

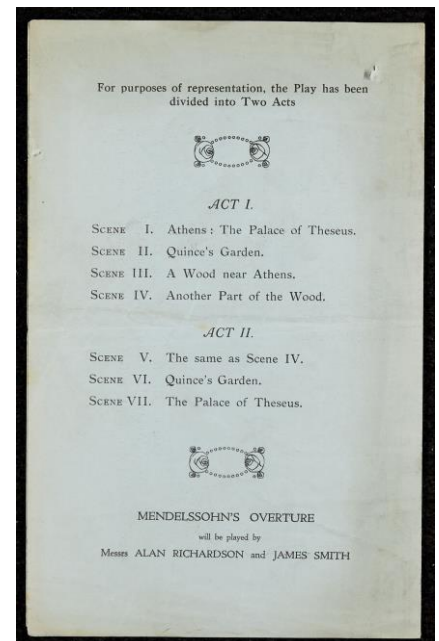
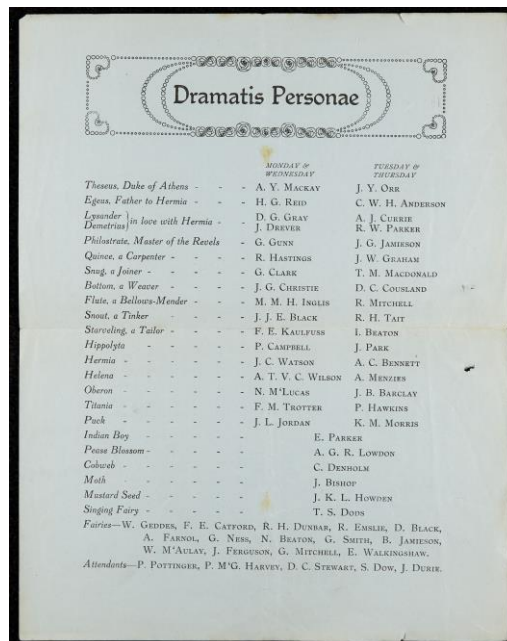
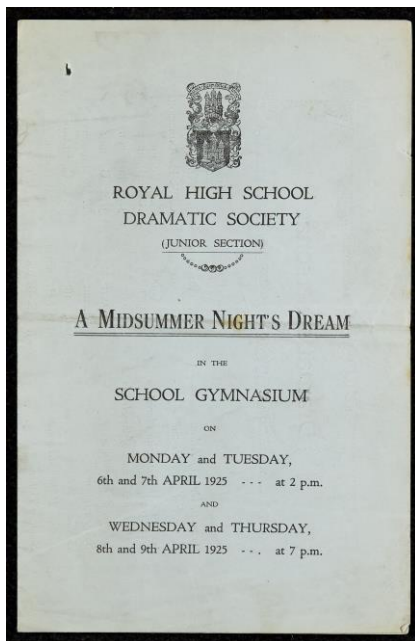
Drama at the Royal High School

Plays performed include a diverse collection; Shakespeare (several times), Sheridan and those authored by pupils feature here.

July 1921 – The Critic by Sheridan



April 1925 – A Midsummer Night's Dream



Summer 1925

The Pundit and the Potentate – a Musical Comedy in four acts

Written by High Scholars H H Wood and R H Westwater



Photo by "The Pandit and the Potentate," J.M.E. Curran Club.

The splendidly attired and grease-painted Actors in this 1925 all-School production – The Pandit and the Potentate

The Merry Wives of Windsor, 5th April 1926

Macbeth, 4th – 7th April 1927

Authors of Mischief (1948)

The sad tale of Baillie MacMorran versus the RHS Ruffians (led by William Sinclair)

SCHOLA REGIA 15

Dramatics At the end of the summer term, on the 19th and 20th of July, a three-act chronicle-play, written by David Platt (VIU) and Karl Miller (VA) was presented on the stage of the Junior School at Jock's Lodge. The theme of the play centred round the famous Baillie MacMorran incident: the shooting of a City Magistrate in 1595 by a High School pupil, William Sinclair, son of the Chancellor of Caithness. The play attracted much attention and on the second evening many would-be patrons failed to get seats. The Press—particularly *The Scotsman*—gave encouraging praise to authors and cast alike. The leading part of William Sinclair was played with great confidence and dash by Donald Ingham; Anthony Gooch as Hercules Rollock, the High School Rector, deeply impressed the audiences with the dignity of his performance. The vivacious colour of Ronald White's scenery added to the effectiveness of the stage action. Walter Dickson was the resourceful and indefatigable stage manager.

