

GLASGOW CITIZENS' THEATRE

1957 - 1969

THE MIDDLE YEARS

by

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## A B S T R A C T

The early years of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre were dominated by its founder, James Bridie, and by the influence which his legacy exerted over those who worked there in the time immediately following his death. This period can be said to last from the Theatre's opening (1943) until the arrival of Peter Duguid, the first director not immediately influenced by Bridie's aims and objects (1957).

From 1969 until the present day, Giles Havergal and his associates have been in charge, and they have created, in its international-style motivation, something unique in British theatre, famous outside these shores, but totally at variance with the founder's aspirations.

These two eras bear their own recognisable stamps, but in between stretch the 'middle years' - twelve seasons parcelled out among seven directors, an extraordinary series of lofty peaks and corresponding valleys, but comprising, in spite of - or because of - their diversity, a remarkable sum total of achievement. And yet this is the period when - many believe - nothing really happened.

Why were these years so fragmented? Three of the directorships lasted for one season only, and the others had individual styles of their own: Duguid was in sympathy with American plays, Callum Mill with European; Michael Meacham and Michael Blakemore were, on the whole, more English orientated, and the work of Iain Cuthbertson probably came nearer than anyone's, in content, to the Citizens' of James Bridie's vision. Every individual regime of these twelve seasons had its glories, and it is, perhaps, the series of 'new beginnings' which give the 'middle years' their lasting impact.

Relationships between Director and Theatre Board were frequently difficult; both were true to their principles, but these were times when the whole moral and social climate of Britain, its type of 'media appreciation', were in flux. The ideas of 1943 were no longer valid twenty years later, and the problems of adjustment between 1957 and

1969 came close, in the end, to wrecking the whole enterprise. It is only now, with the dust of battle cleared away, that it is possible to see the era in the importance of its true perspective.

## C H A P T E R   O N E

### THE MIDDLE YEARS?

When the Citizens' Theatre of Glasgow raised its curtain in 1943 at the Athenaeum, Buchanan Street, it did so largely as a result of the efforts and inspiration of the playwright James Bridie, and, as might be expected, for many years, two in Buchanan Street, and thereafter at the Royal Princess's Theatre in the Gorbals, it bore his imprint, acknowledged his influence. Even after his death in 1951, the influence persisted. Peter Potter, who took over production in the autumn of 1951, duly paid homage to the recently departed presiding genius, presenting a large number of new Scottish plays, reviving Bridie's Gog and Magog, now a remarkably popular 'vehicle' for the Citizens' favourite character actor, Duncan Macrae, and master-minding the memorial season, which included the premiere of Bridie's posthumous The Baikie Charivari. Michael Langham, who followed him - (tensions were already being experienced within the theatre's structure, and this distinguished director remained for only one season) - produced a programme to some almost alarmingly Scottish in content, finishing off with another posthumous Bridie - almost a Bridie at any rate - as Meeting at Night had been re-worked by actor/author Archibald Batty, a one-time member of the Aldwych farce team. His successor was Richard Mathews, who remained for three seasons and was very familiar with the Glasgow theatrical climate, having been for many years actor and director for the Wilson Barrett Company, whose visits annually to the massive Alhambra Theatre had been such an important landmark on the Glasgow scene. Two of his seasons had commenced with Bridie plays, and his commitment to Scottish drama was consistent. It was with Peter Duguid in 1957 that the change came, and, for the first time, the Citizens' was in the hands of a producer not personally influenced by the founder, even though he was responsible for encouraging Scots plays, often at financial, sometimes even at artistic, risk.

In this first period, there were seven directors; between 1957 and 1969 - (twelve seasons as opposed to fourteen in the first group) -



the same number, and from 1969 just one. The last era, under Giles Havergal, is an era, an epoch all of its own, owing little or nothing artistically to what had come before, while from 1943 - 57 can be termed the Bridie years. These have been well reported, even if not in great detail, by Winifred Bannister in her James Bridie and his Theatre<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere, and arrived at a certain consistency, especially as John Casson, son of Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson, stayed the course for four years, his ideas apparently harmonising happily in practice with the Citizens' that Bridie saw in his inner visions. Right back at the beginning, the first director, Jennifer Sounes, was responsible for only three productions, Holy Isle (Bridie, and not an unqualified success), The Good Natured Man (Goldsmith and not a success at all), and Shadow and Substance (Paul Vincent Carroll), which was highly acclaimed and popular with audiences. Denis Carey and Anna Burden gave performances which were talked about. As Winifred Bannister said, 'Thus was the new Scottish theatre put on its feet by an "Abbey" playwright and the nostalgia of the Glasgow Irish'.<sup>2</sup>

Eric Capon, who then took over for the rest of the first season and the remaining one at the Athenaeum trod a judicious path, but not unacceptably 'safe', mixing Shaw, Ibsen and Priestley (Bull Market, a premiere) with daring sorties into Molnar (Lilium) and Massinger (A New Way to Pay Old Debts). In the Scottish field, there was a revival of John Brandane's seminal The Treasure Ship, a Joe Corrie premiere, (A Master of Men), and Forrigan Reel, vintage Bridie destined for future treatment and revival. With the move across the river to the Royal Princess's in 1945 and the appointment of Matthew Forsyth to take charge of productions, ambitions - and problems - increased. How easily, for instance, could West End of Glasgow patrons be tempted anywhere into the 'foreign' south side of the river, far less into the then still theoretically dangerous Gorbals? There was a brave but maybe rash opening with Priestley's Johnson over Jordan and one of the periodically ill-starred attempts at 'true repertory' which beset Scottish theatres from time to time, as soon, it seems, as time has elapsed for everyone to forget that it failed to work before. Nevertheless, there was a fine mixture of drama and a measure of success. John Casson was sometimes accused of trying to Anglicise

things too much, but his regime included the particularly dangerous experiment of George Munro's Scottish gloss on Christ's second coming, Vineyard Street. There was now, of course, a stage able to cope with Shakespeare, and many were horrified in 1948 at the Bridie-inspired modern dress A Midsummer Night's Dream, with most of the 'mechanicals' played in the Scots comic tradition, and a distinctly Scottish Puck in James Gibson. Another major break-through which has had lasting influence was the Robert Kemp-style Molière, Let Wives Tak Tent, while, in the more general field, there would spring up a uniquely moving and cleansing piece like Kenneth Woollard's Morning Departure, set in a submarine, unloved by Glasgow, but subsequently a major film, and Tyrone Guthrie's Top of the Ladder, never a complete success, but just the thing a theatre like the Citizens' should have been doing.

During this time, the Citizens' was developing in many ways: the Theatre Society continued to flourish, and in 1947 the Junior Citizens' was established, two productions each year being chosen with schools' parties in mind. In those days, and for some time afterwards, these parties were 'segregated' into matinees, and this resulted, as will be seen later, in occasional tensions which could break out into scenes worthy of being reported in the Press. Useful foundations were being laid, however, and in the Eighties parties have come to integrate easily with evening audiences, enjoying plays which, at one time, they would never have been expected to sit through. On a lighter note, another tradition was being established with the new-style Christmas revue, launched in sensationally successful fashion in The Tintock Cup in 1949, a cross between the old Royal Princess's pantomimes - (with the thirteen letter title tradition retained) - and a kind of intimate satirical Scottish music hall. From this source, Duncan Macrae, Stanley Baxter and Molly Urquhart were propelled into other and lucrative forms of theatre. Usually these entertainments helped in a substantial way to subsidise the rest of the year's programme.

In 1969, as has been noted, Giles Havergal began to initiate a policy which was totally different from anything attempted before, and between 1957 and 1969, there stretches a period which many regard as a kind of unprofitable no man's land, a time when, it has been



suggested, nothing much happened. The reason why this 'middle period' is sometimes so regarded probably lies in the fact that no one major figure dominated these years either artistically or in an administrative manner, although many strong personalities - too many, too strong perhaps in the wrong way - made deep imprints. On the Board, George Singleton, a man of many concerns, a founder of the Citizens', figures notably from time to time, and probably often unwillingly, but most single-minded of all was Michael Goldberg, throwback to the patrons of the Arts of Renaissance times, and perhaps for that very reason not able to reconcile his cultural sensitivity with the cut and thrust, the shifts and alterations of the nineteen sixties. On and around the stage, Iain Cuthbertson is the personality most remembered, but, when it came to the point where he seemed likely to achieve what must have been his chief ambition, he severed his connection completely apart from a brief return for one production. That, however, is just one example of the seemingly perverse tricks of fate which seemed to dog the Citizens' in the Sixties, a decade when brilliant promise and success were followed by sudden and often unexplained decline, when fruitful, dedicated effort so often met with insufficient reward as far as audience acclaim was concerned.

Much has been made of the clashes between producers and Board, but too much can be read into this; simplistic blacks and whites can so easily be taken as the true colours of things. The problem was much more complex, difficult, very often beyond the efforts of individuals to solve: it is always thus with times of natural transition. While Bridie lived, and while his influence lasted, the atmosphere remained - not calm, perhaps, but even, level, in the way that a really strong personality renders it. The opening season must have had its problems, but generally thereafter the right man was there at the right time to hold the artistic reins. John Casson, as already noted, did much for the stability of the theatre, and the only real upheaval, and this after Bridie's death, appears to have been the abrupt departure of Michael Langham, whose appointment seemed to be such a major achievement. Again, once Havergal had established his policy, under a tactful and businesslike chairmanship, harmony reigned: the director and his associates were in charge. The 'middle

period' is the time when 'earth tremors' of all kinds were felt, when the Press and public would suddenly turn against the Citizens', sometimes with the most slender of reasons.

For some of the events between 1957 and 1969 it is hard to find any logical thread of reasons and explanations; for some guesses can be hazarded, for others hardly even that. What can be done, however, is to set down the facts of what was done and to examine the critical reaction to the work presented on the Gorbals stage, some of which is in marked contrast to that apparently recalled in casual conversation. The people concerned, the artistic achievements reached, all go some way to build up the complicated picture, and it will be necessary to examine the less well-known plays involved, for of their production little enough record remains, unlike those of the earlier period. They must be set, too, in the wider theatrical context, for this is the era of the Lord Chamberlain's decline, the era of the realisation of Brecht's importance - real or exaggerated, according to taste, the era of Osborne and Look Back in Anger, which turned British theatre on its head. There were other striking developments in Europe, too, and in America, and a recurring challenge to each regime was the question of how a major Scottish theatre should deal with the actors, writers and directors of its own country. (It should be noted that Callum Mill (1960) was the first Scottish director to take charge, and Cuthbertson was the only other in the period under review.) However, it cannot be denied that 1969 looked like a sad ending in minor key.

Through all the shadows which kept recurring, however, brilliant achievements shone through, and, if we take the whole picture of these times, the result is indeed impressive, adding in a considerable measure to the sum total of what could be done for Theatre in a country which so often had been unkind to this branch of the Arts. The physical structure of the Citizens' is, in itself, symbolic: bruised and battered, with everything around and above it hacked away, it continues, by stages, to rise phoenix-like from its own ashes, both as a building and as a platform for the mysteries of the ideas and ideals which, somehow or other, go to create a theatre in the true essence of the word.



Footnotes to Chapter One - THE MIDDLE YEARS?

1. Winifred Bannister, James Bridie and His Theatre (Rockliff, 1955).
2. *ibid.* p.213.

## CHAPTER TWO

PETER DUGUID AND THE AMERICAN INFLUENCE

The advent of Peter Duguid as producer - the term was then still extant - in the late Summer of 1957 marked a break with tradition in many ways. As already indicated, Duguid was the first producer functioning outwith the Bridie influence, and he brought with him new actors, while wisely retaining the nucleus of a company already popular with regular audiences.

A more sensational break with tradition was the choice of Arthur Miller's A View from the Bridge as opening production of the 1957-58 season, as this play still lay under the Lord Chamberlain's ban because of the references to homosexuality, and because one male character forces a kiss upon another from loosely altruistic motives - he wishes to prove the young man's lack of masculinity to his beloved niece. In this connection, the Citizens' Board - not without opposition - followed in the wake of the New Watergate Theatre Club, which had taken up residence in London's Comedy Theatre in Panton Street, admission being confined to Club members. (The name 'Watergate' had then no political connotations, but sought to perpetuate that of an earlier club theatre.) Now, at the Citizens', only members of the long-standing Theatre Society could obtain admission, with the result that membership numbers became unnaturally swollen.

Such a venture obviously attracted a great deal of attention, and, for the first eight weeks of the 1957-58 season, the deficit was one of £478 compared with £2,539 in 1956-57, but, strangely enough, this improvement was attributed mainly to reduction in costs, and, as so often, a 'sensational' success proved to have little lasting effect. Comparative figures for Autumn 1956 (13 weeks) and Autumn 1957 (15 weeks) are significant: in 1956 Production Costs amounted to £6,571 against £4,845 in 1957. Total costs £12,226 compared with £11,075. Losses of £2,609 compared with £2,114. Attendances 48,834 compared

with 40,241. In short, in spite of some good house-keeping, audiences had decreased, and this in the face of increased Society membership, indicating that the bulk of those who joined to attend a banned play showed little inclination to follow the more conventional remainder of the year for which they had subscribed. At the same time Society postage costs, etc. began to grow in an embarrassing manner, as the annual subscription was then only 5/-.

In general, reaction to this sharp switch in policy was good, although it was clear that some former supporters would never feel quite the same again about their theatre. This was, probably, the first attempt by a leading Scottish playhouse to 'bring in a new audience'. In the Eighties such claims are everyday events and all too often bring little in the way of fruitful consequences; in 1958 the Citizens' Board advanced cautiously, and the remainder of the Season would return every now and then to more familiar paths. There was, however, a new element in the make-up of the work presented, one that can only be described as a certain kind of 'grittiness' alien to the Bridie tradition, and perfectly in keeping with the approaching new decade.

The play chosen for this bold experiment has had a strange history, originally seen in New York in 1955 as a long one-act play, part of a double bill along with Miller's A Memory of Two Mondays. It had the advantage of Van Heflin in the key role of Eddie Carbone, whose jealous passion causes him to betray the young Sicilian loved by his niece to the immigration authorities, with tragic consequences. There were overtones, indeed, of Greek tragedy, and Edwin J. Bronner, in his Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, relates that it was 'dismissed by the critics as "self-consciously arty" and "lacking in any particular freshness of viewpoint or insight"'.<sup>1</sup> The enlargement into a Two-act play was carried out for the London production of 1956, with Anthony Quayle as Eddie, and great changes were made. One reason for the different reaction to this new version is suggested by Dennis Welland in Miller the Playwright, where he refers to 'the abandoning of the verse form into which much of the play was originally cast. Often this conversion was effected merely by



resetting the original as prose without changing it in any other way'.<sup>2</sup> In 1988, A View from the Bridge is held in greater respect in this country than ever before, with quoted accolades like 'The NT at its blazing best' in the Sunday Times, although when Steve Grant wrote about the National Theatre production at the Cottesloe, he gave much of the credit to Michael Gambon's performance, which 'does allow the inner and innate tragedy of Miller's piece to glimmer in what can be (on this side of the Atlantic) an overblown melodrama of increasingly absurd and unworldly immigrants'. It is a matter for conjecture just to what extent everyone at the Citizens' realised what a potentially dangerous cargo they were taking on board, especially in the light of a footnote to Bronner's remarks on the original production: 'One controversial scene in the play called for Van Heflin to kiss Richard Davalos on the lips. Said Heflin, "That kiss always got gasps from the audience. We got away with it, I suppose, because neither of us looked effeminate"'.

The first night at the Citizens' coincided with the Edinburgh Festival, with the result that Christopher Small, Theatre Critic of the Glasgow Herald, was unable to review it. 'L.V.B.', however, in the issue 3/9/57, pronounced it to have been a 'thrilling dramatic experience', but, rather cautiously, added, 'mainly because of the superb acting of Archie Duncan' (as Eddie). Duncan was a splendid example of the kind of local talent fostered by the Citizens' in the earlier years - amateur into professional: he was well able, big in stature as well as in talent, for a particular range of parts, to dominate a stage, and he was well suited to the role of Little John in the Television series Robin Hood, which occupied much of his later career, less prestigiously, perhaps, but with obvious gains of another kind. Dr. T.J. Honeyman, then distinguished Chairman of the Theatre Board, appeared to be in no doubt about the success of the new venture, and, after the first performance, described it as 'a wonderful first night', and, when Christopher Small came to write about the production (9/9/57), he pronounced it a 'special occasion for Glasgow', going on to say that 'It is all a very happy augury for the future, but the effect is in the present. It is electrifying'. Frank Wylie, a considerable talent not long out of Glasgow's School of Drama, shared

the 'controversial' scene with Duncan - and certainly drew some 'gasps' from the well-filled houses, while Irene Sunters and Annette Crosbie, two actresses who were being carefully 'groomed', had opportunities to develop their talents, the former as Carbone's wife, the latter as the niece who drives him - literally - to distraction. Dorothy Marshall's set was appropriately more formidably ominous than audiences had generally been used to.

The Scotsman (3/9/57) thought it a 'great play, and the Citizens' Company are to be hailed for daring to present it ... new producer, Peter Duguid, has made the mark of March entering like a lion'. 'Raw if you like' said the Bulletin, 'but Miller doesn't deal in dirt'. (As far back as 13/6/57, the Scotsman had assured its readers that there was no 'serious split' in the Citizens' corridors of power, but 'difference of opinion'.)

By any standard, Duguid had made an auspicious beginning: he was described as a 'Geordie' from Gateshead and gave the impression of being a 'plain, blunt man'. In an interview with the Evening Citizen (19/8/57), he had said, 'I distrust brilliance in the theatre ... a play should appear because of its own worth, and not because somebody puts a flashy production over the top of it'. He presented himself as a 'no gimmick' man.

Consequently, as long as the repertoire remained relatively 'hard-boiled', things went well. A quick follow-up to A View from the Bridge was Herman Wouk's The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, also well suited to Duguid's touch, and in contrast to the Citizens' recent 'house style'. This was, as the title suggests, an adaptation of the latter stages of the author's novel, The Caine Mutiny, which had won a Pulitzer Prize. The dramatization had been a great success in New York, when it had commenced a 405 performance run at the beginning of 1954, with Henry Fonda, John Hodiak, and Lloyd Nolan as Captain Queeg, whose disintegration forms the climax of the play. In 1956, Nolan had repeated this performance in London, where he also directed. On the occasion of the Broadway premiere, Bronner states that 'Walter Kerr (Herald Tribune) summed up the prevailing critical opinion of



the time when he hailed the play as a "shrewd and shattering ... theatrical adventure".<sup>3</sup> The choice of this play, then, showed a keen alertness on the part of Citizens' director and Board, the sort of vigour which was to accompany the opening of each regime in the coming years.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 1/10/57) praised Duguid's success in 'drawing the whole theatre ... into the trial' and noted the 'almost unbearable force and verisimilitude' of Robert Gillespie's *Queeg*, showing the character to be the play's 'true hero', a point that the 'last little scene helps to drive home'. (This last remark is in contrast to the attitudes expressed regarding the last scene of the 1985 London revival with Charlton Heston.) Familiar and popular actors like Fulton Mackay (*Greenwald*) and John Grieve (*Challee*) were employed, placed alongside newcomers Gillespie (later well-known as a director at the King's Head, Islington, London), Derek New (*Maryk*) and Peter Wylde (*Keefer*). James Robb's Court Room set obviously flowed out over 'pit' for the piano, which was still a familiar feature of the Citizens', and the Programme acknowledged the assistance of the U.S. Consulate, Glasgow, and 1631st Air Base Group U.S.A.A.F., Prestwick, indicating that every attempt had been made to ensure documentary accuracy.

The Scotsman was doubtful of the effectiveness of the first Act, saying, in appropriately nautical manner, that it 'veers a point or two off its expected course'. This, however, was blamed on the necessary 'compression' involved in the adaptation of the novel's background, and the audience, being 'in court' arrived at a 'finding' which was 'unequivocally favourable'. Gillespie gave a 'remarkably complete performance', one which the Express found 'electric', adding that this was a 'play with real bite'. The Mail, recalling the none too happy French farce in between, was pleased with 'a welcome return to season opening form', while 'C.G.M.' in the Bulletin (once Scotland's indispensable 'picture paper' daily), recorded that 'the audience was at times so swept away by the play that it applauded good lines as well as good performances'.

It was logical, following his success in A View from the Bridge, that another 'vehicle' for Archie Duncan should be sought, and John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, another perceptive choice, fitted admirably into the pattern which Peter Duguid was creating and formed a part of his strong 1958 Spring Season. The play dated from 1937, when Broderick Crawford and Wallace Ford had played Lennie and George, the one a giant with the mind of a child, the other his 'lonely, intelligent protector', as Bronner describes him; the New York Times is quoted as finding it 'infinitely moving, somberly beautiful ... a masterpiece'.<sup>4</sup> Seta at the Citizens' were by the now resident David Jones, and Duncan duly returned to play the retarded Lennie. According to the Herald (1/4/58), his performance was 'memorable', but it 'never overbalances the effect of (Fulton) Mackay's George ... Mr Mackay is excellent'. Opinions, however, were not unanimous, with the Scotsman almost aggressively contradictory: 'One or two of the company fall down badly ... notably Fulton Mackay ... who cannot get himself nearer California than the black hills of Milngavie'. Others, however, 'rise to considerable heights ...', but 'The stage setting, allegedly in an agricultural valley in Northern California, leaves a lot to be desired. It is difficult to imagine how any farmer ... could set a bunkhouse, barn or stable on such an unpromising slope'. The Daily Mail also seemed to be comparatively unimpressed, its impression being that of a 'sluggish stream of talk'. 'A.M.G.' (Evening Times) said that it 'holds the audience every minute of the way', with Mackay 'an authentic needle-sharp George', and the Daily Mail (8/4/58) this time thought it 'a classic of the twentieth century theatre'. It was a mark of the outgoing policy of the Citizens' at this time that the Evening Times on 2/4/58 reported a visit by Duncan, Mackay and Irene Sunters to Howden's works during the lunch-time break. It was said to be 'greatly appreciated'.

In late April, it was back to Arthur Miller with a more ambitious choice still, a far from 'safe' choice, too, as, although celebrated, The Crucible had never had much in the way of 'commercial' success. Produced in America in 1953, it had managed to achieve 197 performances at a time when, as Bronner says, 'hysterical fear of communism took on some of the dimensions of the Salem witch hunts'



(the ostensible subject of the play). 'The play received respectful but tepid reviews, due in large part to a ponderous production. The two decades since its first performance have brought the play's wider applications and deeper meanings into clearer focus'.<sup>5</sup> It had first come to London fairly unobtrusively as the second English Stage Company production at the Royal Court, sandwiched between the almost forgotten The Mulberry Bush by Angus Wilson and the now legendary Look Back in Anger. In his Anger and After, John Russell Taylor referred to the first two as 'a sound if unsensational start'<sup>6</sup>, but there was to be a later National Theatre production at the Old Vic in 1965. In his Miller the Playwright, Dennis Welland<sup>7</sup> says of The Crucible that:

some found it too much of a morality play, while for others the parallel it suggested with American political events of their own day was an embarrassment; its structure, characterisation and language all came under attack. Yet ... in Britain it continues to enjoy a popularity in the theatre attributable only in part to its reputation in the classroom and even less to its oblique commentary on American political investigations in the 1950s.

This last statement dates from 1979, and, when the Citizens' chose to present the play in 1958, it was another act of courage, typical of the theatre's current attitude.

According to the Glasgow Herald of 29/4/58, David Jones had provided a set 'almost wholly in black and white, bare uprights against Stygian blackness'. The 'fearful tension', the review said, 'is kept up by the Citizens' remarkably well; Peter Duguid even goes one better than the original British production in extending the production, at crucial points, to the auditorium ...'. Iain Cuthbertson and Irene Sunters were the Proctors, and the strong nucleus of regular players were by now no strangers to this kind of writing, although 'it would be absurd to pretend that the playing ... is impeccable ...'; for instance, Annette Crosbie as Abigail 'has not the gall for the horrible creature'. Nevertheless, actors like Roy Kinnear (Thomas Putnam) and Ewan Hooper, later to found the Scottish Theatre Company (Judge Hathorne) had joined the Company,



and, to sum up, it was 'a piece of theatre that Glasgow should not miss'. Edith Macarthur was Rebecca Nurse, and Eileen McCallum made an early appearance. There is much that can be said for and against the policy of maintaining 'regular' Companies in a Repertory theatre: of course, as is suggested above, 'impeccable' casting throughout each play is impossible to maintain, and the question of costs is important, with considerations of rehearsal and holiday pay to be taken into account, but there is much in favour of actors learning to play together and with a regular Director or Directors, and there is no doubt that audiences enjoy comparing the performances of an actor or actress in a variety of roles.

The Crucible required the recruitment of additional players, being a large cast play, and, in this connection, the Scotsman (29/4/58) registered a pertinent criticism of the play as a piece of writing: 'The first act is ... a clumsy, incomprehensible procession of characters into a sick room'. It went on, however, to say that '... the third act rages with Wagnerian grandeur of tone, colours of dialogue and conflicts of action'. The fact that Miller was 'fuming from the fumes of his own ordeal' (in connection with 'unAmerican activities') was acknowledged, that his play was 'unbalanced', but that 'it occasionally intoxicates with the crashing powers of its sincerity'. Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) had similarly mixed feelings: 'The play is a turgid, unrelenting cataract of fierce emotions, but a big work and memorable ...'. He was especially impressed by the third Act, 'which Mr. Duguid plays in the boxes, the aisles, and all over the theatre with hair-raising effect'. The Evening Times (6/5/58) recalled 'the many curtain calls at the end' as 'a tribute both to the company and to a brilliant piece of theatre'.

For the beginning of his second (1958-59) season, Duguid returned not only to his American theme, but also to the 'Club' system, as Tennessee Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin Roof lay under the Lord Chamberlain's ban for the same reason as A View from the Bridge had done, references to homosexuality, although here they moved nearer to central stage. Staged in New York in 1955, it had had a run of

694 performances, winning both the NY Drama Critics' Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In his 'Memoirs', Williams says,

That play comes closest to being both a work of art and a work of craft .... Also it adheres to the valuable edict of Aristotle that a tragedy must have unity of time and place and magnitude of theme. The set in Cat never changes and its running time is exactly the time of its action ....<sup>8</sup>

The London production had come to the Comedy Theatre in January, 1958, a New Watergate Club venture, the third - after A View from the Bridge and Robert Anderson's Tea and Sympathy, where Peter Hall's production had met with less acclaim than that of Elia Kazan on Broadway. According to 'F.S.' in the Theatre World, it was 'a workmanlike presentation' of a:

sizzling play, which however has not met with the unqualified approval of the London critics. One or two of them, having seen the Broadway production, find the London version badly cast and lacking the right tempo. Seeing the play for the first time, this writer was more easily pleased, although recognising that there is not an atom of real nobility in any of the play's characters ....

This should be compared with the reaction to the National Theatre's 1988 revival (the first in London since 1958): 'That the play is Williams's masterpiece is confirmed from the opening moments and it breaks your heart that he can't see this magnificent rendition'.<sup>10</sup> All this shows once more both the courage and the foresight of the Citizens' Theatre at the end of the Fifties.

Its production was the last of the 'Club' plays; as in London, the necessity for this kind of tactic was soon to become a thing of the past (for the time being, at any rate): the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's authority was still some way off, but his code of practice was much less rigid towards the end. As indicated, the success of Williams's work in Britain has always been rather less than a foregone conclusion, except for the case of A Streetcar Named Desire (1949), at least as long as Vivien Leigh remained in the cast. The first night of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at the Citizens' was described in the Glasgow Herald (9/9/58) as being 'almost full', and



the extended three-week run had a modest deficit of £465. 'L.V.B.' was less than completely enthusiastic, but felt that the company 'tackled the stupendous task with courage, vigour, and, finally, with success ...'. The 'production ... appeared at times to lack the heart that should vibrate ... yet the whole thing comes off well ...'. David Jones again designed, and there was a good cast. Ingrid Hafner had been brought in to play 'Maggie', and, by way of something of an unique precedent, a leading Glasgow amateur actress, Rita Black, was cast as 'Big Momma', on the grounds that no professional actress then available could play the part in as satisfactory a manner. Iain Cuthbertson, not surprisingly, was an impressive 'Big Daddy', with Ewan Hooper taking the difficult, ambivalent role of 'Brick'. This actor, one cannot help feeling, was critically under-rated during the time he spent in the Gorbals: his style of acting, especially well attuned to this branch of American drama, owed much to the then innovative technique rather loosely described as 'Method', and in this respect it may well have been ahead of some local critical tastes. Christopher Small had once more been occupied by Edinburgh Festival duties, but, in the Herald of 16/9/58, he wrote, 'The close attention paid to it by Tuesday's audience and the repeated curtain calls showed how much it had been appreciated'.

Gordon Reed (Scottish Daily Express 9/9/58) thought that the play was 'a sizzling drama' and went on to indicate how attitudes to manners and morals were much less 'hard-nosed' in the Fifties than they are today:

Mr Williams has penned prose which sears with a raw edge; verges, occasionally unnecessarily, on the pornographic, but flows mostly in a bawdy slang which takes time to understand. It has the impact of an uppercut. But last night's impact was not merely confined to the play. Peter Duguid's direction and the performance of the cast were quite tremendous.

'C.G.M.' (Bulletin) went further:

The result for me was that I accepted the Williams characters as real - they battered down my unbelief. They also battered me at times to sheer boredom, often to indifference ..... They didn't shock me, but they sickened me, and I left with a sense of bemused, exhausted bewilderment ... Ewan Hooper gave, I thought, the best performance of the evening.

'This white-hot drama is NOT', warned the Record, 'for maiden aunts', while 'J.McK.' in the Evening Times solemnly agreed that the banning of the play by the Lord Chamberlain 'was inevitable. Whether the Citizens' Theatre should have chosen to open their new season with it is another matter. There will be divided opinions here, but, for all its rawness and toughness and roughness, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof lives'. Wm. S. Mack, in the Herald of 18/9/58, took a gently satirical view of the whole thing, inspired by the shade of McGonagall:

Why there is Mr. Iain Cuthbertson with stuck-on  
eyebrows like Niagaras,  
And there are Mr. Ewan Hooper and Miss Ingrid Hafner,  
the Citizens' talented guests,  
And there are all the others too, and I am sure they  
are doing their best,  
And it is all highly dramatical, that I will  
roundly declare,  
And only an ignorant person will say it is a  
lot of hot air.

Four other productions should be mentioned at this point as related to those already mentioned in this chapter, the first two being strong dramatic plays, not set in America, but both with the final imprint of American dramatists upon them. The Diary of Anne Frank was based, of course, on the tragic record of the family which hid from the Nazis in World War Two Amsterdam, but the dramatisation came from the Broadway stage (Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett). The 'American adaptors', Christopher Small said (Glasgow Herald, 29/10/57), 'have done little to give it theatrical life', (a verdict rather at odds with the impression given by a study of the printed text). However, he went on to say that 'It has ... a life of its own residing in the force of its central character, and in our knowledge of the fate suffered by her and 6,000,000 others; to this the Citizens' production does honour and even some justice'. Annette Crosbie's performance was 'courageous and spirited ... a remarkable piece of work'. Summing up, Small said that although 'the tensions ... are projected at first with only intermittent success, ... the appalling facts ... and the sincerity of the players finally overcome the inadequacies of their theatrical realisation'.



The Scotsman also had doubts about the dramatisation, and its point made about the means used to denote the passage of time possibly touches on the reason why this production gave the impression of clumsy handling by the adaptors. The play, it said:

becomes a piece of gripping reportage, overburdened by editorial treatment. A mess of message clogs the theatrical version ... Shortly before the interval, there is a moment of dramatic grandeur as the recluses celebrate a Jewish religious festival around their frugal board ... Against this there are moments when idealism and something near to false preaching irritate the ear ... Peter Duguid's production is sound, although the constant lowering of the curtain to denote the passage of days and the soliloquising of Anne Frank in a darkened theatre set problems of interruptions in the audience's concentration which no producer can adequately solve.

(Surely a sweeping statement!). Magnus Magnusson - in a fairly rare incursion into dramatic criticism in the Scottish Daily Express commented on the 'seesaw' in standards at the Citizens', making comparison between Anne Frank and Peter Duguid's first venture into Shakespeare there, Twelfth Night: 'Why should the Citizens' fall with a thump when dealing with a dramatist like Shakespeare - and then excel themselves in something that is scarcely a play at all' ... 'Whether you have read the book or not, it will seize you by the scruff of the neck'. Anne's father was played by Martin Heller, a 'naturalised' Scottish actor, whose career went back to the days of the Wilson Barrett Company. John Grieve, Frank Wylie, Irene Sunters, Claire Isbister, Harry Walker and Fulton Mackay were players often to be found in Duguid productions, and they were joined by Barbara Wilson, a striking newcomer.

Much later, in the latter part of the 1958-59 Season, there came the other American/European event, Ibsen's An Enemy of the People, but in a new version by Arthur Miller. Admittedly, although the Glasgow Herald of 24/3/59 found 'very little alteration in it', and felt that 'the satire has largely been drowned by the loud voice of indignation', Christopher Small found the version 'well calculated to bring a play to bear with the utmost force on an audience of the nineteen-fifties'. He felt that Miller was 'accustomed to see things

in pure black and white, and to point morals at the level of melodrama', but the play was 'tight packed into two acts'. It was played with 'fierce energy', and Iain Cuthbertson's Stockman was 'memorable'. Irene Sunters was Mrs. Stockman, with the juvenile roles played by Hugh Ross, now prominent in English regional theatre, and Hamish Wilson, who is in charge of Drama at Radio Clyde. The Bulletin found the production impressively set on a circular dais, without scenery. (The set was by David Jones.)

The Evening Citizen enjoyed the forceful treatment: 'Ibsen's rather stiff-shirt rebellion against nineteenth-century morality is transformed into a wild-eyed frontal attack on social injustice. Miller punches home his point as strongly as ever'. The Scotsman was less happy:

His adaptation adds very little to a play which, in its original form, would run up against the insurmountable difficulty of trying to spread over three acts in a situation which, to modern audiences, is normally covered in two banner headlines and two equally ambiguous paragraphs in the popular press.

The Scottish Daily Express gave credit where due:

Credit the Citizens' for doing this play. Credit them too with a brilliant scene when the doctor tries to tell the truth to the town. They give it the atmosphere of a good-old-fashioned hustings, as boisterous as panto, yet illustrating how fickle an excited audience can be.

Glasgow audiences were less excited than they might have been.

The other two productions linked to the manner of those already discussed were not American, but demanded the same kind of acting and production, were signally well suited to the Citizens' style, and contributed to the individual character which Peter Duguid's regime can now be seen to have possessed. The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (Ray Lawler) was, of course, Australian: it had been brought to London in April 1957, by Sir Laurence Olivier in association with the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, and had been the first Australian play with an Australian cast ever to appear



in London. It had brought to Britain the actress, June Jago, who was later to spend a notable season as leading lady at the Citizens'. Following on after Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, this choice showed how Duguid had learned, for his second season, the secret of following one strong piece with another with equal strength, but of a different kind, although this one, in fact, was not directed by Duguid himself, but by Colin Chandler, Principal then of the RSAMD School of Drama, but his company was mainly the experienced group already accustomed to this rich, earthy stuff: Cuthbertson, Hooper, Harry Walker, Sunters, Edith Macarthur, and Jessie Morton, who had been prominent in John Stewart's 'drawing room' Park Theatre above Kelvingrove, and had played the lead in the first, wartime, production there, Victoria Regina. As well as a strong plot, The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll presented believable human beings of more than local significance, although possessing marked indigenous characteristics. Two cane-cutters return to town each year to spend the money accumulated over the working season, and the same two women wait to enjoy their 'leave' with them. Up to now nothing more permanent has been demanded, and the doll brought each year by Roo to Olive is symbol enough of their relationship. But in this, the seventeenth year of the association, there has been a change: the second woman has opted out, and a none too willing substitute ^ introduced. The presence of the 'outsider' undermines the foundations completely: there are some kinds of happiness which cannot be carried beyond youth. As the Herald put it (30/9/58), the play was 'a splendidly stirred caldron of emotions, catching the pathos of growing old in a young country where youth and bodily stamina are success's currency'. There was 'every reason to thank the Citizens' for putting this on ...'. It was 'the sort of thing they do well'. Iain Cuthbertson and Edith Macarthur, who carried the 'main burden', gave 'big performances, well controlled, and mounting in strength to a formidable climax'. The Scottish Daily Mail considered Colin Chandler's direction 'as strong and straightforward as the play', while Iain Crawford (soon to be considered as a playwright) in the Express, said that it brought 'a new kind of gusto to the stage', while, according to the Citizen, it was 'a rough diamond of a play that deserves the praise heaped on it'. 'A.M.G.' (Evening Times) echoed these feelings: 'Every moment of

Colin Chandler's well-controlled production pulsates with vitality, and the excellent David Jones set adds an exotic touch'.

The English One More River (Beverley Cross) came near the end of Duguid's time at the Citizens', but it was very much in the tradition of his earlier work, although the composition of his company had changed substantially: Bernard Kay had come North to play one of the leads, while Russell Hunter, Victor Carin, Clark Tait and Roy Butcher were names which were to figure prominently in future Citizens' productions. This strong all-male play had been seen in London (October 1959) but had originated in Liverpool some eighteen months before when Sam Wanamaker had been operating so promisingly there; it was Cross's debut as a dramatist: "I don't look on melodrama as a dirty word", Frank Granville Barker quotes him as saying at the time, "Shakespeare was never afraid of being melodramatic: he was a romantic who made his characters larger than life in speech, behaviour and action". 'There is remarkable realism, too', Granville Barker says, 'in his treatment of this story of mutiny and violence on a cargo boat at anchor in a West African river', and adds in his review of the production in the same issue, 'It presents us with some deeply observed, sharply-etched character studies, some challenging comments on human prejudice, and some no less stimulating ideas concerning responsibility'.<sup>11</sup> With its echoes of The Caine Mutiny Court Martial, it is easy to see why One More River appealed to Duguid.

This West African adventure was really 'a thumping melodrama', Christopher Small said (1/3/60), advising audiences to 'enjoy the moments when he (Cross) does exactly what he means to do', and to 'forget the larger claims that the author seems to be making for his play'. It was, we are informed, 'a good strong mixture, and the Citizens' serve it up uncommonly well; this is, in fact, the sort of thing that Peter Duguid does best ...'. There were 'some splendid effects ... the drunken dance of liberty which follows a funeral at sea is really a little masterpiece of direction and acting'. Visually, too, it was striking, with 'the stars of Africa swinging above the after-deck'. The Evening Times referred to



'this hearty melodrama, which would not have disgraced the stage of the Metropole,<sup>12</sup> is a first-class piece of theatre'. The Scotsman complained that Bernard Kay used an accent which was 'only an odd aspirate removed from the drama class', but Kay might have defended himself by quoting the playwright's original note which precedes the printed text: 'They are not a dozen assorted character-men displaying their skill with all the stage dialects from Tilbury to Tipperary. Let them speak plain, audible English. Neither emasculated Oxford nor exaggerated Cockney, but a rough and vigorous English'. 'E.G.A.' in the Bulletin labelled it 'thumping though implausible ... if it's accepted as a pretty busy adventure story, I think it will be rather satisfying, but it would be inadvisable to start examining it too closely, or the whole thing may come apart at the seams'. The Evening Citizen considered it 'gripping, full-blooded stuff, with a splendid performance by versatile Russell Hunter'. All in all, a perfect recipe for box-office success? In fact, the deficit for its two-week run was £1,138. Small wonder that Peter Duguid eventually concluded his contract a somewhat disappointed man: there was every reason why a play like One More River - under Repertory conditions - should have been a popular success for audiences of all ages, but this is the kind of disappointment which occurs again and again during the years under consideration. Perhaps 'play' audiences had still not become accustomed to visiting the Gorbals regularly for anything with an unfamiliar name - (the Christmas revue had recently made a surplus of £3,300) - perhaps younger potential playgoers were still under the thrall of the small screen. These were questions to which answers can only be hazarded: all this was part of a problem which was not to be solved until the Seventies, and then in a way which, in 1960, would have been unthinkable. 'Quality' of theatre can do little without the right climate to allow it to flourish, and it is possible for this to come and go without any apparent reason.

The rest of the American plays introduced by Duguid were much lighter in weight and demand less attention. My Three Angels was the first new 1958 production: Sam and Bella Spewack were the authors, although its originator was Albert Husson (Cuisine des Anges). The American production, directed by Jose Ferrer had commenced a run of

344 performances in 1953: Bronner's 'Encyclopedia' neatly encapsulates the plot, 'A trio of escaped convicts take refuge with a French family besieged by conniving relatives. Before proceeding on their way, the three obliging scoundrels arrange a couple of convenient murders and thus set matters right for their grateful hosts'.<sup>13</sup> The News had described it as an 'engaging and pleasantly preposterous comedy'. There had been a more modestly successful London production with Ronald Shiner, and, in the same year, a film version, We're No Angels, with Humphrey Bogart and Peter Ustinov. In the Gorbals, Fulton Mackay, John Grieve and Roy Kinnear were the eponymous convicts who arrive in the French Guiana general store, and the Herald (11/2/58) pronounced it a 'first-rate little comedy', with the Citizens' making 'an excellent job' of it. The Scotsman called it 'a distinctive comedy', the Scottish Daily Mail 'the funniest serious play to be presented at the Citizens' in years', and on 18/2/58 it reported that, 'consistently amusing throughout, the play was well received by last night's large and cheerful audience'.

John van Druten's Bell, Book and Candle arrived later in the season. (Van Druten by now counted, to all intents and purposes, as an American dramatist, and his delightful comedy of love versus witchcraft, dating from 1950, was set in Manhattan). For some reason this was treated almost like an 'outside' tour. It had a David Jones set, it is true, but production was in the hands of David Turnbull, and none of the regular company appeared, although Alex McAvoy kept a foot in the door for well-known local talent. Barbara Steele, later a handsome decoration for the big screen, often in horror films, played the lead opposite Bernard Horsfall; 'A.F.' in the Glasgow Herald (13/5/58), noted that 'for all the physical signs that two hearts are beating as one, there is little in the way the lines are put across to suggest it', but that everyone made 'a competent job of ... a neat, amusing and wholly pleasing play'. 'The play is enjoyable', the review continued, 'and, if all the players acquire for the first act the timing and orientation they have in the remaining two, it will be even more so'. The Scotsman considered it 'a brew that frequently amuses but seldom intoxicates'. Glasgow theatres have often had difficulty with the 'summer season',



when they bother to have one at all, that is, and Bell, Book and Candle - (its post-London tour had already been seen in Glasgow) - had a deficit of £414 over its two weeks' run.

A rather more surprising choice was to come in the theatrically forbidding month of June, Mrs. Gibbons' Boys, by Will Glickman and Joseph Stein, hardly household names in this country. They also, however, and more successfully, wrote the books for musicals like Plain and Fancy and Mr. Wonderful; the Stein half of the partnership was to carve for himself a small piece of immortality by being responsible for the book of Fiddler on the Roof. The fact remains, however, that what Bronner calls this 'farce about a doting mother and her three hoodlum sons'<sup>14</sup> ran for five performances on Broadway in 1949, when the Sun labelled it "outrageous rubbish ... about as coarse and as absurd as a play can get to be". Despite all this, the play had a mild success in London in 1956, toured the following year with Barbara Mullen, and, oddly enough, became a British film in 1962. It did little to set the Clyde on fire, but Christopher Small reported that, although 'the joke has to last through three acts pretty well without assistance ... the Citizens' company succeed in keeping it very cheerfully alive' (10/6/58). Irene Sunters must have been well cast as Mrs. Gibbons, and the Herald praised 'Fulton Mackay's admirable sketch of the unfortunate little man who, all unsuspecting, has proposed himself as Mrs. Gibbons' Boys' step-father'. (It was announced that month that Mackay was leaving the Citizens' after a long and very honourable association.) Considering Peter Duguid's otherwise imaginative programming, it is surprising that, when in search of lightweight material, he should choose plays which had been seen in Glasgow before in fairly recent memory. The Evening Times referred to this in its review (10/6/58), recalling how, when it 'appeared on tour in Glasgow last year, it received a rather mild reception but ... certainly pleased the patrons', while the Bulletin recalled its 'cool reception ... which may in part account for the small audience'. It 'just goes to show how much a play depends upon its presentation ... The bulk of the credit probably lies with Irene Sunters'.

A really good American comedy ended the 1958-59 season, The Solid Gold Cadillac (Howard Teichmann and George S. Kaufman). Familiar as a Judy Holliday film, it came up fresh and sparkling in its original form. It had been a great Broadway success in 1953, achieving 526 performances, with Josephine Hull in the lead; according to Bronner, its press had been mixed, but World-Telegram had pronounced it "an occasion of great rejoicing ... a howling hit".<sup>15</sup> A London production as late as 1964 - probably too late, and unsuitably housed in the large Saville Theatre - was less successful, but it was an ideal choice for the Gorbals in May, 1959, with Irene Sunters bearing the brunt of things, but strongly partnered by Iain Cuthbertson and elegantly directed by Callum Mill, who also provided the off-stage voice which is so important a part of this comedy about a lesser stockholder who asks awkward questions at a shareholders' meeting and sails to power as a result. Designs this time were by Douglas Abercrombie, and the Glasgow Herald gave its verdict of (19/5/59) 'a very funny evening ... a triumph for Irene Sunters as Mrs. Partridge'. 'With all its shortcomings', the Scotsman said, '... this is one of the most entertaining offerings served up by the Citizens' for some time', while Don Whyte in the Scottish Daily Express said, 'It is impossible to believe in a single character but impossible not to laugh at them'.

Another inspired choice came in the notoriously difficult pre-Christmas period (1959), The Great Sebastians, written by the skilful American team of Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, authors of the long-running Life With Father and, later, the book of The Sound of Music. This had been a 'vehicle' in 1956 for the celebrated husband and wife team of Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne, not one of their famous ones, admittedly, but a delightful entertainment, and it is surprising that it does not appear to have been performed in Britain prior to Duguid's Citizens' production, and not often afterwards either. At the time of the original Anta production, Journal-American had found it "a rather flimsy charade ... (it) really ought to be better, but the Lunts couldn't be".<sup>16</sup> It can be appreciated that it was with difficulty that any theatre outside London could provide the star-power required to drive this vehicle about two vaudeville



mind-readers who become involved in Iron Curtain skulduggery, but Glasgow Citizens' had a perfect substitute for Lunt in Iain Cuthbertson (his last Gorbals appearance for some time), and, as a partner for him, ideal in looks, stature and polished acting ability, Edith Macarthur was brought back to the company. The Glasgow Herald thought it 'highly diverting' (23/11/59). Although written for 'the Lunts', 'more cannot be said for Miss Macarthur's and Mr. Cuthbertson's acting than that they successfully made us forget it'; the Scotsman was less happy, considering the play 'designed more for Desi and Lucy' (a reference to 'I Love Lucy', the popular American TV series of the time), and also slightly disturbed by the juxtaposition of a serious political background with light comedy fun and games ... there is a suicide in the wings somewhere ... 'the flippancy is continued to an unnatural degree'. But this was, of course, in the days before black comedy - its use and misuse - were to any degree understood. The Bulletin referred to the leading players as 'a wonderful pair ... only with the occasional intrusion of melodramatic politics is there any sag, but these don't last long, and then we're off again'. Robins Millar in the Express, as so often, summed things up in warm but astringent manner: 'London may have been shy about staging it without the Lunts ... No such humility oppresses the Glaswegians. And they justify themselves'.

Altogether harder and tougher was The Kidders (Donald Ogden Stewart), and it required a corresponding type of acting and production, something difficult to achieve in the rough and tumble of fortnightly repertory, difficult enough for British actors in any circumstances, although its brief London run in 1958, following a fringe production at the Arts, had been well enough received; it was described in Theatre World as aiming to 'uncover some of the insincerity of contemporary American life'.<sup>17</sup> (The author had then been resident in Britain for several years.) The performances of brother and sister Faith and Lyndon Brook, it was said, 'drew forth the highest praise from the critics'. The action centred on the visit of Agnes Potter, accustomed to the pleasures of big city life, to her sister and brother-in-law, in the Middle West. The latter has been a prisoner of war, and the marriage is on uncertain ground.

Agnes acts as catalyst as far as her relatives are concerned, there are business problems and betrayals, and a near violent climax before Agnes, too, sets her own values in order. Everyone lives on a brittle surface, and high gloss jokes are the order of the day, whatever may be going on underneath. 'Are you nuts?' the dangerously highly-strung husband is asked, and he replies, 'Not quite, yet. Can you wait a little?', and he drives his idealistic friend, Steve, to ask, 'Dan, are we ever going to get back on the level? Or is it going to be always kidding?' And when Steve tries to reassure him, 'The ship isn't sunk yet, brother', Dan responds with, 'Oh give up. The liberty bell's got a crack in it. Haven't you heard? The rats have taken over'. Perhaps because the play's essence arrived in slightly diluted form in the Gorbals, the impact upon Glasgow audiences was a muffled one. The Herald said (6/10/59) that it had 'the makings of a first-rate play, though not, perhaps, more than the makings ... Pure misanthropy ... when it is countered by the mild good intentions of the new Humanism, becomes rather depressing'. There was, however, a 'remarkable performance from Christopher Burgess' (as Dan).

After considering its possible claim to be an 'authentic social document', Harold Ballantyne (Evening Citizen) decided that 'what matters much more to me was that an actress called Elaine Wells, by her beautiful movement and quite brilliant controlled playing, made it for me an authentic vehicle'. (Miss Wells, a local actress, who had been a member of the Wilson Barrett Company, played the married sister, Jennie.) The Daily Mail reports that 'The cast machine-gun the cracks in all directions as though they had been born and bred in the good old USA', but the Express, in quite a different mood, had witnessed 'Pseudo-American accents with pseudo-fashionable costumes. And a plot to match ... The Kidders is appropriately named', while the Record - at the same play?? called it 'a merry mix-up'.

Immediately before The Kidders had come a comedy which was American by adaptation only, Colette's Gigi in a version by Anita Loos, author of the once notorious Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, a



version which had brought fame to Audrey Hepburn on Broadway in 1951, although dismissed by the critics as "a gay little trinket" (Herald Tribune) and "very trivial and old-fashioned" (New York Times).<sup>18</sup> Leslie Caron had played the title role in London (1956), and again in the Lerner and Lowe screen musical (1958). The Citizens' engaged an attractive young actress called Amanda Grinling for this testing leading role, playing opposite Iain Cuthbertson as Gaston, her 'protector': according to the Glasgow Herald, he cut 'a really splendid figure' (22/9/59). Although it seemed an 'odd sort of thing for the Citizens' to attempt', it made 'a most delightful evening', and Peter Duguid's production was 'rapid', 'light' and 'neat'. Two well-known Scottish actresses appeared in support: Enid Hewitt and Lorna Tarbat (who had been a great favourite in Perth in the Thirties). The Scotsman ('H.C.') felt that Peter Duguid's production had 'an unseemly thirst for blatant comedy ... he fattens the humour with stunts involving pantaloons displays and champagne drinking ... the sets designed by David Jones are the absolute West End'. The Bulletin, however, said that the cast 'brought out all the humour, now sophisticated, now boisterous' ('C.G.M.'), and the Citizens' might well have expected a generous return at the box-office, but there was, in fact, a smallish deficit of £430.

Duguid had a good record for presenting new and nearly new work, and in no way did he neglect that of Scottish writers; indeed, two Scottish plays tower over the other 'premieres' of those three seasons. First mention must go to Jack Ronder's Wedding Day, an original creation of great individuality: it was strikingly impressive at the time, and its resonances echo strongly in print today. The setting was contemporary, a flat in Edinburgh's Castle Wynd, and at least one playgoer was moved to go and see what the latter looked like, and to look at it with different eyes ever since.

The two sisters who occupy the flat, Louie, who stays at home and Janet, who sleeps around, especially with her boss, Bert, whom she may be going to marry, are bound by a tortuous kind of devotion to each other, and, partly to leave Janet free, Louie agrees to marry the touchingly seedy small-time violinist who lives upstairs with his

adolescent son, Charlie, who in turn is obsessed by Janet, but willing enough to accept Louie as a stepmother. At the last moment, the latter learns that her sister has lost both job and lover and ruthlessly jilts Joe, her prospective groom:

Louie: Let's be partners, Janet.

Janet: All right, Louie. Partners, while it lasts.

Louie: I'd much rather have you.

As far as their relationship is concerned, 'poor Joe' was the one 'needed ... to pull the veil away'. Joe (memorably played by Russell Hunter), is a beautifully written role, but all the characters, with the exception of Charlie's girl friend, Joyce, are superbly delineated. Joe's two main experiences with women are beautifully summed up; he tells Charlie about his 'musical' courtship of his mother:

And we played and played ... And then we went on again till the landlady threw us out. I've never seen such a grim woman. So we went down to the pier shelter with the cases and spent the night. It was freezing cold. It was the loveliest night of my life ... We started saving for the Wigmore ... But you came along so we set up house instead ... We had five years of wedded bliss, now and then, then she died on us ....

At the end, shattering his violin, he turns on the sisters with a piercingly simple:

You've been disruptive, the pair of you, and very disruptive too.

Then he goes on:

Do I say thank you and go down to my little hole in hell again? Hell ... I didn't know the name of the place, it was just one kind of misery in a numb sort of way. It looks worse from up here.

The Citizens' production had a strangely mixed reception. Ronald Mavor (Scotsman 29/3/60) saw the play at Ayr, before it reached the Gorbals, and was in no doubt as to its value. Having



referred to Jack Ronder as 'the best young Scottish playwright', he pronounced his play 'by a pretty long chalk the best new Scottish play for long enough, and therefore something of an occasion'. He also touched on the reasons which gave rise to puzzled hostility/embarrassment in some quarters when it reached Glasgow:

It is an outspoken play, and it brings on to the Scottish stage a number of situations and subjects which have tended to be dealt with humorously or not at all in the past .... Once or twice in the play (Ronder's) skill o'erleaps itself and falls on the other ....

and, referring to the breaking of the violin, the :

final gesture from Joe ... cannot be other than Vaudeville. But most of the time the play is solid and sure and flows steadily from start to finish.

In the Scotsman of 12/4/60, however, when the play had moved to Glasgow, the following comments were reported as overheard in the Citizens' Theatre: 'Not the sort of thing the teenager would take his or her parents to see' ... 'It's more like a BBC television play on a Sunday night than what we expect at the Citizens'.' What we expect at the Citizens'?? Presumably nothing which will disturb in any way ... something rather more 'cosy'. For it should be made clear that Wedding Day is not an offensive play: it certainly came as a shock in 1960 to hear of a couple having sexual intercourse in the bath - (Louie is very annoyed when she comes upon this!) - but, unlike much of what is written in the Eighties, everything said in Wedding Day becomes valid because it is in character, or nearly always, at any rate. 'C.G.M.' in the Bulletin appreciated the play's virtues, but had this doubt about Ronder's dialogue: 'When he tries to talk frankly about sex, he is sometimes embarrassingly funny', but the most astonishing review came from 'M.P.' in the Glasgow Herald, writing about the sisters:

Why continuing in their self-induced purgatory should be a gesture of affection he does not explain; nor is he able to make them anything but tiresome .... This receding view of human nature, with no relieving touch of stature or

pride, inevitably becomes an affront. What appear to be attempts at realism - the swear words ladies should not use, the efforts made by the prettier sister to get her lover to bed - do not help in the slightest.

At nearly thirty years' distance, it is hard to say whether or not this critic wrote with tongue in cheek. Richard Carver in the Scottish Daily Express (12/4/60) was a trifle enigmatic: 'although there was warm applause at the end, the audience did not seem very happy during the play ... a play that demands concentration and sympathetic understanding from the players'. However, the Scottish Daily Mail said unequivocally, 'At last Glasgow has a play worth supporting - and it's by a Scots author', and the Evening Citizen felt that 'It must have been extremely gratifying for Scots author Jack Ronder to sit in the Citizens' dress circle last night and hear people thumping seats and crying "Encore"'. 'Domestic' plays can be deceptive, and probably all too few people in Glasgow realised during its premiere run that they had a major piece of theatre, or something very like it, on their hands.

An Anglicised version, This Year, Next Year, was seen briefly at the Vaudeville Theatre in London (October 1960), directed by John Dexter, with Brenda Bruce and Pamela Brown as Louie and Janet (now Barbara!), the roles played in Glasgow by Beth Boyd and Una McLean, but the play seems to have lost its character and 'guts' in 'translation'. Bill Lester in Plays and Players thought it:

far too slight a piece to justify this array of acting talent .... He (Ronder) is so afraid of melodrama that he hesitates to make his characters that little bit larger than life that results in good theatre. But he has talent - in dialogue rather than plot, to judge by this play - which deserves further encouragement.<sup>19</sup>

'L.M.' regretted (Theatre World of the same month) that it had:

failed to attract the public ... for there are still running in London quite a number of plays of less merit ... The play had its faults inasmuch as it sometimes sounded like something



out of a woman's magazine, but there was enough interest and psychological insight to make one regret its short run.<sup>20</sup>

All the more praise is due to Peter Duguid for having the courage to present this play and for bringing the best out of it. Jack Ronder continued to write, but, like so many Scots dramatists, never achieved the position which he had seemed to deserve. An extremely interesting later play, Who'll do it this time? was staged at the Close Theatre Club in 1969.

The other Scottish play deserving some detailed attention is George Munro's Gay Landscape, in effect an attempt to place a Greek Tragedy in a Clydeside setting. Munro was one of the great unfulfilled talents of the Scottish theatre (more spectacular and idiosyncratic than Ronder, but not necessarily better) ... his last unfinished play, Mark but this Flea, was to receive an STV posthumous play of the year award ... and this example of his writing, potentially his masterpiece, though not one in actual fact, bored and/or infuriated many of those, public and critics alike, who saw it. It has been called a 'Clydeside Milestones'.<sup>21</sup> The mood of Gay Landscape, however, - (the title was savagely ironical) - was a world away from Milestones: the first Act took place at a funeral, the second at a christening (illegitimate), the third at another funeral, the stage was a kind of black and white chessboard flooring to the Gascoynes' kitchen, and, in Peter Duguid's production, there were no chairs for anyone to sit upon. The periods are 1908, 1914 and the 'present' day, and the female characters had the lion's share of the acting; a fierce group the sisters are, and they were strongly cast, with some of the best talent available: Edith Macarthur, Ellen Mackintosh, Irene Sunters, Annette Crosbie (as both Mother and Daughter) and Hilary Paterson. Passions run high throughout; there is mystery shrouding the paternity of Martha's child, and, as a result, incest is only just side-stepped in the next generation. And over all broods the river, its cranes and shipyards.

Munro's dialogue is unique, sometimes infuriatingly mannered, at others poetic in its power. Meg's threat to her brother can be

the extraordinary 'Come near me! I'll jaw this brew between your pigeon's eyes', but she is also given a caustic and witty line like 'If they hold onto the cords' (of the coffin), 'like they hold on to their money, it'll be a mass funeral'. There are eccentricities like the way in which the family has been taught 'to coorie together when our words, or ways, bring skelly glint to green-eyed interlopers', while Martha can say to her former lover: 'Your peck was peak to me ... You should've warned me that your chocolate was poisoned ... You drew the kisses from me like howked screwnails'. Elsewhere there is genuine quality, especially in the speeches about the River ... there are even stage directions like 'They face the Clyde like Ganges worshippers'. Then Martha says:

I've walked Clydeside at daybreak and mirkest hour ... Buildings and wharves and stooks move into skyline setting for me. I've felt tender for the tracery of tenements touched by sun or winter cloudbank.

According to Anne, another sister, the river 'works nothing but destruction. Destruction, Dirt, Despair', but according to Katherine:

A kindly current, I used to think, ... where the iron palings are now, a path ran below the Auld Kirkyard. You could see green grass, even ... To the light of moon and lorry candle-lamp, we'd come home, cloppity-clop, to Govan. Oh! the smell of the winter stables. Hot mashes! Treacle: black beans ....

There is a kind of sour wit, too: one character is described as looking 'like a pensioned horse', while another claims to be 'one of the first ruins of the Welfare State. Mama and Papa were pioneers of it. I was weaned from The Red Flag onto Rule Britannia. I can chant neither'.

The play was not well liked in Glasgow. Mr Small was in acid mood (Herald 25/2/58): 'It is like any ... jump into cold water, an act laudable for courage and hardiness ... but ... it is difficult to convince the spectator on the bank that it is enjoyable'. He also found much of it 'a single undifferentiated slanging match'. 'A.M.G.' in the Evening Times, suggested that it was going to be more of a



success than it actually was: 'the most impressive piece of Scottish theatre seen for a long time' and it 'provided the capacity audience with a great theatrical experience'. The Scottish Daily Mail called it 'a family chronicle ... which straggles from the 1900s to the present day. Mr Munro attempts too much ... attempting to portray the rise and fall of the industrial empire on the Clyde'. 'C.G.M.' in the Bulletin found it 'a strangely bitter play, and for no apparent reason it concerns itself with neither character nor cause, philosophy nor purpose'. The Evening Citizen (4/3/58) was disapproving: 'There is little to be said of a girl who mourns her grandmother with a gin bottle in her hand. She is one of the many blots in George Munro's allegedly Gay Landscape'. Gordon Irving (Daily Record 25/2/58) also complained: 'Why must Scots playwrights set their plays in drab tenements and fill them with the seamy side of life?'. Ronald Mavor, who always gave much thought to new work, wrote in the Scotsman (25/2/58) that its advent was 'very important. If the Scottish theatre is to mean anything, it must be a theatre which embraces, has room for, all kinds of dramatic performance within the frame of a theatre for Scots. Mr. Munro has written an allegorical play' - a fact generally unrecognised - 'something in the style of Eugene O'Neill'. He also thought that the 'key to the play' is the mother, who 'never appears', both Mrs. Gascoyne and 'Mother Clyde'. 'The language of the play is stylised and in no way colloquial', he went on, and he was impressed by the visual aspect of the production:

In the first act Mr. Duguid has arranged his actors like chessmen across the whole area of the Citizens' stage ... Much was gained from the setting of Mr. David Jones, who raised two massive tenement skylines against an up-thrusting cradle for some new ship with wooden fingers stretched against the sky.

The play excited correspondence in the Press: in the Glasgow Herald of 27/2/58, Mr. E.J.P. Mace wrote:

If the base metal of Mr. Munro's characters and their thoughts is not transmuted into gold, there is a poetic quality in their language which far transcends the superficially sordid content of their speeches,

while Mrs. Elizabeth T. Clark (Joan Ure) came straight to the point with her question (26/2/58):

Is it not the most important play about Scotland that we have seen for dear knows how long? .... What is wrong is wrong because the dramatist is inexperienced as a dramatist. This is how to get experience ... by seeing what a company with integrity and talent can do under the leadership of a producer with understanding.

There was an epilogue to this production in Glasgow: it was decided - courageously, perhaps rashly - to send the Citizens' at its most individualistic to the Festival of Repertory Theatres at London's Royal Court, and Gay Landscape had its first performance there on the unlikely date of July 7. Perhaps not surprisingly, the combination of mixed, largely uncomprehending critical reception and heatwave weather resulted in poor attendances and a loss of £179 (£100 more than budgeted). The Times referred to 'this sorry narrative ... a stiffly wooden production', and the Daily Mail of the same date (8/7/58) called it a 'dreary saga'. The Daily Telegraph was more perceptive of its real failing: 'a tragi-comedy in the Greek style, but for chorus only', but it was Alan Dent, James Agate's one-time deputy, who, in the News Chronicle, came nearest to the truth about the play: 'This begins well, continues even better, and - after a swoop into alcoholic and unlikely melodrama at the beginning of the last act - recovers itself and concludes magnificently'.

Some years later, in an undated letter, which must have been written in 1962 or 63, as it was addressed to Piers Haggard, then Director of Productions, Mr. R.E. Armit, obviously a devoted searcher after neglected Scottish plays, had come across some of Munro's work, including Gay Landscape, and he summed up neatly, 'The plot is non-existent. There is no development ... The author shoves these people off and on without caring how he does it ...' but it is 'a genuinely poetic creation and it has haunted me'. Too harsh perhaps in its adverse criticism, this nevertheless encapsulates many of the reactions to this extraordinary play.



There were other respectful salutes in the cause of new Scottish drama, and, to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, Joe Corrie's ambitious study of the poet, The Roving Boy, was staged, something more ambitious than this distinguished chronicler of his country's working classes had previously attempted. It is not now ranked among his best work, and, revived in 1986, it seemed to some to have been drained of such theatrical life and colour as it possesses; Callum Mill's 1959 production was by no means lacking in merit, but the best the Glasgow Herald could say of the play (1/2/59) was that it was 'lively enough', and that 'by the end of a moderately long-drawn night, (the critic's) sympathies were altogether with Holy Willie'; Roddy McMillan's 'leering malice' was, in fact, 'the most real thing in the play', and justified praise also came the way of Iain Cuthbertson's Minister, 'Daddy Auld'. Ewan Hooper, the poet himself, did 'all he can' with the part as written, but gave Christopher Small the impression that, instead of the great works, he 'would probably have been writing difficult little pieces for "Horizon"'. Part of the trouble with The Roving Boy was a failure to select and arrange the material available in a coherent and significant manner: the love affair with Jean Armour does not receive a satisfactory treatment, and the fate of Mary Campbell is dealt with in rather cavalier manner. There is no doubt that the 'double act' between Auld and 'Willie' Fisher is the most successful element in the play: the lesser characters are inclined to be paste-board, and a very young 'Thomas' Conti as a farm-hand was there to provide 'comic' relief. The symbolic Beggarwoman (eliminated in 1986) was, however, a nice touch, providing the hint of character complexity absent in the role of Burns itself.

The Scotsman thought that :

this might have been a bonny brier bush in the Burns kailyard if it had been pruned in the right places ... in a strong-bow haircut and seaman's stockings, there are disconcerting moments when (Burns) might pass for either Jim Hawkins or the secretary of the local Young Farmers' Club.



On the other hand, Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) reported that:

an upstanding young Scot, Ewan Hooper, strides out as the swarthy farmer of Mauchline and manages to be as close to the poet as anyone I have seen .... A Scot, Callum Mill, has directed the play in the mood of the angry, reckless tempest which brought a crisis to the poet.... Not a polished pageant this, but an honest one - and a dashed sight happier than these orations ...'

And although 'W.D.' (Scottish Daily Mail) saw the production 'before a house so thin one might have suspected a boycott, the play impressed as an interesting and reasonably accurate account of Burns's life between his meeting with the lyrical Jean and his return from Edinburgh'.

Under the Light by Iain Crawford was another ambitious undertaking which, for one reason or another, did not quite hit the mark. Set on a lighthouse 'off N.W. Scotland', it combined a 'Flannan Isle' kind of mystery with the impact on an isolated group of Kenneth Angus, a Billy Graham type of evangelist returning, with disastrous results, to explore his roots. The result, however, though potentially of considerable interest, was sometimes unconvincingly melodramatic. 'A.M.D.' in the Glasgow Herald (7/4/59) found the 'main construction of the play' good, but marred by 'overmuch statement ... The long revelation of the mystery enacted in the lighthouse many years before, strong drama at secondhand, was unsatisfactory', Iain Cuthbertson, as Angus, was a 'performance out ahead of the rest of the cast'. The praise of Cuthbertson which constantly occurs in reviews was fair and justified in itself, but often negates the performances of others. Ewan Hooper, for instance, once again registered strongly as the 'angry young' newspaperman sent to cover the evangelist's tour: the confrontations between the two radically opposed men form some of the best scenes in the play. Less happy is the strand of plot dealing with the tragic results of Kenneth's destruction of what turns out to be the illicit relationship of Joe and Sally, two of the lighthouse's inhabitants. Madness and suicide ensue, and, if that is not enough, Angus discovers the grisly secret of his own origins. The dialogue

is sometimes stilted and melodramatic, with phrases like 'the infidel in our midst' and 'your lewd woman's arts'. And there is bathos at the end, where, in the midst of misery and destruction, Angus says, 'I don't even have the same parents as I began the day with!'. All this would seem, on the surface at least, to suggest a new play staged before it was completely ready: in the haste of a short rehearsal period, it appears obvious that there was not time to do the amount of work required in rehearsal, and, while the enterprise of the theatre as well as the enterprise of the playwright are to be applauded, the presentation of work not fully realised would be liable to act as a deterrent for future audiences presented with the opportunity to support new Scottish drama. This is a state of affairs which has existed now and then at the Citizens' - and, of course, at other theatres too - doing a disservice to the playwright of the moment as well as his possible successors, while not providing much help for the already hard-pressed box office.

Jack House in the Evening Times (also 7/4/59) called Under the Light 'the most stimulating and exasperating play I have seen this season ... when the author is good, he's very, very good, and, when he is bad, he is horrid. Luckily he's mainly good'. The Scotsman was scathing:

All that is needed to top off this melodramatic durbar is 'The Ride of the Valkyrie' as incidental music ... no peak but a trough. The story is suspended at the end of the first act, whereupon the stage is filled by a quiz panel on mixed marriages and free love until it is resumed in the third act.

Some of the other papers were more tolerant: the Evening Times saw it as, 'in a sense, an angry young play ... coming to the Citizens' the week after a combination of Arthur Miller and Ibsen (An Enemy of the People), the play was in no way a let-down. It deserved a much bigger audience than it had last night'. Don Whyte in the Scottish Daily Express said that 'Glasgow audiences are left a lot to talk about', and the Record thought it 'a good play, if rather wordy in making points'. 'W.D.' (Scottish Daily Mail) referred to it as a 'fitful world premiere'. Somehow the News of the World became



aware of the production's existence (5/4/59) just before it opened: 'Scotland's "Old Vic" - the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow - fulfils an ambition this week by presenting a new Scots drama by a Scots author. "It is surprisingly difficult to find really good native material", says producer Peter Duguid. "Now, however, we have a play that is a delight to stage"'.

