

The Civic Theatre Leeds



Programme

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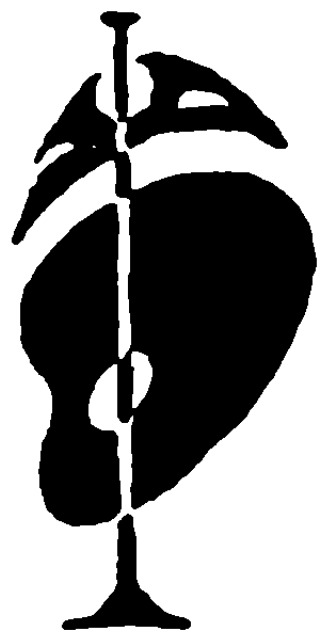
When **SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE** was first presented at the Royal Court theatre in October 1959, it was received with hostility and indifference by the majority of its audience. A similar reception was given to much of John Arden's early work; three of his plays have been given public performances at the Royal Court and between them they have achieved only seventy-three performances. More recently, however, Arden's work has been re-assessed. **SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE** has continued to be produced all over the world and is generally regarded as being one of the masterpieces of the British 'new drama'.

SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE confused early audiences because it seemed to present a tract about pacifism which showed that pacifism did not work. The motives and methods of the soldiers are so at odds with each other and often so wrongheaded that it seemed to be an attempt to discredit pacifism by discrediting pacifists. If Arden is 'for' the pacifists, why has he not made them heroic; if he is 'against' them why has he made their opponents so unheroic?

The answer is that Arden refuses to 'load' his plays in favour of those characters whose opinions most closely resemble his own. Indeed, he has said that he has 'grave objections to being presented with a character on the stage whom you know to be the author's mouthpiece'. In other words, there are no villains in his plays; nor are there heroes. There are just people. And people behave in different ways although they may believe the same things. So, although we may agree with Musgrave's pacifism, we do not have to approve of his actions or his solution.

Arden has said that he 'cannot see why a social play should not be so designed that we may find ourselves understanding the person's problems, but not necessarily approving his reactions to them'. It is in this light that we should watch **SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE**.

It is of interest to note that Arden based the play on an event in Cyprus in the late 1950's. A British soldier was killed by natives. In the violence which followed, five natives were killed; one of them a young girl.



LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

presents

DECEMBER 5th to 9th 1967

SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE

By JOHN ARDEN.

CAST

PRIVATE SPARKY EDWARD MACRO
PRIVATE HURST GRAHAM ALCHORNE
PRIVATE ATTERCLIFFE ERIC PARKER
BLUDGEON, a bargee EDWARD LAKELAND
SERJEANT MUSGRAVE JACK LEWIS
THE PARSON LEONARD SHELDON
MRS. HITCHCOCK OLIVE RICHARDSON
ANNIE MONICA SHELDON
THE CONSTABLE NOEL MEER
THE MAYOR STANLEY SMITH
THE SLOW COLLIER GERALD BEAUMONT
THE PUGNACIOUS COLLIER BRIAN SHAW
WALSH, the earnest collier JAMES BOYER
TROOPER OF DRAGOONS NIGEL SUDDERY
OFFICER OF DRAGOONS JOHN LISTER

DIRECTED BY SYDNEY IRVING

The play is set in a mining town in the North of England, eighty years ago.
It is winter.

Set designed by HAZEL IRVING

Stage Manager: BILL ROGERSON

Assistant Stage Manager: GEOFFREY MOUNTAIN

Prompter: CHRISTINE DALTON

Lighting & Music: PAT CLARK

Properties: CHRISTINE LASKEY, RUTH WILKINSON

Wardrobe: ANITA MOUNTAIN, CHRISTINE DALTON

Set construction: FRED MOWER

Box Office: HAZEL IRVING, JOHN PEMBERTON

House Manager: DOROTHY HOOLEY

CIVIC THEATRE, Cookridge Street, Leeds

Manager: Derek Rose

**In accordance with the requirements of the Watch Committee of
Leeds City Council:—**

- (a) The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open.
- (b) All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or any obstruction.
- (c) The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before the commencement of each performance so as to ensure its being in proper working order.

Our next production : January 30th – February 3rd, SALAD DAYS.

