



NGAIO MARSH
"Just thank The Bard"

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the *Othello* production could have filled a bigger theatre, Miss Marsh told us.

"The prevailing remark afterwards was 'One understood it all,' Shakespeare became natural and real to the audience, and they listened as they might have listened to a contemporary play. I like to think that we really need our Shakespeare. In the blitz in London they rigged up Shakespearian plays all over the place, especially the tragedies, which seemed so right at a terrible time like that.

"In Christchurch during *Othello*, the whole town was in a stir. I was walking through town one day and I went past a tailor's shop. The tailor came dashing out with a piece of tweed over his arm when he saw me, and said he had taken his son five times, and could I possibly get him seats again. Well, exactly the same thing happened with an electrician. Personally, I think we must just thank The Bard!"

"But the students really did work hard, and in the time they were working on it they did acquire some technique. As far as possible, we used the methods of Stanislavsky, who was the G.O.M., as it were, of the Russian theatre. Complete muscular relaxation and natural-looking movements are the main idea. We had three acting levels, with the stage arranged so that acting was continuous—one scene going on in one quarter of the stage while a new scene is set up—as quietly as possible—behind curtains on another part of the stage. Of course it's much easier to make experiments of this kind with young people who haven't done any acting before, and they really did make a success of it."

We asked Miss Marsh if it was true, as we had heard, that the Canterbury College Drama Society might send its *Hamlet* and *Othello* on tour during the long vacation, and if it was possible yet to say so publicly.

"Oh, yes, it's true, and I think everyone knows about it. I mean we've had so many requests from all over the place, and now some friends are coming to light with the necessary backing and ideas, and suggestions on the business side. Of course there are all sorts of things that will have to be dovetailed in, and there will be transport and manpower difficulties, too, but you might see us on tour, all the same, in the summer."

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