The other new Scottish play presented by Duguid could hardly have been more different, but it met with no greater support at the box office, despite its emphasis on comedy. Its author, Alexander Scott, had had a success at the Citizens' in 1954 with Right Royal, which had given Duncan Macrae one of his major comic roles, but this one added a touch of classical satire to its 'Caledonian' mix, never a great inducement to Gorbals audiences. The trouble with Truth to Tell was, probably, that it combined too many comic and farcical elements: oddly enough, it looks better now in text than memory suggests that it did in performance, when one recalls some uneasy larking about in the latter stages, but then comedy was not Duguid's strongest suit. The central character was no less than Socrates himself, who survived the 'fatal cup', and the action ranged from Athens to a prison in Carthage and a beach in Caledonia. The dialogue took in its stride a discourse on wisdom, and, when Socrates finally arrives in Caledonia - (opium has been substituted for hemlock, but his incurable garrulity keeps getting him into trouble) - the authorities eventually decide that the combination of his wisdom with the beauty of the slave girl, Arete, who has become his companion, 'the great grandfather and the mighty maid' is too heady a mixture to be allowed to roam free: 'A little more than a little, and we lose our balance altogether, we see dreams we can't realise ...', and the couple are walled up in the most honourable imprisonment, but Arete has the last word: 'Twins - and Fergus thought he could put an end to brains and beauty by shutting up the two of us together'.

Having described the initial stages of the play, Christopher Small went on to say (Glasgow Herald 15/4/58):



The situation is rendered more piquant by the circumstance that this antique and savage land (Caledonia) seems round about 399 BC to have been a matriarchy, ruled by a ferocious set of Pictish Amazons ... The whole, it must be owned, does not make much of a play, nor, perhaps, anything very striking in the way of philosophic discourse. But it has wit and a good deal of fun ....

The Scotsman was disapproving: 'Fantasy may be the wallpaper thrown across the bricks and mortar of life, but ... Truth to Tell seems to be more of a strange distemper'. It 'does not evoke enough laughter to broaden its sails and speed it into the enchanted seas of fantasies'. The Evening Times talked of (22/4/58) 'a large cast' and 'a too small audience' and called it 'this wordy play'. The Evening Citizen referred to 'the highly entertaining tale', (22/4), on which date the Scotsman mentioned 'the happy story' but the Daily Mail had been more critical: 'Mr. Scott has written a funny one-act play and has had to tack another unfunny act on in front'. To add to the strangely mixed, if not downright contradictory Press reception, the Daily Record (15/4) had added the description of 'a gay, colourful, mad romp'.

Duguid was responsible for several valuable revivals, most valuable of all, perhaps, being that of Bridie's last play, The Baikie Charivari, first seen at the Citizens' (posthumously) in 1952: it formed, in fact, part of the Bridie Memorial season. According to Winifred Bannister in her excellent James Bridie and his Theatre, 'The play was badly received by the Scottish Press'. On the previous page, she gives a neat description of it:

Mr. Eliot gave a "Cocktail Party" for the best people; Bridie's last play is a dinner for all; the table is set for a fascinating group of characters; for democrats, communists, clerics, economists, faded aristocrats, artists, and for you and me. The host is a reincarnation of Pontius Pilate, Sir James Pounce-Pellott, ex-Governor of India, who, in retiring to Baikie on the Clyde estuary, has leaped from a receding British Empire to the bewildered base which is these islands ... From his guests Pounce-Pellott hopes for a blueprint for the times ....<sup>22</sup>

Duguid chose this to open what was to be his last season (1959-60): the flirtation with 'banned' plays was over, indeed no longer necessary, and a play was needed which would be of suitable stature for an initial week at the Edinburgh Festival (Gateway Theatre). The choice proved to be a good one. Alan Brien in the Financial Times (10/9/59) claimed that 'The Glasgow Citizens' Theatre have not a dud among them, and The Baikie Charivari shares with The Three Estaites the title of the best play staged in the Edinburgh Festival this year. It should instantly be brought intact to London ... Bridie has set his brilliant morality play within a wall-less parlour, while in the shadows outside prowl witches and warlocks'. The Glasgow Herald (8/9/59) thought it 'odd that this, the last of the author's plays, should be the one that dates most ... The plot of the play is confused, if it exists at all. It is really rather a platform for ideas ... Donald Douglas lost all weight by guying the part of the minister into tedious insignificance'. When, however, Christopher Small came to deal with the production in Glasgow (15/9/59), he felt that it 'does as much with Bridie's last and most difficult play as anyone could ask, and more, perhaps, than some might believe possible...' Donald Douglas was 'particularly good'! Back at Edinburgh, the Scotsman (8/9/59): 'I have no hesitation in saying that the best of the three repertory productions at the Gateway is the last (the Bridie)'. Alan Dent (News Chronicle 10/9/59): 'Bridie in this wilful mood is everything by starts and nothing long ... this strange, half funny and half alarming affair is imaginatively directed by Peter Duguid'. The Times thought it 'imaginatively produced', too, but considered that Pounce Pellott - or Bridie - 'got no nearer the truth ...' but 'he will go on asking the question' ..., 'we are being given too much work to do'. 'W.A.D.' (Telegraph 10/9/59) imagined that 'badly produced and acted, this would have been intolerable and incomprehensible. Ably directed by Peter Duguid, it came out well tonight, though sometimes the incidental comedy was more potent than the main argument'.

The Lass wi' the Muckle Mou', Alexander Reid's skilful combination of the title story with the legend of Thomas The Rhymer, was another welcome revival. The Glasgow Herald thought Roddy



McMillan's Sir Gideon a 'splendidly absurd figure .... In this light-hearted and real comedy there is also some real poetry' ... this 'fantastication on various themes of balladry, (all pinned about the crucial question whether a wedding is worse than a hanging) is a delightful piece of work' (10/3/59). The Scotsman was concerned about the 'cumbersome sets' which 'hamper much of producer Peter Duguid's handling of some of the comic by-play, but he coaxes spirited performances from his cast'. Jack House (Evening Citizen) thought this superior to the earlier production ... 'Or it may be that Alexander Reid's play improves over the years'. (The Theatre Alba production of 1986 proved that it does.) ... House recalled 'One exquisite moment when Ewan Hooper said just two words - 'No' wantit?'. It was that moment of perfection that makes the theatre so much better, so much more individual, than the cinema, the radio, or the telly'.

The strangest 'Scottish' revival, however, was Scottish only because of the playwright's nationality. 1960 was the centenary of the birth of one of Scotland's two great playwrights, J.M. Barrie, and there was much deliberation as to how the Citizens' should celebrate the occasion. Not much of Barrie's stage work is, of course, indigenously Scottish, but much of it has the magic often associated with that nation. In the event, the play chosen was perhaps the one least suited to a Scottish company or audience - any audience, some might say - his first success in the theatre, Walker, London. The place of this comedy/farce in theatrical history is well summed up by Denis Mackail. Last minute trouble had occurred, we are told, over finding a title: the original choice, The Houseboat - the action takes place on one - had already been used, and J.L. Toole, the great 'low' comedian for whom the play was to be a 'vehicle' was hard to please until Walker, London caught his fancy. 'Walker', Mackail explained, was still in the dictionary, though no longer in common use: 'interjection (slang) expressing incredulity and suspicion of being hoaxed'. It was, we are told, 'the standard answer to the attempted leg-pull'.<sup>23</sup> Toole played 'Jasper Phipps, the barber who has left his Sarah waiting at the church, while he spends the honeymoon money in impersonating an African explorer.



Is that funny? Perhaps not, until you have seen Toole'.<sup>24</sup> The  
1892 production was a massive success, running:

two years, as makes no difference, altogether. And at the end of this it was still being played in New Zealand, South Africa, India, America, and the British provinces ... after Toole's death it was sold to Messrs. Samuel French, the great publishers of plays for amateurs ... anybody who cares to pay them their fee can even stage it for himself. At the same time we hope Messrs. French will forgive us if we add that they would be very much surprised if anybody did. For it dates ... farces which centre round a low comedian have vanished together with the class of low comedian that once gave them life.<sup>25</sup>

As actor and director, Victor Carin was a major adornment of the Scottish theatre, and his too early death was a great loss, but he was in no way a 'low comedian', and it can only be suggested that, when this elegant member of the company was cast as Jasper, it was believed that there were other ways of making the play work. Of the Citizens' production Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 15/3/60) had much to say:

It is difficult to know which to admire most, the prophetic insight which could divine the talent, so successfully concealed in this trumpery little piece or the genius ... that made it a success. Alas, there is no genius of that sort in the Citizens' company. They are good, conscientious, unsparing of effort ....

He speculated

what a great low comedian might have made of it. Victor Carin tries extremely hard, but he is not that ... Historically, no doubt, this is all very interesting: perhaps Walker, London should be called a history lesson, and left at that. But it seems rather a sad way to pay tribute to the memory of a man who could, when he learned his business, write a very good play indeed.

Ronald Mavor in the Scotsman: 'It was, one may assume, neat enough and funny enough for its day, and it poked fun at the fashionable targets, the woman graduate, for example, and whether one ought to give up smoking...'. Now 'it takes a great deal more to crease our leathery faces into a smile ...'. Duguid 'has attempted no major face-lift. The old girl is led on to the stage and left very much to fend for herself ... the house-boat on the Thames' is 'exquisitely realised in Miss Elizabeth Friendship's setting, and mutton-chop bustles and straw hats are de rigeur'. 'E.G.A.' (Bulletin) was regretful: there was 'certainly curiosity interest in it as the first piece by the man who became a brilliant craftsman of the theatre, and probably he never saw it again after without a shudder at the blunders he made and the opportunities he missed ... But it might have been better to have left this one resting peacefully on the shelf'. One or two lines require to be quoted, one the notorious 'E's a Nero. Haitch, Hee, Har, O, a Nero', and the others the concluding lines, which explain the title fully:

Now, however, the two pairs of lovers are united, the impostor has been exposed, his Sarah has caught him at last, and the two of them are stealing away in a punt. Yet some of the characters still believe that a distinguished explorer has been in their midst.

The mother remembers that she has been given - and has lost - his "telegraphic address". She calls to him, "Colonel - what did you say is your address?".

Jasper (off-stage): "What's my what?"  
 Mrs. Golightly: "Your address?"  
 Jasper (still further away): "Walker, London."  
 All: "Walker, London!"<sup>26</sup>

During these years, attempts at the fully-fledged classics were few and far between, and the impression given is that Peter Duguid was less interested in this field of activity. Certainly his Twelfth Night, near the outset of his period of control was a disappointment, and this is especially regrettable as it was the penultimate appearance of Duncan Macrae at the Citizens'. It appears that the great comic actor was suffering from flu on the first night,



Don Whyte (Scottish Daily Express 15/10/57) describing him as 'the long-faced victim' of that ailment; the Express reported the then General Manager of the theatre, William McIntosh, as saying, 'He was allowed up yesterday for one hour only. You could push him over ...'. Direction was said to be 'satisfying'. The Scotsman found Macrae's Malvolio (understandably) 'restrained by a safety catch which prohibits the cocking of a snook'. Dorothy Marshall's set was 'economic and practical'; the Bulletin thought it all 'drab, dowdy and dull ... a formal set, composed principally of pillars, scarce sets the mood'. The Glasgow Herald attacked bitterly: the secondary title 'or What you Will ... allows a large licence to the producer of perhaps the most perfect of the comedies. But it cannot be extended to cover plain bad handling'. It was 'a sad occasion', suggesting 'a general want of enthusiasm and interest'. There had been talk of disruption at Schools Matinees, which were not always as orderly as they might have been in 1957. (Citizens' 'school audiences' in the Eighties usually behave impeccably, perhaps because they are no longer 'segregated', perhaps because the contrast between stage and TV screen is greater than that with the 'big' screen to which they were accustomed in 1957). The Evening Citizen (28/10/57) told, it claimed, the 'truth' about the matter: 'some "big man" used the cover of darkness to catapult paper pellets at the actors. One actor got one on the chest, others had near-misses'.

Duguid's Othello was much better, although it came in for its share of critical ill-treatment, especially from the Glasgow Herald (21/10/59). Christopher Small disliked David Jones's set, with its 'sort of fire escape; there is Desdemona's bed, which trundles forward on wheels, while the tester descends from above, an operation that makes her final slumbers perilous indeed'. Kenneth Griffith was an Iago 'bullet-headed and brisk, as though he were the bad hat of a comic strip ... he could hardly, we feel, bring about the ruin of a Roderigo, let alone anything like an Othello'. The play, however, was still recognisable as Shakespeare's tragedy:

in spite of all, when Othello takes the stage;  
Iain Cuthbertson's Moor, immense, noble,  
dignified and speaking blank verse ... with  
real eloquence ... is ... a splendid thing



to watch .... It is a painstaking and ambitious production ... but (perhaps Peter Duguid does not really care for Shakespeare) it cannot be rated among the happiest of Citizens' recent adventures.

According to the Scotsman, 'It was left to a tall burly Glaswegian to turn the evening into a major triumph, both for himself, and for the theatre ... Iain Cuthbertson, in burnt cork and rather disreputable trappings, matched himself, word by word, to the challenge'. 'C.G.M.' noted how he 'developed the character with notable skill', but was afraid that Griffith 'could not by the most gullible have been thought at any point to look "honest"', while Sheila Ballantine's Desdemona reminded him, as she did Small, of a 'Victorian governess'. The Scottish Daily Mail, proclaimed in no uncertain manner that 'You now have the chance of seeing and hearing a production of Othello which, for enterprise and resourceful team work, looks set to be the highlight of the ... season'. Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) also attacked the set: 'Peter Duguid has an urge for freakish symbolism. His Cyprus scenes were murky with black settings and an overhead railway bridge as a permanency', for 'fortunately Shakespeare took over his own play in the second act'.

Othello ran for three weeks, and, when Griffith left the cast, Christopher Burgess took over the role. The 1960 production of Ben Jonson's The Alchemist, was put on for a run of one week only, presumably as an attraction for the schools, but not for the general box office. The Glasgow Herald (23/2/60) thought that:

on a cold dark night, it was perhaps a little unfortunate that both decor and costumes - all done by David Jones in pale, ghostly hues - should be so very cheerless .... But the play and Peter Duguid's treatment of it have quite enough animal warmth to overcome this .... It seems a pity it is only to run for a week.

'H.C.' in the Scotsman criticised the 'company as a unit' for not being 'exceptionally effective at the sawdust ring antics: fortunately two or three actors are adept at them. Una McLean,

for one, is exemplary as Dol Common'. (The other two were Ken Wynne and Bernard Kay.) 'E.G.A.' (Bulletin) did not consider that the cast ever 'quite achieve the pace and lightness that the play requires'. 'W.D.' (Scottish Daily Mail) referred to 'this rarely seen collector's gem', adding, rather surprisingly, 'if the language is hair-raising at times, it is excused by the period'.

Duguid's only other nod to the Classics, in the narrower sense of the word, was his production of Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, which again excited controversy over David Jones's designs. The Glasgow Herald reported (14/10/58) how they had:

assiduously given Goldsmith a new look by bringing him up, approximately, to the Edwardian era. Thus the Squire is discovered in a Norfolk suit of tweeds ... and the two benighted young gentlemen, goggled, cloth-capped, muffled, are trying to find their way to Hardcastle Hall in a motor car .... There are moments when this gratuitous monkeying with period seems unquestionably among the mistakes of a night ...

but 'even when they are tripping over producer's gimmicks, the Citizens' company can hardly fail both to give and share enjoyment'. Iain Cuthbertson makes Young Marlow 'a tremendous young knut, more of a masher than a macaroni ...'. Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) also disliked the change of period: 'The old play is a mirror of its time - the 1770s. Its boisterous joke is narrated in stilted language that cannot be modernised .... A good many amateur clubs could outshine this awkward effort', while 'E.G.A.' (Bulletin) thought that it would have been 'a harmless enough experiment ordinarily, but ill-advised here .... Would Mr. Hardcastle, for instance, say something about hearing a coach in the yard just after a backfire from a car, and would there be all the fuss about getting horses for the lovers' escape when that car was sitting outside?'. The Daily Record said that it had 'a good reception' and was 'a riot of fun', and 'G.B.' (Scottish Daily Mail), after rather oddly describing it as having 'the charm of a fairy-tale or a modern film comedy', went on to claim that 'The Citizens' brought it closer in time by setting the action in a vaguely Edwardian era', while the



Scotsman was thoroughly enthusiastic about the settings:

The Citizens' company have hit their stride with a dashing production of the classic ... David Jones has helped bravely by creating sets which are moveable on the stage but will be constant in the memory .... The Hardcastle house is nothing but a grandiose chimney-piece, two doors and an intrusion of leafy branches where the roof should exist - yet it is everything.

There was quite a scatter of more 'modern' classics, at least two of which deserve especial attention. The Cherry Orchard (Chekhov in a John Gielgud adaptation) was the Citizens' contribution to the 1958 Festival of Repertory Theatres, an event of remarkable promise and importance, but never repeated because, it was said, the cost was too high. No cost could have been too high in comparison with the value this would have achieved if placed on a permanent footing. Three other theatres were involved: Edinburgh Gateway in Robert Kemp's Penny Wedding, Perth with Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra, and Dundee - very strikingly - with Sartre's Crime Passionnel. Each play performed a week 'at home' and a week at each of the others. Duguid's Cherry Orchard was a worthy representative, despite the odd attentions of some of the critics, to whom Chekhov appeared to be something strange, new and unwelcome. Edith Macarthur was a beautiful Ranevsky, with Iain Cuthbertson as Lopahin, John Grieve as Gayev and Ewan Hooper as Trofimov. According to the Glasgow Herald, auguries were good (28/10/58): 'A highly auspicious opening to the Scottish Repertory Theatre Festival .... A considerable triumph ... admirably accomplished' ... Iain Cuthbertson a 'remarkably good Lopakhin' - the programme used the spelling as above ... 'must add notably to the Citizens' laurels'.

The attitude of the Scotsman was very different:

When does the plot get a push? Six or seven excerpts from separate life stories seem to be simultaneously in progress - scarcely discernible progress it must be said ... the action of the play limps .... The alternating insertions of bizarre humour and ponderous nostalgia are the bad medicine of this play. Chekhov gets the patient to open his mouth ... then pops in a choking pill for philosophical sentiment.



The Evening Citizen took a similarly odd line describing it as 'a play that seems to have dated badly, and one wonders if it has lost vital spark in the translation from Russian into English ...'. The Scottish Daily Express felt that 'a little more action from the company would enliven the drama and sharpen the philosophy', but nevertheless found it 'fruit for intellectual thinking ... food for the less critical playgoer too'. After all this, it comes as a relief to find Ronald Mavor setting the record straight for the Scotsman in his summing-up of the whole Repertory Festival (24/11/58): 'The Glasgow Citizens' Theatre tackled the greatest play of the season - and one of the greatest ever written most commendably ...', a 'young company' with 'tremendous potentialities', going on, interestingly, to note that Penny Wedding was the popular success wherever it went, attracting, on the whole, bigger audiences than the other theatres were accustomed to. (Penny Wedding was an amusing Scots comedy.)

The other, greater, memory which stands out in this category is guest director Michael Elliott's production of Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, set in the glowing designs of David Jones at his most creative, and surely well on the way to being definitive. The marvellous cast was headed by Donal Donnelly (Christy Mahon), Colette O'Neil (Pegeen Mike), Phyllida Law (Widow Quin), Russell Hunter (Old Mahon). This was the last play of Peter Duguid's last season - (he himself was preparing a new departure, a summer revue, Sixes an' Sevens) - and the Herald said, (22/4/60):

The Citizens' save the best to the last - in all its old ramshackledom a great and splendid comedy, perhaps the best the Irish theatre has given us ... the company, like Cromwell's soldiers, ... know what they are doing and love what they know. Much credit for this, clearly, must go to Michael Elliott ... and to some remarkably good individual performances.

The Scottish Daily Express described it as a 'vehicle for impressive sets ... for brilliant acting ... for detailed and dramatic direction ... and most of all for the pure beauty of the Irish tongue as it flowed from the pen of J.M. Synge'. Only the Scotsman,

in another of its 'illusion-stripping' (and uninitialled) reviews was unhappy about it: 'One gets the impression that The Playboy has little to say to us these days. The finest of players cannot raise the dead'.

Two respectable Shaw revivals and a French disaster make up the tally of 'modern classics', In the case of Major Barbara, 'L.V.B.' in the Glasgow Herald (12/11/57) praised a production which 'allows Shaw's superb sense of theatre to triumph over his bombastic paradoxes'; Barbara Wilson's Major 'would charm the most hesitant sinner'. The recurring problem of the final act was recognised, but, apart from the last ten minutes, it 'goes like an Undershaft bomb - breathtaking and devastatingly effective'. According to the Scotsman, Robert Gillespie (Undershaft) and Fulton Mackay (Cusins) 'have gone to town with an old-fashioned dramatic zeal'; the play 'occasionally took a note of new urgency', and, even if it were to be considered 'out-dated in content', it was 'so refreshingly pungent in theme'. The Evening Citizen was concerned about the final Act: 'It is the unflagging performance of Edith Macarthur as Lady Britomart that sustains the play .... She certainly carried the banner last night ... but even she could only keep the banner flapping rather limply in the tedious and verbose last act'. 'A.M.G.' (Evening Times), and recalling the recent Twelfth Night, was relieved that the Citizens' made an 'immeasurably better job of Shaw than they did recently of Shakespeare ... a major success'.

The Scotsman (10/11/59) described You Never Can Tell as 'one of the worst that Shaw wrote .... Producer Peter Streuli strives with some success to enliven the play. An admirable performance is given by John Southworth as Valentine ... David Jones contributes an excellent hotel terrace set, which has a formidable amount of blue sea at the rear of it'. The Bulletin rated it 'far from the best' in the Shaw canon, but 'a pleasant evening's entertainment'. 'W.D.' in the Scottish Daily Mail thought that 'Even GBS would have been delighted ... a company without a flaw', and the Herald, as so often, summed up in balanced manner: although 'superficially its battle of the sexes has dated ... its basic truths have not. Nor have the



good writing and the flexible wit'. (It has been proved in 1988 to have enough staying power for an extended London West End run.)

The French play, An Italian Straw Hat (Labiche and Marc-Michel), never a success that can be taken for granted, was a doubtful choice for Duguid's second production in the Gorbals. The Glasgow Herald tactfully described it as 'a slight pause for breath ...' it 'would be disingenuous to suggest that it altogether comes off', although there was praise for Robert Checksfield's 'wretched groom', and Peter Duguid's 'generalship' was 'purposeful and imaginative'.(17/9/57). The Scotsman referred to 'a strong whiff of mildew', and Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) complimented Barbara Wilson as the Countess for lifting 'the production for a brief episode into quality'. 'T.G.H.' (Evening Citizen) simply said, 'this hat was as flat as a pancake'.

Glasgow has always had a liking for Irish plays, and Duguid included two newish ones in his second season: one was a disappointment, the other in a rather special category of its own. (Neither, of course, was comparable in quality with The Playboy.) Walter Macken's Look in the Looking Glass seemed to have all the makings of a popular success, with John Grieve as the local boy - the 'Homer of Claddabaun', hailed by his fellow villagers as a result of the play he has written, until they begin recognising themselves, or thinking they do so, and hero worship turns to fury. Three weeks' run had been allotted to it instead of the then usual two, but the promising mixture did not work as well as expected. Its inclusion in the repertory, however, is further indication of the thought given by Peter Duguid to building his seasons. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald (26/11/58) remarked that the comedy:

recently given by the Abbey Company ... and now having its first performance on this side of the water at the Citizens', is not the most brilliant piece to grace either institution .... It makes lively enough stuff in a way .... (but) the most disappointing thing ... is probably Mr. Macken's language, which ... sags most alarmingly in the course of the evening.



The Scottish Daily Mail found that 'It winds up ponderously before delivering some scarce, well-telegraphed punches. And the Citizens' company have to over-act strenuously to make them connect'. The Scotsman's comment was that:

Many a true word is spoken in jest, as one of the characters pronounces. But not in this play. True words and situations are only found in the hackneyed parts of it ... John Grieve wrestles dexterously with the turmoils and triumphs of Peter, one of his best portrayals on the stage .... Once again Douglas Abercrombie has provided a set which has enough solidity and authenticity to interest a real estate valuer.

Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) felt that 'it has this benefit: the actors obviously are enjoying this earthy Irish lark', while 'E.G.A.' in the Bulletin also emphasised the 'action' side of things on which the play seemed to depend: 'Mr. Macken has put into his play a good deal of knockabout business and rushing about - which is just as well, because there is very little in the way of wit or sparkle in his dialogue and very small dimension in his characters'. Obviously the presentation of this play was a reasonable gamble which did not pay off, and little was heard of it thereafter.

Brendan Behan's The Quare Fellow was much less of an unknown quantity; both the play itself and its author had had a great deal of attention and publicity in the course of its London run, and, once again, Duguid kept pace with the latest developments in the theatre and felt that his audience should do so too. The trailing clouds of controversy which followed the play ... both it and its author had acquired a certain notoriety ... aroused quite a lot of interest in Glasgow, and the venture was by no means unsuccessful, although there was a deficit of £814, probably because of the large male cast required. Roddy McMillan, Callum Mill, Ewan Hooper, Martin Heller, Joe Brady (before his Z-Cars success on TV), Harry Walker and Phil McCall (an early appearance) helped to make up a strong team, and Iain Cuthbertson loomed large as the Hangman. The Glasgow Herald (24/2/59) thought that it demanded 'a more stylised approach than Peter Duguid gives it ...', but that it was 'a bold and in most ways an admirable production ...' with a 'very high general level of acting',

even if there were too much striving after 'realism'. It was:

a loud, roistering, furious, above all, a lively protest against the habit of certain humane and civilised societies of taking a man out from time to time and deliberately doing him to death .... - (the 'Quare Fellow' of the title is a convict under sentence of death) - snatches of rollicking, if macabre, humour; a ballad floats hauntingly up from the punishment cells; there is one scene at least ... which is pure vaudeville.

Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen):

... one must ask if the Citizens' all-male company have rather failed to project the drama and tension that should grip a prison just before an execution. But the play itself has faults. Too often Mr. Behan's native garrulousness puts time-wasting irrelevancies into the mouths of his characters.

Obviously, while recognising the play's merits, the Scottish critics were not going to be blinkered by metropolitan enthusiasm, and Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) had characteristically mixed feelings:

Every conceivable detail of execution is relentlessly brought to light, not visibly, but in words ... maybe if actual Irish players were on the stage, Behan's dialogue would have sounded warmer and often humorous. What the all-male company under Peter Duguid's dark-toned production gave us is solidified tragedy. Walk up, brave hearts, for a night of gloom.

'J.H.' (Evening Times) made an interesting comparison: 'This is a prison play, and I must admit that if I hadn't seen a much better prison play called Now Barabbas by William Douglas Home (just a Scotsman),<sup>27</sup> I might have been more impressed ... generally this was just a formless melange of ripe Irish sayings'. The Scotsman, however, was convinced that, according to 'T.Q.F.', it 'despite the superfluous anthology of old lags' tales in the first of the three acts and the faltering climax of the final act, roars out like a strong meaningful voice among the cocktail party cut-glass chatter of the contemporary theatre'.



The Duguid mixture included a few light-weight pieces in the thriller/comedy thriller category, of which Any Other Business (George Ross and Campbell Singer) was the most unusual, the chief interest being not to spot the murderer, but to guess the identity of the traitor in the boardroom: it was an excellent piece of its type, and the Herald (21/4/59) agreed that 'this play keeps us continually on the edge of our seats and makes the fortunes of Henry Armstrong and Sons, wool manufacturers in the Borders, the successfully absorbing matter of a moderately long evening ...'. The company gave 'a remarkable degree of life and variety to the chairman and directors', and the actors were, indeed, whipped into 'spasms of tension' by their director, according to 'A.M.G.' (Evening Times). Dial 'M' for Murder (Frederick Knott) conveniently occupied a pre-Christmas spot, and, although it had to meet comparisons with the Hitchcock film version, its director, Fulton Mackay, faced the challenge of familiarity 'magnificently' as far as the Scotsman was concerned (26/11/57), providing the qualities of 'interest and freshness ... the effect is not fully achieved until the third act, and one wonders how far Roy Kinnear's playing of Inspector Hubbard contributed to this'. 'W.D.' (Scottish Daily Mail) was satisfied that it 'still has power to thrill'. John Grieve, Barbara Wilson and Robert Gillespie were also in the cast. Agatha Christie's Ten Little Niggers - the original title still appeared to be acceptable in 1958 - came in as an answer to encroaching summer weather, and the Glasgow Herald found it 'easy to understand how this play has thrilled audiences and filled theatres for so long'. The direction by Peter Duguid was 'carefully disciplined', the setting by Pat Douthwaite 'cool, economical' (27/5/58). Not in the Book (Arthur Watkyn) was more of a comedy than anything else, although a question of murder was involved. It was directed by Reginald Birks, now General Manager in succession to the much respected William MacIntosh, who had taken ill and died at the wheel of his car in January, 1959. About Not in the Book as a play, the Herald (29/3/60) had doubts:

Why the Glasgow Citizens' should choose to do it is not clear; but it must be admitted that under the circumstances they do it remarkably well ... Martin Heller, dealing with the chief part of a civil servant

improbably blackmailed ... goes through the quite unrelated phases of the character ... with as much appearance of consistency as possible; he even manages to make some of them amusing ....

The Scotsman elegantly summed up the ingredients: '... lethal weed-killer, a coffee bowl, and an instruction leaflet in the form of a thriller MS ... setting for a perfect crime ... "Sin Stalks Suburbia". But treated as a lightsome thing, it does not stalk for long. Rather does it perform an entertaining soft-shoe shuffle ...'.

Fear comes to Supper (Rosemary Ann Sisson), a new play which deserves some attention because of the fact that it was new, was another imaginative step in the dark of the kind which is typical of Duguid's three seasons; the fact that it attracted neither critical nor popular acclaim does not make it something to be ignored or, indeed, totally forgotten. Its ideological and more physical rivalries were then fresh and novel matters for the stage, and their assimilation into 'thriller' form must have seemed an attractive prospect, but the potential excitement of the situation, the attempt to 'eliminate' a distinguished Russian defector in West Berlin, was swamped by a flood of talk. Nor did the production - in the hands of guest Gerard Dynevor - ever come really to life. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald (5/5/59) 'didn't believe a word', and the thrills were 'padded off from us by a great deal of other business' ... 'Russians', he said, 'it is well known, talk a lot', but in this case 'murder seemed desirable and even justifiable'. The plot was no worse than any other of its kind: hired killer ingratiates himself in the house of veteran defector, and becomes emotionally involved with the daughter who, to make matters more complicated, bears a heavy burden of guilt for having, under pressure, informed against her father. The assassination does not, of course, take place, and Father has known about the girl's betrayal all the time. Unfortunately, the relationships never become believable: the love affair between the two young people, for instance, is too suddenly initiated for conviction. There is, moreover, another strand of plot which took place on the other section of David Jones's divided set, involving a middle-aged couple in the toils of the forces of



evil and operating on another plane altogether.

Christopher Small elaborated a little further:

The killer feels a recurrent urge to self-analysis ... and the victim himself holds everything up, even his own impending demise, by gross indulgence in moral reflections .... Only for a short time in the brief and almost inarticulate despair of the German woman played by Irene Sunters does the matter of life and death really seem so, and that has really nothing to do with the story ....

The Scotsman admitted that 'the play has some adroit moments of tension', but warned that the principal character's 'pretentious preaching ... absolutely puts the spies off their work ...', while the Scottish Daily Mail said that, although 'the acting standards are as high as ever', 'the sensation of fear is missing'. According to the Bulletin ('E.G.A.),' we're rarely stirred, emotionally or otherwise'. Jack House (Evening Times) dealt with the play in typically forthright manner: 'The cast knew the play was weak, and so they over-acted ... I don't think it would be fair to mention the individual actors in this turgid piece. What I can recommend with all my heart is the brilliant West Berlin setting designed by David Jones'. In addition to Ms. Sunters, leading parts were played by Martin Heller, John Grieve, Annette Crosbie and Callum Mill.

Amidst all the rich variety of plays chosen by Peter Duguid, the most significant was John Osborne's Look Back in Anger, and it is to Duguid's credit that he arranged for a production to be mounted as soon as possible after the London presentation had made the play such a centre of controversy. Look Back in Anger is by no means the best play seen during these three seasons; indeed, as time goes on, its actual quality becomes increasingly suspect, but it was a trail-blazer in no uncertain way, a landmark and a watershed in British theatre. It opened a whole new chapter and - for the time being - firmly closed those which had gone before. When the play had first appeared at the Royal Court in London in May, 1956, it had set critical opinion in something of a turmoil: John Russell Taylor in

his Anger and After - the very title of the book testified to the importance attached to the event - quotes some reactions:

T.C. Worsley in the New Statesman ... caught the prevailing opinion very well when he wrote: "As a play Look Back in Anger hardly exists. The author has written all the soliloquies for his Wolverhampton Hamlet and virtually left out all the other characters and all the action. But in these soliloquies you can hear the authentic new tone of the Nineteen-Fifties, desperate, savage, resentful; and, at times, very funny". ... Of the three "quality" dailies ... only The Times came out decidedly against: ("This first play has passages of good violent writing, but its total gesture is altogether inadequate.").<sup>28</sup>

Thus it can be seen that it took courage on the part of Peter Duguid and the Theatre Board to include the play in the 1957-58 season, and there was some uncertainty as to how Glasgow would greet it. Christopher Small was never one to follow a London band-wagon: indeed, great popularity in the South was at times inclined to raise his resistance. Commencing in somewhat cynical vein (Herald 11/3/58), 'Well, here it is at last ...', he nevertheless went on, 'It may as well be said at once that it is very good indeed, that the Citizens' do it extremely well ... it is something upon which to look back in gratitude'. On this occasion, David Jones's assistant, Pat Douthwaite, was responsible for the set, and there was a guest director in David Turnbull, later to direct at Edinburgh's Gateway Theatre in Leith Walk; Fulton Mackay made a personal success as the angry 'Jimmy Porter', and John MacGregor stood in for him when he was ill. Frank Wylie played 'Cliff', Barbara Wilson made sense out of the rather preposterous 'Helena Charles', Martin Heller was the Colonel, and Pat Pleasance was brought in, for the role of 'Alison'. This was one of the occasions when Glasgow audiences did decide to come South of the river in large numbers: the run was extended, and a surplus of £182 was recorded, with a week's return visit to come at the end of the Spring Season. (Unfortunately, a single successful production of this kind did not result in any great subsequent momentum, and this interest in the new and the novel did not continue to this extent during subsequent productions.)



Christopher Small went on to say: 'Mr. Osborne has grasped the ... important principle that anger, like any other strong emotion, is the fuel that makes plays go. His whole piece could almost be taken, not as a social, but as a theatrical object-lesson ... this one goes like a bomb'. The Scotsman thought that 'at first the dialogues with Cliff seem 'too rhythmic, like patter and repartee ...', It 'suggests a vaudeville mother-in-law-and-all-her-family sketch with laughs on cue .... John Osborne does not merely carry a torch for dying enthusiasm and feeling - he takes it to false flags and meaningless manifestoes'. Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) complimented the leading actor: 'Young Scots actor, Fulton Mackay, comes triumphantly through the exacting test of playing talkative Jimmy Porter ... an accurate copy of the ingenious London production is given'.

Some of the audience reaction was fairly explosive: distinguished Glasgow citizens, Sir Patrick and Lady Dollan, were said to have walked out, quoted as saying, 'The language is the worst I have heard on any stage in my time'. A letter to the Glasgow Herald (14/3/58) from Mr. Robert Lamont (Glasgow NW) claimed that 'To counter-balance the vapidness of the play, we are given occasional bursts of foul language, and at one point the dialogue descends to blatant pornography', while Mr. R.L. Cormick (22/3/58) complained, 'It is, I think, the most disgusting play I have seen'. Nevertheless, the Scottish Daily Mail critic, 'G.B.', described it as (11/3/58) a performance to 'remember and ponder over', and the Bulletin gave its rather 'cosy' summing up, 'It isn't a "nice" play ... but it's a play to see'.

The staging of Look Back in Anger is yet another example of Peter Duguid's determination to fly in the face of timid public opinion, and to keep his audiences up to date with the latest developments in the theatrical world: theirs was the right to reject, but not, he felt, the right simply to stay away without giving themselves the chance to judge. As his tenure drew to a close, he said to Andrew Young in the Mail, 'I would have been happier if the hard work had been rewarded by good audiences, but the sad fact is

that Glasgow seems only to want to see revue ... this is a regrettable comment on Glasgow's taste'. (The revues during his time were Merry-ma-Tanzie, Clishmaclaver, Babity Bowster (Christmas) and the first of the two Summer shows, Sixes an' Sevens. All titles were manipulated in such a way as to preserve the thirteen-letter titles for so long associated with Royal Princess pantomimes.)

It is hard not to sympathise with Peter Duguid in his disappointment at the end of such an intensive three seasons - 45 productions, and most of them directed by himself. Perhaps there were more reasons than one for the rapid turn-over of directors during the years under consideration: Duguid was the only one to remain for as long as three years. Perhaps no individual productions glow in the mind like some of Callum Mill's and Michael Blakemore's, but he was responsible for a remarkable body of work, varied, in touch with new developments, and, despite less emphasis on - and less success in - older classical plays, the quality was generally high. Furthermore - and in no disrespectful manner - the stylistic mould of the Citizens' had been broken without being destroyed.

The Productions were:

A View from the Bridge (Arthur Miller) Directed Peter Duguid  
(2/9/57).

An Italian Straw Hat (Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel)  
Directed Peter Duguid (16/9/57).

The Caine Mutiny Court Martial (Herman Wouk) Directed Peter Duguid  
(30/9/57).

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare) Directed Peter Duguid  
(14/10/57).

The Diary of Anne Frank (Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett)  
Directed Peter Duguid (28/10/57).

Major Barbara (Bernard Shaw) Directed Peter Duguid (11/11/57).

Dial 'M' for Murder (Frederick Knott) Directed Fulton Mackay  
(25/11/57).



- Merry-ma-Tanzie (Revue) Directed Peter Duguid (19/12/57).
- My Three Angels (Sam and Bella Spewack) Directed Peter Duguid (10/2/58).
- Gay Landscape (George Munro) Directed Peter Duguid (24/2/58).
- Look Back in Anger (John Osborne) Directed David Turnbull (10/3/58).
- Of Mice and Men (John Steinbeck) Directed Peter Duguid (31/3/58).
- Truth to Tell (Alexander Scott) Directed Peter Duguid (14/4/58).
- The Crucible (Arthur Miller) Directed Peter Duguid (28/4/58).
- Bell Book and Candle (John van Druten) Directed David Turnbull (12/5/58).
- Ten Little Niggers (Agatha Christie) Directed Peter Duguid (26/5/58).
- Mrs. Gibbons' Boys (Will Glickman and Joseph Stein) Directed Peter Duguid (9/6/58).
- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (Tennessee Williams) Directed Peter Duguid (8/9/58).
- Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (Ray Lawler) Directed Colin Chandler (29/9/58).
- She Stoops to Conquer (Oliver Goldsmith) Directed Peter Duguid (13/10/58).
- The Cherry Orchard (Anton Chekhov) Directed Peter Duguid (27/10/58).
- Look in the Looking Glass (Walter Macken) Directed Peter Duguid (25/11/58).
- Clishmaclaver (Revue) Directed Peter Duguid (18/12/58).
- The Roving Boy (Joe Corrie) Directed Callum Mill (9/2/59).
- The Quare Fellow (Brendan Behan) Directed Peter Duguid (23/2/59).
- The Lass wi' the Muckle Mou' (Alexander Reid) Directed Peter Duguid (9/3/59).
- An Enemy of the People (Henrik Ibsen/Arthur Miller) Directed Peter Duguid (23/3/59).
- Under the Light (Iain Crawford) Directed Peter Duguid (6/4/59).
- Any Other Business (George Ross and Campbell Singer) Directed Peter Duguid (20/4/59).

Fear came to Supper (Rosemary Ann Sisson) Directed Gerard Dynevor  
(4/5/59).

The Sold Gold Cadillac (Howard Teichmann and George S. Kaufman)  
Directed Callum Mill (18/5/59).

The Baikie Charivari (James Bridie) Directed Peter Duguid (14/9/59).

Gigi (Colette/Anita Loos) Directed Peter Duguid (21/9/59).

The Kidders (Donald Ogden Stewart) Directed Peter Duguid (5/10/59).

Othello (William Shakespeare) Directed Peter Duguid (20/10/59).

You Never Can Tell (Bernard Shaw) Directed Peter Streuli (9/11/59).

The Great Sebastians (Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse) Directed  
Peter Duguid (23/11/59).

Babity Bowster (Revue) (Ronald Emerson. Music Arthur Blake)  
Directed Peter Duguid (10/12/59).

The Alchemist (Ben Jonson) Directed Peter Duguid (22/2/60).

One More River (Beverley Cross) Directed Peter Duguid (29/2/60).

Walker, London (J.M. Barrie) Directed Peter Duguid (14/3/60).

Not in the Book (Arthur Watkyn) Directed Reginald Birks (28/3/60).

Wedding Day (Jack Ronder) Directed Peter Duguid (11/4/60).

The Playboy of the Western World (J.M. Synge) Directed  
Michael Elliott (25/4/60).

Sixes an' Sevens (Revue) Directed Peter Duguid (19/5/60).

Footnotes to Chapter Two - PETER DUGUID AND THE AMERICAN INFLUENCE

1. Edwin J. Bronner, The Encyclopedia of the American Theatre 1900-1975, (Barnes, 1980), p.505.
2. Dennis Welland, Miller the Playwright (Methuen, 1979), p.70.
3. Bronner, p.76.
4. *ibid.*, p.344.
5. *ibid.*, p.III.
6. John Russell Taylor, Anger and After (Pelican, 1963), p.31.
7. Welland, p.54.
8. Tennessee Williams, Memoirs (Star - W.H. Allen, 1977), p.168.
9. Theatre World, March, 1958.
10. Plays International, March, 1988.
11. Plays and Players, November 1959.
12. Metropole, the old building in Stockwell Street, Glasgow, a music hall, which also housed companies like the Denville Players, specialists in 'thick ear' melodrama and Grand Guignol.
13. Bronner, p.327.
14. *ibid.*, p.323.
15. *ibid.*, p.433.
16. *ibid.*, p.196.
17. Theatre World, May, 1958.
18. Bronner, p.177.
19. Plays and Players, December 1960.
20. Theatre World, December, 1960.
21. Referring to the Arnold Bennett - Edward Knoblock 'chronicle' play of 1912.
22. Winifred Bannister, James Bridie and his Theatre (Rockliff, 1955), pp.183, 182.
23. Denis Mackail, The Story of J.M.B. (Peter Davies, 1941), p.190.



24. *ibid.*, p.191.
25. *ibid.*, pp.192, 193, 194.
26. *ibid.*, p.192.
27. Now Barabbas, staged at the Citizens' in 1948.
28. Russell Taylor, pp.29, 30.

## CHAPTER THREE

CALLUM MILL: THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

The two seasons during which Callum Mill was 'producer' - he was virtually the last to bear this title in the fullest sense of the term - provided the Citizens' Theatre with some of its most distinguished highlights, but then Mill is one of the great unsung talents of the Scottish Theatre. This is obviously an opinion shared unwittingly with many theatregoers of the period: remind them of a particular production, and their recalled enthusiasm will be unbounded. The irony is that it is sometimes necessary to remind them who was responsible for it. Surprisingly enough, Callum Mill was the first Scot to occupy the office: he had worked for the Citizens' before, but, now that he was, artistically, in control, it seemed quite possible that a new era was at hand, especially as he appeared to work well with Reginald Birks, now proved to be an excellent General Manager, who could act, and could direct, but was quite happy to leave it at that. On August 15, 1960, Michael Goldberg, Chairman of the Board, said that there had been 'much defeatest and alarming talk about theatres lately', but that was not the Citizens' point of view. They still hoped to persuade a large number of people that good theatre, art and painting were a part of civilised living. According to the Glasgow Herald, 'Mr. Callum Mill, the first resident Scottish producer the Citizens' have had, said a theatre should not be regarded as a dustbin but as an exciting place with an atmosphere of wonder about it'.

For his first production, Mill made a brave choice, but one fraught with dangers, Friedrich Durrenmatt's Romulus the Great, in a translation by Nell Moody. George Scott Moncrieff in the Glasgow Herald of August 23, 1960, described the Citizens' as 'the first repertory company, it seems, to tackle Durrannatt'. London, indeed, had seen little of him: there had been a production at the Arts Theatre in 1959 in The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi, while Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne had just arrived with The Visit (Der Besuche Der Alten Dame), following an abortive British tour three years earlier,

under the title of Time and Again. Audiences, it seemed, had difficulty in accepting these experts in high comedy in something resembling superior Gothic horror. Die Physiker had not yet been written, but in a few years it, too, would take the Citizens' stage as The Physicists. Just as Peter Duguid had shown a preference for American plays, Callum Mill tended towards the European. Romulus Der Grosse was an earlier work than those mentioned above, and presumably Mill was influenced in his choice by the fact that it was to open at the Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh, as part of the Festival of that year. The official description of the play as 'an unhistorical historical comedy' places it straight away in Shavian territory, although Scott Moncrieff in his review of the production at Edinburgh found that the material was 'hardly handled with Shavian brilliance' and was 'coloured by a post-Hitler German negativeness'. (However Germanic Durrenmatt's style may be, it should be made clear that he was both born and educated in Switzerland.) Nevertheless, the review continues, 'Callum Mill's production is excellent and goes gracefully in Sally Hulke's attractive sets. Even so, the play would sag very heavily without the engaging performance of Joe Greig, a Roman emperor with the face and pawkiness of a Scots comic'. On its arrival in Glasgow 'P.H.'s review for the Herald (30/8/60), formed a rather different picture of Mr. Greig, concluding that this Romulus was 'drawn from Wodehouse rather than Tacitus or Gibbon: A Roman Lord Emsworth'. He made, it was said, 'an unconventional but credible Emperor. Callum Mill, the new producer, evokes a brittle atmosphere of "fin de siecle" too true for comfort at a time when the Goths still threaten to come over the hill'.

Somehow the play, in its elegant translation, reads better today than it played in 1960, or seems to do so, perhaps because dramatic horizons have widened so greatly in the intervening years. We have also become accustomed to a play changing its mood quite strikingly in the course of its action, becoming much blacker as it reaches its end. In 476 AD, the twilight of the Roman Empire, Romulus sees his duty as a matter of allowing to come to an end something which has outlived its usefulness, realising, as the Herald perceptively put it, that 'collapsing things are best allowed to collapse'. Not



everyone shares this view: Spurius Titus has rushed in 'true Roman' style to put his Emperor in touch with the desperate military situation, exhausting himself so much that at the end he realises that 'the last Imperial Officer' has 'slept through the downfall of his country'. Then there is Caesar Skinner, the trouser manufacturer, - 'a modern state that wears no leg covering is certain to give at the knees' - who is prepared to buy the advancing barbarians off if he can marry the Emperor's lovely daughter, Rea. Eventually all the rest, including Empress and Princess, attempt escape by raft, and it is later fairly casually revealed that all have perished except Zeno, Emperor of 'East Rome': it is a measure of the play's stylisation that an event of this nature can be followed by a surprisingly tranquil end. Romulus and the sleeping Spurius await the arrival of the enemy, whose leaders, Odoaker and Theodororic, 'one in trousers, the other in uniform - not "operatic"', are quite different from what has been expected. Odoaker is a civilised philosopher, while Theodoric seems a pleasant young man, although he is a major threat for the future, 'a real German. He dreams of world domination, and the people dream with him'. And Romulus, who has devoted most of his time to his carefully named hens, is not to be allowed to slip from the world and his responsibilities so easily. 'You cannot avoid your greatness, Romulus', Odoaker tells him, 'you are the one man who understands how to rule the world'. As the room fills with travel-stained men, he goes on:

Then let us bear with the bitterness. Try  
and put sense into senselessness, and, in  
these few remaining years, govern the world  
well .... These will be a few years that  
world history will forget, because they are  
unheroic, but they'll be the happiest that  
this chaotic world will ever know.

The Scottish Daily Mail attacked viciously: 'Bad acting and Callum Mill's fumbling direction ... last night almost ripped apart the superb satirical fabric of this historical comedy', but the Scotsman told a different story: 'The first act is somewhat scrappy - reminding one of the work of Shaw in his last years - but Sally Hulke's setting admirably conveys the feeling of imperial decay ....

... even when the action was spasmodic, the acting under Callum Mill's direction had many admirable performances'. Some London critics, in Edinburgh for the Festival, attended the production there. T.C. Worsley (Financial Times 25/8/60), felt that:

Political fantasy of this kind (needed) a special style of artificial acting - one that a repertory company may find particularly difficult. The Glasgow Citizens' Company are better known for their raw realism than for stylistic acting, and they are not entirely happy in this mode. But the director, Mr. Callum Mill, shows real imagination in tackling the play, and the company make a loyal attempt to carry out his ideas. But it is largely the Emperor's evening, and Mr. Joe Greig has a charmingly gentle comic touch to convey to us this bland old woman of an Emperor. (The rather patronising tone of this review is worth noting.)

'Our Drama Critic' (London Times 24/8/60) was equally patronising, but less impressed:

The Glasgow Citizens' Theatre give the rather uneven satire a rather uneven performance, but Mr. Joe Greig, as the plump and placid Emperor, uses his devastating understatements effectively, and Mr. Hugh Sullivan is impressive as the returned prisoner whose patrician qualities of command have survived torture.

When Romulus reached Glasgow, however, 'A.W.' in the Scotsman (30/8/60), saw 'signs last night, both in the production and in the spirit emerging from it, that this may now well take on a lustre more vital and intense'. Charles Douglas-Home in the Scottish Daily Express of the same date, admitted to having suffered 'three acts of the most burdensome Teutonic humour'. The Daily Record admitted that it was 'cleverly done, wonderfully produced', but 'high-brow - too much so to be enjoyable'.

Obviously, this is a play not for all tastes: re-workings of ancient history have seldom been Glasgow's favourite dramatic fare, unless adorned with music and Duncan Macrae; have not been markedly successful in Britain at all - witness the failure, not once but twice

in London, of Robert E. Sherwood's much garlanded high comedy morality about Hannibal, The Road to Rome. It might also be suggested that Callum Mill took a little time fully to find his bearings at the Citizens': Joe Greig's appearance was a 'guest' one, and the formidable company which he later assembled had not quite come together, although the brilliant Geraldine Newman was in the cast. The financial deficit on the production was in the region of £1,547, but, despite misgivings about the adequacy of finance from the Edinburgh Festival, the visit there appears to have made a surplus of £99. Mrs. Elizabeth T. Clark, in a letter to the Citizens' Programme, which then took upon itself something of a magazine form, said, 'The small audience last night were fascinated, puzzled too, to the very end ...'. Mrs. Clark, who was better known as the playwright, Joan Ure, thought Romulus 'the most exciting and startling play that we have had in Glasgow for ages'.

As a footnote, it may be mentioned that a 'colourful new curtain' had been presented by the Theatre Society, and that, as an additional attraction, the Seven Ages of Man Recital by James Roose Evans was presented on the evening of Sunday, September 18.

The second play in a Season is sometimes even more dangerous than the first, and, continuing the European motif, Mill presented Jean Giraudoux's The Enchanted, an extremely delicately balanced piece of near-whimsy at a time when a strong, direct contrast to Romulus would have been more welcome. Reception was not enthusiastic, either from audience or critics, and casting does not appear to have been all that might be desired: much must depend on the playing of Isabel, but the Herald (13/9/60) found Joanna Morris in this role a 'sad pursuer of shades'. The action of the play hinges on the fascination Isabel feels for a Ghost, first a bogus one, then the real thing: it is the efforts of the 'rational' mortals to prevent her from giving herself to Death in the form of the latter that is the eventual theme of the play, which more or less poses the question, is her (wordly) salvation not really a kind of destruction? Glyn Jones as the Ghost was found to be 'noticeably solid flesh and blood, while Hugh Sullivan, as the Doctor, albeit through no real fault of



his own, showed a 'failure to establish the "harmony" which should hold everything together' ... 'By the time he strikes his tuning fork and invokes the healing symphony of nature, the thing is, sadly, long past mending'. It is admitted that there are some 'diverse pleasures' such as Martin Heller's *Inspector*, and a 'fine touch of macabre farce' from James Grant and Ian Trigger as the Executioners. But, as Christopher Small sums up, 'it appears that some of the hazards of producing this sort of piece have not been very clearly foreseen ... it cannot be said that either shape or point survive very recognisably in the production'. He also wonders why the actors are 'dressed in Edwardian clothes for a play which belongs to the "thirties"'. It is sad, but not wholly surprising that there was a financial deficit of £1,191: to bring audiences to the Gorbals playhouse required something forceful and positive in its appeal, and it is doubtful if, even faultlessly performed, The Enchanted would have fulfilled these requirements.

'A.W.' in The Scotsman decided that:

fantasy doesn't travel too well at the best of times .... In reaching the Clyde it has suffered a sea-change, but scarcely into something rich and strange .... Callum Mill's direction, though occasionally too slow in tempo ... was admirably pointed and illuminating in places .... Sally Hulke's setting of a clearing in the woods was at once eye-catching in its blend of colour and superb in its creation of perspective.

The play amused Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) 'by its whimsicality, though the humour scarcely has greater impact than a paper bag full of feathers'.

Fortunately for Callum Mill's regime, a resoundingly successful Hamlet had intervened before the next - deeper - plunge into contemporary European drama was made. The rise of the reputation of Eugene Ionesco had been meteoric: eight years before the Citizens' venture, the Oxford Companion to the Theatre had afforded him no space at all, while six years later, with infinitely less space at his disposal, John Russell Taylor gave him almost two pages in his Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre.<sup>1</sup> Nothing dates more quickly than the

'avant garde' of the day before yesterday, and, whatever posterity's verdict may be, today Ionesco almost seems rather stodgy and old-fashioned, but in 1960 he was the very vanguard of all that was new, unsettling, destructive of old standards, and it was an act of great courage - some said foolhardiness - for Citizens' Board and Management to take such a risk, even if the agreed run was to be only that of a week. The three plays chosen to make up the Bill were Maid to Marry, a slender trifle in Ionescoid terms, The New Tenant, in which the eponymous leading character finds his room encroaching on him in a most alarming manner, and, in the middle, the appallingly funny The Lesson, in which the Professor allows his Pupil to drive him into a progressively greater frenzy until - this seems to be something of a habit - he stabs her to death. Russell Taylor places it 'among the most brilliant works in the whole Theatre of the Absurd'.<sup>2</sup> If Ionesco set out to shock his audiences and to 'alienate' them to a much greater extent than Brecht had done, he certainly succeeded - in the latter aim, at any rate - in Glasgow. The Ionesco Bill was no damp squib like The Enchanted: the Citizens' Theatre may have been loud with the sound of tipped-up seats and feet heading for the exit doors, but at least, even if in a limited circle, a talking point, matter for argument, had been raised.

Obviously the occasion had left a disagreeable taste in the mouths of many who attended: even 'D.S.K.', when reviewing the following production in the Glasgow Herald of October 25, 1960, referred to it as 'an antidote to the excoriating absurdities of Ionesco'. Christopher Small wrote on October 18, half jokingly, of an evening of 'wicked nonsense'; noting that this was the first professional introduction to the playwright - (Theatre Group, a daring amateur group had already slipped The Bald Prima Donna into a Scottish Community Drama Association Festival, causing no little alarm and panic in the process) - he went on to talk of 'exercises in surrealist leg-pulling'. Maid to Marry he considered to be 'a patter of fatuous non-sequiturs' which would be 'better got through in less time', although Martin Heller and Geraldine Newman maintained 'an admirable appearance of conviction and respectability'. The piece was, in fact, slight but perfectly tolerable, a 'conversation', on a

park bench, with Ms. Newman - as so often - quite dazzling in the sharp awareness of her performance. The New Tenant, which involved an 'enormous clutter of perfectly useless furniture' engulfing the central character - 'a more cumbersome demonstration of human isolation' included a 'fine Ionescoid monologue by Shelagh Fay as the concierge', containing the sentence, "I don't know who you are, but I know who I am". 'Which', said Small, 'puts her at least half a jump ahead of the rest of us'. But however easily these two short plays might slip from the mind, the centre of the evening, The Lesson would be hard to forget on any count. This chilling account of the crazed Professor's 'teaching' methods probably stands the test of time better than most of Ionesco's work - even a ballet has been made out of it - and at the Citizens' there was a 'most remarkable performance by Ken Jones ... funny and genuinely hair-raising'. 'There remains, of course', the review drew towards its end, 'the question, voiced with some frequency in the stalls and elsewhere, what the point of all this may be ... it is education, and we must certainly thank the Citizens' for that ...'.

The other critics more or less threw their hands up in horror. The Scotsman found 'not even a glimpse of a "message" .... Still it might have been worse. There could have been four plays ... (It was an) evening of blank bafflement'. To the Scottish Daily Mail it was 'a truly terrible trilogy', while the Daily Record thought 'each (play) as bad as the other'. It was like a nightmare after a 'heavy meal of beer, cheese and onions'. For the Evening Citizen it was 'deep stuff this - too deep. Entertainment value is nil'. Referring to The New Tenant, the Evening Times recalled, 'the Marx Brothers did it all 25 years ago - but faster, and a lot funnier'.

Three Ionescos at a sitting proved rather much, and the fact remains that theatregoers in the early Sixties were some steps behind gallery-goers, who were beginning to accept abstract paintings. Ionesco's plays are, actually, easier to grasp than a painter's abstractions are, and probably mistrusted even more for that reason: two years before, Harold Pinter's The Birthday Party, which rested on rather more solid ground still, had driven large numbers of the audiences



from the Lyric, Hammersmith, largely because it did not state which of a variety of possible interpretations was the 'correct' one. The week's run at the Citizens' resulted in a deficit of £531.

The remaining European novelty of the 1960-61 Season was Rollo, an adaptation by Felicity Douglas of Marcel Achard's 'boulevard' comedy of 1956, Patate, which, at the time of its Oxford and London productions of 1959, had been running in Paris for four years. This was another choice which flew in the face of Glasgow, indeed Scottish - indeed British taste. Citizens' audiences - and Citizens' actors - have always been more at home in strong dramatic - even tragic - material, successes in the field of high comedy being the exception rather than the rule. It was generally felt that Rollo suffered in being a translation, but many modern French comedies have survived translation in the right hands. The 'Anglicisation' of André Roussin springs to mind at once. It is probably the theme more than anything else which prevented the Citizens' production from attaining much popularity. Rollo and Noel have disliked each other since their days at school, and later on the elegantly handsome Noel has proved consistently more successful in the sexual arena. When Noel seduces Rollo's adopted daughter, however, Rollo sees a way of defeating his old enemy on a moral level. 'D.S.K.' in the Glasgow Herald (25/10/60), found it 'definitely not slick, but in its way a perfect example of the "sick" humour we denigrate so much in the Americans'. As Rollo, Phil McCall 'ran the gamut from tragedy to farce several times during the evening'. The Scotsman was not enthusiastic, considering (25/10/60) that the piece did 'not come across the footlights as the slick, smooth, unshocking piece of comedy which it probably is in the original... Phil McCall did not always do the role justice'. The Scottish Daily Mail reported 'bright constant ripples of laughter from last night's audience', while, according to the Record, 'Phil McCall excels', and, to the Evening Times, the play 'amuses without being exciting'.

Excellent actor though he is, McCall could hardly have been more different from what Peter Roberts called 'Leo McKern's podgy charm and gift for clowning' ... which ... 'sufficiently fill out the title-

role, by which the whole play must stand or fall', when reviewing Frank Hauser's Oxford production when it came to the Strand Theatre, London, in October, 1959.<sup>3</sup> He admitted that some of the 'edge' of Achard's dialogue may have been lost in translation, but considered that Ms. Douglas had preserved his 'feathery lightness'. Not, perhaps, a perfect choice for a Gorbals-based theatre and its company, but it did its part in informing its Glasgow audience of what was going in World Theatre as a whole - surely one facet of the job which any Citizens' Theatre ought to be doing. And, in any case, all these early productions - apart from the Hamlet already referred to, were simply a preparation for the great things which were to come from the Mill regime.

Both Lysistrata and Hedda Gabler (which was the Arts Council tour for 1961, and which came into the Gorbals theatre for a week) can, of course, be said to come under the head of 'European', and in 1962 there were to be two British premieres of European originals, preceded by the Miles Malleon adaptation of Molière, The Imaginary Invalid. This, again, was amiable rather than outstanding: Malleon's versions were very popular in Britain - anglicised in a rather 'jolly' manner, and perfect vehicles for the adapter himself. They were not, however, scholarly like the work of Richard Wilbur, or as approachable to Scottish theatregoers as the adaptations of Robert Kemp and now Liz Lochhead and Hector MacMillan. Christopher Small, in his review of 8/11/61, considered Callum Mill's production 'cheerful and lively ... but it lacks the edge and polish which can convert the fancied cure of hypochondria and the discomfiture of the profession to something better than a charade'. Walter Carr, then just on the verge of his brilliant flowering as a character comedian, he found 'painstakingly and elaborately valetudinarian, but an Argon with perhaps too much of the dear old fuddy-duddy about him' .... After a slow beginning, matters 'cheer up a good deal when the doctors themselves (Charles Baptiste and Roy Hanlon) come on'. The review, however, ended with rather a back-handed compliment: 'Miss Margaret Rothwell at the spinet ... her playing throughout the evening is, indeed, one of the most agreeable things in the show'.

The Scotsman 'rather wished for once that Mr. Callum Mill had performed a surgical operation to remove superfluous parts ...'. Walter Carr was 'never a convincing old man'. Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) felt that 'The Citizens' elect to "ham it" slightly', but that Carr 'played always with a warmth that never loses him sympathy'. Millar (Express) hailed another comedian emerging in 'that school for comics ... Carr has it in him to make a name', but Jack House (Evening Times) seemed to sympathise with 'two ardent Citizens' fans near me' who 'fell sound asleep in the first act and slept for most of the third. I'm glad to say their applause was unstinted at the end'.

In order to illustrate the broad base of Citizens' activities during this period, it is worth noting a reference in the Evening Times (17/11/61) to a Citizens' Theatre Society Sunday afternoon occasion, Jugglers on a Journey, poetry from John Donne to the modern 'beat' Americans, read by (then) Final Year Students from the RSAMD School of Drama, Stuart Henry, Maureen Morris and Gordon Reid.

Three brave experiments were still to come, all in 1962, in the last quarter of Mill's regime, two from the French, one Swiss, the first and last being comparative triumphs in their way. Altona, Jean-Paul Sartre's 1959 play, Les Séquestré d'Altona, is a major undertaking by any standards. (Rumour had it that this replaced an intended revival of James Bridie's Daphne Laureola, with Geraldine Newman in the Edith Evans role, and though it must be a matter of regret that that potentially great young actress never, in fact, had this opportunity, the chance to see the massive Sartre work was something to be valued.) John Russell Taylor described the play as 'a large-scale drama about a family which embodies in its various members the anguish of Germany in the post-Nazi era'.<sup>4</sup> Cut from the original six hours to something perhaps less than half that length, Altona made a strong impression at the Citizens', and, although there was to be a deficit of £1,046, this was rather less than that arrived at by a potentially more 'popular' piece like A Man for all Seasons, although, of course, the latter carried a larger cast. The essence of the play was well contained, its characters strongly defined:



the Father, strong in personal and industrial power, although aware that he has only six months to live; Franz, his elder son, thirteen years in his upper room, but now compelled by his sister-in-law to face up to realities, though still dressed in his tattered Nazi uniform; his sister, Leni, who alone up to that time has been allowed to visit the brother whom she passionately loves.

Perceptively, the Glasgow Herald (31/1/62) described the play as being about 'war and war-guilt, and the post-war revival of Germany', 'a representation of the essential Nazi nihilism, preserved, immured in the very centre of wealth and power ... Franz von Gerlach, a voluntary prisoner in his room - confronting the horrible devils of his self-accusation'. Referring to the difficulties involved, Christopher Small judged that 'The Citizens' meet and overcome them triumphantly' and then reiterated the essential truth about the Citizens' at that time ... and probably at any other, too, 'indeed one may say that ... strong meat and fierce challenge is what they thrive on best ...'. He had praise for Sally Hulke's set ... (her work, like that of Mill himself has not been sufficiently valued in afterthought) ... 'The set - Valhalla, more or less, with something nasty in the attic ... is admirably conceived'. The production was 'direct and clear-cut', the acting 'very good indeed'. 'George Mikell ... has the real command of the play; it is not always easy to hold ... but he does not let it slip ...'. Mikell, who came as a 'guest' with quite a lot of film experience, did present one small problem: in the London production of April, 1961, first at the Royal Court, later at the Saville Theatre, Kenneth Haigh, the Franz, was, like the rest of the cast, British - (Australian in one case) - whereas in Glasgow, Mikell was the only one 'with an accent'. So well integrated was the production, however, that this did nothing to destroy it, perhaps gave it a flavour, in fact. The Herald review concluded, summing up the production as 'an explosive start to the new Citizens' season. There is a fortnight in which to see it. Do not miss it'.

Ronald Mavor in the Scotsman found this :

an occasion for rejoicing, for it is not only a major play - probably the most notable of the

'50s - but an important document of our times ... Its effect is to set the mind spinning. It is too intellectually packed a play to be described in a few facile paragraphs. It is a play to be seen.

E.N. Young (Evening Citizen) was not quite as enthusiastic:

At three hours the play is only half of its original length, yet it is still inclined to drag ... The ranting performance of George Mikell ... as the tormented Franz dwarfs everything else.

While Robins Millar (Express) thought it 'heavy going; all its psychology is darkly morbid, but contact with Sartre's dynamic mind is an experience'.

An equally brave, but less happy adaptation from the French came a little later in the year, the first British production of The Carmelites by Georges Bernanos. This, the only successful play by the religious novelist, Les Dialogues des Carmelites, had had a complicated history: itself adapted from a novel by Gertrud von le Fort, it had been written as a film script in 1948, the year of the author's death, first staged in 1952, turned into an opera by Poulenc, and eventually filmed in 1960. The result, as seen at the Citizens', was bound to be something of a hybrid, and there now appears to be no good reason why it should have seemed a good idea to place it near the end of a Spring season, unless, perhaps, as a gesture in the direction of Easter. If so, there could have been happier choices. 'E.M.', in the Glasgow Herald (17/4/62), considered it to be 'not an easy evening's theatre'. The play is set during the Reign of Terror in France - in the early Nineties: a girl from a noble family seeks refuge in the Carmelite convent at Compiègne. There is reflection on cowardice as a source of weakness, and, after hesitation, Blanche follows the Sisters to the scaffold. Callum Mill's production, untypically for him, was an uneasy mixture of reading and 'acting'. According to the Herald, it 'weaves unhappily between artifice in the use of reading desks, not only by the narrators of the action, but for some of the actors, and near realism when the desks are abandoned'.

It was not helped in its flow by 'sidelong glances at a script'. The Programme Note said that 'in order to emphasise the meaning of this play without distraction, we have not clothed the actresses as Carmelites ...', but this very course of action proved 'distracting' to the Herald critic. 'Spiritual advice comes strangely from a girl in a brown pinafore'. Jean Taylor Smith played the Prioress 'magnificently', while Geraldine Newman was 'most convincing' as Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

'P' in the Scotsman saw little dramatic in a 'static group of good women, to whom no fate worse than death occurs and who all wear brown gym slips'. Her other complaint was that 'partly because of inaudibility (a rare fault at the Citizens') and partly due to an all round failure to transmit any feeling of real devotional ardour the play's content fell short of its mark'. Millar (Express) thought that 'splendid speech' was required, but 'only Jean Taylor Smith as a dying Mother Superior has it. Other actresses murmur and mutter to continual irritation'. The play was suitable 'for those willing to sit through a sermon on sacrifice appropriate for Holy Week. But all sermons should be audible'. To the Evening Citizen it was 'reminiscent of an end-of-term play produced by a girls' school with the aid of brothers and uncles', while Mary Cavanagh (Mail) suffered 'stretches of real tedium. The final scene as the nuns' brave singing voices are cut off by the descent of the blade is the most effectively managed climax'. The Catholic Weekly (21/4/62) saw the play as an 'epic of a faith glowing in the midst of worldly turmoil', but admitted that 'non-Catholics are left to fit in an awful lot of "atmosphere"'. The production carried a deficit of £1,464.

The final European fling of the 1961-62 Season, indeed the final fling of the Callum Mill regime was adventurous indeed: the first staging in Britain of the complete version of Max Frisch's Biedermann und die Brandstifter (1953, revised 1958), under the title of The Fire-Raisers. There had been a production in London at the Royal Court in December, 1961, but here the last Act had been omitted in favour of a curtain-raiser, Box and Cox by John Morton. Biedermann, despite an outbreak of fire-raising all over town, admits - or is



forced to admit to his house an ex-Circus strong man and his sinister companion. Their 'host' allows them to sleep in the attic, and helps them cheerfully to set up the fuses after they have crammed the attic with cans of petrol. He resolutely refuses to believe that the worst can be true, and the house is burnt down. Peter Carthew calls the play 'a mixture of grisly humour and bourgeois satire. Seldom have the evils of complacency been more vividly shown ...'. His only complaint against Lindsay Anderson's London production is that he has chosen to portray the 'holocaust ... as a nuclear explosion. This seems to be an unnecessary personal imposition on a perfectly straightforward piece of writing'.<sup>5</sup> The action takes place 'somewhere in Europe', and is obviously intended to help to explain how a people like the Germans could allow Nazi rule to grow and flourish.

