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Presenting the world premiere of

'A CREDIT TO THE COUNTRY'

By **NIGEL DENNIS**

*A lighthearted comedy adapted from
CARLO GOLDONI'S "LA VILLEGGIATURA"*

at the

MANOEL THEATRE – Valletta

*Under the distinguished patronage of their Excellencies
THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL and LADY DORMAN*

GALA OPENING

Wednesday 22nd January 1969 at 8.30 p.m.
and on

Thursday 23rd January 1969 at 7.30 p.m.

Friday 24th January 1969 at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday 25th January 1969 at 8.00 p.m.

Sunday 26th January 1969 at 6.30 p.m.

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ABOUT THE PLAY

The idea of a play about vacationing in the country came to Carlo Goldoni when he was travelling through the Brenta one summer and saw the idle rich enjoying themselves in their handsome villas. But he found on closer inspection that this life of country gaiety was often a serious matter, and that it had been adopted by businessmen of the middle class for the sole purpose of cutting a dash and aping the aristocrats. People of limited means were prepared to impoverish themselves and their families rather than let their neighbours sneer at them for not having rented a summer villa and entertained lavishly.

So Goldoni wrote a different sort of play in the end — a moral comedy full of frank but good-humoured satire. And he found that he had enough material not just for one play but three, the first about preparing to go to the country, the second about the holiday itself, the third about returning to town with empty pockets and enormous debts. Although this trilogy is known by the single collective title **La Villeggiatura**, it was presented originally as three separate plays. The first was put on during the carnival at Venice in 1761; the second followed in the same season a year later; and the third a year after that.

A modern audience must marvel at the patience of the 18th century Venetians, who were happy to allow intervals of one year "between the acts". A sympathetic smile must also be allowed to Goldoni, who, by the time he wrote the third part, had begun to forget the first. Even in modern editions of the trilogy, for example, the character known as Filippo starts off as Signor Gardanelli and ends up as Signor Ganganelli.

We are left, then, with three comedies, none of which is very long but all of which together would take at least six hours to play. Each comedy has the same principal characters and is dependent on the other two; so, if the trilogy is presented today, some way must be found of shortening it into three acts instead of three plays.

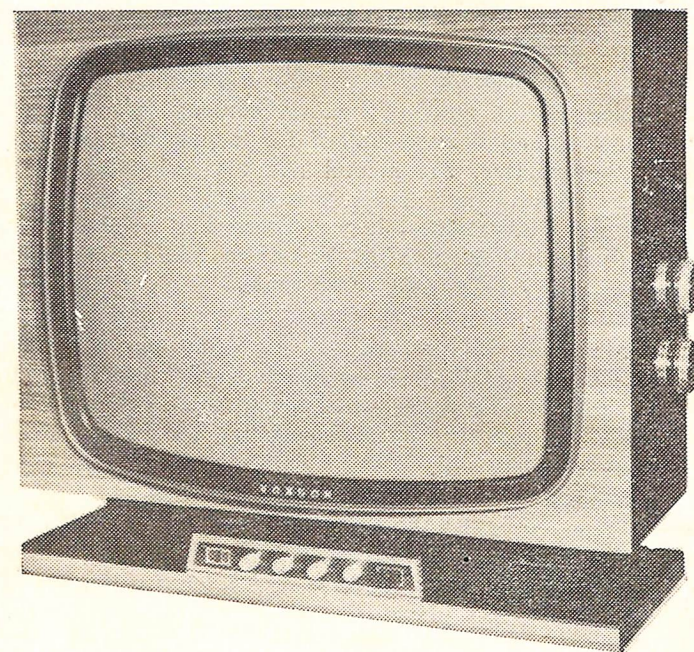
The adapter and the director have tried to do this not by re-writing the trilogy more briefly but by taking out any scenes that are not essential to the story and cutting down all those that are. The theatre for which Goldoni wrote was broad, easy, and unhurried: characters were allowed to develop at their leisure, making extremely long speeches and indulging in numberless "asides" and internal monologues. Similarly, the action was slow in progression and broad in range: there was time and space for everyone and everything. All such material has been pruned as much as possible, so that although Goldoni's story remains essentially the same, it is told with far greater briskness and simplicity.

