

# "THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE"

BY

FRANCIS BEAUMONT and JOHN FLETCHER



COMMENCEMENT PLAY 1949

*Presented by*

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE  
STUDENT THEATRE GROUP

*Directed by Iris Hart*

PERFORMANCES AT "THE HUT"

Students and Friends - - Friday and Saturday, March 11 and 12  
University Theatre Guild - Monday and Tuesday, March 14 and 15





UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE STUDENT THEATRE GROUP

presents

## “ THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE ”

AN ELIZABETHAN BURLESQUE

by

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER

### FOREWORD

The literary partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher is one of the most successful on record, so much so that though Fletcher outlived the younger partner by some nine years and wrote many plays of his own, editions of his works generally carry Beaumont's name as the senior partner of the firm. The collaboration began at about the time when Shakespeare was at the very height of his powers. It was over by 1616, the year in which Shakespeare (and Beaumont) died. In their own day the collaborators were completely modern, the very latest thing in playwrights. They wrote fashionable tragedies and fashionable romances as well as straight comedies, and in their own and the next dramatic age they, and more particularly Fletcher, tended to make Shakespeare look old-fashioned. Scholars have distinguished between Beaumont's style and Fletcher's, and they say *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is more Beaumont's than Fletcher's. However that may be, it is the lightest and most trifling of the collaborators' works, and as theatre it has survived all the rest. This, one surmises, may amuse Beaumont in Elysium; what Fletcher thinks about it one forbears to conjecture. Perhaps he comforts himself with half *Henry VIII*, which scholars say is probably his.

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* makes fun of several things that have not necessarily much to do with each other. The first thing is a curious species of fiction that was already archaic even in Elizabeth's day, the chivalric romance. There seems to be no doubt that the partners took the idea of parodying the romances from Cervantes, the great Spaniard whose *Don Quixote* was a new book in Beaumont's day. Compared to Cervantes, Beaumont and Fletcher are lesser writers, but they are not without their own originality. There was wit in the coupling of this kind of parody with a laugh at the self-complacency of the citizens of London, which playwrights less fashionable than Beaumont and Fletcher had flattered; and more wit in the combining of these two comic ideas with the hardy perennial joke of the effect of a stage play on simple minds. The plot of the particular stage play on which the citizens intrude is, as we might say nowadays, little more than a comic strip, but its effect on them gives it humanity. There is more than mere farce in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*; not very much more, perhaps, but enough to have kept the play sweet for more than three hundred years.

Some of the jokes have receded into the past. Barbers no longer combine dentistry and surgery with hair-cutting, and besides, dentistry and surgery have made enormous studies since Beaumont's day. Moreover, we don't laugh any longer at all the things the Elizabethans found funny, at least when we meet with them on the stage. But a little historical imagination will go a long way with this play.

Professor Charles Jury.

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The play under the direction of  
IRIS HART

Music played by Vivienne Duce, Cecily Mills, and Pauline Whitford

Music composed by ALLAN GILES



# "THE KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE"

## CHARACTERS

### *Members of the audience*

A CITIZEN ..... JEFF SCOTT  
HIS WIFE ..... GLENYS WEMYSS  
RALPH ..... FRANK ZEPPEL

### *Members of "The London Merchant" Company (In order of appearance)*

SPEAKER OF THE PROLOGUE ..... PETER BATEMAN  
BOY ..... KATHLYN POPE  
VENTUREWELL (*a merchant*) ..... RAYMOND MOLLOY  
JASPER (*Son to Merrythought*) ..... BRUCE MARSDEN  
LUCE (*Daughter to Venturewell*) ..... PATRICIA LLOYD  
HUMPHREY (*Suitor to Luce*) ..... OLIVER POWELL  
TIM ..... BRIAN HARTSHORNE  
GEORGE ..... LLOYD MORGAN  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*Wife to M.*) ..... SUZANNE WELLS  
MICHAEL (*Son to Merrythought*) ..... CHRISTINE BROCK  
MERRYTHOUGHT ..... PETER BATEMAN  
TAPSTER (*Host of "Bell Inn," Waltham*) ..... JOHN MERITY  
POMPIONA ..... CLARE MILAZZO  
BARBER (*Barbarossa*) ..... GEOFF. PRIDHAM  
TWO SERVANTS ..... GEOFF. PRIDHAM and BARNEY LAYTON

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Stage Management - - - GRAHAM NERLICH  
Sets designed and executed by - - - BARNEY LAYTON  
Lighting by - - - JOHN HANTKEN  
Costumes by - - - ODELL CROWTHER  
Assisted by - - - PENELOPE LOVEDAY

Programme cover design by GEOFF. WILSON

SCENE: The entire action of the play takes place on the stage of an Elizabethan theatre, during a performance of a popular romance of the day, *The London Merchant*

There will be two intervals of eight minutes each



## UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE STUDENT THEATRE GROUP

Although eager and ready to benefit from outside experience and advice, all the actual work connected with this production was carried out by students.

The University of Adelaide Student Theatre Group exists for students interested in the theatre who wish to *work* in the theatre, as actors, scenic artists, stage assistants, playwrights, or whatever particular branch attracts them.

Call at the Student Theatre Group clubrooms in the George Murray Buildings any week-day. One of the following committee members will be there to enrol you as a member and answer further enquiries:

*President:* Frank Zeppel, 2 Hewitt Avenue, Rose Park (F 4782).

*Secretary:* Bruce Marsden, 87 Kingston Terrace, North Adelaide (C. 8797).

*Treasurer:* Clare Milazzo, 9 Harris Street, Glenelg (X 1876).

*Production Organizer:* John Merity, 101 Fullarton Road, Fullarton (U 3360).

*Social Organizer:* Susan Wells, 10 Fuller Street, Walkerville (M 1764).

F.R.Z.

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### APPRECIATION

Miss Iris Hart and the Student Theatre Group Committee extend their sincere thanks to the following for their warm interest and ready help in this production:

The University Theatre Guild, who in addition to their usual liberal assistance, gave us the free use of their theatrical wardrobe.

The Conservatorium, particularly Prof. John Bishop, Miss Barbara Howard, and Mr. Allan Giles.

Mr. Paul Morisset for his invaluable advice in costuming the play.

The many people, too numerous to mention, who freely gave their services in many ways, expecting no thanks or reward but desiring simply to help make the show a good one.

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### ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY THEATRE GUILD

Theatre Guild Annual Meeting in The Hut, Wednesday, March 9, 8 p.m.  
At the end of March the Guild will present Pirandello's *Thinking Makes It So*  
Communications, enquiries, and subscriptions (15/-) may be addressed to the  
Hon. Secretary, Miss E. Wedd, Harvard Chambers, North Terrace (C. 2315) or  
c/o the University