It can be said that Glasgow did not, on the whole, appreciate that something rather special was happening. In a letter to the Glasgow Herald of May 30, 1962, Mrs. Elise Walker expressed her exasperation, and it is as well to point out that Mrs. Walker is an astute and experienced theatregoer. Referring to the Citizens' Theatre Company, she voiced her 'appreciation of the wonderful variety of plays they have staged, and the tremendous work this fine company have done, often before pitifully small audiences ...' but, she continued, 'like many busy people, I have had no means of learning to understand Ionesco or Max Frisch ...'. The Fire-Raisers struck her as a 'completely confusing, tiring and unfunny allegory ...'. There were no helpful Programme notes, and it was suggested that some indication might be given of the author's intention before Curtain Up. While any 'pre-Curtain' introduction would almost certainly not be a welcome prospect to any Theatre Director, it may well be that some preparation could have been provided more adequately in the Programme, although some Directors object even to this, claiming that the production should be able to stand on its own. However, in recent years, more has been done in the way of providing some advance instruction to audiences faced by something unfamiliar. The seminars provided in connection with the Citizens' revival of Goethe's Faust (1985), for example, were invaluable to those able to attend, and care was

later taken that a newspaper article should appear to throw some light on the background of The Spanish Bawd by de Rojas (1986).

Little seems to have been done, however, to make Frisch more accessible to Glasgow audiences, perhaps because Theatre, even in 1962, was taken less seriously than it is today: it was not, for instance, a wholly respectable academic subject. More interest was centred on the fact that the then famous music hall comedian, Jack Radcliffe, was making his 'legitimate' debut, certainly his first appearance - and his only one - in anything as ambitious as The Fire-Raisers. He was to be partnered, too, by the leading lady of his most famous 'sketches', Helen Norman, all this being further testimony to the lively and imaginative policy pursued in the course of the chapter in Citizens' history which was now - too soon - coming to an end. Christopher Small, in the Herald certainly appreciated what was happening in the Gorbals: in his review of 29/5/62, he called it a 'ferociously jocular little morality .... As a regular little flick-knife of a play, it is wielded by the Citizens' with vigour and skill ...'. He felt that Jack Radcliffe rose 'to his new situation with a confidence visibly growing through the evening ...', making Biedermann 'a genuinely moving figure and much more than an allegorical dummy ...'. Small admired the 'Fireman chorus' sitting near the footlights (the latter word almost a 'period' term now!) 'pointing the moral and prophesying the doom that everyone but Biedermann can see ...'. He thought the whole thing to be 'managed exceedingly well' and that in the Epilogue not previously seen in Britain 'the connection between Biedermann and Everyman, the collective nature of a guilt that is not confined by national frontiers ...' was 'made sufficiently clear', finally summing up by saying 'This is not, in a word, a comfortable play; it is not - except for those with a very savage sense of humour - really a funny one. But it is one to see'.

Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) admitted that he:

never welcomed the straight parable play. (Plays might be) as allusive and symbolical as you like, but a parable is too like a lesson for us .... The play last night came to life only towards the end when the final act, set between Heaven and Hell,



introduced some fantasy of a more colourful and less moralising nature to counter the rigours of the previous acts in which solemn joke after solemn joke had thudded heavily to the ground ... Mr. Radcliffe, in an alien element, failed for most of the play to fill out the central character, (but Miss Helen Norman had) considerable sharpness of attack ... the Chorus (of firemen) ... registered neither as a comic nor a portentous body and were thus only dull.

David Gibson (Evening Times) 'couldn't find it either truly tragic or comic ... surely the audience deserves some consideration .... It all underlines Jack Radcliffe's courage ... a convincing study of the leading role'. The late Mrs. Clark once more wrote to the Herald (31/5/62) and referred to the 'last three productions', going on to say that 'each of the three plays illuminates the other two'. The Fire-Raisers was:

the most interesting farcically tragic play that we may have the opportunity to see for a long time .... Even the Third Programme (Radio Three) did not perform the last essential act. It is a compliment to us as adults that the Citizens' now do, and to Jack Radcliffe's humility that his performance in this act is as moving as it is.

A speech by Michael Goldberg at the Theatre Society's A.G.M. was quoted in the Scotsman of 15/6/62: 'From the point of view of good drama, Glasgow is in a theatrical deep freeze ... we aim to stimulate and to entertain ... we are a breakwater against cultural erosion'.

Citizens' patrons were no doubt somewhat puzzled about the whole thing. For the past two years at this time they had been treated to light and elegant revue, and now they had an opportunity, for the first time, to see a favourite revue comedian at their theatre. Anyone coming on the strength of the names of Radcliffe and Norman alone must have been in for a rude awakening when they found themselves plunged into the bracing but deep waters of Frisch's philosophy. At any rate, the deficit was £988, a smaller one than those incurred by some of its predecessors that Season.



The years 1960 - 62 were by no means lacking in new work, and one of the most striking examples was Breakdown, with which Stewart Conn made his first strong impact in the world of Theatre. It seems now that Breakdown was under-rated at the time, as was the courage of the Citizens' Board and Management in putting it on. Certainly there were faults, and the Orpheus - Eurydice motif seemed a trifle well-worn, coming, for instance, in the wake of Anouilh's variation. Nevertheless, this is a play scenes of which remain obstinately in the mind after a long period of years, whereas more generally lauded pieces like Chips with Everything fade in spite of their virtues.

In common with so many Scottish plays then and afterwards, little has been heard of Breakdown since its first production, and, in the cut and thrust of what was then fortnightly repertory, probably not enough revision could be done in the course of rehearsal, although extensive cuts were made in what was a fairly lengthy text. There was, however, much inventiveness, much that encapsulated the era of the late Fifties and early Sixties, symbolised by the coffee bar, 'El Predicamento', where the first and last Acts take place. (Act Two is set in an Underground Station, the parallel here being an obvious one.) Orph is a member of a typical 'Pop Group' of the period, his lost love a waitress whose return, following an injury, he awaits feverishly. There are chess players, a pack of sensation-hungry girls, a dangerously spiteful gang, a 'sandwich-board man' complete with lurid revivalist poster and pitifully lacking in control of his bodily functions. In the 'Underground' there is a silent sweeper eternally fulfilling her monotonous task, a Porter in charge, who lights sulphurous cigarettes with 'lucifers'. The 'Eurydice' figure only briefly (though tellingly) appears: we are told (not very convincingly) that 'someone made a pass at her behind the coffee machine, and she went over ... boiling milk ... all over her head and shoulders ...'. In Act Two, although Orph goes to the 'Underground' in the hope of meeting her, he achieves nothing but the mortal wounds inflicted upon him by the Gang, and among the group of workers coming, presumably, from some unseen train, there is a 'girl in dark red costume whose face we do not see'; finally back in 'El Predicamento', as Orph dies, stretching out his hand to

her, the 'new waitress', with 'death-mask make-up', pays no attention to him, but switches on the tape to allow us to hear not only the music, but the heartless girl's laughter with which the play began. Both Gang and Girls differ in their attitudes to the doomed Orph, there is to be a 'masked jive', and the vital Juke-box 'breaks down'. The elaborately wrought dialogue occasionally aims at comedy: 'he's got a face like a cul-de-sac; it can only come to one end ...', 'the age of deterrents and detergents', but more often it has overtones of Christopher Fry: 'They will lounge or strut according to their velvet-collared mood' or 'The darkness that swirls through my skull, and howls round the rag and bone shop of the heart ...', a hint of Eliot, 'The spider on the pillow case, the scratch behind the wainscot', even a touch of Dylan Thomas, 'He unbolts his eyes and quits his bedrock lair year after year ...'. This is not to say that Conn's dialogue has no style of its own: among his other achievements, he is an accomplished poet, and the cumulative effect is less derivative than chopped excerpts will suggest.

In later years, he would have tightened, lightened, provided more focus, and a gathering together, a shredding of the rich material, is what this early example of his work requires. Orph condemns 'the artist who has painted nothing' and seeks some kind of redemption: 'perhaps only by dying can I find out about living ...', but perhaps the play's greatest deficiency lies in the fact that at its centre, Orph is in no way a fully developed character, and not all the growing skills of Frank Wylie at the Citizens' could make him into one.

Nethertheless, the whole piece is much more worth while than it would seem to be from first acquaintance: Christopher Small in his Herald review of the first night (7/3/61) certainly made few allowances:

We suffer, (he says) from a superfluity of symbols .... Even the juke-box is symbolic - indeed, if I don't mistake Mr. Conn, it carries the heaviest load of the lot - and supplies him ... with his title .... Under all this, (he goes on) the play understandably staggers and even for moderately long stretches seems to lie down altogether .... (He admits,



however, that) there is undoubtedly life there, and from time to time it fights its way through ... this is most successfully so in the central subway scene ....

Most surprisingly, he claims that the play bears:

evidence of having been conceived in terms of sound radio; it is hardly adapted for the stage at all .... The decorations do much to catch the eye, but for a great deal of the time there is no reason to see anything; it is a play of voices only.

If so, why is it that so many visual images, closely connected with the texture of the play itself, persist in haunting the mind? It is easy, tempting even, to expose the faults in work which is less than completely mature, especially work that perhaps takes itself much more seriously than it ought to, but it has often been the habit of the body of Scottish dramatic criticism to deal less than mercifully with 'first plays'. Fortunately, unlike some less courageous spirits, Stewart Conn went on to establish a substantial corpus of writing for the Theatre. The budding playwright is surely more vulnerable than even the fledgeling novelist, poet or painter, and the position is aptly stated in the letter which Mrs. Elizabeth T. Clark wrote to the Herald (13/3/61): 'To go to see Breakdown is the best way to deal with our contemporary dramatic predicament. The penalty for ignoring our own talent is that it dies or emigrates'.

Most of the critics, then, were unhelpful: Robert Hewitt (Citizen 7/3/61), thought that 'a good many' in the audience were 'puzzled over what Breakdown is about. The "script", I imagine, reads better than it plays'. Margaret Kelly (Evening Times) had obviously had a fairly miserable evening: 'he (Conn) goes off the lines somewhat. His minor characters drown the principals by dint of long-windedness ... The sex talk and the murder beat-up isn't for young or tender ears'. Robins Millar (Express) presumed that it was the 'evident intent by the author to uplift this squalor by throwing bubbles of rather beatnik poetry in the air ...'. This was 'unsuccessful', "The everlasting dormitory of my wishes", for example. 'Callum Mill has directed with all too tedious slowness'.



The Scotsman, initially, voiced the rather convoluted expression that:

The play, in fact, seems to be almost split in two, voicing the ... yearnings of the young dreamer, and showing, at the same time, the utter disregard for truth, beauty, and even thought which is said to characterise many of today's younger citizens ... a little less seriousness of approach might spell a notable future for the author.

However, at the beginning of the second week of the run, Ronald Mavor took a look at the play (14/3/61), and his review is reminiscent of the way Harold Hobson used to turn general critical opinion on its head, often with the most salutary results. It provided, Mavor said:

an extraordinarily interesting and satisfying evening's entertainment ... Mr. Conn ... seems to have sprung fully armed from the right side of Jove.

He was, admittedly, reminded of the 'gnomic confusions of Cocteau' and the 'thorny wilderness of Thornton Wilder', but:

poets, and Mr. Conn is a poet, tend to have ideas about all sorts of things ... one is never sure how much tribute to pay the director, what blood, sweat and tears Mr. Callum Mill spent ... one does not know, but it is difficult to conceive that the play could be much better done.

There were:

three towering performances by Messrs. Frank Wylie and Charles Baptiste and Miss Anne Kristen .... (Mr. Frank Spedding's music was) mellifluous and suitable.

In a letter of November 23, 1987, Stewart Conn says, presumably with a tongue in cheek modesty:

I suspect Breakdown was about three bad plays rolled into one. (Earlier on, he had said) I've very few memories of Breakdown beyond

images of it in performance, and the vivid visualness of the (underground station) entrance to Hell, with its red glow and inky shadows; and of the café. I don't think I was really in any way 'part' of rehearsals - probably because I was simply mesmerised by the kaleidoscopic realisation of my text, and quite happy to observe and enjoy the exhilaration of it all. What I do remember is the extent to which I was moved by Anne Kristen's performance - and made irate by some rather scathing reviews. And how much Ronald Mavor's encouragement meant to me, and helped me to believe in myself as a would-be playwright.

In some ways even more ambitious was the new play which opened Mill's second season, Inca by Joseph O'Connor. Obviously there were strong hopes that this one would have a life beyond the Citizens': the author himself played the title role, John Phillips was Pizarro, Joss Ackland the bluff Don 'Bombardo' who, to his own surprise, as much as anyone else's, finds himself ranged in support of the betrayed and captive Inca. As things turned out, the London run failed to materialise, and O'Connor was beaten to the post by Peter Shaffer with The Royal Hunt of the Sun (Chichester, 1964). Whether the latter is so much better a piece of writing than Inca is matter for debate, but it had all the resources of the National Theatre behind it, and John Dexter's production, coupled with the extraordinary Atahualpa of Robert Stephens, carried all before it. It must also be admitted that Shaffer strengthened and focused his play by making the relationship between Pizarro and Atahualpa central, with everything else subordinated to it, whereas O'Connor's Inca is supported not only by - eventually - 'Bombardo' (Garcia), but also by the younger de Soto (handsomely played, at the Citizens', by Donald Douglas). Pizarro figures rather less crucially, less sensitively. There is also the difficulty of accepting the language convention, especially when 'Pillo', the Indian interpreter figures so prominently: the early dialogue between Atahualpa and the Spanish priest Valverde emphasises this problem, but it occurs in Royal Hunt also. Both plays have a Page in attendance, who is going to write an account of the campaign, although only Shaffer uses him as Narrator. The other main difference in structure is O'Connor's introduction of a trial scene in



which his character, Garcia, assumes, without avail, the Inca's defence, while, of course, Pizarro's searing final moments with Atahualpa's body occur only in, and add distinction to, Royal Hunt.

In 1961 at the Citizens', however, Inca was there to be judged on its own merits, and there were no comparisons, invidious or otherwise, to be made. Christopher Small, in the Glasgow Herald (6/9/61) considered it 'indeed a most stirring piece', directed by Callum Mill in a manner 'generally both judicious and imaginative', with Sally Hulke's sets bringing a 'striking degree of Inca splendour and Andean remoteness onto the Citizens' stage'. It was 'a generous play, even to a fault', which 'lays on the language thick and gaudy .... But the story is strong enough, in all conscience, to bear a full load ...'. It was felt that, for some reason, the play sagged a little with the entry of the Inca himself, but that eventually 'the drama reasserts itself and Mr. O'Connor's outrage at the enormities of history, past and present, breaks through, with real and telling eloquence'.

Much of the writing is, in fact, impressive, and O'Connor is good at summing up character or appearance in a few words: Garcia, for instance describes Pizarro as 'a man who always looks as though he's on horseback, even when he isn't', and he also says that Father Valverde's 'wit's like a flash of darkness'. And when Pizarro's much less scrupulous colleague, Almagro, sees Atahualpa for the first time, he at once thinks of him as a 'cross between an eagle and a peacock'. There is dignity, also, in passages like that in which de Soto attempts to communicate his own beliefs to the Inca, using stained glass windows as metaphor: 'outside you can see nothing but a jumble of grey pebbles. But inside the light pours through, and it's all glory. It's the same with the Faith ...'.

Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) treated the play with respect:

Mr. O'Connor ... has been content on the whole to dramatise the events and leave all but the most superficially dramatic soul-searchings alone ... (he) has appreciated that the theatre is not really a place for the intellectual and that a good, racy story goes down a good deal



better than an excessive flow of soul. (It was) a narrative play filled out by some goodish characterisation and his story is a good story .... The Citizens' company perform it with some distinction. Mr. Callum Mill has been well served by his designer, Miss Sally Hulke, and in her heavy, glooming setting, he deploys his well-accoutred Spanish soldiery and khaki-coloured natives with a fine sense of situation and mood.

In contrast, however, Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) was not 'impressed by Sally Hulke's sets' and considered that the 'standard of acting never rises outstandingly high'. Robins Millar (Express) described how 'with a foyer gleaming now like a fashionable white drawing room, the Citizens' theatre opened its doors again', but how the play 'quickly soaked the newcomer in gloom'. It 'moves heavily, its sombreness unrelieved'. The most interesting comment came from the Sunday Times critic (10/9/61), presumably in Scotland for the Edinburgh Festival:

Before leaving Scotland, I went over to Glasgow to see the Citizens' Theatre open its new Season with Joseph O'Connor's fine and compassionate study .... I was astonished, (why astonished? London provincial, I suppose) at the smoothness, depth and power of Callum Mill's direction, the sense of remoteness and of richness in Sally Hulke's décor.

Breakdown had incurred a deficit in the region of £1,615 and Inca, a rather more expensive production, had a fairly large one of £1,953. The Board and Management, however, remained firm in their resolve to pursue a policy which was both adventurous and of high quality, however cool the interest of the Glasgow populace might be.

This fact is emphasised by the quality of the Autumn programme which followed Inca. During this period, it should be remembered, Reginald Birks was still General Manager, although he was destined to resign at the end of the year, in order to take up a similar, but more challenging position at the Empire Theatre in Sunderland, a large theatre which was embarking on an important new chapter in its history, instead of closing, as so many others of its size were now doing. It

is perhaps significant that the Empire is still functioning as a live theatre in 1989. The Mills-Birks partnership seems to have worked well, although in those days the Manager was very much the man 'up front', while the 'Producer' kept very much backstage. Birks, at one time an actor in the Wilson Barrett Company in Scotland, carried out a multitude of duties: as well as looking after the business side of things, he took a keen, but not obsessive, interest in the artistic policy of the theatre. He was more than supportive to the Citizens' Theatre Society, looking after their finances, and on one occasion, when these were running low, gave invaluable advice on the organisation of a life-saving Prize Draw. And, although he disliked doing it, he felt it his duty to welcome patrons in the Foyer, and did so charmingly. It is doubtful if the Theatre Board realised what a valuable asset they had in him.

Another new play came after Inca, another expensive one with a large cast. 'New' is not, strictly, a correct adjective to use, although Callum Mill's production was a premiere, and an historic one, too. In the early Fifties, plans had been afoot to make a new film version of the Knox-Burke and Hare story: the basis of this had been provided by Donald Taylor, who had, as he says in an after-note to the published version of the script, been 'searching for some years to find a story that would pose the question of "the ends justifying the means"'. Concurrently with this, I had been much interested in James Bridie's play, The Anatomist ....<sup>6</sup> The greatest claim to fame of this venture, however, lies in the identity of the 'script writer', Dylan Thomas, who provided an Under Milk Wood descriptive treatment of Edinburgh, as frame-work for his dialogue. The film remained unproduced, although now a new version based on Thomas by Ronald Harwood has been screened, without much success, in Britain. However, the present concern is the stage production which the Citizens' Theatre made out of the original script, a kind of illustrated narration, nowhere nearly as good as Bridie's work considered as a play or as a character analysis in some depth, but vivid as a modest spectacle and possessed of a dramatic breadth and power not easily forgotten. The Doctor and the Devils, of course,



as befits its form as a film script, covers a much wider canvas than The Anatomist, which devotes much of its length to the character of Knox, as its title suggests: Burke and Hare and their women figure very prominently. - (the notorious pair are allowed by Bridie to appear comparatively briefly, albeit with tremendously telling effect) - and the Doctor's sociably unacceptable wife, only passingly referred to by Bridie, assumes the status of quite a heroine. The low life of Edinburgh plays a large part in the action, although with much less concentrated impact than in the superb Three Tuns Tavern scene in The Anatomist - (one of the best things of its kind outside Shakespeare); Mary Paterson, for instance, hardly registers at all, and there is nothing comparable in power with Bridie's version of the young Doctor's discovery of her body, delivered as a medical 'specimen'. Towards the end, moreover, the Dylan Thomas script, having created quite a rich social and professional background and foundation, becomes a welter of murder following murder in quick succession, despite some attempt to suggest a counterpoint between the philosophy and scholarship of Dr. Knox and the foul deeds on which they are based.

Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald (20/9/61) considered it a 'strange sort of hybrid of a play', and he found the use of 'scenario - directions ... awkward', and at times 'unnecessary', sometimes giving the effect of a 'running commentary'. He compared it unfavourably with the 'much more compact and truly theatrical piece by James Bridie'. Nevertheless, he was impressed by Sally Hulke's efforts to suggest 'the whole of early nineteenth century Edinburgh, Old Town and New ... a cross-patch of little alleys and closes ...', and the whole thing was 'directed with great skill and imagination by Callum Mill, who caps this considerable achievement by a remarkable performance himself in the chief part'. The Citizens' Company divided among themselves 'some 50 parts', and distinguished names, then or thereafter, included Donald Douglas as the Narrator, Alec Monteath, David McKail, Stuart Henry, Morag Forsyth (as Mary Paterson), Geraldine Newman, and Tom Conti (as Daft Jamie), while the Herald felt that the performances of Clark Tait as Burke and Roy Hanlon as Hare were terrifying enough to make one 'glance over one's



shoulder going home' ... they brought the play to 'something approaching tragedy ...'.

Mavor (Scotsman) first of all disposed of the obvious disadvantages of the play's genesis and then went on to appreciate its virtues:

The screenplay is a patchwork quilt ... but on the stage a patchwork quilt must be made of very brightly-coloured material if it is to be an adequate substitute for the warmth of character and the soundly constructed situations of a good play. This said, there is nothing left but praise ... Mr. Mill splendidly portrays Knox .... To be able to mount such a production, to play it with such smoothness and to cast it so effectively give the lie direct to those who denigrate the Citizens' on a number of counts.

(It is significant that Mavor should find it necessary to emphasise his defence of the Citizens' in this matter, thus confirming that the theatre was undervalued, but also that there was a strong lobby antagonistic to it. This was to come to a head in later years, and to affect the whole sense of critical perspective regarding this 'in between' period.) According to Edward Ashton (Daily Mail) 'As stagecraft it is brilliant, though the scenes seem more episodic in the theatre than they would on the screen'. Hewitt (Citizen) appreciated Mill's 'double chore ... I give him due praise for the satisfying job he makes of both'. It is impossible to resist quoting Robins Millar's typically idiosyncratic view, staunchly felt as always: 'As lurid as the gruesome theme, the effect is theatrically audacious and interesting visually ... But the crudeness of the underworld in the play is all too much in the vein of a horror shocker ...'.

It is perfectly true that the narration should have been more sparingly used, confining itself to the wonderful Thomas word pictures, but the temptation to include as much as possible, especially after the previous season's Under Milk Wood, was understandable. Despite the scale of the production, the deficit, £1,391, was less than that of either Breakdown or Inca. Callum Mill

again directed the play in the Assembly Hall at the Edinburgh Festival of 1962, but did not act in it; the spectacular treatment which could have made it work so well in this difficult venue was missing, possibly for financial reasons, and the casting as a whole seemed less impressive than at the Citizens'. The result was serviceable rather than exciting.

Another new play was to follow in the 1961 Autumn season, although not quite a premiere. The Durable Element by Cliff Hanley had already been performed at Dundee Repertory Theatre, with the then unknown Glenda Jackson and Nicol Williamson in the cast, and it was to the credit of the Citizens' Board and Management that they decided to give it another showing. Too often, in the Eighties, Scottish plays, when they do succeed in being staged at all, are never seen again, and, in the fragmented state of Scottish Theatre in general, there is little chance of their being circulated. This, however, has not always been the case: there was some inter-change between the Citizens' and Edinburgh Gateway, and there was the possibility of a 'second chance' at Dundee or Pitlochry. The Durable Element was well worth reviving, and, with a little tinkering, could well hold a stage today: its ideas remain constant, its dialogue fresh and pertinent. Whether its own rather simplistic kind of 'alienation' would work is less sure.

The play is a 'three-decker' construction, the First Act set in the London of 1898, the Second in 'Macfarlane's Valley', ('another time'), an allegedly Utopian society of survivors after the 'big bang', the Third - where some kind of resolution is achieved - in a School Staff-room, 'today'. The various characters appear in each section in roughly parallel incarnations, with the added presence of an 'outsider', Harry Jones, who keeps trying to intrude into the scheme in the First and Second Acts, but succeeds in fulfilling himself only in the 'present' period. In 1898, a tyrannical Victorian patriarch has his daughter committed to an asylum rather than make a marriage of which he disapproves - (the implication is that his more than normally possessive nature would disapprove of any marriage). Apart from the hapless victim, Katherine, and Benjamin, her Father,



we have the feckless Mother, Marjorie, the pert maid, Hetty, Jonathan Dent, the unhappy wooer, Dr. Jolly, elderly and quite ready to be treacherous, Dr. French, too spineless to resist evil, Bruce and Wallace, brutally ready with the strait-jacket, and Harry, waiting in the wings and wondering what part he is to play, hoping fruitlessly that he can be introduced in such a way that he will be able to avert the tragedy. He is also quite prepared to chat to the others out of character, discussing the plot with Marjorie while putting on his make-up while she makes remarks like 'Oh dear, I hope it isn't one of those plays with twins'. Just how far this sort of thing helps an already fairly complicated play along is a matter for some argument. In the 'happy valley' of Act Two, the official ruler is the 'Chosen One', currently Hugh French, easily influenced again, very much under the shadow of the Writer (Benjamin, who lusts after Hugh's attractive sister, Katherine), and the fairly unscrupulous Chairman, Jolly. Marjorie is Hugh's scatter-brained Mother, ('I must go and scramble some mangoes'), and Dexter is once more a doomed figure, this time the actual victim of the strong-armed Bruce and Wallace. Once more Harry waits outside, unable to help, even though he is allowed to do a bit of 'role swapping' with Dexter. In the more satirical context of Act Two, the tricks work better than in the Victorian segment, which is quite a gripping little melodrama in its own right. The state of things in the Valley gives rise to some amusing passages, some of them involving Hetty, once more lively and unconventional, shuttling between a variety of male partners. The origins of this 'ideal' society has its grimly humorous side, too: in 1972, when 'the bomb fell', several hundred girls, pupils from a 'finishing school' were sailing from Southampton to Rio, and they and the crew were the only world survivors, steered by the navigational skill of Angus Macfarlane (from Paisley) - or was it just the chance result of a gigantic tidal wave? - into the valley. However that may be, Macfarlane is the God-figure by whom they swear. The rituals are the result of typical upper-class schoolgirl fantasies, the 'scriptures' the books which accompanied them, 'Biggles Takes a Trick' and the Manchester Telephone Directory, 1967 - ('I can't follow the story at all'). Because it has become traditional for the females to outnumber the males, there is a periodical ceremonial



'driving out' of young men to what were once the Black Lands, and the wretched Dexter is one of those, trying to get home, and succeeding only in being cast from a high rock in order to preserve the conventions. This is probably the best of the three episodes: only the final curtain leaves something to be desired.

The third, 'present day episode' is not so much of a climax as it might have been, but its school staff room ambience provides an agreeably diverting entertainment to round things off. Benjamin and Jolly are older teachers who have been passed over in the climb to promotion, something about which the former is predictably bitter. (It is also possible that he lurks outside the caravan where Hetty and her brother (Hugh French) are living on a temporary basis.) Hetty is, as always, 'unconventional', and may be carrying on a full-scale affair with Dexter, the young teacher who has stepped over Jolly to become head of his department. Marjorie (Mrs. Wiggs) is the kind of member of staff that her name, and her previous appearances, would lead us to expect, while Katherine is the youthful Headmaster's attractive secretary. The main difference here lies in the fact that Harry Jones is inside the play, as the Headmaster, and is able - by lying when necessary - to prevent Dexter becoming a sacrificial victim again when Benjamin uncovers a difficult period in his life when he had been in prison and also accuses him of nocturnal visits to the caravan. Bruce and Wallace, now disagreeable 'macho' colleagues, are quite prepared to side with the accusers, but Harry not only saves Dexter, but also, less predictably, clears Benjamin when things begin to go against him. Whatever the cost, Harry 'will not throw other people to the lions'. Here the only concession to 'chatting with the audience' comes at the end when Harry and Katherine prefer to be left on their own.

A little tightening up of the play's structure would have been welcome: there are, indeed, a multiplicity of 'durable elements', but perhaps the constant factor is, as Christopher Small suggests, the fact that 'the types will be true to themselves', while Harry's dictum seems to be that 'it doesn't matter what people do .... The only thing that matters is what you do to them'. Small, in the

Herald of 25/10/61, obviously thought the piece worth staging in the Gorbals, 'done with much spirit and variation', even though he suggests that the unkind might claim than Hanley had written the Acts separately and then 'tried to fit them together'.

There were exceptions, but most people liked The Durable Element. Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) approved of the:

ingenious and serious notion (behind the play, admiring its) bubbly invention, considerable dexterity (and) strong sense of character and a good nose for a good story.

Callum Mill succeeded 'triumphantly' with the first two Acts, but Mavor had reservations about the third, and about Samuel Donaldson who played the part of Harry Jones:

in the third act ... he must both animate the Common Room and grasp the destinies of all the characters ... the play demands of him that he become a hero, at least of a sort, in this last act .... At Dundee the actor did this by sheer vivacity, but Mr. Donaldson does not do it at all.

(Mavor here regretted the fact that Clark Tait was 'leaving the company, alas not to go on acting. So do these days of the locust lay bare our growing trees and thus is the rising sap cut off at the root'.) This remark is yet another reflection of the lack of major inducements to keep the body of Scots acting together, and in Scotland, but sadder still is the knowledge that, after a useful career on the production side of Scottish Television, Tait was to die well before his time. Hewitt (Citizen) was bewildered by The Durable Element. Did it 'have a message - a protest against Hate, Fear Superstition, Injustice? Or is there ... just Mr. Hanley's facile pen whipping three snatches of theatre-stuff into what Callum Mill calls "an entertaining experiment"?'. Ellen Grehan (Daily Record) recorded that the old lady sitting next to her 'was quite firm. "I'm not really sure what it was all about", she confided, "but I did enjoy it"'. Robins Millar (Express) expressed 'puzzlement about the author's intention'. This would have been 'avoided if the programme



had been presented as a mixed bill'. The playwright, questioned in the summer of 1988, smiled and said that what now struck him about his play was its innocence.

In all, it seems less than fair that The Durable Element is condemned to obscurity, and that Cliff Hanley has not contributed more to the 'straight' theatre. Once again, one is reminded of the fact that there is no Scottish theatre company which can build up a repertoire which will contain the acceptable - if less spectacular - work of the recent past.

The remaining new play of the two seasons was in no way a Citizens' discovery, as it was part of an innovation permitting Arnold Wesker's latest play, Chips with Everything, to be seen both at Sheffield and Glasgow almost simultaneously with its London opening at the Royal Court. (The production at the latter theatre had five weeks' rehearsal, the 'regional' presentations a fortnight or less.) The opening at the Court was on April 27, 1962, at the Citizens' on the 30th. This arrangement aroused a great deal of excitement at the time, and Glasgow audiences - if not their Herald critic - felt themselves quite favoured by it - considerably more, no doubt, than they would in 1989. It does, however, provide an illuminating comparison between the original reactions in the three centres and how massive critical claims can fade in the space of almost twenty-five years or so. It is necessary to recount the fact - (the play has not become a part of the regular repertoire of the British Theatre) - that the action covers the period of initial training of a group of RAF conscripts, the intended central figure being the 'upper class' Pip, fighting his own battle against his background, and striving to rouse his 'working-class mates' from their acceptance of second-class status and their all too common 'chips with everything' outlook. The cast is a large and awkward one: seventeen males and two females, which is one reason for the infrequency of subsequent productions, although it does not, in itself, explain the lack of interest shown by the subsidised 'giants'. Eric Chapman, in his review of the Geoffrey Ost version at Sheffield, throws caution to the winds, and claims that it is 'possibly the



greatest post-war play in English, certainly ranking with Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, and A Man For All Seasons', while Peter Roberts, who saw the Royal Court production - (all three are reviewed in the same issue)<sup>7</sup> - considers that 'The drill sergeant in Chips is the most fully realised and true character in post-war drama' ... a sweeping statement indeed. He finds Wesker 'immensely expressive' in this play, although, he admits, 'least of all in words', and he rightly admires 'the dramatic shorthand that Wesker now feels he can adopt in a scene like the public school airman's symbolic assumption of an officer's uniform'. It was certainly right, considering the extravagant importance obviously attached to this play, for the Citizens' Theatre to mount a production of it, despite the casting and staging problems inherent. Callum Mill, writing in the same Chips-filled edition of Plays and Players,<sup>7</sup> noted that the company had to be augmented by seven male guest artists - (at this time the Theatre was able to keep a semi-permanent company together, with a beneficial effect upon artistic standards) - also that the many changes of scene:

had to be achieved in our theatre without a counterweight system on a steeply raked floor. The final result arrived at by our designer, Sally Hulke, was an entirely practical and evocative basic skeleton .... The conscripts themselves, as in real life, acted as scene-shifters ... the play was continuous (and) the cost of this ingenious setting, though not light, proved within our limited means.

Side by side with Mill's article, Peter Hamilton reviewed the production, which he found:

perfectly competent ... Sally Hulke's sets were very efficient and the various parts of the training station materialised, dematerialised and transformed themselves with gratifying swiftness .... (He thought that) Pip proved no more workable a role here than in London or Sheffield, (but that Jon Croft as Smiler and Colin Miller as Chas gave) glowingly successful performances .... (According to Hamilton, the play itself was) the best and the worst of Wesker's plays. The dramatist delineates and narrates with a greater intensity of perception and

compassion, and the political pamphleteer undermines the dramatist's work more extensively and more destructively in this than in his other works.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 1/5/62) made it quite clear that he was not overwhelmed by the opportunity of seeing the latest Wesker at so early a date. 'It soon appears that he is writing the same play, more or less, that he has written all along, about class warfare and the sad stupidity of the working classes who do not wage it with enough zeal' ... He made the perfectly justified charge that on the one hand we have the 'wicked tyrants in officers' uniform and whiskers' and on the other the A/C 2s, noted for their 'kindliness and charity ...'. There was no reason why the materials provided should not have 'the makings of a good play', but there were too many 'ponderous sarcasms', and 'extension lectures', too much 'gross caricature'. The piece was, however, 'beautifully staged', with its evocation of 'a wonderfully bleak midwinter station in all its varied discomfort', while it was 'admirably directed and almost uniformly well acted'. He admired the raid on the camp coke-store, which was 'mercifully without words at all' and was touched by the breaking of 'Smiler', whose unfortunate facial structure so strongly suggests insubordination, but was irritated by the 'half-baked Marxism' and bluntly summed the play up as mostly 'twaddle'.

It might well be said that it is not nearly as bad as Christopher Small considered it, nor nearly as good as others originally thought it. The play's chief weakness lies in its over-idealising of the 'other ranks' as opposed to the caricatured officers, a contrast summed up in the Christmas Eve party, where the Wing Commander attempts to degrade the men by a 'How about Elvis?' attitude ... 'Make merry - it's a festive occasion and I want to see you laughing. I want my men laughing'. Instead of which the Other Ranks rather improbably show themselves masters of folk culture, launching without difficulty into 'The Black Crow', 'a menacing song from the time of the Peasants' Revolt', while one of them recites 'A Lyke-Wake Dirge', the whole of it, attributing the poem to Robert Burns. The scenes between Pip and the admiring Chas are certainly effective, however, and the whole thing is characterised by fresh inventiveness; no



valid adverse criticism can detract from the courage of the Citizens' in staging something so demanding in the course of a long and busy season.

'But the officers!' Robins Millar (Express) complained. 'Wesker draws them as openly homosexual or viciously sadistic ... this harping on overdrawn villainy becomes a bore'. J. Blaikie (Evening Times) also found it 'all rather boring, I'm afraid, and not the R.A.F. I knew'. The Daily Record recognised 'satire with a real "bite"', and Edward Ashton (Scottish Daily Mail) admitted that, 'though much of the play is silly and pretentious, Wesker now and again does catch the authentic service character and speech .... Callum Mill's production moves the play smoothly through its 21 episodic scenes'.

The Press of the time suggested that, while London and Sheffield approved the play, in Glasgow (Scotsman 7/5/62) it was 'welcomed by neither the Press nor the public'. This was true only of the early stages of the run, and soon attitudes began to change. Some readers began hitting back at the critics of their respective papers: the truly devoted enthusiast, Mrs. Elizabeth Clark, writing in the Herald of 7/5/62 considered Christopher Small 'the best theatre critic in Scotland ... but it is an error to credit a critic with unlimited objectivity'. In the Scotsman of 11/5/62 Mr. George R. Stewart of Selkirk claimed it to be 'an experience I would not have missed ... your reviewer showed a culpable partiality'. Then there was a report of 'one of the largest houses that the theatre has enjoyed for a long time', coming to 'make their own judgement'... So pleased was Michael Goldberg, Chairman of the Citizens', with the culminating interest in Wesker's play that, when the curtain came down, he ordered champagne for the company'.

(As a footnote, it may be suggested that, when Chips with Everything was revived by Pitlochry Festival Theatre in 1987, the strengths remained strong, the weaknesses weak.)

Callum Mill did not neglect the 'accepted' classics, although in



this field he probably never surpassed the success of the early production of Hamlet, certainly not, at any rate, from a financial point of view. This was a Hamlet without much in the way of frills or tricks; it was also the first time that the Citizens' Theatre had attempted this, one of the most challenging plays in the Shakespearean canon, and the circumstances surrounding the venture were peculiarly advantageous: Mill had the scholarship and theatrical skills to make the tragedy relevant to his time, and he found the perfect actor to put his ideas into practice. John Cairney, who had been the first graduate to the Citizens' from what is now the RSAMD School of Drama, had gained much of his early experience in the Gorbals, thanks to the then existing scheme under which the Citizens' offered year-long contracts to the two students of its choice, sometimes the leading Medallists. In the years since then, Cairney had been gaining valuable experience much further afield, and he seemed admirably suited to bring to the role both sufficient emotional and technical equipment and what could be a genuine rapport with the young audiences that it was hoped to attract. Initially, Cairney says, star and director exchanged suggested cuts: these were arrived at independently, and proved to be strikingly similar in execution. The strong company which Mill was already building up was well able to deal with the other key roles: Morag Forsyth, for instance, was an obvious choice for Ophelia, while Geraldine Newman was Gertrude, Manager Reginald Birks Claudius, Martin Heller Polonius. Sally Hulke's set was simple and functional, and everything was geared so that the heart of the play could - so far as such a task was possible - be revealed even to those members of the audience seeing it for the first time. Reaction from the young audiences who practically besieged the theatre during the run is summed up by a letter to the Glasgow Herald from two senior pupils from the old High School of Glasgow in Elm Bank Street (29/10/60) which noted the 'perfect reception given by the young people to the splendid performance'. Colin Milne, Christopher Small's predecessor, also wrote that, when he was in the audience, the 'performance was followed with all the appearance of real appreciation ...'. He understood that 'this pleasant and heartening state of affairs had persisted' throughout the run. Some pupils were known to have seen the production several

times, and, while it is true that John Cairney came to attract a personal, almost Beatle-like following, his personal success could not have reached the same satisfying proportion without a production which provided a skilfully constructed framework and springboard for it.

Christopher Small thought it 'the best Shakespeare they have done for years ...', a 'straightforward, vigorous production ... very well done indeed ...'. He was less than happy about the 'tannoy system' used in the Ghost scenes, and the production direction which allowed 'Ophelia to attempt to snatch a dagger'. He noted that, in the cause of simplicity, 'Fortinbras and all his train had to go', and that the play ended with 'the rest is silence', but added that this was 'not inappropriate' in 'an evening that even more than is customary belongs to the Prince of Denmark'. Cairney's performance was described as 'fine, eloquent, noble', and, on a more mundane note, it should be recorded that, despite the expense inherent in almost any Shakespearean production, there was a financial surplus of £392.

Despite some reservations, 'A.W.' (Scotsman 4/10/60) wrote:

And yet ... let me commend this production, as one which will illumine many of the darker folds of the play's fabric.

Regarding John Cairney:

the subtle orchestrations of the character frequently eluded him, (but) he grows in stature; and this performance far surpasses anything I have seen him do on television .... The setting of Sally Hulke was an effective, if occasionally precarious, all-purpose montage ....

The rest was a chorus of praise; Evening Times: 'The Citizens' emerges with their banners flying really high'. Robins Millar (Express): 'Splendid John Cairney! He electrified the Citizens' as Hamlet'. Scottish Daily Mail: 'If you think that a Glasgow repertory company production of Hamlet can't match up to a Stratford

or Old Vic past pattern ... go and see the Citizens' Theatre performance'. Evening Citizen: 'If the size of an audience be anything by which to estimate the merit of a dramatic production ... (this one) is nightly a success before the play even begins'.

The active forces at work within the theatre at that time found expression of a different kind in a series of exhibitions within its walls of the work of a group of young Glasgow artists, the first on view being Jack Knox, then at the outset of his career. At the opening 'viewing', Councillor John D. Kelly observed that those responsible for running the Citizens' Theatre indicated, with this innovation, that they 'are anxious, as they have been from their inception, to understand the other arts and not to confine their interests to drama'.

Callum Mill's Shakespearean choice in his second season was Romeo and Juliet, doubtless chosen to appeal to the youthful audiences who had packed the theatre for Hamlet. This time, there was no John Cairney, although no doubt it had been hoped that there might be: Donald Douglas, however, although not quite boyish enough for Romeo, played it handsomely and with genuine feeling, and he teamed well with Morag Forsyth, a charmingly vulnerable Juliet. The production looked good, and there were some imaginative touches: it became quite clear that Nan Kerr's young and beautiful - (why not?) - Lady Capulet had her own personal reasons for wanting the County Paris to become a member of the family. Geraldine Newman, as was now expected, was impressive as the Nurse. Small (Herald 11/10/61) found her performance 'visibly after Edith Evans' and 'not infrequently level with her'. It was 'generally very well acted', and the Hulke set was complimented for combining utility and beauty, but the critic was obviously not entirely happy about the first performance. The earlier passages seemed to him to be treated with a 'deprecatory, off-hand humour', and the players 'lacked self-confidence to commit themselves to the business whole-heartedly'. Moreover, 'scarcely anyone, except Ronald Davis (as Benvolio) speaks Shakespeare's verse as verse', but the whole thing was 'good enough to make some of the self-conscious tricks at the beginning both unnecessary and tiresome,



and, later on, to over-ride them altogether'.

The 'self-conscious tricks' would probably be accepted as received practice in the nineteen-eighties, and it was no small achievement that Callum Mill should be able to offer a production of this calibre after only three weeks' rehearsal. Three weeks was, of course, a luxury then, and could only be made possible by slipping in, just before Romeo, a single week of an American play new to Glasgow, William Inge's Come Back Little Sheba, with different leading players and a different director, in this case the all-purpose General Manager, Reginald Birks.

The remaining reviews were generally at least respectful. Mavor (Scotsman) thought it:

most elegantly set and dressed. It is a little, but not too fussily, directed, and the two main actors are both personable and skilful ... But the important lines are too often either barely audible or barely comprehensible ... What remains is a performance of one of the best of all plays by a company which is doing splendid work.

Millar (Express) criticised the two leads for 'indistinct speech', a fault which was 'too common in the cast. Geraldine Newman was an exception, giving the scurrilous Nurse a "Zummerset" accent for her own reasons. A good character study all the same'. 'E.G.' (Daily Record) was delighted that the production 'doesn't disappoint us cockeyed romantics one whit ... what first rate actors these two (Douglas and Forsyth) are'. Clark Tait's Mercutio was 'devastating' in its 'swagger, dash and a wicked wit'.

Romeo and Juliet was not quite the starry attraction for young people that Hamlet had been the previous year, but then, it may be asked, is Romeo and Juliet really a young audience's play? In principle, of course, it should be, but perhaps the very youth of its leading characters forces the younger theatre-goers to make comparisons with themselves and to be puzzled by the different standards which obtain: the influence of West Side Story was not yet common enough

currency. Still, this production had a quality of its own, product of the deep feeling and committed thoughtfulness which Mill brought to the greater part of his work at the Citizens', which stays in the mind when later memories have faded.

Homage was paid to the past by four other 'classics' during these two seasons. One - if classic it is - was Robert Kemp's adaptation of Allan Ramsay's eighteenth century pastoral, The Gentle Shepherd, although Mill did not direct it himself: it was Colin Chandler, then director of the RSAMD School of Drama, who was in charge of production, assisted by Iain Cuthbertson, now General Manager in succession to Reginald Birks. This adaptation had been a great success as a late night entertainment at the Edinburgh Festival of 1949, under the guidance of Tyrone Guthrie, directing in delicately stylised fashion. There is much to enjoy in this simple story of a herdsman and a country girl, both lost sprigs of nobility, as things conveniently turn out; there is also the restored Sir William, able to return to his native heath 'now Cromwell's gane to Nick', a second more 'comic' pair of lovers, an assortment of country folk, stalwartly faithful 'antique' or roynish clown, and a former nurse waiting dutifully in the offing and thought, of course, to be a witch. Cedric Thorpe Davie placed the songs tidily and appropriately, and Robert Kemp's adaptation has arranged the couplets charmingly:

Second, we say that fowk might hae the grace  
To ken, and bide in their ain proper place  
Instead o' raising righteous indignation  
By poking up their nebs abune their station.

Christopher Small (Herald 4/4/62) felt that the Citizens' production needed a larger complement of singers than were on display there; the result, however, was 'very genuinely bucolic', with a 'generous accompaniment of farmyard noises supplied by the company themselves ...', the method used being a presentation as if 'given by a crew of strolling players to a village full of enthusiastic yokels'. The two singers were David Young as Patie, the eponymous shepherd, and Bill McCue as the restored Sir William Worthy. In principle all this was a good idea, but the result - which obviously strained to avoid

the 'Prettiness' of the Guthrie Edinburgh production - could well be said to have been a shade coarse-grained, and was insufficient in its impact to sustain a full evening.

'P' in the Scotsman praised the production for 'catching the 'simplicity, freshness and gaiety of verse and music which so pleased earlier generations', but Ellen Grehan (Daily Record) was less understanding: 'Fine if you're a fiend for folk-at-frolics. But, if your tastes run slightly more sophisticated, you might find all that country air overwhelming', and Hugo Pitman (Evening Citizen) thought that 'without the pretty-pretty eccentricities of traditional staging adopted by Director Colin Chandler ... it would not be too exciting'. For Robins Millar (Express) 'rustic lore, peasant customs, have fluent language to picture them in rich auld Scots not obscure when clearly spoken', and Edward Ashton (Mail) admitted that 'as a revival it is most interesting ... but it is also, I am afraid, rather beyond the scope of the company'.

There was a deficit of £1,696, larger than most in what had not been, up to then, a financially happy season. This may have been due to the shifting power structure within the theatre: one could hardly expect an all-round man of the theatre like Iain Cuthbertson to be content with purely managerial duties, and the new situation could not, it would seem, be other than awkward. In various ways, the climate was not propitious: the Christmas revue, Bletherskeits, although profitable, earned about £1,000 less than that of the previous year, the Board feeling that it suffered from 'poor and sketchy script-writing', while it was also regretfully claimed by them that a meeting with young playwrights had proved 'fruitless'.

Early in 1961, there had been a stage adaptation of Great Expectations, a visit from the Scottish Arts Council tour of Hedda Gabler, and, reaching further back into the past than any of the others, Aristophanes' Lysistrata, though in a crisp modern translation by the American poet, Dudley Fitts. The Dickens adaptation was of distinguished provenance, being the work of Alec Guinness: it had appeared briefly in London right at the outset



of World War Two (December 1939), part of a short-lived venture by 'The Actors Company' at the unpromising Rudolf Steiner Hall. It had received some praise, not surprisingly: directed by George Devine, future pioneer of a new wave of British drama at the Royal Court, and with a cast which included Marius Goring as 'Pip', Martita Hunt as 'Miss Havisham' and Guinness himself as 'Herbert Pocket', of whom the two latter were to repeat these roles later in the definitive David Lean film version. James Donald played 'a policeman', a role which he did not repeat. Unfortunately, in the late Thirties it had not been fully realised that an 'unlocalised stage' could be very useful, and according to the Glasgow Herald (21/3/61), the handling of 'eighteen scenes' resulted in 'too many extended pauses'. Nevertheless, it was 'astonishing how well Dickens goes on the stage'!! Ronald David was 'Pip', Morag Forsyth 'Estella', and there had to be a 'special word for Geraldine Newman's "Miss Havisham", whose crazy authority dominates every scene she has a share in ...' and she 'makes of her final immolation ... something quite hair-raising'. The Board thought it 'not a complete success'.

According to the Scotsman (21/3/61) 'The task last night was, quite frankly, too great. 'Fourteen' changes of scene were beyond the resources of the Citizens' stage management'. Ronald Davis as Pip, 'with horrifying bumps and alarums behind him, and curtains that refused to rise for at least several minutes after he had spoken his cue line ... exercised commendable restraint'. Robins Millar (Express) granted that 'if accepted with patience for dragging delays, the Dickens characters are excellent ... But without Dickens' magic of writing, it works out as Victorian melodrama'.

Ms. Newman played the title role in Hedda Gabler, but for once this actress did not receive complete praise from the Herald (28/3/61). Hedda should, Small said, be 'a Valkyrie stepped into a middle-class nineteenth century drawing room' and Geraldine Newman 'does momentarily remind us of this' ... her consigning of the manuscript to the flames 'produces the appropriate shudder'. 'At other times' the performance is 'all ice' ... 'a little too self-contained' ... This Hedda has a 'chill and even inertia at the centre'. He also felt

that the production - by Reginald Birke - 'seems to move a little sluggishly'; Iain Cuthbertson, however (not yet back to stay), was an 'absolutely first-rate Judge Brack' ... 'well-nourished, plummy', and Gudrun Ure, returning to the scene of her early successes, was a Thea 'of most touching sincerity'. Whatever short-comings may have been found in this review, this was a production which the various stages of the tour were fortunate to have the opportunity of seeing.

According to the Scotsman, Newman gave 'the part its full and inevitable awfulness, rushing towards self-destruction with a calm beauty belying the seething torment within'. Cuthbertson's Judge Brack was 'masterful'. The Evening Times thought it 'a pity that the production runs for only one week'.

Lysistrata actually opened the 1961 Spring Season while Hedda Gabler was on the road. This particular choice was a braver one than might appear on the surface: the Gateway Theatre in Edinburgh had hoped to stage it, but, with its close connection to the Church of Scotland, it had been discouraged from doing so. Hence Glasgow Herald's (14/2/61) feeling that the play had now 'entered Scotland with (it may appear) some air of apology'. There was 'no need for it', although the Gateway's 'special difficulties' were appreciated. The problem, of course, centred on the comedy's basic plot point of the militant (in their own way) women's vow to withdraw conjugal favours until the war is ended, and, while the jokes are ripe and raunchy enough, the point made is that 'it is not sex, but war that is obscene'. Callum Mill's production was strategically placed so that it could carry forward some of the cast - and some of the large audience - from the Christmas revue (Gaggiegalorum)! It is doubtful if the latter aim was really achieved - (it never was) - but Christopher Small thought that it opened the Spring Season with 'the most exhilarating bang'. He liked 'Mr. Fitts' richly slangy speech, the musical inventions of Donald Eastwood (echoes of back-court balladry and modern Greek folk-songs, with a dash of boogie-woogie)' and the decor of Sally Hulke and Elizabeth Friendship, with its 'sacred slopes reaching down to the auditorium', as well as its 'vivid costumes and masks'.

The lively company was led by the wonderfully versatile Una McLean, straight from her Revue success. She is one of the number of 'straight' players whose talents in other fields of performance were discovered and developed as a result of Citizens' Christmas shows.

Mamie Crichton (Scottish Daily Express) was pleased that the production did not 'shy at the earthy lines that must have raised fruity laughs in Athens ... more than 2,000 years ago'. Una McLean was 'even better as a comedy actress than a comedienne .... If you are "genteel", Lysistrata is not for you. There were a lot of ungentle Glaswegians at the Citizens' last night'. Ronald Mavor in the Scotsman noted with satisfaction that 'Mr. Callum Mill has further ornamented Mr. Dudley Fitts' recent version of the classic so that the Citizens' company romps through it with the greatest gusto .... The more one sees of Mr. Callum Mill's work at the Citizens' Theatre, the more one admires it. An ancient play can seldom have been so toothsome served up'. Jack House (Evening Times) found 'some choruses difficult to follow. I don't think masks are a good idea, even if the original Greeks did use them. But this is a good, hearty, lusty, earthy comedy'.

It is worth remarking that, around this time, Michael Goldberg was reported in the Evening Times (22/2/61) as saying that 'plays such as Roots attracted a lot of young people because it was contentious, but there is still a noticeable gap in middle age ... Television seems to have gained their interest'.

It had been, as noted, Peter Duguid who had developed the Citizens' Theatre's natural ability to deal effectively with American drama, but one of the finest examples of this genre, was Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, the penultimate offering of Callum Mill's tenure of office. In point of fact, it was directed by Iain Cuthbertson, but Mill played - triumphantly - the testing role of Willy Loman. The production was virtually a complete success artistically, and financially it did well, too, with the deficit down to £175. Other roles were strongly cast: Geraldine Newman as



Mrs. Loman, the last of her outstanding series of performances at the Citizens', Mike Pratt and Philip Gilbert as Biff and Happy, Brian Coburn as Charley next door. Christopher Small said (15/5/62) that this was the kind of thing, 'strong and honest', that the Citizens' did best. Mill's Willy 'reminds us again how much is lost if he keeps wholly to the producer's side of the stage', while Miss Newman 'is - it hardly needs to be said - very good ...'. It is 'her presence at the end which puts the seal on this story and transforms it from a tract on the acquisitive society to universal tragedy'. He concluded with an exhortation and a warning: 'In a word, this is a classic; but do not take that as a reason for staying away. It is something to be seen'. As far as can be ascertained, Arthur Miller's play had only been seen in Glasgow before in 1950, in the notable production by the Wilson Barrett Company at the Alhambra Theatre, and so this was, in every way, a most happily chosen revival.

'P' in the Scotsman (15/5/62) reported that 'its quality of autumnal sadness fills the theatre'. She praised the 'wonderfully poignant set designed by Sally Hulke', and, while Callum Mill seemed 'not yet ready "to fall into his grave like an old dog", his ravelled gaze and vague gestures in mounting confusion are sensitively done'. Edward Ashton (Daily Mail) was glad of 'A solid, meaty evening's play-going and so welcome after the pretentiousness of Wesker last week'. David Gibson was also whole-hearted in his enthusiasm, describing the occasion as 'first rate in every respect ... Callum Mill IS Willy Loman .... Last night's play had so much force that the audience was subdued at the finish - but subdued only by the enjoyment of emotional excellence'.

It was, however, announced in the Herald of 18/5/62 that:

Callum Mill ... has decided not to return next season .... The immediate reason is that Mr. Mill has been given the job of producing Dylan Thomas's The Doctor and the Devils ... for the Assembly Hall at the coming Edinburgh Festival .... Both Mr. Mill and the Citizens' Board hope, however, that he will be able to return "on a fairly regular basis" as a guest producer. It is emphasised that his interest in the Citizens' remains "very deep".

(In fact his return visits were to be as actor rather than director.) The two full years of Mr. Mill's work with the Citizens' have been a series of productions, including a number of great distinction and originality, which have established Mr. Mill's reputation as a producer of both enterprise and resource; it may be said that they have done much to contain and consolidate the company's high standing among British repertory theatres.

The other American plays were less significant, but were of no little value in keeping Citizens' audiences informed of what had been happening across the Atlantic, in this way, once again, fulfilling a necessary function of a civic playhouse, namely to offer, as far as possible, a cross section of World Theatre. Come Back Little Sheba, as already noted, was brought in for a week while Romeo and Juliet was in preparation; its author, William Inge, Kansas-born, and a considerable success in his own country, met with little in Britain, although film versions of his plays fared better, for example, Picnic (1953) and Bus Stop (1955). John Russell Taylor, however, suggests that The Dark at the Top of the Stairs (1957) was his best.<sup>8</sup> Come Back Little Sheba - (the title refers to the long-lost little dog, who will never return) - made Inge's name, but, although it managed to run for 190 performances on Broadway in 1950, 'houses', the playwright himself said, 'began to dwindle to the size of tea parties'.<sup>9</sup> It did, however, provide wonderful roles for Shirley Booth as the wife who has lost all pride in herself, and Sidney Blackmer as the alcoholic husband. In Glasgow, these parts were taken by Irene Sunters and, in his only appearance at the Citizens', a Canadian actor called Laurence Herder. Reginald Birks directed while Callum Mill was rehearsing Romeo and Juliet, with designs by Douglas Abercrombie. Glasgow Herald (3/10/61) was less than enthusiastic about the play, with Small describing it as 'one of these carefully doctored, neatly packaged, even pre-digested slices of life'. He found it 'perhaps easier to understand how it should have been a success on Broadway than why the Citizens' should choose it, even to fill in an odd week; but it must be owned that ... they do it remarkably well ...'. The acting was 'excellent', the climax, with Doc reaching for 'the household chopper' 'as shocking as it is

meant to be, almost perhaps as it ought to be ...'. Production was 'swift and straightforward', the setting a 'small masterpiece of studied squalor'. All things considered, it can be said that the choice of this play was an excellent one for the purpose suggested, fitting neatly into the carefully considered Citizens' pattern of that era. The Scotsman saw it as:

an excellent vehicle for Miss Irene Sunters. It is doubtful if this production would have been more than mildly competent without an actress of this calibre and it would have certainly been much less entertaining ... Laurence Herder ... appears to be mainly responsible for the lethargy so apparent in the opening scenes of the play ... when we do see him caught tight in the clutches of the whisky, however, we see Mr. Herder at his best.

Edward Ashton (Daily Mail) felt that 'the temperance dramas did all this a great deal better years ago'. Robins Millar (Express), however, referred to Herder as 'a fine Canadian actor', while reserving his main plaudits for Irene Sunters, who 'reveals a hundred expressions as she fusses through domestic tribulations, fluttering from the gay to the tragic .... A splendid performance, Miss Sunters'. The deficit for the week was £565.

Two for the See-Saw, at the beginning of the following year, was by another American dramatist comparatively unknown in this country, William Gibson, although by this time he was also famous at home for The Miracle Worker, which dealt with the crucial events in the early life of Helen Keller. Two for the See-Saw had run for 750 performances in New York, in which the two leading roles - they formed the entire cast - were played by Henry Fonda and Anne Bancroft; (the latter also took the part of Annie Sullivan in The Miracle Worker); it later came to London, was filmed, and eventually, and rather surprisingly, became a Broadway musical. The New York News found the original "an absorbing, affectionate and funny delight":<sup>10</sup> the idea of the play was, indeed, slight enough: a hair-brained Jewish girl embarking on a relationship with a lawyer



from the Middle West for what she knows must be a brief affair, but it provided, given the right pairing, an absorbing evening in the theatre. The director at the Citizens' was a guest, Desmond O'Donovan, while a guest actor, Ronald Leigh-Hunt, played 'Jerry' to Anne Kristen's 'Gittel', with Sally Hulke providing a divided set. (The main Company was on a pre-Citizens' Arts Council tour of A Man For All Seasons.) Christopher Small, never by any means an unquestioning admirer of American drama, wondered (21/2/62) what the play would have done without the availability of a telephone ... 'it might conceivably exist, but it would not last out the evening, nor do it with such a deceptive appearance of life'. He called it a 'duet for lost Americans - absentee husband and forlorn girl, briefly encountering each other in the Bronx jungle'. Major credits were 'dialogue full of agile, wry inventions and involutions' and the two performances 'so beautifully dove-tailed that they may be called, together, a little masterpiece'.

The Scotsman claimed that it 'upheld the banner of the Citizens' Theatre by enthraling an all-too-small audience'. Robins Millar (Express) called it 'Enthralling! It really is ... only two characters are in it; yet it is alive every minute .... Thanks indeed to the Citizens' for this one', and Jack House (Evening Times) made quite a sweeping statement: 'The Citizens' Theatre, at the moment, has probably the finest group of actresses it has ever had, but by this performance, as the sad, silly, generous Gittel, Anne Kristen puts herself in the forefront of them all'. About this time (23/2/62) Philip Stein in the Daily Worker wrote:

It would make the angels weep to see the empty seats at Glasgow Citizens' Theatre first nights. What philistine blight has settled over the otherwise vigorous one million Glaswegians that the city's only remaining straight theatre cannot pull them in from the telly, the cinema, the fireside?.

The deficit here, for a two-week run, was £979.

The remaining representative of American Theatre during this period was a much more familiar name, although it is sometimes not realised that Tennessee Williams has not enjoyed a great measure of real commercial success with his plays in Britain: the Double Bill originally known as Garden District (1958) was staged in London, not in a large West End theatre, but in the small Arts Theatre Club. The Citizens' production of these two plays, Something Unspoken and Suddenly Last Summer, was not, then, a gesture in the direction of easy Box Office returns, but a typically brave exploration of the less familiar by-ways of major talents. (The fact that Suddenly Last Summer had been expensively filmed would not really be calculated to attract patrons to the second play of a Double Bill.) The first play is something of a chamber piece for two actresses, described by the Glasgow Herald as a 'sketch of an ancient Southern tyrant foiled in a social ambition and taking it out of her secretary-companion' (21/3/62). The roles were taken by the eminent senior Scottish actress, Jean Taylor Smith, and by Geraldine Newman, and it was said to be 'admirably acted'. It was, in fact, however, really a curtain raiser for the longer 'unashamedly grand guignol',<sup>11</sup> as John Russell Taylor saw it, of Suddenly Last Summer ('determined at whatever cost to be shocking', in Christopher Small's view). This 'family post-mortem on the dubious death of an ageing aesthete', involving 'incest, hysteria, medical mumbo-jumbo' and 'business with hypodermic syringe' was spoiled for him by the assumption of 'significant' pretensions, but there were 'virtuoso performances' from Anne Kristen (essaying 'heavy character') and Morag Forsyth, and the final scene, involving the use of a truth drug and revelations about cannibalism, was 'guaranteed to keep anyone on the edge of his seat'.

The Scotsman felt that Suddenly Last Summer needed the 'bogusness of Hollywood at its most lush': on the stage it was 'curiously lacking in impact'. Something Unspoken was 'well acted and produced' but would not 'convert the rest of the world from the widely held opinion that American matrons are on the whole better avoided'. Robins Millar noted that in the former play an 'exotic atmosphere is created, Iain Cuthbertson having completed production when Callum Mill turned ill'. Jack House (Evening Times) again

could not remember a time when the Citizens' had so many good actresses, but 'the finest performance ... was that of a veteran of the good old Scottish National Players - Jean Taylor Smith .... It's a first-class double bill, except for wig trouble'. Edward Ashton (Mail) enjoyed Williams's 'further ventures into his favourite subject, decay and degeneracy in America's Deep South': Something Unspoken was 'quite beautifully played', while in Suddenly Last Summer, 'Anne Kristen and Morag Forsyth (rose) splendidly to the occasion'.

The latest in British Theatre was by no means unrepresented, and anyone attending the Citizens' Theatre regularly from 1960 to 1962 would have no mean foundation of a dramatic education, even with little previous knowledge. Arnold Wesker, at this time, as has already been indicated, was very much a talent to be reckoned with, and, prior to Chips with Everything, audiences had already had the opportunity of seeing the earlier Roots, perhaps, with hindsight, the most durable of his plays. The middle piece of the trilogy which first made Wesker's name, Roots deals with the return of Beatie Bryant to her farm labouring family in Norfolk, following a prolonged affair in London, with Ronnie Kahn, one of the Jewish family from Chicken Soup with Barley. She tries, with predictable lack of success, to indoctrinate her relations with her half-baked, half comprehended notions of politics and culture on the Ronnie Kahn model, and it is only when she arranges for her family to meet him, and she hears that the relationship is over, knowing that he will never come now, that she realises that she has found her own voice, can speak for herself. Roots has had a chequered history; the production first seen in London on June 30, 1959, stemmed originally from the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Following a not very successful transfer to the West End, it returned to the Royal Court as part of a staging of the whole trilogy, and it was on this occasion that Peter Roberts noted that its predecessor marked 'the growth of apathy in a number of people', Roots depicted 'the death of apathy in one'.<sup>12</sup> Joan Plowright had her first great solo success as Beatie, and the whole thing was treated with the greatest of respect - quite properly - and found its way, perhaps, prematurely, into senior school curricula. All of



this again shows that the Citizens' Board and Management had its finger very much on the pulse of current fashionable thinking, even if Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 8/11/60) thought of it as 'this little rural tragi-comedy', with a climax which was 'really preposterous'. He admitted, however, that it was 'an admirable production' and that Anne Kristen's Beatie was 'quite a triumph'. There are good grounds for claiming that this remains Ms. Kristen's finest performance to date, her final moments remaining stubbornly in the mind of most people who witnessed them. What now seems almost a prodigally talented company also included Geraldine Newman as the mother who tries to comprehend what is happening to her daughter, Martin Heller, and Hugh Sullivan.

'A.W.' in the Scotsman was not so pleased, heading his review with 'Malaise and Mangolds'. He felt that the play was not improved by the cast's 'struggle with the East Anglian dialect. Nor was it notably enhanced by the direction of Callum Mill, who apparently decided to play the piece for all it was worth as a slice of lush mangold-wurzelry'. Robins Millar (Express) noted with some relief that 'It is one of the kitchen sink dramas, but not squalid', while the Citizen, also under-rating the play, proclaimed that 'it is a tribute to the players that their acting almost belied the fact that nothing much was being said. Rarely have I seen a higher quality'. In the Eighties, Roots hardly seems very avant garde, but these reviews testify to the difficulties experienced by critics in coming to terms with a changing theatre, a situation which increasingly added to the problems of forward-looking directors.

Despite the play's lack of commercial success originally - and later on, too - the Citizens' deficit was only £850, suggesting that more informed playgoers were - at that time - penetrating the Gorbals. The Theatre Board considered it 'excellent', 'very satisfying to all concerned'.

The production which immediately followed Roots in the Gorbals was that of another new work (in theatrical form at any rate), but in complete contrast. The Aspern Papers was an adaptation by Michael

Redgrave of the Henry James novella about an American writer who comes to Venice with the single-minded, passionate purpose of seeing the eponymous letters written by the legendary poet to the woman who loved him, the centenarian (at least) Miss Borderau, willing to stoop to theft or the emotional seduction of her spinster niece. This adaptation had received considerable acclaim on the occasion of its London production, which had provided Flora Robson, Beatrix Lehmann and Redgrave himself with what were among the greatest roles of their careers. Peter Roberts had drawn attention to the fact that, while James had failed to achieve fame as a dramatist on anything like the scale of his success as a novelist, now 'yet another of his novels has been made to yield theatrical treasure in the hands of an adapter'. He referred to the stage translations of Washington Square and The Turn of the Screw, 'but neither of these', he continued, 'preserved so full and so thrilling a Jamesian flavour as ... in the present version of Sir Michael Redgrave'.<sup>13</sup> Douglas Abercrombie designed the Citizens' production, and the Glasgow Herald (22/11/60) said that 'there is no question that it is how we imagine it: the decaying, threadbare splendour, the dust of years settled on what had once known life and glory'. It was 'a most accomplished production, with Hugh Sullivan 'superbly odious' as H.J., and Lennox Milne making a 'veritable she-dragon' of Miss Borderau. (Miss Milne had long-standing Citizens' connections, and was making a return after quite a long absence; she was not as scarifying as Beatrix Lehmann had been: who could be? No one who saw the latter could forget her as she fluttered around H.J. like a demented bat, having caught him in the act of taking the letters.) According to the Herald, however, it was Geraldine Newman (Miss Tina) who 'transforms the evening'. The dawning of love in the repressed spinster's heart, and her disillusionment when she realises that she has merely been used add up to a wonderful role for the right kind of actress, and Miss Newman, then in her twenties, was superb at playing older women. 'There has been nothing better at the Citizens' for a long time. It alone (and it does not stand alone) is worth a journey to see'.

The Daily Record had some grave doubts. The three leading

players, it was agreed, 'could not be bettered in their parts, but this play by Sir Michael Redgrave is anything but good', and Robins Millar (Express) thought that the 'three acts drift slowly, and the mystery is "Why was it a West End success"?'. The Scottish Daily Mail, however, saw the Citizens' now achieving 'success after success', with Geraldine Newman, in this case, 'the undoubted star'. Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) realised the impossibility of conveying the original's 'full psychological subtleties', but 'much remains ... Mr. Callum Mill has nicely pointed the struggle by making his author all fever and activity'. Mavor complimented Douglas Abercrombie for 'a fine atmospheric set' and Lennox Milne on her powerful Miss Borderau, but 'the acting honours went to Miss Geraldine Newman, whose performance as the niece was of a beauty and veracity rare on any stage'. Hugh Sullivan (H.J.) was 'a veritable Trigorin of literary single-mindedness and insensitivity'. The Board thought the evening 'good, with excellent acting', and the deficit was in the region of £800. We were also told, witnessing the splendidly progressive management of Reginald Birks, that 'last night the front-of-house facilities, which already include a restaurant and a picture gallery ... were further expanded by the opening of a club room for the Young Citizens' Theatre Society'.

