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ACTON GAZETTE

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QUESTORS FLOUNDER IN POLITICAL DEPTHS...

ONE MAN'S life, from the sweat of an iron foundry to the toil of involving himself in 19th century radical movements, is taken on by two actors in John Norman's new play Agitator.

The task is a daunting one to even the most experienced actor, and Questors seem to have been a little too ambitious for the first time in many plays.

Robin Ingram plays the part of the young George Jacob Holyoake, an enlightened radical who lived from 1817 to 1906 and whose own words form an important part of the play.

The second actor, Tony Barber, plays Holyoake from death to birth and this separation allows for the changing nature of George Holyoake's character to be explored.

In addition to this internal conflict, there is a clash between the two actors who during "improvisations" work out their own opposing attitudes to Holyoake and to each other.

As well as playing Holyoake and "themselves" the actors take it in turn to act various people whom Holyoake met during his life.

Obviously there are a great many lines to learn, and a great many parts to play — too many, in all frankness, for an amateur acting company.

The play is about politics; it is intended to move, entertain and bring laughter to its audience. Certainly there were some very amusing sequences and the dialogue came like flashes of lightning, striking the audience before they had time to object. As such, it inevitably stimulates real political discussion.

But these assets are due to playwright John Norman whose ability with words is no amateur talent.

Robin Ingram and Tony Barber both worked hard for the production and their efforts did not go unnoticed by the audience. Their acting ability is in no way lacking in view of their experience.

But Agitator is a deep and philosophical masterpiece, few actors could do it justice. Questors did not altogether succeed.

Claudia Cooke