11-15-1962

King Lear, 1962

Montana State University (Missoula, Mont.). Montana Masquers (Theater group)


KING
LEAR

FIFTY-EIGHTH SEASON
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
and
MONTANA MASQUERS
present

King Lear

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
NOVEMBER 15, 16, 17, 1962
UNIVERSITY THEATER
DOUGLAS BANKSON, Director
RICHARD H. JAMES, Jr., Designer and Technical Director
Costumes Designed by SARAH JAMES

CAST

LEAR, King of Britain ..... Jay Hopkins
KING OF FRANCE ..... Larry Empereur
DUKE OF BURGUNDY ..... Clarence Moles
DUKE OF CORNWALL ..... Noel Young
DUKE OF ALBANY ..... Dennis Hostetler
EARL OF KENT ..... Ronald Engle
EARL OF GLOUCESTER ..... James Baker
EDGAR, son of Gloucester ..... Wayne Finney
EDMUND, bastard son of Gloucester ..... James Morrow
CURAN, a courtier ..... William Lensing
OSWALD, steward to Goneril ..... Larry James
OLD MAN, tenant of Gloucester ..... Michael Fallon
DOCTOR ..... Victor Borg
FOOL, to Lear ..... Bruce Cusker
A CAPTAIN, under Edmund ..... Larry Empereur
GENTLEMAN, attendant on Cordelia ..... William Powell
HERALD ..... Robert Foreman
CORDELIA, daughter to Lear ..... Helen McKeague
GONERIL, daughter to Lear ..... Marith Willis
REGAN, daughter to Lear ..... Georgia Tree

KNIGHTS, LADIES, PAGES AND SERVANTS

KNIGHTS:
Attendant on Lear and Cordelia ..... Clarence Moles, Victor Borg, Bruce Blahnik
Attendant on Cornwall ..... William Lensing, Michael Fallon, Thomas Williams, Greg Osborn
Attendant on Albany ..... Robert Foreman, Larry Empereur, Bill Pedersen

PAGES:
Attendant on Cordelia ..... Margo Maxson, Susan Sather
Attendant on Goneril ..... Kathy Kibler
Attendant on Regan ..... Nina Poulis

LADIES-IN-WAITING:
Attendant on Cordelia ..... Ione Hutchings, Carol McCaig
Attendant on Goneril ..... Carol Larimer, Corlis Nickerson
Attendant on Regan ..... Joan Campbell, Sharon Stewart, Sharon Wetterling
FIRST MESSENGER, attendant on Cornwall ..... Patsy Maxson
SECOND MESSENGER, attendant on Cordelia ..... Eilene Corr
TRUMPETERS ..... Margo Maxson, Susan Sather, Eilene Corr

Scene: Britain

There will be a ten-minute Intermission following Act Three

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant to Mr. Bankson.....Susan Sather
Assistants to Mr. James.....Larry Boag, George Baldwin
University Theater Technician.....William Lensing
Stage Manager.....Richard Willis
Assistant Stage Managers.....William Pederson, Margo Maxson
Sound.....Bruce Marsh, Kent Garlinghouse
Lighting.....Larry Boag, Raymond Dilley, William Lensing, Delbert Unruh
Properties.....Eilene Corr, Russell Eliasson, Scott Black, Greg Osborn, Mike Skones, Rita German, Jane Wallace, Larry James
Make-up.....Larry James, Douglas Griffith, Kaye Johnson, Nina Poulis, Mike Skones, Claudette Johnson
Scenery.....Edward Prodor, Tom Williams, Wayne Finney, Carol Larimer, Gayle Schneider, Bruce Blahnik, J. Pat Crowley, Delbert Unruh, Scott Black, Dennis Hostetler, Mike Skones, Larry Boag, William Lensing
Costumes.....Kathy Kibler, Helen McKeague, Margo Maxson, Corlis Nickerson, Eilene Corr, Wayne Finney, Ione Hutchings
Box Office.....Roger DeBourg
House Manager.....Bill Anderson
Publicity.....Roger DeBourg, Gene Buck
Cover Design.....Gene Buck
Theater Secretaries.....Lois McGinley, Mae Comer
Photography.....Cyrile Van Duser

Special Consultant in Voice and Diction.....Daniel Witt

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Lear, aged King of Britain, divides his kingdom between his two daughters: Goneril, wife of Albany and Regan, wife of Cornwall. Enraged by the failure of his third and favorite daughter Cordelia to flatter him, the stubborn and arrogant Lear gives Cordelia's inheritance to her sisters and banishes her. For taking her part, Lear also exiles the Earl of Kent.