At the end of this term Mr. McAra will take to the Schools Winter Festival at the Cygnet Theatre a new one-act play—“Libertyman”—of which he himself is the author. The play deals with the reactions of “new entries” at a Royal Naval Establishment. In the cast are W. B. Aitken, W. W. Dickson, Donald Ingham, John Robson and Kevin Foley. Rehearsals are already well advanced, and the hue and cry has been raised for bellbottomed trousers.

“THE AUTHORS OF MISCHIEF”

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENTIRE CAST OF THE PLAY TAKEN DURING A DRESS REHEARSAL AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL
(By courtesy of "Evening Dispatch")

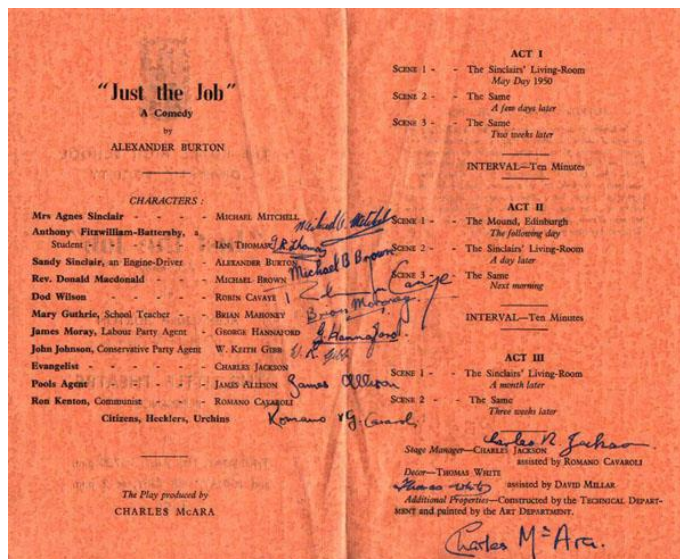
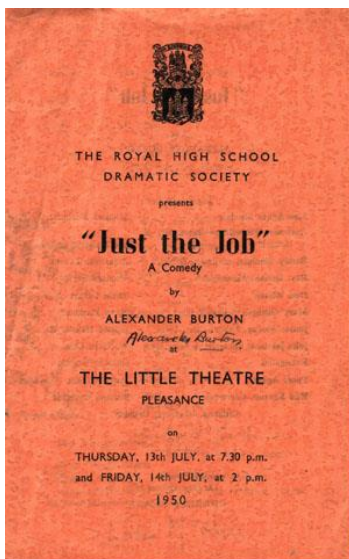
Icarus (or similar name) at the Gateway, circa 1949, written by Karl Miller

The lamp of the wicked, July 1949, Little Theatre

See report below

Just the Job, July 1950, Little Theatre

Pupil/actor Alexander Burton's 1950 tale of the engine driver trying to land the job of a £1000 a year MP
(These images courtesy of the RHS London Club)



SCHOOLBOY'S PART IN HIS OWN COMEDY

Sixth-form schoolboy Alexander Burton accomplished a big task when the Royal High School Dramatic Society presented his comedy, "Just the Job," in the Little Theatre, Edinburgh, last night.

He was on stage for a large part of the time contributing a major part to the success of the evening by his performance of Sandy Sinclair, an engine-driver, whose ambition is to land £1000-a-year job as a member of Parliament. He was in a position to realise to the full not only the "first-night" nerves of the playwright, but also those of the actor—and his performance was never dulled by strain.

In this "homely play in plain prose"—the author's own description—there is plenty ammunition of the light satiric type that has a refreshing flash-point of laughter. The school are fortunate not only in counting Alexander as a pupil, but in having in Brian Mahoney and Michael Mitchell two potential comedy artists of a high order. Last night they played the parts of women with real gusto and snap.

