

THE LITTLE THEATRE

THE HOME OF THE SOUTHPORT DRAMATIC CLUB



1st-9th March 1985

THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING

by CHRISTOPHER FRY

directed by
JOYCE GOLDSWORTH

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WHAT'S ON at the LITTLE

MONDAY, 11th MARCH — WEDNESDAY, 13th MARCH

**TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD
DRAMA FESTIVAL**

SATURDAY, 16th MARCH

BANKS BRASS BAND

WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH — SATURDAY, 23rd MARCH

**Merry-Go-Round Theatre Workshops
'THE DESTINY' - a new musical play for children**

SATURDAY, 23rd MARCH

INNER WHEEL COFFEE MORNING

SUNDAY, 24th MARCH

ONE ACT PLAYS



WEDNESDAY, 27th MARCH — 29th MARCH

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FRIDAY, 29th MARCH

R.N.L.I. COFFEE MORNING

12th — 20th APRIL

NIGHTLY AT 7.45

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Directed by PAT SUTCLIFFE

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Directed by Benny Darrah

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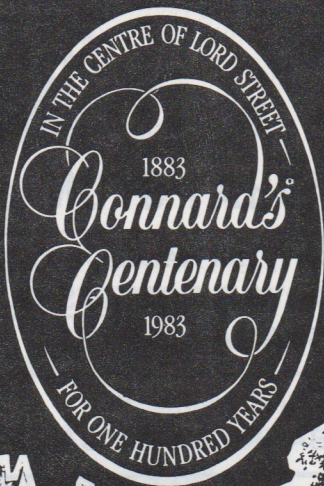
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Christopher Fry

Christopher Fry was born in Bristol in 1907. His father, Charles John Harris, was a builder whose heart was in the church. He obtained a licence as a lay reader in 1904 and thereafter devoted himself to practical Christianity. Christopher Fry writes of his father in *Can You Find Me*, a family history: 'it was not so much the dogma as the doing of Christianity that filled his thoughts.' The influence of his religious background can be seen in Fry's dramatic writing.

Although he began his career as a teacher, Fry left after six months to act with a repertory company in Bath, his stage name being taken from his maternal grandmother's maiden name. He returned to teaching for three years at a preparatory school before again working for a repertory company, this time as director, at Tunbridge Wells. After two years in this post he toured England with Ivor Novello's *Howdo, Princess?* and then toured as a lecturer. In 1940 he was appointed director at the Oxford Playhouse, a job he soon had to relinquish in order to undertake war service, but to which he returned in 1944, remaining at Oxford until 1946.

Christopher Fry started his career as a dramatist by writing pageants and, between 1939 and 1940, plays for *Children's Hour*. His first stage play, written in 1938, was *The Boy With a Cart*, which tells the story of St. Cuthman of Sussex. It only really attracted attention, however, when it was revived in 1950. In these early years Fry wrote several plays with religious themes. *The Tower*, 1939, was commissioned for Tewkesbury Festival, *Thor*, 1948 was written for the Canterbury Festival and *The Firstborn*, also 1948, describing the early life of Moses, was performed at the Edinburgh Festival.

A Phoenix Too Frequent, 1946, a comedy based on a story by the Latin writer, Petronius, was performed in London at the little Mercury Theatre, as part of a season of verse plays, but Fry achieved his first major success with *The Lady's Not For Burning*, 1948, when it transferred from the Arts Theatre Club to the West End with John Gielgud and Pamela Brown playing Thomas Mendip and Jennet Jourdemayne, the young Richard Burton taking Richard, and Claire Bloom playing Alison Eliot. The play was conceived as a 'spring' play, the first of a quartet of plays taking their characters from the seasons. Fry wrote in his Foreword to the play: 'The comedy is a climate, of damp and dry, of spirit and matter, playing April with each other, and the climate is the comedy.'

The second play in the series was *Venus Observed*, 1950, an 'autumn' play that was written for Laurence Olivier. Olivier played the ageing Duke of Altair, who requests his son to find him a wife, only to have his desire re-awakened by Perpetua, the eternal Venus, for whose hand father and son find themselves in rivalry. Another religious play, *A Sleep of Prisoners*, 1951, written for performance in church, intervened before the third play in the 'seasons' series. This was *The Dark Is Light Enough*, 1954, a 'winter' play. Like the other plays it is designated a comedy, but the tragic vein, present in all his work, is here more prominent. Despite the presence of Edith Evans in the leading role, this play was not a success and for a while Fry concentrated on translations.

