

## DETAILS OF PERFORMANCES

*Evenings at 7.30 p.m.*

Monday 15th and 22nd July	" IN THE BEGINNING "
Tuesday 16th and 23rd July	" THE PASSION "
Wednesday 17th and 24th July	" THE PASSION "
Thursday 18th and 25th July	" IN THE BEGINNING "
Friday 19th and 26th July	" THE PASSION "
Saturday 20th and 27th July	" THE PASSION "

*Matinees at 3.0 p.m.*

Wednesday 17th and 24th July	" IN THE BEGINNING "
Saturday 20th and 27th July	" IN THE BEGINNING "

## PRICES OF ADMISSION

*Each Performance*

10s., 7s. 6d., 5s., and 3s. 6d.

A reduction of 5% will be allowed on block bookings of not less than 30 seats.

## BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

Advance Booking Office will be open from the 1st January, 1957. Box Office for personal bookings will open in the Municipal Offices on the 1st June, 1957—9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday and 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon Saturdays.

There is a Ticket Order Form overleaf.

# CHESTER

AN IDEAL HOLIDAY CENTRE

Chester—the historic county town of Cheshire occupies an outstanding position among the ancient cities of Britain. Not only is it one of the very few places where the complete circuit of walls has been preserved in its entirety, but the main streets are lined by the famous Rows. These mediaeval galleries above street-level provide an additional line of shops and in architectural form can be matched in no other city in the world.



*The Rows at  
The Cross*



*The Water Tower*

The Walls of Chester, nearly two miles in circumference, form an elevated promenade from which many fine views of the city and surrounding countryside can be enjoyed. Part of the North Wall and the whole of the East Wall are of Roman foundation. At the North-West angle are two towers, Bonewaldesthorpe's Tower and the Water Tower, built in 1322. Chester Cathedral, originally a Benedictine Abbey, built shortly after the Norman conquest, stands within the City Walls in a setting of considerable beauty. Its early Monastic buildings include the Refectory, the Great Cellar, Chapter House and the Cloisters, all of which (thanks to the courtesy of the Dean and Chapter) will be used in presenting the Miracle Plays. Opposite the Town Hall is the Abbey Gateway (built in 1377) which leads to Abbey Square and the Cathedral Refectory and Cloisters. It was outside the Abbey Gateway that the Chester Miracle Plays were first acted on carts; each play as it gave way to its successor being re-enacted in various parts of the City so that everybody might see the episodes from Bible History played before them.



*The Cathedral*



*The Abbey Gateway*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT  
CHESTER send to  
DEPARTMENT MP, TOWN HALL, CHESTER  
for a copy of  
ILLUSTRATED GUIDE BOOK, PRICE 1/6d.

# CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS



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JULY 15<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> 1957

THE CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS

in

The Cathedral Refectory, 15th-27th July, 1957

Adapted from the mediaeval text by BETTY AND JOSEPH McCULLOCH

Settings by MICHAEL TRANGMAR

Under the direction of CHRISTOPHER EDE

Costumes by SHEILA JACKSON

The Chester City Council again take up their traditional role in presenting the Chester Miracle Plays, the oldest of the surviving cycles, a responsibility first undertaken in A.D. 1327.

The success of the Festival of Britain revival in 1951, and the production in the following year proved that the plays, after six hundred years, still commanded audiences in the twentieth century.

The adaptation of the text has skilfully preserved the verse form and style of the original while making the language intelligible to modern ears.

The 1957 production will condense the twenty-four short plays of the Mediaeval Cycle into two full-length plays, so that the whole Cycle can be seen in two evenings, or, when there is a matinee, on one day. The first play "In the Beginning" starts with the fall of Lucifer, followed by the Creation, the disobedience of Adam, the murder of Abel, the story of Noah and the Flood, the sacrifice of Isaac and the prophecies of Christ's Coming. The play ends with the fulfilment of the promise, the Nativity of Our Lord.

The second play "The Passion" tells the story of Christ's last three days on earth with moving simplicity.

While the Old Testament story is told with native humour and startling humanity, the Nativity reveals great tenderness and beauty. In "The Passion", the mediaeval simplicity is magically deepened, revealing in the most beautiful verse of the Cycle, the human understanding and dramatic insight of the author which culminates in the triumph of the Resurrection.

The production is again being staged in the famous thirteenth century Refectory, and will be directed by Christopher Ede who brought the plays to life in 1951, in the first revival of the complete Cycle for three and a half centuries. In 1957, he will have round him many of the players who are building a tradition in the twentieth century comparable with that which bound together their mediaeval forerunners in the City of Chester. The plays are intimate in their approach, written as they were to be played on carts, or pageants, and witnessed by as many as could see in the limited space of mediaeval streets. To enlarge the production into the modern conception of a pageant would jeopardise the whole nature of the plays. The size of the Refectory ensures that this essential quality is retained, but inevitably limits the size of the audience. Early booking is, therefore, advised and particulars and Order Form will be found on the opposite pages.

PRESS COMMENTS on the 1951 Festival Revival:—

"The production by Christopher Ede was extremely impressive. He let the audience float on the full tide of simple and poetic narrative which carried the play from the Garden of Eden to the sacrifice of Isaac."—NEWS CHRONICLE, 19th June, 1951.

"I saw 'In the Beginning,' which goes from Eden to the Ark and to Abraham and Isaac: shrewd and simple, warm with life, charged with a slapping folk-humour, and pathos that is arrow-true. The Cycle is, in another sense, miraculous; it binds the centuries."—J. C. Trewin, SUNDAY OBSERVER, 24th June, 1951.

"The players from Cheshire Rural Community Council's Drama Committee have that simple yet robust style of approach which must have characterised the original acting by tradesmen of the City's craft guilds.

"Combined with thoughtfully-contrived music and decor, and the contemporary surroundings of beautiful grey stone, this Festival revival of one of Chester's past glories is a most moving experience."—DAILY DISPATCH, 19th June, 1951.

"The highly stylised Ark, the sending forth of the black wooden raven and the white wooden dove, the handling of the doomed crowd who jeer at Father Noah, the gay and characterful costumes by Sheila Jackson, all build up a vigorous impression of mediaeval ideas adapted for a later telling."—MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 19th June, 1951.

CHESTER MIRACLE PLAYS

TICKET ORDER FORM

Advance Postal Booking from 1st January, 1957.  
Box Office for personal bookings from 1st June, 1957.

Postal Booking to be made with this form should be sent with a cheque, postal order, or money order and a stamped addressed envelope to "The Booking Office, Chester Miracle Plays, Town Hall, Chester."

Cheques and orders should be crossed "& Co.," and made payable to Chester Corporation. Bookings will be dealt with in order of receipt. Since the number of seats is limited, bookings made without a remittance cannot be held longer than 48 hours. Tickets once booked cannot be changed nor can money be refunded.

Please forward tickets as follows:—

Name of Play      Date and time of Performance  
(For particulars see overleaf)

"In the Beginning" .....seats @ .....

"The Passion" .....seats @ .....

Total ... £ : :

I enclose \*Cheque/Postal Order/Money Order

value £ : :

Name (Block Capitals).....

Address (Block Capitals).....

.....  
.....  
.....

Signed..... Date.....

\* Delete as necessary.