



# Melodrama in Grand Central Station Smart book doesn't make coherent play

By GAIL MORGENSTERN

Although Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* was initially banned in Canada, the novel later gained critical acclaim and has now been made into a one-act play. Unfortunately, the play is unable to maintain the literary standards set by the original work.

Adapted by Anne Anglin and Nancy Beatty for Theatre Passe Muraille, *By Grand Central Station* centres on a turbulent love affair. Yet the play itself is foremost a homage to Smart, who died only last year.

Both Anglin and Beatty knew Smart personally, and Anglin had previously discussed the idea of turning the novel into a play with Smart. In this production, Theatre Passe Muraille's season-opener, Anglin directs and Beatty is the sole actor in the 75-minute show, which runs without an intermission.

*By Grand Central Station* is in part autobiographical as Smart's love

affair in 1940 with British poet George Barker shaped the book, yet substantial portions were written before she met Barker.

*By Grand Central Station* presents how intense love can become doomed surrounded by conventional people and the frenzied emotions of wartime.

The character is turbulently in love with a married man and is with him for a period of time, but he eventually returns to his wife. She then must face the difficulty of having and caring for their baby herself. Most of the play deals with how the liaison enormously changes her life.

Beatty is given a very difficult role that really was not meant for the stage, and must struggle to make the character come alive from the pages of Smart's novel. It is a hard task as the language is full of intense prose that doesn't lend itself well orally.

Beatty is able to change her emotions very rapidly with considerable dexterity. Her character and others that she plays, are performed with a great deal of passion and strength.

She is at her best when she plays additional characters from Smart's novel, distinguishing the characters by using different voices.

All of the scenes can take place on one simple set, designed by James Plaxton. A manual typewriter sits on top of a desk. There are a few chairs and a sofa-bed. An old record player, used to play music that promotes the play's mood and time, is also included. Beatty manages to use the entire set, including the grey hanging backdrop, which she covers herself with.

Lighting by Tanuj Kohli is well used to accentuate the drama. The spotlight envelops Beatty like a train that is about to strike her down on the tracks.

There is a tremendous amount of emotional intensity in *By Grand Central Station* that at times becomes overwhelming. Although Beatty's performance is full of strength it is too melodramatic. Perhaps the beautifully written poetic images that come from Smart's novel should have remained there.



**WRITER'S BLOCK:** Nancy Beatty is the sole performer in the stage adaptation of Elizabeth Smart's *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*.

## York showcases Indian arts

By BONNIE MITTEN

The earthly sounds of professor Trichy Sankaran on the mridangan, a tubular-shaped Indian drum, mesmerized the very responsive crowd last Thursday night at MacHall. The occasion for this spiritually-pleasing concert was the Navaratri (which translated means nine nights), a festival in honour of three Indian goddesses.

York's premier celebration of the Navaratri was shortened from nine to three nights of vocal and instrumental concerts on Wednesday and Thursday nights followed-up on Friday night with a dance performance by Menaka Thakkar at Burton Auditorium.

The instrumental performance on Thursday night featured a four piece group with T. Viswanathan on flute,

Gail Goldberg on tamburna, N. Sushidavan on violin and Sankaran on mridangan. The tone and mood of the concert was set by its religious nature and was furthered enhanced by burning incense and drum solos. Sankaran improvised and manipulated his drum music purely from audience input. The drummer's performance was memorized which effectively added to his spontaneity and the audience's participation. Sankaran believes the unique percussion of South Indian music to be "excellent training for students of all different disciplines. York is the only university in Canada to offer a program of South Indian music," he added.

The Navaratri's performance on Friday night exposed Menaka Thakkar's energetic dancing talents, stylized as both physically and men-

tally expressive. She wore a brilliant costume and bell-like bands around each foot that jingled and tingled as she moved about the stage. Most of the dances were lyrical interpretations backed by South Indian music. The most striking feature of Thakkar's dancing was her exaggerated eye movements and facial expressions combined with strong arm and foot movements.

The proceeds from the performances are to go to the Jon B. Higgins Memorial Fund. The fund was established after the former York professor, who was integral in bringing South Indian music at York, was killed in a tragic car accident in 1984. Since the fund provides the opportunity for Indian artists to perform at York, the University will be hosting the Navaratri for many years to come.

## calendar York Community Arts Events

Compiled By JENNY PARSONS

### DANCE

Wed. & Thurs. Oct. 22-23: Lunch Time Dance performance Studio 1 Fine Arts Building, 12-1 p.m.

### FILM AND VIDEO

Wed. Oct. 22: Student Short Films of 1986: *Passion and Gasoline, Thanatos, The Man who Fell From the Apple Tree, Twice a Child: Alzheimer's Disease and Family, and The Book*. Nat Taylor Cinema N-102 Ross.  
Wed. Oct. 29: Student Feature Film: *Welcome to the Parade. Stuart Clarfield, film grad. student '86*. Nat Taylor Cinema, N-102 Ross, 3:00 p.m.

### GALLERY SHOWS

Oct. 2-Nov. 14: *Kim Moodie: of Unknown Origin*, Drawings 1984-86, Glendon Gallery.  
Oct. 2-Nov. 14: *Victor Mateo: Acrylics on Canvas*, Winters Art Gallery.  
Oct. 14-19: *Classico Sperimentale-7*, recent works by Milada Kovacova, Founders Gallery Rm. 206 FC.

### MUSIC

Thurs. Oct. 30: South Indian Music Concert, McLaughlin Senior Common Room, 8:00 p.m.

Oct. 13-17: *Homecoming*, Undergraduate Alumni Exhibition, IDA Gallery, Fine Arts Building.

Oct. 16-Nov. 14: *York Work*, An exhibition of sculpture, intermedia, and performance works by artists from the teaching Faculty of Arts staff, AGYU Ross N145.

Oct. 16-29: *Beata Hasnik, Watercolours*, Samuel J. Zacks Gallery, 109 Stong College.

Oct. 21-25: *Love & Money*, a multimedia presentation by Julia Stienecke, Ron Loranger, and Anita Jagersma, Founders Gallery. Reception and performance Wed. at 5 p.m.

### THEATRE

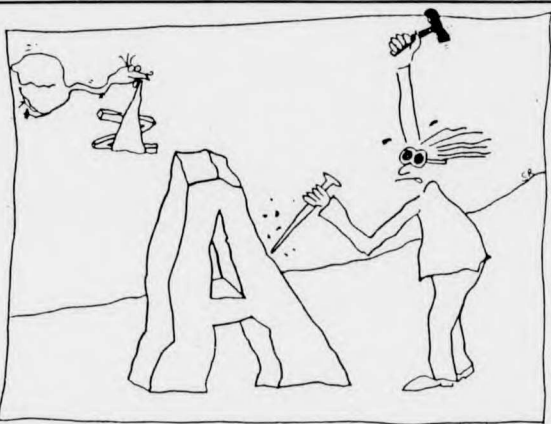
Oct. 21-24: *The Conference of the Birds*, by Jean-Claude Carrier and Peter Brook. Theatre Department's first 3rd year production, directed by Jeff Henry. Atkinson Theatre 7:00 p.m., Oct. 22 at 2:00 p.m. For more information call the Theatre Department at 736-5173.

If you are planning an Arts event drop by Excalibur at 111 Central Square or call 736-5239 and ask for Kevin, Angela, or Jenny.

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