

Theatrical Review:

Almost Couldn't Stand 'Fall'

By Bill Moser

We could almost not stand to watch "After the Fall," written by Arthur Miller and directed here by E. Glendon Gabbard.

No one can stand to see a man's soul torn apart.

THE FAULT lay neither with the actors, nor with the direction, nor, in fact, with the play. No fault existed in that context at all.

Of course, there were a couple of flubbed lines, and there were moments of first night jitters.

The play searched for truth in a man's soul. Perfectly honest with himself, Quentin, played by Mike Drake, relived brutal scenes from his childhood and found himself by being brutally honest.

GABBARD HANDLED a large cast — there were 25 — well.

Supposedly largely biographical of Miller's relationship with Marilyn Monroe, the play was handled in that way.

Peggy Johnson as Maggie — MM? — had all the mannerisms of the much-publicized beauty. The tragedy of her life and death and relationship with Miller helped elucidate the truth that

tore his soul.

WE FELT sorry for Phyllis Bartges, who, as Felice, had to wear a bandage on her nose for the entire two and a half hour performance.

The entire plot revolved around the cruelty of Quentin's mother. All strings twined back to her. And she, Carol Smith, had some rather good lines: "QUENTIN! Don't play with matches or you'll pee in bed."

Pam Johnson, as Quentin's first wife, showed promise. The part, however, showed her only as the shrew.

BUT IT WAS Drake who, although he sounded somewhat like Chester Good, held the show together.

Doug Koertge's costumes showed originality and creativity.

But Peter T. Vagenas' set only repeated the pattern of every play this year. In the entire year, not one set has utilized the full depth of the stage.

NOR HAS ONE been bounded by the edge of the stage. Don't beat a gimmick to death.

A final comment: One doesn't win friends and influence reviewers by giving them two tickets in different parts of the theatre.

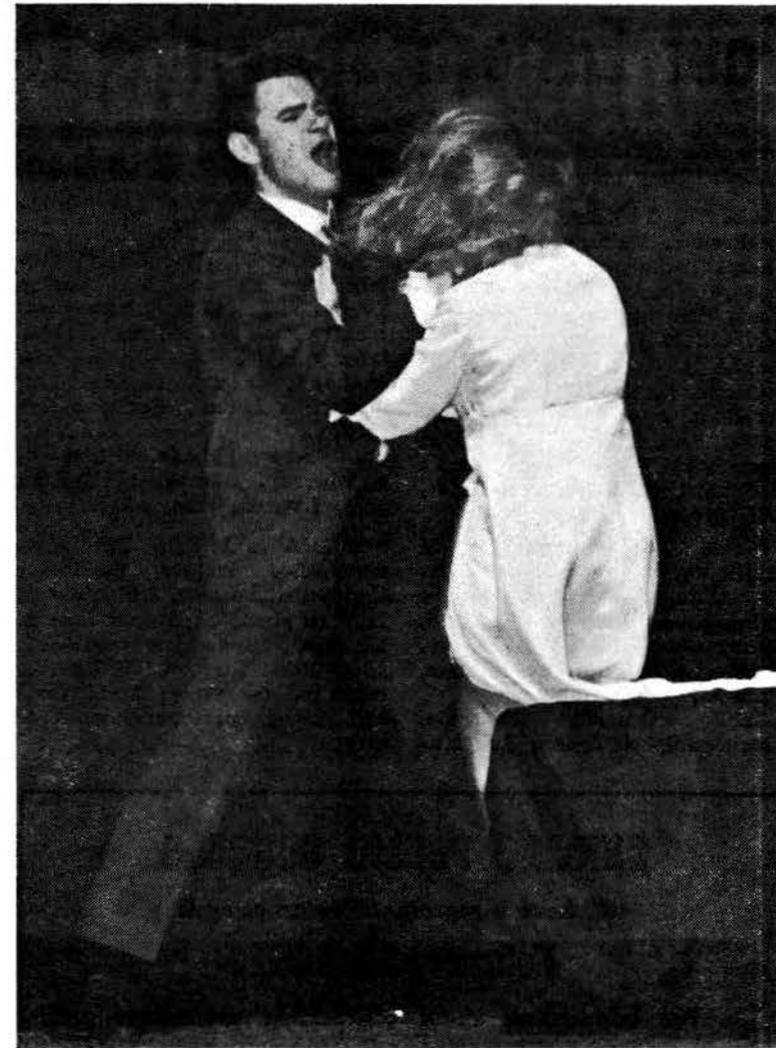


Photo by Betty O'Neal

Before The Fall

Mike Drake, as Quentin, struggles with Maggie, played by Peggy Johnson, to prevent her from committing suicide by taking an overdose of barbituates. The scene is from the recent production of Arthur Miller's "After the Fall."