continued



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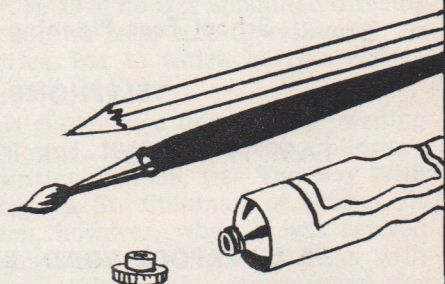
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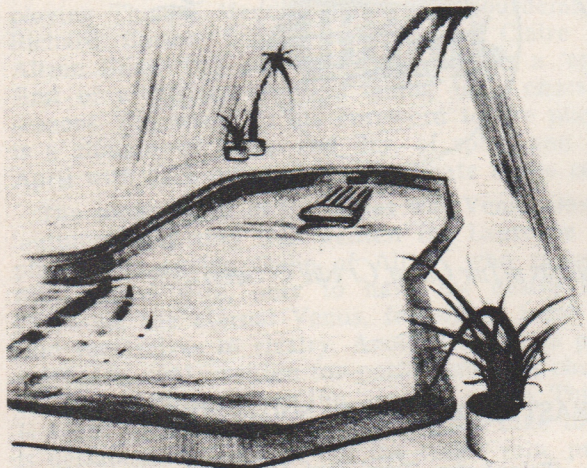
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CHRISTOPHER FRY, continued from page 6

Curtmantle, 1962, marked his return to original playwriting. It was his first specifically historical play. Although all Fry's pieces can be said to be 'historical' because they avoid the present time, their setting is often rather vague. **The Lady's Not For Burning** takes place in 1400 'either more or less or exactly.' **The Dark Is Light Enough** is more specific, being set in the winter of 1848-9 in an Austrian country-house near the Hungarian border, but the story it tells is of an imaginary incident in the Hungarian revolution against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. **Curtmantle** concerns real people, Henry II and Becket, and historical events trying to present a portrait of Henry and at the same time show the interplay between the laws of man and the laws of God. It was first performed in Dutch at Tilburg, before receiving its English première at the Aldwych Theatre. Fry finally completed the 'seasons' plays with a 'summer' play, **A Yard of Sun**, which was written in 1970.

Christopher Fry has an impressive list of translations to his credit:—

Ring Round the Moon (Anouilh), 1950.

The Lark (Anouilh), 1955, the story of Joan of Arc.

Tiger at the Gate (Giraudoux), 1955, which had a long run with Michael Redgrave at Hector.

Duel of Angels (Giraudoux), 1958.

Judith (Giraudoux), 1962.

Peer Gynt (Ibsen), performed at Chichester in 1970.

Cyrano de Bergerac (Rostand), also performed at Chichester in 1975.

He has also written several film scripts, where again his interest in religion has been apparent:—

The Beggar's Opera, 1952.

A Queen is Crowned, 1952.

Ben Hur, 1959.

Barabas, 1960.

The Bible, 1964.

He was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for poetry in 1962.

Christopher Fry's verse drama like that of T. S. Eliot, was a vogue belonging to the late 1940's and the early 50's. In the plays he wrote for the West End, he took up the comedy of manners that had descended from Wilde and Bernard Shaw and added glittering imagery and word-play. The verse is free, it is unrhymed and lacks a regular rhythm, so that it is not always obvious that the characters are speaking verse, but poetry lies in the imaginative handling of words. The vogue, however, passed as the 'kitchen-sink' school of writers came to prominence, and Fry sank in both critical and popular esteem. But **The Lady's Not For Burning** has not been forgotten — Fry himself directed it at Guildford in 1971 — for its verbal fireworks and whimsical humour continue to give delight.



1st — 9th MARCH, 1985

The Lady's Not For Burning

A Comedy in Three Acts

by **CHRISTOPHER FRY**

Directed by **Joyce Goldsworth**

RICHARD, an orphaned clerk **Mark Braithwaite**
THOMAS MENDIP, a discharged soldier **Mike Yates**
ALIZON ELIOT **Carolyn London**
NICHOLAS DEVIZE **Jonathan R. Elliott**
MARGARET DEVIZE, mother of Nicholas ... **Thelma Falls-Hand**
HUMPHREY DEVIZE, brother of Nicholas ... **Stuart Wardle**
HEBBLE TYSON, the Mayor **Hugh Wolfson**
JENNET JOURDEMAYNE **Jean Braithwaite**
THE CHAPLAIN **Alan Joyce**
EDWARD TAPPERCOOM, a Justice **Richard Haslam**
MATTHEW SKIPPS **Frank Braithwaite**

The action takes place in a room in the house of Hebble Tyson, Mayor of the small market town of Cool Clary. The time is 1400 either more or less or exactly.

ACT I — An afternoon in APRIL

INTERVAL

ACT II — An hour or so later

INTERVAL

ACT III — Later the same night



STAGE STAFF

Stage Manager Barry Johnson
Asst. Stage Manager (Book) Anne Sykes
Asst. Stage Manager (Cast) Joanne Elliott
Properties Christine Genower, Pauline Davies,
Debra Sawbridge
Lighting Tony Berry
Sound Ron Treanor
Costumes Margaret Horne, Nadine Scott
Programme Cover David Charters
Set designed and painted by Roy Blatchford and built by the
production team.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The magic of words orchestrated to reveal a gamut of life's human relationships, in a balance of humour, wit, pathos, romance, courage, aggression, with overtones of evil—this is the challenge of 'The Lady's not for Burning.'

May our interpretation and sheer enjoyment of the text let you take some of that magic home with you tonight.

