

The Questors Theatre Archives
Questories
New Plays Festivals
15th Festival 1974

THAMES VALLEY THAMES

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AHEAD OF HIS TIME

For the second offering in their New Plays Festival, Questors of Ealing have come up with **The Last Analysis** by Roland Bowden, about the life and work of Wilhelm Reich, the unsung hero of "the sexual revolution."

Way back in the thirties Reich was advocating free birth control and contraceptive advice, universal sex education and no persecution of homosexuals.

He also believed that sex was the driving force of the universe, that its beneficial properties were unlimited.

Continual rejection turned his theories into obsessions, and he died in an American institution in 1957, having achieved virtually no recognition whatever.

Roland Bowden's play does not seem very enthusiastic about Reich as a man—he appears boorishly humourless and intense—but Mr. Bowden obviously considers him a worthy subject for cool consideration.

He worked with Freud for 12 years, until the two fell out, and he was also involved with Einstein for a while. Both legends appear in the play—Freud as a tweed-suited robot, and Einstein as a cuddly old Guru.

Reich's main problem seemed to be that he took himself far too seriously, so that everyone else regarded him as a crank. Any revolutionary needs credibility as well as conviction.

It seems fairly certain that he had difficulty in personal relationships, since he fell out with all his colleagues as well as three wives. He was haunted by childhood influences and traumas.

David Gower's stylish production may be slow at times, but it retains interest in a man whose life work was obviously more appealing than the man himself.

Reich is played by John Wilson as a young man and John Wilbourn as an older man, undergoing psychiatric treatment. Peter Holmes plays the sympathetic psychiatrist.

The other new play, **A Borderline Case** by Harry Barton is a light-hearted romp about Ireland, written by an Irishman, which might explain the confusion of themes. One minute it seems to be about the situation in Ulster, the next about class distinction, and the next about women's lib.

The result is a likeable mess, with Tom Pritchard and Chris McDermott giving full-blooded performances as rival Micks from either side of the border, and Barbara Hutchins stealing scenes, right and centre as a delightfully eccentric county Irishwoman.