIS MARK HARRINGTON

GRANT WRIGHT, TERRY MORRIS

IAN RUSSELL, RICHARD LEWIS

Lighting ERIC THORNLEY

Sound TONY BLAKE

HILARY BLAKE, JOHN BOYCE

Designer JOHN ROLFE

Construction ROY BRIERLEY

Wardrobe MOIRA FITZGERALD

MARY COMMON, FREDDIE EDWARDS

Props CATHIE FRASER

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COUNTY TIMES AND GAZETTE

Friday, July 20, 1973

A 'Cordon Bleu' performance

THEATRE-GOERS at the Questors have been able to enjoy a real Lancashire hot-pot this week with Harold Brighthouse's "Hobson's Choice" and "Lonesome Like" sharing the bill.

The North Country palate was whetted with the Questors Theatre Student Group presentation of "Lonesome Like," which is set in a cottage in a Lancashire village in 1910.

It was amply satisfied with the second offering by the student group – "Hobson's Choice," involving the many goings-on at Hobson's Boot Shop in Salford, in 1880.

"Lonesome Like" began with Sarah Ormerod, an old widow convincingly played by Rosemary Parry Jones, waiting in her cottage to be taken off to the workhouse. Her hands were paralysed and she could no longer earn a living.

Emma Brierley (Judy Radcliffe), a young neighbour pops in to comfort her on her way home from the mill. While there Sam Horrocks, a shy, lonely young man, movingly portrayed by Tony Gariff who has never got over his sharp-tongued mother's death, pops in to try and persuade Emma to marry him. She turns him down flat.

Not to be put out, he returns and asks Sarah if she will come and be his new mum. He told her his mother had a "terrible knowledge of burning words" and felt the old lady could quickly take her place.

A happy ending to the short play comes when the workhouse is forgotten and Sam carries off his new mother to his once lonely house.

"Hobson's Choice" - Brighthouse's most famous play - was a delight and showed the wealth of talent available at the Questors.

Henry Hobson, a man with a liking for the demon drink, leaves his three daughters running his boot shop while he enjoys

himself in the Moonraker Arms. He pays them no wages and is quite content with his selfish life.

But it all changes when Mrs. Hepworth (Judy Radcliffe again), a rich customer, breezes into the shop and asks to see the maker of her recently-purchased boots.

Will Mossop, brilliantly played by John Dave, emerges from the cellar and admits he made the boots. The dull boy cowers expecting trouble, only to be highly praised by Mrs. Hepworth.

Maggie Hobson, played by Julie Cooke, who gave a dominating performance, realises Will's potential, persuades him to marry her, and sets him up in a rival boot-making business.

She also, with a devious scheme, gets her sister married off and consequently ruins her father, played by Tony Hill, who despite good make up, looked a little young for the character.

Maggie's rival business flourishes so much her father hits the bottle more and more as his shop heads towards bankruptcy.

Dr. MacFarlane (Peter MacNamara) warns Hobson he must in future practice total abstinence because of his chronic alcoholism, and says he needs someone to look after him, if he is to survive.

Sisters Alice (Cathie Jones) and Vickey (Margaret Halberstadt) won't consider returning home now, as both are living comfortable lives, but Maggie agrees to come back with Willie as long as they get control of 50 per cent of the shop and Hobson becomes a sleeping partner. He reluctantly agrees, having little option, hence the expression – Hobson's Choice.

Fine entertainment, a revealing glimpse of Lancashire life years ago, and a credit to the Questors cultivation of its young actors and actresses.

D.W.



Judy Radcliffe (left) as Emma pops in to comfort Sarah Ormerod (Rosemary Parry Jones) who wants to be taken off to a workhouse. Her crippled hands prevent her from working, in "Lonesome Like."



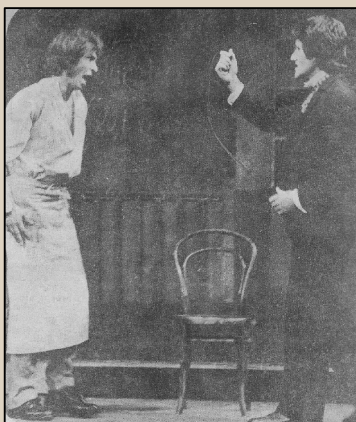
Maggie Hobson, played by Julia Cooke, realises Will's full potential and marries him. Eventually she sets up a shoe shop in opposition to her father.



Sam (Tony Gariff) holds Sarah in his arms after she agrees to go home with him to be his new mother.



Cathie Jones and Margaret Halberstadt play Maggie's sisters, Alice and Vickey, who refuse to look after their father when he becomes ill.



Tony Hill (left) as Hobson in "Hobson's Choice" argues with Will Mossop (John Davey)

MIDDLESEX CHRONICLES

20 July 1973

A character right out of Ibsen

THE Questors Student Group gave a worthy showing of Hobson's Choice last week. The production of this, one of the outstanding plays of the century, was upheld largely by an excellent interpretation of Maggie Hobson by Julia Cooke.

Maggie takes Willie Mossop to the altar, and into ownership of her father's boot shop, by the scruff of the neck, so to speak; a character right out of Ibsen, in some ways, yet stamped with original genius.

