



ROOSTERS

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE presents
a play by Arnold Wesker
Civic Theatre 19th – 23rd June 1973

‘ROOTS’

The action of the play takes place in Norfolk in the present day.

ACT I An isolated cottage, the home of Jenny and Jimmy Beales.

I N T E R V A L

ACT II *Scene 1.* Two days later in the kitchen of Mr. and Mrs. Bryant’s cottage

Scene 2. The same, a couple of hours later.

I N T E R V A L

ACT III Two weeks later in the Bryants’ front room.

“My people are not caricatures. They are real (though fiction) and if they are portrayed as caricatures the point of all these plays will be lost. The picture I have drawn is a harsh one, yet my tone is not one of disgust - nor should it be in the presentation of the plays. I am at one with these people: it is only that I am annoyed, with them and myself.”

Arnold Wesker.

Beatie Bryant	Mary Nelson	Stage Manager	George Westmoreland
Jenny Beales <i>her sister</i>	Dorienne Wilkinson	Assistant Stage Managers	John Pemberton, John Coates, Adrian McKay.
Jimmy Beales <i>her brother-in-law</i>	John Armitage	Properties	Barbara Gilmour, Dorothy Money, Liz Hudson, Anne Robinson, Val King.
Mrs. Bryant <i>her mother</i>	Olive Richardson	Lighting Design	Sydney Irving.
Mr. Bryant <i>her father</i>	Martin Key	Music & Sound Effects	Barry Appleson, Bill Rogerson, Peter Hutchinson.
Frankie Bryant <i>her brother</i>	Edwin Barraclough	Prompt	Thelma Stoker.
Pearl Bryant <i>her sister-in-law</i>	Pam Swift	Front of House Managers	Hazel Spray, Tom Stoker.
Stan Mann <i>a neighbour of the Bealeses</i>	Dennis Stevenson	Box Office	Hazel Irving, John Pemberton.
Mr. Healey <i>a manager at the farm</i>	John Pemberton	Publicity	Gordon Wilson.
		Set Design	Elaine Cooper.
		Resident Stage Manager	Fred Mower.
		Theatre Manager	Derek Rose
		Wardrobe Director	Margaret Rhodes

Directed by Norman Thackwray.

We are grateful to the University of Leeds Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies for their help with the Norfolk accent. The drawing on the front of this programme is by Elaine Cooper of the Leeds Arts Centre Fine Arts Group.

" if there is one thing which shines through this unusually honest play it is Mr. Wesker's bitter sympathy for the people he is writing about

"Mr. Wesker's characters are limited by their environment. They are dispossessed not so much materially, (although the 'You never had it so good' state has largely ignored farm labourers), as spiritually. They have been handed over to the cultural exploiters. *'The slop singers and the pop writers and the film makers and the women's magazines, the whole stinkin' commercial world exploits us'* cries Beatie Bryant, *'and we don't care a damn!'*

' Arnold Wesker does care. He cares too much to pretend that his country folk are harmless and lifeless dummies who parade nightly in 'The Archers' or the comic yokels and golden-hearted peasants of the popular, suburban formula play. And it is because he cares, and because he is writing about a situation in which we are all involved, that 'Roots' is an important and moving play."

**From a correspondence in the Eastern Daily Press in March, 1960
following a B.B.C. broadcast of 'Roots.'**

"The public may leave the Civic Theatre at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open. All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any obstruction. The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before each performance to confirm that it is in proper working order."

Leeds City Council Watch Committee.

Arnold Wesker was born in the east end of London in 1932, his mother, a Hungarian, his father a Russian tailor. In the ten years after leaving school he gained a wide experience of life by working in an assortment of jobs – apprentice furniture maker, carpenter's mate, bookshop assistant, plumber's mate, seed sorter, farm labourer, builder's labourer, kitchen porter and trainee pastry-cook – experience which is reflected in both the subject matter of his plays and their characters. This period also included two years' National Service in the R.A.F. and culminated in his working as a pastry-cook in a restaurant in Paris, where he saved the money for a six month course at the London School of Film Technique.

His career as a playwright began with the presentation of "Chicken Soup with Barley" in July 1958 at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, and later at the Royal Court in London. This was followed by the production of his earlier play "The Kitchen" but the biggest impact was made the following year in June-July 1960 when all three plays in the so-called 'Wesker Trilogy' – "Chicken Soup with Barley", "Roots" and 'I'm Talking about Jerusalem' – were presented at the Royal Court.

His success continued with the production of "Chips with Everything" in 1962 but his subsequent plays – "Their Very Own and Golden City", "The Four Seasons" and "The Friends" – have not been as well received, and it is largely his earlier plays which have earned him his reputation as a leading modern dramatist.

He has also written a play for television and a number of short stories and articles. In 1961 he became director of 'Centre 42', a somewhat unsuccessful cultural movement for popularising the arts with Socialist and, in particular, Trade Union backing.

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

The Leeds Arts Centre was formed in 1945 as an amateur Society to encourage and foster interest in the arts,

The Drama Group mounts five plays each season at the Civic Theatre,

The Green Room Group puts on plays and other forms of entertainment in the rehearsal rooms to give members valuable experience of acting and producing before tackling major parts or productions in the Civic Theatre.

The Fine Arts Group meets twice each week throughout the year for drawing, painting and other creative work.

In addition there is a variety of social activities, such as theatre visits, outings, parties, etc.

New members are always welcome and if you are interested in joining or would like more information about any of the groups, please write to:-

THE SECRETARY, Leeds Arts Centre,
43 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2.

PRODUCTIONS NEXT SEASON

2nd – 6th October, 1973.

CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS by Georges Feydeau

Produced by Margaret Rhodes.

4th – 8th December, 1973

THE NATIONAL HEALTH OR NURSE NORTON'S AFFAIR

or

FORGET-ME-NOT LANE by Peter Nichols

Produced by Sydney Irving.

30th April – 4th May, 1974

VIVAT VIVAT REGINA by Robert Bolt

Produced by Malcolm Brown.

January – June productions to be announced.

N E X T W E E K

26th 30th

JUNE

LEEDS ART THEATRE

present

"THE GHOST TRAIN"

by A. Ridley.

Produced by Dania Sykes.