

EMP/6/2/11

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CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS



9th - 21st
JUNE
1952



IN THE
CHESTER
CATHEDRAL
REFECTORY





THE CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS

ADAPTED AND PREPARED FOR MODERN PRODUCTION BY *Betty and Joseph McCulloch*

Will be presented in the Cathedral Refectory by

THE CHESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL DRAMA COMMITTEE

*Settings by
Michael Trangmar*

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
CHRISTOPHER EDE

*Costumes by
Sheila Jackson*

IN view of the outstanding success of the 1951 Festival of Britain Revival, the Chester City Council have arranged with the County Drama Committee of the Cheshire Rural Community Council to repeat the Cycle of Chester Miracle Plays this year.

The new production will again be staged in the lovely thirteenth-century Cathedral Refectory, and will be in the hands of Christopher Ede who so skilfully fashioned and directed last year's revival which was the first performance of the complete Cycle for over three and a half centuries.

In the adaptation of the plays for the Festival production last year, care was taken to preserve as far as possible the verse-forms and the style of the original text in all their simplicity and charm, while at the same time making the language fully intelligible to modern audiences. The twenty-four plays of the Mediaeval Cycle have been skilfully cut and re-fashioned to produce three plays of approximately two hours each. More of the original material has been added to "In the Beginning" and "The Nativity" for this year's production. Although each play is complete in itself, the full beauty and power of the work will be wholly understood only by seeing the complete Cycle of three.

The First Play of the adapted version, "In the Beginning," reveals a naive mixture of humour and pathos. It starts with the creation of Adam, and goes on to depict his disobedience and expulsion from the Garden of Eden and the subsequent troubles that beset man through his folly and sin;—the story of Noah and his children and of the universal flood, and finally, Abraham's great act of faith in obedience to God's will.

The story of Our Lord's birth, from the Annunciation to the visit of the Shepherds and the Kings, and the flight into Egypt before the wrath of Herod, is told with great beauty and tenderness in the Second Play, "The Nativity."

The Third Play, "The Passion," is a deeply moving account of the events of the last three days of Our Lord's life on earth—the Last Supper and the arrest in the garden, the trial before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Some of the most exquisite poetry of the whole Cycle is found in this last play—the lines, for instance, spoken by Salome at the foot of the Cross :

*Come, Lord, down and break thy bands !
Loose and heal thy lovely hands,
Or tell me, Jesus, why these wounds
Thou sufferest for man.*

Over 7,500 people saw the plays last year, including persons from Switzerland, North and South America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Mexico, Egypt, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, South Africa, Italy, Jamaica, and Malaya. It is expected that many of those who saw the plays, and hundreds of others who were unable to gain admission last year, owing to the restricted accommodation in the Refectory, will take the opportunity of seeing this improved production. Bookings should therefore be made early ; there will be a week of advance postal booking during the 5th to the 10th May, and the Box Office will be open to the public and for later postal bookings on May 12th.

PRESS COMMENTS on the 1951 Festival Revival :—

"The production by Christopher Ede was extremely impressive. He let the audience float on the full tide of simple and poetic narrative which carried the play from the Garden of Eden to the sacrifice of Isaac."—NEWS CHRONICLE, 19th June, 1951.

"I saw 'In the Beginning,' which goes from Eden to the Ark and to Abraham and Isaac: shrewd and simple, warm with life, charged with a slapping folk-humour, and pathos that is arrow-true. The Cycle is, in another sense, miraculous; it binds the centuries."—J. C. Trewin, SUNDAY OBSERVER, 24th June, 1951.

"The players from Cheshire Rural Community Council's Drama Committee have that simple yet robust style of approach which must have characterised the original acting by tradesmen of the City's craft guilds.

"Combined with thoughtfully-contrived music and decor, and the contemporary surroundings of beautiful grey stone, this Festival revival of one of Chester's past glories is a most moving experience."—DAILY DISPATCH, 19th June, 1951.

"The highly stylised Ark, the sending forth of the black wooden raven and the white wooden dove, the handling of the doomed crowd who jeer at Father Noah, the gay and characterful costumes by Sheila Jackson, all build up a vigorous impression of mediaeval ideas adapted for a later telling."—MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 19th June, 1951.



DETAILS OF PERFORMANCES

Evenings at - 7-30 p.m.

	1ST WEEK	2ND WEEK			
Monday	9th	16th	June	..	In the Beginning
Tuesday	10th	17th	..	..	The Nativity
Wednesday	11th	18th	..	..	The Passion
Thursday	12th	19th	..	..	In the Beginning
Friday	13th	20th	..	..	The Nativity
Saturday	14th	21st	..	..	The Passion

Matinees at 2-30 p.m.

	1ST WEEK	2ND WEEK			
Tuesday	10th	17th	June	..	In the Beginning
Wednesday	11th	18th	..	..	The Nativity.
Saturday	14th	21st	..	..	The Passion.

PRICES OF ADMISSION

Individual Performances 7/6, 5/-, 3/6 and 2/6.

A reduction of 2/6 will be allowed on the 7/6 and 5/- seats only, on a complete Cycle booking of the three plays, which may be booked in any order. Special reductions will be quoted on request to Schools for block bookings at Matinee performances, and a 5 per cent reduction will be allowed on other block bookings of not less than 30 seats. No concessions will be allowed in respect of the 2/6 seats.

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

There will be a week of Advance Postal Booking during the period 5th to 10th May.

THE BOX OFFICE will be at the Cash Office of the City Treasurer's Department, Market Square, Chester, and will open to the public at 10 A.M. ON MONDAY, 12TH MAY. It will then remain open for applications, both personal and postal, between 10 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday inclusive.

Orders by post should be accompanied by the exact remittance and a stamped and addressed envelope. Cheques and Orders should be crossed " & Co." and made payable to the Chester Corporation.

There should be a Ticket Order Form with this folder for your use.

Cover designed by H. Baxter—Photo. Chidley, Chester.