

The Questors Theatre Archives

Questories

Fifth New Plays Festival 1964

Unidentified Press Cutting

A THIRD NEW PLAY AT THE QUESTORS

THE last of the trio of new plays in the Ealing Questors' festival, "The Surrey Recruit", is billed as a comedy and concerns the vetting of a run-of-the-mill suburbanite for his usefulness to an unexplained secret organisation. This information we are given in the last few minutes of the final scene, and for the rest of the play we have to witness a succession of apparently lunatic illogicalities, which occasionally give rise to some humour.

The cast is probably the most competent of the three festival groups, with John Holbrook as the victim and June Judson, as his wife, both giving markedly good performances.

Ned Gethings and Dorinne Ingram, as the two most-successfully drawn of Fred Watson's characters, portrayed with just the right tone a couple living almost parallel lives to the main characters, and when they were on stage there was some legitimate comedy with several well-turned lines.

Frank Di Rienzo and Ruth Lister completed the cast with capable performances.

Aimless Chatter

The New Plays Festival as a whole has suffered as a result of the playwrights' own inability to merge the literary and dramatic aspects of their works. These should be inseparable, but Albert Bermel's "One Leg Over the Wrong Wall" proved to be little more than aimless chatter, and "The Surrey Recruit," although by no means so blatant suffered also from a paucity of dramatic power or feeling.

It was left to Dannie Abse's "Is the House Shut?" to uphold the reputation of the festival. It is a work of emotional and intellectual value and is worthy of the consideration of a wider audience.

R.W.