

# A Limerickman's Diary

By OBSERVER

## "Where have all the players gone?"

Asks Actor

**A**CCORDING to actor Jimmy Queally, the live theatre is dead in Limerick. And he attributes this paradoxical situation to the inactivity of that one-time very energetic group, the College Players. For a number of years, Jimmy himself appeared in College Players productions, and this week was seen to superb effect in the City Theatre with the Southern Theatre Group in John B. Keane's "Hut 42" and "Sive."

Thousands of theatre fans from Limerick and its hinterland enjoyed the season of Keane imports by this Cork group. Asked for reasons why audiences crowded the City Theatre, Jimmy Queally explained: "Limerick playgoers have a liking for comedy; they like J. B. Keane's plays, and James Healy's production serves up a theatrical dish that brings them in."

Limerick in the theatrical field, Jimmy said, contrasts very unfavourably with Cork, which has, in addition to the Southern Theatre Group, The Everyman Theatre and the James Stack productions—all unfailingly supported by Cork theatre fans. In Limerick, the City Theatre—excellently equipped and with 1,000 seat capacity—awaits a group with an adventurous policy and an attractive list of plays.

But, Jimmy feels, while Limerick's lingering groups continue their fragmented efforts in a climate of narrow group loyalties which prevent a pooling of their best talents, this fine theatre will remain unused and local audiences starved of the good plays which they would enthusiastically welcome and support.

This year a commemorative stamp has been issued to celebrate the Eighth Hundredth Anniversary of St. Mary's Cathedral. As part of his varied theatrical career, Jimmy recalled with pride his appearances in the Cathedral's first Nativity Plays, under the

direction of Reverend Mat Lynne, some years ago.

### Appearances

In addition to many fine appearances with the College Players, he appeared in Rainbow and Michael Donovan-Schofield productions, before going to Cork, where he is on the Display Staff of The Queen's Old Castle Stores.

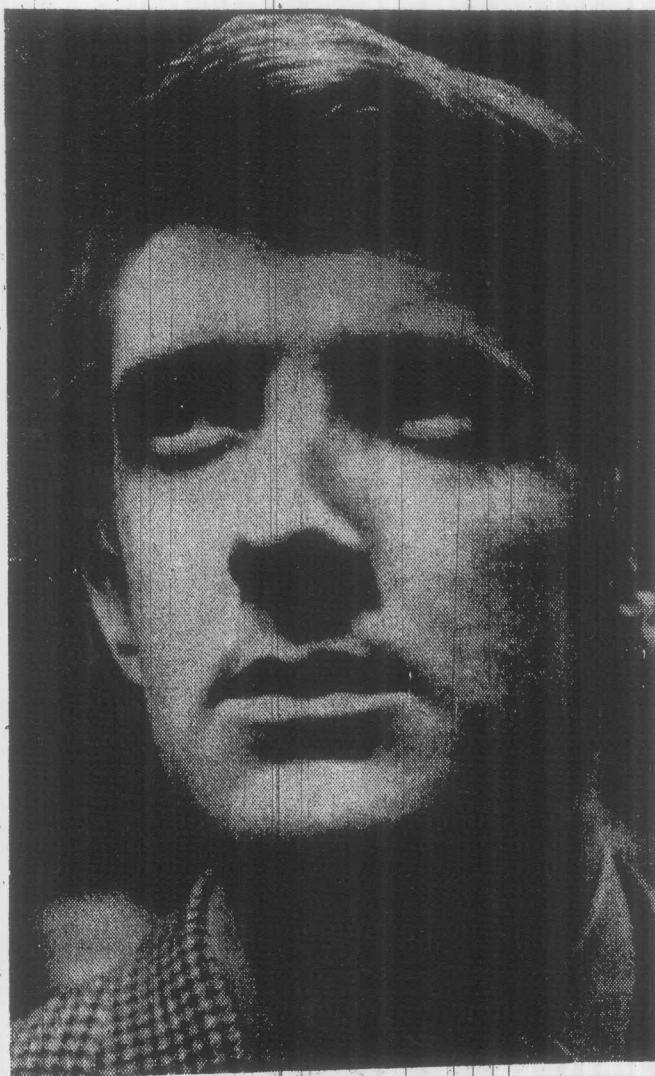
"A challenging experience," is Jimmy's description of his reading of many short stories from Cork's Radio Eireann studio.

With The Everyman Theatre he acted in their three weeks' run of "The Cherry Orchard," by Chekov, which he describes as one of his most satisfactory experiences.

With the James Stack productions he appeared in "Who Goes There?"

Shortly after going to Cork, Jimmy repeated his earlier experience in religious drama in Limerick's Cathedral, when he acted in an Eastertide Passion Play by Henri Gheon, in Saint Michael's—a Church of Ireland suburban parish church—in Blackrock, with some of Cork's best actors.

Jimmy and his attractive wife, Marie, have a two-year-old daughter, Sarah Elizabeth. A former member of the College Players, Marie last summer came and delighted the audience in the Turret Room, King John's Castle, with a reading of her own sensitive poems.



# TALENT AND IMAGINATION