A price must be paid for this economy, of course. Sharpness of tone must replace Goldoni's spacious irony; the complications of his plot must spin out rapidly instead of unravelling themselves at leisure. But I would be sorry to think that so much compression had squeezed out the spirit of the great dramatist and left only his skeleton behind. The conception, the situations, the follies and the laughter are still those of the original, and I believe it is better to enjoy them in shorter form than wait in vain for their production at full length.

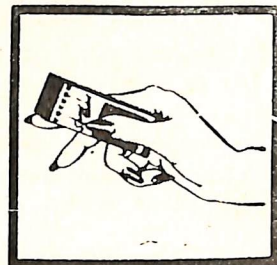
The action takes place in the city of Livorno and the nearby resort of Montenero. Why, it has been asked, did Venice's favourite dramatist stray so far from home in search of a setting? The answer appears to be that he was a cautious man. By transferring the follies of the Venetians to the Livornese, he avoided giving offence to the Venetian public. Only in the last few lines before the final curtain did he tell them — as he still tells us — that keeping up with the Joneses is the same the world over. As in Livorno, so in Venice — and so, too, perhaps, even in Sliema and Valletta?

NIGEL DENNIS

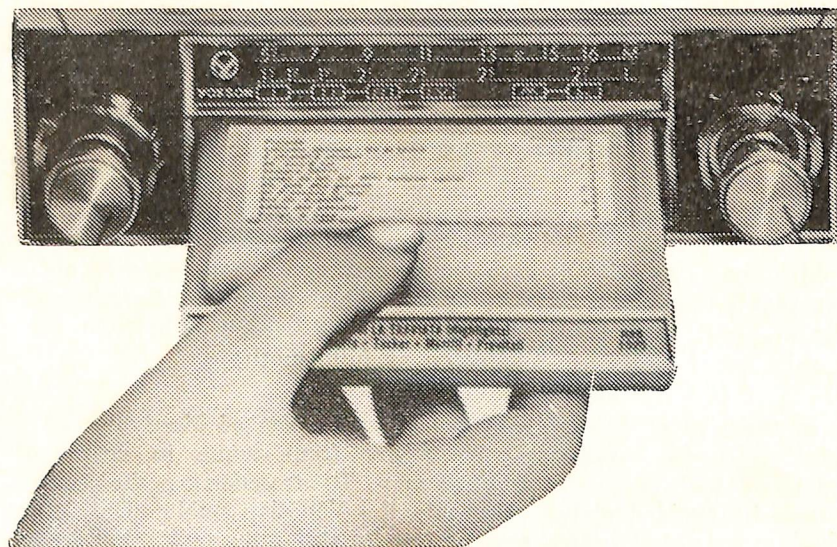
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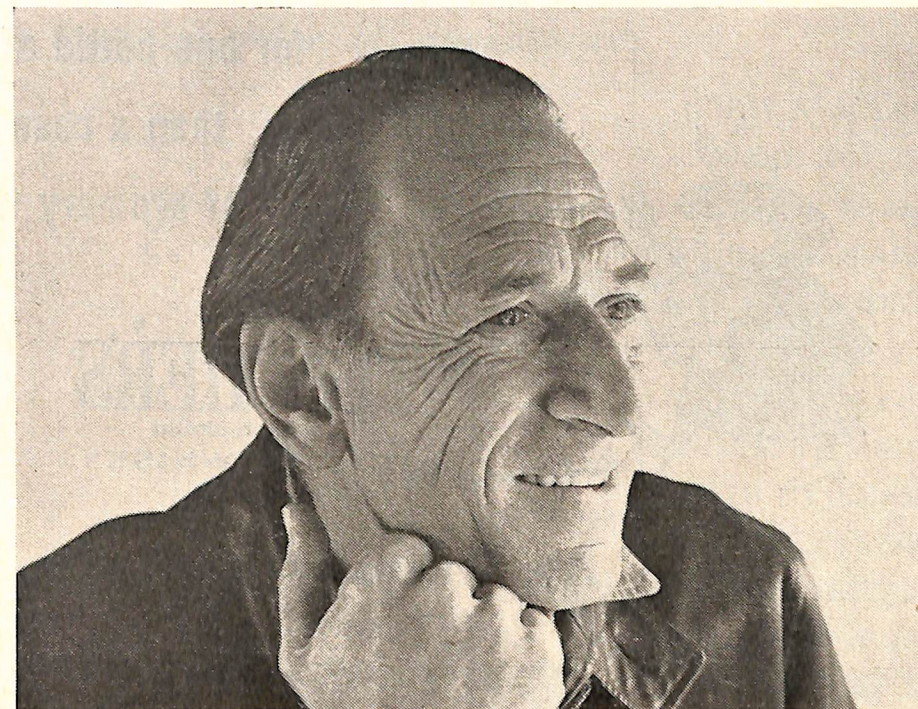
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NIGEL DENNIS