JOYCE GOLDSWORTH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Recollections of a first-nighter

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Just a few of the advertisements in the programme for "Dear Brutus" presented by the Southport Dramatic Club in September 1937, in the new Little Theatre. The price of a Saturday night ticket to see this play was 5/-, including Dance until 11.45 and Refreshments with a subscriber ticket for eight Saturday night seats at £1-15-0d. The show ran for 9 nights and coffee or tea in the interval was 3d. The pattern of presentation of your plays is the same today—the only change being the prices.

I was only a young man at this time but the programme for "Dear Brutus", brought to our home by my parents who had seen the play, was the start of my interest in the theatre; though I must admit that, at this time, other interests occupied much of my time. Plays seen included "The Case of the Frightened Lady" by Edgar Wallace and "The Circle", a comedy by Somerset Maugham.

Come the war and changes in all our lives, the Sheffield Repertory Company came to the Little and presented hundreds of plays during the war years, many produced by Geoffrey Ost with Cyril Luckham, Rachael Gurney and Lally Bowers, who all subsequently won national renown.

The war ended and it was sometime before life returned to normality, but I still attended plays at the Little—I regret to say irregularly. These included "The Light of Heart" by Emlyn Williams and "Claudia" by Rose Franken. Do not think that I came to see these shows on my own, my wife was with me and a number of friends; and by the time the special rates for first nighters was introduced in October, 1953 I was able to muster a party of twelve, and since then have rarely missed a production. The members of this party still support the efforts of the Club. Despite the fact that first nighter seats are not bookable, my friends and I have occupied the same seats today as we did thirty two years ago. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, our original party has been reduced to seven.

Over the years I have seen many actors appearing in over 200 plays and in each pantomime. Improvements have taken place constantly with better and better scenery, and better lighting and sound systems. My party have enjoyed the majority of the plays, knowing that producers and players always do their utmost to achieve the high standards which are a hallmark of S.D.C. productions. A few of the plays that have stayed in memory include "Lady Windermere's Fan" by Oscar Wilde, "The Constant Wife" by Somerset Maugham, "The Teahouse of the August Moon" by John Patrick, "South Sea Bubble" by Noel Coward, "Saturday Night at the Crown" by Walter Greenwood and the Agatha Christie plays.

It is impossible to mention more—I and my friends enjoy our first nights at the Little, meeting other first nighters and members of the S.D.C.! We all look forward to our next first night.

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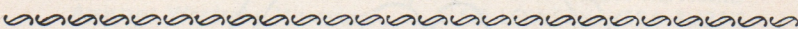
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Opening October 11th, 1951

THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING

A Comedy in Three Acts
By CHRISTOPHER FRY

Characters in the order of appearance :

Richard, an orphaned clerk - - - - -	GEORGE WOODWARD
Thomas Mendip, a discharged soldier - - - - -	RONALD DUNCAN
Alizon Eliot - - - - -	DIANA WISE
Nicholas Devize - - - - -	JOHN TODD
Margaret Devize, mother of Nicholas - - - - -	MONA GRIFFIN
Humphrey Devize, brother of Nicholas - - - - -	JOHN EVANS
Hebble Tyson, the Mayor - - - - -	HARRY DAWES
Jennet Jourdemayne - - - - -	MABEL HALL
The Chaplain - - - - -	ALAN JOYCE
Edward Tappercoom, a Justice - - - - -	JOSEPH BUCKLEY
Matthew Skipp - - - - -	DUDLEY S. WOLF

The play produced by FRED KAY

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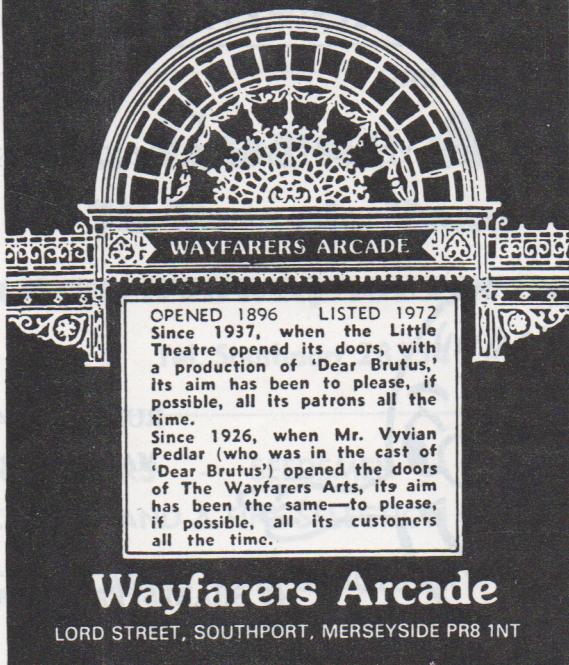
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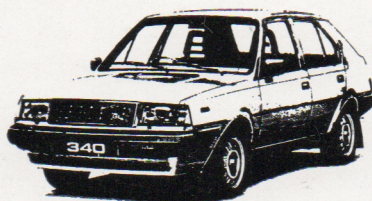
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