By the time Robert Bolt's A Man For All Seasons reached the Gorbals, it already had acquired a prestigious reputation, but no one knew that it was going to become a popular film as well as one garlanded with all kinds of laurels, nor, although Junior Citizens' school parties attended, was it realised that it was going to become one of the more durable 'contemporary' additions to school syllabuses. (It is always a dangerous undertaking to decide what new writing is destined to become 'classic', and there must be many examples of ill-judged choices gathering dust on school shelves.) All of which, in addition to the fact that this could not be an inexpensive production to stage, helps to account for the fact that there was a deficit of £1,195. In fact, during the early weeks of its London run, there was little indication of its future celebrity: it is said that there was a real risk of its being withdrawn quite soon after its initial appearance. Paul Scofield was an actor,



even at this time, of great reputation, but not possessed of the unthinking kind of following which would carry a doubtful play prospect to financial success; nor was the name of the author sufficient to do so, although Robert Bolt had had respectable successes with Flowering Cherry and The Tiger and the Horse. Sir Thomas More, the central character around whom the play was built - (a previous play about him, Traitor's Gate by Morna Stuart (Duke of York's Theatre, November 1938), had sunk without trace after favourable reviews) - was not an obviously attractive theatrical figure, especially when placed in a framework which was coolly Brechtian rather than colourfully romantic in the old Gordon Daviot manner. Caryl Brahms had, in fact, praised the original director, Noel Willman, for 'having taken the fashionable art of alienation and, by integrating it into the play', proving himself 'not its slave but its master ...'.<sup>14</sup> When Callum Mill's production reached the Citizens' stage after what was described as a 'highly successful tour of Southern Scotland', it was clear that the personnel of the company was undergoing subtle changes in the smaller roles especially, not surprisingly: the partnership in charge was now the new one, with the new General Manager, Iain Cuthbertson, obviously making his influence felt. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald of 7/3/62 had few, if any, doubts about the way the play was done, but some about the play itself. Never, as previously indicated, the man to take a 'West End' success on trust, the very reverse in fact, Small found the piece to be 'well-tailored', 'not fustian, certainly, but something more synthetic. Shall we say a nylon tapestry?'. It was, however, 'extraordinarily well produced' ... 'The Citizens' Company surpass themselves (and that nowadays is no small compliment ...'. Alice, More's wife, was 'most beautifully played, rough, rather stupid, loyal, by Geraldine Newman; while John Grieve gave the Common Man all his 'verve and resource'. The Common Man, the personification of Bolt's Brechtian devices, begins as servant, acts as Chorus throughout, jumping in and out of the characters of various functionaries until at last he becomes the Executioner; he also sweeps Wolsey's ceremonial robes into the props basket when the Cardinal has fallen. This is a creation in whom the Herald critic feels that 'Mr. Bolt himself does not quite believe'. David

William's More was 'a notable piece of work, itself well worth going to see ... as the evening advances, it does truly take charge of it'. (William was later - rather briefly - to become Citizens' Artistic Director.) And another salute to the designing skills of Sally Hulke: the 'last two years of More's life made most pleasingly and ingeniously visible in the set - house, court, palace, dungeon, scaffold in turn ...'.

The Scotsman was quite surprisingly dismissive of the play itself: 'It behoves the Citizens' management to search their hearts and their script-files for something less pretentious and more worthwhile than this antidote to Merrie England'. Ellen Grehan, however, (Record) said that 'A play about a 16th century statesman COULD be as dry as dust. But the one I saw last night certainly wasn't'. Edward Ashton (Daily Mail) thought the material 'good dramatic stuff - too good, perhaps, for the author to cope with. Certainly he uses some off-putting technique. He brings in that hackneyed character - the chorus who steps out of the play to address the audience, and his style spans everything from modern colloquial to Wardour-street historical ...'. But there is 'a splendid performance by David William as More, gentle, humorous, kindly, but immovable'. The reaction of Jack House (Evening Times) was, as always, revealing and significant: 'I expected, in fact, to be carried away ... well I wasn't - it was a very painstaking performance, perhaps too painstaking ... maybe, ancient square that I am, I was thinking what a wonderful job GBS would have made of this subject', but Millar (Express) was unbridled in his enthusiasm: 'Salute to the Citizens' is bravely earned ... a play that stands out in the modern theatre for nobility of theme is given treatment far beyond what one expects of repertory'.

Although Glasgow by no means ignored A Man For All Seasons, it is tempting to speculate how much better it would have fared five or six years later, when the name of the play would have been so much more familiar. Glasgow playgoers liked - in the Sixties at any rate - to patronise material with which they had at least some familiarity. It is always tempting to those selecting a season's



plays to be well up in the vanguard of what is newly being discussed in national and world circles, but in 1962 the Citizens' was not a mecca for those in search of the experimental and the exotically unfamiliar: modish novelty was no box office magnet in the Gorbals then.

Apart from The Righteous are Bold, a November 1961 revival of a past Citizens' success about demonic possession in Ireland (written by Frank Carney, with Anne Kristen as the tormented girl and Walter Carr in a rare serious role as the Priest, regardless of himself in his pursuit of exorcism), there remain only three productions of the Callum Mill era to discuss, and they all come towards the end of his first Season, but there are those who consider them not only the crowning glory of his tenure of office, but a uniquely high peak in the whole story of the Citizens' Theatre. Of these only the last was comparatively new - to the stage at any rate - but none were familiar as plays to Glasgow theatregoers. T.S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral had been seen - either by the few who may probably have been interested, or by those who blundered in expecting something in the vein of Agatha Christie - (at least one major theatrical misunderstanding is said to have taken place when productions were being booked) - on tour at Glasgow Alhambra pre-war, but now it came with the impact of an unfamiliar classic. Originally written for Canterbury Cathedral (1935), Christopher Small doubted 'if, properly, it can be played in any other place' (4/4/61), but it did, in fact, suit the Citizens' stage very well: 'When that is said, however, the Citizens' production can be almost unreservedly praised' ... 'admirably produced'. - Allardyce Nicoll, who stated that 'there is to be found no nobler language in the theatre of our times',<sup>15</sup> also says that 'by reintroducing the chorus Eliot has taught his companions what virtues this dramatic device can bring with it ... the commonplace unanimity of the mass is, through them, set against the extraordinary stature of the hero'.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the chorus has often proved a stumbling block, in subsequent productions, to the play's accessibility, particularly in an age when audiences are unfamiliar with choral speaking. The Herald, in fact, draws attention to Callum Mill's treatment of the women of Canterbury:



'Here Mr. Mill has shown further ingenuity, bringing them as far as possible into the action, breaking up some of the choruses between individuals'. It had been a happy idea to bring back to Glasgow Kenneth Mackintosh to play Becket: he had gained much of his early stage experience in the Gorbals (the 1947 production of Bridie's A Sleeping Clergyman, for instance), and he was later to play Macbeth there. In due course he joined the National Theatre, to become Consultant Staff Director. At the Citizens' he was said to be 'an excellent Becket, of proper authority and even majesty'. Sally Hulke's setting was composed of 'single lofty blocks of stage masonry, a high altar flanked by candles'. It, and the groupings deployed in and around it still burn in the mind, and it was at the time of this production that it seemed apt and possible to make more than favourable comparisons with the sort of presentations being made by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre.

Other Press criticism was inclined to turn against the play and - rather prematurely - to assume that it was passé. Mamie Crichton in the Scottish Daily Express found it:

rather like reading a once-urgent story in an old newspaper ... last night I saw it as a self-conscious intellectual exercise played out in modern ritual ... Directed by Callum Mill with studied gravity, the company tackled the poetic prose (sic) with varying degrees of confidence. Guest actor Kenneth Mackintosh has both the presence and composure for the Becket part.

To Jack House (Evening Times) 'A good deal ... sounds as if it had been written by a Glasgow undergraduate of the 1930s ... That's one side of the picture. The other is of really fine acting and first-rate direction'. Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) noted that 'one group behind me walked out during the performance, declaring it "a lot of tripe". I do not altogether agree, though it is hardly the stuff that will overwhelm the box-office'.

Perhaps even more ambitious was the play which followed at the Citizens': Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood. Much had already been said for and against the advisability of transferring this unique

work from radio to the stage, and, when it had appeared at the Edinburgh Festival in September, 1956, and in London shortly afterwards, general opinion was that the operation could be successful if dealt with as generally skilfully as it was in the production set up by that most adventurous of 'commercial' impresarios, Henry Sherek. Admittedly Iain Crawford, after seeing it at Edinburgh, said:

To my way of thinking it did not make a play. The narration, the little cubicles in which the actors were hidden until the curtain parted or the flat dropped and the light guided our eyes to yet another gem of characterisation, militated against a real theatrical unity. (Nevertheless) The ceaseless wealth of Dylan Thomas's imagery, and the heart-open probings of the mind and the world of the senses in which he revelled made their own impact.<sup>17</sup>

Christopher Small (19/4/61), referring to the Edinburgh production, felt that 'to put it on the stage at all was rather like putting Hamlet on ice ...' but 'it survives'. Now 'the victory is won again at the Citizens'. '... It is, of course, a producer's battle, and Callum Mill has fought it with much tactical skill ... the Company hardly ever putting a foot wrong'. The best moments were 'Anne Kristen's Polly Garter, singing her heart-rending little lament for lost lovers' and 'Brian Carey's Captain Cat calling in his blindness for Rosie'. '... Mostly the words win through, spoken in a strange variety of Welsh accents, not always with perfect understanding, but with enthusiasm and love ...'. Sally Hulke's set was more or less in the same convention as that of the original production: it had not yet been realised that it was not necessary to have any set at all, as the students of RSAMD School of Drama revealed in recent years in their Television studio.

The Herald's favourable view of the production was generally supported: 'A.W.' (Scotsman) experienced 'richness indeed: the richness of cascading language, set off with exhilarating conceits and tropes, and consistently bright with extravagant fun ... Callum Mill, the producer, worked prodigies of time and cohesion'. Robins



Millar (Express) was more wary: 'a risky choice ... 51 characters and a narrator talking at enormous length'. But 'Ronald Davis is equal to the big task ... The Citizens' succeed'. Among the reasons for success Hewitt (Evening Citizen) noted 'Ronald Davis's mastery of an extremely lengthy script' and 'Callum Mill, whose production glided through a whole evening without a moment's hitch'.

The Citizens' production was allowed to run for three weeks, chiefly, probably, because it was not humanly possible to stage three major quality presentations one after the other with only a fortnight's rehearsal time. This fact, rather than lack of audience interest, probably accounts for the fact that the deficit was around £1,809.

The third production of this group, E.M. Forster's A Passage to India, in the stage adaptation by Santha Rama Rau, was not as good as its two predecessors, but was still a first-rate achievement. The adaptation had been a success in London in 1960, and was destined to find its way to Broadway in 1962, with Gladys Cooper as Mrs. Moore. Such faults as Christopher Small had to find were mainly with the dramatisation (10/5/61), although he admitted, with some surprise, that 'Mr. Forster himself has given it his blessing'. 'It has been turned into a plain, one must even say a crude "piece of theatre"' ... This, unfortunately, gave rise to a rather misleading heading for the review, 'Fine Novel Becomes Crude Play'. Continuing, the Herald review allowed, 'There is a play here, then, and, in its way, not a bad one', and 'the production (as a production)' was 'well up to the high standard of the whole season'. There were 'many excellent performances': Charles Baptiste was Aziz, with Geraldine Newman as Adela Quested, although it was felt that the adaptation tried to explain too much about the latter role's motivation. Hugh Sullivan was an excellent Fielding, although the Herald found the performance 'too urbane and smooth'. Perhaps most remarkable of all was Phil McCall's Professor Godbole, 'an astonishing feat of impersonation, even to the Brahman's song of praise'. It was, indeed, an extraordinary performance - in physical appearance too. This fine actor had done nothing like it before, and it is doubtful if he has



had the opportunity to do anything quite as good since. General Manager Reginald Birks made another of his welcome appearances as the Collector, and, although the vital role of Mrs. Moore was undercast, standards were indeed in keeping with the quality of recent productions. The deficit was estimated a comparatively modest £822, and, even if the complexities of the novel could not be fully realised on stage, this adaptation brought the original to the notice of many who were not really aware of it at all. It wisely concluded with the trial, and avoided the rather off-key developments which crept into the much later David Lean screen version.

Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) offered similar praise to that of Small, but with similar reservations:

a notable novel rather than a notable play, but as a play it offers much that better plays omit ... Mr. Callum Mill's production is happily free from exaggeration. (Regarding the acting), Mr. Charles Baptiste (Aziz) was ... wonderfully sensitive, rhapsodical and suffering ... Mr. Hugh Sullivan makes Fielding a pleasure to watch (and) Miss Geraldine Newman ... admirably plays Miss Quested, whose road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

Earlier in the review, it had been said that:

noting that the standard of performance has been very high, one looks forward to the autumn with some enthusiasm. Here, at least, one feels, there will be lively and exciting theatre in Scotland.

Robert Hewitt (Citizen) echoed this view, for, although he found A Passage to India 'somewhat wordy', 'possibly more than any other work this season it gives us a chance to see Glasgow Citizens' Theatre acting talent at its best'.

There is a good case for claiming that the Callum Mill period at the Citizens' was rivalled in the pre-Giles Havergal era - (the standards of which are based on different criteria altogether) - only by the productions of Michael Blakemore, and this is no slight on the other distinguished talents which were involved over the

years, and memories - which can be deceptive - are backed by critical reaction, all of which testifies to the shortness of memory of both theatre Boards and audiences. Mill was unfortunate in coming almost at the end of the Producer/General Manager era: not, in all probability, that he would have welcomed the additional - and to many uncongenial - duties which were to come with the emergence of the Artistic Director. In fact, the pressures which a man of his brilliance had been undergoing were not of the kind which could, with equanimity, be put up with over a more protracted period, especially without a regular assistant. As has been suggested, the Mill/Birks partnership worked because their abilities complemented each other. Iain Cuthbertson, a towering figure artistically as well as physically, regarded as the white hope of the Scottish Theatre, could not humanly be expected to remain in the background, and so something had to give.

Nevertheless, Mill looks back on his days as Citizens' producer as perhaps the happiest period of his working life: it was a job that he had always wanted to do, and he says that, had not the Edinburgh production of The Doctor and the Devils intervened, he would have been glad to return for a third season. He acknowledges in particular the great value of being able to work with a designer like Sally Hulke, and seems to have no harsh memories of the Board at all: in fact, he never saw them 'en bloc', his associates in planning being only Chairman Michael Goldberg, Colin Chandler and Reginald Birks.<sup>18</sup>

This is not the end of Callum Mill's relationship with the Citizens': he would be in the audience on the first night of the next season, and he would be back as an actor, but a particular chapter in the history of the theatre had ended.

The Productions were:

Romulus The Great (Friedrich Durrenmatt) Directed Callum Mill  
(27/8/60).

The Enchanted (Jean Giraudoux) Directed Callum Mill (12/9/60).

Hamlet (William Shakespeare) Directed Callum Mill (3/10/60).

The Lesson/The New Tenant/Maid to Marry (Eugene Ionesco)  
Directed Callum Mill (17/10/60).

Rollo (Marcel Achard/Felicity Douglas) Directed Callum Mill  
(24/10/60).

Roots (Arnold Wesker) Directed Callum Mill (7/11/60).

The Aspern Papers (Michael Redgrave from Henry James) Directed  
Callum Mill (21/11/60).

Gaggiagalorum (Revue) Directed Callum Mill (9/12/60).

Lysistrata (Aristophanes/Dudley Fitts) Directed Callum Mill  
(13/2/61).

Hedda Gabler (Henrik Ibsen/Max Faber) Directed Reginald Birks  
(27/2/61).

Breakdown (Stewart Conn) Directed Callum Mill (6/3/61).

Great Expectations (Alec Guinness from Charles Dickens)  
Directed Callum Mill (20/3/61).

Murder in the Cathedral (T.S. Eliot) Directed Callum Mill (3/4/61).

Under Milk Wood (Dylan Thomas) Directed Callum Mill (18/4/61).

A Passage to India (Santha Rama Rau from E.M. Forster)  
Directed Callum Mill (8/5/61).

Sixes an' Sevens (Revue, Second Edition) Directed Callum Mill  
24/5/61).

Inca (Joseph O'Connor) Directed Callum Mill (5/9/61).

The Doctor and the Devils (Dylan Thomas/Donald Taylor)  
Directed Callum Mill (19/9/61).

Come Back Little Sheba (William Inge) Directed Reginald Birks  
(2/10/61).

Romeo and Juliet (William Shakespeare) Directed Callum Mill  
(10/10/61).



The Durable Element (Cliff Hanley) Directed Callum Mill (24/10/61).

The Imaginary Invalid (Moliere/Miles Malleson) Directed Callum Mill  
(7/11/61).

The Righteous are Bold (Frank Carney) Directed Callum Mill  
(20/11/61).

Bletherskeits (Revue) Directed Callum Mill (7/12/61).

Altona (Jean-Paul Sartre) Directed Callum Mill (30/1/62).

Two for the See-Saw (William Gibson) Directed Desmond O'Donovan  
(20/2/62).

A Man for All Seasons (Robert Bolt) Directed Callum Mill (6/3/62).

Something Unspoken/Suddenly Last Summer (Tennessee Williams)  
Directed Callum Mill/Iain Cuthbertson (20/3/62).

The Gentle Shepherd (Allan Ramsay/Robert Kemp) Directed Colin Chandler/  
Iain Cuthbertson (3/4/62)

The Carmelites (Georges Bernanos) Directed Callum Mill (16/4/62)

Chips With Everything (Arnold Wesker) Directed Callum Mill (30/4/62)

Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller) Directed Iain Cuthbertson  
(14/5/62)

The Fire Raisers (Max Frisch) Directed Callum Mill (28/5/62)

Footnotes to Chapter Three - CALLUM MILL: THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

1. John Russell Taylor, Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre, (Penguin, 1966), pp.134. 135.
2. *ibid.*, p.135.
3. Plays and Players, December, 1959.
4. Russell Taylor, p.239.
5. Plays and Players, February, 1962.
6. Dylan Thomas, The Doctor and the Devils, (Everyman Paperback, 1979), p.136.
7. Plays and Players, July, 1962.
8. Russell Taylor, p.133.
9. Edwin J. Bronner, Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, 1900 - 1975, (A.S. Barnes, 1980), p.99.
10. *ibid.*, p.494.
11. Russell Taylor, p.288.
12. Plays and Players, August, 1960.
13. *ibid.*, September, 1959.
14. *ibid.*, August, 1960.
15. Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama, (Harrap, 1949), p.873.
16. *ibid.*, p.872.
17. Plays and Players, October, 1956.
18. In conversation, March, 1989.

## CHAPTER FOUR

INTERREGNUM

In 1962, an advertisement for the position of 'Producer' at Glasgow Citizens' was a magnet for a considerable range of available talent: no one could have been under the impression that the job would be an easy one, for success in the battle to attract audiences to the Gorbals continued to ebb and flow. The Theatre Board was, however, led by a dynamic and idealistic Chairman, Michael Goldberg, a throwback, almost, to the Renaissance Patrons of the Arts, extremely knowledgeable in all matters theatrical, although it must always be questionable whether such knowledge vested in a leading member of any artistic Board is an advantage or a handicap. However that may be, the name of Goldberg must occupy a key place in any record of Theatre in Scotland. In the Glasgow Herald of 10/9/62, he claims that 'many young people are now to be seen in the foyer' of the Citizens' Theatre, going on to say - rather wistfully - that 'eventually, we believe, Glasgow people can be nudged into the realisation that something important, in the theatrical sense, is happening in the Gorbals'. Rather more picturesquely, the General Manager, in the same issue, is reported as saying, in his plea for a new approach in Scottish writing for the theatre, that 'the Scotland of 1962 is no cosy neuk for heathery grannies', but 'a wasteland full of men and women bewitched by economic change and loss of status'. Alexander Reid, author of The Lass wi' the Muckle Mou' (no doubt the type of play at which Cuthbertson was hitting out), replied sharply in a letter on the following day in which he wished to 'correct a few of Mr. Cuthbertson's youthful errors' and giving his own impressions of his study of recent Scottish drama: 'what I have found is a great variety of Scottish character studied in every context from the mythical and historical to the modern'.

No doubt to the surprise of many, the post of Producer now went to Piers Haggard, in his Twenties, son of the Stephen Haggard who had made such a reputation for himself in the years before World War Two,



and who had been a victim of it. Closely associated with the glittering companies which revolved around John Gielgud's earlier triumphs, one of his great successes had been as the original George Windlestraw in Bridie's The Black Eye, the character who caused such alarm in some critical circles by stepping outside the framework of the play and addressing the audience. Piers Haggard came to the Citizens' after a successful period with Dundee Repertory Theatre, and the auguries were good for yet another 'fresh start'. In the event, he remained for only one Season, and, for a variety of reasons, he directed rather less than half the productions during that period, at the end of which he went South again, going on to a successful career, mainly in Television.

His opening production was A Midsummer Night's Dream, and his company was largely a new one, although Anne Kristen remained, and the other leading lady, Marillyn Gray, had gained much of her earlier stage experience in the Gorbals. Michael Knight succeeded Sally Hulke as Designer for the first part of the Season. Although the Dream - (last seen at the Citizens' in Bridie's modern dress, Scots comic version) - cannot be noted as one of the best attempts at Shakespeare there, it received a reasonably favourable Press, the surprising feature of the reviews now being the rather condescending attitude to the play and its author: Peggie Phillips in the Scotsman (18/9/62), for instance, thought it 'enchanting' but possessed of a 'delicacy and moonlit quality which appeals, perhaps, more to the poet than to the average man making up a modern theatre audience', while Robins Millar, the playwright/critic, described it in the Express as a 'pantomime of fairies and comics ... the truth is that, for all its lovely readable poetry, the comics keep the classic durable'. David Gibson in the Evening Times - (the reviews are all of the same date) - thought it 'perhaps not the happiest choice for the reopening of a theatre which keeps declaring it hopes to appeal to a wide section of the community ...'. It had, nevertheless, 'brightness and gaiety', and 'the trimmings are always second to the laughs ... you might say verve and enthusiasm sweep the cobwebs off jokes which have been around, after all, for a very long time'. 'E.R.' in the Evening Citizen said that the production 'never flagged, and seldom can

Shakespeare's poetry and comedy have been better served in Glasgow'. Christopher Small's verdict in the Herald was that it was 'not a perfect production; it cannot be said that all the ideas Piers Haggard puts into it are realised. But they are, generally, the right ideas ... some of the customary prettiness has gone, but the strangeness is enhanced, (assisted by some very strange noises from the small orchestra) ...'. (The music was composed by James Porter and played by a Trio of clarinet, guitar and percussion.) Michael Knight's sets were 'severely simple', although the costume worn by Oberon (Edward Fox in the early stages of his career) made him look like 'a sort of booted and helmeted Papageno'. Acting was 'uneven' with the lovers played as a 'quartet of foolish teenagers'. Peter Vaughan, however, was a 'splendid Bottom', and Alex McAvoy (an actor with much Citizens' experience) 'the best Puck I have seen'. Small considered Marillyn Gray's Titania 'admirable', and 'almost alone' she treated the verse 'not only with feeling but a feeling for metre'. Probably the main reason for the mixed press which this production received - probably, if truth be told, an over-generous one - was that it lacked any positive line or style: it stripped the play of the traditional 'prettiness' which had often muffled its true character and beauty, without actually putting anything in its place.

Haggard's second production was greeted with much greater satisfaction, and, indeed, gave every impression of being a job of work both solid and imaginative. The play was not new to Glasgow audiences: the Wilson Barrett Company had packed the vast Alhambra Theatre with its production of it in a blazing summer of the early Fifties, but Tennessee Williams was still regarded as something rather dangerous and exotic. True, the Vivien Leigh film version had been the rounds, but somehow the 'movie' audience was a different one from the audience which attended the Citizens', still a rather 'respectable' one, neither quite 'smart' nor quite 'intellectual', and not a young one, even though, as has been noted, more young people were beginning to attend, with an active Society of their own.

It is worth recalling the fact that the three principal roles



were all played by Scots, and the casting of Stanley Kowalski was of particular local interest, the guest actor being Tom Gerard (real name Donachy) from Carmichael Street, Govan. He had appeared in several films, was just about to go to Africa to play with Stanley Baker and Michael Caine in Zulu, and seemed to be on the verge of a prosperous career. Since then little has been heard of him - in this country, at any rate - but his 'Kowalski' created a very favourable impression among Scottish based critics. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald (2/10/62) thought him 'absolutely first-rate'; Blanche, he thought at first, to be 'a little outside Marillyn Gray's range', but she was later 'able to persuade us that it is, if not tragedy, something near it'. Although, as has been previously suggested, Small is not an admirer of Williams's work as a whole, he felt that Streetcar 'remains much the best of his we have seen'. Anne Kristen's 'Stella' was 'excellent'. 'The direction' did 'its job without tricks', and the whole thing was 'a stunning piece of theatre in its own right'. 'P' in the Scotsman was rather less enthusiastic, feeling that the production missed 'some of the steamy languor'; praise was, however, due for 'an outstanding try'. Robins Millar in the Express considered Ms. Gray's performance 'remarkable' ... 'over-stretched perhaps, but winning pity'. The sometimes caustic David Gibson in the Evening Citizen gave the verdict of 'a fine job' ... 'but then, set in the Southern equivalent of a room and kitchen, perhaps it is a play closer to Glasgow than most would care to admit'.

The 1962/63 Season was so oddly fragmented, that the only convenient way to consider it is in a chronological manner, and the third production, the last to appear under the Haggard imprint for some months, was adventurous indeed. It is scarcely credible that, in 1962, Bertolt Brecht and his plays were virtual strangers to the Glasgow professional stage; by now, however, Citizens' audiences were rather more accustomed to the rich and the strange than they had been when the admittedly more 'precious' Ionesco had burst upon them. Indeed, possibly some of its members were developing something of a defiant pride in claiming to be supporters of the 'avant garde', as they considered it. The Good Woman of Setzuan, in a new translation



by John Willett, was not to all tastes, but, by the end of its two weeks' run - (apart from the Christmas show, Streetcar was the only production allowed to run for longer) - a large audience had been found willing to take the risk of approaching the unfamiliar and the 'foreign'. The Herald (23/10/62) found it 'impossible to do detailed justice to the Citizens' production', and Small could only 'express heartfelt thanks to producer, designer and composer (Anthony Hedges)'. If, as has been suggested, rehearsals were troubled, the final product certainly showed no signs of this. In Michael Knight's stage designs, everything was 'bare and spare'; the simple bamboo constructions gave 'the merest indication of a city, a street, a factory, or the throne of the gods'. The Herald also led the chorus of praise which greeted Anne Kristen's performance: 'the best acting of her career to date: both as Shan Teh, the prostitute with the heart of too pure gold, and as her alter ego, the wicked cousin'. Gibson in the Evening Times admitted that 'several times I found the going pretty tedious - but then, one of my faults is that I like to regard the theatre as an entertainment ...'. (Few critics in 1989 would make such a confession.) One fact, however, he did not dispute: 'Anne Kristen did a wonderful job'.

The success of Ms. Kristen in this and other roles highlights the problem of the actress ... or actor ... who elects to remain in Scotland: what happens when - for want of a better word - 'stardom' is achieved? To what upper echelon does she progress, there to face the challenge of the great roles? For a time it looked as if - following the eventual change of course in the Citizens' Theatre policy - the Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh, might become the goal at which the Scottish actor might aim. But in the Eighties, the problem seems to be further from a solution than ever. While Ms. Kristen - and others of a comparable talent - have worked regularly, and sometimes rewardingly, through the years, too often their roles have been routine ones.

The point is high-lighted by the Scotsman review of The Good Woman by Ronald Mavor. In the role of the 'good woman', 'whose goodness could only survive when she invented a wicked male cousin

to do her dirty work for her ... Anne Kristen adds to her already considerable reputation ... she is, however, equalled, if not surpassed by Mr. Edward Fox's extraordinary performance as the wicked pilot ...'. This arouses, in telling manner, thoughts of comparisons between English and Scottish career opportunities, considered in the light of Fox's subsequent progress. Mavor has an interesting point to make about Brecht's theatrical appeal, which, he feels, is because of his 'story-teller's gift ... Without this gift, it is doubtful, perhaps, how much of Brecht's moral-pointing would be accepted in the theatre ...'. He found the Citizens' production 'worthy of the occasion', admiring the 'bamboo and canvas structures ... by moving his actors in and out of these screens, Mr. Haggard has managed to make a small cast seem enormous'. Mamie Crichton, in the Express, thought that the play was like 'a bucket of iced water tossed from the far left at bourgeois sentiment and hypocrisy'. She discerned, however, some 'uncertainty, lack of Teutonic drive by most of the large cast. But in Anne Kristen director Piers Haggard already has his key character of double power'. The General Manager reported that, on the Saturday night, attendance records were broken when an audience of 1047 saw the last performance of The Good Woman... It had been the 'best opening of any season for years and years'. Nevertheless the deficit on this production was around £1,503. (In the case of Streetcar it had been about £1,267, for A Midsummer Night's Dream, £1,723. Costs for the latter had amounted to some £3,800, but it must be remembered that three weeks' rehearsal had been necessary for this before the Season opened).

At this point in the Season, it was announced that Piers Haggard would be given leave in order to devote 'some time to a survey of work by young writers, particularly those in Scotland, in the hope of finding new plays and playwrights'. The announcement went on to say that 'The need for young Scottish playwrights ... has never been greater ...'. At Christmas Haggard was invited to direct the seasonable entertainment by his former employers, Dundee Repertory Theatre, and he later directed the Citizens' Arts Council Tour of Heartbreak House, commencing in early February. It was not until the Spring that he returned to work at the main theatre.



The last two productions of the Autumn Season caused little great excitement and left little lasting impression on the mind. The first of these, Uncle Vanya, guest-directed by Ann Stutfield, had the makings of a major event: the play itself is one that can provide a highly memorable evening, and the presence of players like Callum Mill (Vanya), Anne Kristen (Sonia), Lillias Walker (Yelena) and Jean Taylor Smith (Marya) promised well. The fact that these elements failed to make a completely successful whole suggests that this first break in the continuity of the season must have left its mark. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald noted the problem presented by having to depict the tedium of unhappy lives 'without communicating the tedium itself' to the audience, and it could not be said that the production 'quite overcomes the difficulties'. There was 'a certain stiffness', and reference was also made to 'Constance Garnett's plodding translation'. Mill's Vanya was, as might be expected, 'an excellent piece of acting', but lacked the necessary 'edge, the occasional venom, the hysteria'; a certain 'heaviness' seemed to 'weight down many of the company'. The last Act, however, had the 'proper effect', with Anne Kristen's Sonia 'perhaps the best thing in the whole evening'. And certainly her closing moments do stay in the mind when other features of the production have faded. 'P' in the Scotsman (also 6/11/62) felt that 'something of the arrested quality' which came upon the characters' lives during Yelena's visit was missing, with Lillias Walker 'too normal to explain satisfactorily the quality of her spell ...'. (This role should have been exactly right for such a beautiful and immensely stylish actress.) On the whole, however, once the first Act was over, 'the play provides compelling entertainment'. On the other hand, the Express claimed that 'a theme of boredom, frustration and repression does not make for entertainment', and, despite admitted virtues, this production 'may not be a box-office draw'. And there was, indeed, a deficit of around £1,670. It should be noted, in passing, that there were no fewer than three intervals of ten minutes each, testimony to the then accepted custom of the 'solid', realistic set in all but 'experimental' drama; this cannot have helped the flow of a play which must not be allowed to 'dawdle'. Worth noting, too, the attitude - in the early Sixties - to the meaning of the word 'entertainment', certainly not generally considered applicable to Chekhov.



Arms and the Man was directed by Eric Jones, a young man who was to work quite a lot at the Citizens' in the immediate future, and who was later to have a long and fruitful association with the RSAMD School of Drama. This comedy is a deceptive piece, often treated in a light and fluffy way, as if it were merely The Chocolate Soldier without songs, and the reviews of the time seem to confirm the impression that such was the case on this occasion. (There is, it hardly needs saying, a substantial sub-text and much more than the surface satirical connotations are embedded in it.) The cast was strong: Callum Mill as Bluntschli, Lillias Walker as Catherine, Anne Kristen as Louka and Edward Fox as the servant, Nicola, while 'G.M.F.' in the Herald (20/11/62) reported that the young Kay Gallie 'acquits herself extremely well as the romantic Raina'. The same reviewer considered Shaw 'one of the great entertainers', admitting that the play was not only 'extremely funny', but also 'beautifully constructed' ... 'the efficiency of Eric Jones's production makes one feel that one could have watched another act or so of Callum Mill's Bluntschli, a dominating performance, which is just as casual and gentle as a portrayal of the chocolate cream soldier should be' ... Michael Knight's sets and costumes were 'a proper framework for a most enjoyable evening'. 'P' in the Scotsman obviously enjoyed herself, although it is unlikely that her comments would have pleased the playwright. Referring to 'the dear little piece', she complimented the 'charmingly frivolous production' and the 'obvious enjoyment of the players and the audience in this sprightly trifle ...'. 'E.M.R.' in the Evening Citizen appreciated the danger of Arms and the Man lapsing 'into farce, as it almost did last night'. Robins Millar in the Express went further in this direction, proclaiming that 'to the new generation he (Shaw) will not be the philosopher sage, but a writer of farces'. 'Yet', he went on, 'it has touch with these times ... in the character of the practised, unsentimental organiser ... Callum Mill coolly kicks the pins away from the romantics in a precise performance'. David Gibson in the Evening Times thought it 'a fine pre-Panto presentation'!! while Mary Cavanagh in the Daily Mail classed it as a 'colourful costume piece', although she continued by saying that 'as light entertainment it conquers the ears and rouses fresh wonder at Shaw's superb skill

as a dramatist'. The deficit was £1,082.

After some hesitations the Christmas show (noted elsewhere) turned out to be Saturmacnalia, a 'book' musical described as 'a Homespun Orgy (with music and electric light)', by Cliff Hanley, with music by the equally excellent Ian Gourlay. Duncan Macrae starred - his last appearance at the Citizens' - and the result - assembled with some haste - was considered so promising that the same partnership, it was decided, would perform the same function for Christmas, 1963. The week ending January 5 established a record in the history of the Theatre, although the over-all surplus was expected to compare unfavourably with that of the less worthy Bletherskeits of 1961/62. Costs had increased greatly, however, and Saturmacnalia carried a large and expensive cast. Art Exhibitions continued: an exhibition of the work of Philip Meninsky had accompanied the run of Arms and the Man, and during the Christmas Show there was a happily chosen presentation - in Foyer and Exhibition Room - of Portrait-Caricatures in pastel and black and white by Coia. There were also the customary matinees of Bertha Waddell and her Children's Theatre. (It was possible in these days to cater for both junior and adult audiences over the Holiday season.) Emphasising the wide ranging loyalty of all those concerned with the Theatre, the Society, in conjunction with the Young Citizens', organised a New Year Prize Draw to enable the 'theatre directors and management to increase and extend' Publicity. First Prize was an Electrolux Refrigerator - (Messrs. Goldbergs were always ready with help on such occasions) - and this venture eventually realised £300, not a trifling amount in 1962.

Sterner stuff was in the offing for February, 1963, when John Arden's Serjeant Musgrave's Dance took the stage. This extraordinary play has always been a puzzle and a problem, well on the way to being unique in the way that it has been praised - in the most extravagant terms - by the critics, and so little liked by audiences. Its anti-war message is a strong and worthy one, vividly expressed in the fable of the Serjeant and his three fellow deserters who burst upon a small North Country mining community, apparently agents of a



recruiting campaign, actually bringing the skeleton of a local boy who has perished in a colonial war as a prelude to giving a terrible display of vengeance begetting vengeance, going on the basis of, as Caryl Brahms suggested 'twenty-five eyes for an eye and twenty-five sets of teeth for a tooth'. Ms. Brahms saluted the 'quality of greatness in it'. She regrets the fact that some critics 'boasted that they could understand it but disliked it. Others have admitted that they could not understand it but disliked it'. She also regrets that it was playing, when she saw it in its second week, 'to a house which was something more than three-quarters empty'. She also admits that John Arden 'cannot entirely be exonerated' from 'the prevalent passion of playwrights for not stating in plain terms the things they mean'.<sup>1</sup> (This production at the Royal Court lost over £4,000, as did Live Like Pigs ... and The Fire Raisers ... and Altona).<sup>2</sup> Martin Esslin felt that the December 1965 revival at the Royal Court failed because of 'a dull, tired, provincial production'<sup>3</sup>, and yet even the recent production at the Old Vic, with Albert Finney as Musgrave, was not greeted with the approval that might have been expected. All of which suggests that, for all its virtues, there is something wrong somewhere at the heart of the play. At any rate, it was brave of the Citizens' Management and Board to stage this prickly piece in February, 1963, unwise, maybe, to make it the post-Christmas show in the deep dark of winter (a bitterly cold one, as it happened). A deficit of £1,828 was, all things considered, hardly surprising.

The Glasgow press was a very favourable one. Director was Company Manager John Bryden Rodgers, who functioned in a number of capacities, and the title role was taken by Iain Cuthbertson, who was later to repeat his performance at the Royal Court in 1965, when Esslin recorded that he was 'a splendid actor of tremendous power' who 'suggested tremendous reserves of power, but never actually brought them into play .... he was too solid, too sober, too bourgeois, too home-spun and never revealed the dark caverns of religious mania and messianic madness ...'.<sup>4</sup> In the Glasgow Herald of 5/2/63 Christopher Small saw him as a 'Black Jack Musgrave who towers over the whole ... Bible-thumping, apocalyptic ... hovering sometimes, as the character perhaps must, on the verge of parade-ground caricature,



but a real, a frightening, and a moving figure ...'. Ronald Mavor, in the Scotsman, was greatly impressed; from the moment when Iain Cuthbertson:

strode on to the scene ... the play gained in momentum until ... Mr. Arden's lines were fizzing and ricocheting round the theatre and I for one joined the ranks of those who have maintained that this is probably the best play written in England since the war ...

Mamie Crichton in the Express considered that the play 'leans over leftwards to point its anti-war message', while Cuthbertson, 'obviously got up to look like Kitchener, sounds (instead) like Jimmy Edwards. Otherwise his Serjeant Musgrave, obsessed with duty and God, was a powerful, solemn piece of work ...'. Earlier on, Ms. Crichton (Express 1/2/63) had announced that 'The first 25 couples who moved from the old sprawling Gorbals to the new multi-storey buildings are to be guests of the theatre on the first night of the spring play season'. And under the heading of 'Tea and cakes with councillors', the Daily Record quoted one of the guests, Mr. William McCafferty, 'It's wonderful to get together. I've lived in the Gorbals all my life and never had a night out like this'. In principle, at any rate, the idea was an excellent one, but whether the choice of play for such an occasion was the right one is much more open to question. Musgrave is by no means an easy play, described by the Herald as sharing 'some of the confusions of reality', and not the kind to make a theatre-goer out of anyone new to drama. Which raises the question: is it right that drama should mirror the 'confusions of reality' instead of elucidating them and presenting them in comprehensible form to anyone prepared to listen? Without doubt Arden had written an extremely powerful piece of work, on an important theme, but it takes a long time to say something that has been said before, and it is not impossible to be irritated by the frequent 'folksy' balladry and the intrusively symbolic character of the Bargee.

In the meantime, Piers Haggard's production of Heartbreak House appears to have been touring successfully: 'J.K.' had caught a

performance (Herald, 30/1/63) at Dalkeith High School, describing the revival as 'appropriate' and 'stimulating', dealing with 'the master's voice nobly well'. Although, however, Shaw's wit was considered 'brilliant', 'his philosophy drags more than a little. The voice that reaches out is that of an angry old man'.

Following Serjeant Musgrave, important developments were taking place in the Gorbals. Albert Finney, after his early popular successes on stage and big screen, felt that the time had come to try his hand at direction. Accordingly, he wrote around various regional theatres, offering his services. It is said that some did not even trouble to reply, but the Citizens' Board and Management stepped in with commendable alacrity, and with a firm offer. Their Spring programme included a proposed production of Pirandello's Henry IV, a play which had recently met with much acclaim at Pitlochry, with John Bailey in the lead. No actor had yet been engaged by the Citizens', and the ingenious proposition put to Finney was that he should undertake this task in return for an agreement that he should later direct two productions more or less of his own choice. Attracted by the idea, and despite the fact that he was really too young for the Pirandello, he agreed, and it was decided that subsequently he would direct The Birthday Party and The School for Scandal.

In the meantime, Eric Jones was signed to direct The Importance of Being Earnest, a comedy not before seen at the Citizens', but the beginning of an important association with the plays of Wilde, who, much later, was to take first and second places in a list of box-office successes. Maud Risdon, a Scottish actress of some prestige, was to join the company as Lady Bracknell, with Harvey Ashby as John Worthing, Lillias Walker as Gwendolen, and Anne Kristen as Cecily, while the distinguished Sylvia Coleridge was to return as Miss Prism. Chief credit went to the sets and costumes of Michael Knight, and the Glasgow Herald (19/2/63) referred to Algy's flat as 'done up, by courtesy of the Glasgow School of Art and the ingenuity of Michael Knight, by Charles Rennie Mackintosh'. Acts Two and Three were played in the same sort of amalgam of house and garden ... 'a



veritable jungle of potted palms in a conservatory like a cathedral (complete with organ loft) ...'. The play was 'a little hesitant getting into motion', but 'things got steadily better', with the final result 'a most pleasing evening'. Miss Coleridge's Prism must have been one of the greatest ever: the Herald 'described her as 'always marvellously, almost painfully, but quite beautifully absent'. 'P' in the Scotsman felt that the production 'should be played at greater speed and sharpness'. Maud Risdon was 'a quietish Gorgon, placidly contemptuous ... but her interpretation proved that Lady Bracknell, written as a stylish monster, should be played to the hilt as such'. The Daily Mail found Miss Risdon 'splendid', the Evening Times 'magnificent'.

It is of interest to note that the week before the arrival of Henry IV was filled by a visit from Western Theatre Ballet, described as 'an adventurous young company presenting Modern Ballet'. In due course, under the guidance of Peter Darrell - (the founder was the late Elizabeth West) - the Company was to change nationality and become - for the good of all concerned - Scottish Ballet.

At first, Glasgow did not quite realise the importance of the event when Henry IV, Pirandello's 'Unhistorical Tragedy', had its first night, but word of mouth soon got around. Unfortunately, a strict time schedule had to be observed: the whole venture had only been made possible because Albert Finney's appearance in the proposed film, Ned Kelly, had failed to come about. He had, however, to direct his two productions, and then prepare for his New York debut in Luther; the run of Henry IV was, then, limited to the originally scheduled one of two weeks. As a result, quite a fight for tickets soon developed, and fashionable audiences could be seen streaming up to the top Circle, where hard wooden benches were still the rule of the day. A box office record for a straight play was established, and an expected deficit of £2,000 became a surplus of £830.

London critics arrived in droves; T.C. Worsley, in the Financial Times, said:



It was a pleasure last night to be sitting once again in the famous Citizens' at Glasgow and to find so packed, so attentive, and so appreciative a house ... Piers Haggard's simple and unfussy direction catches the atmosphere exceedingly well ... Mr. Finney managed both to dominate and yet to sink his part right into the centre of ... the extraordinarily subtle and intricate framework ....

Not all were entirely uncritical of Finney: Eric Shorter in the Daily Telegraph (13/3/63) found it 'above all a highly intelligent performance', but the Times (18/3/63) said:

Emotionally at least his performance of the mock-emperor was on the heroic scale .... What was lacking was a secure mental control of the character .... In Piers Haggard's production Lillias Walker repeats the corrosive performance of the Countess which she gave at last year's Pitlochry Festival - a production which made rather more sense of the play than this one .... (Not only Ms. Walker, but the designer, Daphne Dare had been involved at Pitlochry).

New Statesman (22/3/63) reported that 'Glasgow (together with most London critics) was cheering his Henry to the echo .... I'm merely asking that he should give fewer interviews and no credence to his idolators: because he is talented, and, with care and humility, he could one day be as good as they say he is now'. Kenneth Tynan (Observer 17/3/63) considered Finney:

grotesquely miscast, too young, too moon-shaped of mien and frankly inept at conveying the razor-edged intelligence that underlies Henry's lunacy; but the thrust of his temperament carries him over these hurdles to hard-won triumph .... (At one particularly striking moment the) house visibly quailed: even at the memory, hairs rise on the nape of my neck. Lillias Walker plays the mistress with the kind of casual, whiplash aplomb for want of which high comedy has languished in London these many seasons ....

Alan Brien (Sunday Times 17/3/63), had misgivings about Pirandello, but was in no doubt that 'Glasgow's achievement made London seem provincial ...'.

Nearer home, the critics were no less aware of the achievement: Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 12/3/63) recorded 'an exalting and illuminating experience', and Ronald Mavor (Scotsman 12/3/63) said 'The play is not for idle listening, but I think it is a magnificent play and nobly done ...'. Lord Harewood, then Director of the Edinburgh Festival, was present at one performance, 'incognito', and is said to have been 'thrilled', while the Daily Record (12/3/63) reported it 'a performance so vivid that it stuns the senses'. (The translation used was by John Wardle.)

Henry IV had to be the highlight of this strange up-and-down season, and was the last production of Piers Haggard to register a complete success: he had three more to come, but they seemed, for one reason or another, to be an aftermath which dwindled in interest. Probably he realised by then that there was to be no continuity of the kind that he had hoped for. The excitements of the two Finney productions lay ahead, but there was a gap to fill before then, and, wisely, it was decided to fill it with something which could not be compared with its dazzling predecessor: a new play by Bridie's son, Ronald Mavor, the first to be staged at his father's theatre. It was, fittingly enough, set again a medical background, for this had been Mavor's original background too, as it had been Bridie's. The director was Ann Stutfield, who went to work with the author to make his promising script completely stage-worthy. As things turned out, however, the actual performance was less effective than the original script had promised, or, indeed, that a reading today would indicate. This may well have been due to a certain clinical coldness in acting and direction, in keeping, perhaps, with the mood of the play, which really required a treatment which ran against its own grain. The Press, however, was, generally, friendly. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald (26/3/63) touched lightly on comparisons between father and son, finding Mavor's play 'a sort of Sleeping Clergyman in reverse'. Whereas the latter was a 'celebration of the working through heredity of scientific progress', 'Mr. Mavor looks on progress and even science itself with, if not a jaundiced, at least a more cautious eye'. The conflict between 'pure science' and common sense and humanity, Small sees as 'an interesting and important debate', but he also feels that Mavor made 'a real play of it, a genuine clash



of temperament as well as of argument'. The central situation: the unexpected rivalry for the Chair of Surgery in 'the Royal Infirmary of a large industrial city' - (not a million miles, doubtless, from the Citizens' Theatre) - could have been developed on 'popular' lines like those of the excellent 'Dr. Finlay's Casebook' series well-liked at the time, but Mavor had more ambitious aims, which he partially achieved. His ambitious sub-text, which, it must be admitted, requires the playwright's word of explanation, was a gloss on the Daedalus-Icarus, Icarus-Talos legends, symbolical versions of the rituals of the dying king, with the young surrogate who becomes 'a King for a day' and is then destroyed either by being cast off a high cliff, or, in some versions, eaten by virgins:

The partridge keeps on cropping up in these myths perhaps because its behaviour, either in its love-dance or when threatened - it pretends to be wounded and hobbles about but suddenly regains its full strength - resembles that of the King who pretended to be dead but returned, his strength renewed, after the day's ritual.<sup>5</sup> (Hence Partridge, in this play, returns from his 'exile' limping, and with a stick.)

Mavor claimed that he used this mythology 'to shape' what was otherwise a 'straightforward play about a controversial contemporary problem, the place of research in medical practices'. Mr. Harry Partridge, Senior Visiting Surgeon, generally expected to be the favoured candidate, is ousted by his younger zealot of an assistant, John Sillars, and disappears almost off the face of the earth while Sillars almost ruins his career by his impersonal, blinkered enthusiasm, and finally returns, symbolically renewed, so that each may gain his own world. On the fringe of things, there is the comic, chorus-like figure of Danny, the drunken hospital porter: 'See these dark nights. You'll see me in the shadows. I'm part of them, almost'. There is also Mrs. Partridge, who, in her husband's absence, suddenly and unconvincingly reveals that her marriage is unsatisfying and makes a play (unsuccessful) for Sillars. This plot is, as it stands, quite unbelievable as well as being unnecessary, and is a serious flaw in the texture of the play. Near the end, the two rivals ruminate together on the hospital roof, where some of the



philosophical debate is effective. Near the beginning, Partridge had told Sillars, 'You've no poetry in you, John', the reply being, 'Not much, I think. I haven't time for it', but now Sillars has little alternative but to listen to some fairly poetic musing from his senior: Partridge is indulging his enthusiasm for the comets and planets in the night sky: 'A shining genius can pop up anywhere. But in general the great procession marches across the night sky, in its very nature orderly ...'. And eventually, paving the way for both men to achieve the best of their own particular worlds: 'We only sacrifice our young men for the benefit of our old kings when we have wars. And I hate sacrifices of all kinds. It is much better to have reached a happy compromise. Isn't it?'

A study of the text today gives the annoying impression that here is a play that was nearly very good, but which has sunk without trace: so much Scottish dramatic work of this period remains unpublished. Certainly memory suggests that - for whatever reason - neither the Partridge of Alastair Hunter, nor the Sillars of Michael Blakemore - (who could have realised his future importance in the history of the Citizens'?) - fully realised the potential available. Christopher Small, however, found them 'well-matched', with Hunter 'rotund, rosy, common-sensical', and Blakemore giving the impression of 'pursuing a line of research with wolfish singleness of purpose' ... 'excellent pieces of acting'. Roddy McMillan was Danny the Porter, inclined 'to indulge in macabre philosophy and very funny indeed', and special mention was made of 'his final outburst', which, 'making elaborate hay of some of the instalments of Progress, seems to have only tenuous relevance to the matter in hand: but it alone is worth a visit to see'. Daphne Dare had remained as designer after Henry IV, and her set 'most ingeniously' suggested 'the appropriate parts of a Royal Infirmary from wards to roof-top'. 'P' in the Scotsman (26/3/63) found it 'a rattling good play' ... 'I took a doctor along with me, and the types and situations were as valid to the expert as to the more selfishly agitated layman'. This critic considered that 'the Citizens' Company did the play proud', with Blakemore effectively suggesting his character's 'curious, frustrated, specialised limitations' and 'the funny bits' 'riotously successful

in the hands of Roddy McMillan's drunken, shrewd and beautifully Scottish infirmary porter'. Not all the reviews were quite as complimentary: the Record also praised McMillan (perhaps the finest Scottish character actor of his time when at his best form), but of the play said 'It's much too wordy and at times borders on the ludicrous'. David Gibson in the Evening Times satirically stated that:

The play resembles half a dozen episodes of "Emergency Ward 10" (then a household name as a successful Television 'soap opera') lumped into one and unfortunately lacking the love interest, despite an almost embarrassing interlude in the second act which looks as though it dropped in from Mars, but which is presumably there to hit home with sledgehammer blows the unsocial, dedicated character of Sillars, through the sudden marital frustrations of Mrs. Partridge ....

Edward Ashton in the Daily Mail (26/3/63) found it 'a play which for about three-quarters of its length is good stuff', while 'E.M.R.' in the Evening Citizen considered Mavor 'a worthy successor of his late father'.

Neither of Albert Finney's productions did his reputation any harm, and both ranked high among the attractions of this strange season. The reception awarded to The Birthday Party was fairly typical of the attitude of the Scottish Press to Harold Pinter, whom they obviously still regarded with some mistrust, as others had done before. Following the first (highly unsuccessful) London production, Peter Jackson had written, 'Harold Pinter strikes out on a course towards the Ionesco-Simpson brigade but twists and turns so aimlessly in half-circles that I wanted to give the whole cast a swift kick in the pants'. Nevertheless, in seeming contradiction, he added, 'Peter Wood directs the weird characters and their destinies with a fine sense of mounting tension'.<sup>6</sup> Laurence Kitchin qualified his interest in the play by statements like 'Pinter lets the backchat run away with him in the manner of Ionesco at his garrulous worst'.<sup>7</sup> John Russell Taylor, however, by 1962, was referring to it as 'a real comedy of menace'.<sup>8</sup> Christopher Small made no secret of his belief



that the playwright was vastly over-rated, and in his Glasgow Herald review of 9/4/63 he expressed Glasgow's gratitude:

to the Citizens' Theatre for enlarging (its) knowledge of what is, at least, fashionable .... But it must be said that this kind of thing, in which the raw materials of life ... are thrown almost at random together, disorganised and unchanged, does not make a play ... (although it was) from time to time interesting to watch ... (He felt that the characters) under Albert Finney's direction ... and in Daphne Dare's shabby-genteel set ... have as much theatrical life as ..... they are capable of. (The acting was) quite outstandingly good (and) Martin Miller, in particular, with his too-white smile, his dreadful bonhomie is able genuinely to stir the hair.

'P' in the Scotsman of the same date thought Finney's production 'too loose to pin down the stifling yet intangible aura with which a well-done Pinter reeks', continuing with the rather sweeping and - surely - questionable judgement, 'The later and better Pinter plays are less explicit ... Nevertheless ... the production has plenty of excitement. Everyone enjoys the shudders to be got from watching someone else being bullied'. Obviously neither critic sees in this play the genius which - arguably - it expresses: none of the materials of Pinter's plays are 'thrown together' ... it might, indeed, be fairer to fault him for being too fastidious, and, whatever one's view of their function and nature may be, he has created five truly memorable characters. 'E.M.R.' in the Evening Citizen noted that 'the comedy occasionally eclipsed the underlying menace' and was bold enough to label the inscrutable Stanley as 'a mildly inoffensive ex-pianist'! Robins Millar in the Scottish Daily Express complimented Finney on being 'as brilliant at producing a play as at acting ...'. 'The characters are vividly created, but all the action is freakish'. Quite the most extraordinary remark came from John O'Callaghan in the Guardian (9/4/63): 'The play has a curious, gratuitous advantage playing in this theatre lost in the brutish squalor (sic) of the Gorbals', and probably the most sensible one from J. McKenzie in the Evening Times: 'If we stick to the characters and take what goes on on the stage as it comes, the play keeps hold'. Apparently there



was some uncertainty in audience reaction: the Scotsman critic observed that 'The audience seemed to find amusement in passages which should have had a chilling effect', and in a letter to the Herald printed on 13/4/63, a Mr. McPherson of Glasgow wrote, 'I wish to express my extreme indignation at the selfish and childish behaviour of a section of the audience in the gallery'. But then the borderline between laughter and terror in Pinter is always a slim one: sometimes there is none at all.

Finney's staging of The School for Scandal provided ample comfort for those who had been frightened off by the Pinter. Sheridan's comedy is not the easiest of plays to put across to an audience, and productions often find the first scene heavy going: indeed one of the few cautionary critical remarks comes from 'P' in the Scotsman (23/4/63): 'a little more rehearsal, or some judicious cutting might send this act' (the first) 'more surely over the hurdle'. The critic goes on to say, however, 'This is a superior production of a masterly old favourite and' - (not the compliment that Sheridan would have wished to earn) - 'deserves the grateful support of Glasgow's schools and parents'. Small in the Herald of the same date considered it 'the best piece of high comedy (one of the peaks most difficult of repertory attainment) that the Citizens' have given us for long enough'. He notes with satisfaction that 'They have put the whole thing behind screens at the Citizens'; bringing scene after scene smoothly to view from behind them'. It was 'an occasion for congratulations all round, to Albert Finney for the direction itself, to Daphne Dare for fitting it so pleasingly out ...'. Robert James, a one time 'jeune premier' in the Wilson Barrett Company, was 'a most unctuous and insinuating Joseph Surface', while Anne Kristen (Lady Teazle) was 'so gay, so delightful, so charming'. Edward Ashton (Daily Mail) thought it a 'delicious job', while Robins Millar in the Express assumed the complete mantle of doyen of critics: 'This young man may have been exploring the art of direction in Glasgow, but already he has distinction in it ...'; he showed something near to 'impeccable style that glitters like new chromium'. Other members of a distinguished cast included Sylvia Coleridge (Lady Sneerwell), James Cairncross (Sir Peter Teazle), Kay Gallie

(Maria), and a very promising young actor, John Church, later to be heard much in BBC radio drama, as Charles Surface.

From here there was really nowhere to go but down, and the rest of the 1962-63 season has about it an odd sense of anti-climax. The end of a Directorship is always a difficult time, and this one had never really had the chance to get started: there was from now on little sense of 'company feeling' - guest artists came and went - and there was no 'house stamp' on the productions. The choice of play, too, was strange. First came Anouilh's The Waltz of the Toreadors, a difficult mixture of sweet and very sour, from a playwright never a favourite with Glasgow audiences. (In contrast, according to John Russell Taylor, 'his popularity, especially in Britain and the U.S.A., has continued to increase among the ordinary theatre-going public', while 'somewhat in eclipse in intellectual circles'.<sup>9</sup> Christopher Small, in his Glasgow Herald review of 7/5/63 neatly sums up General Saint Pé's predicament as having 'an invalid wife ... two hideous daughters ...', and 'cherishing for 17 years a hopeless passion of his youth'. Piers Haggard's production received a favourable enough press, but there is room for doubt whether Graham Crowden, excellent actor though he is, was ideally cast as the General. Admittedly the Herald found him 'admirable', ('though sometimes rather hard to hear'), and memories of some stylish supporting performances remain in the mind, especially Lillias Walker as the never to be attained object of the General's affections, and John Church as the younger man who puts her finally out of his reach. Eithne Dunne, described at that time as the 'uncrowned queen of the Dublin theatre' was the terrifying 'invalid' wife. She was vocal in her admiration of the Citizens' Theatre, as reported in the Evening Times of 16/5/63: 'They have a real sense of the theatre akin to what we have at the Abbey. I was amazed when I saw the range of their productions. Glasgow has something to be proud of here, but why oh why do the public not give them better support?'

Christopher Small, in turn, recalled her 'rising from the bed of imaginary paralysis', crying to her wretched husband, "You're mine! My thing, my object!". She could 'certainly make us laugh, but it



is with a gasp of horror'. Of the production, he says, 'though moving a little slowly at times', it 'treads very successfully the delicate line between pure ribaldry and the reminder, never very far distant in Anouilh, that, if human beings have souls, that is what makes life hell for them'. Rather surprisingly he also found the evening 'most cheerful'. 'P' in the Scotsman suggested that 'A British company playing this can never quite attain the proper climate of thought which permits such scarifying glimpses of the marriage of untrue minds .... That said', it 'comes over very well. Piers Haggard produces it' - (cf. the Herald) - 'at speed, with throwaway lightness, but he achieves a very ugly and menacing bedroom scene'. According to Don Whyte (Daily Express) the production 'swings along pleasantly. It could be a tour de force with a little more general attention', while 'E.M.R.' (Bulletin) - all of the same date - thought it 'hilariously funny, very sad, and occasionally profound'.

1963 was very much the year of the critic turned dramatist: Ronald Mavor was at that time Drama Critic for the Scotsman, and 'John Hubbard', author of the next play, V Minus One, was a fairly thin disguise for Christopher Small. In its final form, the play turned out to be rather short for a full evening, and so it was coupled - not too happily - with A Resounding Tinkle by N.F. Simpson, flavour of a fairly short month. His work was certainly original and was sometimes witty and amusing, but is not really the sort of thing to end an evening begun with a substantial and thought-provoking piece of work: employed as a curtain-raiser it might well have made a more satisfactory impact. However, Mavor, in the Scotsman of 21/5/63 described it as a 'witty surrealist dream-picture of life in suburbia', while 'E.M.' in the Glasgow Herald thought that 'Leonard Webb, Anne Kristen and Lillias Walker' (the latter as 'Uncle Ted'!) did 'a beautiful job with Mr. Simpson's deadpan nonsense'. Robins Millar, however, regarded the whole bill with a jaundiced eye, claiming that the 'two short plays' were 'in the vogue that cultivates obscurity. It looks as if the policy is to freeze out average citizens for the sake of playful experiment ...'. He called the Simpson play 'imitation Ionesco ... a lengthy one-act to produce giggles by nonsensical irrelevance ...'.



It was, however, the 'Hubbard' play which was the talking point of the evening. Drawn from the Philoctetes of Sophocles, it gave the legendary invincible bow obvious modern connotations, adopting a style of speech appropriate to this interpretation. Hercules begins the proceedings in declamatory vein, but soon takes the audience into his confidence in conversational style. The exposition shared between Ulysses and Neoptolemus, the younger soldier entrusted with the task of bringing the injured Philoctetes and his bow back from Lemnos to put an end to the war with the Trojans, is a shade awkward, but things improve greatly when Neoptolemus meets the pain-tormented veteran. The dialogue here has more than a flavour of Christopher Fry as Philoctetes begins to win over his would-be adversary:

Two and two equal four, bent and strung and  
hammered to a point. My arrows cannot miss.  
Their points are tipped with truth. There is  
no shield against them .... Where shall I aim?  
To the Moon, where she climbs, where she hangs  
and smiles at me? Shall I split that rotten  
old fruit? .... My arrow points higher yet,  
beyond, up there, through the hole in the  
night to the black centre, the zenith.  
Nothing ...'.

The cross-talk between two soldiers is not always too happy, although the first of them has an effective passage where he describes Lemnos as 'a place you'd naturally come to if there was a bad thing to do', while the second voices some telling 'home thoughts', and the Attendant to Neoptolemus, the latter guarding the bow while its owner lies in a swoon, has a nice Thersites-like scurrility about him: He is, he says, 'a collector of truth. I find it in the dirt, you know. I look for it in the ash of camp-fires, in the mud, round the latrines'. He is delighted to cause trouble and complains about the sleeping soldiers, 'They're dreaming of their wives and sweethearts, each one for himself, following his own longing ... it's disaffection, sir'. Neoptolemus is torn between affection and sympathy for the older man and duty to his patriotic commitments: the sequences illustrating these developments are not always totally convincing, but there are striking moments, as when Ulysses, who could so easily become the unattractive outsider, rounds upon the moralisers, 'All of you in the grip of your idiotic little scruples ... D'you suppose I don't enjoy

luxuries too? A clean shirt and a clean conscience every day? ...'. There is danger of sentimentality with the eventual pleading of Philoctetes, 'Take me home, boy. Take me home', but this pitfall is side-stepped, and violence only just averted by the re-appearance of Hercules, Deus ex Machina, proclaiming that the war will go on:

All the things you are about to do at Troy  
will be done again and again. And my Bow  
also has the power of growth and reproduction  
... (until) the harvest of death spills out  
all over the world .... (The play ends with  
a challenging question) ... must I ask it  
myself: why, why, why must this be? What  
is to be done that it should not be? I  
can't answer: I am only Hercules, an  
immortal ... will nobody speak?

Ronald Mavor in the Scotsman of 21/5/63 sees the play, rightly, as Sophocles

with secret weapons and ultimate deterrents  
very much in mind ... with the aid of Mr. Piers  
Haggard as producer, Mr. Hubbard has made the  
play look very modern indeed, although it is  
still set in ancient times. It has  
contemporary dialogue, ballad-like songs,  
actors who remain on the stage when not  
performing, droll music from the orchestra  
pit and direct appeals to the audience.  
The result is refreshing, serious and yet  
light, classical and yet relevant .... (He  
was not sure if) the small cast makes the  
most of the play (but) John Church (Neoptolemus)  
has a nobility. Ronald Ibbs' Ulysses (however,  
was) too gentle and elegant to represent the  
military mind. (Bruce Taylor's Philoctetes  
was a) woolly old man from the sea rather than  
a warrior who has learnt philosophy ...

Mavor also explained the title succinctly as 'backward projection':  
H bombs, A-bombs, V2, V1 and so on. 'E.M.' in the Glasgow Herald  
correctly pointed out that the 'bow which will end the war' was a  
'parody of the reasoning used to justify the dropping of the atomic  
bomb on Hiroshima'. The review goes on to say that the playwright  
'varies his attack with some shrewd and delightful asides ...'. At  
the same time, 'it would perhaps benefit from some cutting and



certainly from a production which gave full value to the good lines which last night were thrown away on the backdrop ...'. Michael Kilgarriff as Hercules was singled out as 'dominating the stage during his brief appearances for the very good reason that in his immortal regalia he looked all of eight feet tall'. (The actor is, in fact, 6ft. 7ins.) Robins Millar, as already indicated, did not enjoy the evening, saying that V Minus One:

works out, after a lot of padding and moralising, as an anti-deterrent tract .... As presented without reality, this does not hit drama .... But the play's message does have a punch when Hercules, as a demi-god, strides out with a rousing speech to indicate that the bow will be followed by cannon, bombs and similar destruction if men cannot find a reason why not .... But such gimmicks as having Cockney ancient Greek soldiers rolling their own cigarettes are tiresome.

Despite some faults, V Minus One has much to commend it, and a study of the text prompts the thought that it probably aroused insufficient attention at the time, with, as so often then, too little credit given to the Theatre Board and Management for their enterprise.

In spite of a fairly friendly press, Peter Ustinov's The Love of Four Colonels did not make a rousing end to the Season. With the leading roles all in 'guest' hands, James Bree and Maureen Toal as Bad and Good Fairies respectively, and Sheila Hammond as the Beauty, this hardly seemed like a Citizens' production at all. Furthermore, although a great success with the author in the lead, this fantastical comedy, which places the Sleeping Beauty's castle in the midst of the four post-war occupied zones, did not seem to be wearing well. The idea of a Colonel from each zone in search of success with what 'G.M.F.' Glasgow Herald (4/6/63) called the 'slumbering ideal' is an amusing one, especially when they took the guises upon themselves of '18th Century French, Shakespeare, 1935 Warner Bros. and classical Russian', but 'perhaps it is ungrateful to suggest that they are not as funny as they might be, or that the intentness with which Mr. Ustinov pursues his themes sometimes verges on the ponderous ...'. What promised to be 'an airy, sparkling bubble of entertainment' ... 'performed



something less than it seemed to promise'; the settings of Daphne Dare, however, were 'exquisite, especially in the dream world sequences'. Mamie Crichton in the Express felt that 'There are witty lines, but Piers Haggard's production hardly brings out enough acting flamboyance', but 'P' in the Scotsman was particularly amiable:

Piers Haggard's alert direction and excellent acting by the cast rounds off their season very nicely .... The comedy is a hilarious lesson for those boring Moderns with Messages, showing them how a moral can be conveyed painlessly by leavening wit with seriousness, without harping too long on either. (Elements in the performance were) engagingly reminiscent of earlier productions this year ... so reminding us in a modest and genial way of the many pleasant evenings we have had from the company.

Taking an all-over view of the Season, Michael Goldberg, as Theatre Chairman, was reported in the Herald of 15/6/63 as saying that there was now 'greater promise of an assured future than ever before'. In June, the Board was told of a substantial increase in attendance, while the Junior Citizens' Theatre Society donated £300 towards the Tea Room, including a new carpet. And Iain Cuthbertson was appointed General Director of Productions; (the concept of Artistic Director had, in fact, arrived, although it would be a year or two before it was used). As a July post-script, the Glasgow Herald of 25/7/63 announced that 'Piers Haggard is to take up an appointment at the National Theatre in London in September as assistant director under Sir Laurence Olivier'. It was noted that he was a great grand nephew of Rider Haggard, the novelist.

The Productions were:

A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare) Directed Piers Haggard (17/9/62).

A Streetcar Named Desire (Tennessee Williams) Directed Piers Haggard (1/10/62).

The Good Woman of Setzuan (Bertolt Brecht, trans. John Willett) Directed Piers Haggard (22/10/62).

Uncle Vanya (Anton Chekhov, trans. Constance Garnett) Directed  
Ann Stutfield (5/11/62).

Arms and the Man (Bernard Shaw) Directed Eric Jones (19/11/62).

Saturmacnalia (Cliff Hanley, Music Ian Gourlay) Directed Graham  
Crowden, Dance Direction Bruce McClure (5/12/62).

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance (John Arden) Directed John Bryden Rodgers  
(4/2/63).

The Importance of Being Earnest (Oscar Wilde) Directed Eric Jones  
(18/2/63).

Henry IV (Luigi Pirandello) Directed Piers Haggard (11/3/63).

The Partridge Dance (Ronald Mavor) Directed Ann Stutfield (25/3/63).

The Birthday Party (Harold Pinter) Directed Albert Finney (8/4/63).

The School for Scandal (R.B. Sheridan) Directed Albert Finney  
(22/4/63).

The Waltz of the Toreadors (Jean Anouilh, trans. Lucienne Hill)  
Directed Piers Haggard (6/5/63)

V Minus One (John Hubbard) Directed Piers Haggard and  
A Resounding Tinkle (N.F. Simpson) Directed Graham Crowden (20/5/63).

The Love of Four Colonels (Peter Ustinov) Directed Piers Haggard  
(3/6/63).

Footnotes to Chapter Four - INTERREGNUM

1. Plays and Players, December 1959.
2. John Russell Taylor, Anger and After (Pelican, 1963), pp.330, 331.
3. Plays and Players, February, 1966.
4. *ibid.*
5. Professor Mavor's Note which accompanies acting script.
6. Plays and Players, July, 1958.
7. Laurence Kitchin, Mid-Century Drama (Faber, 1960), p.119.
8. Russell Taylor, p.289.
9. John Russell Taylor, Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre (Penguin, 1966), p.15.



## CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL MANAGER IN CHARGE

With Iain Cuthbertson in sole command as Director of Productions, everything seemed set fair for a long tenure, with a much needed continuity of management style. Cuthbertson would direct, personally, as far as productions were concerned, bringing in 'guests' on a short, long or intermittent term basis; he still carried the title of 'General Manager' as well, but by the late Autumn Andrew Leigh would be appointed 'House Manager'. As has been suggested, the increasingly fashionable concept of 'Artistic Director' was now, in fact, operating at the Citizens'. Whether this concept has been for the good of Theatre in Britain remains a matter of discussion, succeeding or failing according to the man or woman concerned. Some rare beings are perfectly able to cover the whole spectrum, but others have been tried and found wanting; some distinguished directors have been driven out to seek other avenues of theatrical expression because they were being caught in the trammels of theatre politics instead of being allowed to concentrate their energies on matters artistic. In this case, however, the prospects were good, especially as Cuthbertson was already popular as an actor and personality with public and critics. And yet, after only two years, another 'fresh' start was being made.

However, the beginning of the first season, a production of Macbeth, was a big, bold and confident venture, with money not spared, and a Theatre Society Wine and Cheese Party helped to add to the festive spirit. The takings for the first week were a record for the theatre, but a substantial return from the Box Office was necessary to meet the expenses for a three-week run of a costly presentation. There was an actual deficit of £2,028, but, as now shown, with the Scottish Arts Council grant parcelled out at £600 a week, the deficit looked rather better at £228. For once there is little record of any major catastrophe accompanying this traditionally ill-fated play: it was, generally, quite handsomely

received by Press and public, but it is the visual impact that remains in the mind, rather than anything emotional or intellectual. (Juanita Waterson was the new designer.) Kenneth Mackintosh returned to play the name role, with Anne Kristen as his Lady. Iain Cuthbertson directed, and one striking new personality at the Citizens' was Stephen MacDonald, certainly the favourite actor for the next two years, and destined to be a most important influence in the Scottish Theatre. Phil McCall was the Porter, Norman Scace, well known to Glasgow audiences for his appearances with the Wilson Barrett Company, was Duncan, Alex McCrindle Ross, Sylvia Coleridge the Gentlewoman, and Maurice Roëves one of the Soldiers. The Witches were no shrivelled crones, having more in common with the Lorelei. Perhaps Ronald Mavor came nearest to the truth in the Scotsman (10/9/63) when he said that there was 'little sign of any strong artistic imperative to perform the play'. Going further along these lines, he described it as 'Victorian melodrama', 'at its best ... no more than a routine performance'. He described the set as combining '20 blood-red stairs with a moorland landscape of stalagmites which seem to have been poured on to the stage from a can of melted Edinburgh rock ... I liked best Mr. Stephen MacDonald's performance as Macduff'.

Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald of the same date admired the courage of the enterprise: 'Right at the beginning of the season, the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, set themselves at this Becher's Brook of a play, ride hard and straight and - not without a few scratches - come triumphantly over. It is an auspicious start ...'. There was 'nothing fancy about this production, apart from a certain extravagance in the set, and some eccentricities in the noises off ...'. Iain Cuthbertson's direction was 'direct, rapid, and to the point', while Mackintosh's interpretation of the title role attempted no 'extraordinary interpretation' but was 'perfectly logical', Anne Kristen's Lady Macbeth was a 'remarkable achievement ... Her youth, too, suggests a kind of unthinking wickedness which gives a new and poignant depth to the character ...'. The Daily Mail found the production 'a worthy presentation', while David Gibson in the Evening Times gave 'prime mention' to Kristen, 'whose Lady Macbeth is a mingling of open sex, sheer sadism and a kind of



childlike innocence ...'. The verdict of Robins Millar in the Express was 'Shakespeare unrefined, vigorous'. In the Scotsman of 20/9/63 there appeared a letter from a Mr. D.H. Smith: it referred to Ronald Mavor's 'sarcastic and pompous review'. Mr. Smith had 'not enjoyed a production in years so much' and admired the Citizens' for having the 'guts to please the paying audience'.

As 1964 was the year of the Quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, Cuthbertson's first season was unusual in including two of his plays, and obviously a comedy was required as contrast to Macbeth. Much Ado About Nothing was considered to be a suitably unhackneyed choice, and once again a three-week run was scheduled. Eric Jones was engaged to direct: a strong cast was headed by Anne Kristen as Beatrice and Stephen MacDonald, now an established favourite with Glasgow audiences, as Benedick. Hannah Gordon played Hero, and once again designs were by Juanita Waterson. Roderick Horn (Claudio) composed an original setting for 'Sigh No More Ladies', and incidental music was by Byrd, Dowland, 'and other composers contemporary to Shakespeare', while costumes were supplied by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the special Programme, made possible by the Scottish Branch of the 'British Empire Shakespeare Society', had the Quarto Edition frontispiece as its cover, and included a Map of Shakespeare's London. On the Birthday, April 23, there was a celebratory recital, arranged by Company Manager John Bryden Rodgers, under the title of 'The Lunatic, the Lover and the Poet'.

Fortunately all these trimmings were to adorn a successful production which did much for the Citizens' prestige: Keith Harper in the Guardian (24/4/64) compared it more than favourably with other Shakespearean productions in Scotland at that time. 'But "Twelfth Night" dismally started the Pitlochry Festival', he said, 'and the "Romeo and Juliet" at Perth is colourless .... Only the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre Group (sic) ... came out with their reputation unscathed. Rather is it enhanced ...'. It was, he went on, 'Scotland's finest repertory company'.

The play was done, Christopher Small said in the Glasgow Herald



(15/4/64), 'very handsomely indeed, with skill and assurance, with pleasure for the ear and a quite ravishing appeal to the eye ...'. It allowed 'the various treasures of wit and pathos and ribaldry ... to display themselves in their own time and in their own way'. Most of all it was 'Beatrice's evening' ... as played by Anne Kristen, she 'fairly dances like the star at her christening ... Nor is Stephen MacDonald's Benedick an unworthy partner'. Referring to the Quarto Programme cover, he concluded, 'the Citizens' have every right to hold up their heads beside the Lord Chamberlain's men'.

The Scotsman considered it an 'enchanting entertainment', while Robins Millar in the Express noted that this was the only staging of this play for the current celebrations, expressing the reaction that it was 'such a gorgeously enjoyable play'. The Daily Record said that it 'should not be missed', while the Evening Citizen called it 'memorable' and praised the 'almost statuesque poise' of Roy Boutcher (Don Pedro). It is difficult to believe that less than two years previously the critics had been regarding the much more accessible Midsummer Night's Dream as not quite the thing for a theatre 'which keeps declaring it hopes to appeal to a wide section of the community' (Evening Times, 18/9/62). Fittingly at this time the civic authorities awarded the Citizens' an extra £5,000 for 'urgent repairs', the annual grant now being £6,200. But with a considerable degree of over optimism the Herald reported (14/4/64), 'Glasgow Corporation was now fully committed to the city architect's department being given the task of designing the new cultural centre ... on the site of the former Buchanan Street goods station'.

The third and last Shakespeare under Cuthbertson's control, The Merchant of Venice, was also, probably, the least good, although it won some favourable reactions, and Maurice Roëves, as Lorenzo, received something of the junior adulation once awarded to Cairney's Hamlet. It was directed by Eric Jones, already a proven Shakespearean director of quality but, here he came up with something rather coarse-grained, in some ways a throwback to Victorian methods: Shylock, for instance, was seen returning to his deserted house, following the flight of Jessica. Morocco was

made to perform in musical comedy style, and Roy Boutcher, never elsewhere an actor to exaggerate, was required to portray an outrageously 'camp' Arragon.

Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald of 17/3/65 aimed his main attack - rather unjustly? - at the play itself. It was, he said, 'treated - and who will say wrongly? - very much as a carnival, not to say a charade ... if, as a play, it tends under scrutiny to dissolve into fragments, the Citizens' are really far less to blame for that than the author ...'. There were, however, 'many good fragments to recall'. Stephen MacDonald's Shylock was, when he claimed his pound of flesh, 'as implacable as anyone could wish', although 'hitherto almost too calm, too dignified, too handsome'. Anne Kristen's Portia was one 'whom we rather curiously first observe undergoing beauty treatment, and whose wooing by guess is something less than urgent', but she 'comes into her own' with the Trial scene. He concluded that 'it makes a cheerful evening'.

In the Scotsman, 'P' saw the production as a 'condemnation of anti-semitism and race prejudice', although 'in the ennobling Shylock has been diminished in terms of dramatic colour. The pathos he used to be able to command, in contrast to his avarice and villainy, now has no foil, and therefore little impact ...'. Anne Kristen's Portia was 'hampered a little by a voluptuous blonde wig'. In contrast, the Evening Times thought that MacDonald gave a 'performance which evoked sympathy, albeit reluctant, while at the same time generating detestation of his avarice'. The Evening Citizen found him 'superb', reckoning that 'Eric Jones's brilliantly exciting production was magnificently successful'. However, a letter from Mr. H.P. Nicol of Kilmacolm appeared in the Herald of 1/4/65 which was notably lacking in such superlatives. Certainly the Shylock was 'memorable', but 'overshadowed by the distasteful features' of the production:

While the treatment of the Prince of Arragon as a pansified ass is warranted, there is no need for the exaggeration with which this part is played. Nor is there any need for the grossness of Launcelot Gobbo's gestures. Adult minds find no pleasure in this: that it should be displayed before audiences made up largely of school children is shameful ....



This letter - (and let it be said that its misgivings were not without actual foundation) - illustrates the way in which a production deviating in any way from the norm could incur public wrath. This is one of the first signs of the unjustified charges of doubtful moral standards which were to be thrown at the Citizens' in the next few years, a sort of rearguard action against the crumbling of accepted values which was to have its profound effect on the fabric, the inner workings of the whole enterprise.

One other Shakespearean venture should be mentioned, if only to illustrate the commitment to touring which then existed in the Theatre itself and in the authorities responsible for providing subsidies to back it up: a production by John Bryden Rodgers, the Company Manager, of Twelfth Night; this was not seen at the Citizens', but its cast was composed of players who regularly appeared there. Anne Kristen was Viola, Lisa Daniely Maria, Alec Monteath Sir Toby, Graham Lines Malvolio, Roderick Horn Feste. The tour reached a respectable number of towns and villages, while Glasgow Corporation set up five special matinees at different schools. 'D.K.C.', in the Glasgow Herald of 10/3/64, recalled how it 'ended its first week with a capacity audience at Greenock Arts Guild Theatre ... Alec Monteath, still specialising in the "old buffer" roles which, for a young actor he plays so brilliantly, is a wonderful Sir Toby Belch'. Later, the Rutherglen Reformer (20/3/64) reported that the production had 'delighted staff and pupils' at Duncanrig School, East Kilbride. Some opinions varied from these enthusiastic reviews, but it seems that the tour was fulfilling its purpose, and the Scottish actor, Alex McCrindle, acting as Tour Manager, was quoted in the Glasgow Herald of 16/3/64 as saying, after the final performance at the Dumfries Guild of Players' Little Theatre, 'Everywhere we went people had been queuing for seats. Our tour has certainly killed the myth that live drama is on the wane'.

There was surprisingly little in the way of 'period' classics during the time when Cuthbertson was in full command, but at the beginning he came up with something of a rarity in his own production of Vanbrugh's The Relapse, with Peter Woodthorpe as



Guest actor in the role of Lord Foppington. (It may be mentioned at this point that Andrew Leigh was now installed as House Manager. Mr. Leigh was the son of the late Walter Leigh, composer of pre-war intimate musicals and Herbert Farjeon revues. Otherwise much remained the same: Margaret Rothwell still played the piano 'in the Pit', and the programme still housed copious advertisements.) Plays of the period of The Relapse require careful handling if their 'plots' are to be in any way lucid and intelligible, and this production perhaps went after effect, business and decoration rather than clarity, with Woodthorpe playing his comedy at full throttle, but it was critically well reviewed. Small in the Herald of 4/2/64 considered the play itself:

one of the funniest and most spirited of the pieces which ... we lump together as "Restoration" .... It calls for a style and polish not quickly to be come by, and sometimes, it is true, wanting in this production .... Peter Woodthorpe seemed momentarily almost too grotesque, more of a pantomime dame ... but he is also extremely and mountingly funny ... Altogether it is a pleasing show and a sufficient demonstration of its author's parts ....

Praise was given to the late Clem Ashby for his 'racy rustic knight'. 'P' in the Scotsman did not consider the play to be Vanbrugh's best, being 'ramshackle in construction, but' it 'abounds in tearing good humour which comes over the footlights infectiously ...'. Complimenting the cast, she wished that Vanbrugh had 'written them a better third act for them to work on'. The Daily Mail thought Woodthorpe 'magnificent', the Evening Times 'splendid'.

During these two seasons there was no concentration on any one area of play choice, the aim seeming to be to provide audiences with as big and wide an experience as possible. Marginally the greatest dependence was on what one might call more 'modern' British classics, one or two of which presented some problems of approach. John Russell Taylor tells us that Somerset Maugham's The Circle 'was accepted at once as a triumph of wit and construction, and also of psychological realism',<sup>1</sup> but its history had not always been

untroubled, as J.C. Trewin chronicles: 'Astonishingly, The Circle was booed on the March night of its premiere .... The gallery could not always hear ("Don't mumble!" it shouted), and it did not like Maugham's irony'.<sup>2</sup> The question now was whether it was 'period' or 'dated'? Christopher Small asked in the Glasgow Herald of 15/10/63. One possible reaction from the audience, he felt, was 'How antique the slang and how absurd the dresses'. This may have been because in the generally efficient production of Eric Jones 'the feeling of period' was 'a little lacking'. Indeed, this is a play which requires the ultimate polish and style if it is to succeed in revival; not all the performances achieved this degree of 'rightness', although the cast was a strong one, with Geoffrey Chater guest actor as Clive Champion-Cheney; the Herald gave just praise to Sylvia Coleridge's Lady Kitty, 'aged, raddled, painted ... ludicrously affected and boundlessly silly ... a performance worth going to see for its sake alone ...'. One moment was especially praised: the moment when 'this absurd old woman sees herself as what she was and what she is'. 'P' in the Scotsman thought that it seemed now 'as much of a period piece as anything by Wilde' and that it lacked 'the ultimate rapier edge of style which keeps a comedy of manners ever-green'. The Daily Record found it, on this viewing, 'all style, but little substance ... the kind of play which has to be performed with elegant flair. In this production it is very well served'. The Evening Citizen commented that 'allowances must be made, of course, for the superficial attitudes of the period', while the Evening Times felt that it would be acceptable 'if you can get yourself to feel in period ... otherwise the outmoded slang and dated dresses will get you down'. (Outmoded slang? Dated dresses? Do strictures of this kind apply to Wilde? Indeed to Sheridan? Goldsmith? Or is it just that they are better writers? Or better treated in production?). Robins Millar, in the Express, ever true to himself, delightedly proclaimed that 'The break from these morbid moderns is a happy choice'. The production had one irreparable disadvantage, at any rate, in the presence in the cast of Lillias Walker as Mrs. Shenstone ... dazzling, beautiful, witty; unfortunately, Mrs. Shenstone appears only in the first few minutes of the play, and lovers of the dazzling, the beautiful, the witty, spent the rest of the evening



vainly waiting for her to return.

Shaw's Pygmalion, cleverly inserted into the Season at the normally 'dead' pre-Christmas period - and also directed by Eric Jones - turned out to be a much greater success in every way. Leaving the Arts Council grant out of consideration, the deficit was only £730. With £1800 added - (the run was for three weeks) - the net gain was £1,070. This is probably less than surprising, as J.C. Trewin recalls that 'Sir Herbert Tree ... made from it £13,000 in its first three months .... For Shaw does not lecture in Pygmalion. He is telling a good theatrical story ...'.<sup>3</sup>

It is doubtful if anyone could claim that this was one of the best Pygmalions ever - for one thing, the production was too 'busy', and in the First Scene in Wimpole Street, Higgins sat on practically every arm of every piece of furniture, which, even allowing for the Professor's volatile temperament, seems excessive. Shaw's speeches do not require to be 'jollied along' or broken up by extra movement: his text is, in itself dramatically mobile enough. However, as has been indicated, everyone was fairly happy on this occasion, even if it seemed to 'P' in the Scotsman of 12/11/63 'one of these endearing plays which sends everyone home, relaxed and happy'. Not, perhaps, just what Shaw intended. The production was also much to the liking of Robins Millar (Express): 'My Fair Lady without music lacks nothing in entertainment' ... (the embargo placed on the original by those holding the rights of the musical version had only recently been lifted) ... 'The Citizens' draw gasps from the stalls at the sight of stupendous gauzy hats. And men should envy silk-lined opera cloaks and black topplers ... a strongly acted production of its period when writers could be brilliant without being grimy ...'. Andrew Young in the Daily Mail considered Anne Kristen's Eliza 'superb', and, although Stephen MacDonald's Higgins was 'overbrash', the delivery of lines was 'surefire', and this was probably the 'best production of the Season'. The Evening Citizen commented on the 'magnificent settings' (by Juanita Waterson) and thought that the whole thing made 'a fine ending to the current Season'. (The Autumn one). Christopher Small (Herald), consistent in his admiration of Ms.



Kristen, found her 'by some distance the best Eliza I have seen', while MacDonald, though 'rather younger than usual' for Higgins, was 'none the worse for that', although it was not 'always easy to believe in this professor's burning genius (and Shaw does not provide such an awful lot of evidence for it)'. Norman Scace was an 'impressive' Doolittle, and, to sum up, 'That it is still quite unfaded, one of Shaw's best and funniest plays, is shown in full'.

A 'modern classic' of a different kind was the choice for March in the following year, Harold Brighouse's Hobson's Choice, and, although it was enjoyed by audiences and well reviewed, there seems to have been no great sense of occasion, or realisation - generally - that Patricia Routledge was giving a major and definitive performance of a great leading role. The Glasgow Herald (by 'G.M.F.') was brief and routine. (19/3/63): 'homely comedy ... no deep problems to be proved or answered ... pleasant, predictable ...'. John Sharp's Hobson was a 'good, ponderously comic job', while Routledge was 'uncomfortably convincing' as the 'young battleaxe daughter'. 'P' in the Scotsman classed it as 'part of what might be called theatrical mini-history ... directed with good taste ...'. (Eric Jones was in charge again.) The heading of the review - incredibly - was 'Aged Comedy Wears Well'. The Evening Citizen took up this theme with 'A 1916 Choice but Still a Hit'. The Daily Mail noted that the Citizens' had chosen to 'fall back on ... a tested comedy'. However, the result is 'the soundest professional production of the season so far .... It is outstanding in many respects, but principally for the performance of Patricia Routledge ...'. J.C. Trewin calls Hobson's Choice 'the best Lancashire comedy of its school, one appreciated as much in the gentler South as in the craggy North ... It was made to wear ...'.<sup>4</sup>

At least there was no danger of Saint Joan being regarded as a 'pot-boiler', as Hobson's Choice obviously was, but it might be said that, in fact, it proved to be less than an 'occasion'. This, the other Shaw in Iain Cuthbertson's time, providing an obviously suitable 'vehicle' for Anne Kristen, always presents a problem when it forms a part of a 'repertory' Season, even though Citizens'

productions, from the opening of the 1964-65 programme, were now running for three weeks, with a corresponding increase in rehearsal time. Direction was by Kenneth Parrott, who had created a favourable impression with The Caucasian Chalk Circle (8/9/64), and the rest of the cast was strong. It included Brian Smith as the Dauphin, Tony Wright as Dunois, Callum Mill as de Stogumber, Stephen MacDonald as Cauchon, and Michael Burrell as the Inquisitor.

Some critics used superlatives: Robins Millar (Express 21/10/64) said that Anne Kristen 'surpasses all expectations', while Andrew Young (Daily Mail) felt that she was 'like a woman entranced'. Christopher Small in the Herald began as devil's advocate by claiming that surely by now we should regard Saint Joan as 'played out, old hat'. One would think that 'surely it is time Shaw's was superseded ...' (as far as stage treatments of the Maid are concerned) ... 'Somehow it is not; it obstinately remains not only his most powerful play, but one of the most lively in the repertoire ...'. However, this production is 'in several respects below the standard the company usually set themselves, and this play requires ...'. Anne Kristen was 'honest, direct and sensitive ... but it is only when the trial opens that she begins really to get a grip of Joan and us ...'. Elsewhere there was some 'very good acting indeed'. Michael Burrell's Inquisitor was 'gentle, courteous, faintly ironical, and quite implacable', while Brian Smith was 'an excellent Dauphin'. 'P' in the Scotsman found the Company not at their best; they 'seized on the Epilogue to show their paces': there was a 'curious lack of spiritual excitement in the first half'. Kristen was 'admirably competent' rather than moving, and things 'failed to break through the barrier of talk into the realm of dramatic excitement ...'. The nearest thing to excitement was the playing of Callum Mill as de Stogumber'. It seems that this was an example of a potentially outstanding success which failed quite to rise to the challenge. But then, as already suggested, Saint Joan, wonderful play though it is, always presents a problem .... Without taking the Grant into consideration, it would have shown a deficit of £2,585.

Box Office returns for An Ideal Husband, however, were 'most



encouraging' according to Board Meeting Minutes, and this a little later in the year at the pre-Christmas period. The 1964 production by John Bryden Rodgers was not strongly cast throughout, but it had much to commend it to the large numbers who came to see it, and the critics, on the whole, seemed to enjoy it so much that they were, perhaps, inclined to over-praise it. Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 2/12/64), paraphrased the text in complimentary manner, 'one can even - in such a very old-fashioned piece as An Ideal Husband - grow quite suddenly modern ... a minor classic' performed 'with much elegance and style' in 'some extremely fine sets' (by Edward Furby). He admired the acting: it was 'well up to its setting', with Stephen MacDonald (Lord Goring), 'with ruffled shirt and green carnation, the perfect result of Boodle's'. Lisa Daniely (Mrs. Cheveley), he thought, displayed 'a splendid show of wickedness', and Michael Burrell's Lord Caversham was 'elaborately old and crusted'. His remarks about Martin Heller and Anne Kristen as the Chilterns are significant: 'They do it very well, carrying off even the most preposterous scenes of Accusation, Misunderstanding, Reconciliation'. The use of capital letters alone shows that the melodramatic scenes were still, at this time, a matter for some scarcely concealed merriment, despite the fact that Kristen, in particular, found a great deal of sense in her tormented Ladyship. Allardyce Nicoll refers to An Ideal Husband as 'a problem drama flavoured with sentimental motives. All of these serious themes, however ... (he was making comparisons with Wilde's other plays of this kind) ... Wilde has clothed with a profusion of wit, and one has the impression that in none of them did he believe very much)'.<sup>5</sup>

In the Eighties, strangely enough, attitudes have changed back, and young audiences will sit enthralled through scenes not taken seriously by their parents. And the political intrigues, of course, are mild stuff compared with the realities of the late twentieth century. Small, however, saw the play merely as 'a polished and pleasing piece of work; a delight to the eye and soothing to the mind ...'. Admittedly Andrew Young in the Daily Mail even then pointed out that it 'could scarcely be more topical', but 'P' in the Scotsman considered that its 'chief charm lies in being a period



piece'. As might be expected, Robins Millar, commendable as always in the honesty which impelled him to scorn publicly the fashionable and the modish, hailed the play's 'grip of theatrical story-telling which lights up human values that are always universal ... a delightful revival of high days when the English theatre was a pleasure-giving illusion'.

Early in the next year, Mr. Millar was given further pleasure by the production (again by Bryden Rodgers) of Pinero's Dandy Dick. 'If they could only keep on entertaining like this', he said in the Express of 3/2/65, 'they would have no need for subsidies ... directed exactly in period ... with gay exaggeration, and racily acted'. (In fact, without the Scottish Arts Council Grants of £2,100 apportioned to the three-week run, Dandy Dick would have shown a deficit of £1,960). Small in the Herald of the same date enjoyed 'altogether a beautiful evening' and had praise for the guest actor, David Stoll; he also liked the performances of Gillian Brown and Anne Raitt as the 'flighty daughters', Roy Butcher and Ralph Gruskin as the Hussars, Stephen MacDonald as Blore the Butler, and Peggy Marshall and Martin Heller as the 'sporting pair'. 'P' in the Scotsman rated it a 'gay, unpretentious little entertainment ... dated but enjoyable'. Dated? In what way? Plays are only 'dated' as opposed to 'period' if they fail to work in subsequent ages: there are those who consider it just possible that Pinero's farces, always excepting the brilliant The Magistrate fail completely to make the leap from their own time. Or perhaps they require an especially stylish treatment to enable them to do so.

Iain Cuthbertson made a commendable effort to cover a wide area of dramatic ground during his years in control, and, if the British classics, ancient and more modern did not throw up anything for posterity in the way of productions, it should be stated now that real distinction was to be found in the European choices, and, even more, in the 'Scottish' side of things. It should also be noted that on 6/2/65, it was announced that this potentially long-lasting and important regime was to end after only two years. His resignation, 'personal and unconnected with the direction of the

Citizens'', was accepted 'with great reluctance'. He wanted to 'get around and find out what's happening to the theatre elsewhere'. Whatever the reasons for this unsettling surprise, however, the sense of an end, rather than a bracing new beginning, could possibly be sensed a little after the half-way mark in this period: once more the creative flame of excitement was burning a little lower.

The European element had been introduced bravely and most enterprisingly immediately after the opening Macbeth with the presentation, by arrangement with the Royal Shakespeare Company, of Friedrich Durrenmatt's The Physicists, only nine months or so after the Aldwych production by Peter Brook, and in the same translation (by James Kirkup). The Citizens' production was by a distinguished guest director (André van Gysegghem), and Fulton Mackay returned 'home' as guest star in the central role of Mobius. Set in a sanatorium in Switzerland, this is the kind of play which arouses conflicting reactions, depending on what, in fact, one expects of it. Small in the Herald (1/10/63) felt that 'thanks and congratulations' were due, '... the atmosphere macabre, claustrophobic and dreadfully rational .... A little, perhaps, of the outrageous humour of the piece has leaked away'. After praising the male leads: Mackay, Stephen MacDonald and Norman Scace, he went on, 'Just why Durrenmatt chose to incarnate the supreme principle of destructive reason in the person of a female psychiatrist must remain, perhaps, for psychiatry to answer. But there is no question that Lillias Walker makes her most frighteningly real ...'. There was much pondering over the 'meaning', the 'significance' of the play, and it is to the credit of the Citizens' that they should go out of their way to choose a play which could become a healthy talking point, although John Russell Taylor had made a neat assessment when reviewing the Royal Shakespeare production: 'Its function is to ask questions', he summed up, 'not to provide answers; it is, in short, a theatrical entertainment, no more and no less, teasing, lightweight, and very cunningly put together as an essay in intellectual grand-guignol'.<sup>6</sup> It should be said that the play deals with three scientists who have incarcerated themselves as mental patients, one, Mobius, to keep what he sees as his fatal discoveries from the world, the others, from different



powers, to win over Mobius and his crucial, but potentially lethal discoveries. In order to preserve their secret, it has become necessary for them to murder their respective nurses - escaping punishment because they are believed not to be responsible for their actions. It seems possible that Mobius's strategy will work until it becomes clear that the mad doctor who runs the sanatorium has been watching and waiting until she is able to seize power and possession of the three scientists and their knowledge. This is a play which seems to have disappeared from view, and there is thus all the more reason to be grateful to the Citizens' for taking the chance of staging it when the moment was right.

Robins Millar in the Express automatically distrusted the play, or at least had his doubts about it: 'a macabre play ...'. The debate is 'in heavy and fairly obvious terms. "Should the scientist be let loose on the world?" We get an anti-nuclear sermon ...'. There is 'vivid melodrama', but the play 'hammers its message'. Peggie Phillips ('P') in the Scotsman said, 'the play grips the attention to the final curtain without ever descending to the blood and thunder level which might be expected from madmen and corpses'. (Another instance of the general critical uncertainty as to what 'category' this play fell into. 'Categories' of the cut and dried kind were still assumed in 1963, and the arousing of a degree of perplexity in face of this play contradicts the suggestions later to be made that the Citizens' during these years kept to the tried and traditional theatre.) According to 'P.F.' in the Daily Record, The Physicists 'took the Citizens' Theatre by storm last night', while David Gibson in the Evening Times enjoyed 'a series of twists and turns which keep you wondering what's next ...', but, more significantly, he had already noticed that 'There may be a message buried somewhere amongst it all, about who is really sane in a nuclear age; if there is, it's secondary to a strong story ...'.

The next European choice, Pirandello's Six Characters In Search of an Author, was even more adventurous, although it already had the 'cachet' of being recognised as a 'modern classic', even if it was none too familiar to Glasgow audiences. Production was by John



Bryden Rodgers, and the cast was a strong one: Stephen MacDonald was the Director, Leonard Maguire the Father, Ruth Lodge the Mother, and Lillias Walker the Step-daughter, and others in the company included Robin Culver (son of Roland), Helen Norman, more familiar, as already noted, to music-hall and variety patrons, and now making a place for herself as a 'straight' actress, as well as Lisa Daniely, Phil McCall, Anne Kristen, Janet Michael, and, recently graduated from drama school, Hannah Gordon. Despite the odd rough edge here and there, this was a production to remember, once the preliminaries were over. Christopher Small in the Herald (18/2/64) thought that it 'might have been written for such a company as the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow. For surely it is a repertory company who are assembled there, for rehearsal, on the empty stage ...'. He then goes on beautifully to encapsulate just what the play is about: 'They enter - the six uninvited, unscripted, unwanted characters who come to teach both the actors and audience their lesson about the nature of theatrical illusion and reality. It is an effect that loses little by 40 intervening years and plenteous debate ...'. It was a 'generally admirable revival' with 'very much due to Leonard Maguire's performance as the Father ...'. David Gibson in the Evening Times recalled that Shaw had counted it as one of the five best plays he had ever seen. '43 years later it has lost nothing'. 'E.M.R.' in the Evening Citizen considered it 'probably the finest play from one of the century's outstanding dramatists, but', (and here the critic sounded a note of disagreement with other colleagues) 'this production did it insufficient justice'. But the last controversial word must rest, as so often, with Robins Millar in the Express: 'In 43 years, it has gone round the world, even to China, but Glasgow has rarely seen it. The likely reason? It is strictly for eggheads'.

Despite the peaks which accompanied Cuthbertson's regime from start almost to finish, the impression left - even at a distance of time - is one of unevenness of quality, even though it must be remembered that this was a first run for the kind of artistic direction which is now common practice - the final death knell, for the moment, at any rate, of the power of the 'Producer'. During the first Season, however, there was little 'playing safe', and the

next venture among the Europeans was an unfamiliar one, The Pinedus Affair by Paoli Levi (in a translation by Robert Rietty). There are those who feel that not much would have been lost if it had remained undiscovered as far as this country is concerned, but it was given a respectable press and can be said to have been a modest prestige success. It is one of those plays where no one except the eponymous music critic, Jon Pinedus, has a name, but are labelled 'The Lady', 'A Drunk', 'Soap Box Orator', etc., often a sign of pretentiousness to come. Both direction and design were by John Bryden Rodgers, and there was a large cast of familiar players like Leonard Maguire, Alec McCrindle, Lisa Daniely, Martin Heller and Phil McCall, none of them with anything very memorable to do or say. Harvey Ashby, a good actor, who had previously been at the Citizens' in The Importance of Being Earnest and Henry IV, returned to play the ill-starred Pinedus, whose story, in the words of 'E.M.' (Glasgow Herald 31/3/64) 'begins with a parking charge and ends with a martyrdom'. When Pinedus finds himself unintentionally guilty of another death, 'he declines to fight against his sentence .... While this play could be usefully shorn of some of the more portentous generalisation ... with which it is afflicted, it is an absorbing piece of work'. Comparing Levi with Ibsen, Peggie Phillips (Scotsman) remarks that 'All this forms a tranquilly disturbing entertainment, agreeably thought-provoking, but lacking the splendid theatrical clangour ...'. Robins Millar (Express) approved it as a 'sombre tragedy, inevitably gripping ...', while 'E.G.' (Daily Record) described it as a 'gloomy, exasperating but interesting exercise', although he had prefaced this judgment by saying that 'The trouble ... is that it is a play with a "message"'. The author himself, in a Programme note, explains that he has 'tried to propound what I consider to be one of the most distressing problems of our epoch: the belief in the necessity of a perfect justice, and the proof that in practice it is impossible'. Having suggested his philosophy that gross human errors are only tolerable if we believe that they are part of 'a far greater design', (a credo accepted by Pinedus when he resigns himself to his 'expiation'), Levi trusts that his play is 'neither pessimistic nor desperate as it might at first appear'.



A giant of the second Cuthbertson Season was Kenneth Parrott's production of Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle, (the opening presentation for 1964-65, which was the Citizens' 21st birthday year). It had special music composed by Frank Spedding, choreography by Clemence Bettany, set by Edward Furby and costumes by Wendy North, and there was a five-piece orchestra (Piano and Organ, Percussion, Trumpet, Clarinet and Flute). It was the British premiere of the translation by James and Tania Stern with W.H. Auden, and the role of the Storyteller was sung - and superbly - by Isabelle Lucas. It should be noted, too, that from now on runs of three weeks were to be the rule, the extra rehearsal time being considered necessary to achieve the desired quality. This step was to prove justified on a number of occasions - if not all. It is, perhaps, not surprising, considering the costs involved, that the deficit on this production was the largest ever: £5,147, not taking the Arts Council's Grants into account.

Christopher Small, in the Herald of 9/9/64, not a whole-hearted Brechtian, hailed the removal of 'Brecht's original induction, the laborious documentary of peasants arguing the rights and wrongs of the Kolkhoz ...'. (Representatives of two Kolkhoz villages met to discuss land claims, and the actual play is performed in honour of the visiting delegates.) Small also had praise for Lucas:

who makes a feminine Storyteller of notable presence and rich voice, a blues singer strayed into the Marxist night-school ... (He was, however, troubled by) the extraordinary dislike of the playwright for straight lines of approach .... The last scene of the play which, after some two hours of approach-work, embodies the point, is much better ... it is good enough, indeed, to remind one how much wit and reason and passion there actually is in Brecht: but it does seem a long time getting there ....

(In this the wise if highly unconventional judge, Azdak, rules, after the 'love tug-of-war' that the child belongs to the kitchen maid, Grusha, and not - of course - to the Governor's Wife.)



But you, who have listened to the Story  
of the Chalk Circle,  
Take note what men of old concluded:  
That what there is shall go to those who  
are good for it,  
Children to the motherly that they prosper  
Carts to good drivers, that they be driven well,  
The valley to the waterers, that it yield fruit.<sup>7</sup>

There was 'some excellent acting', and those singled out were Brian Spink (Azdak), Martin Heller, Roy Butcher, Stephen MacDonald, Harry Walker and Anne Kristen (Grusha). Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) considered the production 'an almost total success ... a very Brechtian Brecht production ...'. There were 'fine performances throughout', and there was special notice of 'Brian Smith's sympathetic Simon'. On the other hand, 'Mr. Parrott has made a number of fairly substantial cuts, but even so there are points that seem to be over-stressed, scenes which do not seem to pull their weight ...' and the dialogue showed a 'certain lack of tautness'. To Robins Millar (Express) it was 'challenging and a fresh experience', but, although David Gibson (Evening Times) called it 'A brave choice', he felt that it 'could well have been trimmed', and that 'at times it became laborious'. 'R.W.' (Daily Record) noted a 'sparkling performance', while Andrew Young (Daily Mail) really summed up general opinion by saying that the Citizens' 'have launched their 21st anniversary season with a magnificent production and some brilliant acting'. It could be said, too, that it was the foundation of what was to become the great popularity of Brecht with Citizens' audiences: The Good Woman had already beaten down some resistance, and he was destined to figure prominently in the repertory in future years and very different regimes.

Contemporary plays did not feature prominently during these two Seasons: three only, one English, one Irish, one American (the latter by nationality of authors only). Rashomon was, in fact, based on stories by the Japanese writer, Ryunosuke Akutagawa by Fay and Michael Kanin; Kurosawa's celebrated film version had appeared in 1951, and the stage play commenced a run of 159 performances in New York in January, 1959, with a cast including Rod Steiger, Claire Bloom and Akim Tamiroff. A Hollywood version, The Outrage, was

still to come, removed from its Oriental setting, and, according to The MGM Story, it became 'a bit of an endurance test in its Western guise'.<sup>8</sup> The Broadway production apparently had a mixed press, ranging from "An inviting theatrical experiment" (Herald Tribune) to "a pretentious bore" (News),<sup>9</sup> but the play reads well even now, and, on paper must have seemed a good, imaginative choice.

The theme and structure are certainly attractive and unusual, taking place in and around Kyoto a thousand years ago, and dealing with the rape ... or was it? - of the wife of a Samurai Officer, and the Samurai's violent death, presumably at the hands of the same Bandit. But we see the story told in several different versions. Perhaps the wife was not so flower-like ... could she have run her husband through? Or was it all a tragic accident? What should be a haunting framework is provided by the presence of a Priest, a Woodcutter and a Wigmaker, and the 'message' is nicely summed up by Edwin J. Bronner, as 'the elusive nature of "truth" and how it changes in the eye of the beholder'.<sup>10</sup> Or, according to the play itself, 'People see what they want to see, and say what they want to hear'. For some reason, however, the Citizens' production by Graham Evans did little to fire the imagination of audiences, despite some strong male casting. Perhaps the differing facets of the Wife were brought out insufficiently strongly, perhaps it was because of the extreme brevity of the piece.

Critical reception was not unfriendly: Small in the Herald (25/10/63): 'The play runs through the possibilities with a deft hand in which the dexterities of this production admirably co-operate ...'. Some effects were 'borrowed from the Kabuki theatre ... the action moves rapidly ... exploring and demonstrating the unreliable nature of evidence and the elusiveness of truth ...'. It was noted that the company 'nowadays changes from show to show, but preserves as much as possible the feeling of a team'. There was 'some excellent acting ... Ian McShane especially distinguishes himself as the Bandit, horribly tough, of hairy muscular body and plebeian speech', but 'Fiona Hartford could perhaps have made more of the wife's transformation .... It makes unquestionably a gripping and,



finally, an uproarious evening'. Elsewhere, however, the treatment of the later part of the play met with less approval, with the Evening Citizen referring to 'tasteless horse-play', and the Express feeling that it would have 'done for the Crazy Gang'.

An ominous note was struck in a letter by Mr. Tom O'Beirne to the Herald of 5/11/63 which remarked that 'Of the last three productions, two, The Physicists and Rashomon, have proved to be virtually 'one-acters' with a tea-break. In the case of Rashomon the curtain rose at 7.35 pm, the tea-break lasted for 17 minutes, and I left the theatre at exactly 9 pm, not because the play was paltry, which it was, but because it had ended'. Mr. O'Beirne wondered if there was not, under such circumstances, a case for re-introducing the 'curtain raiser'. He was making a valid point, certainly in the case of Rashomon, which did not make a satisfying evening, although memory does not suggest that the Durrenmatt needed further 'bolstering'. The fact is that some plays, Pinter's Old Times, for instance, although brief as regards actual running time, pack so much of atmosphere and implication into them that any addition before or after would almost be an impertinence. Nevertheless, value for money is something that theatre managements must watch carefully if they are to retain the regular goodwill of their audiences. A happier letter came to the Herald from Miss Thelma Sutton who, describing herself as a 'new Glasgow Sassenach resident', saw the 'Citizens' as doing 'their best to serve all tastes during this tricky period; at least they have not condemned us to a safe provincial pot-boiler diet, an exclusive menu of the modern spit and drool school, nor (dare I say it?) too much Scottishness to please the patriots'. She was in favour of 'more unusual and provocative modern plays'.

The sole contemporary English play was the one which had first established Peter Shaffer's reputation, Five Finger Exercise, and it was right that Glasgow audiences should be given the opportunity to make up their minds about the early work of a playwright of significance who was continuing to maintain his favourable position in the eyes of the critics.



This study of the eruption of a charming and intelligent German tutor into a rather glossy Home Counties family was much praised and had considerable commercial success when it first appeared in London (1958), and John Russell Taylor described it as 'put together with the theatrical aplomb of a Pinero, well provided with dialogue of remarkable crispness and articulacy'<sup>11</sup> and 'immensely clever, extremely well written, and completely theatrical in the best possible sense of the term'.<sup>12</sup> The Scottish Press was less wholeheartedly enthusiastic: Christopher Small noticed (Glasgow Herald, 24/2/65) 'the fearful sentimentality only a little below the surface'. Then, referring, of course, to Shaffer, 'the way he says it and the level at which he makes his plea for love and understanding sound like a problem story from one of the glossy magazines lying around the set'. The Scotsman's 'P' thought the play 'naive' and lacking in the magic 'which involves an audience in the passions of the characters', and the Express considered that it took too long to achieve very little'. On the other hand, the Evening Times regarded it as 'a refuge from television plays ... an enjoyable evening's entertainment', and, according to the Record, it was 'one of the Citizens' most explosive and successful offerings'. Yet the feeling persists that either the direction (John Bryden Rodgers) or the casting - which was strong - Leonard Maguire, Peggy Marshall, Christopher Guinee, Ian Dewar, and Vivien Heilbron - was less in sympathy with the play than it might have been. Without attaching any actual blame to them, it must be said that the Citizens' has seldom been at its best in this kind of material, which requires a diamond sharp edge out of harmony with the particular richness of Clydeside. And it must be remembered that the company was, at this time, in no way an ensemble one.

The Irish representative was by far the most successful of the contemporary trio, and was also the last production by Iain Cuthbertson during his term of office. Hugh Leonard's The Poker Session had made quite an impression at the Dublin Festival of 1963, and had come to London (Globe Theatre) on February 11, 1964, where, although well received, it had not achieved a long run. Martin Esslin suggests a reason for this: 'That it is an exceedingly

clever piece of theatre is beyond doubt. The basic plot idea is most ingenious. The dialogue moves fast and is witty into the bargain ...'. However, 'I feel that, paradoxically, the play is too clever. The surprise ending is so ingeniously concealed that it defeats its own purpose'.<sup>13</sup> The action takes place on the first evening home of Billy Beavis after a period in a mental institution, and the eponymous game mirrors the one which had taken place on the evening of his collapse. There has been a broken romance, with Billy's friend Des marrying Irene, whom Billy loved; Irene is one of the party, but Des has not arrived ... by the end of the evening he still has not joined them. There is also some mystery surrounding the death of Billy's sister, and additional colour arises from the arrival of Billy's friend from the institution, Teddy, who has constructed for himself an elaborately 'cool' type of speech: 'I left my wife, walked out on her, and in this other town I met me a swinging nubile chick aged twenty-one .... Man is a social animal ... an animal ; so we found us a crazy pad, sparsely furnished, but with a bed the size of a swamp and a cookbook of curry recipes ...'. As it reads today, perhaps The Poker Session is not quite as exciting as it seemed in print in 1964, but it was a sensible idea of the Citizens' to introduce Glasgow playgoers to a new playwright of importance, and there was a vintage cast of familiar players: Stephen MacDonald as Billy - his last performance in a major role at the Citizens' meantime - and Callum Mill as Teddy, with Peggy Marshall, Anne Kristen, Irene Sunters and Martin Heller. Full value was given to the characterisation, tension, comedy, and the quite appalling climax; reception was generally favourable, despite some murmurs about the wisdom of presenting mental ex-patients in this manner, and the production went on to the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh. Decor - as it had been throughout Cuthbertson's second Season - was by Edward Furby. Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald of 7/4/65 considered the play not only to be a 'thriller', but also 'quite a telling assault on ... the respectable, orthodox ... property-loving pious Irish society'. It was 'all very good stuff ... very well put over'. MacDonald's was 'a most carefully thought out performance as the madman who is so sane, so reasonable, so gentle ... almost too good'.



One would have expected a rich burgeoning of local writing to be staged under Iain Cuthbertson, but such proved not to be the case; Scottish drama seems to have been on a downward curve at this time, as indeed, it was to be for some years, as far as Glasgow was concerned, at any rate. Nevertheless, under the rather loose and inconsistent heading of 'Scottish plays' came two outstanding productions and one box office success which caused a certain amount of consternation. The playwright concerned was Bruce Baillie, an Edinburgh born schoolmaster then living and teaching in Canada, and his play had been lying around for some time before Cuthbertson decided that it was worth looking at and shaking down: Battle Royal was its eventual title. John Cairney, who played a leading part, says, '... big Iain encouraged me to write to my heart's content. Like me, he held that a play is not a play until it is performed. It is only a rehearsal script. Fortunately it was a great success'.<sup>14</sup> There was a very good idea behind the play, and it did indeed prove to be popular, but its changes of gear and occasional unredeemed crudities prevented it from achieving the quality of, say, James Scotland's The Honours of Drumlie.

A money-conscious Laird and his three daughters who long for a suitable marriage are linked to the reputed habit of King James V travelling the country 'like a gaberlunzie man' calling himself 'The Guid Man O'Ballengeich', with a 'randy reputation' and a 'bug about testing hospitality'. When Jamie Soutar, a strolling player - or is he? - arrives at Sir Robert, Laird of Glendrum's castle, demanding food and shelter, he is certainly given a bite to eat, but thereafter dumped into Sir Robert's particularly nauseous 'pit'. Becoming convinced that his visitor is, in fact, the King, Glendrum, along with his ancient crony, Sir Ebenezer Fletcher o'Kinellie, favoured husband for his eldest daughter, Isabel, sets about putting things right, resorting to all sorts of desperate measures. His trump card, as he sees it, is to offer 'Jamie' the pick of his daughters for the night. Eventually 'Jamie' calls his bluff and puts Glendrum 'on trial', creating the serving man, Willy Ochiltree, Knight and Judge so that he may deal out justice to his master. Finally 'Jamie' sets off with Isabel and a full purse, just as another



visitor arrives at the gates, apparently the genuine 'Guid Man'.

Certainly an ingenious plot, with infinite opportunity for diverting situations, and Baillie has an ear for good dialogue:

Stop her! Yer late lamented mother? It would've taken the Abbot himself wi' his bell book and candle to stop your mother. Aye, and be God she'd have blown out the candle, eaten the book and danged the damn bell herself.

And 'Jamie's' thoughts as he prepares to elope with Isabel, 'King or mummer, lord or beggarman. What does it matter? They're all but skins to peel off' show how effective the conclusion might have been had it not got out of hand and changed its mood so insensitively. Some of the characterisation is fine, too: 'Jamie' provides an excellent opportunity for colourful swash-buckling, an opportunity which John Cairney exploited to the full in the Citizens' production, and Sir Ebenezer, Glendrum's unwilling accomplice (richly realised by the great James Gibson) has some good moments: 'I'd stay wi' you bit I've just minded a bit business I've no' attended to. Don't take it too hard, old friend. It'll be all over in a matter o' minutes if the axe is no' blunt'. Best of all is Ochiltree (Walter Carr), who finds himself on such uneasily familiar terms with the supposed King: 'my most notorious extinguished excellent', and, later, 'I dinna like to stand by and see my king being made a fool o' by a couple o' weasels like yon'. Unfortunately, Baillie does not know where to stop, in any sense of the word: he favours unsubtle puns like those in the scene between 'Jamie' and Kate, the passionate 'middle daughter':

JAMIE: You have no conception of the variety of womenkind.

KATE: I hope they hae no conception either ....

JAMIE: Isn't that her gnawing at the door already?

KATE: Probably. We are an annoying family ....

JAMIE: Kate kissable, Kate comely, delicate.

There are, too, plenty of unfunny crudities, as when the 'nobility' is described as 'wagging all their blue blooded bums in the air'

and 'Jamie' advises Glendrum, 'I'd sit down if I were you, Sir Robert, before you blow your breeches off like a stopped cannon. It'd be a pity to spoil the furnishings'. Later, when he has been directed from the castle hall to relieve himself, Sir Robert asks, 'Did you find "it" all right?' and 'Jamie' replies, 'I've been fairly well acquaint wi' its whereabouts since I was weaned ...'. All this in 1964, too. Some of the reviewers duly took offence to a more or less degree, and the Daily Mail (19/2/64) promised in advance that it would 'contain words in it never before heard by a repertory audience'. 'P' in the Scotsman (3/3/64) felt that the Citizens' Theatre did 'no service ... to the Scots theatre by tacitly admitting ... that this is the best the searchers' (after new Scottish plays) 'could find' .... The playwright, she continues, 'achieves Restoration coarseness without the sense of period or style that excuses and enhances it'. The Daily Record entered the world of sub-Hollywood by describing the play as 'spicy - but nice', while Robins Millar begins, in the Express, by greeting the arrival of a new play by a Scots author, 'a rare event nowadays'. However, 'it is carried through in barrack room language with no possible indelicacy omitted. It is fair to say that the douce, fur-coated audience laughed at all the bawdiness in sheer happiness'.

Andrew Young (Daily Mail) thought that the 'one basic joke' was 'laboured and wears a trifle thin', but Paul H. Foster (Evening Times) found it 'riotous ... a romp from start to finish making The Relapse look like a story from the pages of a "Noddy" book'. A severe condemnation might have been expected from Christopher Small, but although he wrote in the Glasgow Herald, 'The joke dies rather soon' and the play is weighed down with 'conscientious bawdry and excruciating puns', with the last act threatening to 'disintegrate altogether', 'it is saved by a happy piece of invention which, with the tumbling and chasing over, sets a servant up to pass judgment on the behaviour of his betters'. He had previously noted that the author, 'declining to take his country's history solemnly, has looked in one of the least edifying passages of it for something funny. For a good deal of the evening it may be said that he has handsomely succeeded'. Iain Cuthbertson was assisted in his production by one



of the Company, Glenn Williams, with designs by Juanita Waterson and Jay Clements. 'Pit' piano solos were provided (by Margaret Rothwell), with arrangements of 'Scottish airs' as Overture and at the second Interval, and 'Scottish Dances by Hamish MacCunn' at the first.

When, some twenty years later, the Scottish Theatre Company revived Battle Royal, it did not repeat its initial popular success. There was another richly effective Ochiltree in John Grieve, but not a 'Jamie' with John Cairney's panache: its less successful scenes remained unsatisfactory.

It was probably inevitable, following the commercial success of Battle Royal, that there should be a speedy follow-up, and in April, 1965, Bruce Baillie's The Harmony Bugle duly appeared. This was, chronologically, the last production before Iain Cuthbertson left for the Royal Court, the last by John Bryden Rodgers, and the last with Stephen MacDonald as a member of the Company, and it is a pity that their various exits were not associated with something more distinguished: it did not, as had been intended, accompany The Poker Session to the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum.

In fact, Baillie is not at all negligible as a playwright, and it is a pity that neither of his Citizens' plays were shaped and crafted into acceptable unities. He returned to Scotland to teach, but has produced nothing else of note for the stage. This is unfortunate, because he can write, and, given more self-control and, perhaps, more external advice, he could have filled a respectable corner in a type of Scots comedy which is always welcome and can attain at least modest degrees of artistry.

Unhappily, The Harmony Bugle comes too near to a re-run of the earlier play, with the setting transferred to 1865 in the 'Quaker Community of Harmony, Virginia, on Confederate territory, 15 miles south of the Potomac'. But once more we have three man-hungry daughters and a 'single parent', here a female one who runs a village store. The 'Bugle' of the title is a - from the Confederate point of view - heretical newspaper produced by the girls in secret. As



a result, a Confederate Major arrives in a state of some indignation, and later a United States Army Lieutenant, set on ensuring the safety of the Editor in the face of possible persecution. He is followed by Lieutenant Willard Macquhat, who is black-skinned and 'speaks Scotch' (for some reason or other). The romantic possibilities are obvious, and the subject of miscegenation is dealt with in no very subtle manner: before things go as far as that, Willard is described as 'one of the Black Watch', but in due course he is addressed as follows by the young lady of his choice: '... if you think I'm trudging over there for the pleasure of having my bottom skelped by a goddam fuzzy-wuzzy like you, you're out of luck ...'. And, just to pave the way for a happy ending, the birth elsewhere in the Community which has been awaited throughout the play finally takes place with the celebratory cry of 'a Harmony baby at last. And what's more - it's black'. It has to be said that all this is presented with, obviously, the best of intentions, and, although we have puns like 'Don't shake so much'. 'I can't help it - I'm a Quaker', some of the incidents, as when Lieutenant Billings hides under the sofa on which his Confederate enemy is sitting, are genuinely funny, and the central idea of the play is a good one. Nevertheless, the Board voted the production 'a failure both artistically and financially'. The Glasgow Herald (28/4/65) found it 'genuinely funny' at moments, but considered a 'serious theme in low comedy' offensive. The Scotsman granted that the author's 'technical skill has improved with practice', but, 'the grossness of his humour has not changed'. Robins Millar (Express) said that 'The idea in the play was good enough to have been handled less crudely', while Andrew Young (Daily Mail), bearing in mind that the tag of 'World Premiere' had been used in connection with the publicity, commented that 'it would be better to let this one sneak in quietly'. In retrospect, however, and in the light of the later prevalence in Theatre everywhere of much more offensive rubbish, it may be thought that The Harmony Bugle was handled with unnecessary harshness, and a possible talent cut off because of the wrong kind of treatment.

The Christmas entertainments during Iain Cuthbertson's two

seasons, Oh for an Island!, a gallant attempt at a musical play by Cliff Hanley, and Dick Macwhitty, a regulation Pantomime, are noted elsewhere, and That'll be the Day, an attempt at a 'peace-time' equivalent to Oh What a Lovely War, written by, among others, Kenneth Parrott, J. Bryden Rodgers and Roy Wilkie, and described as 'A sharp look at the century through 64 years of popular song', hardly requires much attention, apart from the fact that its creation shows at least a resolution to try new things, a resolution which marks the first three-quarters of this chapter in the Theatre's history. Although the rapid turn-over of Directors between 1957 and 1969 resulted in an undue number of terminal declines, it provided a corresponding wealth of brave and innovatory beginnings. Robins Millar (Express 11/11/64) found some of the propaganda in the revue 'crude' and felt that it gave the 'impression of being Lefter than Left'. Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) considered that, in spite of 'some good moments', it 'does not quite come off' some of the material possessing 'neither point nor edge ... neither coherent enough to be truly satirical, nor quite bold enough to be shocking, nor frivolous enough to be really funny'. According to the Daily Record, 'the ideas weren't particularly new, but the presentation was', and to Andrew Young (Daily Mail), it was 'frequently very clever', although the 'satire and irony' were 'handled in a rather uneven manner'.

The great Scottish revival of this period of the Citizens' was, fittingly enough, the play chosen for the Theatre's twenty-first birthday, one of its founder's strongest plays, A Sleeping Clergyman, previously staged by Matthew Forsyth in the Gorbals in 1947, with Lewis Casson, Kenneth Mackintosh, Jane Aird and Duncan Macrae. It had originated at the Malvern Festival in 1933 and had transferred to London, with Robert Donat as the two Camerons and Dorice Fordred in the taxing three-decker female lead. Following the Citizens' production, it had enjoyed a second successful London run, again with Donat, this time partnered by Margaret Leighton. There was a film in 1951; it was called Flesh and Blood and starred Richard Todd.

Bridie wrote at some length about it in his autobiography, One Way of Living: he says, 'As this curious play was the nearest thing



to a masterpiece I shall probably ever write, perhaps you will allow me to spend a little time on it'.<sup>15</sup> Then, later:

The London public took to the place in steady but unsensational numbers. I am proud to think that Gracie Fields saw it four times; that Wee Georgie Wood saw it five; and that Noel Coward and John van Druten made up a quarrel on the strength of it. It was not a masterpiece. The second act attempted an impossibility and failed badly. It takes a better dramatist than I shall ever be to show an apotheosis on the stage. But there was satisfaction in it.<sup>16</sup>

Winifred Bannister makes a comparison with the writing of The Anatomist, which was:

essentially theatrical as well as possessed of the force of truth. But A Sleeping Clergyman was no such gift from life. It took Bridie more than two years to complete. He started it in 1931 and its realisation eluded him again and again. He would throw it down in despair and start something else.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Bannister quotes a letter from Bridie to Flora Robson referring to the play as '... a maddening, heavy, dull, insistent two year old play .... It is no good. I hate writing it. Nobody will ever produce it, but I can't do anything else till I've got it off my chest ...'.<sup>17</sup> What other play could possibly have been chosen to celebrate the twenty-first birthday of Bridie's theatre?

In some ways, it is what used to be called a 'chronicle' play, dealing with a family through three generations, but it is the problem of heredity which obsesses its creator. Can the dangerous combination of genius with 'bad blood' eventually find redemption? Charles Cameron the first is a drunkard and a seducer who dies on the verge of earth-shattering medical discoveries; his bastard daughter becomes a murderess to further the course of her life as she sees it, and her twin children - (Charles Cameron the second proving himself to be 'a bit of a handful', as one of the characters describes him) - save the world in the time of 'The Great Sickness'. It is a strong play, melodramatic at times, but deeply felt and richly



theatrical, providing a string of good acting roles.

The first night at the Citizens' on this anniversary occasion was something of an event, with a distinguished audience assembled to do honour to the Theatre and its founder. Andrew Cruickshank spoke the lines written by Bridie's son:

The worthy sower reaps  
While peacefully the one who  
Set it going sleeps ...

General reaction, too, was good. Christopher Small in Glasgow Herald (30/9/64) found it 'well worth reviving in any case ... the Citizens' have done it very handsomely'. He describes it as the play 'in which Bridie had his say about genetics and the nonsense of the eugenists' ... it 'takes a fine, almost stately course from mid-Victorianism to the mid thirties, and it holds its audience all the way'. At the same time he thought that it was all, perhaps, 'a little too majestic', with 'all the scene changes in full' and 'the action ... a good deal interrupted'. '... a style of acting has been adopted with a little too much reverence in it'. As far as the individual performances were concerned, John Cairney was:

a fine romantic Cameron of both generations, elaborately dissolute at the offshoot ... building up skilfully to turn into the great, though still uncouth scientist, who, in the melodramatics of the last act, "saves mankind". (Charmian Eyre), representing three generations of very good and very bad heredity at work ... in a character which may be said to combine Florence Nightingale with Madeleine Smith (was) in all incarnations entirely English. There was much admirable playing ... Stephen MacDonald plays Marshall, the custodian of the flame of genius, with much skill and a quiet force which becomes more important as he gets older.

Players long associated with the Citizens' must have been pleased to be associated with the production, Jean Taylor Smith, for instance, Lennox Milne and James Gibson, the cast also including Pekoe Ainley, grand-daughter of Henry.

Virtually the only dissenting voice was that of David Gibson in the Evening Times; he thought it 'rather dull ...' the '... scene changes take an unconscionably long time, and in places everything drags'. 'E.M.R.' in the Evening Citizen, however, reported that it 'unfolds with wit and profound insight', while Peggie Phillips in the Scotsman said that it 'wears well as a first-class story, directed with insight by Iain Cuthbertson' ... partly echoed by the Guardian (Cordelia Oliver 1/10/64), 'It has worn well, this cleverly-knit saga'. Andrew Young (Daily Mail 30/9/64) neatly summed up: 'the present company do the old man proud'. Acting was 'superb', direction and sets 'inspired'.

Other attractions accompanied the celebrations: there were two Exhibitions in the Theatre: one of original drawings by O.H. Mavor (Bridie), the other a 'photographic montage' outlining 'the work of the Company since its inception', and an illustrated booklet was published. There was also a Late Night Entertainment on certain nights called Push Bar to Open, described as 'A dissertation with digressions on the perils of theatrical enterprise - Priests, Presbyterians and Parliamentarians v Players, Playwrights and Producers'. The Theatre Programme of 8/9/64 went on to refer to it as 'An hour's anthology of an age-old war of nerves, after free coffee at 10.30 pm, to celebrate the Birthday. Late Buses. Booking (3/- all parts) from 7th September'. All of which civilised enterprise sounds a world away, before 'progress and modernisation' made such arrangements virtually impossible. Put more simply, the show dealt with attitudes to censorship, and the company was made up of Michael Burrell, Brian Smith, Roy Butcher, Leonard Fenton and Anne Kristen. More optimistically than prophetically, House Manager Andrew Leigh said, when interviewed, 'We feel that there is a real need for late-night entertainment in the city .... If there is a demand, we will stage late-night shows regularly from now on'.

It was, however, the fourth 'Scottish' play, exactly half way through Cuthbertson's tenure, which was the most original and adventurous event of these two seasons. Armstrong's Last Goodnight was not, of course, a Scottish play at all, its author, John Arden,



hailing from Barnsley, Yorkshire, but its subject was more sharply and thoroughly observed, its 'Scots' speech richer and more strikingly flavoured, than in many genuine national products. The play was given to Glasgow Citizens' because of the playwright's satisfaction with their production of Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, and it is, perhaps, a better play than the earlier one. It later went on to Chichester, then the National Theatre, with Albert Finney in the lead. In the Gorbals, it was a natural vehicle for Iain Cuthbertson, and it is probably the finest thing he did there or has done anywhere else. Someone, then, had to be found to direct, and the choice went, wisely enough, to Denis Carey, whose association with the Theatre went back to its earliest days in the Athenaeum.

The time of the play is what is described as 'the second quarter of the sixteenth century', and centres on the encounter of the courtly and intellectual Sir David Lindsay of the Mount with John Armstrong of Gilnockie, Border 'baron', King, near enough in his own domain, hence Lindsay's mission to 'regularise' the situation, although it is, in fact, resolved, for the moment, only by the arguably brutal treachery of the young King James the Fifth, then first sensing the power of his manhood, and his consequent freedom from his former advisers. The other principal characters are Lindsay's Secretary, Alexander McGlass, and Lindsay's mistress, who makes the journey with him and finds it highly eventful, but there are a multitude of others, requiring much doubling: there is even a Protestant Evangelist, thrown in for good measure. The Chichester production was perceptively reviewed by John Russell Taylor. He touches on the customary dichotomy between popular and critical reaction to Arden's work: usually it is the critics who are in favour, but here:

a splendid play superbly produced has been widely received with mystification and resentment even from critics who have previously liked Arden's work. I suppose the first reason for this is the language ... possibly its first audiences at the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre had a slight advantage over Chichester's Sassenachs, but it is anyway largely a matter of attuning one's ear to the way of the language, and after a few minutes one falls readily enough into it ....

Comparing the forms of contrast in other Arden plays, he sees it here as perhaps:

that between thought and action. Lindsay is the polished courtier and diplomat, cunning, devious, seeing politics like a game of chess; Armstrong, the border bandit, is the man of action, taking each turn of the game dead seriously. (The contemporary relevance is noted): tied very much to the world we now live in by the play's dedication to Conor Cruise O'Brien. In the Congo, Arden suggests, he was a Lindsay; the same conflicts are ever and ever revived and reshaped ....<sup>18</sup>

The original Citizens' production was generally well received critically, hesitantly, as so often the case with Arden, and, indeed as with any unknown quantity in Glasgow at that time, by the public. The Theatre Board noted it as 'acclaimed', with attendance 'disappointing'. The actor Graham Crowden in a letter to the Glasgow Herald (16/5/64) wondered, 'Could it be that the Scottish public is in a deep sleep unaware of what is taking place in their midst?', while a Mr. George A. Combe of Wormit, Fife, wrote (19/5/64), 'I was glad to learn to-night that business has picked up. I would counsel Glasgow and district to make the third week a sell-out'. He did not consider the play 'great', but it was 'nevertheless a clever reconstruction of a lively period in Scottish history .... An excellent art show thrown in makes an evening at the theatre a cultural adventure all too rare'.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 6/5/64), praises Arden: 'Not only has he, an Englishman, written a play in Scots, about Scotland - and Scotland at a time which even historians touch with delicate fingers ... but he has had the audacity to make a brilliant and resounding success of it'. He makes a neat comparison between the characters of Armstrong and Lindsay, the former 'a savage, noble in part, part simple and part guileful, and wholly dangerous', the latter 'the embodiment of intelligence, cultivated diplomacy, art, and Renaissance humanity'. He found the Evangelist - who eventually kills McGlass in rather cavalier manner - a 'premature Reformer'



and 'a needless complication'. W.H.C. Watson (Scotsman) was impressed by Cuthbertson's 'monumental bandit ... playing his body as much as his tongue with a marvellous eloquence. Maguire's Lindsay was 'a virtuoso performance', and the whole thing 'a glory of colour, movement, passion. It is voluptuous, furious and exotic. Playwright, director and actors run in harness as if this were the only play of their lives'. Andrew Young (Daily Mail) introduced a note of rather severe caution: 'The acting of the huge cast and the direction of Denis Carey were superb. But they have committed the unforgivable crime of playing solely for themselves'. Robins Millar (Express) thought that it was 'like sitting through a cyclone'.

Critics from the South travelled to Glasgow for this important event. Benedict Nightingale (Guardian) considered the language 'forceful and virile and not often hard to follow ...'. Cuthbertson 'played with great authority and gusto', while Arden 'makes most of our new dramatists look like simple-minded children'. Bamber Gascoigne (Observer 10/5/64) was less enthusiastic, but 'part of the fault may lie in Denis Carey's charade-like production in front of a flimsy set and in picture-book colours ...'. Harold Hobson (Sunday Times) summed up with a compliment worth valuing from a critic of his experience: 'Taken as a whole, the Citizens' Theatre company offers the best acting I have seen in a repertory company'. 'The reckless pantomime, the flamboyant melodrama, the ironic humour ... all come off', he continued.

In his 'General Notes' for the Citizens' Programme, John Arden mentions 'certain difficulties' in arriving at a suitable linguistic style for the dialogue, and he sums up his final compromise as 'a sort of Babylonish dialect that will, I hope, prove practical on the stage and will yet suggest the sixteenth century'. The result, very successful on the whole, is well indicated in Lindsay's reply to McGlass after their first meeting with Gilnockie (Armstrong). McGlass has just given his suggested course of action: (Act One, Scene 9):

He is ane terrible Gogmagog, he is ane  
wild Cyclops of the mountain ... I think  
we need to cut his throat ....

LINDSAY: Ye ranten feuden Hieland Gallowglass  
 - cut his throat! Cut Armstrang's, cut  
 Eliot's, cut Maxwell's, cut Johnstone's  
 whaur do we stop? Na, na, but gang ane  
 circuit - indirect, undermine the nobility  
 ... Set them a' to wonder what in the de'il's  
 name we're playen at. I think our wee King  
 will enjoy this business, Sandy. He was aye  
 ane devious clever knave in the schoolroom.  
 But no courageous. That's pity. We're at  
 his palace. Blaw your horn.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to Cuthbertson's towering performance, Maguire and Cairney were at the top of their form, while Lisa Daniely gave by far her best Citizens' performance as Lindsay's mistress, brilliantly delivering her reply to Armstrong when she (temporarily) rebuffs his advances. 'Tak your claites aff', Gilnockie has commanded abruptly. 'She draws a little penknife', state the stage directions 'and points it at him as he tries to embrace her. She is laughing, and he laughs, too, as he disengages himself'.

GILNOCKIE: Aha, ha. But you are ane whoor?

LADY: I'm no your whoor.<sup>20</sup>

'I have no idea', Arden says in his 'Notes', 'whether or no Lindsay had a mistress'.

Armstrong's Last Goodnight was, almost certainly the peak of Iain Cuthbertson's two years in charge at the Citizens', but there were obviously a number of high spots. There is no doubt that he looks back on Armstrong with particular relish and feels now that a revival of it somewhere is overdue. But then he obviously recalls his whole Citizens' experience with pleasure: he voices no complaints against the Board, but has words of special praise for Michael Goldberg, and for R.B. Wharrie, a great and business-like man, who was always ready to bring his skills to bear in difficult times. Asked about the problems of his many-faceted post in the theatre, Cuthbertson admits that it came as a relief when a House Manager was appointed.<sup>21</sup>

In retrospect, this would seem to be the time when the influences of the past decades should have come together to form the definitive



style which James Bridie had envisaged. On current evidence it is impossible to give a definite answer as to why this failed to happen: the volatile nature of theatrical 'highs and lows' is always incalculable. The fact remains that for this kind of permanent achievement it was now or never, and with Cuthbertson's departure - and despite the fine things which were to come in the next four seasons and the fame and triumphs of the present 'international' Citizens' - the first era came, once and for all, to an end.

The Productions were:

Macbeth (William Shakespeare) Directed Iain Cuthbertson (9/9/63).

The Physicists (Friedrich Durrenmatt, trans. James Kirkup)  
Directed André van Gysegghem (30/9/63).

The Circle (Somerset Maugham) Directed Eric Jones (14/10/63).

Rashomon (Fay and Michael Kanin) Directed Graham Evans (28/10/63).

Pygmalion (Bernard Shaw) Directed Eric Jones (11/11/63).

Oh for an Island! (Cliff Hanley; music Ian Gourlay)  
Directed Denis Carey (4/12/63).

The Relapse (Sir John Vanbrugh) Directed Iain Cuthbertson (3/2/64).

Six Characters in Search of an Author (Luigi Pirandello,  
trans. Frederick May) Directed John Bryden Rodgers (17/2/64).

Battle Royal (Bruce E. Baillie) Directed Iain Cuthbertson,  
assisted Glenn Williams (2/3/64).

Hobson's Choice (Harold Brighouse) Directed Eric Jones (16/3/64).

The Pinedus Affair (Paoli Levy; English version Robert Rietty)  
Directed John Bryden Rodgers (30/3/64).

Much Ado About Nothing (William Shakespeare) Directed Eric Jones  
(14/4/64).--

Armstrong's Last Goodnight (John Arden) Directed Denis Cary (5/5/64).

The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Bertolt Brecht, trans. James and Tania  
Stern, with W.H. Auden) (Music by Frank Spedding)  
Directed Kenneth Parrott (8/9/64).

A Sleeping Clergyman (James Bridie) Directed Iain Cuthbertson  
(29/9/64).

Saint Joan (Bernard Shaw) Directed Kenneth Parrott (20/10/64).