Julia Cooke played her with a quiet authority, working a spell over Willie that was bound to succeed from the word go. His faithful Ada was brushed aside and her determination not only to make something of him but to make a love match of it as well, dominated throughout.

HIGH TALENT

Miss Cooke, given the, right parts such as this one, obviously possesses a high talent.

Willie Mossop, who would never have made anything of himself unaided (he was in Mr. Hobson's employ), was the luckiest young man ever born. John Davey got his weakness of character all right but his performance lacked something of variety. His habit of constantly rubbing his left thigh became irritating as well as likely to ruin his suit in no time. The shy man's habit of fingering his tie was never resorted to.

Tony Hill made of Pa Hobson a tough Lancastrian, assuming added years with great effect.

COMPETENCE

These three, the backbone of the play and also of the performance, leave me no room to say of the others than that Cathie Jones, Margaret Halberstadt, Paul Ekins, Judy Radcliffe, Peter Harbourne, Tony Gariff, Janice Stanley, John Slavin and Peter Macnamara gave them competent support.

The abundant humour, which makes the play such a fine one, was fully brought out.

"Hobson" was preceded by the author's one-act "Lonesome-like" in which Rosemary Parry-Jones, a past Student Group member, played an arthritic old weaver with a measure of realism, supported by Judy Radcliffe, Tony Gariff and Peter Macnamara.

Wyllie Longmore was the producer.

THAMES VALLEY TIMES

24 July 1973

Oopish like

The tag "male chauvinist pig" might have been invented for Henry Hobson, the central character of Harold Brighouse's comedy, Hobson's Choice, performed by second-year students at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, last week.

Owner of a boot shop in Salford in the late 19th century, Hobson is a widower with three unmarried daughters, whom he expects to serve in his shop without remuneration.

He also expects them to be subservient at all times, describing any divergence from his rigid code of behaviour as "oopishness," which must be stamped out at all costs.

When his eldest daughter, Maggie, whom

he regards as beyond marital potentiality, announces that she is to marry Will Mossop, his head bootmaker, Hobson is flabbergasted.

Under Maggie's strict tutelage, Will Mossop is slowly transformed from a cowering and exploited employee into a smart, self-assured rival to Hobson, with his own boot shop round the corner.

Hobson's choice is whether to carry on losing business to Mossop, whose fine boots were always the main attraction at Hobson's shop, or to go into partnership with Mossop, accepting the role of sleeping partner.

Apart from Hobson himself, who really needs to be played by someone who looks middle-aged, it is an ideal vehicle for students, offering plenty of opportunity for characterisation and humour.

John Davey's Will Mossop, if a little overdone, was a constant source of amusement, with his idiotic laugh and physical awkwardness.

Julia Cooke both looked and sounded right as Maggie, the bullying, single-minded eldest daughter, who plucks Will Mossop out of the basement workshop like a determined shopper seizing a bargain at the sales.

The other two sisters were well played by Cathie Jones and Margaret Halberstadt and Paul Ekins cut a dashing figure as Albert Prosser, an eligible suitor.

The one performance I was unhappy about was Tony Hill's 'Obson, who remained unconvincing throughout. Tony

Hill is a good actor and he had obviously worked very hard on this characterisation: special walk, right tone of voice, stern looks, every outward appearance of the dour Northerner, but it still didn't work for me.

As an opener, the students also did a slight one-act by Harold Brighouse called Lonesome-Like about a lonely old woman, doomed to the workhouse, who is given a last-minute reprieve, thanks to the whim of a simple lad whose mother has just died, leaving him lonely and doomed to solitude.

END OF PART FIVE

LIST OF STUDENTS (1968-1973)

Many students were in more than one group.

Students who were accepted into a second year are marked with an asterisk.

GROUP 23 (1968-1970)

Yasmin Ahmed*
Dave Bellm
Maggie Bracken
Richard Earthy*
Cathie Fraser*
Mary Kennedy*
Judy Lane*
Richard Paines*
Christine Richardson*
Edward Ruczynski
Heather Tobias
David Tysall
Sebastian Verghese*
John Wilson*
Carol Wiseman*

GROUP 24 (1969-1971)

Jose Alfano
Kevin Barrett
Sally Burns
Peter Coleman
Pat Condon
Bruce Cowan*
Peter (Flags) Garrett *
Liz Graham
Steve Hallmark*
Carolyn Hayfield*
Tom Jennings*
Anne Jones
Helen King
Paul Lewis*
Susan Reeve*
Trevor Small
Jeanne Smith*
Yvonne Suggars
David Young

GROUP 25 (1970-1972)

Rosemary Parry-Jones*
Garry Brooking
Maureen Connew*
Penny Darch
Michael Fender
Caroline (Finch) Good*
Peter Harborne*
Irene Macdonald*
Lisa Manlove
Daphne Marler
Dawn Mastin
Clare Patrick*
Janice Stanley*
Dana Stuczynska*

GROUP 26 (1971-1973)

Jennifer Baggett
John Bull
Julia Cooke*
Janice Culling*
John Davey*
Paul Ekins*
Tony Garriff*
Margaret Halberstadt*
Tony Hill*
Peter Macnamara*
Judy Radcliffe*
Eileen Robinson
Tony Simmons
John Slavin*
Cathy (Jones) Snowdon
Keshav Verma