

The Questors Theatre Archives

Questories

[Fourth New Plays Festival 1963](#)

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THEATRE

by Kenneth Tynan

The Questors of Ealing, those aristocrats of amateur acting, are presenting a festival of new plays at their theatre in Mattock Lane, W.5. It consists of three programmes; of the two I saw, I hesitate to recommend **The Things**, by Colin Finbow, a full-length piece about a flat filled to bursting-point by a pair of newly weds, their multitudinous possessions, and the wife's father, a shiftless conjurer with homosexual leanings. Realistically handled, this might have promised well; but the author opts for fantasy, borrowing modishly from Pinter and Ionesco.

Programme two, a triad of one-acters, strikes off with James Saunders's **Who Was Hilary Maconochie?**, a laboured tilt at Edwardian formality: two elderly widows turn their regular weekly tea-party into a baroque display of mutual bitchery. There is a lot of polysyllabic humour, a maid straight out of "The Skin Of Our Teeth," and a resplendently fussy performance by Dorinne Ingram, than whose impersonation of Edith Evans I have heard many worse by the Dame herself.

Bitter joking

After **Don't Wait For Me**, a thin-blooded novelette by David Campton, Mr. Saunders returns refreshed with **The Pedagogue**, in which a querulous teacher, lecturing his pupils 10 years hence on the absolute necessity of trusting those in authority, is interrupted by a sun-darkening flash that marks the outbreak of nuclear war. The joking is bitter and even poignant; but a subject as dwarfing as the Bomb demands something infinitely grander in the way of irony and indignation. Abraham Cowley was probably right when he said: "A warlike, various, tragical age is best to write of, but worst to write in."