That'll be the Day (Kenneth Parrott, J. Bryden Rodgers, Roy Wilkie)  
(Musical arrangements Frank Spedding, George Michie)  
Directed Kenneth Parrott (10/11/64).

An Ideal Husband (Oscar Wilde) Directed J. Bryden Rodgers (1/12/64).

Dick Macwhitty (Cliff Hanley, James Scotland, Tom Wright, etc.)  
(Music Ian Gourlay) Directed Iain Cuthbertson, J. Bryden Rodgers  
(22/12/64).

Dandy Dick (Arthur W. Pinero) Directed J. Bryden Rodgers (2/2/65).

Five Finger Exercise (Peter Shaffer) Directed J. Bryden Rodgers  
(23/2/65).

The Merchant of Venice (William Shakespeare) Directed Eric Jones  
(16/3/65).

The Poker Session (Hugh Leonard) Directed Iain Cuthbertson  
(6/4/65).

The Harmony Bugle (Bruce Baillie) Directed J. Bryden Rodgers  
(27/4/65).



Footnotes to Chapter Five - GENERAL MANAGER IN CHARGE

1. John Russell Taylor, The Rise and Fall of the Well-made Play (Methuen, 1967), p.105.
2. J.C. Trewin, The Gay Twenties (Macdonald, 1958), p.25.
3. J.C. Trewin, The Theatre Since 1900 (Dakers, 1951), p.88.
4. *ibid.*, p.166.
5. Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (Harrap, 1925), p.427.
6. Plays and Players, March, 1963.
7. Bertolt Brecht, Parables for the Theatre (trans. Eric Bentley) (Penguin, 1966), p.207.
8. John Douglas Eames, The MGM Story (Octopus, 1975), p.317.
9. Bronner, The Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, p.390.
10. *ibid.*
11. Russell Taylor, Anger and After, p.249.
12. *ibid.*, p.251.
13. Plays and Players, April, 1964.
14. John Cairney, The Man Who Played Robert Burns (Mainstream, 1987), p.21.
15. James Bridie, One Way of Living (Constable, 1939), p.278.
16. *ibid.*, p.282.
17. Bannister, James Bridie and his Theatre, p.90.
18. Plays and Players, September 1965.
19. John Arden, Armstrong's Last Goodnight (Arden, Plays : One) (Eyre Methuen, 1977), p.287.
20. *ibid.*, p.305.
21. In conversation, May, 1989.

## CHAPTER SIX

THE 'ENGLISH' PERIOD (Part One)

The appointment of David William as Director came as a complete break from what had gone before: distinguished, almost patrician in manner and appearance, his advent could have heralded a period of prestigious development: having worked at the Citizens' as an actor, it would have seemed that he would know the magnitude of the task which he was shouldering, and would be prepared to face it. His contract, however, was initially for one year only, and he had virtually relinquished office before the 1965-66 Season was over. Certainly there was nothing wrong with the standard of his work, and he had the privilege of being in charge, not only of the Citizens', but of the newly established Close Theatre Club next door. The Close, let it be said, the long cherished dream of Citizens' Chairman, Michael Goldberg, without whose efforts it would never have come into being, was a really precious jewel in Glasgow's theatrical crown. It is strictly without the scope of the present study, but it is so intimately bound to the larger theatre that it requires to be mentioned every now and again, and it was a production of the Charles Marowitz version of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus which caused the first major clash between William and the Citizens' Board. In his depiction of the Seven Deadly Sins, Marowitz had identified each with some easily recognisable public figure, and Sloth had taken on the voice of the present Queen Elizabeth, and the mask her appearance, why it is hard to say, because this would hardly seem an obvious fault to find in her. The Board asked for the removal of what they considered an unfair slur; Marowitz refused, and several members of the Close Directorate were left to explain to the first night audience why the first night was not taking place. David William was not primarily involved in the affair, but, having engaged Marowitz, he must, one would think, have felt bound to give him moral support, and, although a sort of compromise was hammered out to allow the second night to go ahead, it is hard to imagine Director-Board relations ever being quite the same again. Later on, moreover, there was to be a brush with the audience,



probably perfectly justified, but not conducive to the image of an Artistic Director completely in harmony with his surroundings. And yet, in addition to the quality of his own productions, he was to introduce a vitally important body of elements into the composition of the Citizens' out of which were to come some of the most outstanding productions in its history.

In his first production, Sheridan's The Critic, there were one or two familiar names: Roy Boutcher and Martin Heller, for instance. David Bird, who had been in the pre-war Howard and Wyndham Players, was there, and Marty Cruickshank, daughter of Andrew, but vital new names appear like those of Michael Meacham, and soon to come - as an actor - was Michael Blakemore.

The problem of Citizens' programming policy must well have been a puzzling one for any new Director, and David William told the Express (13/9/65), that he had been 'looking through the figures for the past three years' and that he found them 'bewildering, as it could not be predicted what audiences want to see'. Certainly the Evening Citizen of 8/9/65 showed doubts about the choice of the Sheridan as an opener: 'At first glance, one would have thought that a period piece' of this kind 'was not the ideal opener ... but having seen the play and watched the audience reaction, one is bound to admit that it would have been difficult to have made a better choice'. And certainly the omens were good: James Bree, an experienced actor from the Royal Shakespeare Company, was Mr. Puff, elaborate designs were in the hands of Robin Pidcock, and the expert Geraldine Stephenson was responsible for choreographing the proceedings; furthermore, the first night atmosphere in the theatre was warm and apparently enthusiastic. At the end of the day, however, before the crediting of grants, there was a deficit of £4,877: the verdict of the Theatre Board was that this was 'very disappointing', a 'first-class production', which 'had not appealed'.

Christopher Small in the Glasgow Herald, always influential with his readers, had not been over enthusiastic, stating that the production had 'a good deal of the charade in it, with both the merits

and demerits of that variety of domestic diversion'. He went on to say that the evening had 'turned frankly to pantomime ... The finale has certainly been contrived with much ingenuity and care ... and was received on the first night with general rapture; after all, it's that sort of thing in Glasgow that we really like best'. 'P' in the Scotsman thought it 'robust', but warned that 'Mr. William's funny business tended to blanket rather than emphasise Sheridan's superior wit'. Andrew Young in the Scottish Daily Mail was more affirmative, his verdict being that it was 'still magnificent entertainment'. And it must be recorded that the presentation of the play within the play, 'The Spanish Armada' was lavishly memorable, with Don Whiskerandos, Tilburina and the River Thames superbly represented as things came to their comic climax with the appropriately over-blown 'Rule Britannia'. All this was followed, of course, by Mr. Puff's 'Well, pretty well - but not quite perfect - So, ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse the piece again to-morrow', dangerous words to be spoken on any first night.

There can be no doubt that David William had proved himself a director of real quality in this debut, but the follow-up to it presented even greater problems, coinciding as it did with the Commonwealth Festival of the Arts (which opened the Close Theatre with some short pieces). In no way playing safe, William plunged in with an extraordinary Canadian play called The Killdeer by James Reaney, whose grandfather, it was said, went out from Scotland in 1831 to farm in the 'new world'. This was a European premiere, and the title referred to a kind of plover bird which made this sound when rain was on the way, 'Crying its names when it's going to rain'.

The plot is virtually impossible to summarise: Eli, the central character, has been stunted in his development as a result of an appalling crime committed by his father and is influenced by what Christopher Small (Herald 29/9/65) called a 'sinister hired man, with the mark of the beast upon him'. The latter is apparently murdered, and Rebecca, who sells eggs, looks like hanging as a result; Harry, who has what may be a lightly homosexual relationship with Eli, loves Rebecca too and gets her with child to postpone the hanging. All



this heady mixture is stirred up by Eli's mother, who turns up, a veritable fiend incarnate, under the name of Madam Fay, coming to the boil in a melodramatic trial scene; the happy ending comes as a consequence of a 'deus ex machina' doctor who explains all. This account, however, is unfair to an author who is not afraid to write a play unrestrained in its romantic emotionalism. (The killdeer, it should be said, figures both practically and metaphorically.) The dialogue is in blank verse, and Harry initially describes his domestic circumstances as follows:

I eat Mother's home cooking  
 Yes, all those pickled cherries and candied pears.  
 Crystallized lemon rinds and glazed pumpkin blossoms,  
 Christmas puddings as big as a man's belly.

The Hangman approaches the condemned cell with:

I'm the doctor who delivers your immortal soul,  
 Like a greasy burlap moth it flutters out.

while Madam Fay, who is capable of remarks like:

I even managed for about two years before  
 To virgin up somewhat ...

can also relish to the full, almost laugh at, her own evil:

Now there's nothing I like better, if it's not  
 Smashing up birds with broken wings and letting  
 Innocent young ladies get hanged, than chasing  
 Old ladies down wet slippery dark streets ...  
 I'll be the back door tapping like a blind man  
 I'll be the cistern dripping like an idiot's mouth.

Christopher Small came down heavily in the play's favour: it explored, he said, 'the recesses, the odd and dark places of the human heart' and was 'quite the most remarkable new piece we have seen in these parts for years ... a most skilful production'. The court scene was 'pure melodrama', but there was 'a most beautiful ending' with the arrival of 'the strange doctor-magician ... whose appearance finally unties all knots, releases love, and confers blessing'. (The Doctor was played by Wolfe Morris, later to be the controversial Faustus at the Close.) The Evening Times found it a 'stimulating experience',

but Robins Millar (Express) was afraid that 'too much of the play does not ring true on the stage', and Allen Wright (Scotsman) said, 'It is "Long Day's Journey" with Peter Pan waiting at the nursery door to tuck us up snugly'. The Sunday Mail, however, (3/10/65), said that 'the depth and brilliance of Reaney's play was matched by magnificent production given to it by David William'. Other leading parts were played by June Jago (Madam Fay), Bernard Hopkins (Eli), Del Henney (Harry) and Michael Meacham (the sinister Clifford). An Exhibition of Eskimo lithographs was on view in the Tea Room during the run of The Killdeer, but no great impression had yet been made on Glasgow audiences.

The next production, however, was to make a profound impression, for all the wrong reasons, and laid the real foundation for the outrageous accusations later that the Citizens' and the Close followed a policy of presenting 'dirty plays'. The changing theatrical climate cannot be over-emphasised: the tastes and morals of 1965 were incredibly different from those of 1989, and the stresses of a changing world were to make themselves felt profoundly within the fabric of the Theatre Board. The greatly cultured and knowledgeable Michael Goldberg was eventually to resign his Chairmanship of both theatres, for, as an aggravation to health problems, he was torn between disapproval of some of the new trends and a reluctance to stand in the way of possible progress because of his own likes and dislikes.

Live Like Pigs by John Arden was the third production of David William's tenure of office - (in these short regimes, as suggested before, chronological accounts are the most revealing) - although it was actually directed by his assistant, Derrick Goodwin. No great sensation appears to have occurred when the play was seen in London at the Royal Court in 1958: John Russell Taylor describes it as dealing with 'the Jacksons, a cosy conventional family happy in their housing-estate semi-detached until the Sawneys, a wild and disreputable family of near-gipsies, are moved protesting into the house next door'.<sup>1</sup> He also quotes Arden's Introductory Note to the printed Text:



On the one hand, I was accused by the Left of attacking the Welfare State: on the other, the play was hailed as a defence of anarchy and amorality. So perhaps I had better declare myself. I approve outright neither of the Sawneys nor of the Jacksons. Both groups uphold standards of conduct which are incompatible, but which are both valid in their correct context.<sup>1</sup>

None of this had anything to do with the controversy which blazed up over the production in the Gorbals, where members of the audience walked out after a girl - in an upper part of the split set - playfully removed a young man's trousers. It was possible to sit in the third row of the stalls while remaining unshocked and unaware of any disturbance, but by the morning after the first night the papers had blown the matter into a cause célèbre.

Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express, 20/10/65) led the critical attack: 'No other play in Glasgow has been so loathsome to look at' and on 23/10 he amplified this statement with 'I was reticent in only calling it loathsome'. Jack House in the Evening Times (20/10/65), never one to side easily with the Puritans, said, 'I do think that this is a calamitous presentation' ... the 'set-up' was 'artificial', and 'I didn't blame the people who left at the interval'. There was talk of a complaint to the Church of Scotland Social Welfare Committee, and Glasgow Senior Magistrate, Bailie Maurice Shinwell, stated that he was going to see the play for himself. Millar had gone on to say in his statement of 23/10/65, that the Citizens' had been 'influenced by insolent elements in London', the result being 'an assault on our standards of public decency. It degrades the theatre ... I blame the producer more than John Arden, for he has exaggerated the opportunities in action'. The Express capped this with a leader on 26/10/65: '... not only is it time to ring down the curtain on Live Like Pigs, it is difficult to understand how it ever went up'. On 24/10/65 the Sunday Mail reported that audiences were 'running a little higher than average'; the play would 'go on'. Michael Goldberg as Theatre Chairman told the Evening Citizen (22/10/65) that 'The critics have blown the whole thing out of proportion. It is wrong to judge the play in the manner it has been because of one short scene' and on

26/10/65 the Daily Record printed a statement from the Board of Directors: 'We wish to express our faith in the play and in the production as at present performed. To judge by its reception, so too does the public'. It was said that the 'trousers scene' had been almost completely cut, but this was denied later in other quarters. Marty Cruickshank, involved as an actress in the 'scandalous' section of the play, told the Daily Record (22/10/65), 'It's a wonderful play, controversial, with a beautiful language'. Ms. Edith Hunter wrote to the Evening Times (22/10/65): it was, she said, 'written by this country's best dramatist and is a powerful, stark, often poetic statement on a situation which can - and does - exist even in Glasgow'. Then on 12/11/65, Cliff Hanley wrote in challenging mood to the Glasgow Herald, 'It is sad to see it (this production) being dug up by Glasgow Corporation apparently for use as a political weapon against a theatre which has served this city well .... A theatre which never takes a bold risk is a dead theatre; and a city which will not tolerate a live theatre is a dead city'.

Some of the more influential critics were supportive: the divide was bridged by Iain Thorburn (Evening Citizen): 'It is not a comfortable evening's entertainment, especially if you are easily shocked. But it is rewarding - and it makes you think', and by the Daily Record, which classed the production as 'first-rate adult entertainment'. 'P' in the Scotsman thought that it 'achieved the classical catharsis of pity and terror in its final act ... due to John Arden's poetic insight', and, although Christopher Small in the Herald referred to 'shapelessness, exaggeration and reliance on mere noise and confusion', he was aware of 'strong virtues ... plentiful action, vigour and even splendour of language'. The gross deficit of Live Like Pigs, (that is, before taking into account the relevant grants) was £2,874, and, as costs were high, it is obvious that the publicity increased the box office potential, for the play had lost more than £4,000 in the course of its twenty-three performances at the Royal Court.<sup>2</sup> The gross deficit at the Citizens' for the first three productions of the season was £11,593. After deducting grants of £7,460, there was a net deficit of £4,133 compared with £4,199 for the same period in 1964. (It may be of interest to note that, when



revived by the RSAMD School of Drama students in March, 1989, there appeared to be no kind of public protest. The Glasgow Herald (15/3/89) found it 'still shocking in the purest sense of the word, the shock rooted in truth and honesty and without prurience'.)

It is hard to understand why the next production chosen was one of Ibsen's The Wild Duck, as Ibsen was highly unlikely to attract large audiences to the Citizens', (although before long he was to pack the smaller spaces of the Close), and a gross deficit of £4,239 resulted. The staging by William in conjunction with Derrick Goodwin was a distinguished accomplishment, even though Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) thought that 'frankly the pigs were more interesting'. This was the first professional performance of Michael Meyer's translation, and the Herald (10/11/65) judged it 'the sort of thing which shows the Citizens' at their best ... a long but short-seeming evening ...', and the Gregers Werle of Michael Meacham was said to be played 'with a self-lacerating, Hamlet-like integrity .... As for Marty Cruickshank's Hedwig - lanky, peering, loving, terribly vulnerable - I have not seen better'. The Scotsman also praised the Hedwig as 'a masterpiece of presentation', but Andrew Young added to his criticism in the Mail the charge that 'in the all-important role of Hedwig, Marty Cruickshank is seriously miscast'. Glasgow, as suggested, in no way flocked to the production, and J. Harder in a letter to the Glasgow Herald of 27/12/65 described an audience of 60 people. One or two events of some significance took place around this time: there was a rearrangement of seat prices: stalls 10/6, 7/6, 5/6; circle, 10/6, 8/6, 7/6; side circle 5/6. Then John Bryden Rodgers, formerly assistant to Iain Cuthbertson, who had stayed on to look after the Close Theatre Club, resigned because of ill health, and, it was reported, in the Glasgow Herald of 23/11/65, an extra £500 was being supplied to fund a full-time publicity officer, despite some rumblings of civic discontent in the wake of the Live Like Pigs debacle.

Following the lack of box office support for the Ibsen, Coward's Private Lives was put on to tide over the always difficult lead-up to the Christmas period, but, despite good reviews, audience response

was less good than might have been expected. The comedy, almost certain to attract crowds in later years, had then, it seems, not yet regained its full magnetism. Michael Meacham was in charge of production, as David William was taking on the role of Elyot alongside the Amanda of Caroline Blakiston. Richard Kane, Carol Macready and June Jago made up the cast. 'P' in the Scotsman (1/12/65) thought the comedy 'still brilliantly entertaining' despite a 'certain lack of combustibility' on the part of the leading players. The Glasgow critics still seemed surprised that a play of this kind should wear so well: the Coward renaissance had not yet gathered momentum. (The reappraisal of the comedy had really begun in 1963, with a fairly modest production, and - most surprisingly - one without stars.)<sup>3</sup> The Evening Citizen claimed, rather elaborately, 'He can still hang a phrase on the air like a jewel on the ear', and the Herald saw something 'still with enough glitter to catch the eye and hold it through a brief, swift evening'. David William played 'with much elegance and a fine line in the projection of invective ...'. He was 'admirably paired with Caroline Blakiston'.

And yet, by the Board Meeting of 11/1/66, it was known that there would be a gross deficit of £3,226, and it was realised that prospects for the Christmas show, A Beano for Jack, were 'dim'. (The eventual gross deficit for this was to be £8,624.) The members of the Board were 'surprised and perturbed' and decided that the whole question of the Christmas show should be examined. Usually its profits helped to make up for deficits incurred during the rest of the year, but now it was clear that the day of the old Royal Princess's Christmas show was, for the moment at any rate, over, and something different must be sought. Various ideas were considered: Kenneth Mackellar in The Beggar's Opera, for instance, and a stage version of the popular Television show, White Heather Club. The old formula had outgrown its own strength, and something new must be found, but at the same time there was the problem of Glasgow audiences' resistance to change: the season under David William's direction was of high quality, but it was not the Citizens' Theatre as it had been up to now - in any of its phases - nor would things be the same again. The situation was reminiscent of that in the Thirties when the Brandon Thomas Company



moved out of the Theatre Royal, and no substitute, for the time being, however good, could gain acceptance. It was in the troubled situation of 1966, too, that the resignation of Michael Goldberg as Chairman was announced for health reasons, although he was to remain in charge of the Close Committee. His successor, George Singleton, associated with the Citizens' from its outset, claimed that Goldberg left it 'higher in the theatrical world than at any other time in its history', but contact with its audience had wavered seriously, and the Board soon became conscious of David William's 'impending resignation'.

Following the major disappointment of A Beano for Jack, there came the Shakespeare production, Julius Caesar, presented with a view to attracting schools as well as adult audiences. William directed himself - it was to be his last Citizens' production - and played Cassius: production and performance were distinguished, and there was a very strong cast: Meacham as Brutus, Sebastian Breaks as Antony, John Wyse as Caesar, Michael Blakemore as Casca, with Richard Kane, James Gibson, Zoe Hicks and June Jago among the others present. Blakemore also acted as assistant to the Director, there were designs by Robin Pidcock, special music by John Purser, and choreography by Geraldine Stephenson. All of which probably explained why production went over budget: there was a gross deficit of £4,370, and there were whispers of 'most extravagant'. Press was generally favourable: Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald, 9/2/66), complimented the production on keeping going 'at compelling pace all the way from the Capitol to Philippi'. There was 'a huge and sinister eagle dominating the set', and Sebastian Breaks was an 'excellent' Mark Antony, 'the playboy with the dangerous gift of persuasion and mischief combined'. There was, however, 'rather too ample an effusion of stage blood' ... the unfortunate Cinna the poet suffered 'the apparent evulsion of an eyeball ... stage violence hovers on the verge of the comic'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) thought it 'a masterly production ... the grouping and movement of the crowd is thrilling and alarming', while Robins Millar (Express) described it as 'mounted with a richness that is astonishing in a repertory theatre'. 'R.McA.' (Evening Citizen) thought that there was 'some very fine and competent acting alternating with some that verged on vintage Hollywood epic', and Jack House

(Evening Times) proclaimed, 'We've decided to give the production an H certificate .... Blood flowed freely'.

It may be that the profusion of blood did something to unsettle the young audiences which attended, as before long another crisis arose in the persistently and - considering William's dignified personality - improbably turbulent course of the season. Following a particularly troubled performance, he told the Scottish Daily Express (23/2/66):

It is a great pity from the company's point of view that the enjoyment of the majority should be so disgracefully affronted by the hooliganism of a few .... We have had a large number of schoolchildren at our performances, and all have behaved themselves admirably .... I don't know why these people came tonight. I would estimate the hooligans as about 20 per cent of the audience.

On 24/2/66, Andrew Leigh, Theatre General Manager, described the disturbance as 'the culmination of a series of incidents .... Not that school parties were responsible. The noise came mainly from individuals who had come to cause trouble'. On 24/2/66, however, the Glasgow Herald adopted a different tone: 'There is a great and growing danger of the theatre becoming sadly divorced from real life. Special pleading from the acting profession means only one thing: that they are failing to engage their audiences' attention', while in a letter to the paper (23/2/66) Mr. G.C. Muir referred to a 'rather bad-tempered speech from the producer'. The Scotsman (24/2/66) presumably summed the matter up by reporting, 'On Tuesday, 40 teenagers were ejected from the gallery at the Citizens' during the first interval'. David William commented that 'the behaviour of the destructive fringe was mentally vacant and depressing', while Andrew Leigh announced that 'We have made Thursday's performance for adults only because of the noisy behaviour'. It is regrettable that all this was the impression which survives over the years from an enterprising and ambitious production, especially as the 1956 presentation of this tragedy had been an especially happy one, its success partially attributed to the fact that the children who saw it encouraged their parents to go.



But, as demonstrated over and over again, it is difficult, during the later sixties to trace a logical pattern through the fortunes of the Citizens'.

A South of Scotland tour was in progress from February 28, when it commenced in Duns, of Shaw's Misalliance: directed by Michael Meacham, it was to come to Gorbals after the next production, which was Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie. Probably chosen because, in tandem with the tour, it had a conveniently small cast, this beautiful play had not been a favourite with Glasgow audiences when it was staged, excellently done, with Ann Casson as Mrs. Wingfield, in 1949, and no great enthusiasm was shown for it now. (Its London reception had been disappointing when Helen Hayes played the role in 1948, while Tennessee Williams writes that 'in Chicago, the first night, no-one knew how to take Menagerie, it was something of an innovation in the theatre'.)<sup>4</sup> The Glasgow Herald (2/3/66) was unhappy about Derrick Goodwin's production, feeling that his approach was that 'the play can only survive as comedy and that of no very fragile kind', Mrs. Wingfield emerging as a 'creature of pure farce, composed equally and unremittingly of brass and gush', the play looking like 'a fairly trumpery piece altogether'. Sebastian Breaks as Tom, the unhappy son who has deserted his mother and lame sister and whose memories form the stuff of the play, 'throws himself into the part with luxurious abandon, even to moments at least of Southern accent'. The scene between the sister, Laura, (Louise Breslin) and the Gentleman Caller (Maurice Roëves), was 'the best thing in the evening, achieving whatever of genuine pathos there is in the play'. 'P' (Peggie Phillips) in the Scotsman said that 'the psychological mess which the mother ... has engendered is still valid enough to be heart-breaking ... Zoe Hicks has a gallant try'. (Ms. Hicks appeared frequently at the Citizens' during these years, giving performances which often came some way towards greatness.) Andrew Young (Mail) thought her 'superb', while Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) felt that 'Four players carry through the whole story ... and do it extremely well'. (The use of words like 'story' and 'tale' are strangely prevalent in the criticism of the time, and seem oddly out of key with the kind of theatre which was about to develop.)

The gross deficit was £2,257: the financial situation was worrying, especially as the Close Theatre Club was in 'considerable ... difficulty'. Then (19/3/66), in the Glasgow Herald the news of David William's resignation was announced, the reason given being that other professional commitments were 'too heavy'. His original contract with the Citizens' had been for only a year, and he had been engaged to direct at Stratford, Ontario. But, as Allen Wright was to point out later in a Scotsman article, at this most unpromising moment things began to swing upwards again, and it almost looked as if the announcement of provision of baby-sitters to allow young parents to attend the theatre was symbolic of a new, positive spirit.

First, Misalliance arrived in the Gorbals after what seems to have been a successful tour to a chorus of happy and welcoming reviews. In the Ayrshire press on 11/3/66 there had appeared a report that there had been 'a large audience under the auspices of Troon Arts Guild .... The Glasgow company were left in no doubt as to the enjoyment they gave to this Troon audience, whose response to the Shavian wit was warm and spontaneous'. The play, written in 1910 and described by Shaw as 'a debate in one sitting', is not one of his best-known, but has proved to be remarkably resilient: in January, 1963, when it was seen at the Royal Court in London, later at the Criterion, Clive Barnes wrote:

Never regarded among Shaw's best plays, Misalliance can now boast two London revivals within the past five years or so. Such things are often coincidental, yet there is a strain of perverse topicality about this fifty-year-old "debate" ... purposeful chit-chat shattered by violence is a device not unknown to our new dramatists, and although Shaw avoids naturalism of dialogue ... his humour often has a wild fantasy happily timeless in English literature.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly it was greeted with general pleasure when it was seen in Glasgow, and audiences seemed to enjoy the inter-generation country house cut and thrust, interrupted by two aviators, one of them a Polish girl acrobat, then later by a young man doggedly bent on revengeful murder and concealed in a portable Turkish bath. Small



(Herald 23/3/66) set the tone: 'the talk is really astonishingly good, it wears uncommonly well ... Richard Kane's performance' was 'a little masterpiece of comic acting'. (Kane, a young actor of dazzling versatility, later an Ariel of great acclaim, was now dealing with the fairly earth-bound would-be avenger of his mother's honour, 'Gunner'.) Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) was jubilant: 'There's a joy night of comedy at the Citizens' - at long last, as Misalliance rampages across the stage', while Peggy Phillips in the Scotsman enjoyed 'a stimulating evening', with the Company 'in particularly good form', and Andrew Young (Daily Mail), referring, of course, to the current season, called it 'without doubt ... the most polished production in the Citizens' so far'. June Jago was Lina from Poland, and among the rest of the company were Martin Heller and Mairhi Russell as Mr. & Mrs. Tarleton and Marty Cruickshank as Hypatia. Christopher Small was particularly enthusiastic about Ms. Jago:

The entry of the aviators via the greenhouse does much to shatter the calm, especially in the person of June Jago's Lina, who, for once, makes both Polish ancestry and acrobatic profession credible; Miss Jago has done nothing better since she joined the company. "Thank goodness", Hypatia exclaims when the curtain falls: but truly we are sorry it is over.

Cordelia Oliver, in the Guardian (24/3/66) rounded off something very like a complete chorus of praise: 'Shaw's nonstop and often very funny harangue on parents and children and the unlikelihood of their ever reaching mutual understanding ... among the company's best this season'.

The mood of critical euphoria continued into the following production, David Halliwell's Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs, which had first come to the surface at the Dublin Theatre Festival of 1965. It then proceeded to the Garrick Theatre, London, under the auspices of the then newly innovative Michael Codron (3/2/66); its run was brief, but prestigious: even John Russell Taylor, less enthusiastic than most, admitted that:

there is clearly some talent at work in the play, if uncertainly directed and insufficiently channelled. Obviously Mr. Halliwell has a real gift for theatrical rhetoric, and most of Malcolm's part is decidedly well written, giving John Hurt a great opportunity which he seizes with both hands, loping and ranting about the stage with exactly the right prima donna's extravagance.<sup>6</sup>

Glasgow critics had few such reservations.

The Malcolm Scrawdyke of the title is an art student expelled from Huddersfield Tech. because of his baleful influence on his fellow students. He heads a small group planning to take vengeance on the Principal responsible for Malcolm's expulsion, the name of the group, most unsuitably for Malcolm, the Party of Dynamic Erection. The thing hasn't a chance of any kind of success, its only result being a particularly nasty and petty kind of violence, and Malcolm is finally deserted by his 'disciples', left to pick up what pieces of life he can:

Oh I should 'ave a mental breakdown. That's what this should be. I should collapse, let 'em carry me away. Aar I can't even manage that. Even a mental breakdown needs more willpower than I've got.

The 'eunuchs' are, of course, the representatives of authority that he expects to destroy so easily.

The speed with which the Citizens' snapped up this new play shows how there were moments when Directors and Board could act with joint dash, courage and originality. The Board agreed that there had been a 'very successful opening night' and approved special advertising for this - to Glasgow audiences - unknown quantity. Despite Glasgow's mistrust of the unknown, a healthy respect, at least, was developing for the Citizens' at this time, and would culminate in the popularity of the season's closing production. In the Scotsman of 18/4/66, much impressed by the success of Little Malcolm and of Olwen Wymark's brilliant Lunchtime Concert at the Close, Allen Wright wrote an article entitled 'Broadside from Gorbals': he saw the two theatres



as 'blazing away with both barrels' and 'demonstrating the superiority of their dramatic firepower'. He was, moreover, surprised at this happening at 'such an unexpected time - when the director of productions has just departed, when the season is drawing to an end, and the actors' contracts are running out'. David William had not, however, gone with callous disregard for the theatre's future: he had recommended that it should pass into the hands of the 'two Michaels', Meacham and Blakemore.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 13/4/66) described Little Malcolm (Michael Blakemore's first production on the main Citizens' stage), as 'a most remarkable piece of work, truthful, funny, serious, and, merely as dramatic narrative, a good deal more gripping than most who-dunnits ...'. There was 'wholly admirable direction and playing', with Richard Kane as Malcolm giving a 'masterly performance ... posturing, haranguing, flattering, hectoring, moaning in solitary self-doubt ... the Citizens' cannot quite claim to have discovered Mr. Halliwell, but they are giving us the chance to do so, and it is not one to miss'. Peggy Phillips (Scotsman) had enjoyed 'an evening of great lustre ... a new play of the most meritorious sort'; Jack House (Evening Times) thought that people might be worried by the title:

after the disastrous, badly acted, poorly produced Live Like Pigs .... But have no fear. This play ... is funny, absorbing, well acted and altogether the sort of piece which will delight intelligent people ... if you miss this, you are missing something worth while. You are also missing a night of delighted laughter - and how often can you afford to miss that these days?

Cordelia Oliver (Guardian 14/4/66) considered it 'by a long way the best thing ... this season ... I, for one, can hardly wait to see more plays by David Halliwell'. (As things turned out, Halliwell devoted his activities to fringe operations, his best-known later play going under the forbidding title of K.D. Dufford Hears K.D. Dufford Ask K.D. Dufford How K.D. Dufford 'll Make K.D. Dufford (1969). It must be put on record that unofficial reaction in

Glasgow to Little Malcolm was not unmixed: some members of the Young Citizens' Club wrote to the Herald (18/4/66): the play was 'a bad joke', the joke lying in the fact that:

it is a highly frivolous piece of theatre dressed up in the trappings of satire, social comment, and what-have-you and in that critical opinion has treated the play with a seriousness which we maintain it does not warrant. We are particularly annoyed to observe that the management chooses to advertise it as "a penetrating satire on youth", and we feel it our duty as young people to object to this as strongly as possible.

In response to another (more favourable) letter, P.D. McCloskey (Glasgow, W2) (18/4/66) wrote, 'John A. Mack says that some of the origins of Shakespeare's plays were crude, but he turned their crude material into gold ...' while Halliwell turned it 'into a cesspool. The current production is unabashed pornography'.

The closing and - as popularity goes - culminating production of the season was Meacham's staging of Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, with June Jago and Blakemore as Martha and George, Sebastian Breaks and Pamela Buckle as the unfortunate young couple drawn into their marital whirlpool. Little needs now to be said about this play, but in 1966 it was new and strange to Glasgow, and the impact was considerable. (First seen in America in 1962, it was referred to by Edwin Bronner simply as 'the play of the decade.')

Christopher Small was puzzled as to the reason for the play's tight grip on its audience despite its length and relentless attack. The production was, he said (Herald 4/5/66), 'admirably presented', but what makes us stay to watch? The old answer is to see 'what happens', and 'for a great part of the long evening attention is held - mainly by the acting ... a virtuoso duet'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) called it 'a shattering and brilliant climax to the season ...'. It was 'Michael Blakemore who makes the production so very impressive'. 'P.H.F.' in the Evening Times said that it was 'hard for a repertory company to follow a triumph with another one, but the Citizens' Theatre has done it', and Cordelia Oliver (Guardian) called it 'a



magnificent finish to an average season', (although she did not forget the success of Little Malcolm). Ms. Christine Edmunds of Glasgow W2 wrote to the Herald (5/5/66) 'to me the play was one of extreme subtlety portrayed excellently by the cast'. The only comment really out of line came from Elizabeth Lyon (Evening Citizen, 4/5/66): 'a tasteless excursion into the American passion for self-analysis'.

On 26/5/66 came the official announcement that Michael Meacham was to become Artistic Director - (David William had been Director of Productions) - 'in association with Michael Blakemore'. William had laid a useful foundation for a new kind of Citizens' Theatre, and another beginning had been reached, rich with hope.

The Productions were:

- The Critic (R.B. Sheridan) Directed David William (7/9/65).  
The Killdeer (James Reaney) Directed David William (28/9/65).  
Live Like Pigs (John Arden) Directed Derrick Goodwin (19/10/65).  
The Wild Duck (Henrik Ibsen/Michael Meyer) Directed David William/  
 Derrick Goodwin (9/11/65).  
Private Lives (Noel Coward) Directed Michael Meacham (30/11/65).  
A Beano for Jack (Pantomime) Directed John Groves (20/12/65).  
Julius Caesar (William Shakespeare) Directed David William (8/2/66).  
The Glass Menagerie (Tennessee Williams) Directed Derrick Goodwin  
 (1/3/66).  
Misalliance (Bernard Shaw) Directed Michael Meacham (22/3/66).  
Little Malcolm and His Struggle Against the Eunuchs (David Halliwell)  
 Directed Michael Blakemore (12/4/66).  
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Edward Albee) Directed Michael  
 Meacham (3/5/66).

Footnotes to Chapter Six - THE 'ENGLISH' PERIOD (Part One)

1. Russell Taylor, Anger and After, p.79.
2. ibid., p.330.
3. This Hampstead Theatre Club production, by James Roose-Evans, transferred successfully to the West End (Duke of York's Theatre).
4. Tennessee Williams, Memoirs, p.85.
5. Plays and Players, March, 1963.
6. ibid., April, 1966.
7. Bronner, Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, p.520



## CHAPTER SEVEN

THE 'ENGLISH' PERIOD (Part Two)

Although in some ways a continuation of the 'David William' era, the two seasons under the guidance of 'The Two Michaels', Meacham and Blakemore, have a flavour all of their own, taking the Citizens' Theatre to greater individual heights, perhaps, than it had ever reached before. There was little of a Scottish character about them, compared with the early 'Bridie' years, but a quite spectacular display of 'quality and prestige' productions which seemed to herald a new era of success; and yet in two years it was all over, with the Theatre heading towards an undeserved unpopularity both with diminishing audiences, Press and civic authorities. There was, too, the ever-increasing sense of a bogus type of Puritanism in the air, the name of Live Like Pigs always ready to be used even, mostly indeed, by those who knew nothing of that play. There was, in addition, an unhappy little difference of opinion almost at the outset, between the new Directors and the Board. It cannot be emphasised too much that in disagreements of this kind all concerned, more often than not, acted from the best of motives, the Board representing the ideas and ideals of a Theatre which, for better or worse, was slipping out of existence, the safe kind of Theatre protected at all times, even if often rather foolishly, by the Lord Chamberlain. The Directors, on the other hand, now had more power and prestige than ever before and, understandably, wanted to make use of it; they also wanted to enter the new, free and unfettered areas previously forbidden them, unaware at first that, although free in one way, they now had different, onerous responsibilities that they must bear themselves.

Meacham and Blakemore had decided to open the Citizens' season with Bernard Shaw's Man and Superman, a good, popular choice, of wide appeal and yet with the veneer of a 'respected' classic, and this they were to follow with Tennessee Williams' Sweet Bird of Youth, relatively unfamiliar on British stages, and they showed nothing if not ambition in their search for a suitable actress to play the showy role of the 'Princess'. The Board, no doubt aware of the creeping

oppressiveness in the local cultural and moral standards, and now faced by a play whose characters were flavoured by various kinds of decadence, with almost every one corrupt in some way, and castration waiting in the wings at the end, pronounced it 'unsuitable'. Blakemore 'deplored the rejection' and sought arrangements which would prevent similar situations occurring in the future. The Williams went out, replaced by Hugh Leonard's James Joyce adaptation, Stephen D.

If we take the productions of 1966-68 in loosely defined groups of classification, the picture presented is an interesting one: five 'orthodox' classics, four of a more modern nature; three Scottish plays, two of them new, and five other contemporary pieces, including three premieres; three modern comedies (two of them American), and two vintage farces, both for Christmas. The modern classics were, in fact, two Shaw and two Brecht. Man and Superman always works well if it is at all efficiently done, and Michael Meacham staged it to perfection. (His Associate was directing Doris Lessing's powerful Play with a Tiger next door at the Close, with Zoe Hicks and Steven Berkoff.) Edgar Wreford and Ann Firbank had joined the company to play John Tanner and Ann Whitefield, and a fine cast also included Martin Heller as Roebuck Ramsden, Peter Gale as Octavius, and Aimee Delamain as Mrs. Whitefield. Straker was played by John Warner, the original leading man in Salad Days, who was also to show considerable talent as a director during his stay in the Gorbals. (During these years, the Citizens' seemed to provide fertile ground for the development of Directors.) Audiences were good, and, despite the handsome production values and the opening of season rehearsal costs, there was a small deficit of only £181, after grants had been credited. Colin Chandler, Director of RSAMD School of Drama, later put on record his praise for the first night, and another attractive feature of the occasion was the presentation at the Close (late night) of the Don Juan in Hell sequence, performed by the appropriate players.

The Glasgow Herald (7/9/66) was unequivocal in its praise: 'a gay, dashing and in every way most unmournful opening to the



Citizens' season'. Edgar Wreford was 'a most excellent John Tanner', Ann Firbank a 'most beguiling Ann'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) considered it to be 'of a standard that would grace the Festival', and Robins Millar (Express), though less enthusiastic about the play itself, admitted to 'a lively hour of discussion' and two other acts of 'ordinary but amusing farce'. The Scotsman (19/9/66) reported, 'it seems they have never made a better start at the box-office'.

The other Shaw, Mrs. Warren's Profession, came towards the end of the following Autumn season, in the pre-Christmas spot, and was a rarity in Glasgow, although the Wilson Barrett Company, not always given credit for their adventurousness, had staged it in the vast Alhambra Theatre in 1941. It is an earlier play than Man and Superman by almost ten years, although it had, of course, lain under the Lord Chamberlain's ban for a long period, because of its theme, the discovery of Vivie, one of Shaw's young 'new women', that her expensive education has been provided by the profits of her mother's lucrative chain of brothels. In 1894 the very mention of such a 'profession' would generally be considered an affront, and Shaw's approach, in any case, was not the normal one to such a theme: it did not matter that his purpose was serious and sincere in its crusading motivation, and that his play was - and is - a marvellously entertaining one.

The Citizens' production (by Robert Cartland) did not receive a press of unmixed praise, but it was a creditable one, and attracted reasonable business. Allen Wright in the Scotsman (29/11/67) thought 'Mr. Cartland's production ... too easy-going', making the play seem rather 'a demure and colourless work'. The result was, however:

an agreeable entertainment, but it could be a caustic and invigorating plunge into questions of conscience .... Even Mrs. Warren seems subdued, although Zoe Hicks is the most assured member of the company, and the mellow vulgarity of her performance is impressive ... Robin Pidcock designed the curiously miniature settings, which are stylized but add to the impression that the play has been reduced in scale.

Noting the play's continuing relevance, the Glasgow Herald regretted that 'to begin with, at any rate, the Citizens' treat it as a period piece'. Nevertheless, there was much to give satisfaction: Zoe Hicks was a 'terrific Mrs. Warren ... a powerful performance not to be missed', while Barbara Ewing as Vivie never put 'a foot wrong, cool and unemphatic at all times', and Gary Hope as Frank was 'debonair, imperturbable, but something better than dandified'. Most important, after 75 years, the play's 'power to shock ... is undimmed'. Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times) relished the fact that 'Shaw's comments are spiked with typical biting wit ... Zoe Hicks is beautifully disciplined and altogether excellent as Mrs. Warren ...' but, 'although Robert Cartland's direction has some very amusing and inventive touches, the pace tends often to be slow. There is also too much table-rapping for emphasis'. According to the Daily Record, 'the wit and wisdom of George Bernard Shaw shines out ... Zoe Hicks was splendid ... an above average first night ...'.

The two Brecht productions, both by Michael Blakemore, were landmarks in different ways, The Visions of Simone Machard because it was the play's first professional English language production, the second, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, because it was a resounding triumph which has so far proved definitive and which discourages subsequent competing versions. Simone Machard is a pale memory in comparison, despite all Blakemore's burgeoning skill as a director. (It cannot be over-emphasised that it was at the Citizens' and Close that he began and developed his craft in this field of theatre, emerging in due course as one of the best directors in Britain.) Simone Machard marked a return for Brecht to the Saint Joan theme, this time translated to the occupied France of 1940, the play being written (1940 - 43) during the playwright's wartime exile in the United States. It is credited as being written in collaboration with Leon Feuchtwanger, and the translation used in the Gorbals was that of Arnold Hinchliffe. Music was by Hans Eisler, designs by Annena Stubbs, and Blakemore was fortunate in finding a seventeen-year-old Glasgow actress to play the leading role. There was a very large cast required, and it included names then or since then well-known, like Arthur Cox, Jean Taylor Smith, James Gibson and Richard



Wilson. One also notes that David Hayman played 1st Soldier in Mail and 1st Sentry, while the roles of 2nd Engineer, 3rd Soldier in Mail and 2nd Sentry were all taken by Denis Lawson. There was an Assistant Director, Keith Darrin, and a musical one, Wilma Purser. Obviously the salary bill was a high one, and audience figures not correspondingly satisfactory, with the result that there was (after grants) a deficit of £1,859, although there was an S.A.C. small 'new play' award. The instruction from the Board was that such losses must be avoided.

Press reception was not overwhelmingly favourable, and the Glasgow Herald (15/2/67) found the visionary intervals 'so much more real than the rest'. There was, however, 'a remarkable performance by Shirley Steedman .... The exchanges between her and her Angel (exceedingly well spoken, or rather sung, by John Purser) are the best in the play'. The play's relevance remained: 'there are those who may suppose such doings all over and done with now, but they are wrong'. William Watson (Scotsman) did not mince his words: it was 'Brecht at his most irritating', peopled by 'marionettes, stock figures' who:

were there to get Brecht's message across, not by living it, but by stating it ... I can't see why the Citizens' are doing it now. In a way this is made all the more vexing by the zeal that has gone into Michael Blakemore's production ... Mr. Blakemore does some wonderful things with these switchings back and forth.

On 27/2/67 Allen Wright, of the same paper, said, 'Michael Blakemore has handled it as if it were a masterpiece. But the material does not justify such devoted treatment. I would rather see a second-rate production of one of Brecht's important plays, than a first-class production of his inferior work'. The Evening Times (1/3/67) praised the direction's 'confident swiftness .... The Citizens' are commendably enterprising in giving us a chance to see this rarely performed parable'. Perhaps the best way to remember Simone Machard is as a preparation for the triumph, the following season, of Arturo Ui, a production which helped to set the seal on Blakemore's

success as a major director, and which made Leonard Rossiter a star actor, a status which he was to retain for the rest of his life.

Arturo Ui was an expensive production, with a very large cast, and financial results were rather less triumphant than the artistic ones. It would have been a welcome addition to the next Edinburgh Festival, but the Citizens' Board did not feel justified in taking the financial risk involved. This course of action, or lack of it, is, considering the theatre's growing financial worries, understandable, but must have been a bitter disappointment to Blakemore. As things turned out, Andrew Leigh, Citizens' Business Manager, formed a company to take Arturo Ui to the Lyceum Theatre during the 1968 Festival. Ironically, however, it was under the banner of an English regional theatre that it eventually reached the Saville Theatre, London, where it easily conquered these wide open spaces, winning for Rossiter the London Critics' and Variety Club's Best Actor Awards (1969).

The production at the Citizens' created a profound impression, and no one who saw it could easily forget the final moments when Hitler/Capone Arturo Ui advanced on his sky-high platform right to the lip of the stage. The Glasgow Herald (27/9/67) considered it 'an extraordinarily lively, funny, frightening, and entirely up-to-date piece of theatre ... the best exercise in the Brecht spirit that the Citizens' have given us yet'. The two henchmen, Harold Innocent's Giri and Richard Kane's Givola were 'both simultaneously grotesque and horrible', while the lessons from a Shakespearean actor, 'played with superb old peach-fed ham by John Lancaster', were 'made to evolve into complete Hitlerian utterance'. Rossiter's performance was a 'brilliant caricature', but 'the comic element must be to some extent revolting ... much more frightening than funny .... For we are not, at the end, allowed to think that that is all there is to it; here lies the real force and value of this play and the reason for gratitude to the Citizens' for putting it on', a reference to the closing caption, 'the beast that bore him is in heat again'.



David Gibson (Evening Times) felt that:

The atmosphere of Chicago in the 'thirties was there, the violence was there. There was even a sub-machine gun splattering blanks all over the place with a deafening roar .... A play such as this, with 30 characters, back-slides giving historical data on the Nazi regime ... and all heavily larded with satire, requires someone strong to hold it together ... Leonard Rossiter ... did a fine job.

And then, in complete contrast to the Herald, 'However, 20 years after the war, better more comedy and less message'.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) considered that:

Rossiter's portrayal of Hitler - growing from caricature into hideous reality is the finest performance that I have seen for a long time ... Michael Blakemore's brilliant production contradicts any suspicion that (Arturo Ui) might be one of Brecht's least significant works ... Its neglect by British theatres is unaccountable, for it is dramatic, absorbing and often enormously funny ... Blakemore brings off a staggering display of dramatic effects, the most imaginative of which is the use of the safety curtain as a garage door for the St. Valentine's Day massacre ... but it is Leonard Rossiter's triumph and another major achievement by the Citizens'.

The 'recognised' classics during these two seasons varied in both kind and in quality. There were two Shakespeare productions, both by Michael Meacham, Twelfth Night and The Tempest: the former was probably done less than full critical justice, and the over-all standard of acting was perhaps the better of the two, but The Tempest had certain qualities which placed it among the most striking Shakespeares in the Citizens' history.

Designs for Twelfth Night were by Robin Pidcock, with music once again by John Purser: Meacham himself was the Orsino, with Kara Wilson as Viola, Nicola Pagett Olivia, Arthur Cox Sir Toby, Roy Butcher

Sir Andrew, and Richard Kane Malvolio. (It must be obvious how important and vital a role this extraordinarily promising young actor played in the fortunes of the company in the course of the three years he spent with them.) This was, as the Herald (18/1/67) pointed out, a 'Caroline' Twelfth Night, and a warm and handsome one it was too, conjuring up suggestions of 'one of the last Court entertainments' before everything of its kind disappeared from view. It seemed, however, that 'The sense of light and sunshine, the real gaiety of this most truly felicitous of the comedies is hardly present ... Malvolio, mad and tormented', was 'too genuinely injured and too sinister to be really funny .... A remarkable performance, but one that leaves an unmistakable shadow behind, where all, perhaps, should be light'. (All 'failings' which would today, and probably rightly, be considered perfectly appropriate.) Michael Meacham, however, was 'a most admirable Orsino, handsome, elegant, arbitrary'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) saw this interpretation as unduly solemn, too, 'avoiding frivolity at all costs', with elements seeming to 'symbolise the Puritans, who were to have their revenge a generation after Shakespeare'. The production 'eventually broke out of the shrine in which it had been laid ... I think Richard Kane was chiefly responsible for liberating it'. As so often, critical standards and ideals as far as Shakespearean production was concerned, vacillated in a surprising manner: Robins Millar (Express) had seen 'light-hearted Shakespeare ... played as a boisterous romp. And even as a classic, it could not be much else, unless given more style than repertory can possibly muster'. Even more surprisingly, Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) found it to be 'a pastoral romp in the spirit of A Midsummer Night's Dream, and it is played for all it is worth by this talented Citizens' company'.

Apart from one extraordinary outburst from Robins Millar, there was nothing but praise for the following season's The Tempest. As has been suggested, the general standard of performance was less distinguished than in Twelfth Night, but the production somehow touched the right vein of magic, something so seldom achieved with this most difficult of all Shakespeare's major comedies, if, indeed, one can include it in this category at all, and it was further



distinguished by Kane's superb Ariel. As with Rossiter's Arturo Ui, this is a touchstone for any consideration of subsequent interpreters of the role: he was truly not of this earth. Harry Waistnage designed, and John Purser provided incidental music and songs. Christopher Small (Herald 18/1/68) was in no doubt about the production's virtues:

A true Tempest is the greatest of rarities ... the Citizens' ... have trusted the play to do what it marvellously can: the result is, to speak personally, the best production of the play I have seen, and thereby almost necessarily the most remarkable piece of Shakespeare I have enjoyed on their stage.

The setting was composed of:

a single semi-circle of neutral wall, recess below, balcony above ... "the great Globe itself" is represented at the start by a kind of enchanted golf ball ... Donald Douglas's Prospero is exceedingly good, dignified, eloquent, powerful ... Richard Kane's Ariel is ... not human at all ... like a celestial Pantaloon, his slow, somnambulist movements make a spirit at once beautiful, mysterious and ... alarming: the appearance "like a Harpy" shrieking and hovering on huge threatening wings is a sight indeed to appal the guilty and raise the hair upon us all.

To James Watson (Evening Times) the whole thing was 'a spellbinder':

Shakespeare doesn't spare the magic in this tale of atonement through suffering, demonstrating that problems can't be solved by shutting oneself away on an island, and that forgiveness, not revenge, is sweet ... The Ariel of Richard Kane has a fascinating slow-motion that really seems to carry him into the air to do his master's bidding ... an absorbing evening's entertainment.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) praised the 'much grace and delicacy' of Meacham's direction' and 'John Purser's solemn organ music' and referred to the 'brutish vigour' of Inigo Jackson's Caliban, 'almost

obscene in appearance'. Donald Douglas played Prospero 'elegantly', and his 'feeling for the poetry grows with the play'. Celia Bannerman's Miranda was 'a constant delight', with Lawrence Douglas making a 'romantic figure' of Ferdinand. The mortals were 'rather dull', the clowns 'amusing', and Wright joined in the praise of Kane's Ariel: 'he seems to be literally treading on air ... enchanting'. It is hard to believe that Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) saw the same production: 'There is no storm impact .... The play is so feeble in drama and crude in clowning that it has to be read for its poetry. With so much indistinct speech, so much muttering and actual whispering, it becomes only an antique pageant. There are supernatural fantasies that are just silly on the stage today'. Some thought Douglas (not so very long ago a Citizens' Romeo) rather a young Prospero, but there is no reason why Prospero should be an old greybeard, and Mr. Millar was alone in his extreme disenchantment. (But then, as a critic, he was always one of the great individualists of the Scottish Press; he was also a fairly prolific dramatist in his own right.) Wisely, The Tempest was allowed to run for four weeks.

An especially brave venture early on in the régime was the then seldom seen Phèdre of Racine in a version by Robert Lowell, Phaedra, directed by Michael Meacham, with Robin Pidcock designs and John Purser music. Few repertory theatres at this time would have dared to take such a risk, but the Citizens' Theatre seems to have emerged more or less unscathed financially from the experience. This is, however, an act of courage and idealism which, like so many others, was forgotten when, before long, the clouds, financial and other, began to close in. The Glasgow Herald (9/11/66) found it 'as it ought to be, an appalling spectacle', with Zoe Hicks giving:

a quite hair-raisingly good performance, the most powerful individual piece of work that has been seen on the Citizens' stage for a good while .... It should be seen, with whatever imperfections, by more people than were there - why? is the real thing so frightening? - last night.

(Racine based his play firmly on the Euripides tragedy and traces powerfully the unrequited passion of Phaedra for Hippolytus, son of



her husband, Theseus; by a previous marriage.) 'P' in the Scotsman decided that 'the tragedy in retrospect has been a full and balanced entertainment; she was impressed by the Hippolytus of Christopher Guinee; 'his marble eyes turned on his ravaged stepmother convey all the cruelty of unimaginative and affronted intolerance'. Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) thought that this production 'established beyond doubt the versatility of the present Citizens' company' ... presented 'with an economy of stage gimmickry against an impressively sombre setting ...'. Cordelia Oliver (Guardian 10/11/66) recognised that the production was not without shortcomings, but awarded high praise to Zoe Hicks for her performance in the title role:

few repertory companies can boast a resident actress with the physical equipment, temperament and intelligence to come anywhere within grasping distance of such a part as Phaedra ... her face, with its high cheek-bones and large eyes, might have been made for tragedy, and her voice can rise as easily to a howl of rage and despair as it can drop to a thrilling throbbing murmur. Hers is not yet a perfect Phaedra, but neither is it to be dismissed lightly, for she does grasp the monumental more than human quality of the role.

The fact that this role offers an unique challenge to any actress is stressed by Allardyce Nicoll: 'With consummate artistry, the dramatist has presented an unforgettable portrait of a woman whose very being is consumed by a fire she cannot quench'.<sup>1</sup>

Nightmare Abbey (Anthony Sharp out of Thomas Love Peacock) was an even more rarefied choice (and an unlikely one for the pre-Christmas attraction), and Glasgow audiences probably did not appreciate the opportunity they had to enjoy something different; at the same time, this was the kind of play which demanded a certain amount of 'homework', and theatregoers in the Sixties did not take kindly to any such idea. However, a perceptive man of the theatre like Michael Blakemore was unlikely to embark on such a venture without a good reason other than his own preference, and this was the hundredth anniversary of Peacock's death. (The Theatre Programme for the production is

surprisingly unhelpful regarding background.) Designs were by Maurice Strike, with special music this time by Frank Spedding and mimes arranged by Grace Matchett: it is worth noting how meticulously peripheral details of this kind were attended to during this period. Christopher Small, always well versed in literary manners, had some reservations regarding Peacock on the stage (Herald 30/11/66), but decided that 'enough remains ... to give a great deal of pleasure to most Peacockians ... though others may find the occasion and some of the allusions a little obscure ... it makes a cheerful evening'. (Much of the wit in Peacock's novels was directed in satirical manner against notables like Shelley, Byron and Coleridge.) Allen Wright (Scotsman) thought that 'Michael Blakemore's production did not seem quite ready for public exposure last night', but the Daily Mail's 'misgivings ... must fade in view of the richness of the acting ... John Warner ... is magnificent. This' (in the role of Scythrop, son of the master of Nightmare Abbey) 'is acting as good as we have ever seen at the Citizens', which is saying something'. Nicola Pagett (Marionetta) gave 'one of those once-in-a-lifetime performances as a sweet young maid, ripe for love'. Cordelia Oliver (Guardian) notes the reference to Shelley, 'whose real-life situation between Mary and Harriet resembles Scythrop's between Stella and Marionetta'. The Stage (15/12/66), however, cuts across this pleasant literary and historical speculation: 'It is all very dated and dainty, and not without merit, but it leaves one wondering why the Citizens' have not yet made an impact with an important and contemporary drama, preferably from Scotland'. (This question was to be answered on both counts before the season was over.) One additional point of interest concerning Nightmare Abbey, however, lies in the fact that the guest actor playing Christopher Glowry was Ronald Adam, who organised the Howard and Wyndham Players for two seasons at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow/Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh, just before World War Two.

The other production which may, rather loosely, join this group is that of George Farquhar's The Beaux' Stratagem. This marked a guest return of Iain Cuthbertson to the Gorbals as Director, and the comedy, which had had a 500 performance London run in the early



Fifties, seemed ripe for revival. For some reason, despite these advantages, things turned out less well than might have been expected: not an inaccessible play, its plot was here hard to follow, the characters had insufficient room to breathe. Apart from Roy Boutcher as Archer and Richard Kane as Gibbet the Highwayman, most of the prominent roles were played by artistes from outside the usual company: Roger Brierley was Aimwell, Pauline Delany Mrs. Sullen, and the production was graced by the presence of Sophie Stewart and Ellis Irving, although they had little chance to show their talents. Memory suggests, too, a certain drabness about Robin Archer's designs, but this may, of course, have been a deliberate attempt to break away from any sense of the 'prettiness' which often used to beset this kind of play. Press reception was, indeed, reasonable: Christopher Small (Herald 29/3/67) was quite enthusiastic, describing the play as:

a continuously lively, witty and engaging piece, a most astonishing work to be produced by a man, under 30 and on his death-bed .... It does, however, appear to stand in need of revival, and if so the Citizens' go the right way about it ... a most delightful, as well as an instructive, evening.

Robins Millar (Express) conceded that 'Fine costumes and remarkably quick scene changes are features of a worthy production'. On the other hand, Andrew Young (Daily Mail) felt that 'the expected explosion is muffled in words', and Allen Wright (Scotsman) suggested that, like the Highwayman, Captain Gibbet, 'the production is inclined to drag its spurs along the ground'. The play's vitality and gaiety 'have not been fully exploited'. Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times) simply found it 'wordy and dated', the direction 'lethargic'. It seems unhappily for this potentially attractive occasion, that there was a gross deficit of £5,965 (not taking grants into account).

A number of strong contemporary pieces brought life and freshness to the Citizens' during this vital period in its history, and, although Stephen D had not originally been intended to follow Man

and Superman, it proved to be an undeniable critical success. Adroitly adapted by Hugh Leonard from James Joyce's 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man' and the fragmentary 'Stephen Hero' (initial draft of 'A Portrait'), it had been inspired by what Leonard refers to as 'Cyril Cusack's spellbinding recording' and he had set about the adaptation of 'Portrait' because 'on the surface it was the most straightforward of Joyce's works'. It was only, however, by using the additional fragment, that he 'managed to produce a rough script in which alternate lines and scenes quite literally flitted from book to book'.<sup>2</sup> Leonard's eventual feelings were mixed: 'For the first time, I had completed a play in which there was not a word of my own dialogue', and he was full of trepidation as to the possible reaction of a Dublin audience to Joyce's 'vividly expressed agnosticism'. As things turned out, 'while there were gasps among the audience now and again, there was not a murmur of protest'. Much more troublesome was the attitude of the still powerful Lord Chamberlain's office when a London production was planned. 'They seemed to look upon it as the wickedest thing since Crippen .... What strait-laced Ireland took in its lazy stride, pagan England would have no part of'.<sup>2</sup>

All these problems had been settled by the time Michael Blakemore's production reached the Gorbals, and where Sweet Bird of Youth might have caused alarm and aroused abuse, Stephen D appears to have arrived smoothly and without undue comment. Allen Wright's impression (Scotsman 28/9/66) was, in the first Act, of 'fragments of experience ... at first mere glimpses' of 'the impressionable Stephen and the influences which he absorbs', with a latter half in which he is 'challenging everything received'. 'Much of consequence has happened at the Citizens' in the past year, but I don't think I have seen anything better than this'. In the Glasgow Herald, Christopher Small admitted approaching this kind of 'translation' with misgivings, but he had found that 'a surprising amount of Joyce not only survives but actually takes on theatrical life ... Mr. (Lewis) Fiander's Stephen is a beautifully considered, sustained, and pointed performance which actually does bridge the gap between page and stage' ... It was an 'ingenious, skilful and painstaking presentation'.



Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) also had doubts about a play with such origins: 'As it is a play based on what is going on inside a man's mind, it is almost inevitable that it should be long on words and short on action. But skilful direction by Michael Blakemore brings the words to life'. Iain Thorburn (Glasgow Evening Citizen) said that it 'adds yet another jewel to the Citizens' impressive crown'.

Directly after this bold venture, came John Osborne's controversial Inadmissible Evidence - (the Citizens' once again up front with developments in British and World Theatre) - and in this Michael Blakemore faced up to the greatest challenge of his career as an actor. It seems that Nicol Williamson, creator of the role of Bill Maitland, had varied greatly from night to night, as John Russell Taylor observed in his review of the transfer from the Royal Court Theatre to London's West End (Wyndham's):

Apparently the first night of the transfer was a triumph; the second, when I saw it, was very nearly a disaster ... it started slow and got slower and slower ... quite a sizeable portion of the dress circle left before the end. (The role of Maitland) the fortyish solicitor whose world slowly dissolves about his ears in the course of the play is extremely, if not uniquely, taxing, and since most of the play is virtually a monologue by him, if he is not absolutely on top of it, the whole production suffers .... At his best, however, he (Williamson) is absolutely superb and gives one of the great performances of the modern English theatre. The role is written brilliantly, but within a very narrow range of emotions - self-pity, petulance, despair, savage irony.<sup>3</sup>

Some of this was echoed in the Glasgow Press reaction: Allen Wright (Scotsman 19/10/66) described the play as:

a formidable piece of work, the author confining himself to a very narrow range ... Bill Maitland announced in the first scene that he is irredeemably mediocre, hopelessly indecisive, and quite dependent on other people's efforts ... Michael Blakemore vividly suggests the shallow charm and the pitiful weakness of this man, but a monotony creeps into the performance and production.

Christopher Small (Herald) found Blakemore's performance 'in some ways even more remarkable than his tour de force in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'. He also referred to the play being 'admirably directed by Michael Meacham', whereas Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times) asked, 'A good play? Probably not. But it is a fascinating human document ... Michael Blakemore is superb'. In contrast, the Scottish Daily Mail thought it 'probably John Osborne's best play so far, and the Citizens' are fortunate in having someone like Blakemore capable of making the most of the leading role'. Michael Meacham directed.

In its way, A Day in the Death of Joe Egg (Peter Nichols) was the peak of the Michaels' term of office: although it was very much a Blakemore product and shot him into the international sphere of Theatre, others deserve praise for approving this play at ground level, seeing it grow into a success in the Gorbals, followed by a London run, a Broadway season and a film: Michael Meacham, whose reputation would have suffered had the play turned out to be a disaster,<sup>4</sup> and the Theatre Board, who countered any previous charges of cowardice by their support for the staging of a play dealing with that most delicate and painful of subjects, a spastic child and its effect on a marriage. The daring aspect of the project, even more than the physical presentation of a 'severely brain damaged only child', was the approach to it in a manner which almost smacked, from time to time, of music-hall humour: Christopher Small (Herald 10/5/67) wrote of its 'furious attack on everything within sight and out of it', with its leading roles 'exceedingly well acted in a production which may fairly be called brilliant'. Bri, the husband and father, was:

almost too well done by Joe Melia, since it is hard to believe in such a performance - he not only takes off himself, but all the others out of the author's reach ... Zena Walker is also very good as the wife and mother who ... partly feeds on magical hopes and partly satisfies her urge to "embrace all living things" by keeping cats, goldfish, stick-insects, and potted plants ... it is not ... in any way ... offensive - at least not in the sense that might be expected,



and, even if the total end product was not altogether 'satisfying', 'the Citizens' are to be congratulated on putting it on'. The centre of the play was 'not really a hopelessly sick child, but a hopeless marriage'. Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times) thought that:

some people may initially be offended by the idea of a retarded spastic child being the basis for a funny play, (albeit) one of the most original, perceptive, and brilliant plays by any modern dramatist ... Nichols's dialogue sizzles with wit, and his more poignant, economically written passages - (Nichols wrote from personal experience) - are often deeply affecting.

Blakemore's production 'could not be bettered', and Melia's 'bright, switched-on veneer hides a frustrated, neglected man'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) prophesied that:

a long and controversial career lies ahead ... it is the last production of the season ... but it should survive as a stimulating topic of conversation until the curtain rises again in September ... like his hero, Mr. Nichols may not be able to sustain a passion until the end of a sentence, but all the fragments of unfinished sentences and moods add up to an extraordinary experience ... Joe Melia's performance is a brilliant combination of exuberance and desolation, and Zena Walker suggests the warmth and the hopeless faith of the mother, yearning for "magic".

Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) noted wisely that Nichols 'uses television ideas that give unconventional approach. And their effect is deeply poignant .... It is cleverly written and brilliantly acted, so that there is much laughter'.

Popularity for any 'unknown' play took a long time to build in Glasgow of the Sixties, and there was a gross deficit of £3,358, but it is fairly safe to say that no one connected with the first launching of Joe Egg regretted it, and there would be financial 'spin-offs' from subsequent developments.

Another new play, though already staged in London, was Donald

Howarth's A Lily in Little India, directed by Tony Jones and designed by Robin Pidcock, and, although by no means without merit in writing, acting and production, this piece proved too 'small-scale' for the Citizens' which, although a comparatively small theatre, has seldom proved to be a suitable stage for the sensitively intimate. It is easy to see that A Lily had nothing which could reach out and attract large audiences into the theatre. 'E.M.' in the Herald (8/11/67) thought that there was material 'for no more than at most ... two acts' - (there were three) ... much of it is good, truthful material ... but ... invention dries up some time before' the climax. It is explained that the action takes place in the Calcutta Street - Bombay Road neighbourhood of a North-country town, where the young Alvin Hanker 'steals soil in which to plant his bulb' (a Dragon's Fang Lily). He establishes - and, of course, there is symbolic 'reaching out' - a relationship with a dressmaker who has to care for her retired, bed-ridden clergyman father, Alvin, in turn, being oppressed by his 'termagant mother', a role in which Irene Sunters was 'admirable'. The Herald review concluded with a reference to:

the continuing fascination of watching the cast negotiate Robin Pidcock's complicated set. It contains at least six rooms; seven or eight if you count hallways and landings, which means an unconscionably cluttered stage and more than normal temptations placed in the way of the players to walk through walls. They surmount them.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) sums up the theme of the play neatly: 'The lily is a symbol of beauty and delicacy arising from the dust. It is cultivated and cherished by a young man whose home is a place of squalid bickering'. Describing the plight of the girl (Anna), he continues, 'To say that the lily grows and flowers like their love is to sentimentalise a play that skilfully avoids false emotionalism .... It is a pleasant play without being very substantial .... Matthew Long is impressive as Alvin' and 'Irene Sunters suggests the vulnerable loneliness behind her coarse facade'. Wright also mentions the 'elaborate setting ... the complex of partitions and split-levels tends to confuse the essential simplicity of its (the



play's) drama'. 'T.D.T.' (Evening Times) quotes the Theatre Programme, in which Donald Howarth says, 'I was trying to stylise realism to show more of the person speaking than normally meets the ear'. 'Unfortunately in this production', the critic continues, 'Mr. Howarth's aim was not fully realised .... The production by Tony Jones does not achieve the full depth of feeling which is possible with the play. Part of the fault may lie in the slow speed at which it was played'.

A surplus of £463 was expected; instead there was a deficit of £447 because of the poor box office returns, and Michael Meacham pointed out that smaller costs do not guarantee greater surpluses. (Presumably under 'advice', A Lily had been substituted for Oh What a Lovely War.) The larger scale, attacking production has often been proved to produce much more successful results than the more 'economic' and modest model.

The still reasonably fashionable Jean Anouilh was represented by The Rehearsal; this production, by Michael Meacham, was a beautiful one, but Glasgow, as previously noticed, has seldom reacted enthusiastically to French plays, and certainly - The Waltz of the Toreadors was an example - not to Anouilh, and so it is regrettable but not surprising that audiences were sometimes 25% of capacity. It is, however, surprising that the Michaels should have, at this juncture, opted for 'something French'; this was their third last production, and was to be followed by two more in the 'contemporary' bracket - brand new, in fact - and there is no doubt that for some reason the steam and power had gone out of this fine partnership, and audience interest, correspondingly, dropped away too. Although a contemporary play, The Rehearsal is an 18th century costume piece because the leading characters are rehearsing a very high grade amateur production of Pierre Marivaux's 'La Double Inconstance', admired, as the Theatre Programme, puts it, 'by an elegantly decadent public not far removed from the social butterflies which Anouilh puts so wittily upon his stage'. It is one of Anouilh's 'pièces brillantes', written in 1950, but not seen in Britain until 1961, and, in addition to Anouilh's satirical wit and sparkle, it presents

us with one of his typical heroines, 'symbol of innocence soured by experience'. 'P' in the Scotsman (3/4/68) mentions how its limited London season turned into a long run:

no one, seeing it anew last night ... will be surprised at this .... The Citizens' company looks delicious, and the set ... is done by Robin Pidcock in melting nacré shades and is perfectly beautiful ... on the whole Michael Meacham ... might have encouraged them (his cast) to be more classically malignant .... There is no doubt, however, that M. Anouilh's romance must please the heart of every female theatregoer within miles. It is about love, and is handsomely done.

The Evening Times found it, 'in the hands of a very strong cast ... compellingly convincing. It is a play within a play. Beautifully directed by Michael Meacham, it builds up an atmosphere that is at times almost painful'.

Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) reacted violently against the play, and typifies the groundswell which was building up against the Citizens' as it moved into the more 'liberal' atmosphere of the Seventies. It was 'a change from the kitchen sink'. Instead we had 'a French drawing-room sink of iniquity'. The characters were 'vicious degenerates all of them .... Victorian melodrama holds the plot together'. He concludes that 'poisonous behaviour is not less repulsive for being covered by an icing of glittering elegance in language and acting'. Small in the Glasgow Herald took a rather different approach: it was an 'elegant piece, most elegantly played', and it was:

a pleasure to watch it so well done, presented with so much polish and style in a suitably glittering set ... Donald Pickering, a newcomer to the company, makes a splendid Count .... There is a most touching, sure and direct performance by Kika Markham as the invasive force of innocence and truth ... it is the scene of her betrayal by the sourly named Hero (Peter Halliday) that is the real core of the evening. Mr. Halliday, moving from maudlin drunkenness to destructive cruelty, Miss Markham from serenity to wretchedness, remind one again what Anouilh can do. He is maybe not far from being a classic after all.



The fact that audiences could ignore a production of this kind mirrors the whole attitude to the theatre in the Gorbals during the next years. The dice were heavily loaded against it, and it could hardly do any right in the eyes of many: either its product was negative, or, sometimes, 'dirty', whatever that adjective was intended to mean.

The last two productions were, it would seem, intended to fulfil the search for another Joe Egg, in other words, a new play which would shoot off into all kinds of prestigious and profitable directions: indeed Smile Boys, That's The Style (John Hale), directed by Blakemore and Under the Skin (Kenneth Ross) directed by Meacham could have, especially in the first case, been detached and allowed to sail straight into the West End orbit. Sadly, no such happy ending ensued, with the result that this régime, so rich in promise and in previous execution, ended in a low key manner.

Smile Boys, That's The Style had much in its favour: it was a first play by a good novelist, (begun in 1965). The Theatre Programme tells how 'Four versions and one year later he had a set of scripts duplicated as "an act of faith"; faith being defined as "an irrational belief in the impossible" - in this case that anyone should ever stage the play'. In 1968, it was under option in both London and New York, and it was the playwright's idea that it should have a Citizens' production: 'What I was looking for was a director whom I respected and a theatre with a reputation'. The optimistic scenario thus projected never came to fulfilment, although there was, eventually, a London 'fringe' production under another name, and Hale's third novel, A Fool at the Feast, clearly deals with the genesis of the play.

It was a good play, first-class as to acting and direction, and Patrick Robertson's designs - and their execution - were among the most exciting ever seen at the Citizens'. 'The action', the Programme stated, 'which is continuous from 10 in the morning until midnight, moves between "The Volunteer" (a hotel) and the small house and garden of ex-Warrant Officer Class One Pitt. Between them is the seafront'. Johnny Pitt, fugitive from the world of Television success and an unhappy marriage, has fled, with faithful secretary in tow, to the

seaside town (out of season) where his father and mother live. Characters, situation, dialogue are good: Johnny hopes to find the secret of living - which he has failed to solve - from his father.

JOHNNY: I was certain that the world is - just a fluke - in the centre of chaos; that we only make it bearable by a sort of senseless clinging to one another - for warmth. It was stinking hot and I was freezing. Freezing and sweating. I came home to find out how you do it, and like me you don't.

Allen Wright (Scotsman 24/4/68) notes that this is John Hale's first stage play:

But it would seem that he set out to write a screen play, so widely does it roam and so frequently does it cut from one scene to another .... It is fascinating to see how the director, Michael Blakemore, has coped ... by back-projection of photographs and gliding changes of rooms and furniture, the whole ambience of a bleak seaside town is created. (This, however, attracts) more of our attention than what Mr. Hale has to say ... as a picture of the disenchantment of middle age it does not approach the sardonic force of John Osborne's Inadmissible Evidence. (There was ) some brilliant observation of character which some of the actors work upon very successfully (and it all amounts to a) very resourceful production.

David Gibson (Evening Times) discusses the interest of 'emotional tangles' for audiences, and this is 'a tangle of the most contemporary sort ... the parts are well-defined, perhaps too well defined, for we have seen them all before. But these are exploited beyond their definitions by a superbly competent cast ... and the whole production flows along smoothly with ... a television slickness'. Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) saw the play as 'so perfectly up to date that it is almost a period piece already ...'. Nevertheless:

the narrative of the 14 critical hours in the life of Mr. Hale's Johnny Pitt is sustained with much skill ... scenes wheeled briskly on and off, ground floor and split level ... and exceedingly well produced and acted .... The



real nub of the play is ... in the small, tidy, dreary home of Johnny's parents, the old soldier, retired WOI, and his silly, wistful, unloved wife ... both ... beautifully played by Margery Mason and Leslie Sands.

Some of the rest was reduced to the level of the 'Problem Picture'.

Robins Millar (Daily Express) was fairly jaundiced about this one too, heading his review 'Hale not Hearty'. He allowed that 'novel staging offered the play a fair chance. An English cast was imported. But it has a shopworn plot and the appeal to Glasgow is dubious'.

The Citizens' suffered an eventual deficit of £1,417, and there were no subsequent benefits, but it seems unfair that a production of this kind should disappear without trace. Perhaps the play's theme was insufficiently novel in itself, perhaps the excellent cast did not include enough names with 'marquee value' - (Edward Judd, Caroline Blakiston and Neville Jason played leading roles). It stays in the memory, however, after twenty years.

Michael Meacham's final production was not as happy as one would have wished for this sensitive and very capable man of the theatre, and it is hard to see why he placed such faith in Under the Skin. The play obviously had no future as far as the stage was concerned, nor had the playwright, Kenneth Ross, although he became a successful film script writer, notably with The Day of the Jackal. The characters were as unattractive a bunch as one could hope to meet: Sidney Kinsella an unsuccessful ageing actor (shades of Long Day's Journey), his wife an unhappy eccentric, his daughter a nymphomaniac, the son a pale shadow of Oswald in Ghosts. The first three of these rage and bicker, watched by 'Nannie' Vine, who is a sort of male mother to the boy. This situation is interrupted by the arrival of Mullock, a potentially interesting catalyst who comes on the scene too late and is not allowed to develop significantly enough.

Paul Hartley Foster headed his article in the Evening Times 'Skinful of Rubbish' (15/5/68): noting that it is billed as being 'not suitable for children', he goes on to say that it:

isn't suitable for adults either - certainly not intelligent ones anyway. It is not that I am a prude ... But the play was just stupid. It had no dramatic point or value and relied on shouting, fighting, undergraduate smut ... Michael Meacham has nevertheless directed with skill, imagination and vision, and the acting is very good, with splendid performances from Roy Boutcher and Victor Carin. It's a shame, though, that a theatre with the Citizens' reputation should sink to a level when it puts on such trivial and tedious rubbish.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) was struck by:

A kind of wild eclecticism which for a time at least affords interest, if only to guess at Mr. Ross's sources .... There is no question about the efforts made by the Citizens' company to give the play some life ... (to) impart at least movement and noise and such animation as a succession of grotesqueries allows.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) perceives accurately that Ross's:

bizarre household is clearly meant to represent the sick society in which we live, but the play is more of a symptom of that sickness than a diagnosis .... It is lamentable that Michael Meacham should have chosen this sour and half baked play for his last production at the Citizens' Theatre where he has done so much distinguished work over the past three years ... Mr. Ross seems earnest and sincere in his dialogue ... but he has expressed himself clumsily ... Roy Boutcher is particularly good as the meek and effeminate 'Nannie Vine', and Victor Carin gives a slickly sinister portrayal of the advertising man.

Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) was, as might be expected, bitterly forthright:

Oh What a Nasty Boring Play. It conveys the effect, to my mind, of a bad smell ... I have not heard so many of an audience describe a play as "sickening" and "nasty" since Live Like Pigs. The least fault was that it was badly acted ... It is deplorable that civic subsidies go for this kind of theatre fare, even if presented with a "for adults only" warning.



Box office was poor, and the deficit, when deductions had been made was £1,390. The Board thought it 'extremely poor and should not have been produced'. Other talents employed were those of Carmen Silvera, David Blake Kelly, Tina Packer and Bernard Finch. It was said that a well-known leading male actor had been expected to take part, but it is doubtful if anything could have retrieved a mistake of a kind that even the best talents can make.

There were three Scottish plays, two of them new, but mention should also be made of three comedies, two of them American which, although not exactly of classic dimensions, were of some substance, and two farces which successfully took the place of the usual Christmas revue. The British comedy, The Knack, was by Ann Jellicoe, a writer very prominent in the fifties and sixties, and this was probably her most successful play, appearing first in 1961. John Russell Taylor describes it as 'a witty study of the relations of three contrasted housemates with an innocent girl who wanders in'.<sup>5</sup> In the Citizens' Theatre Programme, Robert Cartland (who directed) quotes the author: 'The theatre is a medium which works upon people's imagination and emotion - not merely their intellect. And I am trying to use every possible effect that the theatre can offer to stir up the audience - to get at them through their emotions'. And Russell Taylor again: 'The most remarkable quality of the play, in fact, is the sheer drive of the action, physical and emotional, right through its three acts in one unbroken movement'.<sup>6</sup>

Word, however, got around that an amusingly 'daring' play was on show in the Gorbals, and audiences, not caring about any weighty motives and theories, packed the theatre, making tickets hard to get by the end of the run. Designs were by the excellent Rodney Ford, and the cast of four were Barbara Ewing as the girl, Del Henney as the sexually aggressive Tolen, Matthew Long as the worried and uncertain Colin, and Richard Kane as the 'balanced' Tom. Christopher Small (Herald 18/10/67) made no great claims for the play: 'from time to time ... certainly ... funny', but 'the climactic moments at which laughter bursts unforced from situation ... are pretty thinly scattered through the evening', which is 'extremely strenuous ... for everybody'.

There is 'something innocent about the characters ... the three youths sharing their down-at-heel London house and doing nothing much in or out of it, apparently ... but sit around and talk about the knack of getting girls' and Nancy 'looking for the YWCA'. Nevertheless, 'play therapy is one thing, a stage-play quite another. And until the business is, as the jargon goes, rather better structured, it is a bit hard on the watchers behind the one-way screen'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) also neatly punctures the mist of high-sounding talk that was inclined to surround this comedy: 'It has an air of brash gaiety, and there are some shafts of original observation, but it is altogether too trivial'. The 'irony' of the situation, the

girl from the provinces who eventually eclipses the boys' ... fantasies with her own wild dreams ... is that they are all innocent, and their pranks have an appealing charm .... Endless amusement is derived from manhandling an old iron bedstead around the room, and splashing whitewash on the walls - activities that Miss Jellicoe insists are part of the business of "communicating" with the audiences .... Richard Kane is often very funny as the self-consciously eccentric Tom.

David Gibson (Evening Times) went further along the same lines: 'If you haven't seen the film (1965) ... or even if you have, it's well worth visiting the Citizens' Theatre .... If authoress Ann Jellicoe was trying to put over a message, it missed by a mile. If she just wanted to make people laugh, she's spot on'. The Daily Record simply said: 'Plays about morals are fairly thick on the ground these days. But few manage to invest the subject with so much inoffensive humour ... a marvellous vehicle for actor Richard Kane's natural exuberance. It is a witty, fast-moving and refreshing piece of pure entertainment'.

Following the famous film version with Marilyn Monroe (1955), it was brave to revive George Axelrod's The Seven Year Itch, but there is always interest in going back to the original, especially as it was one which, following its Broadway appearance in 1952 with Tom Ewell and Vanessa Brown, ran for 1,141 performances. The New York News summed it up then as 'delightful nonsense'.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly 'P' in the Scotsman (8/3/67) found it 'too slow' by TV standards, the first Act seeming



to her 'interminable'. 'The comedy has a curiously emasculated effect ... the man, in fact, is a bit of a bore', but 'Nicola Pagett lent a pleasing comic touch to *The Girl*'. Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) thought it 'very funny indeed', and muses darkly how such a theme would have been handled in the late Sixties: 'It is too easy to imagine how this business would nowadays have been hotted up and lowered down, and, even, save the mark, given insignificant significance'. Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) praised Michael Blakemore's performance as being 'superb'. Blakemore, who played what Bronner calls the 'publishing executive who starts thinking like a bachelor when his wife goes on a summer vacation'<sup>7</sup> was blossoming more fully as actor as well as director at this time, and had also written a novel, 'Next Season', (reprinted 1988). Young also felt that the revival was 'intelligently directed' (by Kenneth Parrott), and that 'Nicola Pagett looks beautiful but never quite comes to grips with the part'. According to Robins Millar (Express), it was 'light-hearted entertainment with just enough satire in it to carry a kick'. The Stage (23/3/67) was pleased to see the Citizens' Theatre 'presenting a more modern type of play and scoring so successfully'.

The Odd Couple by Neil Simon was another Broadway success, although it reached Gorbals just ahead of the film and Television fame which was to follow, and which would have caused it to attract rather more attention than it did. The New York run of 964 performances had begun in 1965, and once again it would be hard to find a better summing-up of the plot than that provided by Bronner: '... comedy about mismatched roommates, a fussy neatnick (Art Carney) and a slob of a sportswriter (Walter Matthau) who take up house-keeping together in New York - and drive each other crazy'. This time the verdict of the News was 'Wildly, irresistibly, incredibly and continuously funny'.<sup>8</sup> The film had Matthau and Jack Lemmon (1968), and there was a London production - successful but not outstandingly so - (1966) - with Jack Klugman and Victor Spinetti. At the Citizens', Tony Jones directed, with David Blake Kelly as sportswriter Oscar and Peter Halliday as Felix. The latter did much fine and versatile work at both Citizens' and Close, and was, like so much at this time, undervalued; Blake Kelly, a strong character

actor, was, perhaps, not ideally suited to this kind of comedy.

Allen Wright (Scotsman 13/3/68) was right in thinking that:

the smart wit and brisk exchanges of the dialogue need expert handling, and, although the leading parts are efficiently taken ... it is difficult for British actors to adopt this relaxed and crackling style. Peter Halliday goes a long way towards it with his performance as Felix, and David Blake Kelly is entertaining as the vastly irritating Oscar. The dialogue is often very funny, but one misses a sharp edge to this comedy of some social significance.

The setting by Edna Purdy was 'admirable'.

The Evening Citizen was worried about the accents:

a pretty ambitious thing for the Citizens' to do and - accents apart - they did it fairly well. When the odd couple themselves were left alone on the stage the accents didn't matter at all - it was only when confronted by six home-grown poker-playing all-Americans that I felt irritated .... An impossible marriage, but hilarious for the audience while it lasted.

Glasgow Herald enjoyed it:

Some funny, perceptive lines, wisecracks rather, are carefully planted in the dialogue. And the clash of temperaments between Oscar, admirably played by David Blake Kelly, and Felix - a matching performance from Peter Halliday - is very well managed. Last night's audience enjoyed the comedy, as will, doubtless, the audiences of the next three weeks ... Tony Jones's production has hardly achieved the dazzling glitter, which, ideally, it demands, but it is remarkably well finished.

Robins Millar (Express) was also happy: 'It ran gaily last night with lots of laughter at its skit on U.S. divorce as it hits husbands.



Rugged American manhood lashed to fury becomes funny and quite credible too'.

1966

The 1966 Christmas farce was Charley's Aunt, an excellent choice, as the Brandon Thomas classic has seldom failed to please since its first performance in 1892. Success was doubly assured with Richard Kane available to play Lord Fancourt Babberley, and other practically definitive casting included Michael O'Halloran as Sir Francis Chesney, Martin Heller as Spettigue and the veteran James Gibson, a Citizens' founder member, as Brassett, the College Scout. The first-rate production was by John Warner, designs by Donald Chaffin. Christopher Small (Herald 21/12/66) enjoyed 'a most agreeable experience' ... this 'might indeed have been a part written for Richard Kane ... like all the best Aunts, he is both credible and impossible at the same time'. He was well partnered by 'Malcolm Ingram's Jack (manly and sporting)' and 'Christopher Guinee's Charles (sentimental and stammering)'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) noted that:

the only "significance" in this happy entertainment comes from the catching of Richard Kane as the impostor, for earlier this year he played Little Malcolm at the Citizens'. He has thus spanned three-quarters of a century of undergraduate fantasy, and the gulf is as great as that between the garrets of Huddersfield in winter and the lawns of Oxford in summer .... When the clock chimes, and the birds twitter, and Donna D'Alvadorez (Zoe Hicks) makes her superb entrance, there is an overwhelming sense of serenity.

We are also told that 'The unusual and welcome sound of cheering burst from the gallery at the end of last night's performance'.

1967

The following year, Robin Midgley directed another classic, Ben Travers's Rookery Nook, designed by Edna Purdy with costumes by the Wardrobe Supervisor, Jennifer Noon. Of all the Aldwych farces, this is probably the best, and yet it seldom revives as well as one feels that it ought to, perhaps because, more than any of the others, it is bound firmly to the Lynn-Walls-Hare axis and resists the efforts of others. (Even a promising musical version, Popkiss (1972), failed

'to run. Kurt Ganzl refers to 'a bundle of light-footed and well-integrated ensembles without the show ever making the more obvious effects necessary for popular success!')<sup>9</sup> However, despite a press reception which was decent but not overwhelming, and a not too wise attempt to impart a Scottish flavour, this fairly expensive production did actually better than expected at the Box Office, ending up with a surplus of £1,900. Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times 20/12/67) wrote:

It is billed as "the funniest play in the world", and that is not an exaggeration ... Robin Midgley's production gallops along at a tremendous lick, and the split-second timing of the whole cast ensures that the fun is always fast and furious ... Richard Kane's cringing, terrified rabbit Harold Twine ... is a joy as he timidly nibbles his straw boater .... If you don't believe it is THAT good, go and see it for yourselves.

The Glasgow Herald, too, reported:

waves of very present laughter .... The Citizens', who are developing at least a seasonal flair for farce, do it very well indeed .... The players, with the original cast watching them, so to speak, from a facsimile of the Aldwych programme in 1927, might well be a little inhibited ... but no one is daunted ... there are minor Scottifications: the Daily is now a Mrs. McWhirter (Irene Sunters), her eyes bulging with righteous Presbyterian indignation and curiosity, and all the better for it ... it is quite delightful.

'R.L.' in the Evening Citizen thought that he 'would have laughed a lot harder' if he had 'seen it in 1925' ... (Although the 'replica' photographs are dated 1927, Rookery Nook began its run in 1926, and the Citizens' production places itself at New Year 1925) '... sometimes it was the lines which weren't written to be funny' ... (were there any?) ... 'which aroused the biggest giggle ... Roy Boutcher and Gary Hope made a splendid comedy team, with little Richard Kane looking exactly like something out of a silent film and raising more laughs than anyone ... the costumes were brilliantly authentic for the period'.



'P' (Scotsman) felt that:

a good vintage farce ... needs lots of time and money spent upon it to restore it to its original condition .... As an evocation of the period the Citizens' job is admirable in decor and costume (but the cast should) take steps to speed up and polish the farce technique .... The shadow of the masters they are typecast to create hangs over them .... A jolly show, and to those younger ones who never saw the original team it offers a bright and entertaining Christmas present.

Nevertheless it is hard not to agree with J.C. Trewin when he says that the situation caused by 'the Prussian stepfather who had just turned out his daughter for eating whortleberries against his orders' was 'a crisis possible only at Chumpton-on-Sea, Somerset, not too far from Maiden Blotton'.<sup>10</sup> At the same time some adjustment may be justified in a farce where, in at least one edition of the text, the directions for Gerald read simply, 'does the egg business'.

Of the two new Scottish plays, by far the more interesting was Stewart Conn's I Didn't Always Live Here, something very different in style from the playwright's last at the Citizens', Breakdown (1961). It is a study of two women living 'across the landing' in a not too salubrious part of Glasgow. One, Martha, (the more important), felt that her arrival there had seemed, long ago, to be an achievement:

Not as if I always lived here, mind you ... no, I started off in Govan. Never dreamt in those days I'd end up this side of the river. Real step up in the world, that was. When Jack and me moved across.

Amie is less happy than Martha was originally:

You understand, I didn't always live here, Mr. MacWhurrie (her minister). For a while we lived out of Glasgow, my mother and myself. Out of the soot and grime. But changes come to us all, as you might say .... Of course I'm just here temporary.

In the case of Martha, the action shifts between past and present. Stewart Conn states that I Didn't Always Live Here has been called 'a hymn to Glasgow':

The writing certainly stems less from first-hand experience than from impressions and, I suppose, affection .... It is of course Martha's play. She lives with her budgie, in the crumbling tenement. And flashbacks show moments from her past - in the years of the Depression, the Blitz, and shortly after the War. But sympathy extends to Amie ... to MacWhurrie with his dilemma of faith; and to Jack, the ghost from Martha's past, as he succumbs to grief.<sup>11</sup>

The playwright has memories of the Citizens' production of a play which 'remains the one for which audience response has been warmest' (recalling in a letter). 'I remember green-room readings and initial blockings and Walter Jackson's first foray on to the Citz' stage proper - doing a walk-down, embracing the prosc-arch and saying "my tabs - they're still here from 1935!" or some such'. (Jackson, who played 'Burly Jim', a representative of the seamier side of Glasgow life, had been a celebrated man of the local Music Hall.) 'Again a main memory is of my regard for the sheer emotional power of Irene Sunters' central performance - its integrity and emotional resonance'.<sup>12</sup>

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 19/4/67) recalls how Stewart Conn had previously used Glasgow 'as metaphor', 'symbolic and poetic'. He is 'more literal now' and 'employs a careful, almost documentary realism'. Referring to Martha and Amie, 'The pathos and humour, (Mr. Conn judiciously mixes them), of these two lives are conveyed in alternating scenes, recollected incident and straight soliloquy ... at one point Mr. Conn provides an imaginary tour of city streets, telling them off like a magnificent drum-roll'. He finds Amie 'a source of imbalance in the play ... little more than caricature'. (A study of the text today suggests rather more than that.) 'But it is Martha's story, from nostalgic beginning to sad end; indeed one might have wished that it had been even more her story'. The role gives Irene Sunters 'something she can use her great talents on'.



Small seemed to have doubts as to the depth of the play's sentiment, but it provided 'a good, honest, decent evening, and that is much to be thankful for .... But not from such a coy view ... will Glasgow ... grapple with its present'. Conn recalls Small's implication that 'the play wouldn't solve any of Glasgow's problems. He's right. But I don't think it set out to. It was really more concerned with the indomitability of one old woman - and (given the title) with the class contrast between Martha and Amie, and the different ways they got to (and regard) where they now are'.<sup>13</sup>

What The Scottish Daily Express was out of step with the play's reception elsewhere - not Robins Millar, as it happens, but Alistair Syme: 'As a moral lecture on leaking roofs, unfeeling landlords, the problems of old age and religion, Mr. Conn lets his characters become bogged down in a welter of neurotic soliloquies. One must admire James Copeland as the wife Martha's husband (sic), and James Gibson giving a delightful vignette of a chimney sweep'. It is hard to credit that Mr. Syme and Paul Hartley Foster (Evening Times) saw the same play:

A world premiere at the Citizens' Theatre is always welcome, and, if it is a play about Glasgow by a city author, it is doubly so ... when it is also ... theatrically valuable ... it becomes the highlight of the season. Stewart Conn has brilliantly captured the Glasgow humour, and writes with humanity and compassion of the universal plight of the desolate old. Occasionally, though, he indulges in cheap sentimentality.

Irene Sunter's Martha was 'a gem - perfect down to the last detail, and Rosamond Byrne's Amie is well-judged too'. Michael Meacham's production was 'sympathetic, though slightly slack'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) considered it 'a surprisingly sympathetic and nostalgic work for a young writer to produce ... without resorting to the maudlin sentiment of "I Belong to Glasgow"'. It was 'beautifully played. It would have been absorbing just to watch her (Ms. Sunter) talking to her "budgie" all night .... It makes the most enjoyable evening at the Citizens' since Stephen D'. Once again, however, it

was proved that Gorbals audiences approached new work warily, and there was a gross deficit of £3,662.

Three Goose-quills and a Knife was another venture into Burns territory by a playwright not previously associated with this kind of work. Lesley Storm came originally from Aberdeenshire, but this was what the Theatre Programme describes as 'her first all-Scottish play in which she uses the language she was born into'. Her previous writing had been mainly for the London West End, and her record of success was a distinguished one, with, for example, Tony Draws a Horse, Black Chiffon and Roar like a Dove to her credit, as well as a number of film scripts. Three Goose-quills and a Knife (the poet's implements and 'my sole possessions in this world'), covered Burns's life from Lochlea in 1783 to Dumfries in 1796, and its approach is suggested by the author's note in the Programme:

When the spirit of Scotland was overlaid by hell-fire preachers he was lightning to their thunder. He harried them with his flashing satire and he made nonsense of their primitive purging. He topped their groans with laughter. For this Scotland loves him and the modern Kirk has reason to be grateful to him.

This was a fair, scholarly and deeply felt piece of work, concentrating on Jean Armour as far as the poet's 'love life' is concerned, but giving a neatly assembled picture of the way others saw him:

GILBERT: There's naething in his heid but his damned rhyming.  
 AGNES: He took on his father's debts without a murmur.  
 AIKEN: ... The first real poet Scotland has seen since Dunbar ... we've given birth to a peculiar phenomenon ...  
 ARMOUR: Lord help us! A new Messiah ... straight oot o' Poesie Nansie's whorehouse.

Nor are Burns's personal sufferings ignored:

We've had our heads clouted twice wi' double births and our hearts scored wi' three deaths.



Later he describes himself as:

lying in ambush in the salt marshes and  
up to (the) neck in the Solway.

With all its good qualities - production by Meacham, designs by Pidcock, music arranged and composed by Frank Spedding and played by J. Mouland Begbie, it is difficult now to account for the lack of excitement in Glasgow over the play, with little or no life thereafter. Perhaps it was simply that no need was felt just then for yet another play about Burns, however well done.

The Glasgow Herald (4/9/67) saw it as 'selected fragments ... very skilfully conceived in theatrical form'. Jean Armour was almost the sole representative of 'the lasses', with Edinburgh omitted and Highland Mary forgotten. Marillyn Gray's Jean was 'homely, rather timid, but devoted ... exactly what we may suppose her to have been'. Irene Sunters (Agnes) 'warm, downright and filled with unlettered poetry', Victor Carin (Burns), who 'splendidly looks the part', acting it also 'with force, dignity and as much liveliness as Miss Storm allows him'. It is all 'full of generous sentiment, it is amiable, and it surely guarantees the play success; but it is rather less interesting, we may guess, than the contradictions and complexities of the actual man'. According to the Sunday Mail it was 'brilliant'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) found the play:

long-winded and inclined to be boring ....  
But the central act, which only covers the  
year 1786, is very good .... There is a  
tender quality about these passages where  
Burns and Jean are alone together ....  
Marillyn Gray is most poignant as Jean  
(while) Victor Carin takes it all in his  
stride and gives an attractive portrayal  
of Burns, delicately balanced between the  
robust and the morose ... Robin Pidcock's  
settings, in their bare simplicity, convey  
the atmosphere superbly.

For Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express):

Robert Burns on the penitent's stool, being  
preached at by a hell-fire minister ... is  
the most stirring scene ... She (Lesley Storm)

is bent on showing him as a life-long social rebel .... As a play (it is most effective) as a narrative. It loses drama because Victor Carin as Burns, while a replica of the statues, rattles his half-Scots speech so rapidly that much is not to be grasped .... Irene Sunters shows how Scots can be articulate, as the poet's mother.

The third Scottish play was a classic, in every sense of the word, a revival of James Bridie's The Anatomist, a special production by Tyrone Guthrie in aid of the Duncan Macrae Memorial Fund, thanks to a Gala First Night. On 28/11/67, the Scotsman had proclaimed that, according to Tom Fleming, lecturing on 'The Actor in his Time': 'The Scottish theatre had come to the end of an era with the deaths of Duncan Macrae and Robert Kemp', and this glittering production, with Fleming as Dr. Knox, was a sort of hail and farewell, an apotheosis of all that Bridie and his colleagues had aimed for, and, at the same time, the last occasion when anything quite like it was to be seen on the Citizens' stage.

The play itself, perhaps still Bridie's masterpiece, needs no further attention here: suffice it to say that, in its unique design, it sometimes deceives the unwary into believing that the Third Act shows a falling off from what has gone before, whereas, in fact, it rounds off the piece in an adventurous manner not understood in 1931, and seldom comprehended even now. It should also be pointed out that, although it was directed by a notable 'outside' guest, this production could hardly have been mounted without the distinguished ambience created by the two Michaels, and nothing so good would appear during the remainder of their tenure.

'It was all glitter at the gala opening', wrote David Gibson (Evening Times 14/2/68), 'a piper at the door, twin red carpets'.

Fleming played Knox as:

a powerful personality with hawklike pride and acid tongue, (and) fine performances were rendered all round, from cheerfully drunken carousing in a sordid Edinburgh tavern to speeches about "the provincial town of London" in a fine Victorian drawing



room. The Anatomist ... last night drew a capacity audience. It well deserves to draw the same crowds for the whole run.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) praised 'this robustly cheerful production and robust performance'. It was not to be thought that, because Fleming's Knox 'is no longer a figure to frighten little children with, that it is of less effect. On the contrary ... everything goes tumbling along from laugh to laugh, with undisguised jollity and unlimited energy ...'. With the appearance of Mary Paterson, however, something else does enter in:

Mary is played by Anne Kidd, and very well indeed ... the pathos of this "glorious creature", so bedraggled but so full of life and so soon to die, gives the whole affair a different aspect. Not for long, however ... the audience of the gala opening night were eating out of the Anatomist's hand, in no mood, clearly, to hear a word against him.

Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express):

Sir Tyrone Guthrie's return to Glasgow as a producer made the revival of a much acted play a novel event. The Guthrie values? We saw them in the polish of character, the finesse of stage pictures, the comprehension of the author's mixture of the ironic and the serious .... That lurid Burke and Hare episode in a sleazy tavern had its crudeness lifted by sinister lighting. Tom Fleming was splendidly boisterous as Dr. Knox.

The Express also reported that Sir Tyrone, at a luncheon in the City Chambers, said, 'I am wild about the location of the Citizens' Theatre in the Gorbals. I think the Corporation of Glasgow is lagging behind many others in its support to the Arts'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) made the kind of prophecy that ought to have come true: 'The pistol shot that brought down a shower of the plaster on the stage proclaimed that Sir Tyrone Guthrie was back .... It might also have been the starting pistol for a Scottish National Theatre. It was a 'hopeful and exhilarating event', showing off 'the great

resources of acting talent in Scotland that are not always exploited'. There was 'a mighty performance by Fleming, whose gruff voice and professional authority dominate the stage'. It is only fair to quote the tributes to the others in the cast from Wright's review: Louise Breslin (Mary Belle) 'displays much dignity and spirit'; there was a 'fine performance' from Edith Macarthur (Amelia); Gary Hope (Raby) was 'excellent', John Grieve 'highly amusing' as Davie Paterson, and there were 'character sketches of distinction' from James Gibson (Landlord) and Jean Taylor Smith (Janet). In this celebration of those adding their distinctive talents to the Scottish Theatre mention should also be made of Donald Douglas (Walter), Roddy McMillan (Hare) and David Blake Kelly (Burke). Robin Pidcock designed, and the production was presented in association with the Falcon Theatre Trust. (The Falcon was the gallant venture that had tried, unsuccessfully, to make an Arts Centre out of the Empress Theatre, St. George's Cross.)

It is to be regretted that the closing sequences of the Meacham/Blakemore regime appeared to be less successful than what had gone before ... public memory is fickle and perverse in these matters, for nothing can detract from the fine things which had been created. For a time it looked as if Blakemore might remain, but this possible agreement was not reached, and by May, 1968, the partnership was over.

Twenty years after the events, Michael Meacham has 'such happy memories of' his 'times in Scotland, largely at the Citz. .... But, of course, a great deal was due to the really marvellous sense of achievement we felt about much of the work we produced'. He makes it clear, however, that the strains of work were 'as nothing' compared with the 'exhaustion and frustration' caused by the more political side of things.<sup>14</sup> Michael Blakemore, too, has the happiest memories of the Citizens' and its audiences, and has a great respect for the memory of Michael Goldberg, but, as already suggested, he was more on the 'sidelines' of things, although the disappointment over Sweet Bird of Youth obviously still rankles.<sup>15</sup>

Reference should be made to one or two other significant events



during these seasons: a Director in Charge of Young People's Theatre was appointed full time, also Scotland's first 'dramaturg' (Literary Adviser), one of whose duties was to work with the ailing George Munro on his last play, Mark But This Flea. Mr. R.B. Wharrie, one of the great stalwarts of the Board, died, and the Young Citizens' Society ceased to exist and returned to merge with the Citizens' Theatre Society, from which it had come. It had done much splendid work, but its original severance from the Senior Society was counter-productive in that the young 'supporters' did not retrace their steps but drifted away, never to return in quite the same form.

The Productions were:

Man and Superman (Bernard Shaw) Directed Michael Meacham (6/9/66).

Stephen D (James Joyce, adapted Hugh Leonard) Directed Michael Blakemore (27/9/66).

Inadmissible Evidence (John Osborne) Directed Michael Meacham (18/10/66).

Phaedra (Robert Lowell from Racine) Directed Michael Meacham (8/11/66).

Nightmare Abbey (Thomas Love Peacock, dramatised Anthony Sharp) Directed Michael Blakemore (29/11/66).

Charley's Aunt (Brandon Thomas) Directed John Warner (20/12/66).

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare) Directed Michael Meacham (17/1/67).

The Visions of Simone Machard (Bertolt Brecht, trans. Arnold Hinchliffe) Directed Michael Blakemore (14/2/67).

The Seven-Year Itch (George Axelrod) Directed Kenneth Parrott (7/3/67).

The Beaux' Stratagem (George Farquhar) Directed Iain Cuthbertson (28/3/67).

I Didn't Always Live Here (Stewart Conn) Directed Michael Meacham (18/4/67).

A Day in the Death of Joe Egg (Peter Nichols) Directed Michael Blakemore (9/5/67).

Three Goose-Quills and a Knife (Lesley Storm) Directed Michael Meacham (2/9/67).

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (Bertolt Brecht, adapted George Tabori) Directed Michael Blakemore (26/9/67).

The Knack (Ann Jellicoe) Directed Robert Cartland (17/10/67).

A Lily in Little India (Donald Howarth) Directed Tony Jones (7/11/67).

Mrs. Warren's Profession (Bernard Shaw) Directed Robert Cartland (28/11/67).

Rookery Nook (Ben Travers) Directed Robin Midgley (19/12/67).

The Tempest (William Shakespeare) Directed Michael Meacham (16/1/68).

The Anatomist (James Bridie) Directed Tyrone Guthrie (13/2/68).

The Odd Couple (Neil Simon) Directed Tony Jones (12/3/68).

The Rehearsal (Jean Anouilh, trans. Pamela Hansford Johnson and Kitty Black) Directed Michael Meacham (2/4/68).

Smile Boys, That's The Style (John Hale) Directed Michael Blakemore (23/4/68).

Under the Skin (Kenneth Ross) Directed Michael Meacham (14/5/68).



Footnotes to Chapter Seven - THE 'ENGLISH' PERIOD (Part Two)

1. Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama (Harrap, 1949), p.312.
2. Plays and Players, March, 1963.
3. ibid., May, 1965.
4. Michael Blakemore, in conversation by telephone (November 1988), made it clear that Meacham, by virtue of his (in effect) senior position, had to face the actual battle with the Board, if/when the occasion arose.
5. John Russell Taylor, Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre (Penguin, 1966), p.138.
6. Russell Taylor, Anger and After (Pelican, 1963), p.71.
7. Bronner, The Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, p.418.
8. ibid., p.344.
9. Kurt Ganzl, The British Musical Theatre, Volume 2 (Macmillan, 1986), p.949.
10. J.C. Trewin, The Gay Twenties (Macdonald, 1958), p.90.
11. Stewart Conn, Introduction to John Calder's Playscript 74 (Three Conn Plays), (John Calder, 1976), p.9.
12. Stewart Conn, Letter written November, 1987.
13. ibid.
14. Michael Meacham, Letter written July, 1988 (See also Ch.9).
15. Michael Blakemore, in conversation of November, 1988, as above.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CARTLAND SEASON

The successor to Messrs. Meacham and Blakemore, Robert Cartland, seemed to be an obvious and happy choice: he had 'guested' as Director on a number of occasions, and he had been with the Citizens' as an actor as far back as 1952, in Peter Potter's time. In addition he was known to and popular with many in the Glasgow area through his connection with the Scottish Community Drama Association and the splendid Summer Schools which they ran at St. Andrews. He was a good all round 'man of the Theatre' and not afraid of hard work, which was just as well, as he had no 'associate' (as Blakemore was) to help him run the two theatres, although he had a skilled young Assistant in Malcolm Griffiths. Box Office receipts at the Citizens' had been slipping, and money was not plentiful, and, although he would have liked to employ the occasional prestigious 'guest actor' ... he even approached Stanley Baxter ... he intended, in less spectacular ways, to build up a young Scottish company, one of his first steps being to sign up 24-year old Andrew Neil, son of an Ayrshire miner who, against all the laws of probabilities, had not only been accepted by R.A.D.A. but had ended up there winning the Ronson Award as the most promising actor of the Academy Year. Neil was, indeed, an actor of extraordinary promise and could light up a stage when he set foot on it. To build up the kind of structure which Cartland intended, however, required time, and this was something he was not to be allowed: by the Spring of 1969, yet another regime was drawing to its close.

The choice for the opening bill was a double one of plays by Peter Shaffer, the most rapidly rising English playwright of the time. Whether it was wise to open a season with a double bill is open to question, and Black Comedy has, throughout its career, failed to find the right partner; when originally staged at Chichester in July, 1965, John Russell Taylor referred to it as a:

triumph. A good old-fashioned farce (which) turns on one gimmick, brilliantly used: the reversal of light values, so that, when all



the lights are on at the beginning, the stage is completely dark, but as soon as the house mains fuse all the stage lights go up so that we can see what happens in the darkness in which nearly the whole piece is played .... If only Mr. Shaffer can now be persuaded to provide a less tiring curtain-raiser than Miss Julie (its Chichester partner), Black Comedy could be packing them in in any West End theatre for months to come.<sup>1</sup>

When Black Comedy reached the Old Vic, John Osborne's adaptation, from de Vega, A Bond Honoured, was another 'heavyweight' attempt, and then Shaffer tried to fill the gap himself with The White Liars in a 'commercial transfer', but the problem remained virtually unsolved. Cartland, however, decided to take the second half of yet another Shaffer double bill, The Private Ear and The Public Eye, with reasonably successful results; this arrangement allowed him to divide the 'Citizens' evening between himself and his assistant, Griffiths, while they shared the offering at the Close, Murray Schisgal's The Tiger and The Typists.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 2/9/68) had the heading, 'Diversions of West End as Citizens' Lure', which almost suggested, coming from him, a kindly sort of reproach. Nevertheless, dealing with The Public Eye, he says, 'It is played most deftly and agreeably, and no less so when the arrival of the wife brings on another new Citizens' recruit, Kate Coleridge' - (daughter of Sylvia, the memorable Prism of 1963) - 'It doesn't cease to be amusing, and Mr. (David) Kelsey's performance - cajoling, posturing, stuffing himself out of his plastic nosebag, is something of a tour de force .... Black Comedy is 'almost pure farce and very good fun, though whether' it is 'enough to fill out an hour and a half may be doubtful'. Special mention was made of Andrew Neil, 'the tardy electrician, formerly a doctor of philosophy of the University of Heidelberg ... Mr. Neil makes a highly promising debut'. Mamie Crichton, formerly of Glasgow Evening News and now regular critic of Scottish Daily Express, seemed to prefer The Public Eye:

Kinky life in Bloomsbury and South Kensington is projected in topsy-turvy comedies ... The fun dialogue, slick and fantastical belongs to swinging London. - (another reproach?) - The Public Eye is about a talkative hired detective who patches up the marriage he's supposed to help destroy, and David Kelsey made a dominating, very un-private eye ... Roy Boutcher, as always, was an impeccable foil as the pompous professional husband, and Kate Coleridge was spectacular as the young with-it night club hostess he married and tried to educate.

Regarding Black Comedy, 'the knockabout needed a brisker pace than it achieved on the first night'. 'P' in the Scotsman reversed the preference: the main piece was 'directed with a brilliant sense of fun .... The company makes an excellent thing of this all-round opportunity'. She felt that the 'black' of the comedy was, perhaps, understressed:

more might have been made of the hysterical and menacing venom rife in the final sequences. However, since Mr. Shaffer's thinking is not marked by any striking philosophical originality, but shows a happy facility for witty situation and dialogue, there was justification for Mr. Cartland's treatment ... The Public Eye ... sags but is propped by the excellent acting ... and the direction of Malcolm Griffiths ... Ideally this conversation piece should have been kept for the Close.

Most enthusiastic of all was Paul H. Foster (Evening Times), who felt that the 'new season started in splendid style ... The Public Eye ... is both witty and touching ... Malcolm Griffiths directs with expert racy energy and the characters pulsate with vibrance and body'.

Black Comedy was 'a supremely funny farce ... Robert Cartland's direction brilliantly realises every comic possibility ... I guarantee they'll (both plays) give you your best night out for years'. And yet the impression remains (even after twenty years) that the opening production of this richly promising but ill-starred season struck a note that was somehow 'foreign' to the theatre in the Gorbals.



It would probably have been good policy to follow up Shaffer with something more down to earth; on the contrary, the rather strange choice turned out to be Somerset Maugham's 1927 high comedy, The Constant Wife, up-dated to 1968. This manoeuvre worked well enough in some ways, but in others was in conflict with the ambience of the play, making it more brittle, and, indeed, apparently more trivial. In any case, The Constant Wife had never been anyone's favourite Maugham, for all its wit and skill: at the very outset, J.C. Trewin tells us, 'It had a difficult first night that began with confusion over tickets. People who had booked for the last row of stalls found that it had been merged, mistakenly, with the pit .... That was the beginning, and the gallery did its part at the end by interrupting Fay Compton's speech of thanks ...'.<sup>2</sup> The comedy has not often been revived, and, ten years later, when the eminent American actress, Ruth Chatterton, made her London stage debut, no great triumph was scored. The main success for the play seems to have been in America, where it was seen before London (1926), providing Ethel Barrymore with a 'vehicle' which kept her busy, in New York and on tour, until 1928. Then in 1929, the same Miss Chatterton had starred in an early talking picture version under the title of Charming Sinners, the cast also including Clive Brook and William Powell. In The Paramount Story, John Douglas Eames writes, it was 'a splendid example of the early talkie period, when ... the long chase was replaced by the chaise-longue. A scintillating cast ... juggled with the assorted infidelities of Somerset Maugham's sophisticated comedy'.<sup>3</sup>

All this is, of course, a world away from Gorbals, 1968, and, although Robert Cartland's production was smooth and enjoyable, there were no stars of 'scintillating' magnitude, and nothing very much calculated to attract large audiences. Small (Glasgow Herald 25/9/68) thought that the play:

lasts well enough to make the efforts at modernisation of the present Citizens' production rather puzzling. There seems no particular point in advancing matters from 1927 to 1968, and indeed it would take more than the pop-up furniture and the metal grasshopper hanging from the ceiling to do so .... The effect is rather to slow things

up and to hinder the needful air of artificiality ... the piece is done, however, with a good deal of spirit and in particular with a most delightful performance by Pamela Buchner ... as she of the title .... There is a handsome set.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) found 'no harm in bringing Maugham's play up to date by more than 40 years'. He thought, however, that the play, which shows how 'well-bred people ... can remain attached to each other and yet enjoy sexual independence' was 'only tolerably amusing until the final act when it blossoms into sparkling light comedy' at its 'gloriously ambiguous conclusion'. Pamela Buchner gave 'a beautiful performance of cool composure, so relaxed that it covers up some of the stiffness elsewhere in the production'. It was 'an agreeable entertainment which is performed in an elegant but rather starkly furnished setting designed by Rodney Ford. Its black-and-white simplicity may be intended to match Constance's ('she of the title') low emotional temperature'. Mamie Crichton (Express) was not too happy:

In the third act ... Roy Boutcher and Pamela Buchner tossed up acid comment on love and its economics crisply enough to make one half-forget the drag of the first two acts .... Perhaps the old artificialities of the plot about infidelity could not be made to fit the modern mini-skirts it was dressed in .... An unsureness of casting, lack of style and a tasteless set (sic) did not help. Director Robert Cartland can do better.

There was a different story, however, from James Watson (Evening Times): 'A breath of the late 1920s blew into the Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow, last night .... Each member of the cast is excellent, but it is still Maugham who is the star. His dialogue takes precedence over the players, commanding the stage and cutting convention to ribbons with sophisticated wit'.

The third production - (as before, it seems better to take a 'one season' regime in chronological order) - really brought things



to life. Philadelphia, Here I Come! by Brian Friel was the work of a guest director, the highly skilled Valerie Hanson, but it showed all Cartland's discernment in assembling a company and creating a good atmosphere. Glasgow audiences usually like Irish plays, and, although they did not flock to this one as might have been expected, it was greatly liked by those who saw it. (New names, as usual, did not attract immediately to the Gorbals.) Much credit went to Maurice Roëves and Philip Lowrie for a truly remarkable double act as the 'public' and 'private' selves of Gar O'Donnell, anxious to shake off the restrictions of his native Ballybeg as he prepares to emigrate to America, but hating to go. So we have, in a manner both funny and intensely moving, Gar's outward behaviour, and, at the same time, 'the unseen man, the man within, the conscience, the alter ego, the secret thoughts, the id'. In particular, Gar longs for a significant bond of affection between himself and his father to show itself, but there are other significant relationships, with Katy, the girl he's lost, with Madge the housekeeper/nurse, and the boys he runs around with. One of them, young Joe, would like to get away too, but 'the mammy planted sycamore trees last year, and she says I can't go till they're tall enough to shelter the house'. For the first time for quite some while, the heart of the Citizens' audience was warmed. Perhaps this play should have opened the season.

Allen Wright (Scotsman 16/10/68) began forbiddingly with 'In the absence of new Scottish drama, the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre celebrates its twenty-fifth birthday with an Irish play ...'. But from there on, all was well:

But the subject is emigration, which is something that concerns Scotland. Tenderly and humanely, Mr. Friel observes the opposing forces that overwhelm a young man on his last night at home ... I enjoyed the play more last night than when I saw it in London, even if all the accents of the Citizens' company were not authentic ... Maurice Roëves and Philip Lowrie are very impressive, and their playing in harness is amazing.

Irene Sunters was 'gentle and yet strong' as the kindly old housekeeper - (she was to play the same role at the Iron Theatre, Glasgow, in 1987) - while David Blake Kelly was 'very effective' as the taciturn father  
 ... but:

it is to the director, Valerie Hanson that I would give most of the credit .... The play ran very briefly in London after its success at the 1964 Dublin Festival. But this is not the first time that the Citizens' has given a new lease of life to products of the Festival. Little Malcolm was another example.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) thought the production 'very lively ... exceedingly well done', with 'two remarkable and beautifully complementary performances'. The play was basically 'a continuous soliloquy ... a very deft juggling with the more manageable emotions', illustrating the conflict between revulsion against the 'narrowness and restriction' of life in Ballybeg and the natural 'strong attachment', the struggle complicated by 'the frightful allurements of America'. The final curtain left 'everything poignantly settled and undecided'. Mamie Crichton (Express) had no doubt that this was 'the best thing the Citizens' Theatre has done this season ... Maurice Roëves played Gar ... clowning, clumsy, tongue-tied, as seen by his father and the rest of the village. Philip Lowrie was the inner Gar mocking and mercurial, yearning for his father's affection'. James Watson (Evening Times) described it as 'a full-blooded Irish comedy rich with sentiment and tingling with wit .... It sets laughter ringing one moment with salty back chat, then wrings the heart the next with its developing theme of unbridgeable gulf between emigrating son and inarticulate father'. The 'timing and miming' of the two leading actors was 'at times uproarious, the mannequin parade take-off in particular being a priceless piece of lampooning'. As the housekeeper, Irene Sunters 'has just the right rough-and-ready tongue to put everyone in his place'. Box Office so far seems to have been reasonable.

It was Theatre policy at this time to introduce Glasgow audiences to the latest developments in drama, wherever these might arise, and it was now back to the double bill, in this case a very closely linked



one, with John Bowen's Little Boxes. The 'boxes' concerned were the top flats of Victorian houses in Glasgow (as far as the Citizens' was concerned) and in London. In the first play, Coffee Lace, a group of 'theatricals', out of touch with their times, have retreated from the world's scorn, while in Trevor the isolation is that of two girls concealing their Lesbian relationship: in both cases there are outside intrusions of one kind or another. The whole thing was ingeniously organised, but once again Citizens' patrons showed themselves unexcited by the unknown; it must also be admitted that the second play was by far the better of the two, and critical opinion was by no means unanimously friendly. Pursuing his efforts to foster new Scottish (or almost Scottish) talent, Cartland had persuaded Maurice Roëves to stay on to direct both pieces. (He himself and Malcolm Griffiths, it should be emphasised, were also occupied, like their immediate predecessors, in running the Close Theatre Club.)

Small (Glasgow Herald 16/10/68) had little to say in favour of Little Boxes:

Why (these plays) should have been chosen for presentation at the Citizens' is not at all clear, but that, it must be owned, is the least of the unclear things about them .... This nonsense is well enough played ... (There were) several excellent performances, especially in the second play .... The production is admirable, the elaborate multiple set used for both plays designed with care and ingenuity (by Rodney Ford) .... Nothing, however, can disguise the emptiness of these two plays, or the basic confusion in which they seem to have thrown the company .... (They lurched) from an incredible Glasgow to a scarcely more probable Chelsea.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) described the plays as being about 'people who have recoiled from society and cling to each other for comfort and support. But it is a pity that such a bright play as Trevor should be shackled to such a dismal partner as Coffee Lace'. Wright describes Trevor, pretended fiancé of both girls when their respective parents come to visit, as 'a kind of servant of two mistresses'. This play has 'more depths ... it shows that human feelings cannot be

tailored to fit a pattern imposed on us .... The distribution of the play between three rooms in a house is very skilfully managed in Maurice Roëves' production', the action being 'woven together. This does not happen in Coffee Lace, which is more clumsily produced'. But then it is 'soggy and sentimental under a surface of black comedy', while Trevor is 'crisp ... compassionate'. The performances of Irene Sunters, Lennard Pearce and Stella Moray were 'impressive', while, as Trevor, Philip Lowrie's 'animation and charm seem to inspire the rest of the company'. James Watson (Evening Times) had no such reservations: the Boxes were:

crammed with good things ... (but) no kitchen sinks! Instead there is a poignant study of an old-time theatrical group struggling to maintain appearances and traditions (and keep out the cold) ... followed by a joyful mixture of wit and farce in swinging London ... it is the comic side of the situation, gloriously seized by Philip Lowrie, which is memorable. Elizabeth Power and Eileen Nicholas prove with sympathetic portrayals that they are not just pretty faces.

Mamie Crichton, too, (Express) was better disposed:

Lesbianism and the sale of a body to embalmers (Coffee Lace) may not be stage-play subjects Aunt Edna would appreciate. But in John Bowen's double bill ... they were treated with compassion. In last night's Citizens' Theatre presentation they were directed and acted in the same spirit ... director Maurice Roëves has drawn moving performances from the same cast.

It was bold, perhaps even rash, to present Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night during the chilly and traditionally quiet pre-Christmas period, and, although prestigious, the production did little to boost flagging audiences. It was an ambitious choice for Malcolm Griffiths's first full-scale main house venture, and he approached it in typically thoughtful, conscientious manner. Little need be said here about the play itself, which is a big and daunting challenge to any company, and the Citizens' Company gave a good account of themselves, although perhaps the main interest centred on Rodney



Ford's extraordinary designs. Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 27/11/68) used that adjective, finding the set 'both elegant and horribly appropriate'. He noted the:

faded elegance of the furniture ... insubstantial indication, hints and not much more, of walls, doors and windows ... an elaborate and intricate pattern of threads drawn round about the people of the play (which was) most powerfully presented in Mr. Griffiths's production, his first on the Citizens' stage and an impressive debut .... Some hesitations at the beginning last night were certainly excusable - and these were in any case soon forgotten.

James Junior was 'extremely well played by Mr. (Peter) Lincoln', Mary 'brilliantly' by Libby Glenn, a performance that 'Citizens' audiences will remember for a long time .... The odd paradox of O'Neill has not been better demonstrated for a long time'.

'P' in the Scotsman was a little less enthusiastic:

Reasonably enough, young director, Malcolm Griffiths ... sends the piece along at the reverentially funereal pace which might be expected of a highly dramatic entertainment acted in 1912 (although written only some 20 or 30 years ago).<sup>4</sup> Whether this benefits the writing is doubtful, since the play is a sustained lament and becomes a little oppressive taken in this style .... The setting ... suggests the lost and ghostly past in which the participants live .... Many members of the audience (were) distinctly moved by the gripping last act in which Mrs. Tyrone appears, like Ophelia, clutching her wedding dress. Here's rue for everybody ....

Libby Glenn made 'a charming thing of Mrs. Tyrone', handling the more sentimental passages 'with superb tactfulness'. Mamie Crichton (Express) thought that the journey 'seemed even longer than its three hours of tormented self-revelation' ... Brendan Barry gave 'an authentic flourish to the father', and Libby Glenn was 'pitifully convincing as the once-pretty mother who had found refuge in morphine .... Yet the blend of parts did not work satisfactorily'. Rosemary Long (Evening Citizen) was impressed by the people 'living in a

shadowy present (ingeniously presented by designer Rodney Ford with grey misty rope "cobwebs" around the set, echoing foghorns and gloomy half-light) ... portrayed with insight by a cast performing one of the longest plays of the Citizens' season'. It held the audience by 'a sort of weird fascination'.

There had been congratulations at the opening of the season when the deficit for Black Comedy turned out to be £752 and not the feared £1,679, but that of The Constant Wife was £469, not £319. In the case of Philadelphia, Here I Come! it was £431, not £731, but the Little Boxes deficit was £1,228, presumably because of the large cast and elaborate set, and that of Long Day's Journey was £625. And it soon became apparent that the Christmas entertainment was not to yield the customary necessary profits.

The main attraction was the Bernard Miles/Lionel Bart/Laurie Johnson musical Lock Up Your Daughters, an adaptation of Henry Fielding's comedy, Rape Upon Rape - (but notably inoffensive) - which had been such a success at the Mermaid Theatre at London's Puddle Dock (1959).<sup>5</sup> A very honest effort, however, had been made to provide a 'complete' festive entertainment for everyone between the Citizens' and the Close. The Citizens' was staging matinees of Robert Bolt's The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew, while, in addition to the comedy, Relatively Speaking, which virtually introduced Glasgow audiences to Alan Ayckbourn, the Close had matinees of The Vanishing Snowman (Strictly for the Youngsters) and - late night - The Pre-Mix People Cake Show, with jazz musician Andy Park and actor Richard Wilson.

Two things need to be made clear about Lock Up Your Daughters: Glasgow, on the whole, did not consider it a suitable Christmas/New Year entertainment, and, secondly, memory suggests that, apart from an unnecessarily introduced prologue, the evening was one of unalloyed pleasure. (There was even an extra 5 o'clock matinee on New Year's Day!)

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 19/12/68) would seem, in his review, to endorse the favourable impression: the show was a:



mixture, so to speak, of Tin Pan Alley and Grub Street .... It is good and really perfectly clean fun, especially as the pace, a little ponderous to begin with, picks up .... The show should give as many witty friends as possible the chance to make the facetious inquiry, "Are you going to Lock Up Your Daughters tonight?" Yes, it's a course of action I would recommend.

In particular:

The wicked and corrupt justice is splendidly played and sung by Brendan Barry, orotund, nimble, libidinous of eye and grasping of hand ... Andrew Neil, in the small part of Quill, the justice's downtrodden clerk, contributes a beautiful piece of pure clowning ... if ever the Citizens' should be so ambitious as to seek a successor to Tommy Lorne - (legendary Glasgow comedian of pre-war days) - they might not need to look further than Mr. Neil.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) thought the music (Johnson's) to be 'generally captivating' and, summed up the show as 'one big naughty wink, and - if the director is not careful - it could degenerate into an even bigger yawn. Robert Cartland avoids the danger, and pushes it along at a rollicking pace ... it is an inventive production'. Wright was not enthusiastic about Kenneth Bridgeman's set, a 'gaunt setting of tangled beams' which seemed to him 'dull'. Probably, as with Prologue, the aim was to avoid the 'chocolate box' effect which is liable to beset any 'costume' musical. Paul Shelley, the 'adventurous Ramble', had a 'hand in nearly all the best scenes. His eagerness and vitality' were 'infectious'. Arthur Blake directed the music, 'the orchestra being tucked away behind the stage unobtrusively. It is a merry entertainment which will grow in exuberance over the season'. Mamie Crichton (Express) was also in favour: 'The Citizens' Theatre goes rough and randy for Christmas' - (probably an unfortunate choice of words as far as potential Glasgow holiday patrons were concerned):

with the naughty 18th century romp ... its first night made great fun of its uninhibited words, bouncing music and a company in frolicsome form. Robert Cartland has directed with great good humour. All the

show needs is a bit more pace and slickness to make a really hilarious entertainment .... Among the most effective scenes were a silent abduction by underworld characters in a dark street and a Gilbert & Sullivan type song by the whole cast in black cloaks.

David Healy (Evening Citizen) also emphasised the sensational side, probably with the best will in the world: 'a bright, bawdy picture of rape, gin swigging and corrupt justice ... Linda Bywaters is the pert Hilaret ... (she) plays not only with great gusto and a pleasant singing voice; she is highly decorative into the bargain .... The whole evening is a perfect Christmas present from the Citizens'.

There was a deficit of £2,034 compared with a profit of approximately £2,000 for the farce of the previous year. It is more pleasant to record Brendan Barry in an Evening Times interview (21/12/68): he was 'delighted to star in it again here because I think Robert Cartland's production is far superior to the London one'. (Barry had appeared at the Mermaid and in numerous other productions of the musical.)

All was going well at the Close, as, indeed, it did throughout Cartland's directorship, but Baron Bolligrew ended up with a deficit of £287. The Herald found it (27/12/68) 'a highly acceptable substitute' for the usual children's entertainment: 'several dragons ... sea voyages, a good long sword fight ... a dollop of very black magic and a trio of the most engaging villains ... a remarkable air of freshness and enjoyment'. There was a warning, however, that 'for the very young there may be a less taxing afternoon to be had next door at the Close'. Bolligrew was inclined to give one a 'nudge in the intellectual ribs ... who really wants to hear jokes about T.S. Eliot?' 'P' in the Scotsman also had a warning: it was:

totally English in concept ... a curiously alien and out-of-date entertainment ... to offer a generation of tough TV-democratised Scots children. The fact that, after the first wordy introduction, (it) went like a bomb must be due to the energy and spirit put into the dragon-hunting by the actors. (It was surprising to find an) elderly



tumphy-type knight as the hero ... Lennard Pearce's Sir Oblong Fitz Oblong ... won over the small fry with out-and-out goodness ... Peter Lincoln played Blackheart as the only modern among the Arthuresque crew, and I must say my heart was with the rebels.

The annual Shakespeare production was an unusual one, Henry IV Part One. Possibly because of its forbidding name, this one is inclined to be neglected, but it is rich in attractive ingredients and has a memorable gallery of good acting roles. Direction - wisely, as it happens - was entrusted to Malcolm Griffiths, who delivered something very special in the canon of Citizens' Shakespeares. A lot of credit was given to it at the time, and it is surprising that it has not been recalled to mind to a greater extent over the years. Box Office does not seem to have been exceptional - parties in these days kept very close to the conventional 'set texts' - and, in tune with this strangely doomed season, a bus strike limited audiences at the end of the run. There were controversial features: Falstaff was no benevolent Father Christmas figure, but the kind of man capable of the mean tricks of which he is sometimes guilty, but the only feature which may justifiably have given offence was the Gorbals style accent wished on Andrew Neil's Douglas, who did become something of a music hall creation.

Glasgow Herald (30/1/69) noted how the production 'pushed along at a cracking pace and with indeed scarcely time to draw breath between court and Boar's Head or the bloody and disputed field': Christopher Small was taken by the 'striking, if slightly puzzling decorative scheme, a kind of black Plantagenet honeycomb ... the result is certainly among the best Shakespearean productions we have had at the Citizens' in the past 10 years'. There was 'much excellent acting ... the Falstaff who emerges in Pitt Wilkinson (from under the blanket of a sleazy hangover bed) is a very interesting one ... magnificently raffish, battered and gross in appearance, really is a rogue and a scoundrel .... Some of the gaiety, the genuine playfulness ... is lost', but Wilkinson did 'supremely well' 'the superb debunking of military glory'. Indeed Small felt that the 'whole management of the final battle scene had a satirical flavour'

and that the entry of Bardolph (Harry Jones) 'on a halter, seems to refer to a more recent commenting on human vanity'. Mamie Crichton (Express) was less happy about the speed of the production which sometimes made it:

impossible to hear the torrent of words. And in the second half huge swords and clanking armour drag the pace down in the battle scenes where it should be faster. Otherwise the spirited cast did well last night by this ragged (sic) Shakespeare play ... curious settings, perhaps representing chain mail, looked as if they had been made of magnified black foam.

The Scotsman saw this production as 'a fairly traditional view of heroism and fate'. Allen Wright thought that:

By modern standards he (Falstaff) is the most sensible character .... It is the valiant Hotspur who is the fool. Peter Lincoln's performance (as Hotspur) with its marked Northern accent ... is a dour and graceless representative of chivalry, though Mr. Lincoln does convey his proud spirit ... Prince Hal, on the other hand, becomes much more amiable than usual - Paul Shelley gives us a vigorous and gallant Hal, who is rude rather than ruthless in his treatment of his old companion Falstaff ... Sir John is agreeably - (a strange adverb to use) - played by Pitt Wilkinson ... the scene in which he imagines Hal pleading his case before the King is beautifully done. As the King, Brendan Barry speaks nobly ... and the sombre setting by Rodney Ford was very effective.

'R.W.' (Daily Record) thought that Peter Lincoln, with an accent that would have done Freddie Truman justice, was a superb Hotspur' - (cf. Henry IV Part Two, II.3, where his widow says:

And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,  
Became the accents of the valiant ...).

Pitt Wilkinson was 'a convincingly corpulent Falstaff, and Paul Shelley a pleasantly square-jawed Prince Hal. A spirited professional production played against rather splendid sets by Rodney Ford.



The Evening Citizen called it

one of the best Shakespearean productions ever attempted at (the Citizens') ... Coupled with the marvellous direction of Malcolm Griffiths, and the ... sets - which somehow seem to lend themselves to the period - it all adds up to an exciting, thrilling, gripping play. The well-publicised battle scene - the company went to Glasgow's Queen's Park to rehearse it - is forcefully presented.

It should be said that eleven of the cast were Scots, and that from now on the Scottish element in the company was strong.

The season continued in classical vein (modern this time), with a revival of Shaw's Major Barbara (last seen at the Citizens' in Peter Duguid's production of 1957). Once again, little need be said about the play itself: the cast was strong, critical reception good. This time Cartland himself directed. A newcomer to the Citizens', Fiona Duncan, played Barbara, while Rachel Herbert, who had been doing sparkling work next door at the Close, was Lady Britomart. Brendan Barry, who seemed to be specialising in massively wordy roles, was Undershaft, Andrew Neil Cusins, and Maud Risdon returned to play Mrs. Baines.

According to Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 27/2/69) things were 'a little subdued' at the beginning, but, as Lady Britomart hit the right style, 'the whole of the company move with her into the strange mixture of fooling and casuistry with growing confidence and ease, and this dazzling and abominable play comes bafflingly to life'. 'In spite of some momentary uncertainties in this very long and taxing part, Mr. Barry is a most impressive Undershaft'. As Cusins, Andrew Neil makes 'a brilliant job, the best piece of work which this very able young actor has done with the company', and, if Fiona Duncan's Barbara is 'perhaps a little on the ethereal side ... partly that is Shaw's fault'. In the Third Act, Kenneth Bridgeman's set design:

(which in the other scenes is serviceable and not more) greatly adds to the final effect of the production ... white and gaunt, the buildings

rise rather differently from the garden city background Shaw asked for, and in the foreground, by a truly imaginative stroke, are the mangled bodies of the dummies on which (though not so effectively as on the real thing) the Undershaft weaponry is tested.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) noted that the production 'seemed to give much satisfaction ... a large and colourful figure, (Undershaft), dominates the play, and Brendan Barry can be forgiven for occasionally stumbling over the countless words of wisdom at his disposal. It is a performance full of twinkling mischief and genial authority. Barbara is vigorously played by Fiona Duncan, who is impressive in the Second Act in the Salvation Army Hostel where it is possible to believe that her eloquence would bring strong men to their knees. Andrew Neil is not very well cast as Cusins, the professor of Greek ... (cf. Herald) ... He is not sufficiently refined and sophisticated. Peter Lincoln as the earnest young Stephen, Michael Bruce as the belligerent Bill Walker, and Ian Stirling as the foolish Lomax are all very pleasing'. Mamie Crichton (Express) was reminded again of Shaw's:

facile Irish wit, page-long speeches and ideas thrown off like sparks from a catherine-wheel. In fact, the speeches begin to get slightly tedious towards the end, where characters tended to become mere mouthpieces for the author. But for three-quarters of the play Fiona Duncan sparkled ... and Rachel Herbert as her mother echoed many of the Edith Evans mannerisms. Brendan Barry ... looked remarkably like King Edward VII, and lanky Andrew Neil made an interesting character of the Greek professor.

The review in the Daily Record was cheerfully headed 'Attention! for the Major', and Alan Radnor (Evening Citizen) thought that the play was 'as fresh and relative today as when written in 1905 ...'. Fiona Duncan 'gives a convincing performance', and Undershaft was 'admirably played by Brendan Barry, very well supported by Andrew Neil as the Greek professor ... and Rachel Herbert as the mother with enough commonsense to see through the facades put on by many of the characters. Some superb acting, too, from Ida Schuster (Rummy Mitchens) and Maud Risdon'.



Major Barbara was followed by the first new Scottish play seen at the Citizens' for a very long time. Our Kindness to Five Persons by Tom Gallacher, a name later to become well known in the world of fiction as well as the theatre, had come near to being seen at the Close the previous season, but the plan had been abandoned, though a part of it had featured in one of the New Drama in Scotland afternoons presented on Sundays at the Close as a result of a funding arrangement with Scottish Television which Cartland had masterminded. In November, 1968, six excerpts from new work had been given ('moved' readings by the regular company), with celebrity panels present ... Andrew Cruickshank, for instance, was a member of one. The authors were there, and public discussion followed. Both these performances were easy sell-outs, and Our Kindness proved so popular that arrangements were made for a full-scale Citizens' production (by Cartland) as soon as possible. Interest was keen, music by Andy Park was commissioned, and anticipations ran high. The author, in a programme note, said:

This is, I suppose, a play of the kind they don't write any more. It tells a story and is constructed so that it progresses in orderly fashion from the beginning to the end by way of the middle ... (He admitted to) blatant use of the Dramatic Unities and for other classical appurtenances drifting around under the surface. Well under the surface, .... as I say, they don't write plays that way now, and I am anxious to please an audience. To that end, the characters are as real as I can make them - or remember them. The purpose is to entertain. One hopes that you - and they - will think I have remembered them well.

All of which was, in 1969, really asking for trouble, both from Press and public. At all events, neither gave the play much support: expectation turned to disappointment, as might have been anticipated in this season, with its succession of misfortunes.

Our Kindness is a play full of interesting and rewarding features: it is probably too long, or was then, at any rate, and is

a shade convoluted in content, but is worthy of much more considered interest than it received. Set in 'a large, modern, and comfortable flat in Glasgow', it deals with a level of Scottish society well away from the 'kitchen sink' area, although the Hansons, Steve and Don, have dragged themselves up from it. The 'comfortable flat' belongs to Don, and Steve is on a visit home with his wealthy American wife, set on persuading his brother and sister-in-law to join him, though which of them he wants the more is open to question. All the time the brothers are measuring the distance they have come from 'Bannarman Road' ... 'We planned this, fifteeh years ago .... Education was the only weapon we had'. When Steve re-visits the old street, he sees, admirably described:

Chalk marks all over the walls, every landing window broken, battalions of dirty kids playing buckety-buck, and the first few drunks cutting the road and corner too fine. The ricochet still bounces them off the pavements .... But when I put a record on my black box console, and some blues singer starts telling me she has come a long way from St. Louis - I know she means "Bannarman Road". (Bannarman Road, where) Jam was the all purpose food and sweetener.

Judd, the other male member of the 'magic circle' now reassembling is very much the 'eminence grise' of the group, the catalyst and, in a way, the one who sacrifices himself for the good of the others. (Maggie, the other female member, is a warm-hearted but cynical victim of a failed marriage to a husband who prefers the boys.) There are five scenes, and the note to the printed text says that 'the past of the group is examined from five points of view'. The characters are, in their way, seeking to balance love and ambition, and the programme proclaims that, as in most of this writer's work, there is an autobiographical thread present in the characterisation.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald 19/3/69) makes the point that 'it is about people who once belonged to Glasgow and have either gone or are raring to go ... the close entanglement of a small group of persons'. There is 'the curious and ambiguous figure of a friend who has manipulated them in the past and is trying still to do the same;



an author who, having made a book out of them, appears to regard them all in some sense as his property'. This was a:

most interesting creation ... deathly pale, baggy-eyed, sententious ... he is played with suitable portentousness by Colin Jeavons and makes the progress of the evening ... if not altogether credible, full at any rate of satisfactory foreboding .... The remainder ... are scarcely so substantial; or perhaps it is that some oddities of casting give them less substance than they might have .... It seems, indeed ... that the present production has rather underlined those points where all these people begin to talk and act like the magazines .... And the peculiarly flimsy decor designed for it does very much suggest the opened-up pages of one of the weekly glossies. But possibly, of course, this is intentional.

