

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festivals
13th Festival 1972

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CONFUSION WAS THE RESULT OF A 'NEW PLAY'

THE QUESTORS Theatre opened its New Plays Festival on Saturday with **Candlelight and Babylon**, an avant-garde work by Don Roberts.

At the post-performance discussion, the audience admitted to not understanding what the play was about—neither did this reviewer.

It appeared to be about the life of one man Toby, seen as a child, young sailor and old age pensioner.

But since in certain scenes Tobies of different ages appeared on stage together, there was understandable confusion. The confusion was added to by the fact that the same actress appeared as young Toby and as Toby's mother.

This was not the fault of the Questors, but was Mr. Roberts' intention, possibly because both young Toby and his mother represented youth and liberation, while the elder Toby represented age and repression.

Julia Cruttenden in the dual role of young Toby and his mother did well in exploiting the comic possibilities of the play, as did Philip Wright as the elder Toby.

It was in the relatively simpler scenes that Mr. Roberts' talent for comedy came through strongly.

Had he concentrated on this instead of borrowing "modernistic" theatre concepts from West Germany, it would have provided a more enjoyable and more understandable evening for his audience.

Under the direction of Jill Champion -Tolerance the Questors strove to bring clarity from the chaos, but the burden of the script proved too much. Although the Questors is to be praised for its ambition in producing new works, it would probably have been better not to have been so many steps ahead of the audience that they lost touch.

M.A.