



An oldie but goodie. This rare photo dates back to the October production of *The Owl* and *The Pussycat* by the York Masquers. Gloria Luftspring is standing; Art Sinukoff is not.

Hidden in the files...

This week we're pulling open the files to let you read articles which, for some pretty reason or other, never got printed in this section.

All three features on this page were casualties of deadlines. By the time Mira's piece on *A Delicate Balance* and Sandra's review of the Jules Olitski exhibit at the David Mirvish Gallery on Markham Street were ready for print, the film and exhibit had disappeared. The photograph of the Masquer's play was bumped by another photo simply because it was horizontal instead of vertical.

We've got lots more waiting in the files. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy reading the following; but please don't check your local listings for the times, because they're not current reviews.

Age meets truth in Albee's balance

By MIRA FRIEDLANDER

Strip away a person's life mask, add a constantly increasing fear of growing old, together with the inability to cope with this situation, and you have the chilling movie version of Edward Albee's stage play, *A Delicate Balance*.

The play is an uncompromising study of what happens when an aging couple, Tobias and Agnes, are forced to face the realities of their sterile marriage and life style within the relentless cage of suburbia.

It all begins innocently enough, with Agnes and Tobias discussing her alcoholic sister Claire, who has come to stay with them. But even at this early stage the tension about to explode before us is subtly creeping up from behind in the form of forced dialogue and the lush cold atmosphere of the family recreation room.

Before long we learn that Julia, the daughter, is about to return home in the process of her fourth divorce, and from here on in the yet unaccountable terror begins to build rapidly. Perhaps the greatest genius in this work is the fact that not until much later, at the end of the second act, are we given any explanation for this terror, and even then the only answer we are given is a constant reference to the "plague".

The plague arrives in the form of the couple's best friends, who are suddenly terrified to remain at home alone together and so move in, bag and baggage. From here on in the confrontation erupts as Julia, panic-

stricken and wielding Tobias' gun, decides that Edna and Harry are bringing the 'disease' in with them and must be asked to leave.

Tobias, the ineffectual impotent father and husband is forced to make the decision by his domineering wife and stubborn daughter. He realizes his duty as a friend, but although he asks them to stay, at the same time forces them to go by not being able to say honestly that he wants them there.

The relief when the friends go is intense, and now the family can once again escape into their day to day fantasy world where they are momentarily safe in their illusions. The circle has been completed to start again.

Albee shows clearly and frighteningly the danger of ripping defenses down when one is incapable of finding the inner strength to face reality. At all times there is the awareness of the potential insanity lying so close to the surface, and Agnes herself refers twice to the possibility of her own approaching instability. The delicate balance between insanity and reality lives up to the title of the play.

Katherine Hepburn and Paul Scofield as Agnes and Tobias turn in stunning performances, and Kate Reid as Claire is outstanding in her control and understanding of the black humour lying below the surface. Tony Richardson's direction is faultless, in that his transposition of the play from the stage to the film media makes it all the more powerful, rather than destroying it, which is often the case in such attempts.

Brilliant abstracts

Olitski masters colour, texture

By SANDRA WOLFE

Jules Olitski is recognized as one of the finest abstract painters of our time. His canvases (formerly on display) enable us to understand why he is so widely acclaimed as an accomplished artist.

It is indeed a rarity to find oneself in the presence of paintings of such uniformly high quality, and sheer technical mastery. One could be utterly seduced by Olitski's color sense alone.

His use of color, which in earlier paintings often resulted in rather garish combinations of emerald greens, not pinks and jazzy yellows, seems now to have reached an astonishing level of purity, as in *Absalom Passage 21*, with its refined harmony of lavender, pale blue, beige and white.

Another extraordinary aspect of these paintings is the nature of their surface. Paint is applied to the canvas by means of spray guns, sponges, squeegees or hands, and is scraped, scumbled, scoured and swept, to create a rich variety of textural effects, from rough sprackle to melting opalescent glazes.

In terms of composition, Olitski's major achievement is to have combined the "all overness" of field painting, large areas of color that can be perceived at a single glance, with a considerable amount of dramatic inflection and liveliness, which prevent his pictures from becoming merely decorative wallpaper or vast, empty spaces.

One can see this clearly illustrated in the picture *Absalom 6*. Here, the unity of the salmon field is accented by pink and blue markings located at the edges of the painting.

Yet, because of their differing color and widths, these markings provide dynamic pulsations at the outer limits of the field. And the exact location of the salmon area is rendered ambiguous by the delicate blue spottings which dissolve the upper left corner.

But it is the special beauty of this picture that the salmon field, which at first seems rather vacuous, is as richly modulated as the more lively edges, by an ingenious use of facture contrasts. These raised ridges cast shadows, creating even more subtle color effects which are revealed only after prolonged viewing.

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