Nigel Dennis

NIGEL DENNIS, author of various novels and plays has recently settled in Malta and is delighted at the thought of this adaption of one of Carlo Goldoni's works being presented in so perfect a setting as the Manoel Theatre. His latest play to be presented was "August for the People", starring Rex Harrison which was recently produced at the Edinburgh Festival. He has also been closely connected with the Royal Court Theatre during its formative years and is currently co-editor of "Encounter" and book critic for the "Sunday Telegraph".

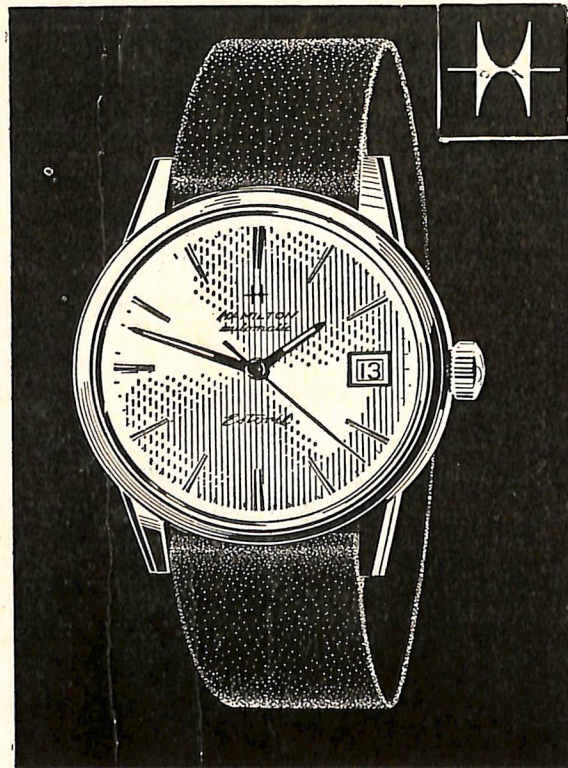
JAMES FALKLAND, who is the director of tonight's play was born and brought up in the West of Scotland. He has been involved with theatre from an early age and was a professional actor for several years before coming to settle in Malta. Since his arrival in the Island he has rapidly established a reputation for stimulating productions, his most recent being "Electra" for the Classical Festival of Drama at St. Michaels Training College. He considers this play, the first comedy he has attempted, one of the most challenging he has yet encountered and, at the same time, the most rewarding.

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A CREDIT TO THE COUNTRY

Cast in order of appearance:

Paulo	GODWIN SCERRI
Leonardo	PAUL XUEREB
Cecco	CHARLES THAKE
Vittoria	KARMEN AZZOPARDI
Ferdinando	TERRICK FITZHUGH
Filippo	STEVE SINGLETON
Guglielmo	ALAN AMATO GAUCI
Giacinta	ANTOINETTE SOLER
Brigida	MARJORIE LYDDIARD
Fulgenzio	CHARLES IZZO
Tita	MARYLU RIPARD
Beltrame	CHRISTOPHER WARREN
Costanza	BEATRICE DENNIS
Rosina	THERESA MICALLEF
Tognino	ALBERT FENECH
Sabina	KATHLEEN WARREN
Bernardino	PHILIP PARKER
Pasquale	MARIO PHILIP AZZOPARDI
Servants	ROBERT DIXON, GUY HEATH

