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EALING GAZETTE

25 March 1977

ALAS, POOR BARD—LOOK WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO YOUR LIFE

by Jackie Whitburn

ALAS, poor Will would turn in his grave if he knew about the Questors' Theatre production—*Early Shakespeare and The Late Marlowe*—and quite rightly so.

The script could have been saved by the cast, but as it was, most of the light relief was a chamber pot that turned up periodically on stage. But even that grew tiresome in the end.

It was Questors member Michael Moriarty's first dabble with playwriting and for sheer imagination-run-wild he deserves credit.

But sadly the overall effect was slow-moving.

Simon Surtees as William Shakespeare, tried hard but, he needs practice and that is all this play gave him.

The opening scene shows Shakespeare in bed with Miranda, then trails off into a bizarre set of noises and three-second scenes, which see Christopher Marlowe—played by Paul Collins—killed in James Bond style.

Now dead, Marlowe turns up again alive under Shakespeare's bed, and thus begins the plot.

Collins must receive credit for his acting. His voice was powerful and clear and showed some expression.

Sue Sotheran, playing the seemingly inexpressive Miranda, doubled up as Lady Wriothsley.

She is trying to get her homosexual son, Henry, married off to produce a family heir—but he is more interested in Marlowe.

Shakespeare writes sonnets for Henry because his mother has promised to get them published.

Lady Wriothsley was a good part to play—the classic pompous, pushy aristocrat—and Sue Sotheran did so competently.

It was also easy to overdo Henry, as Clifford Overton did admirably.

Marlowe comes up with the answer—Henry should marry Miranda, and William should produce the heir for the Wriothsley family and carry on his affair with Miranda.

In the meantime there is a battle going on between William and Marlowe, who was also once Miranda's lover. William eventually agrees, with some persuasion from Bill Kemp, also played by Clifford Overton, that Marlowe can join his theatre company as an actor.

And to top it all, there was no interval.

I noted I was not the only person to come out muttering: "Is it just me, or was it a bit peculiar?"

Early Shakespeare and The Late Marlowe is one of those tedious plays where the audience is left wondering if it is the end.

Alas, poor Will. It is just as well you are not around to see it.

Performances are at the Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, tomorrow, Tuesday and Friday.