

GYULA ILLYÉS: THE PURE

A tragedy in three acts

First performed October 29th 1970. VIGSZINHÁZ
Budapest. Directed by Zoltán Várkonyi. Sets
designed by Vihodyl Vladislav (Bratislava). Costumes
designed by Márta Jánoskuti. Music composed by
Sándor Szokolay.

14 male and 2 female parts.

The action takes place at Monsegur in 1242 and 1243.

This new work by Gyula Illyés, the
Kossuth Laureate poet and dramatist, is a medieval
knightly story, but at the same time a cautionary
tale for our own days. The stake of the drama is the
humanity of those involved; the struggle to remain
pure and not become blinded to one's faults either
in religion, or war, or love.

The Cathars, the "pure" are defending
the castle of Monsegur against attacks by the French.
Perella is the Constable of the Castle, his son-in-law
Mirepoix is his deputy. A deputation arrives that
demands surrender in the name of the Pope and the
King of France. Gerard is a member of this
deputation. He had earlier fallen in love with
Azalais, Perella's daughter, whom he had guarded
when she had been a hostage. The girl returns the

knight's feelings. The leader of the deputation wants to persuade Corba, the wife of the Constable to come with him, promising her that she would be able to escape and that her life would be spared. Corba on the other hand, who has pangs of conscience because of their earlier sinful relationship, wants to be one of the "pure." Perella, relying on outside help and political allies, does not surrender the castle.

The siege continues without success. The leader of "the pure" however, Bishop En Marty, prepares the faithful for a martyr's death. The leader of the besiegers, Pierre-Amiel, renews his attempt to persuade those in the castle to surrender; angered by his failure he betrays the mother's secret to the daughter. Perella defends his wife's honour, Pierre-Amiel must perish.

The expected succour fails to turn up, the castle must be surrendered. The "pure" proceed to the stake, and Corba, Perella's wife, joins them. Gerard is taken away as a traitor; and the chest where the writings of the heretics are kept is confiscated. Guillaume, the miller promises escape and a chance to fight again to Perella, but in vain. Despair is the Constable's lot.