

Howard plays at Caux Drama Festival

**'Hides nothing, so that
men may be better able to
see what needs to change'**

A DRAMA FESTIVAL has been initiated at Caux with performances of Peter Howard's plays *The Dictator's Slippers* and *The Real News* by the Westminster Theatre Company, London. The Festival has drawn international audiences including diplomats from Geneva and Berne, the Director of the Swiss Industrial Association, and trade unionists and industrialists from Switzerland, France and Britain.

Mrs Peter Howard said at Caux, 'This Caux theatre fortnight is going to become a European event. There is a bankruptcy of leadership in the world and also a bankruptcy of thinking. This theatre is meant to give the world from Caux the fresh thinking of every nation.'

'As I watched the play last night, I had the thought, "You will look back on this evening with the same sense of wonder and gratitude with which you think of the day when three young Swiss couples decided to create Caux as a centre of common-sense and faith for the world." I believe the new thinking we need will come from men who have been freed in Caux from wrong enslavements, and fired by the spark of God's truth in all its scope.'

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Tribune de Geneve, largest circulation newspaper of Geneva, published the following reviews by ERIC VOGEL:

The Dictator's Slippers

'Consciously or unconsciously people imitate what they see on the stage. If they see men behave like



photo: Meillefer

THE DICTATOR'S SLIPPERS: Saturn, Chief of Police in a totalitarian state (Max Latimer) talks with Dr Hippocrat, the Dictator's personal physician, (Patrick Ludlow)

animals, hear barnyard morality extolled, watch jungle violence glorified behind the footlights, they go out into the streets more animal-like than when they went in.

'There is more in man than a beast wearing clothes in daylight. I want to see the theatre once more play its part in restoring honour to homes, unity between colours and classes, and to all men faith in God.'

In these words Peter Howard, the great newspaperman who died in 1965, defines the aim of the sixteen plays which constitute his work as a dramatist.

The Westminster Theatre, which sets out to be a pioneer of thought,

gave the première of *The Dictator's Slippers* on Saturday night at Caux.

'It is often said that "you cannot make good literature out of noble sentiments". In *The Dictator's Slippers* the characters are moved by sordid or unselfish motives; they are filled with despair or with lofty ideals—in fact, they are human.

The scene is laid in the present, in the office of the Chief of Police in a country under a dictatorship. The "Big Boss" is dying—supposedly. From all directions aspirants to the post of supreme power appear on the scene.

How has the author secured the dramatic quality of his play against

the supposedly erosive and anti-literary effect of the noble sentiments pronounced by his actors? This is where the high quality of the actors themselves and of the director is revealed. All are experienced professionals. They could have *acted* their parts, developed the theatrical effect by voice and gesture and attitude, using all their skill to build up the drama. They have done no such thing.

Penetrating intuition

'They do not act. They *are*. All stage effects are avoided and the penetrating intuition of Peter Howard alone speaks through the cast. They have accepted an iron discipline: they dominate the audience and communicate with them by means of sheer moral force and the pitiless clarity of the author's visionary spirit, which hides nothing of what is, so that men may be better able to see what needs to change. This is a theatre of ideas, full of weighty consequence, but also sustained with reasons for hope. This is perhaps one of the characteristics of the theatre of tomorrow, a change from so much hopelessness, so much nihilism of all kinds of which the public might justifiably be tired . . .

'We like this theatre of Howard's

because of the mental shock it gives us. If it gives us less satisfaction on the level of pure art is it not because the author was primarily concerned with the former rather than the latter? In this he achieved his aim.

'The set—a vast honeycomb of metallic facets, the futuristic furniture, the extreme and deliberate economy in the costumes and lighting, the robot-like gestures and geometrical movements on the stage, which fit together like the movement of a watch—all these things are executed with perfection. The result is an atmosphere of strain and constraint which leads us all the more forcefully to the great open door which is the *raison d'être* of the whole play.

'This first performance received a standing ovation from the very large audience. It was a well deserved tribute to the dedication with which the whole cast had brought the play to maturity. This inclusive gesture of the audience towards author and actors impressed us as a great dramatic moment.'

The article is accompanied by a portrait of Howard, under which is the following quotation: 'I write to encourage men to accept the growth in character that is essential if civilisation is to survive.'

The Real News

'*The Real News*, a three-act play by Peter Howard, reflects his thorough knowledge of the world and of the Press. The author realistically reveals how men and their motives determine the big decisions. This is the second play on the programme of the Theatre Fortnight of Caux. We witnessed it on Wednesday night in that majestic Mountain House, which looks out on Caux, the lake and the Alps. The play bursts with picturesque details taken straight from life, with English humour at its marvellous best.

'In *The Real News*, the Westminster Theatre Company reveals another facet of its dramatic gifts, presenting characters without trace of symbolism—people like you and me whom we meet every day. The three acts are carried off in a staggering breeze of candour. Even the simultaneous translation does not dilute our pleasure. The actors' art comes across to us as though a universal language already existed . . . or was coming back to life.

'Peter Zander's production, which is never still, is a model of clarity, rhythm and movement.'

