

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festival
14th Festival 1973

THE ACTON GAZETTE
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A FAITHFUL PLAY ON WORDS

DON'T put your faith in writing young man. That may seem a strange thing to come from one who does just that all her working day but remember "How vain it is to sit down and write when you have not stood up to live."

That quotation came from a Christmas cracker but it might just as well have been the moral of David Mowat's play "My Relationship with Jayne", which had its first performance at the Questors last week.

It was the first of three plays in this year's Festival of New Plays at the Theatre.

Although Mr. Mowat and I may pull the same crackers his sense of humbug is a degree or two higher.

The greatest asset of the play was its subtle humour, a little too subtle for much of the audience, many of whom were sleeping off the first act.

The chief character of the play is Timon, played admirably by John Turner, a young writer shooting to fame through the inspiration of Jayne, whose instincts are a little baser than the flawless goddess she portrays in his work.

Jayne, Timon's literary agent, soon takes his mind off the business side of writing, invites herself into his bed one night and becomes a permanent fixture.

His relationship with Jayne is basically a business one, but her "attractiveness" gets in the way a little too often.

She becomes his wife, without her he cannot write, the flesh and blood being used only as a means to colour the virgin paper heroines.

Not surprisingly the nubile young wife seeks interest elsewhere and after a furtive roll under the dining room table with her ex-boss, Jayne runs off with her husband's publisher.

Mr. Danny promises her a life of luxury on the fat profits he has made out of Timon's prolific writing.

Timon, a few years the wiser, begins to take note of the advice of his dying father, that the audience is treated to in the opening of the play, and takes faith out of writing.

Deborah replaces Jayne and Timon begins a relationship with reality.

Although almost painfully slow to start, the second half of the play is worth the wait. Ken Ratcliffe's portrayal of Mr. Danny, a disgusting business man but none-the-less likeable, is excellent.

His philosophy is probably summed up in the line, "Inspiration is in the bottom of a glass, preferably a full one."

Caroline O'Reilly's performance as Jayne is equally as good as her two fellow actors. The three manage to create a repartee that establishes the relationship each of them enjoys with the others without long screeds of dialogue.

The direction of the play, as I always find at the Questors, is imaginative. Director Brian Watson uses still photographs projected onto the back drop to establish time lapses and there is no furtive scene changing in the dark.

Philippa Bryant