

The Questors Student Group
 Three One-Act Plays
 February 1966

Press Reviews

Middlesex County Times
 4 March 1966

THREE PLAYS THAT DIDN'T COME OFF

With the best will in the world, I have to report that, in the Questors' students' triple-bill, directed by Michael Hoddell last week, I found the first segment wrongheaded and inadequate; the second ineffably dull; and the third, unentertainingly trivial.

The saddest failure was the opening piece, Pinter's "A Night Out," since it was the only good play of the trio. Pinter is one of those dramatists (Racine and Noel Coward are others) who positively demand a particular, rigid form of stylization in performance, by virtuoso actors alert to every demi-semi-quaver of class-consciousness, sarcasm, colloquialism, verbal poetry, sexuality, and threatened violence in the author's scrupulous text.

The secret of Pinter's art is that his apparently naturalistic writing is in reality subtly and mesmerically formalised. Played accordingly, "A Night Out" is a painfully gripping study of an over-mothered youth.

For the naively old-fashioned naturalism of the Questors' production, which reduced the drama almost to the level of a henpecked music-hall joke, I'm inclined to blame less Mr Hoddell than the limitations of the student cast.

POSSESSIVE

Jillyann Healy sketched a strident, shallow and unconvincing cartoon idea of a possessive older woman, whilst James Harrop, as her son, similarly sounded a single caricatured note of gaucherie, missing the character's deepest frustrations and eruptive savagery.

The rest of the evening was Mediterranean, with a vengeance. Lamb tried all his life to like Scotsmen: I have been trying for a fair slice of mine to like Pirandello. But he still appears to me to beat Beckett by a neck (Beckett's neck buried in sand, of course) for the wooden spoon as the twentieth century's most criminally overrated playwright.

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"The Other Son" is a peasant melodrama, chock-a-block with black-shawled old cronies sitting doomily around stirring stews and the cast was quite unable to prevent it seeming the swiftest soporific since second.

UNFUNNY

The same sentiments applied, too, to the last item of this eminently forgettable three-decker: "The Red Velvet Goat" (yes, goat, not coat: such is the quality of the humour), by one Josephina Niggle. A doggedly unfunny tale of ham Thespians, it only served to remind us (as if we needed the reminder) how genuinely funny are the mechanicals of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The Mattock-lane Thesps postured through it with a stentorian and in-

In your garden week by week

IT is surprising how many weeds can grow during the winter season. While the weather is still too cold to get down to any real sowing programme outside, it gives you a good opportunity to work around the garden, and clear away some of the debris.

It will be no good trying to bury the weeds; they will have to be picked up, so gently fork the ground over, taking care not to disturb any surface rooting plants too much.

Some smaller plants may have got loosened by the frosts during the winter. These should be well firmed back into the ground. Re-stake where necessary, and check all your ties—particularly on wall-shrubs.

The constant wet weather will cause string to rot, and then your plants will be without support when it is needed. Generally clear away rubbish and burn to remove any chance of disease spreading.

THEY MET AT LUNCHEON

Fifty members of Central Section, Ravenor Ward, Ladies Section, of the Conservative Party attended a luncheon at Conservative Headquarters last Thursday when Mrs. G. J. Ebsworth, ward chairman, presided.

Following the luncheon, Cllr. Mrs. Elsie Prodham, a Perivale Ward Councillor and president of the section, addressed members on her work as an Ealing Borough councillor and answered questions. The talk was followed by a film show provided by a firm of notepaper manufacturers.

People in

Shirley will be Head

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DOUGLAS McVAY