

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festivals
12th Festival 1971

THE STAGE AND TELEVISION TODAY

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QUESTORS FESTIVAL

THE FINAL programme of the 1971 Questors New Plays Festival, on June 22, was a double-bill consisting of Arnold Meyer's "**Bleach**," directed by Mike Custance, and "**Poor Dumb Animals**" by James Hepburn, directed by Cecil Hayter.

The first, set in small-town America and in the Vietnam war scene—atmospherically suggested by means of war film sequences—aims to explore the developing relationship of two young men, the Bleach of the title and his friend John, through the boredom of peaceful home life and the terrors and excitements of war. Unfortunately we know nothing new about human relationships in general and nothing interesting about the two characters in particular by the end of the play, and, as there is no plot, it all adds up to a sadly predictable anticlimax, although Michael Noakes and Alan Chisholm in the leads, like the director, brought a good deal of effort to trying to make it interesting

"**Poor Dumb Animals**" is trying to say something about ecology, environment and allied matters of grave concern through five little playlets which aim to be funny and quite often succeed.

The brevity and style of the first two put them rather in the category of revue sketches, which is an excellent idea, and "Duck" and "Cow" are pleasingly diverting. A visit to the underground world of the earthworms is mainly notable for a piece of clever production in which a triangular yellow light, representing a blackbird's beak, delves repeatedly into the dark scene and picks off members of the creepy cast.

"Ants in the Pants" does little more than show off some excellent movement ability, and "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird in Twelve Scenes" outlasts its interest by at least nine of them.

L.G.S.