

Czapa

By Janusz Krasinski

Czarowna Noc

By Slawomir Mrozek

Play no. 222

Opening show: 30/10/1966

Hebrew by: Shulamit Har-Even

Directed by : Reuven Morgan

Setting and Costumes by : Oded Peleg

Cast Czapa

Kuzma: S. Friedman

Ohlesh: S. Segal

Gaoler: I. Rubinchik

Cast Czarowna Noc

Comrade: S. Segal

Dear Comrade: S. Friedman

Third Party: B. Aviezer

The Plays

In recent years much has been heard, though little seen, of the Polish theatre and its achievement. In this evenings performance Habimah presents two examples of contemporary Polish playwrighting introduced to the theatre by its artistic director Professor Berdini. Both are comedies, both based largely on a relationship between two men: but whereas Czapa is the work of up and coming newcomer, Janusz Krasinski, Czarowna Noc is an example of the work of the acknowledged king of Polish playwrights Slawomir Mrozek, whose work - especially the full length play Tango is now performed in repertory throughout the world.

The most unbeatable form of anarchy has always been humorous and strict governmental rule has always provided a breeding ground for satire. Both of this evenings comedies present a sidelong glance at the ways of the Establishment, and both conceal beneath their brilliant dialogue a searching wit and a disenchanting philosophy.

In Czapa, by Yanush Krasinski, the two principal characters, Kuzma and Olesh, have been condemned to death for murder several years before the play starts. However they have succeeded in postponing the hanging by the unique trick of continually confessing to additional killings. Thus each time there must be a new investigation, a new trial, and a further sixty days must elapse before the sentence can be carried out. Killing as a means of retribution leads to killing in order to attain a stay of execution and human life is reduced to a value of sixty days, as both Olesh and Kuzma eventually find out.

As against Krasinski's black comedy, Mrozek, in Czarowna Noc presents us with two government clerks, with a slight but decisive difference in rank

struggling to preserve the principles of comradeship and equality whilst having a hotel room overnight. The almost smooth face of bureaucratic good manners however, becomes decidedly disfigured when a mysterious third person appears in the room in the small hours. In the face of such a dilemma, theorizing immediately gains the upper hand over logical action, and the two enter upon nightmare of conjecture and logic run mad. If the situation seems unreal, then it must be a dream – the insoluble question remains, whose dream is it? When normality finally returns the only way in which order and sanity may be preserved is by a tacit agreement, as it were, to destroy the records and deny the event. Where past history cannot be made to fit current philosophies, it is history which must emerge the loser.