There was also 'a whole mass of stuff getting in the way ... poems and literary allusions, all the way from Jane Austen and Eliot to James Thurber'.

Allen Wright (Scotsman) at once fell upon the Programme note: 'two new plays by Scots writers are being produced in Glasgow this week ... feast after lengthy famine ...'. (The other was Jack Ronder's Who'll Do It This Time? at the Close):

The edge was taken off my appetite by Mr. Gallacher's declaration in the Programme that he was anxious to please the audience and that the purpose of his play was to entertain .... These are sound sentiments but he seems to have put them before other, more important, considerations, such as being truthful to his characters. Instead of developing humanly, they conform to a pattern as if they were simply counters in a game .... The only glimpse of humanity comes near the end, when a forlorn alcoholic utters a cry of anguish, "I can't get better. This is the best I'll ever be".

The plot was 'on the level of a women's magazine story; it is an intriguing situation, but dramatically it is insipid'. As the brothers, Peter Lincoln and Andrew Robertson were 'effective', and

'Rodney Ford designed the setting which won a round of applause, although the colour scheme of pink, orange and purple was presumably intended to express the vulgarity of the nouveau riche occupants ...'. Alan Radnor (Evening Citizen) reported

a feeling of expectation .... However, as the last act approached, it became obvious that any ... climax expected was not forthcoming .... The play did not measure up to the fine acting by a young and talented company .... (It) reminded one of a cross between Harold Pinter and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? without really taking the better points from either.

The Evening Times also hooked on to the author's purpose being:

to entertain. The Citizens' Theatre company struggled manfully to satisfy his intention and succeeded to some extent. The inordinate length to which he has stretched the good, but limited, plot has, however, inevitably diluted that enjoyment. Judicious pruning would remedy the defect .... The best acting was Colin Jeavons's interpretation of Judd, always stage-managing lives, planning from behind a fragile screen of staid aloofness.

Our Kindness deserved a more sympathetic hearing: perhaps the trouble was simply that too much had been expected of it. David Hutchison, for instance, wrote that 'Gallacher's debut in the professional theatre in Scotland ... was unfortunately marred by very bad casting and production'.<sup>6</sup> Some years later, with a few revisions, it was presented at Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

The following production was to be a real commercial success, Billy Liar, by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, an attraction in itself, but with the added bonus of Adam Faith in one of his first 'legitimate' roles. Before that, however, there appeared in the Glasgow Herald (5/4/69) a fairly unobtrusive item of news reporting that 'Robert Cartland, artistic director of Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, is to relinquish his position at the end of the current season'.

Billy Liar survived, and does so still, as a good piece of theatre,



although the 'progressives' in education who thrust it on to the list of 'set books' as a representative of Modern Drama have probably realised long since that its importance in the long term is rather more limited: it has quite speedily become a 'period piece' Under the title of Billy, however, it became a resounding success on the musical stage (1974), revealing Michael Crawford as a major talent in this field.<sup>7</sup>

Direction at the Citizens' was in the hands of Malcolm Griffiths, who was showered with praise as a result of the play's popularity, wryly claiming that some of his previous work had been far more deserving of attention than this more conventional example. It should also be mentioned that - oddly, but quite significantly - every member of the cast of this north of England play, apart from Faith himself, was a Scot. Christopher Small (Herald 9/4/69) observed several textual alterations - the date is given as 'today' - and Billy 'has been greatly jacked up to date at the Citizens': "Enoch Powell", not "Eden" - condensed milk hoarded now 30 years old'. However, 'a great deal ... remains extremely funny ... Billy himself is a genuine comic creation who has quite enough life in him to outlast a decade'. Adam Faith was a 'remarkably good Billy .... From the moment that he comes down the stairs of the Fisher home (admirably constructed in flawless Lancashire suburban) (by Rodney Ford), with his hair flapping in his eyes, we feel both the splendours and the miseries of being Billy', with his 'kind of absurd triumph. Dreams will continue to get the better of reality'. Phil McCall, as 'blustering, sanguinary-spoken father' and Julia McCarthy as Mum were 'admirable', and there was a 'beautiful little portrait of pure elderly malevolence by Jean Taylor Smith as Grandma'. 'What strikes one now in the midst of it all is an uncertainty at the heart of the play, whether it is dealing with life and lies and even death at the level of the comic postcards ... or whether it purports to say more about quarrelling families and ne'er-do-well sons .... It makes a fine, lively, untruthful evening'. Allen Wright in The Scotsman hailed it as:

the box-office success which the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow so desperately needs ... one of the best entertainments seen there this season .... Adam Faith's performance

in the title role was much better than I expected from a popular singer who has only recently set out to become an actor. He displayed considerable ability, and there was emotional power in his final conflict with the parents .... An important contribution to the success of the production was made by Jean Taylor Smith as the dour grandmother ... chattering to the sideboard about how to bring up children .... This play ... crackles with abuse and scorn, but is basically kind-hearted and usually very funny ... Malcolm Griffiths has directed ... with a sure sense of the vigour and bluntness of the North of England.

Gordon Reed (Scottish Daily Express) praised Adam Faith for coping:

professionally with it all, and I suspect he was doing a quiet send-up of himself at times as the young Walter Mitty-type man living in a world of make-believe to escape his home life ... a thoroughly enjoyable piece of entertainment. Superb support comes from a strong cast. Phil McCall is the irate father and Julia McCarthy the harassed mother, who have to cope with the dream world - and the girl friends - of their son.

Michael Fairbairn (Evening Times) was also favourably surprised by:

the former pop idol (taking) the stage with remarkable ease and self-assurance ... with his flair for comedy and sense of urgency Adam Faith has certainly come a long way ... A quite magnificent performance comes from Julia McCarthy as the defeated mother. Also in fine form is Jean Taylor Smith as the ageing grandmother who talks to the furniture and drinks tea with a vengeance.

The three girls in Billy's life were played by Katherine Stark, Eileen Nicholas and Maev Alexander, the latter a young actress of great promise, who had graduated from the Theatre for Youth Company and did some striking work at the Close.

Obviously there was a shadow over the remainder of the season, but Cartland pressed on with a defiant professionalism, acting in and



directing John Osborne's The Hotel in Amsterdam at the Close and preparing to do the same with Pinter's The Homecoming at the Citizens'. Meantime he had brought back Keith Darvill, this time to the larger stage. Darvill had mounted an impressive 'Theatre of Fact' season at the Close in 1967, followed by Clydeside, a very successful political gloss on Glasgow's river. Now he devised, wrote and directed a bigger variation on the same theme, called, not surprisingly, Clydeside 2. This did not work quite as well as its predecessor in the Club Theatre, although probably in any other year it would have been given greater credit. Perhaps the politics were too narrowly based, and proceedings were certainly not helped by an awesomely cumbersome set. Nevertheless, Darvill's work was always worthy of attention, and the casting was strong.

Allen Wright (Scotsman 30/4/69) found it:

more like a May Day pageant than a play. It is a rambling, scrappy history of Socialism in the city (using) sketches and songs to illustrate conditions and events ... between 1860 and 1938. If it had ... concentrated on the affairs of the ILP, it might have been very rewarding. Kirkwood, Maxton, Gallacher and company are legendary figures well worth dramatic treatment. It is infuriating to see them presented so flippantly .... The actors - notably James Copeland, Andrew Neil and Phil McCall (with Tom Watson excellent as John Maclean) - invest their slender parts with real character, but they are smothered by the sprawling, pretentious production ... Mr. Darvill has lumbered himself with two ramshackle-looking roundabouts. They are laboriously revolved to suggest changes of scene .... It is all projected with boundless good nature and vitality which should disarm criticism if it were not so sad to see a great opportunity squandered.

Mamie Crichton (Scottish Daily Express) saw the original documentary developed into 'the overblown musical ... staged at the Citizens' last night. The good things in it, especially some fascinating performances, lost much of their effect by the inordinate length of the whole thing ... songs by Matt McGinn are a living part of the show'. The Evening Times (Alasdair Macleod) described it as 'a

characterised history book account of industrial and social change over the past 100 years, and the rebellion which invariably affiliates itself to such change. Matt McGinn, as the narrator, made cohesive a somewhat fragmented plot - in word and song'.

Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) attached his review to Darvill's Programme note - (it is easy to see why so many writers and directors today avoid comment of this sort) - which read as follows: 'Working in the area of documentary one has to make a decision as to what is important. A society with as much individuality as this is bound to produce its own myths and its own idealism. How valid are the myths, what happened to the idealism? It is with these issues that Clydeside 2 is concerned'. 'To answer such large sociological questions on the stage is a tall order', Small wrote. 'They are probably too vague and slippery to be caught in this way'. Events and topics as varied as the High Blantyre mining disaster, the 1901 Exhibition and Irish immigration were touched on, with some good points about modern parallels. 'The careers of the "wild men of the Clyde" are followed through in a leap-frogging fashion from the First World War'. There were:

Tom Watson in a lightning impression of Maclean... James Copeland at various stages in the progress of David Kirkwood ... Phil McCall as Gallacher ... Andrew Neil (much helped by a strong physical resemblance), giving an eloquent and moving facsimile of Maxton's indignation in the Commons. (However) as the movable scenery - ingenious, but slow - lumbers round, it is all too evident that Mr. Darvill has bitten off more than he can chew ... a courageous thing to attempt; there is more than enough there still to make a meal of.

The production of Harold Pinter's The Homecoming brought everything - except audience and critical appreciation - to a climax. It summed up, for instance, the long festering suspicion that the Citizens' presented plays of dubious moral character, and it is no secret that it caused a strong difference of opinion between Director and Board: this may or may not have been an important element in the



situation which gave rise to the non-renewal of Cartland's contract. The Homecoming is certainly one of the most difficult of Pinter's plays for an 'average' audience to accept; it is, to be fair, not the ideal end-of-season springtime fare, and the fact that Cartland had been doing too much and must have been labouring under great stress would account for the fact that the production lacked the final 'shine' which might have fended off his detractors.

When The Homecoming was first presented in London by the Royal Shakespeare Company, there was certainly some controversy, and Frances Stephens wrote that, despite its immediate success:

it would be idle to suggest that it is as good a piece of work as The Caretaker, either in writing or in the atmosphere of suspense attained. Nevertheless, if the hall-mark of a Pinter production is to start the audience arguing and to haunt the consciousness for days afterwards in a vain search for meanings and motives, then The Homecoming is true Pinter.<sup>8</sup>

The same review also gives a neat description of Ruth, the wife brought home to his disreputable family by Teddy, who is on leave from an American university, a Doctor of Philosophy: 'a kind of synthesis of Woman; mother, mistress and wife'. The play had already been seen in Glasgow, presented by the University of Glasgow Arts Theatre Group, and nobody seems to have been particularly worried then, but Citizens' audiences were certainly not ready for it in 1969, despite a production by no means without its virtues. Even after twenty years, it is hard to forget the sneer in the voice of Lenny the pimp, as he warns his scholar brother that he'll be late for his first seminar if he stays much longer with his family, or the group gathered round Ruth, staying on for the family's nefarious purposes, Jill Gascoine sitting in the arm chair, almost statuesque in appearance, as Max, the father (Cartland), begs for a kiss.

Small (Herald 21/5/69) mentioned this scene in his review: with Ruth 'enthroned with all the men of the family except her husband bowing down before her, (it) has an unquestionable if also inexplicable beauty. It may not make a great deal of sense but, with the material,

it is a considerable achievement'. The production, the critic has already said, 'takes the celebrated Pinter pause to what one may call its illogical conclusion ... often between every word and sometimes between syllables - there is a pregnant pause, heavy with whatever meaning you like to insert into it'. He likens it to 'a Jewish family comedy' played as though it were 'Gotterdammerung'.

Mr. Cartland, however, as conductor of the whole affair, appears quite at ease with it, and presents a remarkable piece of acting as the old reprobate of a father .... He almost sings Pinter's frequent obscene words, using pauses and glissandos to turn the horrid old man's paranoid outbursts into something like operatic arias ... it certainly does result in largely removing the offence which, when briskly and literally (one can hardly say credibly) done, the melange of violence, whoredom, and incestuous envy is likely to give.

Allen Wright (Scotsman), noted that 'Mr. Cartland has ... taken the most colourful part in the play - that of Max, the cantankerous head of the household. It is a fairly substantial performance - a strutting, foul-mouthed patriarch'. He takes the wife of the homecoming son:

to be a whore, and she responds to the insult by acting like one .... But Mr. Cartland's production makes nothing of the variations in mood. It is all performed on the same key instead of rising and falling .... Such a limp production does not help us to appreciate the play .... Possibly the best performance is Phil McCall's dim and morose Sam, the uncle who hovers on the fringe of this perplexing family.

James Watson (Evening Times) headed his review, 'This Pinter play is not for me'. He continued - and the Times had been markedly pro-Citizens' that season:

Either Pinter is sick or I am. In spite of powerful performances ... I was lost. I appreciated the sinister growth of female ascendancy and the off-beat dialogue, but



found the situation of the intellectual husband casually leaving an ex-model wife to a life of sin entirely weird and incredible. I must confess that this evening with Pinter left me feeling not only perplexed but decidedly unclean.

Mamie Crichton (Express) was little happier:

It would have been cheering to find the Citizens' Theatre, after all its troubles, finishing the season with a resounding success. Harold Pinter's The Homecoming, on last night's showing, is unlikely to do this for it. Not that the acting isn't well thought out. Robert Cartland, who also directed, leads a cast of six well-defined characters of whom Phil McCall gives the most distinguished performance. It's the play itself that is daunting and bitter.

Obviously Pinter was still being taken at face value in 1969, literally and 'naturalistically'. It is interesting to reflect what reaction to the play might have been ten years later, by which time theatre, Press and patrons had been completely transformed.<sup>9</sup>

It had become abundantly clear, since the first announcement, that Robert Cartland's leave-taking was not of his own seeking, and several articles and comments had appeared in the Press. On 14/4/69 there had appeared in the Evening Times a major article, 'The Citizens' Affair'. A personal view by Paul H. Foster:

I have been refereeing the latest bout between Cartland the Courageous and the Board, led by George Singleton, who seems to have set himself up as a sort of twentieth-century Saint George, resolutely slaying the dragon of progressive theatre .... He wanted (The Homecoming) removed from the programme, and, when Cartland refused to do so, he was told a few days later that his contract would not be renewed.

The Board had been said to be concerned about artistic standards and declining audiences ... Foster claimed that artistic performance was hampered by 'a shoestring allowance'; nevertheless 'Henry IV ... could stand on any international stage as an example of Shakespeare at its best', while Cartland was to be congratulated on 'employing many good Scots actors and encouraging new young ones .... He has helped

new dramatists from Scotland, taken theatre into Scotland's schools, and given the Citizens' an alive feeling of movement into the future'.

On 9/4/69, Ruth Wishart in the Evening Times had said:

The decision of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre Board to announce now that the artistic director Robert Cartland's contract would not be renewed next year was unfortunate to say the least. They dropped their bombshell only four days before the first night of Billy Liar ... Bob Cartland told me he thought the handling of the situation "inept". (In the edition of 11/4/69, Ms. Wishart continued) 'It is rapidly becoming a mark of professional distinction to fall foul of the board ... The men on the board are hard-working, respected and sincere lovers of the theatre, (but) can their beliefs satisfy the needs of the modern-day theatre audiences?

It may be that all the ins and outs of the affair will never be known: the situation was far from simple. Earlier in the season there had been considerable tension over the engagement of The People Show at the Close with a play called Tennis, which was eventually presented as a late night show, with a 'covering letter' sent out to members. This was the occasion of the first 'four letter word' being uttered on a Citizens' controlled stage, and a not previously publicly mentioned part of the female anatomy figures prominently in the text. This piece wasn't in the least worth fighting over, but it came from the Traverse in Edinburgh, with which Cartland wished to foster a relationship, and he regarded Tennis as a point of principle. Perhaps he was marginally more interested in the Close than the Citizens', and he certainly had guided it into a healthy position against monstrous financial odds. Possibly he could, given a second chance, have done the same with the Citizens': it seems obvious now that he should have been given the opportunity. His successor, Giles Havergal, had a cool opening season too before he found his style and brought the Citizens' an international fame that it had never had before. At the same time, it is a mistake to regard George Singleton as a reactionary figure of repression: earlier in his career, he had



spear-headed the cause of 'avant-garde' cinema in Scotland by the creation of the as yet unequalled Cosmo Cinema in Glasgow. Best, perhaps, to suggest that Board and Director were caught in the currents of a theatrical change of major dimensions, one which was bound to claim its victims. It is possible, too, that an element of theatrical politics may have been involved. Cartland went on to work regularly, principally, perhaps, as an actor, but has never as yet had the chance of running a theatre again. His company, on the verge of becoming a formidable team, was scattered, plans for a possible University connection were cancelled, and the search for local writing talent abandoned in favour of different goals.

The Productions were:

Black Comedy and The Public Eye (Peter Shaffer) Directed Robert Cartland and Malcolm Griffiths (31/8/68).

The Constant Wife (Somerset Maugham) Directed Robert Cartland (24/9/68).

Philadelphia, Here I Come! (Brian Friel) Directed Valerie Hanson (15/10/68).

Little Boxes (John Bowen) Directed Maurice Roëves (5/11/68).

Long Day's Journey Into Night (Eugene O'Neill) Directed Malcolm Griffiths (26/11/68).

Lock Up Your Daughters (Miles/Bart/Johnson from Fielding) Directed Robert Cartland (18/12/68).

The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew (Robert Bolt) Directed Malcolm Griffiths (26/12/68) (Matinees).

Henry IV, Part One (William Shakespeare) Directed Malcolm Griffiths (29/1/69).

Major Barbara (Bernard Shaw) Directed Robert Cartland (26/2/69).

Our Kindness To Five Persons (Tom Gallacher) Directed Robert Cartland (18/3/69).

Billy Liar (Keith Waterhouse, Willis Hall) Directed Malcolm Griffiths (8/4/69).

Clydeside 2 (Devised, written, directed Keith Darvill) (29/4/69).

The Homecoming (Harold Pinter) Directed Robert Cartland (20/5/69).

Footnotes to Chapter Eight - THE CARTLAND SEASON

1. Plays and Players, September, 1965.
2. Trewin, The Gay Twenties, pp.99, 100.
3. John Douglas Eames, The Paramount Story (Octopus, 1985), p.64.
4. Bronner, The Encyclopedia of the American Theatre, p.278.  
O'Neill had completed the play in 1940 and 'placed the manuscript in his publisher's vault with instructions that it not be produced until at least twenty-five years after his death'. (However, his widow gave permission for the Broadway production in 1956, when it won both the Pulitzer Prize and the Drama Critics Circle Award.)
5. Ganzle, The British Musical Theatre, Volume 2, pp.752/53.  
'The originally announced six weeks' season ... stretched and stretched. Before long the Mermaid's £17,000 building debt had been paid off and the show was ... playing to near capacity audiences every night'.
6. David Hutchison, The Modern Scottish Theatre (Molendinar Press, 1977), pp.141, 142.  
'Gallacher appears to have a penchant for 'literary' plays ... (he) is interested in exceptional people and builds his plays around such people'.
7. Ganzle, The British Musical Theatre, Volume 2, p.980.  
'Billy Liar made a very good subject for a musical, particularly in the manner in which it was adapted by (the) writing team. The conventions of the musical stage allowed them to open up the story and to show Billy's fantasies on the stage as a glittering contrast to the drab scenes of his Yorkshire hometown life'.
8. Theatre World, July, 1965.
9. Guido Almansi and Simon Henderson, Harold Pinter (Methuen, 1983), pp.69, 74.  
The authors agree with Peter Hall, who directed the original production (1965), that 'The Homecoming is as multifaceted as a diamond ... (it) brought in its wake a flood of critical outpourings (and) it took the advent of such a richly complex play .... to inaugurate feverish attempts to tie Pinter down to precise "solutions"'.  
Dirk Bogarde (Snakes and Ladders, Triad/Panther, 1979, p.278), having likened Pinter's work to 'a beautifully laid-out scenic model railway', goes on to say that 'the instructions are implicit in the words he offers so sparingly for his characters to speak'.



## CHAPTER NINE

END OF AN ERA - AND BEYOND

When Giles Havergal succeeded Robert Cartland in the Autumn of 1969, he began a period of office which has, in 1989, lasted for two decades, a tenure which, for most of the time, has coincided with that of one Chairman, William L. Taylor, and it would be easy to draw glib conclusions from this fact. As already suggested, however, the situation was not nearly as simple as one caused solely by a prolonged state of friction between Director and Board, although there is no use pretending that something of this kind did not play an important part in the change-over of personnel during the years 1957-69.

It is, nevertheless, necessary to place this in its historical context, and the fact remains that the Citizens' had been - from the start - a theatre built on the talents and abilities of men who were outside the rough and tumble of the practical job of deciding exactly what happens on the stage. Initially the 'producer' had had to contend not only with Bridie and the Board, but with the Board-backed Theatre Society, which had a hand in publicity, finance and choice of plays.

As long as the producer was kept - as far as possible - away from the front office, the possibility of major friction was held at bay, becoming really noticeable only when a particularly individualistic 'incumbent' like Michael Langham sought to set a very positive stamp of his own on things. Then the parting of the ways was speedily reached.

Throughout the first quarter of a century of the Citizens' Theatre's existence, then, we have the situation where the Board of Directors considered itself responsible, in the long run, for artistic policy. Although there is not much evidence of the fact, it is probable that Peter Duguid had his difficulties: he seems generally to have had his own way with choice of play - the introduction of the 'banned' play policy shows no excessive puritanism in the Board then - but it is hard to believe that its members' complete support and confidence would not

have carried him beyond his three years - Callum Mill beyond his two.

With the advent of the powerful 'Director of Productions', the question of who was to 'run the theatre' became crucial. Iain Cuthbertson had the Board's firm confidence, but, after his departure, consciously or not, the struggle for power was joined in earnest, and 'incomers' like David William and the 'Michaels' would not fall in with a situation foreign to their inclinations and the drift of theatrical tendencies outside Glasgow.

It cannot, however, be over-emphasised that the Board, as a whole, acted from the best motives. It is easy to allow oneself to be swayed against what may look like a phalanx of 'heavy fathers', but the balance of judgment must be preserved. The qualities of Board Directors were typical of the brave, unyielding nature of the Scots of their particular generation, but they were qualities which did not allow for adapting or stretching to any great degree. The new shape of things, in actual practice, was for Theatre Boards to survey the scene from some little distance, entering the arena only in moments of emergency to offer any appropriate skills. The responsibilities - at the beginning of the Seventies - lay heavily on the shoulders of Artistic Directors, some of whom would have been happy to retreat from the cares of administration which were creeping into their duties. The new Director at the 'Citizens', however, was well equipped to bear these responsibilities; all theatres would not be so tightly managed, and the element of risk would now, under the circumstances, be greater, the 'right to fail' a possibility more necessary to face.

In an interview in The List (2-15/9/88), Giles Havergal discussed choice of plays: 'People say, "What on earth are you doing, doing Ibsen and Schiller and Lermontov and Proust in the Gorbals?" and the answer is of course that if you really believe that these are the great works of art then you must believe that they can and should be shared: it's a belief that people do like the best'. Furthermore, this policy works, and at a flat rate (until 1989) of £3 per seat: the Board is supportive and has confidence in those in charge of the artistic side of things, who are left to get on with their job. Havergal has two



co-Directors, Philip Prowse and Robert David MacDonald, a highly efficient General Manager and a carefully chosen team to back them up. Prowse designs and directs, MacDonald writes, acts and directs, while Havergal acts, directs, and, in close co-operation with the others, runs the whole thing. He is one of the rare beings who seems to be able to combine all the talents required of the Artistic Director, for, as has been noted, during the years since this concept came into being, many good Directors have given up the unequal struggle because they could not cope with the 'politics' of the position - this applies throughout the British Theatre. At the same time the Citizens' triumvirate have far fewer productions on their hands than Peter Duguid, for instance, had, and, unlike the 'Michaels', they have only one theatre to look after, the Close having been destroyed by fire in 1973. Duguid and Callum Mill had to deal with one long season on their own, with occasional artistic assistance and, of course, a powerful General Manager. David William had two theatres, but a permanent assistant, and then came the much more satisfactory situation of Meacham and Blakemore, partners of near equal standing; Cartland feels<sup>1</sup> that he too needed an Associate of equal standing, but the money for this was no longer available.

It cannot, however, be over-emphasised that during these years the theatre, society indeed, was in a state of flux. Before 1957, everything was in a comfortably conventional rut - comparatively speaking - and, although it was no easy matter for the Director (or Producer), the dangers and conflicts of the years to come did not exist to any great degree. But with the removal of the Lord Chamberlain's power, responsibility devolved on Director and Board, and the latter, though usually possessed of a number of skills, were generally older men who, understandably, were less able to meet and adapt to a state of things where the ground was beginning to shift under their feet.

Robert Cartland is in no doubt<sup>1</sup> that the main problem for an Artistic Director in the Sixties was to move his theatre gradually into a new climate, guide it carefully up unfamiliar and often dangerous channels so that it would not run aground on the banks of

embarrassed or shocked disapproval. Before 1957 and for some time after that, the problems of The People Show and The Homecoming would not have been there to face. Michael Meacham reckons that 40% of his and Michael Blakemore's energies were absorbed in matters other than creative work. They were not:

experienced directors, though both of us had been actors for many years, and we were both very inexperienced as managers; so we had to learn as we went along. And I think we were rightly proud of the standard of repertoire and production we produced. Naturally being beginners, as it were, the work took its toll - the strain was considerable. (Eventually it was not possible to cope with all the strains) and do the work at the same time. So we resigned - simple as that.<sup>2</sup>

The strains might have been easier to withstand had audience reaction been more encouraging, but, as has been stated, it was extremely difficult to gauge what would attract: younger members of the public had not yet torn themselves away from the Television screens to find satisfaction in live art, and many older people were sinking into a way of life which, to a great extent, excluded going out after dark. A quick examination of a Citizens' audience of 1989 will reveal a large proportion of younger age groups, and their representatives will accept a kind of theatre which would have aroused the keenest anxiety in the Board of the late Sixties. (It should, however, be realised that William L. Taylor was a member of the Board then, as well as a few others who are part of its composition in 1989.)

Yet, paradoxically enough, much was gained from the mixture of production styles over these twelve years: if we had the repeated troughs at the end of each regime, there was also the initial surge towards the crest of the wave in most cases. For sheer volume of work and variety of output, Peter Duguid cannot be matched. Not all his work was of the same standard ... how could it be under the circumstances? But he it was who brought the Citizens' out of the agreeably cosy channel into which it had been sinking and made it come face to face with the outside world, the world of Steinbeck and Tennessee Williams, of Arthur Miller and Ray Lawler, introducing



Osborne and all that that implied. More than anyone, too, he bravely took chances with new Scottish work, not the echoes of the past which had made up much of the Scottish season which had preceded his arrival. Some of the choices were wide of the mark, and one of his major discoveries, Gay Landscape, earned him little enough gratitude, but he could give encouragement to faltering talents like that of Munro and bright new ones like Ronder's. He would also plunge into both welcome revivals like The Lass Wi' The Muckle Mou' and The Baikie Charivari and wildly unsuitable adventures like Walker, London, while his American invasion encompassed not only the raw and the uncomfortable, but the smooth delights of Kaufman and Lindsay & Crouse.

Even the ill-fated Haggard season threw up its outstanding contributions: Brecht certainly came over loud and clear with The Good Woman, whatever troubles may have beset its gestation, and the contribution of Finney, both as actor and director, shone out brilliantly. Much of Iain Cuthbertson's personal contribution as Artistic Director - whatever the title, the concept came into being with his period of charge - was of major importance: Durrenmatt's The Physicists, the marvellously operatic production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle, the celebratory revival of Bridie's A Sleeping Clergyman, the shockingly gripping introduction to the work of Hugh Leonard, The Poker Session, and, above all, Arden's Armstrong's Last Goodnight, a peak in the history of the Gorbals theatre. Patchy these two seasons may have been, but they are of great significance as a whole. No need to say more about the Cartland venture, but further mention must be made of the Meacham-Blakemore seasons, built on the foundation of the David William groundwork. It is here and in the contribution of Callum Mill that it is possible to see the heights to which the Citizens' could consistently aspire, the first named achieving a sort of counterpart to the style of the National Theatre, the latter to the type of work being done by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre in London.

Taking the long view, results, of course, would surely have been better still given fewer and longer periods of tenure: it would be suggested that four or five seasons are required to consolidate an Artistic Directorship. Fortunately, however, the Citizens' Theatre

has an ability to absorb all kinds of developments. Although Duguid swung the theatre out of the Bridie cycle, traces of the latter's kind of Citizens' kept on coming to the surface every now and then, Iain Cuthbertson being the last real potential heir to what he had envisaged. Right up to 1969, however, the original foundation was used on which to build; what followed after was something different altogether, a totally new concept of theatre for Glasgow, European-based in many ways and exploring strange and exotic pathways. Ronald Mavor, son of James Bridie, was asked - in connection with his father's centenary (1988) - what he considered Bridie would have thought of Giles Havergal's Citizens' Theatre. After a pause, he said that the present structure was unique, but that an unique theatre was not what his father would have wanted: he would have wished for something of broader appeal.<sup>3</sup> There was truth in this point of view, but there is no doubt, on the other hand, that the Citizens' of the late Eighties is not only renowned, but is indeed popular in a way that it never consistently was before; and it still attracts the almost fanatical loyalty of those who work in it, a loyalty which seems always to have been there, no matter what the vicissitudes of artistic policy.

The Citizens' is no longer a forcing house specifically intended for young Scottish talent, and it is significant that the pre-1969 archives are no longer to be found in the Gorbals theatre, but have been transferred to the Scottish Theatre Archive at Glasgow University: 1969 - or rather 1970, for the first Havergal year was one of exploration - was the beginning of Citizens' Theatre, Part Two and this was set up to stand upon its own feet. It has been a triumphant success, and few would wish to see it supplanted by any other form of theatre, but there is nothing now in Scotland to take the place of what the Citizens' was originally intended to be. If any one of the best years of the earlier organisation could be translated in time into the Eighties or Nineties, it would seem strangely foreign, 'dated' in the strict sense of that much abused word, just as we are astonished when we look at not so far distant production photographs, realising how 'old-fashioned' they appear. What Glasgow really needs, in addition to its Citizens' Mk. II, is a contemporary version of what Mill, the 'Michaels', Duguid and Cuthbertson strove for, keeping its



patrons up to date with developments in mainstream British and American drama and, at the same time forming a bank of Scottish actors, a company which young players would set their sights on from student days onwards, becoming a repository for Scottish plays new and old, capable of reviving the success or not originally recognised success of thirty years ago, in other words, although the name would be carefully skirted, something not so very unlike a Scottish National Theatre.

Footnotes to Chapter Nine - END OF AN ERA - AND BEYOND

1. Robert Cartland, in conversation, June 1988.
2. Michael Meacham, Letter of July, 1988.
3. Ronald Mavor, BBC Radio Scotland (Bridie Centenary) Broadcast (1988).



## A P P E N D I X I

THE REVUES AND PANTOMIMES

In its former existence as the Royal Princess's Theatre, the Citizens' had been famous for its long-running pantomimes, beginning well before Christmas and ending somewhere around Easter: latterly the star was always George West, and the wildly original titles, such as Tommie Tiddler and Tammie Twister all had thirteen letters. It was some time, however, before the Citizens' renewed this tradition (1949), with The Tintock Cup, part revue, part music hall, part pantomime, on a regular basis; By 1957, the pattern was set in the intimate revue mould, in some ways the sort of thing that Laurier Lister did so skilfully in London, but spiced and broadened by the rich humour peculiar to Glasgow. Titles since 1949 had included examples like A Glaikit Spell and Whigmaleeries, and one of the regular features was a 'hing', two Glasgow 'wifies' who 'hung' over their window sills, or, more accurately, leaned on them, with cushions for comfort, to engage in rich and strange gossip. By 1957, in Merry-Ma-Tanzie, written by 'Ronald Emerson', with music by Arthur Blake, the two 'ladies' were Harry Walker and John Grieve: comics such as Duncan Macrae and Stanley Baxter had gone on to bigger things (in some ways, at any rate), and Molly Urquhart and Fulton Mackay were the last survivors of the Tintock Cup company, with Miss Urquhart causing something of a stir by withdrawing in mid-run to take up a film role (in The Nun's Story). The matter was complicated by the fact that she was the wife of General Manager William MacIntosh: some felt that she had used her position unfairly and had let the Theatre down. However that may be, Molly Urquhart did not act on the Citizens' stage again, her place as star of Merry-Ma-Tanzie being taken successfully by the promoted Irene Sunters. The revue was described in the Glasgow Herald (20/12/57) as 'quite the best holiday diversion in town', and it included an item in which Shakespeare's Kings lamented 'their rough treatment at his hands'. Originally Molly Urquhart had played a juvenile delinquent, singer Eileen Price took part in a musical sequence, 'Canterbury Road', and Roy Kinnear was also in the cast. Peter Duguid directed, and he

also was in charge of the 1958 model, Clishmaclaver, the Herald (19/12/58) echoing its verdict of the previous year, 'by a long way the best Christmas diversion of the year'. There was what was described as a 'brilliant skit on My Fair Lady re-conceived in Glasgow terms'. 'Hell Caledonia' suggests a satirical attack on the kind of show which used to appear with gusty regularity at the Pavilion, Glasgow, while John Grieve had a number, 'Viking's not to my liking', and Irene Sunters was a 'terrific Florrie Forde'.

Babity Bowster, in 1959, introduced a major new star, Una McLean, who played an amusing 'downtrodden waitress', and, according to the Herald of 11/12/59 kept on 'appearing and reappearing in an infinite number of disguises and with unflagging high spirits'. Iain Cuthbertson was Buttons in the opening number of the second half, 'Cinderelluva', and Alex McAvoy was a 'producer of lavish spectacle' called 'Ten Past Eight', but, although there was 'plenty of life in it', the show was inclined to 'lack some of the sparkle of last year'. Jack House in the Evening Times duly greeted the arrival of the new star: 'There's a wonderful young woman called Una McLean in this new company. She is one of the funniest comediennes I have seen; she is also good looking and can sing and dance'.

1960 brought Gaggielorum, very much a successful repeat, consolidating the success of Una McLean: indeed the Scottish Daily Mail (8/12/60) thought that 'without Una, it would not have been worth the trouble'. Apparently it ran alarmingly over-time on its first night, and Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) wrote of a call 'to report this afternoon for cuts and alterations' as a result of an initial 'running time of almost 3½ hours'. Material can 'come away in shovelfuls'. Una McLean is 'away out ahead of anyone else'. The Scotsman, however, praised Director Callum Mill for making 'a successful job of integrating 27 items .... Not a spectacular; not an extravaganza, but a non-stop revue of sheer good humour, put over in a clever and excellent manner'. McLean was praised for her 'Petite Pitoot!', a dancer 'too big for one show and too wee for the other', and for the satire on Barrie, 'Peter Panned'. The Herald enjoyed 'a most exhilarating evening'. The opening number, reflecting current



'highbrow trends', was named 'Ashbin Capers'; 'four dustbins adorn the Citizens' stage when the curtain rises', but are 'presently abandoned' with 'relief'.

By the next year - 'Ronald Emerson' and Arthur Blake were once more in charge of book and music respectively - the freshness and wit appear to have faded a little, and Bletherskeits turned out, in fact, to be the last of its particular line. The stars this year were Charlie Sim, an agreeable light comic who had been making a name for himself in lunch time Television, and Phil McCall. The Herald (8/12/61) remarked with some alarm that there was 'something like a story ... missing scientist, a brace of Russian spies, and a couple of reporters in pursuit', but 'the plot is more of a burden than a help'. There were, nevertheless, 'several things to enjoy ... chiefly, perhaps, the clowning of Charlie Sim .... It is all at times rather like charades, but that no doubt is a very good thing for a Christmas party, which we may take this to be'. In his seasonable Programme greetings, one of the younger members of the Company, Tom Conti, said, 'For the first time, I don't quite follow the plot of a production at the Citizens'. The Sunday Post pronounced the show (10/12/61) 'a winner all the way', but most critical interest centred on the potential of Charlie Sim. According to the Evening Times (8/12/61), 'If Mr. Sim has not yet arrived as a star comic in this production, I'd say he is half-way there'. Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail):

It didn't quite come off, but the fault does not lie with Charlie. He did not have enough to do, and not all of the material was of high enough standard ... overall the show does not have enough bite, and there is too much play on the comedy merits of Rangers, Celtic and bingo, but it is still well worth seeing.

Production was by Callum Mill, and sketches included 'Pinto's Scaretaker' and 'The Wotta Clock Gang', a joke at the expense of the TV programme where Sim first became popular.

It was obvious that there must be an exploration of fresh avenues,

and an arrangement was arrived at - with not too much time to spare - with the versatile Cliff Hanley, and Ian Gourlay signed to provide the music. Saturmacnalia, directed by Graham Crowden, turned out to be more or less a 'book musical', and it was destined to have the melancholy distinction of being the occasion of Duncan Macrae's last appearance at the Citizens'. In what was sub-titled 'A Homespun Orgy' '(with music and electric light)', he had the role of Duke McCash, a multi-millionaire, and Phil McCall was Noaker Todd, father of the University student 'hero', Alastair (Raymond Boyd). Hector Grampian, a young county 'gent', was played by Edward Fox. Scenes ranged from Chez Todd in the Famous Townhead to the Trackless Veldt, Low Life in the Cazz Bar, The Fleahouse of the April Rain and The Great Wristle at McCash Castle, and there were a large number of songs, the first of which told us that:

Anything can happen when a  
 Girl meets fella in a  
 Shady nook beneath the  
 Highlander's Umbrella,

and things reached a culmination with the title song:

Saturmacnalia!  
 Orgy time is here.  
 Nobody will jail ya  
 If you feel you want to cheer.

Dance director was Bruce McClure, scenery and costumes by Michael Knight.

The Glasgow Herald (6/12/62) described the show as 'a real old Highland Saturnalia, black bun, paper hats, Coca-Cola'. Progress was 'a little uncertain to begin with', with 'connecting links' which were 'rather like a chain round the ankles', but it got 'faster, and better, and funnier'. With the arrival of Macrae, 'the thing takes on a new burst of energy and spirits .... It is quite a Macrae night'. Another pleasant recollection was 'Miss Schuster's Emily, who carries her frying-pan with her round the world' - (Ida Schuster's song was entitled 'Chips With Everything') - and 'Mr. Hanley's sense of fun' could be 'very pointed indeed ... blazing and sparking through the



fog like a bonfire'. While for Ronald Mavor (Scotsman) it was 'not the riot for which we had hoped', it nevertheless 'banished thoughts of the fog and the last buses home'. He had pertinent thoughts on what makes an audience laugh: 'There are lines that would double up a reader in a train, or paralyse a neighbour in a coffee bar, but which float over an audience .... While he (Hanley) can penetrate far beyond the fringe and be as sharp as the week that was, he is a Glasgow writer, and an audience in a Glasgow theatre shares a frame of reference, which I guess, though I do not know, Mr. Graham Crowden, who produces, does not. But there is much to enjoy ...'. 'E.A.' in the Scottish Daily Mail probably summed up the problem with this show - and its successor: 'What will be chiefly missed, I think, by audiences, is the broad "stairheid" Glasgow humour which has been the badge of the Citizens' Christmas shows'. In the field of Sixties light musical theatre, Glasgow audiences were inclined to fight shy of too much style or wit.

Oh For An Island! in 1963, should have consolidated the Hanley-Gourlay partnership at the Citizens', but for some reason failed to do so, probably again because it lacked the full-bodied style of the usual Gorbals festive fare - and, although the cast was strong, there was no Macrae. The musical was a kind of Scottish counterpart to Julian Slade's 'island' follow-up to Salad Days, Free as Air, its particular setting being 'Duna' (off the Scottish coast). This, according to the Programme note:

is an actual place, we need hardly say, though the Admiralty charts are understandably cagey about its location because it is usually covered at high tide and even in light showers. It also moves about when the Gulf Stream is running too fast ... one dark night in 403 A.D. a drunk Druid claimed he had seen the island sailing north, past Campbeltown. Nobody believed him, of course. And there the matter rests.

Denis Carey (director of both Salad Days and Free as Air), was in charge of production, with designs by Juanita Waterson.

The Herald (5/12/63) regretted that the author had confined things

'to one small area of (imaginary) ground' and worried a little about a writer in this kind of show who 'begins to bother about consistency, and even, Heaven forbid, a message'. 'Considered in bits and pieces', however, things were 'quite ... jolly', and there were some amusing characters: 'the local hotel-keeper, whose 'crusy exterior conceals a heart of stone', a local authoress who can't make her novels dirty enough to sell - (the character had the wonderful name of 'Ngaio McDhu') - a Highland lass given to cries like (in accordance with the current Hitchcockian publicity) 'The Birds is coming!' and a Highland policeman 'still learning the right accent from a wee book'. There were some 'excellent songs', but, in general, 'invention appears to be a little flagging'. Ronald Mavor (Scotsman), making comparison with the 'book', found that 'for some reason the music and the lyrics come more briskly across the footlights', with the 'one show-stopper on the first night, a gay little number of the sub-genus Beatle called "Sweet Talk"'. In all, it was 'a very funny and entertaining evening'.

1964 brought a return to more conventional pantomime, with the thirteen-letter title continued, Dick Macwhitty. John Grieve was a more than capable star in this 'Glesca Panto'; music was once again by the excellent Ian Gourlay, and 'Script contributions' were by 'Cliff Hanley, James Scotland, Tom Wright and many members of the company'. Choreography was by Jean McLellan, settings by Edward Furby and costumes by Wendy North, while all-over direction was in the hands of Iain Cuthbertson and J. Bryden Rodgers. Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail 23/12/64), thought this 'without a doubt the most off-beat, most scintillating show in town', and Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) hailed the arrival of 'a shauchly, simple and unmistakably male anti-hero ... all the way from Maryhill'. Songs included 'Life Begins in Glasgow' and 'The Subway Song', and the 'Hing' had now become a 'multistorey' one, while Martin Heller played 'Captain Fligh' (the Beast of the Forth and Clyde Canal). The formula proved to be successful enough for a 1965 encore, A Beano for Jack, with script credited to Kenneth Little, and sets by Maurice Strike; direction was by the reliable John Groves from the RSAMD School of Drama, but perhaps the new David William régime was not the right ground for these echoes of past glories. John Grieve was, again, excellent, and he had the



assistance of the great Helen Norman, former partner of Jack Radcliffe, but, although there were good things in the mix, the ingredients did not succeed in attracting large enough audiences, and just too much was crammed in, including a contemporary style 'group', the Meridians. There was a tremendous finale to Act One, where the top of the Beanstalk turned out to be the habitation of King Arthur's knights, and Ian Gourlay had composed a brilliant pastiche of the title song from Camelot. The only trouble was that the audience was not yet familiar with the music from Camelot, at least not that part of it. The Stage (6/1/66) perhaps highlighted the worst of the show in its review: 'a mixed-quality script with some good things, some very poor items, and much that is only of internal interest ... John Grieve ... comes out of an indifferent show very commendably'.

For the next two years, farce held the Citizens' stage at Christmas and New Year, successfully and very much more profitably. As already noted, the next attempt to put on a 'musical', Lock Up Your Daughters, was not acceptable to Glasgow audiences, and, in any case, the old Royal Princess's tradition had been broken and was not to be restored. For his first Festive season, Giles Havergal was to present a Brahms-Sherrin adaption of Nicholas Nickleby, thereafter resorting to a form of pantomime which became more and more child-orientated, eventually, in the Eighties, striking a very successful vein of children's play, in which the music is purely incidental, apart from the obligatory 'chorus song'.

In the early Summers of 1960 and 1961, a brave attempt was made to establish regular revues under the title of Sixes An' Sevens (the thirteen letter tradition carried over from Christmas), and they were, in many ways, delightful reminders of London entertainments like Tuppence Coloured, Penny Plain, etc. But, as in the case of the Cliff Hanley musicals, their hint of elegance and sophistication seemed to be against the grain of the then Citizens' Theatre.

The 1960 edition, Peter Duguid's final production, with choreography by Jean McLellan, sets by David Jones and costumes by Elizabeth Friendship, had words and music by many hands, and, in

In addition to members of the regular Company, guests included Denise Hirst (from the original cast of The Boy Friend), Denise Shaune and Rae Landor. The Glasgow Herald (20/5/60) thought it a 'most agreeable way of filling in the gap (until Autumn)' and recalled with pleasure 'a touching elegy for the last of the tramcars ... (and) a pleasing reminiscence of the sort of diversion offered in the Glasgow parks, circa 1929'. There was also a satirical glance at the ill-fated Falcon Theatre, 'Meat at the Vulture' (by Tom Wright); at this time the venture still had some hopes of survival, and Russell Hunter was the head waiter at the Vulture, the boss of St. George's Cross', celebrating:

with unkind satire and mounting effect the conjectural 50th anniversary ... wickedly funny and alone worth a visit to Gorbals Street ... Mr. Hunter, taking the best chance the Citizens' have yet given him, shows what a remarkably good and versatile comic he is ... Peter Duguid, the producer, seems to look a little sourly on this last of his labours at the Citizens'. But he has given us something very cheerful to remember him by.

A legendary Glasgow double act was remembered by Colette O'Neil and Eleanor McCready in the guise of the 'Clouston' Sisters, but Robins Millar missed (Scottish Daily Express) 'a switch to the closemouth', and Robert Hewitt (Evening Citizen) felt that 'far too much of the comedy material is glibly superficial and possessing as much impact as a will o' the wisp'. Nevertheless, Andrew Young (Scottish Daily Mail) voted it 'one of the wittiest, wickedest shows Glasgow has seen', and the Scotsman forecast (not, alas, accurately), that 'it could well last until the autumn'. It was 'particularly strong in dancing and ballet'.

On 25/5/61, Christopher Small (Glasgow Herald) did not prophesy correctly either when he said that the second edition 'already' had 'the look of an institution', having 'a gusto and pleasure which is most infectious'. 'Parody' was the 'main thing', involving a version of the Miss Lonelyhearts magazine column, 'Send Us Your Troubles', with Cleopatra one of those concerned, as well as casting amusing new light on Opera al fresco and the New Drama. 'Once or twice there is



something with a real bite in it', and, on the other hand, some turns were 'better than others'. 'From time to time' there were 'professional lapses', and we got 'something more like a student rag. But that is quite all right in a family affair'.

Writers like Jack Ronder and Tom Wright made contributions, while in the Company the Herald singled out Geraldine Newman as 'a fetching witch'. Phil McCall and Hugh Sullivan were 'knaves in the pack', and Clark Tait had the proud boast that 'There's no many folk can ush like me'. Allen Wright (Scotsman) reported, 'Not that all the items on display were of sustained, distinctive quality. Some of the quips misfired .... That said, the joy was unconfined. With a little judicious polish and pruning, Callum Mill, the producer, has the resources here to make a red-letter evening of superb diversion'. Robins Millar (Scottish Daily Express) paid tribute to the cast: 'They keep a cheerful show swinging along briskly with quite a flow of bright ideas'.

Like so many good things during these years, Sixes An' Sevens failed to gain proper appreciation and, in the Eighties, is probably little remembered.

## A P P E N D I X II

BALANCE SHEET SUMMARIES1957 - 58

	£	s.	d.
Operating Deficit before Grants	6,310	12	4
Grants from:			
Arts Council of Great Britain	3,000	0	0
City of Glasgow	2,500	0	0
From Sir Maurice Bloch Fund	211	2	4
	<hr/>		
	£5,711	2	4
Deficit (after Grants), etc.	599	10	0
Accumulated Deficit	7,069	18	6
Carry Forward	<hr/>		
	7,669	8	6
	<hr/>		



1966 - 67

	£	s.	d.
Operating Deficit before Grants	38,611	0	0
Add Grant set aside for Close Theatre Club	5,000	0	0
	<u>£43,611</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Grants from:			
Arts Council of Great Britain	29,000	0	0
New Drama Grant	650	0	0
City of Glasgow	5,000	0	0
Grant for Publicity	1,700	0	0
From Sir Maurice Bloch Fund	67	0	0
Sir John Richmond Bequest	387	0	0
	<u>£36,804</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Deficit (after Grants), etc.	6,807	0	0
Accumulated Deficit	14,532	0	0
Carry Forward	<u>21,339</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

## A P P E N D I X III

CLOSE THEATRE CLUB PRODUCTIONS

- 1965-66 The Maids and Deathwatch (Jean Genet)
- Whisper Into My Good Ear (William Hanley) and Little Brother, Little Sister (David Campton)
- Waiting for Godot (Samuel Beckett)
- Dr. Faustus (Christopher Marlowe, version by Charles Marowitz)
- The Hollow Crown (arr. John Barton)
- The Business of Good Government (John Arden)
- How He Lied To Her Husband and Overruled (Bernard Shaw)
- The Bear (Anton Chekhov) and Bedtime Story (Sean O'Casey)
- The Investigation (Peter Weiss)
- Tchin-Tchin (François Billeldoux)
- Lunchtime Concert (Olwen Wymark) (Premiere) and The Square (Marguerite Duras).
- 1966-67 Play With A Tiger (Doris Lessing)
- Creditors (August Strindberg) and The Zoo Story (Edward Albee)
- Next Time I'll Sing to You (James Saunders)
- The Old Tune (Robert Pinget), The Collection and The Lover (Harold Pinter)
- Happy Days (Samuel Beckett)
- There Was a Man (Tom Wright)
- Pattern of the City (Keith Darvill, Andy Park)
- Letters From An Eastern Front (adapted James Roose-Evans)
- Public Enemy (devised Keith Darvill)
- Johnny's Gone for a Soldier (devised Keith Darvill)



Rattle of a Simple Man (Charles Dyer)

Triple Image (Olwen Wymark)

The School for Wives (Molière-Malleson)

O'Flaherty V.C. (Bernard Shaw) and Miss Julie  
(August Strindberg)

Clydeside (Keith Darvill)

Green Julia (Paul Ableman).

1967-68 A Choice of Wars (Irwin Shaw)

I See Myself As This Young Girl (Joan Ure) and The Ghost  
(Christopher Guinee)

Naked (Luigi Pirandello)

The Strange Case of Martin Richter (Stanley Eveling)

Rosmersholm (Henrik Ibsen, version by Michael Meyer)

Luv (Murray Schisgal)

Beware of the Dog (Anton Chekhov)

The Caretaker (Harold Pinter)

People Are Living There (Athol Fugard)

The Promise (Aleksei Arbuzov)

Exit the King (Eugene Ionesco)

The American Dream (Edward Albee), The Case of the Crushed  
Petunias and Talk to me Like the Rain and Let me Listen  
(Tennessee Williams).

1968-69 The Typists and The Tiger (Murray Schisgal)

Ghosts (Henrik Ibsen; version by Michael Meyer)

The Mighty Reservoy (Peter Terson)

The King (Stewart Conn) and Hello, Goodbye, Sebastian  
(John Grillo)

Mrs. Mouse, Are You Within? (Frank Marcus)

Relatively Speaking (Alan Ayckbourn)

The Vanishing Snowman (Christine Redington - Theatre for Youth)

The Dance of Death (August Strindberg, trans. Brian Rothwell and Tony Vivis)

The Daughter-in-Law (D.H. Lawrence)

Miscellany

Dracula (Traverse Theatre)

Who'll Do It This Time? (Jack Ronder)

This Story of Yours (John Hopkins)

The Hotel in Amsterdam (John Osborne)

The Bench, Born Slave (Lawrence Holofcener), Red Cross (Sam Shepard) and The Indian Wants the Bronx (Israel Horovitz).



## A P P E N D I X IV

CITIZENS' THEATRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1964-65 Michael Goldberg, M.A. (Chairman)  
 The Right Honourable the Lord Provost  
 The City Treasurer  
 George Singleton (Vice-Chairman)  
 T.J. Honeyman, J.P., LL.D.  
 R.B. Wharrie, M.C.  
 Colin Chandler  
 The Chairman of the Citizens' Theatre Society  
 Bailie John Mains, O.B.E.  
 R. Gordon Laing, C.A.  
 Tom Taylor  
 Councillor Richard Buchanan  
 Charles A. Oakley, B.Sc., Ed.B.  
 Councillor Wm. L. Taylor  
 H. Jefferson Barnes

(This year was a typical example of the Board as constituted during the period under review. Doctor Honeyman had been Chairman in 1957, and Michael Goldberg succeeded him as the fourth Citizens' Theatre Chairman in 1958.)

In 1968-69 it was as follows:

George Singleton, C.B.E., J.P. (Chairman)  
 Lord (Tom) Taylor (Vice-Chairman)  
 The Right Honourable the Lord Provost  
 The City Treasurer  
 Michael Goldberg, M.A.  
 Colin Chandler  
 Richard Buchanan, M.P., J.P.  
 The Chairman of the Citizens' Theatre Society  
 C.A. Oakley, J.P.  
 Councillor Wm. L. Taylor  
 H. Jefferson Barnes

(George Singleton had succeeded Michael Goldberg as Chairman early in 1966.)

## APPENDIX V

GATEWAY THEATRE, EDINBURGH, PRODUCTIONS, 1957-65

- 1957-58 The Flouers O' Edinburgh (Robert McLellan)  
Dr. Angelus (James Bridie)  
Drama at Inish (Lennox Robinson)  
The Non-Resident (Moray McLaren)  
The Penny Wedding (Robert Kemp)  
Arise, Sir Hector (R.J.B. Sellar)  
When We Are Married (J.B. Priestley)  
The Wild Duck (Henrik Ibsen)  
The Daft Days (Robert Kemp from Neil Munro)  
All In Good Faith (Roddy McMillan)  
All For Mary (Harold Brooke and Kay Bannerman)  
Black Chiffon (Lesley Storm)  
The Schoolmistress (Arthur Wing Pinero)  
 Director of Productions - Lennox Milne
- 1958-59 Weir of Hermiston (R.J.B. Sellar from R.L. Stevenson)  
Keep in a Cool Place (William Templeton)  
Look Back in Anger (John Osborne)  
The World's Wonder (Alexander Reid)  
The Penny Wedding (Robert Kemp)  
Boyd's Shop (St. John Ervine)  
A Doll's House (Henrik Ibsen)  
Miracle at Midnight (Tom Fleming)  
The Forrigan Reel (James Bridie)



Lace on her Petticoat (Aimée Stuart)

Laburnum Grove (J.B. Priestley)

Follow Me (Tyrone Guthrie)

The Heart is Highland (Robert Kemp)

Muckle Ado (Moray McLaren)

The Open (A.B. Paterson)

Keep in a Cool Place (William Templeton)

Director of Productions - Lennox Milne

1959-60 The Honours of Drumlie (James Scotland)

French Without Tears (Terence Rattigan)

The Keys of Paradise (Ronald Mavor)

Arsenic and Old Lace (Joseph Kesselring)

The Master of Ballantrae (R.J.B. Sellar from R.L. Stevenson)

The Ghost Train (Arnold Ridley)

The Late Christopher Bean (Emlyn Williams from René Fauchois)

Miracle at Midnight (Tom Fleming)

Rob Roy (Robert Kemp from Sir Walter Scott)

Director of Productions - Lennox Milne

1960-61 Mary Stuart in Scotland (B. Björnson, trans. Elizabeth Sprigge)

The Taming of the Shrew (William Shakespeare)

Master John Knox (Robert Kemp)

The Lesson and The New Tenant (Eugene Ionesco, trans. Donald Watson)

The Rainmaker (N. Richard Nash)

Frost at Midnight (André Obey, trans. Warren Tute)

Listen to the Wind (Angela Ainley Jeans and Vivian Ellis)

My Three Angels (Sam and Bella Spewack, from Albert Husson)

The Skin of our Teeth (Thornton Wilder)

The Comic (Maurice Fleming)

The Country Boy (John Murphy)

Director of Productions - David Turnbull

1961-62 Let Wives Tak Tent (Robert Kemp from Molière)

Papa Is All (Patterson Greene)

The Switchback (James Bridie)

All My Sons (Arthur Miller)

It Looks Like a Change (Donald MacLaren)

The Man from Thermpylae (Ada F. Kay)

Foursome Reel (Andrew Malcolm)

That Old Serpent (John Prudhoe, adapted from several cycles of mediaeval Miracle Plays)

Don't Tell Father (Harold Brooke and Kay Bannerman)

Hot Summer Night (Ted Willis)

The Sleepless One (Vincent Brome)

Pygmalion (Bernard Shaw)

Producers - Tom Fleming, James Gibson, John Hussey,  
Maurice Jones, William Moore, Gerard Slevin.

1962-63 Young Auchinleck (Robert McLellan)

The Good Soldier Schweik (Jaroslav Hasek, adapted Ewan MacColl)

Juno and the Paycock (Sean O'Casey)

The Rivals (Richard Brinsley Sheridan)

The Birthday Party (Harold Pinter)

The Perfect Gent (Robert Kemp)

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare)

Noah (André Obey, trans. Arthur Wilmurt)



The Little Minister (J.M. Barrie)

An Italian Straw Hat (Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel,  
trans. Lynn and Theodore Hoffman)

Bus Stop (William Inge)

Othello (William Shakespeare)

The Glass Menagerie (Tennessee Williams)

Waiting for Godot (Samuel Beckett)

Director of Productions - Kenneth Parrott

1963-64 All In Good Faith (Roddy McMillan)

The Hypochondriack (Victor Carin from Molière)

Ring Round the Moon (Jean Anouilh, adapted Christopher Fry)

I'm Talking About Jerusalem (Arnold Wesker)

Photo Finish (Peter Ustinov)

Treasure Hunt (M.J. Farrell and John Perry)

The Merry Wives of Windsor (William Shakespeare)

Tobias and the Angel (James Bridie)

Charley's Aunt (Brandon Thomas)

Schweik in the Second World War (Bertolt Brecht, trans.  
William Rowlinson)

Someone Waiting (Emlyn Williams)

Ever Since Paradise (J.B. Priestley)

Arms and the Man (Bernard Shaw)

Director of Productions - Victor Carin

1964-65 The Golden Legend of Shults (James Bridie)

The Heart is Highland (Robert Kemp)

She Stoops to Conquer (Oliver Goldsmith)

The Fire Raisers (Max Frisch, trans. Michael Bullock)

Marching Song (John Whiting)

Present Laughter (Noel Coward)

A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)

The Plough and the Stars (Sean O'Casey)

The Scythe and the Sunset (Denis Johnston)

Becket (Jean Anouilh, trans. Lucienne Hill)

The Happiest Days of Your Life (John Dighton)

Our Town (Thornton Wilder)

Heartbreak House (Bernard Shaw)

The Circle (Somerset Maugham)

Journey's End (R.C. Sherriff)

Director of Productions - Victor Carin

The Last Production - August/September, 1965

The Man from Thermopylae (Ada F. Kay)

Director - Richard Mathews



## A P P E N D I X VI

NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTIONS, 1957-69

- 1957-58 Pygmalion (Bernard Shaw)
- Look Back in Anger (John Osborne)
- An Italian Straw Hat (Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel)
- Under Milk Wood (Dylan Thomas)
- Separate Tables (Terence Rattigan)
- Summer and Smoke (Tennessee Williams)
- Witness for the Prosecution (Agatha Christie)
- Red Riding Hood (David Waller, original music and lyrics by L. James)
- Henry V (William Shakespeare)
- The Perfect Woman (Wallace Geoffrey and Basil Mitchell)
- Three Sisters (Anton Chekhov)
- Our Town (Thornton Wilder)
- Summer of the Seventeenth Doll (Ray Lawler)
- She Stoops to Conquer (Oliver Goldsmith)
- The Moon is Blue (F. Hugh Herbert)
- The Rainmaker (N. Richard Nash)
- Doctor in the House (Ted Willis based on novel by Richard Gordon)
- Lucky Day (Serge de Boissac)
- On The Spot (Edgar Wallace)
- The Banbury Nose (Peter Ustinov)
- Spider's Web (Agatha Christie)
- Director of Productions - Val May

1958-59 Boys, It's All Hell! (Willis Hall)

Fanny's First Play (Bernard Shaw)

A Memory of Two Mondays (Arthur Miller)

A Resounding Tinkle (N.F. Simpson)

Peer Gynt (Henrik Ibsen)

French Without Tears (Terence Rattigan)

The Potting Shed (Graham Greene)

The Solid Gold Cadillac (Howard Teichmann and George S. Kaufman)

Towards Zero (Agatha Christie)

The Black Arrow (R.L. Stevenson, adapted by J. Blatchley and W. Hall)

Oedipus Rex (Sophocles)

Cecile or The School for Fathers (Jean Anouilh)

Mr. Pickwick (S. Young, drawn from "Pickwick Papers" by Charles Dickens)

While the Sun Shines (Terence Rattigan)

Hamlet (William Shakespeare)

Reluctant Heroes (Colin Morris)

Don Juan (Anton Chekhov, English version by Basil Ashmore)

My Three Angels (Sam and Bella Spewack from the comedy by Albert Husson)

The Man with the Golden Arm (Jack Kirkland from the novel by Nelson Algren)

The Fourposter (Jan de Hartog)

The Diary of Anne Frank (Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett)

The Clandestine Marriage (George Colman and David Garrick)

Flowering Cherry (Robert Bolt)

The Rape of the Belt (Benn W. Levy)

The Hollow (Agatha Christie)

Blithe Spirit (Noel Coward)

Director of Productions - Val May



- 1959-60 Two for the See-Saw (William Gibson)  
Take the Fool Away (J.B. Priestley)  
A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)  
Busman's Honeymoon (Dorothy L. Sayers and M. St. Clare Byrne)  
The Beggar's Opera (John Gay)  
The Rose Tattoo (Tennessee Williams)  
A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens, adapted by John Maxwell)  
Charley's Aunt (Brandon Thomas)  
Edward, My Son (Robert Morley and Noel Langley)  
Much Ado About Nothing (William Shakespeare)  
Concubine Imperial (Maurice Collis)  
An Ideal Husband (Oscar Wilde)  
Any Other Business (George Ross and Campbell Singer)  
The Quare Fellow (Brendan Behan)  
The Entertainer (John Osborne)  
Strip the Willow (Beverley Cross)  
The Doctor's Dilemma (Bernard Shaw)  
Present Laughter (Noel Coward)  
Beautiful Dreamer (Jack Pulman)  
You, Me and the Gatepost - An Intimate Revue (various authors)  
Five Finger Exercise (Peter Shaffer)  
 Director of Productions - Val May
- 1960-61 Rhinoceros (Eugene Ionesco)  
A Cry of Players (William Gibson)  
The Merchant of Venice (William Shakespeare)  
Roots (Arnold Wesker)  
The Survivors (Irwin Shaw and Peter Viertel)

One Way Pendulum (N.F. Simpson)

Oliver Twist (adapted by Robert Gotterough)

The Happiest Days of Your Life (John Dighton)

The School for Scandal (R.B. Sheridan)

A Passage to India (adapted by Santha Rama Rau from E.M. Forster)

Celebration (Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse)

Richard III (William Shakespeare)

The Unexpected Guest (Agatha Christie)

The Winslow Boy (Terence Rattigan)

The Ballad of Dr. Crippen (Beverley Cross)

The Tiger and the Horse (Robert Bolt)

Triple Bill: Lunch Hour (John Mortimer)

The Form (N.F. Simpson)

A Slight Ache (Harold Pinter)

A Taste of Honey (Shelagh Delaney)

Lady Windermere's Fan (Oscar Wilde)

The Aspern Papers (Henry James, adapted by Michael Redgrave)

Second Post - Revue (various authors)

Director of Productions - Val May

1961-62 Hotel Paradiso (Feydeau and Desvallières)

A Streetcar Named Desire (Tennessee Williams)

Macbeth (William Shakespeare)

Alas, Poor Fred (James Saunders)

A Man for All Seasons (Robert Bolt)

The Caretaker (Harold Pinter)

Great Expectations (adapted by Gerald Frow)

The Hostage (Brendan Behan)



The Taming of the Shrew (William Shakespeare)

The Recruiting Officer (George Farquhar)

Maria Marten (George Hall)

The Birthday Party (Harold Pinter)

An Enemy of the People (Ibsen)

The Enchanted (Jean Giraudoux)

Look Back in Anger (John Osborne)

Julius Caesar (William Shakespeare)

The Rehearsal (Jean Anouilh)

The Love of Four Colonels (Peter Ustinov)

Yer What? (various authors)

Director of Productions - Frank Dunlop

1962-63 The Empty Chair (Peter Ustinov)

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare)

The Three Musketeers (Dumas)

Double Bill: A Subject of Scandal and Concern (John Osborne)

The Sponge Room (Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall)

Waiting for Godot (Samuel Beckett)

The Keep (Gwyn Thomas)

Macbeth (William Shakespeare)

Salad Days (Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds)

Photo Finish (Peter Ustinov)

The Shoemaker's Holiday (Thomas Dekker)

Epitaph for George Dillon (John Osborne and Anthony Creighton)

Cymbeline (Shakespeare and Shaw)

Hay Fever (Noel Coward)

The Zodiac in the Establishment (Bridget Boland)

Billy Liar (Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall)

A Month in the Country (Turgenev, adapted by Emyln Williams)

Arms and the Man (Bernard Shaw)

Director of Productions - Frank Dunlop

Associate Director - John Neville

1963-64 Coriolanus (William Shakespeare)

The Importance of Being Earnest (Oscar Wilde)

The Life in my Hands (Peter Ustinov)

Semi-Detached (David Turner)

The Bashful Genius (Harold Cullen)

The Mayor of Zalamea (Calderon, trans. David Brett)

The Good Old Days (various)

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Alan Sillitoe)

Arms And The Man (Bernard Shaw)

Memento Mori (Muriel Spark)

Sir Thomas More (Shakespeare and others)

Joint Artistic Directors - Frank Dunlop and John Neville

1964-65 The Merchant of Venice (William Shakespeare)

Alfie (Bill Naughton)

Listen to the Knocking Bird (John Wells and Claud Cockburn)

The Creeper (Pauline Macaulay)

The Birdwatcher (Georges Feydeau)

Oedipus The King (Sophocles)

That Soundrel Scapin (Molière)

Treasure Island (R.L. Stevenson)

Richard II (William Shakespeare)

Collapse of Stout Party (Trevor Peacock)



The Cherry Orchard (Anton Chekhov)

Volpone (Ben Jonson)

The Elephant's Foot (William Trevor)

The Cavern (Jean Anouilh, trans. Lucienne Hill)

When We Are Married (J.B. Priestley)

Changing Gear (various)

Joint Artistic Directors - Frank Dunlop and John Neville

1965-66 Measure for Measure (William Shakespeare)

Private Lives (Noel Coward)

Richard II (William Shakespeare)

Owd Yer Tight (Emrys Bryson)

Schweik in the Second World War (Bertolt Brecht)

A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens)

The Country Wife (William Wycherley)

As You Like It (William Shakespeare)

A Man for all Seasons (Robert Bolt)

The Caretaker (Harold Pinter)

The Astrakhan Coat (Pauline Macaulay)

Saint Joan (Bernard Shaw)

Measure For Measure (William Shakespeare)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Edward Albee)

The Spies are Singing (Giles Cooper)

The Proposal (Anton Chekhov)

Doctor Faustus (Christopher Marlowe)

Moll Flanders (Daniel Defoe)

Artistic Director - John Neville

- 1966-67 Julius Caesar (William Shakespeare)  
Hedda Gabler (Henrik Ibsen)  
Antony and Cleopatra (William Shakespeare)  
Fill the Stage with Happy Hours (Charles Wood)  
She Stoops to Conquer (Oliver Goldsmith)  
Jack and the Beanstalk (John Moffatt)  
Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller)  
Beware of the Dog (Gabriel Arout/Anton Chekhov)  
Stop it, Whoever you are (Henry Livings)  
The Silver Tassie (Sean O'Casey)  
The Miser (Molière)  
Bread and Butter (C.P. Taylor)  
A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)  
 Artistic Director - John Neville
- 1967-68 Othello (William Shakespeare)  
Long Day's Journey Into Night (Eugene O'Neill)  
The Workhouse Donkey (John Arden)  
Staircase (Charles Dyer)  
Dandy Dick (Arthur Pinero)  
A Midsummer Night's Dream (William Shakespeare)  
Tinker's Curse (William Corlett)  
All's Well That Ends Well (William Shakespeare)  
Skyvers (Barry Reckord)  
Boots with Strawberry Jam (John Dankworth and Benny Green)  
The Little Mrs. Foster Show (Henry Livings)  
Mother Courage (Bertolt Brecht)  
Vacant Possession (Maisie Mosco)



Candida (Bernard Shaw)

Confession at Night (Aleksei Arbuzov)

Artistic Director - John Neville

1968-69 King John (William Shakespeare)

School for Scandal (R.B. Sheridan)

The Ruling Class (Peter Barnes)

The Seagull (Anton Chekhov)

Whoops a Daisy (Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall)

The Mountain King (Ferdinand Ramund)

Macbeth (William Shakespeare)

The Entertainer (John Osborne)

The Playboy of the Western World (J.M. Synge)

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (Bertolt Brecht)

Love in a Bottle (George Farquhar)

The Hostage (Brendan Behan)

Widowers' Houses (Bernard Shaw)

Owd Yer Tight (Emrys Bryson)

Artistic Director - Stuart Burge

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