

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

STAINES CHRONICLE

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QUESTORS NEW PLAYS

THE Questors' Festival of New Plays concluded last week with two short examples, **Bleach**, by Arnold Meyer, and **Poor Dumb Animals** by James Hepburn.

Mr. Meyer is an American, and Bleach is his first-ever play. He came over here to have his plays produced.

Bleach is one, the chief, of the play's three characters, the others being John, and Boy. It is an exposure of the war in Vietnam. Bleach is all for peace, but John "loves it" and gets back in to the fighting. Boy is a Vietnamese whom John kills with his bayonet.

It was splendidly acted by Michael Noakes as Bleach and Alan Chisholm as John. David Morris played the smaller part of Boy.

A feature was the integration of superb film sequences by John Stothart, showing some of the worst horrors of this dreadful war. The play was directed by Mike Constance.

Most of **Poor Dumb Animals** was very amusing, and Ken Ratcliffe, Don Starkey and Paul O'Connor, who had the largest parts, pointed and emphasised it for all they were worth.

The scenes were based on Wallace Stevens' poem, **Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird**. I thought the "Cow" scene touched the high watermark of humour and fun. The blackbird scenes, of course, were not meant for laughs, but were very attractive ballet.

The rest of the cast, who had to work very hard, and successfully, were Richard Lewis, Gillian Redhead, Barbara Butters, Val Caren, June Bowie, Diana Matthews, Roy Edwards and Peter McNamara.

Marie Kettle designed the attractive and amusing costumes.