Play Directed by JAMES FALKLAND

The action of the play takes place at various locales in
Leghorn and Montenero

- ACT I — Leghorn
- ACT II — Montenero
- ACT III — Leghorn

Time — The Summer of 1760

There will be two intervals of fifteen minutes

James Falkland

h. Scerr
Paul Xuer

Theresa Micallef

FOR THE COMPANY:-

Stage Director	...	...	...	...	...	...	VICTOR SOLER
Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	STEVE BROTHWELL
Assistant Stage Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	JANET PALMER
Properties	{	...	...	...	...	...	MARIE SAID
		...	...	...	...	...	GLORIA MARY WARREN
Sound	...	...	...	...	...	...	JO DEBONO
Costumes	...	...	...	...	...	...	JESSIE VELLA
Wardrobe Mistress	...	...	...	...	...	...	LYNDA POWELL
Setting and Costume Design	...	...	...	...	...	...	JAMES FALKLAND
Lighting Design	...	...	...	...	...	...	RICHARD WALBANCKE
Switchboard Operator	...	...	...	...	...	...	VANNI LAUS
Decor	...	...	...	...	...	...	TONY PRECA
Make-up	...	...	...	...	...	...	JOAN SKINNER
Stage Crew	{	...	...	...	...	...	FRANK DEBONO
		...	...	...	...	...	LINO FARRUGIA
		...	...	...	...	...	JOHN GODFREY
		...	...	...	...	...	PAUL THOMAS
Dressers	{	...	...	...	...	...	TWANNY CUTAJAR
		...	...	...	...	...	MONICA DEBONO
Public Relations	...	...	...	...	...	...	JOAN PARKER
Business Manager	...	...	...	...	...	...	MICHAEL BONELLO
Assistant to the Director	...	...	...	...	...	...	ANITA BROTHWELL

FOR THE MANOEL THEATRE:-

Box Office	...	...	...	...	...	...	FRANCES BEZZINA
Head Electrician	...	...	...	...	...	...	VANNI LAUS
Head Carpenter	...	...	...	...	...	...	J. BORG
Assistants	...	...	...	...	...	...	E. DALLI, F. MIFSUD

Setting built by The Manoel Theatre; Furniture by courtesy of The Malta Handicraft Centre, Sliema; Wigs by Rosina Depares, Valletta and Sliema.

The Company wish to acknowledge and thank the British Council for their help and co-operation; Mr. Charles Depares for his advice and assistance, and the many individuals and organisations who have helped to mount this production.

About The Cast

KARMEN AZZOPARDI trained for the theatre at the Actors' Studio in London and for sound broadcasting with the B.B.C. Her debut in Malta was with the British Institute Players' production of "Crime and Punishment", after which she appeared many times with the M.U.T. Players and the M.A.D.C. Her debut in Maltese was in "Il-Werrieta" (The Heiress) with MALETH. Karmen has made several appearances on M.T.V. and on radio and was awarded the Malta Drama League Trophy for the Best Actress in Guze Diacono's "L-Gharusa" (The Bride) in 1960. She received the Manoel Theatre Award for the 1964/65 Season for the part of Martiza in Francis Ebejer's "Boulevard" and was voted Actress of the Year in a popularity poll conducted by "Il-Haddiem" in 1965. She is a member of the Vincent Shaw Organisation of London and is locally represented by The Malta Talent Artistes.

MARIO PHILIP AZZOPARDI is just 18 and feels humble about "not having done anything yet"! Nevertheless he has made something of a mark in local theatre since his debut in "Blood Wedding" a year ago. He has played in Maltese and English productions including "The Fireraisers", "Tons of Money", "Oedipus Rex" and, on local television, leading roles in two plays. As a producer in the National Children's Drama Festival he secured second prize for two consecutive productions.

BEATRICE DENNIS attended the Oxford Playhouse Theatre School for 2 years during which time she acted in something like thirty College plays and the Oxford University Drama Society. She has had quite considerable experience backstage, having been an Assistant Stage Manager at the Royal Court Theatre and The Aldwych. She was a reader for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and has worked as an assistant script editor for film companies making television features at Boreham Wood and Elstree and, since settling in Malta, has acted for the M.A.D.C.; produced the University Players and enthusiastically encouraged young actors and actresses to 'have a go'. Her role as Clytemnestra in last summer's presentation of "Electra" was acclaimed by local drama critics.

ROBERT DIXON's earliest experience of the dramatic art was, like that of so many, in school productions but his first adult performance was with the Mosta Dramatic Company in the Mosta Sacred Heart Oratory. He then joined a variety company known as "The Entertainers" — a roving group which toured the villages of Malta. His most recent appearances have been in "Electra", "The Queen and the Rebels" and "Great Catherine".

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FOR

BETTER

DRESS FABRICS

ALBERT FENCH is a 17 year old second year medical student at the Royal University of Malta. His first stage appearance was at the age of 11 in an operetta at St. Aloysius College followed by performances in other college productions. He took part in the production of "The Rod Saves The Child" in the National Children's Drama Festival from which the play emerged as runner-up to the winner. Recent performances have been in "Blood Wedding", "The Fireraisers" and "Tons of Money". His hobbies include skin diving and 'folksy' guitar playing.

