

MEREDITH'S THEATRICAL PAST

When the curtain rises Wednesday night, April 4, on the MIRACLE WORKER, Meredith College will record the 1973 production in her long-running tradition of dramatic presentations. Since 1970, Mrs. Linda Bamford has been Meredith's drama and speech instructor and has directed a major production each semester. Students may remember TWELVE ANGRY WOMEN, THE CHALK GARDEN, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, THE GLASS MENAGERIE, and CAROUSEL. Noting these recent productions, THE TWIG staff thought it might prove interesting to check into the files of past productions and discover what students and faculty were viewing through the last two decades.

In the spring of 1947, the Meredith Little Theatre presented A ROMANTIC YOUNG LADY, directed by Catherine Hilderman. The play was written by G. Martinez Sierra and set in Madrid. The Spanish-flavored production starred more men than women but was produced by an all-female crew.

The December, 1948 production was that old girls' school favorite, LITTLE WOMEN, by Marian DeForest. This play featured one Harry Dorsett as Mr. Laurence.

A year later in December, 1949, Thornton Wilder's OUR TOWN was produced with a 30-member cast under a new director, Delphine Murphy,

and starred such notables as Harry Dorsett as the Stage Manager (as well as being the assistant director) and Carlyle Campbell as Professor Willard. One of the acknowledgements for OUR TOWN included the PiKas, who donated the use of an organ for musical accompaniment.

The morality play, EVERYMAN, was presented in May of 1950, directed by Delphine Murphy and Beatrice Donley, assistant directed by Harry Dorsett. The program for the play quoted a few lines for the audiences' benefit: "The story is of precious kind/ Yet there remains a lot behind/ Which you shall think of every day/ To mind the moral of the play." EVERYMAN was presented in the courtyard.

In November of 1952, the Meredith College Playhouse presented THE HEIRESS, a play in two acts by Ruth and Augustus Goetz. Again starring Harry K. Dorsett, the play was directed by Evelyn Da Parma and had a production staff of 36 people.

Meredith got a taste of Shakespeare in November of 1953 when AS YOU LIKE IT was produced in a two-night run directed by Evelyn Da Parma. The RALEIGH TIMES featured a picture essay on the production.

Tennessee Williams' THE GLASS MENAGERIE was presented by the Playhouse in April of 1953 for two nights. The four-character play was

acted by two Meredith and two State College boys majoring in heating and air-conditioning!

A four-act comedy, QUALITY STREET by J. M. Barrie, was presented in November of 1954 and was directed by Mrs. Da Parma. Set in England during the time of the Napoleonic Wars, the play was elaborately costumed with the aid of a costume company from Haverhill, Massachusetts.

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN by Sidney Howard was produced in April of 1955 and starred guess who? -- Harry Dorsett. The three act comedy was described by THE TWIG as "one full of clever lines, wit and folksy charm."

Meredith Playhouse went classic in November of 1955 and presented an adaption of Euripedes' MEDEA, starring Miss Margaret Tucker of Raleigh in the lead role. Having acted in five major productions, Miss Tucker was well-prepared for the play which the Raleigh NEWS AND OBSERVER of Saturday, November 12, 1955, called "an ambitious undertaking," for which "Meredith College Playhouse is to be congratulated for delivering a finished and polished performance." MEDEA also featured David and Joe Crook as children.

Noel Coward's BLITHE SPIRIT was presented in March of 1956 and starred five Meredith girls and two

men, one a veteran of the Raleigh Little Theatre stage. In November of the same year, Oscar Wilde's THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST was produced under the direction of Peggy Gorsage. Playing a two-night run, the show, popular for college theater, was engagingly costumed and well-received.

The Playhouse presented THE CRADLE SONG in March of 1957, a two-act play set in the cloister of a convent of Dominican nuns -- and necessarily starred ten girls and only two men.

In March of 1958, THE SILVER CHORD was staged for two nights, starring six characters, including a State College male and another boy studying at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest.

Noel Coward once again graced the Jones Auditorium stage when his I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU was produced in November of 1958. Again directed by Peggy Gorsage, the play offered Harry K. Dorsett in the role of Daniel Davis.

In November of 1959, Shakespeare returned to the Meredith stage with a production of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, starring a cast of 31 people. The play, the first Shakespearean one in six years, no doubt thrilled the English Department and delighted the whole audience with its charming moon-madness.

The decade of the sixties opened with a production of THE INNOCENTS in November of 1960. The play, written by William Archibald was based on Henry James' THE TURN OF THE SCREW.

In March of 1961, Ruth Gordon's autobiographical YEARS AGO was staged by the Playhouse and was directed by Peggy Gorsage. Set in Wollaston, Massachusetts, YEARS AGO starred 9 characters and one cat.

BREATH OF SPRING, by Peter Coke, was produced by the Playhouse for two nights in November of 1961. The play was set in London and featured five female and three male characters.

Sophocoles' ELECTRA was presented here in March of

1962. Again directed by Peg Gorsage, the play featured the classic chorus and starred nine Meredith girls in addition to four males.

THE HEIRESS, evidently quite a popular play, was once again produced on the Meredith stage in November of 1962. Suggested by Henry James' WASHINGTON SQUARE, the play was set in the year 1850 and the entire action took place in one room -- the front parlor -- of a house.

BLITHE SPIRIT was presented for the second time in eight years in November of 1964. The three-act play was given on successive nights.

Shakespeare's TWELFTH NIGHT was staged in March of 1964. Directed by Peg Gorsage, the production marked the third Shakespearean play in eleven years for the Meredith stage. The five-act presentation starred both Meredith and State College students. The Playhouse costumed the play with rented costumes ordered from New York.

The fall of 1965 saw the Meredith stage transformed into the 18th century drawing rooms of Richard Sheridan's SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL, with ten male and seven female characters.

After presenting THE CHALK GARDEN in the spring of 1966, the Playhouse produced a reading of JOHN BROWN'S BODY in the spring of 1967. The Stephen Vincent Benet poem was directed by Ruth Anne Phillips and contained a chorus of 29 voices. The chorus was directed by Beatrice Donley.

In March of 1968, the Meredith Playhouse presented ROYAL GAMBIT, a drama in five acts about King Henry VIII and his six wives. Directed by Mrs. Phillips, the play was described as representing a struggle between the good and the evil in modern man. ROYAL GAMBIT was produced for two nights.

SORRY, WRONG NUMBER, a one-act play by Lucille Fletcher, was presented in the fall of 1969 and again in March

(Continued on Page 3)



THE HEIRESS: NOVEMBER, 1952



THE GLASS MENAGERIE: SPRING, 1953



THE SILVER CHORD: MARCH, 1958