

ENTERTAINMENT

Foreign actors star

Canadian film is grab-bag of politics, satire

By BILL PERRY

This week marks the largest premiere of any Canadian movie to date, *It Seemed Like a Good Idea At The Time*, which opens in 20 theatres across the country this week and in 20 more next week.

Directed by John Trent, it is the movie which is likely to be acclaimed as one of Canada's best comedy films, although it probably won't fare as well on the international scale.

Good Idea is a quick-action, side-splitting grab-bag of slapstick politics, satirical miracles, witty dialogue, situation silliness and a lot of absolute tongue-in-cheek tom-

foolery. All this being crammed into a somewhat spastic story, written by Trent and David Main from a screenplay by Claude Harz.

The story is centered around the quest for money, and the love-hate relationship of a dissatisfied commercial artist and his emancipated ex-wife. While Anthony Newley gives a superb performance, the quality of the acting of the other characters diminishes in proportion to their importance in the film.

This is not so much because of their own ineptitude, but because of the restrictions placed on them by the direction and the script. Rather than real three-dimensional characters, they appear as types (i.e. politicians, cops, hookers, mothers-in-law, etc).

This doesn't make the film any less entertaining, but it is less memorable.

Much of the attraction of this film stems from the fact that it is a Canadian Production. There are heartwarming scenes of unmistakably northern Ontario winters, Metro taxis on Spadina, and yellow "serve and protect" cars. Also, the director has been in Canada for 15 years, the producer



Anthony Newley and Isaac Hayes plaster luscious Stefanie Powers because *It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time*. Excalibur reviewer

Bill Perry says *Good Idea* will probably be acclaimed as one of the best Canadian comedies ever made.

The Physicists loses impact on Centre stage

By ROBIN BECKWITH

Duerrenmatt's play, *The Physicists*, appears from the Theatre Plus production to be rather a lightweight play, the characters often being mere caricatures of themselves, each acting in a world of his own.

There is, however, a rather sinister importance which underlines the events of the play which makes the work worth performing and attending.

But director Marion Andre and all but one actor in the play have apparently opted for the light rather than the serious. The results are that most of the characters are created as if in a vacuum, which doesn't allow the underlying connection between the characters to emerge.

The whole evening was only a light tour-de-force.

One had to search carefully to find Duerrenmatt's serious vein, and find solace in the acting of Alan Scarfe, who was the only actor appearing to react to, listen to, and watch the other actors.

Scarfe portrayed his character with both humour and seriousness, and if he did seem overly serious, it was only because of the other actors' lack of commitment.

Because of the mis-directed acting of the physicists, played by Gerard Parkes, Eric House and Alan Scarfe, and the female doctor Jennifer Phipps, the sinister facts in the play never come to the fore.

For the most part they are lost in uncertainty. Eric Houses' lethargic portrayal of one of the physicists and Jennifer Phipps' superficial interpretation of the evil hunchback, are at the root of the play's problems.

As a spectacle, however, the production was competent. The lighting was excellent and the sound and costuming appropriate for the play and well timed.

The Physicists ends its engagement at the St. Lawrence Centre on September 27.

Cosmic sculpture on view at York Art Gallery

By KARIN MELNIK

York's Art Gallery opened last Wednesday with its first exhibit—a stimulating, albeit eclectic, combination of Canadian-designed contemporary tapestries, pre-Columbian terra-cotta sculptures and classical music selections.

Seven tapestries and five screen prints by Fernand Leduc comprise the focal point of the exhibit entitled "Les Sept Jours".

This somewhat underestimated Canadian artist saw modern art arrive in Quebec only thirty years ago. His style developed from an illusionistic surrealism to a non-illusionistic abstraction of pictorial elements.

The tapestries now at York were commissioned in 1973 in Paris and show a simple but dynamic use of colour and line. The colours of the tapestries are striking, varying in luminosity according to the lighting conditions to which they are subjected, and seeming to resemble flowing lava. Quivering lines seem to absorb the resiliency of the "molten" shades and are balanced by rigid lines.

Artistic tension arises from an erotic and primitive interplay of geometric and curved shapes.

The terra-cotta sculptures contain an internal dialogue and a conceptual logic that is also implied in Leduc's work. These rare

examples of animal, vegetable and human forms of the Colima, Nayarit and Jalisco cultures share with the tapestries a feeling for time and space.

Cosmic spatial qualities in the tapestries are underlined by their titles which are names of planets based on Egyptian astronomy, and by the choice of Gustav Holst's *The Planets* as background music.

The theme of infinity and the cyclical nature of life is also inherent in the sculptures. These were the symbols involved in ancient death-cults—not as symbols of death, but as symbols of eternal life.

The exhibit is effective and very worthwhile in that it unleashes, through the juxtaposition of various artistic media, the inherent mystery behind the visual dialogue of the works.

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