

4 to 6 and 13 to 16 November 1968

MEADOW PLAYERS LIMITED

in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain

present

AN OXFORD PLAYHOUSE
COMPANY PRODUCTION

ARMS AND THE MAN

by

BERNARD SHAW

Directed by MICHAEL HEALEY

Designed by PETER DOCHERTY

ARMS AND THE MAN

Characters in order of appearance :

Raina Petkoff GEORGINA WARD

Catherine Petkoff MAGGIE JONES

Louka STEPHANIE BEACHAM

Captain Bluntschli RICHARD KANE

Russian Officer NIGEL ANTHONY

Nicola STANLEY BEARD

Major Paul Petkoff DONALD PELMEAR

Major Sergius Saranoff BARRY SAVAGE

The play is set in Major Petkoff's house in Bulgaria, in a small town near the the Dragoman Pass.

ACT ONE November 1885. Raina Petkoff's bedroom.
Night.

ACT TWO 6th March, 1886. Major Petkoff's garden.
Morning.

ACT THREE 6th March, 1886. Major Petkoff's library.
Afternoon.

There will be two fifteen minute intervals when the fully-licensed Theatre Bar will be open at evening performances. Coffee, soft drinks and chocolates available during the intervals for the matinee and evening performances.

ARMS AND THE MAN

"Arms and the Man" was written in 1894 and first presented at the Avenue Theatre, London on 21st April 1894, the performance being preceded by W. B. Yeats' one-act play "The Land of Heart's Desire". "Arms and The Man"—originally called "Alps and Balkans"—was—in this first production—directed by Shaw himself who also designed some of the costumes. A sketch by Bernard Gould, who was a member of the original company, shows Shaw at work on rehearsals. According to the programme note, Shaw was assisted by J. Schonberg—special war-artist to the "London Illustrated News"—and by Aubrey Beardsley, who designed the programme cover and poster.

This play, Shaw's first venture into the West End, was subsequently performed in America in September 1894 and has since proved one of his most popular plays. In 1909 it was transformed into an operetta by Oscar Strauss called "The Chocolate Soldier" which opened first in Berlin, moving to the Lyric Theatre, London in the following year. Shaw did not approve of the operetta and refused to accept any of the royalties. He similarly 'disowned' the film version of his play when it first appeared at the Regal Cinema, Marble Arch in September 1932.

"Arms and the Man" is Shaw's fourth play and belongs to that group of five which he called Pleasant Plays and which includes his masterpiece "Candida." Unlike the earlier 'blue-book' or 'Unpleasant Plays' which deal with an immediate social problem, the 'Pleasant Plays' deal less with the crimes of society and more with its romantic follies and with the struggles of individuals against those follies. 'To me', wrote Shaw in his preface to "Arms and The Man", 'the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imagina-

tions by our half satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history.' In "Arms and the Man," he explodes the conventions of military romance and replaces them with a much more commonsensical view of war. Drawing upon military melodramas of the period like "Two Loves and a Life" by Charles Reade or Donizetti's equally popular operetta "The Daughter of the Regiment," Shaw undermines the romantic sentiments of those who still thrilled to Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade' and contrasts this particular kind of romantic delusion with the hard prosaic facts of war to be found in Marbot's "Memoirs" or Zola's "Debacle." 'I declare,' wrote Shaw in 1894, 'that I am tired to utter disgust of imaginary life, imaginary ethics, science, peace, war, love, virtue, villainy, and imaginary everything else, both on the stage and off it. I demand respect, interest, affection for human nature as it is and life as we must still live it even when we have bettered it and ourselves to the utmost.

Despite the Fabian seriousness of Shaw's aims, "Arms and the Man" remains one of his most brilliant plays. As the author himself confessed 'it is always necessary to overstate a case startlingly to make people sit up and listen to it, and to frighten them into acting on it. I myself do this habitually.' While therefore "Arms and the Man" contains Ibsen's belief that a healthy altruism can be attained only through it's apparent opposite, self realisation, Raina's self-discovery occurs in light, witty and above all comic circumstances far removed from the high seriousness of "The Wild Duck" or "A Doll's House." Indeed when the play opened on that first night in 1894 there occurred a solitary boo to which Shaw replied, as he took his final curtain, 'My dear fellow, I quite agree with you; but what are we two against so many?'

The audience broke into spontaneous cheers and THAT, perhaps, is the best comment that can be made on this delightful play.

For Meadow Players Limited

Director of Productions	FRANK HAUSER
General Manager	GORDON STRATFORD
Production Co-ordinator	DAVID H. GRANT
Accountant	PETER B. GODFREY
Public Relations Officer	GLYN V. ROBBINS
Trainee Director	KERRY CRABBE
Administrative Assistant	SUSAN ENEVER
Stage Manager	PETER HARWOOD
Deputy Stage Managers	NICOLA CROSBY, CHRISTOPHER LEGGE
Carpenter	LARRY NOLAN
Wardrobe Supervisor	BEETY ROBBINS
Wardrobe Mistress	SHEILA ROBBINS

Meadow Players Limited operates the Repertory Theatre trainee Director Scheme in association with Thames Television Limited.

For Nuffield Theatre

Licensee	D. A. SCHOFIELD
Business Manager	JOAN H. ABBS
Technical Manager	STANLEY RIXON
Chief Electrician	DEREK JONES

Lighting operators, sound technicians and stage staff provided by Students Union Stage Administration Group.

In accordance with the requirements of the licensing authority :

- 1 The audience may leave at the end of the performance by all exit doors.**
- 2 All gangways, corridors, staircases and passageways which afford a means of exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction.**
- 3 Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways except in positions authorised by the licensing authority and in the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.**
- 4 The safety curtain shall be lowered and raised at each performance in the presence of the audience.**

The management reserves the right to refuse admission, also to make any alteration in the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable causes.

The taking of photographs in the theatre is forbidden