

Youth
MASQUE
Theatre

the children's crusade

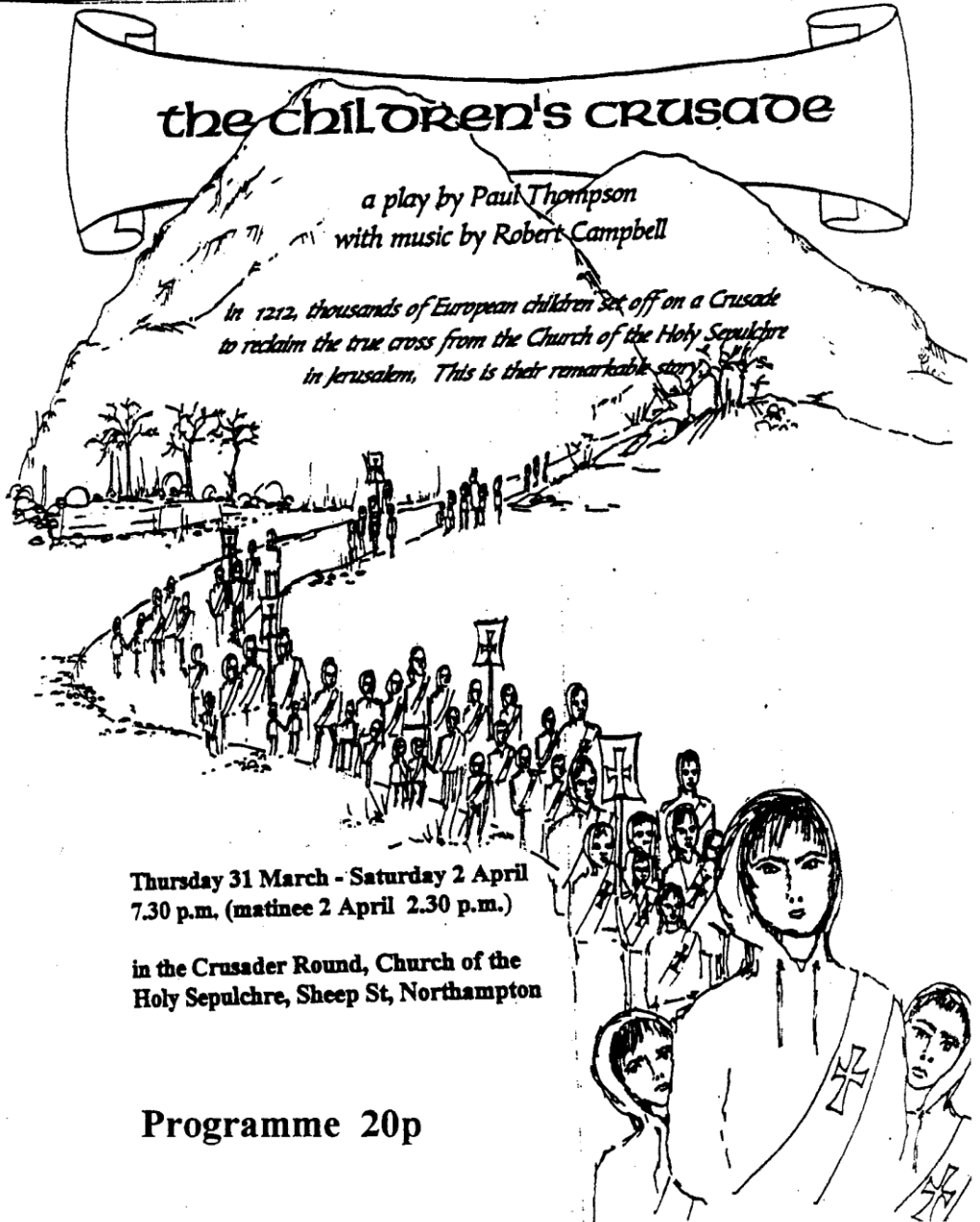
a play by Paul Thompson
with music by Robert Campbell

*In 1212, thousands of European children set off on a Crusade
to reclaim the true cross from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre
in Jerusalem. This is their remarkable story.*

Thursday 31 March - Saturday 2 April
7.30 p.m. (matinee 2 April 2.30 p.m.)

in the Crusader Round, Church of the
Holy Sepulchre, Sheep St, Northampton

Programme 20p



THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

This powerful and disturbing play, based on events which took place in the year 1212, was first performed by the National Youth Theatre in 1973, with a young Daniel Day Lewis in the cast of over fifty. It tells the story of one of two Children's Crusades which took place in that year, when thousands of children set off from France and Germany, to win back the True Cross (as they believed) from the city of Jerusalem. They set off full of hope, trust and idealism, convinced that they will succeed where the corrupt and bloody Fourth Crusade had failed, but they are soon brought face to face with the political and economic realities of the adult world. Many die on the way, many desert, some seek work and material prosperity, others turn to crime, a number are sold into slavery by unscrupulous merchants and a few return home with Nicholas, bitter against the God who did not help them in their "just" cause. Their homecoming is more terrible than they could have imagined. The play raises contemporary questions about whether the end justifies the means, about the human cost of a "holy war" and about the lessons of history.

The play is performed by a cast of forty young actors, directed by Ursula Wright, and the songs by Robert Campbell, arranged by Kay Warcaba, will be accompanied by a small ensemble of musicians. The Crusader Round in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre makes an apt and atmospheric setting for this unusual and timeless play.

Performances are on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 31st, April 1st and 2nd at 7.30 p.m. (with a matinee at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday). Tickets £5 and £4 (concessions) can be booked on 01604.406246 or 01604.401193 or obtained in person from the Visitor Centre, The Guildhall, Northampton. Early booking is recommended, as seating is limited to 90 per performance. Please note that due to the content of some scenes, the play is not suitable for children under the age of seven.

Masque Youth Theatre Productions

- 1998 Knock, Knock (an anthology)
- 1999 The Great Angel Bazaar (Wright/Wade)
- 2000 Zero Zero (Wright/York)
- 2001 The Caucasian Chalk Circle (Brecht)
- 2002 Shoeshine (a devised revue)
- 2003 The Birds (Aristophanes)
- 2004 Any Dream Will Do (a devised revue)

Masque Youth Theatre consists of young people aged 13+ from schools and colleges in Northamptonshire. There are no auditions. They meet for two hours each week to devise and rehearse the current production, as well as for drama games, exercises and improvisation. Many members take part in a week-long Summer School in August, (also open to non-members) staffed by professional actors, directors, voice and movement tutors. There is a Junior Group for children aged 10 - 12 years. Contact Ursula Wright on 01604.719365 for more information.