

Synergic Theater premieres 'Lost' tonight

Many people have rewritten history, but few have produced results as delightful as those presented by David Manning last night.

Manning wrote "Lost" for the 10th anniversary season of Synergic Theater. The work premieres tonight, but a small audience saw a sneak preview of the work at a dress rehearsal last night at the Ark on Duke University's East Campus.

A Review

In "Lost," which is presented in cooperation with the British American Festival, Manning intertwines the story of Virginia Dare and the Lost Colony with the Greek myth of Iphigenia.

Iphigenia was the daughter of Agamemnon, who sacrificed her in order to get favorable winds for the fleet to sail to Troy. Manning finds similarities between the two stories, noting that Dare was sacrificed while her grandfather, John White, battled the Spanish Armada.

The ideas and interplay between the stories that he presents are intriguing and, quite often, very funny.

When they premiered at the US/USSR Summer Arts Festival in Durham 10 years ago, Synergic Theater used a large, proscenium-size shadow-screen. The company returns to that medium with "Lost."

The huge screen fills the Ark from the ceiling to the floor. The imagery presented on the screen was diverse: dancers' shadows, projections (of slides, photographs, drawings) and lights interplay from behind the screen. Most exciting are the dancers' silhouettes, changing size and effect as they move.

Whether dream-like or resembling film animation, a sense of wonder and intrigue was sustained throughout the piece, which caused the audience to sit on the edge of their chairs, or lean left or right, in order to better see the changing images.

The sound imagery was just as diverse. The piece used a taped collage of music created from works of contemporary North Carolina composers — relying heavily on works by John Gromada — and the voices of local talents such as Lee Connor, Duke's dancer-in-residence, and

Robert Ward.

"Lost" is divided into three parts: Iphigenia in Roanoke; *Vogue*, 1938 — Special Issue: Virginia Dare; and Ginny, Lost, 1984. Manning plays with the notion of what happened to Dare, the first English child born in the New World, after she and the entire colony disappeared. Dare was not lost, Iphigenia/Virigina tells us — they just couldn't find her.

Manning created and directed the piece in collaboration with Suzanne White Manning and Anne Deloria, Carol Fike, Katrina Stevens, St. Clair Williams and Raymond Fike.

Anne Fike danced a brief solo, full of charm and wit. After a brief intermission, "Lost" truly found itself. Deloria delighted the audience with her *Vogue*-esque creation — posing and providing her own illumination with a hand-held light which she turned into a microphone while she lip-

synched "I Double Dare You."

Suzanne White Manning used her powerful and beautiful voice in the third section, to read a reel of audio tape.

Deloria designed the women's costumes, all variations of a gauze-like material, wrapped in suitable styles for their solos. Jeff Storer designed a body-

mask of Governor White that was appropriately mythological in tone.

The 90-minute work seemed slow going at first, but when the piece took hold, it was wonderful.

"Lost" will be presented tonight through Saturday and June 7-9 at the Ark. Synergic Theater will take it to New York for a two week run at Pace Universi-

ty's Schimmel Center for the Arts at the end of June.

— ALLISON ADAMS