

## **The Questors Theatre Archives**

### **Questories**

### **Sixth New Plays Festival 1965**

County Times (Douglas McVay) 25 June 1965

#### **Festival plays were not from the top drawer**

THIS has been not the most rewarding Questors Festival to date, for not a single work of genuine quality has emerged.

Kon Fraser's "The Igloo" endeavoured to explore the relationships between a 60-year-old chair-ridden widow, her husband's 50-year-old ex-mistress, the widow's mentally retarded 40-year-old son, and a poetry-penning hard-swearing 13-year-old girl.

A writer of the stature of Ibsen in "Ghosts," or Steinbeck in "Of Mice and Men," is needed to prevent such material from being a mixture of melodrama and sentimental whimsy. Unhappily, Miss Fraser is not that writer.

Alfred Emmet, directing at Mattock-lane, helped to draw a lively portrait from Sandra Wainwright-Fahey, a fresh young face, although the girl's character was made too sophisticated by the author.

#### **'HOLY FOOL'**

Roy Grant was set a similar problem in playing the son, who appeared an excessively Dostoevskian "holy fool."

Mary Jones handled a Shaftesbury-avenue "other woman" role (all wan silences, bitter little smiles, edged repartee and lonely visits to French films) in Elizabeth Sellars style, and I was sorry to see that sterling actress Jo Arundel make her long-delayed return to the Questors in so thankless a part as the possessive, invalid matriarch.

Charles Hatton's "The Shed" was a tolerable, but flimsy, Cockney farce, directed by Roger Saxton Howes. Nice performances from Harry Ives as a cloth-capped, grizzled old grumbler, Sheila Bray as a head-scarved termagant of a next-door neighbour and Estelle Hampton as a busty teenage teaser.

#### **ONLY VIRTUE**

As for the late-night revue, "Ooh!" (written by Vincent McQueen, with additional contributions from James Saunders, Michael Green, Eric Kirby and Don Kincaid, and produced by Laurence Nixon), almost its only virtue, to my mind, lay in its being pro-Audrey Hepburn and anti-Julie Andrews: and even there it over reached itself by hopefully but mistakenly suggesting that Audrey sings in the movie of "My Fair Lady."

Among the artistes, Michael Green, Carla Craik and Alan Drake were, alas, not present, but Joan Pyle, as ever, had the right extravagance and Kay Eldridge sang with a touch of verve.

DOUGLAS MCVAY