JOHN ARDEN was born in 1930 in Barnsley. He studied architecture at Cambridge and Edinburgh and worked in an architects' office in London. In 1956, his radio play **THE LIFE OF MAN** was first presented. In 1957 the Royal Court theatre presented his first stage play, **THE WATERS OF BABYLON**. This was performed for one Sunday evening as a club presentation without decor (at that time the Court was presenting several new plays in this manner to give an audience to new writers).

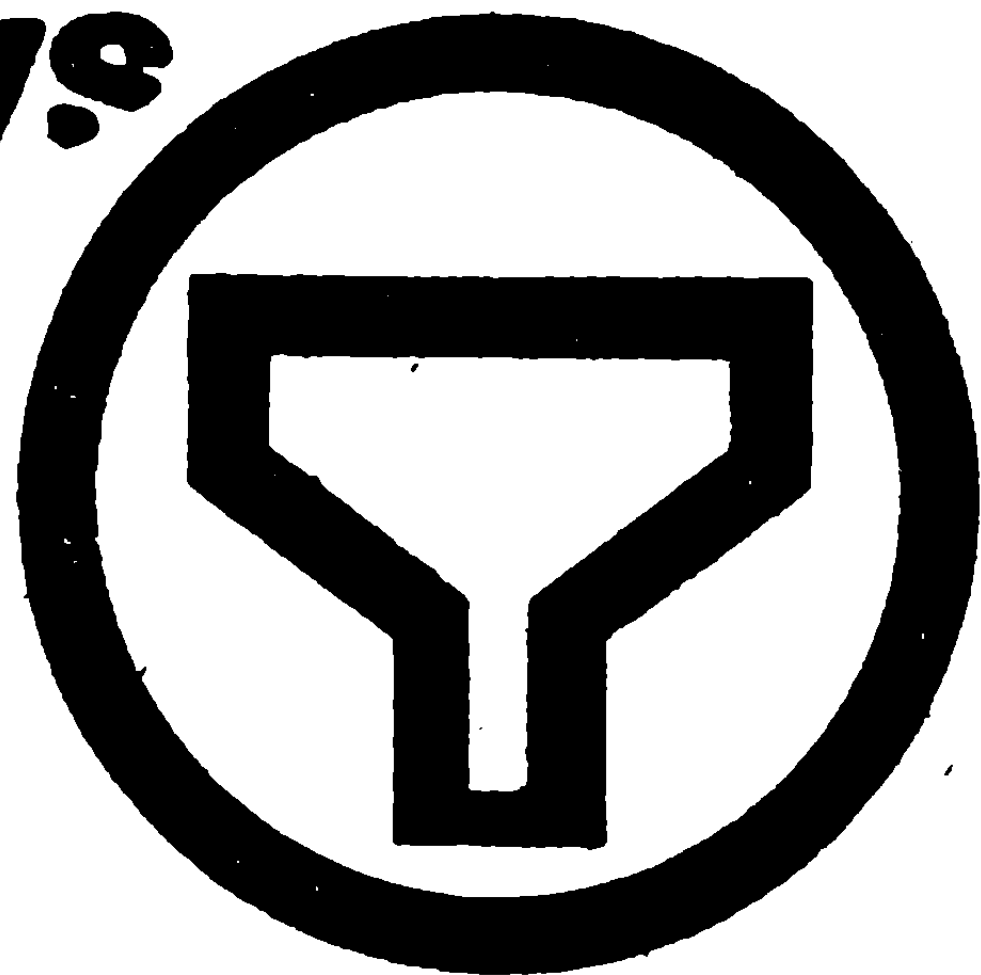
This was followed by normal public productions of **LIVE LIKE PIGS**, **SERJEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE** and **THE HAPPY HAVEN**.

More recent plays have included **THE WORKHOUSE DONKEY** (first presented at Chichester Festival and currently in rep. at Nottingham); **ARMSTRONG'S LAST GOODBYE** (first presented at Glasgow Citizen's Theatre and subsequently by the National Theatre) and **LEFT HANDED LIBERTY** (commissioned to commemorate the Magna Carta and presented at the Mermaid Theatre).

At present, Arden is writing the 'book' for a new musical about Nelson. Provisional title is **TRAFALGAR** and musical score is by Jerry Bock (who wrote the score for **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**).

The Centre presented **LIVE LIKE PIGS** four years ago at the Civic. The play was directed by Sydney Irving and the cast included James Boyer, Jack Lewis, Edward Macro, Eric Parker, Monica Sheldon and Leonard Sheldon, all members of the cast this evening.

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