TERRICK FITZHUGH started his stage career at the age of four when he played a supporting role, as a wave, in a morality play about Noah's flood. At Oxford University he joined the Dramatic Society and had numerous appearances with them and for several of the colleges. Amongst the many plays he has featured in on the Island — apart from quite considerable professional experience in local radio and filmwork — are "As You Like It", "The Duchess of Malfi", "The Tempest", "Electra" and "Boeing Boeing". His hopes for 1969 include the wish to start a professional stage career in earnest.

ALAN AMATO GAUCI's stage debut was at the age of 10, in 1952. For the following decade or so he appeared in plays only at irregular intervals until joining the Dramatic Society at Hertford College, Oxford where he did some acting but concentrated mainly on the administrative side of the dramatic art. This landed him with the job of handling the Society's accounts! In 1967, at Queen's University, Belfast, he again combined much backstage work with some action on the boards. Since returning to Malta last year, he has had walk-on parts, each time as a soldier, in the M.A.D.C. productions, "The Queen and the Rebels" and "Great Catherine" and is beginning to wonder if he is not becoming typecast!

GUY HEATH made his debut with his local Village Dramatic Club at the age of 13. He then did little in the way of acting until being posted to Malta with the R.A.F. when he joined the Ariel Players. His first appearance with this R.A.F. drama group was in "Love's a Luxury" after which he performed for them in several plays, the last of which was the recent production of "As Long As They're Happy". Concurrently with his Air Force drama work, Guy has been an active member of the M.A.D.C. and has played with the University Players, taking the role of Pylades in their Greek Festival production of "Electra". He is currently appearing at the Music Hall at Bir-id-Deheb singing folk-songs to his own guitar accompaniment.

CHARLES IZZO first appeared on a theatre stage at the age of 6 and has continued to do so uninterruptedly ever since! He was a member of a group of University students who did their bit during the war by entertaining the troops with their own adaptation of "A Comedy of Errors". He is a keen playwright and has won a number of local playwriting competitions for radio and stage-plays. Charles has acted in many English (mainly M.A.D.C.) productions but is equally at home with Italian drama in its own vernacular and, of course, in his native Maltese. He has also appeared in a number of musicals and is never averse to giving a helping hand backstage.

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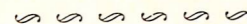
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MARJORIE LYDDIARD was always determined to make the theatre her career in spite of strong parental opposition. As a teenager she took part in many amateur productions whilst studying at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She then joined the Gateway Theatre Club at Notting Hill Gate as a student and this led to a spell in Repertory and touring. She gave up acting at the time of her marriage but remained an enthusiastic observer. Her performance as Brigida sees her on the boards for the first time since her marriage.

THERESA MICALLEF started acting in school productions, and, in 1964, played the part of Ann in Ashley Duke's "Dumb Wife of Cheapside" with the Lyceum Drama Circle. At college she became a prominent member of the choral speaking group which stood her in good stead as Chorus Leader in the University Players' production of "Electra". Another part was another 'Ann', this time in Ivor Brown's "Emily's Night" and in October 1967 she played the lead in the M.A.D.C. production of "The Duchess of Malfi", later appearing as 'Death' in the MASK production of "Blood Wedding". With an intense enthusiasm for the dramatic art, her job as a schoolteacher will ensure the fostering of the joys of theatre work amongst many potential Thespians on the Island.

PHILIP PARKER first became actively interested in the theatre — apart from school and college productions — with the Cheltenham Little Theatre Group almost 20 years ago. He has worked in Malta as a schoolmaster for twelve years, taking part in Service Drama Festivals for many years before joining the M.A.D.C. with whom he has acted in about ten plays in the last four years. He has worked as a Stage Manager and set designer and recently directed the M.A.D.C. production of "The Queen and the Rebels". He would have been flattered to have been offered an occasional juvenile role but has philosophically accepted character portrayals of elderly gents!

MARYLU RIPARD attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart School for 13 years, during which time she developed a great interest in drama — taking part in numerous school productions and playreadings and representing the school drama group in local festivals. She played a main role in the Children's Film Foundation release, "Treasure in Malta" which was filmed on the Island in 1962 and afterwards became a keen member of the M.A.D.C., appearing in their Manoel Theatre production of "The Duchess of Malfi" — as a mad woman!

