

The Moot House Players

present

WHEN THE NEW VINE BLOOMS

by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

Translated from the Norwegian by Inger Collins

with verses in Act III. adapted by Alan Hunter

Characters in order of appearance:

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|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------------|
| PASTOR HALL | ... | ... | Jack Mitchley |
| ALBERTA, Arvik's second daughter | ... | ... | Bettina Hewlett |
| JOSEFA, her friend | ... | ... | Rosemary Eales |
| HELENE, Arvik's youngest daughter | ... | ... | Jill Williams |
| WILHELM ARVIK, a farmer | ... | ... | Kenneth Collins |
| ALVILDE, Hall's daughter | ... | ... | Marjorie Alford |
| FRU. ARVIK, Arvik's wife | ... | ... | Yvonne Mitchley |
| MARIA, her servant | ... | ... | ... Lyn Harris |
| KARL TONNING, a sea captain | ... | ... | Richard Morley |
| TWO PORTERS | ... | ... | Harry Edwards, Peter Graves |
| MARNA, Arvik's eldest daughter | ... | ... | Eileen Spraggon |

The action takes place in the garden of Arvik's farm house in the year 1909. As in many Norwegian farms, the buildings are scattered and one separate one is reserved for the daughters of the family. The time is high summer.

ACT I. Early morning.

ACT II. Later the same day.

ACT III. The next morning.

The Play produced by Yvonne Mitchley

Programme designed by Bettina Hewlett. Costumes by Laws. Wigs by Gustave. Lighting by Harry Edwards. Properties by Peter Graves. Prompter and understudy for tour: Angela Parkin.

There will be one major interval after Act I.

NOTES

BJØRNSTJERNE BJØRNSON (1832—1910)

In Norway, Bjørnson and Ibsen are regarded as equals—they are by far the best known “classic” writers; outside Norway, however, Bjørnson is very little read and hardly ever played. In direct contrast to Ibsen the lonely introvert, Bjørnson was a “man of the people,” taking part in everything that was going on in society, writing articles, novels, poems, plays and using his great gift for oratory—an April shower in the cultural life of his country. He was an uneven dramatist but several of his plays are just as highly regarded as any of Ibsen's.

WHEN THE NEW VINE BLOOMS (“Naar den ny vin blomstrer”)

This was his last play, published only one year before his death, but in many ways it is his “youngest” and, in reading and playing this text, it is difficult to remember that the date is 1909—not 1929! The title is part of a proverb—“When the new vine blooms, the old vine ferments”—and the theme the eternal one of youth and age, young girls falling in love with older men and vice versa—vitality, tears and laughter, April to the last day of December.

THE PRODUCTION

The play came to the Moot House Players notice when they were touring the *MERCHANT OF VENICE* in Norway in 1961; a translation was commissioned from a member of the company and two experimental performances were given in Harlow on April 8/9th, 1962. The success of these suggested that the play be given a wider audience and the present production is based closely on that of 1962. The exigencies of touring compel us to leave the setting to our audiences' imagination but we have attempted to clarify the rather un-English aspect of the Norwegian farm—the separate “quarters” for the daughters of the household—by our designer's programme cover. The production attempts to make this clear by utilising two entrances as widely spaced as possible by the width of the proscenium as this separation is important in the plot of the play.

