

Baumander's kids

Lloyd Wasser

Lewis Baumander is one of a new breed of Canadian directors. His much-acclaimed work has been seen by thousands of theatre-goers in productions of plays such as Peter Colley's hit thriller, *I'll Be Back Before Midnight*, *The Little Prince* and, most recently *Runaways* (written by award-winning playwright Elizabeth Swados), a musical collage about alienation among young people, which runs until Sunday at the Leah Posluns Theatre.

Runaways is a story of teenagers forced to run from their families and their homes in search of life, love and understanding.

"The depth of alienation in today's young people is overwhelming," says Baumander. "In the '80s the way out of alienation is through anger and violence, and that's real dangerous. Basically, the family unit is at the heart of the matter. And with the disintegration of the family you're finding the disintegration of society."

Runaways' candid examination of our society caused ripples of unease through the audience at the performance I attended. Much of the audience's restlessness can be attributed to the play's stark honesty. In one number the cast graphically mime the act of procreation, from intercourse to childbirth. Another jolts us with its discussion of violence in our society. "There's a guy in Detroit shooting kids in the face!" shouts one cast member.

This frank portrayal of our society is not, however, without its casualties. Many people walked out during the play.

"I don't mind eliciting a heavy response from an audience to make them walk out," explains Baumander. "I hope they're walking out because of an image that's evoked something in them. I think the most disturbing reason people are walking out is that they don't want to be told by children that the world is becoming a scary place.

"I think there's an enormous amount of guilt in a lot of people and they just don't want to hear it. You can see the audience shift in its seat and you know it's from middle-class urban guilt."

To capture such intense feelings from an audience, Baumander and his cast put in several months of incredibly hard work. The auditions saw 377 hopefuls whittled down to a cast of 21 versatile youngsters.

Baumander remembers the trauma they went through to bring *Runaways* to life. "I managed to get the show together but the cost in human terms was extraordinarily high. People were very sick, sometimes running off stage in the middle of a number just to vomit. People were dancing with sprained ankles and bruised knees. We got it there—but the price was too high."

Even with his reservations, he still rates *Runaways* as a high point of his career; a career

which includes directing plays at some top Canadian theatres, as well as a playwriting apprenticeship under Mavor Moore while he was a psychology major at York's Glendon campus. This was his stepping-stone to directing.

"I wrote a play that I didn't trust anyone else to direct, and the writing of it was a painful experience, so lonely that when I went into rehearsals with it the first day, I realized that that's exactly what I wanted to do—I didn't want there to be a separation between myself and my life; between who I was and what I did for a living."

Lewis Baumander is a theatrical innovator—directing and staging the plays he wants to do. With *Runaways*, he has created another success—a play which shakes the very foundations of our society and forces us to open our eyes to the horrors of the world. Baumander is prepared to take risks to give Canada a new kind of theatre.

Go Nuts cabaret

Michael Monastyrskij

The York Cabaret is back with a series of seven shows ranging from "strictly nightclub to revue to the musical adaptation of a play."

According to artistic director Douglas Brown the performances are only similar in that they "all have a musical element involved."

Brown, a third-year theatre student from Cape Breton, wrote and directed the first show, called simply *Nuts*. Traditionally, the Cabaret dedicates one show to the theme of love, but Brown wanted to do something different. He says, "Instead of being Cabaret's love show, *Nuts* is Cabaret's loveless show of the year." Set in a psychological institute, the story deals with characters who "...are taught to come back into a loveless world and to survive without love."

A loveless show won't be the only difference in the series. This time around, some of the performances will be preceded by the half-hour routine of York comics.

It is hoped that parts of the Cabaret series will also be shown off-campus and in addition Brown is negotiating to have some of the York comedians downtown to perform.

A number of people who

participated in previous Cabarets have found professional success. For example, Caroline Smith who choreographed earlier productions now dances at the Charlottetown Festival and former technical director Kevin Clark became the master electrician at Toronto's Tarragon Theatre.

The Theatre Department administers Cabaret, but the series is funded by the Co-Curricular Committee which in turn receives its money from the colleges. As a result, any York student can participate.

In addition to the performers in *Nuts*, only the cast for one other show has already been chosen. If you would like to be involved in any aspect of the production, leave your name and telephone number at the Cabaret Mail Box Theatre Department 2nd Floor Admin Studies 663-2059

For those of us who prefer spectating *Nuts* will be shown in Mac Hall this Friday and Saturday at 9 and 10:30. The doors will open at 8:30. Admission is free and tickets can be obtained at the door, but groups of four or more may reserve their places by telephoning the above number. Mac Hall is licensed and the first show will be followed by a performance of jazz and blues.

Bomb Records

on tour

Elliott Lefko

This week Bomb/Rio Records presents four of their artists in one great show: The Scenics, True Confessions, Twitch, and The Secrets.

The Scenics' first album could easily fit on a tape beside The Residents and The Pop Group. This means that they're necessarily obscure and frivolously esoteric. This group takes a turn somewhere to the left of acid rock and falls somewhere near Dan Hicks.

Similar to True Confessions, the album has a cheap appeal. There is some great material here that is alive only because they didn't have the money to play the songs 10 times and then send it through a bank of synthesizers.