THE REAL NEWS: 'Get out!' roars the Editor (Max Latimer) to the Copy Boys (Christopher Thorogood and Mark Allen). John Brook, the young Reporter (Prentis Hancock) hands the copy, watched by the News Editor (Philip Newman). photo: Meillefer



'India Arise' Call

FROM OUR COMMONWEALTH CORRESPONDENT

WHILE THE COMMONWEALTH Conference in London ploughs its path through discussion and division, Rajmohan Gandhi and his travelling force, ninety-strong, are marching through the great cities of India setting fire to the spirit of the second largest nation in the world. Night by night for the audiences of thousands the new India is pictured in a blaze of colour, in moving scenes of history, in humour, song and earthy challenge to change, in precision of movement and in the art of the East.

India Arise leaves many of those who see it stunned. For the first time they know there is an answer to apathy, to feuding in family and nation, to dishonesty that makes a mockery of economic progress, and to the weary prospect of poverty and war.

India has long been a battleground for the forces of materialism and subversion that are out to scoop up the world. With infinite courage Rajmohan Gandhi, the bearer of a famous name, proclaims to his people his conviction that the challenge of 'India Arise' will grip the wills of the millions more powerfully and permanently than his grandfather's challenge of 'Quit India'—the call for independence.

The grandson may be right. For in the heart of the vast land of India

are reserves of greatness and conviction which if realised could swing the balance of thought and action in the entire world.

Gandhi hits opposition—from the fearful, the lustful, the agents of dictatorship, the tools of bribery, the jackals of extremism and the massed forces of godlessness. The aim, he says, is to make God King in India.

One thing is plain. This force of able, dedicated, united men and



Punjabi dance in 'India Arise'



Rajasthan dance

photos: Leggat

women in India, whom Gandhi is training and multiplying, is new in history and a fresh factor in the world. West and East alike will feel the impact of it. It is also what the enemies of liberty hate and fear. And Gandhi and his comrades are resolved nothing shall deter them.

These young men and women represent the true future of India. They are not just rebels against materialism, disintegration, weak government and the tyranny that results from it, but men and women with the clear light of God's global purpose whose new pattern of life can transform the face of the earth.

India Arise speaks to the emergent nations of Africa, in their disarray and their searching for a guiding star. It speaks to the ancient people of the West and the East, and the frustrated world of Communism, but in a way that all who wish can understand. It offers a winning idea capable of bringing fulfilment and fruition to the best in all. It can touch all with its magic.

To enable his campaign in drama and in music to reach far and wide, Gandhi is now making a film of his whole programme. The filming took place at AVM Studios, Madras, and this weapon will soon be available. The cameraman is Prem Prakash, chief of the Commonwealth TV News Bureau, India. The finest Commonwealth aid from Britain would be to help, in practical ways, with this task.



The Commander-in-Chief of the Ethiopian Air Force, Colonel Aberra Mariam, pins an emblem on a member of the 'Harambee Africa' cast, the MRA musical recently in Ethiopia. The Colonel said, 'You have sown a seed which will develop and expand.'

photo: Kobler



'It's our country, Jack!' cast sing at building workers' canteen on construction site

photo: Strong

Campaign opens in car capital

COVENTRY, car capital of Britain, this week launched the new MRA review, *It's our country, Jack!*, which is to go through the ports and industrial centres of the country.

At the end of the performance in the Police Hall, the Socialist Lord Mayor of Coventry, Alderman E M Rogers, said, 'We are not going to get a better world until we get more people coming round to the strong opinions of this cast. It is one of the finest performances I have ever been to in my life.'

'What I want you to do,' he told the audience, 'is to bring as many people as you can.' The Mayor, who had as his guests the Mayors of Wolverhampton and West Bromwich, read messages from mayors and chairmen of councils from different parts of Britain. The show was introduced by Les Dennison, chairman of the Building Trades Operatives of Coventry.

Shop stewards from Standard, Morris, Dunlop and other factories were present, including Communist and non-Communist Trade Unionists. They heard a Kenyan studying in Yugoslavia say that MRA was an idea that could unite East and West.

The leader of the West Indian community heard another member of the fourteen-nation cast, Carol Bartholomew, from Trinidad, tell how MRA

had shown her the full part West Indians could have in British life.

From its opening on an ancient hillside to the final song 'Why not let God run Britain', the cast of 55 spelt out in song and dance, in rhyme and reason what Britain can do.

Telegrams from round Britain and Europe included one from Bristol dockers welcoming this review to their city next week.



**AFAN LIDO
PORT TALBOT**

'It's our country, Jack!' will be performed in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress, Alderman and Mrs W H Lewis Monday and Tuesday, 3 and 4 October, at 7.30 pm

Tickets 5s, (3s under 16) from Lloyds Cycle Shop, 112 Station Road, and at the Afan Lido

Korean Premier opens Asian Assembly

'I WISH TO EXPRESS my whole-hearted support of the theme of this assembly "Demonstration for the Modernization of Asia",' said the Prime Minister of Korea, Chung Il Kwon, at the opening session of the four-day MRA Asian assembly in Seoul. He was speaking to 1,500 people from all over Korea and five other Asian countries who gathered in the Citizen's Hall on 8 September.

He continued, 'When we succeed in uprooting all the injustice from our society and in implementing in the heart courage and conviction for the cause of righteousness, the foundation for the modernization of our lives will have been laid and a peaceful, prosperous new Asia will rise'.

The Asian musical, *Let's Go '66*, with a combined cast of Japanese, Chinese and Koreans, was presented at a public performance to an audience of 3,000. It was the first time since Korea gained her independence from Japan at the end of the Second World War that Japanese songs have been publicly sung in Korea. The show was broadcast by TV and radio.