The power, given into the hands of the ruthless sisters, rapidly corrupts them. Lear's rash folly leads to anarchy. He is stripped of his own knights and driven through rage and anguish to madness as he wanders the storm-lashed heath with only his bitterly jesting Fool and the loyal, disguised Kent to sustain him.

In a closely parallel subplot, the Earl of Gloucester is duped by his bastard son Edmund who links his fortunes with Goneril and Regan. Gloucester, punished as a traitor, is sustained by his loyal son Edgar disguised as a mad beggar. Chaos comes to Lear, to Britain and, it seems, to the Universe.

As the Queen of France, Cordelia returns to aid her father, but she is too late. Order is restored, but not before Lear and Gloucester have passed through the extremes of suffering which will bring some measure of wisdom.

COMING:

THREE GREAT WOMEN OF THE DRAMA, Workshop Series of cuttings from **Phaedra, Camille** and **Medea,** December 13, 14, 15, 1962, Masquer Theater.

Thornton Wilder's ***Our Town,** February 7, 8, 9, 1963, University Theater.

*For the production of OUR TOWN, the Montana Masquers are interested in contributions of old black umbrellas in or out of repair. If you are able to help us, we would appreciate a call to 543-7241, Extensions 309 or 310.

RIPENESS IS ALL

Of all the plays of Shakespeare's maturity none is so rich in the tragic sense of life as **King Lear.** First performed toward the end of 1606, this monumental play reveals Shakespeare at the height of his powers as man of the theater and, to borrow Emerson's phrase, as "man thinking." But in **King Lear** Shakespeare is also man feeling—feeling compassionately both the horror of man's struggle with the corruption that typifies the human situation, and the glory implicit in man's refusal to knuckle under to the countless affronts that daily outrage his innate sense of decency.

On one level the play is a study in depth of the nature of evil; on another, of the nature of goodness. But more than this, the play dramatizes movingly and convincingly how those who commit evil can, if they want to, redeem themselves. Not that redemption is easy. Lear and Gloucester are the sort of men who learn what goodness is only through suffering intensely the full consequences of their own mistaken, if unwitting choices. Slowly but inevitably, for he resists self-condemnation as long as he can, Lear faces up to his sins as father, feudal master, king and man. Only when he begins to realize that his own misery is emblematic of that of mankind at large does his inner vision clear, but it becomes total only when he sees (in the second mad scene) evil as it really is and himself as he really was. He is then ready for reunion with Cordelia, ready to confess what he has painfully discovered about himself: that like all men he is "mainly ignorant" and that like many a father he has not been worthy of his children's love. Gloucester's route to insight is often curiously parallel to Lear's, but it is more limited and culminates, as it must for men like him, in a symbolic leap to faith.

This is not to say that Shakespeare argues that goodness ever triumphs over evil for very long. Lear and Cordelia die at the very moment when the forces of good appear to be victorious. To all the questions that the play asks (why does evil exist at all in a world presumably the work of a just Creator; why does that Creator permit evil to persist, age after age; why do the good more often than not live unrewarded, while the evil prosper?) Shakespeare gives no final answers, only hints and guesses. All he seems certain about is that people thoroughly committed to evil, like Goneril and Regan and Edmund, eventually destroy themselves. That a moral universe exists Shakespeare appears to have no doubt, but like the physical universe of the modern scientist, the moral universe remains clouded in mystery.

Thus, the crucial question for Lear and Gloucester—indeed for all of us— boils down to this: how should man act in a world from which evil can probably never be eradicated entirely? Shakespeare's answer, cryptic yet far-ranging in its implication, is spoken to Gloucester by Edgar in Act V:

> Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> Ripeness is all.

A pessimistic answer? Yes, from a short-range point of view. But from a long-range point of view, this answer is as affirmative as any tragic answer can be. Orthodox to the core, it sums up all that Lear has won through to, all that Edgar has learned through his own suffering, all that Gloucester is still struggling to learn. In essence, ripeness epitomizes all that Cordelia has been from the beginning. One might say, then, that Cordelia symbolizes, in word and action, the heart of the play's ethical meaning.

WALTER N. KING
Department of English