Another who put particular punch into his part was Robin Cavaye as Dod Wilson. To-night the Society present "The Ascent of F-6" in the same theatre.

"THE LAMP OF THE WICKED"

By PAUL HARPER

(Little Theatre—19th and 20th July, 1949)

A School play may be an end of session relaxation, a good-humoured entertainment. Sometimes it is a gallant attempt by a youthful cast to overcome their own limitations and to present a play like "Hamlet." Whatever the intention, whatever the degree of success, a school play rarely asks to be judged as drama.

Many ask little of a play except that it hold their attention, amuse them, distract their thoughts, and possibly refresh their spirits. Drama demands more. It must not merely catch the attention of the audience, it must engross them and impose itself upon their imaginations. Its purpose is not to flatter the spectator, but to awaken him; not to soothe him, but to exalt him; not to blind him to the harsh and foolish world outside the theatre, but to enable him to see that world more clearly.

The essence of such drama is conflict, conflict between one individual and another, discord between a man and his circumstances, tension between a man and himself. Drama poses the problem of this discord, often in simple terms of good and evil, and sometimes as a choice between evil and greater evil, or as the frustration of good by lesser good. The statement of the problem must be vivid and persuasive, the complication tense and provocative, the dénouement must be both inevitable and unexpected.

These are hard and exacting standards by which to judge a School play and it is the measure of the quality of "The Lamp of the Wicked" that it can be judged by no lower standards.

The action of the play was absorbing, imaginative, and credible. There was no simple clash of good and evil; the central figure was neither saint nor devil. He was a human being whose personal tragedy was to have the ambition to paint without the innate endowment of talent. The First Act opened so near a crisis in his life that there was little room to observe any inner deterioration. The temptation was quickly over, for his decision had already been made. The merit of this Act was that it swiftly posed the problem and created a situation instinct with dramatic possibilities.

The Second Act made explicit the deterioration in the character of the artist and indicated the lines of the imminent tragedy. The growing tension of the play was relieved by the scene in the art gallery, a brittle scene, potentially the weakest dramatic point of the play, which was saved by skilful production and by Roderick Graham's incisive, malicious portrait of an insufferable novelist.

The Third Act fully revealed the originality and maturity of the author's talent. The mounting tension was conveyed by variations in language, subtle shifts from the technical explanations and rationalisations of the psychiatrist to the shrill, heightened imagery of the outbursts of the artist and his shadow, and the sombre, prophetic comments of the old man.

Such a play made great demands on the principal players, and the acting and speaking of Donald Ingham, Anthony Gooch, Iain MacIntyre, was assured and polished. John Robson, Charles MacDowall, T. C. Craig, and the remainder of the cast gave admirable support. Walter Dickson was responsible for the smooth stage management and the ingenious lighting.

1949 Play 'Lamp of the wicked' written by pupil Paul Harper, produced by Hector MacIver

The ascent of F6 (1950)

Photograph of rehearsals in Schola Regia summer 1950

A window to the sea (1951)

"JUST THE JOB"



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENTIRE CAST OF ALEXANDER BURTON'S PLAY, TAKEN AFTER THE PERFORMANCES IN THE LITTLE THEATRE.

HEADS OF THE SINCLAIR HOUSEHOLD



ALEXANDER BURTON AS SANDY SINCLAIR IN THE LEADING ROLE. WITH HIM IS MICHAEL MITCHELL, WHO PLAYED MRS SINCLAIR.

1950 Play 'Just the Job' written and starring pupil Alexander Burton. Thespians of the future?

The Summer 1951 issue of Schola Regia had a cast photograph and description of Mr (Hector) MacIver's production of a three act play written by pupil Gordon Stephen of form Vx. Performed in the Gateway theatre, the critic described several convincing performances, but singled out one of the performers, Ivor Davie, as 'not too convincing' in the difficult role as Janet Begbie. In years to come, pupils from girls school including Mary Erskine's, were recruited to play the female roles.