GODWIN SCERRI, who is 28, was educated at the Lyceum, going on to the Royal University of Malta. His early performances included parts in "Othello" and Sheridan's "The Rivals", presented at St. Michael's College of Education. At university he played leading roles in "The Caretaker" and "The Fireraisers", after which he played the lead in "Blood Wedding". His most recent performances have been with the M.A.D.C. for whom he has played two leads this season — as Amos in "The Queen and the Rebels" and as Napoleon in Shaw's "Man of Destiny".

STEVE SINGLETON has been keenly interested in all forms of dramatic art from an early age. He appeared in plays and concerts on Merseyside as a child and, after attending a course in Speech and Drama in Northumberland, produced a teenage cast in a highly acclaimed presentation of "The Boy Friend". He is a talented pianist who has broadcast with the B.B.C. and, with a fine baritone voice and a deep love for Opera, has had considerable experience as a

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soloist in both Mass and opera. He trained a boys' choir in North East England, achieving a high standard in concert performances. Steve's experience of theatre work has many facets, including set design and stage decor and he spent some time in Rome working on stage design after graduating from Durham University with a degree in Fine Art.

ANTOINETTE SOLER was persuaded by her husband to take an interest in acting in 1959. An early success followed when she gained the award for the Best Actress in the Malta Drama League Festival. She has appeared many times on the Manoel Theatre Boards in both Maltese and English productions and one of her most affectionate recollections is of her role as Nora in "The Doll's House" which inaugurated the National Theatre Drama Group. Apart from her many stage appearances, Antoinette has had a great deal of acting experience in radio and television. She has tackled many exacting dramatic roles, one of which was that of Lika in "The Promise" early last year, but the one that she found the most demanding, and challenging, was that of Electra in the Festival of Classical Theatre last summer. Her most recent appearance was in the Manoel Theatre production of "Boeing Boeing" earlier this season.

CHARLES THAKE's name is firmly established as a household word on the Island. There are few, if any, aspects of show business in which he has not delved, and triumphed. Actor, producer, broadcaster, translator and adaptor for stage, radio and television, not to mention appearances in films for the big screen and many character parts in television series' made on the Island by British television companies. If, in fact, you have never seen or heard Charles Thake before today you must only just have arrived in Malta — a thousand welcomes to you!

CHRISTOPHER WARREN's first interest in acting was with the drama group of St. Aloysius College for whom he played several roles in Shakespeare. In 1966 he attended a drama course at this theatre and then joined the M.A.D.C., appearing in their production of "The Long Christmas Dinner". After entering the university and joining the University Players, he appeared in plays which include "The Fireraisers", "Tons of Money" and "Blood Wedding".

KATHLEEN WARREN. This is a name — she is more affectionately known as KAY — that is synonymous with theatre in Malta. She started as a pantomime fairy at the age of 3 and is still going strong! Amongst her favourite parts over the years, some of those she most cherishes are: Madame des Mortes in "Ring Round The Moon", Madame Ranyevskaya in "The Cherry Orchard", Emma Hornet in "Sailor Beware", Lady Pitts in "Daphne Lauriola" and Dame Beatrice Appleby in "Breath of Spring".

PAUL XUEREB's first stage appearances were in Shakespeare at school. His enthusiasm for all aspects of the theatre was fostered by taking part in a number of modern plays at the Royal University of Malta where he also produced two plays — one being a modern-dress version of "Julius Caesar". At the same time he was a regular member of the Compagnia Filodrammatica Goldoni and of the British Institute Players. When the latter group broke up he joined MALETH for whom he gave many performances. Other plays he has appeared in include "Antigone", "Crime and Punishment", "The Cocktail Party", "The Winslow Boy" and "The Lady's Not For Burning". His most recent role was that of Oedipus in the Maltese version of "Oedipus Rex" which opened the Festival of Greek Drama at the St. Michael's College of Education's newly-built open air amphitheatre.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

S. BEHREND (Guitarist) — Recital — 28th January 1969

UNIVERSITY PLAYERS — Therese Raquin — 7th to 9th February 1969

DANTE ALIGHIERI GRUPPO GIOVANILE — Variety Concert — 23rd February 1969

M.A.D.C. — "Letter to the General" — 27th February to 2nd March 1969

LUDWIG HOFFMANN — "Piano Recital" — 17th March 1969.

MALTA TALENT ARTISTS — "The Cliff Hangers" — 19th to 23rd March 1969

