

Two By Two

The Dock Brief

By **John Mortimer**

Enemies

By **Arkady Leokum**

Play no. 231

Opening show: 12/1967

Creative team

Hebrew By: Ada Ben-Nahum

Directed by: Reuven Morgan

Set and Costumes by : Amiram Shamir

Lighting by: Faiwel Har

Cast

Enemies:

Gittelman: Shmuel Segal

Miller: Reuben Singer

The Dock Brief:

Morgenhall (an unsuccessful barrister): Reuben Singer

Fowle (an unsuccessful criminal): Shmuel Segal

John Mortimer's play "The Dock Brief", takes place entirely in a cell under the Central Criminal Court in London: its two characters are Morgenhall, an unsuccessful barrister, and Fowle, an unsuccessful criminal. Fate has thrown these two together in as much as Morgenhall has been assigned the seemingly impossible task of defending Fowle on the charge of murdering his wife in cold blood and with malice aforethought. After years of sitting idle in court, Morgenhall has at last been handed a case: ironically enough, as he says to Fowle – "Not only are you my only client, you are also my most problematical". Together the two of them set about working out the various possible ways in which justice can be avoided and yet still be seen to be done, and in so doing develop a genuine friendship and sympathy one for the other. When the end comes it is as surprising as it is humorous, and as touching. In defining his own particular style of sad, witty comedy, Mortimer writes: "The tragic hero struggles with reality and is overcome: the comic hero slides on the real world like a banana skin. In both cases the fall represents a kind of victory".

Arkady Leokum, in "Enemies", with which we open the evening, also presents us with a close-knit relationship between two ageing men, but here, as the title implies, there is little room for mutual sympathy. Into the tiny arena of a third rate restaurant Leokum introduces his two characters – client and waiter – who are engaged in a permanent duel to the death. With a wit as icy as Mortimer's is heart-warming, Leokum plays out his bitter comedy of the bitter bit, and in doing so gives rise to many a thought on diners and waiters, on employers and employees, rulers and subjects, dictatorship and the oppressed. "Enemies" is a vendetta – and like all wars carried through to the end, each side needs the other in order to be able to kill.