Hamlet (1952)

Gateway Theatre, June 1952

Captain Brassbonds conversion GB Shaw (1952)

Gateway theatre, June 1952

The Doubtful misfortunes of Li Sing (1954)

Photograph in Schola Regia Easter 1954

The Lady's not for burning (22/23 June 1954)

Photograph and article in Schola Regia Summer 1954

Dr Faustus and Murder in the Cathedral (25/26 June 1954)

Photograph and article in Schola Regia Summer 1954

Falstaff and Prince Hal (1956)

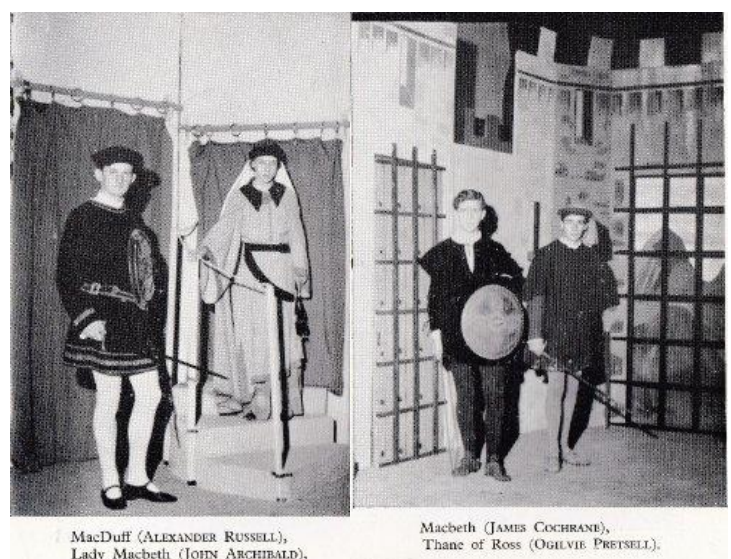
Gateway Theatre June 1956

Macbeth (1956)

Gateway Theatre June 1956



A well posed cast still photograph from the 1956 production of Falstaff and Prince Hal, Dr Cole's production, Alfie Crichton as Falstaff



The principles pose for the 1956 Hector MacIver production of Macbeth, James Cochrane and 'Lady' James Archibald in the title roles

Twelfth Night (1957)

Gateway Theatre 26/27 June; article and photos in Schola Regia Christmas 1957

Escapade (1957)

Gateway Theatre 28/29 June; article and photos in Schola Regia Christmas 1957

The advantages of paternity (May 1959)

Little Theatre, Pleasance; article in Schola Regia Summer 1959

Seagulls over Sorrento (June 1959)

Gateway Theatre, Leith Walk; article in Schola Regia Summer 1959

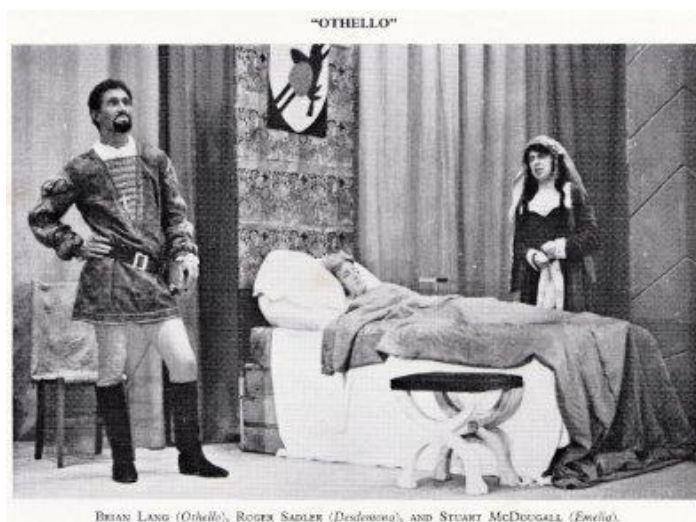
Coriolanus, 1962



The cast on the portico. Malcolm MacNicol, Mike Cichla, Peter Orr, Roy Cowper and others

Othello, 1964

With Brian Lang (the future Principal and Vice Chancellor of St Andrew's University) in the title role. There's another future talent involved – Cassio played by David Robb...



BRIAN LANG (*Othello*), ROGER SADLER (*Desdemona*), and STUART McDUGALL (*Emilia*).