

GREAT
ACADEMIES
1968

drama at
stonyhurst

foreword

by William Devlin



I have a suspicion that nowadays the Drama is sometimes regarded as a form of 'therapy' - a vehicle for the author to display his ego and for actors to work off their complexes.

Of the three elements that make up the theatre - author, actor and audience - I remain unrepentantly of the belief that the last is the most important.

But Mr Blank's deeply felt and intelligent reading of a Beethoven sonata is of small interest if he cannot play the piano, and much the same applies to an actor who has failed to learn his basic techniques of speech and movement.

If your players emerge with realisation that the most important aspects of their art are discipline and humility, they will be on the right road. And if this sounds a little grim, let them remember, too, that it is all to no purpose unless their work is suffused with a deep and abiding joy in the service of the public.

Up with the curtain, and the best of luck to you all!

William Devlin

stonyhurst drama 1967-68

THIS YEAR at Stonyhurst we set about a modestly ambitious policy of developing drama in the College. The work has proved most rewarding, our present production being the fourth this year.

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL, our first effort, is a poetic drama which required sensitive skilled verse-speaking from the cast and particularly from the Chorus. Our version was played in the auditorium and in front of the curtain. Much of the dramatic effect was obtained by lighting, and in this field we learnt a good deal which was evident in our later productions. The most successful aspect of this presentation was the excellent reading of the Chorus, composed of boys from Grammar and Lower Grammar. Many of them are playing roles in 'The Critic'.

THE HOT TIARA is a West End comedy and was our major production in the Easter term. Performed by Grammar and produced by Fr J. Dooley, it proved an amusing romp, the staging being a major triumph for Mr H. Pragnall, Mr D. Allen and his stage crew, whose set was a brilliant re-creation of a drawing room in the Mayfair dry-Martini belt.

THE AUDIENCE clearly enjoyed it all, and a packed Academy Room for N.F. Simpson's A RESOUNDING TINKLE later in the term could not have been more



The Hot Tiara

Murder in the Cathedral



appreciative. This modern comedy of the absurd was performed by boys from Syntax and Upper Syntax and caused a considerable amount of comment and, in some cases, bewilderment. There were a number of skilled and nicely rounded performances, as much from minor as from major characters. Again Mr Allen provided a first-class set, a marvellously cluttered lounge, this time very much from sweet sherry suburbia.

THE CRITIC is an obvious choice for an Academies play, and in this classic farce with its dash of comedy of manners we have the largest cast of any play performed at the College for some time. This gives some indication of the new enthusiasm which has developed over the year and will demonstrate, we hope, our progress in many aspects of the theatre.

NEXT YEAR will see a revue and at least three plays. Before long we hope to join with the Music Department for a major production. As you can see from the newly renovated stage, we are taking drama seriously, we have established ourselves, and, as 'The Critic' will show, we enjoy it as well.

MELVYN MORROW

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The Critic
or A Tragedy Rehearsed
by Richard Brindley Sheridan



Stonyhurst College
14th - 15th June 1968
The Great Academies

The Critic

Dangle ROBERT GRYSPEERDT
Sneer RALPH AUCHINCLOSS
Sir Fretful Plagiary STEPHEN DE KERDREL
Under Prompter HUGH WOOLDRIDGE
Puff SIMON GREIG
Mrs Dangle ANDREW HAMMILL
Playhouse Fellows JOHN MATTHEY
ROBIN HEMMING
Servant PHILIP MCKENNA

Time - 1779

Act One : Dangle's Morning Room, London

Acts Two & Three : Drury Lane Theatre

There will be an interval of 20 minutes after

Act One, and of 10 minutes after Act Two. The

More Library is available as a lounge.

PRODUCED BY MELVYN MORROW

Assistant Producer CHARLES STURRIDGE

Stage Manager F. J. D. ALLEN

Designed by HUBERT PRAGNELL

Characters of the Tragedy

Lord Burleigh BERNARD HITCHEN
Governor of Tilbury Fort CHARLES KNEVITT
Earl of Leicester FRANCIS O'LEARY
Sir Walter Raleigh SIMON BRADY
Sir Christopher Hatton DAVID HURST
Master of the Horse EDWARD DUKE
Sir Francis Rainsford FRANCIS RAINSFORD
Soldiers ROGER SPANO
CHARLES STURRIDGE
EDWARD DUKE
Beefeater NICHOLAS BIRKINSHAW
Justice ANDREW OXLEY
Son CHARLES STURRIDGE
Constable CHRISTOPHER WATSON
Justice's Lady EDWARD DUKE
Justice's Assistants ANDREW NICHOLSON
Don Ferolo Whiskerandos CARLOS BERNITT
First Niece MICHAEL DECROIX
Second Niece ANTHONY BARRY
Confidante HENRY BOSTON
Tilburina NICHOLAS REIDY
Witch MARK BRENNINKMEYER
Thames FERGUS O'MAHONY
Banks COLUM MURRAY
PHILIP YOEMAN
PETER BARROWCLIFF
Mersey KEVIN MALONE-LEE
Hodder EDWARD DUKE
Neptune ANDREW BARRY
Tower of London JOHN COSTIGAN
St Paul's LAURENCE DUNSMORE
London Bridge STEPHEN MATTHEY
Stonyhurst NICHOLAS VALNER
Britannia ANTHONY DWYER
Orchestra CHRISTOPHER FAWCETT
Fleets PETER SMITH
AND A CAST OF THOUSANDS.

