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'MOONFACES' ENJOY A MULTI-LEVEL

ON THE SURFACE, "A Borderline Case" was a very funny, thoroughly Irish play. My initial misgivings faded as the capricious Irish confusion on an insidiously irritatingly affectionate scale took over.

Set in 1944, the comical story dealt with a young unmarried couple travelling from Belfast to Dublin to meet the young man's parents.

The familiar situation of a play within a play caused the main brunt of the action coming from M'Masters, a Belfast man (Tom Pritchard) and his "friend" Mooney, a Dubliner (Chris McDermott).

The constant verbal battle between these two was most amusing. Tom Pritchard's contact with the audience—"his moonfaces"—was charming.

His references to "bloody Dublin characters" and description of Southern Ireland as an "emergency land" caused previous stoney faces to roar with laughter.

But the deviously intricate underlying story, acted out by M'Masters and Mooney, showed the present Irish situation in a horrifically real light.

The young couple, Henrietta, a Scots girl (Lyn Langridge) and her Irish lover Colin (Michael Loughman), finally arrived. Home was an inevitable chaotic place. Colin's scatty mother (Barbara Hutchins) made excuses for her "daughter-in-law's" bare fourth-finger-left-hand, whilst his father, a Dean (John Robb), was as much "in touch with this planet as a toy balloon in a Force Ten gale."

Colin and Henrietta finally got married and on their return journey to Belfast they smuggle in a pram.

Once again in Belfast, the "ugly island with its smiling liars" takes over. Mooney tells them they have unknowingly smuggled in a bomb as well.

The lights dim with M'Masters and Mooney, now extremists, pointing guns at each other with the ticking bomb at their feet. "It would be funny but for the blood."

The author Harry Barton should be complimented for a fine multi-level play. The set and the players improvisatory style was convincing

C.F.