

The Questors Theatre Archives

Questories

7th New Plays Festival 1966

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Questors New Plays Festival

THE first play in the Ealing Questors Festival of New Plays opened on Saturday last: Malcolm Quantrill's "What Really Happened to Fidelity Hope?"—a question that could not possibly be answered and certainly doesn't seem to be by the play very convincingly.

Stylistically—? A mixture of Pinter, James Bond, Modesty Blaise, Durrenmatt, N. F. Simpson and not least, Barbara Cartland. The story line involves Fidelity Hope and her double, her fiancé of 12 years, a camp, pretty-boy servant and secret agents and double agents. Assaults both physical and sexual are performed as are bizarre switches of identity. Pregnant pauses abound. If confusion seems to be clearing then in comes another red herring.

This is another of those plays whose basic idea is admirable but has been lost in the welter of would-be Blaises and Bondisms.

The direction tended to be a pastiche of a highly stylised form of acting—a sendup of a sendup perhaps.

On Sunday last, as the second in their trio of new plays, the Questors presented John Hearne's "The Golden Savage". This is a play, via Mary Renault and Robert Graves, which retells the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. In this version of the Classic tale the Grecian prince isn't quite the golden boy of legend. He is represented as a swaggering youth with longings for responsibility and kingship and who, because of these longings, becomes, remotely, a patricide.

Old King Aegeus is no firm ruler but more of a doddering old woman. Mr. Hearne has given smart little dabs here and there to a very familiar theme and given it new interest without inconsiderate warpings.

The writing is full of pertinent social comment for the period and ironic humour. It takes a pseudo-classical form although the play's content unmasks some of the soldier bits of myth. For example, Mr. Hearne has made the Minotaur not an animal but a withered old crone who devours the flesh of his victims after they have starved to death

P.W.B.