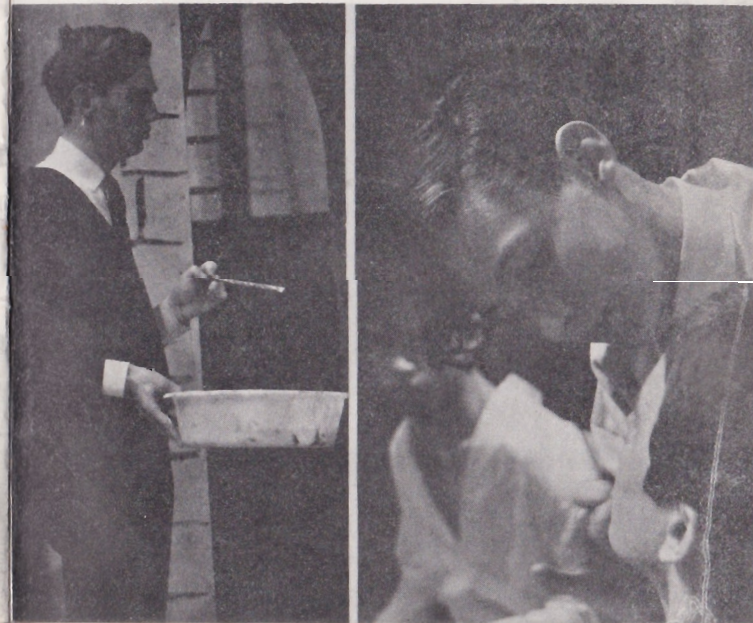
costumes	Watts of Manchester
special properties	Manchester University Department of Drama
stage hands	Gerald Clarkson Anthony D'Alton Stephen Kent Mark Bancroft Livingston
lighting	Mark Unsworth Martin Hadshar Brian Holt
sound	Michael Critchley
assistant to the designer	Susan Greenwood
movement	Francis Matthey
musicians	Michael Critchley Maurizio Favretto Hugh Wooldridge
fanfares arrangement	Hugh Wooldridge
wardrobe	Philip Brown Bruno D'Almada Peter Bloxham Christopher Wood Nicholas Jensen Hugh Wooldridge Bernard Moroney Timothy Holmes Stephen Holder Philip Frank James Malone-Lee Mark Porter Anthony O'Brien Fr Clark SJ Fr Dooley SJ Fr Thomas SJ Peter Anderson David Grey Stephen Roche Fr Low SJ Philip Brown
properties	
front of house	
make-up	
photography	
archives	

The music for the play comes from the suite, "Love in Bath" - an arrangement by Sir Thomas Beecham of pieces from operas by Handel. These depict the elopement of Sheridan, author of 'The Critic', with Miss Elizabeth Linley.

backstage for 'The Critic'

