

## Sacred has something for everyone

**Nothing Sacred**  
Citadel Shoctor Theatre  
through March 12

review by Rosa Jackson

"What am I going to do when I finish school?" This is a question which plagues many of us as graduation looms near. Arkady Kirsanov, in the engaging play *Nothing Sacred*, now showing at the Citadel, finds an unusual solution to this problem: along with his friend Bazarov, he vows to become a nihilist. The pair discover, however, that starting a revolution in 19th century Russia is not as simple a matter as it may first appear to be.

From the beginning of the play, we see that the two friends have vastly different natures: Bazarov seems cold and heartless and often obnoxious, while Arkady is kind and devoted to his father, Nikolai. Conflict arises when Arkady introduces Bazarov to Nikolai and to Pavel, Nikolai's brother. Pavel is a poseur who dresses in British fashion and trains his servant to behave like a European, and Nikolai, it turns out, has impregnated the housekeeper. Bazarov, not one to keep his opinions to himself, denounces the state of Russian society, and soon the entire household is turned topsy-turvy.

The playwright, Canadian George F. Walker, based this story on Ivan Turgenev's book *Fathers and Sons*. To it he has added his own wit and a number of modern touches which make the play appealing to today's audiences. The set is rather surreal, consisting of curved wooden floorboards, two-dimensional trees, and a row of doorways on each side of the stage through which the actors enter and exit. It is amazingly versatile; during one scene, all the trees are lifted, creating an illusion of depth. During another scene, a number of trees turn the stage into a forest, and in yet another, a table and some chairs transform it into a dining room.

Another contemporary feature of this play is the original way in which scene changes are accomplished. Instead of simply dimming the lights and having stage crew members dressed in black take props on and off, the lighting designer (Lynne Hyde) makes the most of transitions by flashing various coloured lights throughout the stage. This is complemented with frenetic music by composer Alain Lang. Music is used effectively at other times as well; when certain characters enter or exit, a mysterious chord sounds. This adds a magical air to the play.

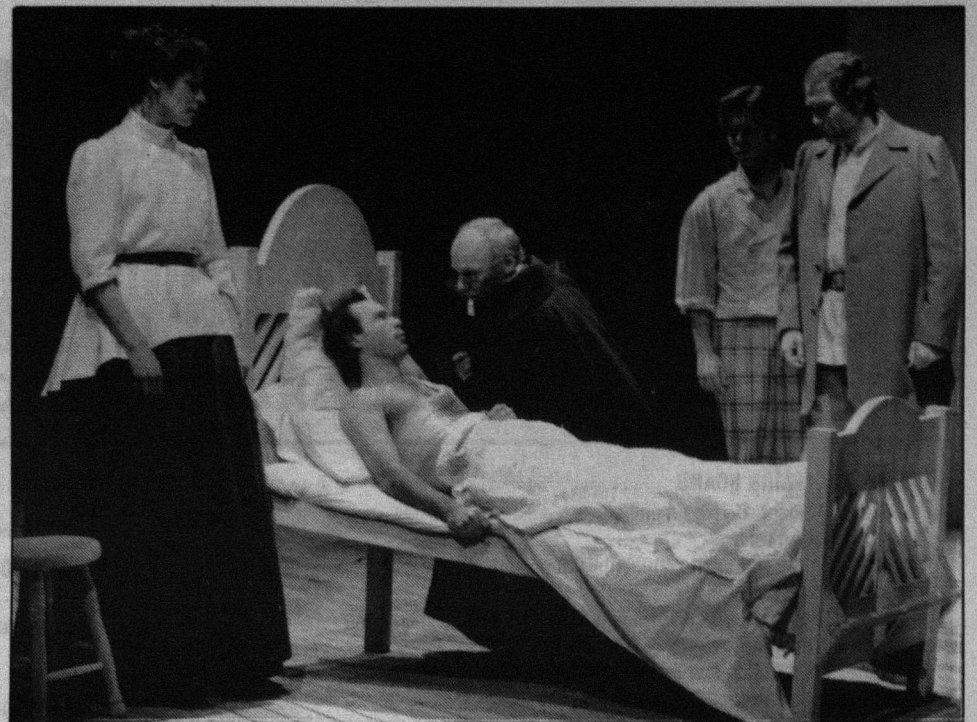
Perhaps the greatest strength of this production, though, is the quality of the acting. Not one of the characters fails to entertain, right down to the most minor roles. One of the most amusing performances, in fact, comes from Peter Blais, who plays Pavel's servant, Piotr. Piotr is hilarious in his attempts to fulfill his master's wishes; much as he tries to obey commands, his individuality shines through. Gary Reineke, as Pavel, is also extremely convincing as a man who, despite

his foolish exterior, is very vulnerable inside.

