

Ben kidnaps Gloria and gets much more than he expected in this cat-and-mouse production

By DEBORAH SANBORN

The *Tiger*, a one-act comedy-drama presented by four York theatre students, closed its run on Friday night in the Samuel Beckett Theatre.

Written by Murray Schisgal, it is an interesting exploration of people who walk on the razor's edge of everyday existence.

The play is about a man and a woman who become friends and lovers when they are brought together by an unusual circumstance. Ben (Kevin Wright) is an intelligent man, but embittered and slowly becoming warped by life's unfairness.

"Everybody's inside themselves, inside their own egotistical shell... nobody's listening," he says. He lives alone in a dirty, sparsely-furnished apartment, scattered with a selection of books and records that are his only companions. In desperation and loneliness, he kidnaps a young housewife, wanting, if only for a night, somebody to hear his problems.

Gloria (Laura Pratt) is at first hysterical. She cries and screams, promising him anything if he will let her go. While unsure of what he has done, Ben refuses, for he is determined to have his audience—his fair share of attention in what he feels is a non-caring world.

While the story line looks to be a melodramatic soap-opera, there is a sensitivity to the human condition that keeps the play afloat. As the play unravels, Gloria calms down, and gradually becomes absorbed by Ben's passionate rhetoric about life's problems. Responding to her atten-

tion, Ben takes his cue and gets increasingly obsessed by his own convictions—at last he has a captive audience.

A bond begins to form between them as we discover that Gloria is also unhappy with her life. Unconsciously, she yearns for someone to talk to, someone to excite her. Like Ben, she needs someone to make her life worth continuing.

Director Frank Clarke said that his main intention was to show the "fluxuating process" of sharing and communicating. Gloria, who is essentially a sensitive, caring person (we learn that she was also a social worker) struggles to understand Ben's intellectual verbiage and she eventually wins him over with her good intentions. While she may not understand him, she cares, and this is what Ben responds to and needs the most.

The turning point in the play comes when we learn that some of Ben's bitterness stems from failing an entrance exam to college because he couldn't learn French. A twist is added. Gloria knows French. This was a tenuous moment because Gloria could either use this to manipulate Ben into letting her go, or as a means of getting through to Ben in friendship. Instinctively, she chooses the latter. She tells him she will teach him the language and from this point on, a true companionship forms.

The humour is an important element as much as the drama. It becomes a vehicle for Gloria and Ben to come together, as well as adding comic relief to the play. At a point of extreme excitement, Gloria

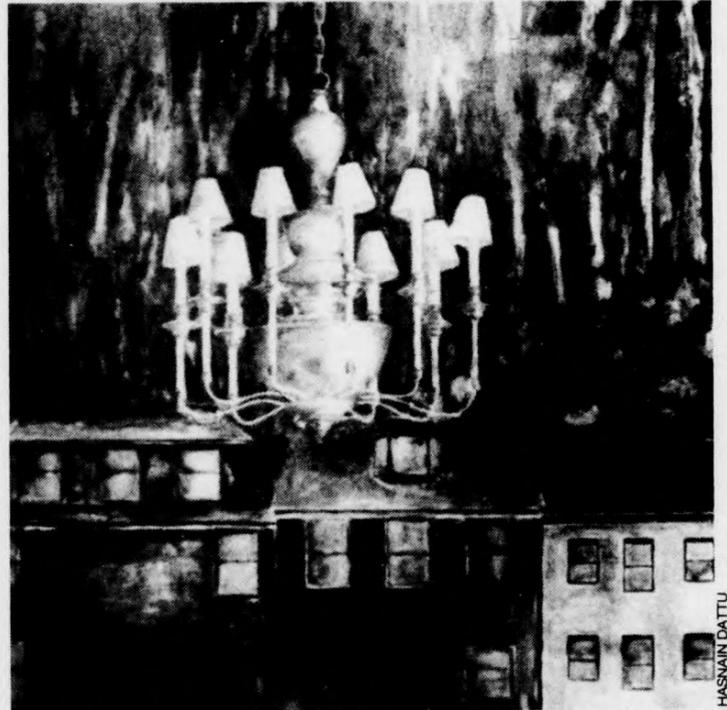
tries to sell Ben a raffle ticket for a charity. While Ben shies away from her sales-pitch, it is at this moment that we realize that all the barriers are down—that Ben is no longer the tiger with his prey, and Gloria no longer the trapped animal in his claws. It is the wonderful humour and irony of the moment that demonstrates this.

Clarke's production was a good attempt at understanding and expressing the tentative process of human relationships. However, in focusing on the seriousness of the process, much of the play's natural humour was understated and badly timed. The over-excited Ben unknowingly repeats things Gloria has said. While the audience caught the humour, it was not played to its fullest potential. We laugh, but the moment is gone before we realize just how funny it really was.

Laura Pratt's performance of Gloria's naive but honest sensitivity was natural, believable and charming. Kevin Wright's portrayal of Ben was sensitive, but could have been more violate or obsessive in nature. As well, there was a certain amount of tension lacking between Wright and Pratt that is necessary to feel the extremity of emotion that is evident in the play.

While the performance was generally good, a more daring approach would have expressed the ability we have to go to all extremes of reality and border on its very edge before returning to its centre. This production of *The Tiger* was close to that edge, but its claws just weren't sharp enough.

Naughty knots



HANGIN' IN: A selected work from Wayne Emery's show *Stumps, Knots and Suns*.

By LOREN ARDUINI

Even though the title of the exhibit is *Stumps, Knots and Suns*, these are not the images that you will see when you walk into the Founders Art Gallery.

What you will see are works of imagination and fantasy molded from simple things ranging from household objects to abstract form. They are the creation of Wayne Emery, a fourth year fine arts/education student at York.

Emery described one of the main themes in his paintings as "organic substance breaking down into geometric shapes." He then applied the theme to his images which are heav-

ily influenced by astronomy. An example of this influence can be viewed in Emery's mural, which hangs in the Steacie Science Building.

Wayne Emery's future is sure to be promising because he never limits himself to one type of art or career. Next year he hopes to complete his studies in education and then do a year of independent study under the guidance of Ted Bieler, a professor of visual arts. In the future he also hopes to be able to travel to China where he would teach English and art.

Wayne Emery's paintings will be on display in Founders Art Gallery until January 30.

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CLUB FUNDING

January 20, 1987

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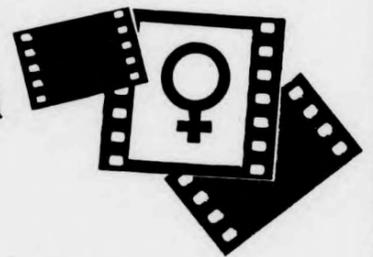
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No charge for Admission - Everyone Welcome!