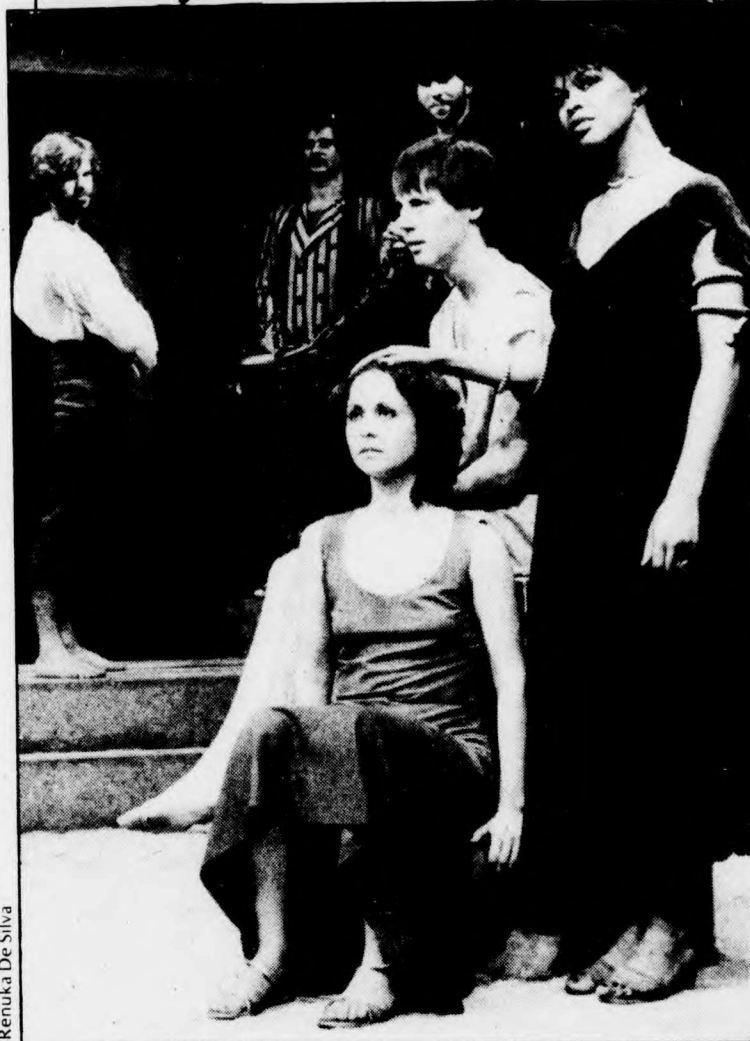
The problem with these records is that the groups are usually so poor, that once they

make an album they lose their enthusiasm, become frustrated, and break up. Collector's items before they're cold.

The True Confessions album is the one that Martha and the Muffins didn't make. When bands like M&M's speak about not compromising, and waiting for the right deal, one thinks of True Confessions. Here is a Toronto outfit with the potential to become a fine recording act, taking the first deal that comes floating by. This underproduced effort is the result. It contains a handful of interesting songs, one great one, "Mating games aren't easy", and a rough mix that make it perfect for static filled car radios. The songs are reminiscent of those Cruising albums: drive-ins, dances, and delirium.

The tour hits Li'l Tony's (4900 Sheppard E.) on Friday and The Rotunda on Saturday.

Oh, Salome



Renuka De Silva

Robert Fabes

York Theatre Department's production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* was a resounding success. Directed by Dean Gilmour and with a cast comprised mainly of third-year students pulled together after only six weeks of rehearsal, *Salome* provided the audience with a wonderful night of entertainment.

The most striking feature of the play was its staging. The scene was set in a type of arena, serving to concentrate the attention on Jokanaan, the prophet, excellently portrayed by Dan Lett. Because of this setting the audience was never at a loss as to where to focus its attention.

Unfortunately though, Antonella Loras's portrayal of Salome left much to be desired.

She lacked a degree of intensity which would have enlivened the character and made her much more interesting. This was most evident during her dance. Another problem was Loras's inability to show Salome's crossover from sanity to insanity.

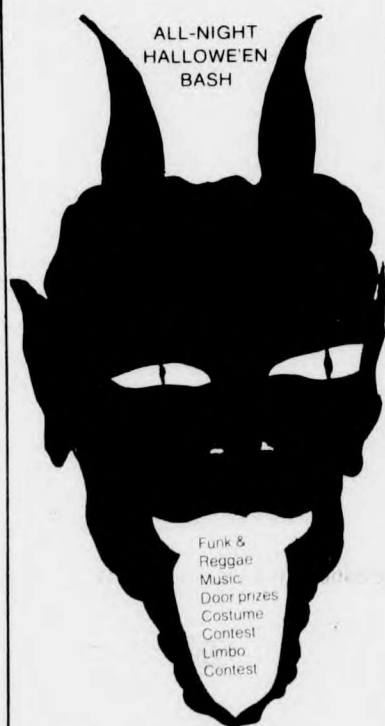
The rest of the cast, with few exceptions, did a magnificent job. Most noteworthy was Janet Sears as Herodias, Salome's mother. Sears performed with such intense characterization that it was very hard to keep my attention away from her. Shawn Zevit, as Herod, also played his part with a high degree of intensity. Also deserving of special mention were Kevin "Haggis" Magill, Steven Hill, Karen Ballard, Sherri-Lee Guilbert...and Ric Sarabia as the lobster.

"ERNIE"

It's ganja time! One week from tonight—yes!—one week from tonight, at 9:00 p.m. McLaughlin College will be presenting the inflammable Ernie Smith and his 'erbin' reggae rockers. Tickets

are available in S833Ross for an outrageously low \$3 in advance, or 500 coppers a la porte. Use the back door please if jah know what I mean.

Steve Hacker Howrd Goldstein



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