Design: H. Pragnell

Make-up: J. Malone-Lee



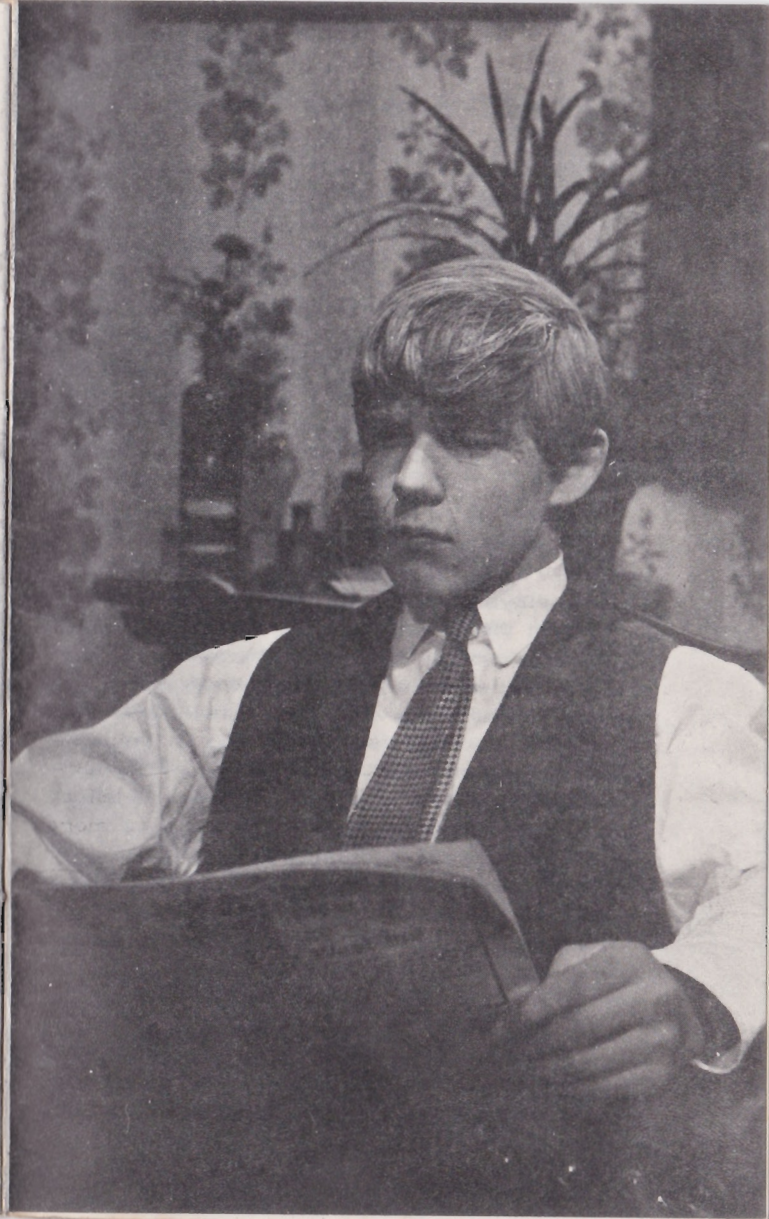
the stage

Charles Sturridge in
A Resounding Tinkle

THE START of the year brought with it decisions to modernise the old stage. Lighting had hitherto been hired for performances of major productions, but it was almost non-existent for other occasions such as class plays. New equipment has now been bought and installed by the stage staff. A modern control board with pre-set facilities and thyristor dimming gives great flexibility.

DURING the Easter holidays the old main curtains were removed, almost in a state of collapse, together with some of the back-stage superstructure. New tabs, two new intermediate curtain tracks, and a complete set of black drapes with adjustable legs were put up, together with a cyclorama. Finally a large apron, which can be removed and stored when necessary, was erected on the floor of the auditorium.

IMPROVEMENTS which should be made as funds become available include sound-proofing for the tiers at the rear of the hall, better seating and ventilation, and provision of a small studio theatre for class and group use. Dare we hope that the necessary finance may be found in the not-too-distant future?



jesuit drama

THE EARLIEST mention of a Jesuit school play seems to be that of a 1551 tragedy. Five years later, by the death of St Ignatius in 1556, it could be taken for granted that each of the 33 Jesuit colleges in Europe would have had at least two plays a year.

They were of two main types. Tragedies ('Iudi solemnes') were acted by senior boys often at the annual prize distribution and were usually on biblical or classical themes. Then there were also shorter plays ('Iudi priores') given by younger boys at Shrovetide or for some special, often royal, occasion.

The plays were normally written by someone on the staff, e.g. the professor of rhetoric, or by the boys themselves. Apart from an underlying moral and didactic purpose, they were intended especially as exercises in Latin, in declamation, gesture and deportment. The vernacular was rarely used at first. Native tongues, however, were resorted to more and more by the 18th century.

Plays were frequently performed in daylight, but since the duration varied from two to seven hours it was often necessary to conclude by the light of torches.

Casts were often large: 30 was normal. But well over 60, as at Aachen in 1716, was not rare, although apart from actors the numbers could include those who took part in accompanying musical interludes and ballets.

Stage sets were elaborate. The scenery and effects of the main theatre (there were in fact three separate theatres in the main building) at the College of Louis-le-Grand in Paris in the 17th century are stated to have been more varied and numerous than those of the Theatre-Francais. The College in Vienna boasted of seven 'transformation scenes'. Indeed the spectacle of the sea in movement, decorated with ships, marine creatures, naiads or tritons, rivalled the effect of fire and lightning, flying machines and suspense mechanisms which were almost universal in seventeenth century Jesuit plays'. It may well be true that they were a powerful factor in the development of technical methods of production for the European stage.

Nor is it surprising that they had their critics. Jansenists protested against the luxuriance of the decor. Within the Society itself decrees were issued at intervals to curtail the number and diminish the extravagance of performances. Some Jesuits complained in the 17th century that the work of the school suffered through excessive concentration on preparations for acting the plays; the expenditure on productions was censured as excessive and unsuitable.

But at least, as modern historians of the theatre all agree, it was these very productions in Jesuit schools that had an immense and beneficial influence on the development of drama, and for that matter opera, too, in the western world.