

Eyen's 'The White Whore and Bit Player' Arrives

"Candy Darling in the role she was born to play," reads the advertisement for Tom Eyen's "The White Whore and the Bit Player." Although one would question, on factual grounds, the word "born," this is a role suited to this female impersonator's talents and one that she has already played in one semblance or another.

This is of course Tom Eyen's classic off Off Broadway comic tragedy, freely inspired by the life and death of Marilyn Monroe. The work was first staged in 1964 at La Mama, and has been revived many times since, including a Spanish-language production last year. The current version, which opened last night at Theater at St. Clement's, is in fact the English version of that Spanish production (with which it is alternating for the next two weeks).

The play is a dialogue in a

The Cast

THE WHITE WHORE AND THE BIT PLAYER, by Tom Eyen. Directed by Manuel Marlin; choreography by Tony Canlanese; lighting by Lewis Rosen and Dale Mosher; setting by Jose Erasto Ramirez; costumes by Van Labriola; sound by Felipe Napoles; hair styles by Carlos Noceda. Presented by the Duo Theater. At St. Clement's, 423 West 46th Street.

Whore Candy Darling
Nun Hortensia Colorado
Also: Edwing Avila, Antonio Candelini, Rafael Delgado, Ken Evans, Arturo Gines, Roberto Lopez, Pedro Lorca, Carlos Noceda, Rene Troche.

madhouse between split halves of a Hollywood personality. The White Whore is the star as she appears to others. The Bit Player, a nun, is the star's image of herself. In the playwright's comic vision, the whore is angelic and virtuous, the nun cheap and brassy.

At the point of suicide, the two remember scenes from life and lead each other through forgotten films on a runway shaped like a cross. Eyen's view is a fragmented but touching portrait of a tortured goddess.

The one-act play has been expanded over the years, and this must surely be the most expanded version. Manuel Martin, who directs both the English and the Spanish productions, creates a chorus of nine lunatics who swirl about the two characters as if they were Marat and de Sade. This leads to an overly prolonged introduction, setting the madhouse scene, but eventually lends the work a certain fluidity.

With her teased platinum hair and practiced pouts, Miss Darling looks like her character and resolutely keeps her acting little-girl-lost. The role-playing aspect works to her advantage. She could, after all, be a male lunatic pretending to be the White Whore. Most of the emoting, however, is done by the nun, and Hortensia Colorado performs at full throttle—almost convincing us that this is the role she was born to play.

MEL GUSSOW.