Bazarov, played by Robert Bockstael, manages to be both detestable for his arrogance and appealing for having the guts to say what he thinks at all times. At the end of the play, his nobility and his humour surface, making the audience sympathetic towards his plight. His lover, and later the object of Arkady's desire, Anna (Margot Dionne), is the female version of him. Her powerful voice and commanding manner make her a woman to be reckoned with.

Greg Spottiswood, who plays Arkady, has a little trouble with being likeable and at the same time being a follower of Bazarov's. He just doesn't seem like the type who would be capable of even thinking of blowing up churches. He is best in those scenes in which his likeableness is unquestioned.

David Fox excels as Nikolai, an aging man struggling to change his attitude toward the lower class. Another stand-out performance comes from Darren O'Donnell, as Viktor Sitnikov, an acquaintance of Bazarov's. It's difficult not to smile each



The cast of the Citadel's *Nothing Sacred*. The play succeeds on all counts: an excellent script, effective staging and good ensemble acting.


time he produces Viktor's distinctive laugh.

Bill Glassco's direction is appropriately artistic for this production; the blocking is well choreographed, but does not seem forced. The pace varies from chaotic to

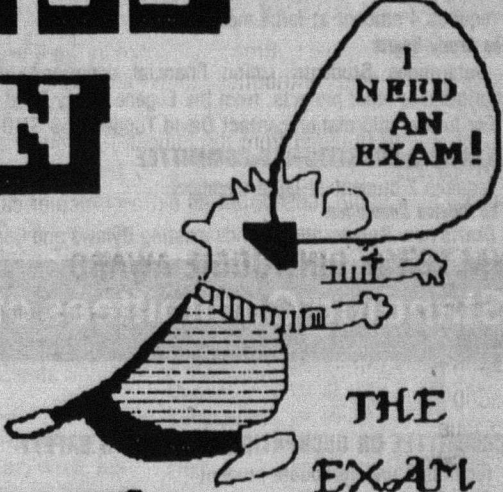
quiet, and never becomes too slow.

*Nothing Sacred* has something for everyone: humour, drama, philosophy, sex and violence (well, sort of), and best of all, it's *Canadian*. Don't miss it!

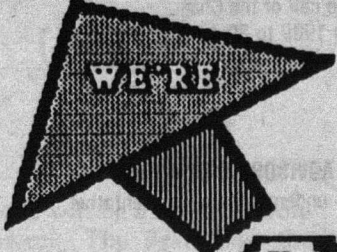
# STUDENTS' UNION

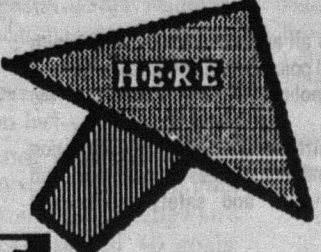


## Housing Registry

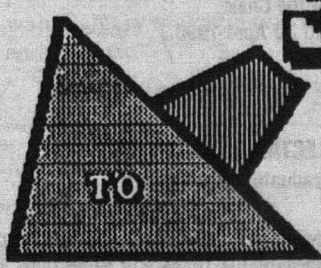


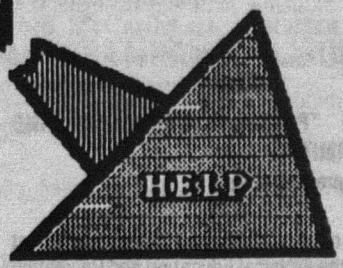
## THE EXAM REGISTRY







## STU REGISTRIES









## TUTOR REGISTRY

# ROOM 150 SUB

## Lady from the Sea

continued from p 9

handed — there's no way one could miss the message of the need for freedom in relationships — especially in its symbols. Unfortunately, director Dawn Davies emphasizes these symbols, which do not need elaboration, to the detriment of the development of character and tension between characters. Greater attention to these aspects may have lessened the melodramatic effect of the language. (Ellida's cry of "The eyes! The eyes!" echoes Kurtz's "The horror! The horror!")

The major symbol of this play is the sea, but this production lacks the force of this element.