

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festivals
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THE SPORT OF DREAMERS

IS writing a substitute for living, an excuse for opting out of active participation? Is it a worthy, worthwhile occupation, or the sport of dreamers?

Timon, the young writer hero of **My Relationship With Jayne**, one third of the Questors' New Plays Festival, is a vague, idealistic character, whose only interest or talent lies in the formation of words.

He is a compulsive writer, seeing everything in pretentious literary terms, even the death of his father, who urges him repeatedly not to put his faith in writing.

Undaunted by his father's scepticism, Timon presents his magnum opus to a literary agent called Jayne, younger than he and coolly attractive. She turns it down, on the grounds that it's not commercial enough.

Jayne's boss, a callous, amoral character called Mr. Danny, urges Timon to write commercial pulp like Parker, his best-selling author.

Timon does as he is told and he is soon raking in the money and winning the admiration and love of Mr. Danny and Jayne.

What he doesn't suspect, being a naïve and idealistic fellow, is that neither Jayne nor Mr. Danny is remotely sincere or genuinely interested in him.

PRESSURES

You get the impression that David Mowat's play is born out of bitter experience—of literary agents, women and other pressures that plague the writer.

He is inclined to ramble from one thing to another without developing any one theme to its logical conclusion.

Not that it's necessary to be logical or conclusive nowadays, but I did feel that "My Relationship With Jayne" was a little too disjointed for its own good.

John Turner as Timon, the catalytic hero, wanders through the play like a lost scene-shifter, occasionally bursting into animated action, usually when angry, but for the most part subdued to the point of insignificance.

This makes Ken Ratcliffe's performance as Mr. Danny, the supercilious agent, all the more welcome for its brash forcefulness.

Caroline O'Reilly is well cast as Jayne. She manages to appear both unnervingly efficient and disarmingly sexy.

Watch On the Works, the second of the Questors' newplays, is a most unusual play about an old man who puts his faith not in writing, but in a gasometer!

Isolated on a moor outside a town, the old man is dedicated to the monstrous metal container he guards day and night. He has even invested it with human feelings and powers. If it is offended, it will retaliate he maintains.

The gasometer's human properties are put to the test when a man arrives to paint the framework around the monster. When he attempts to fasten a ladder to the framework, the painter loses his footing and falls to the ground, injuring his leg. The watchman refuses to summon a doctor and threatens the painter with a gun when he tries to call for help.

David Waterhouse's set, dominated by the throbbing, groaning gasometer, is most effective and undoubtedly helps create the Frankenstein's laboratory atmosphere of the play.