

Hollywood goes T.O.

Directors talk-up their flicks



Director-writer Robert Towne

Al Locke
Two of Hollywood's Grade 'A' directors, Robert Towne (*Personal Best*) and Francis Ford Coppola (*One From the Heart*) were in Toronto last week promoting their latest films. While their purpose was the same (see my film and tell people it's good), the directors differ in more ways than water and Perrier. Towne, who won an Academy Award for penning *Chinatown*, was asked if he could have done a better job of it than Roman Polanski did, answered, "of course I could. That's why I want to direct what I write. I want more control of what goes on the screen."

Sadly, as a result of *Personal Best*, Towne lost the rights to Greystoke-the original Tarzan. The first 100 pages of the script have no dialogue-just movement, description and color.

As a writer, Towne prefers sound and color to dialogue. He offers, "Language is specific, valuable, but limited. Sound is evocative. When you hear a sound, it suggests more than words. It gives the power of the moment and suggests movement, life...feeling."

Towne shows the idealistic naivety of a writer wanting more control and becoming a director. Francis Coppola, conversely, shows the hard-headed business sense of a smart filmmaker wanting more control because he "can do it all, better than they can."

Coppola is a surprising mixture of reality, and self-parody, close to a director-type on SCTV's *Network 90*. His latest film *One From the Heart*, is supposed to be another 'he's got everything, staked on this including his house' film like *Apocalypse Now*.

Part of Coppola's revolving door mortgage is the financial drain of his newly formed Zoetrope studios. "We've been investing money into new things- technological development mainly. The major studios invest nothing in that stuff. They're more interested in listing profits for quarterly reports."

One of Coppola's investments is an innovative electronic storyboard. Its use will result in the streamlining of production,

which will, 'take the film out of the hands of the editor, and give it back to the actor'. With stars like Nastassia Kinski in *One From the Heart* (whom Coppola calls the most beautiful woman in film today) that shouldn't be hard to take.

A natural director, Coppola told reporters what to expect from *One From the Heart*: "Don't go expecting to see another *Apocalypse Now*. It's a light-hearted love story. It's technically innovative as well. It's the type of film that's impossible to see once and write a review 6 hours later. You have to see it twice."



Francis Coppola-dreamer

Uncommon Women flashes but fails

Romano Marchi
On Tuesday, Feb. 9, about two dozen people in the tiny Samuel Beckett Theatre witnessed some incredibly uneven performances which at times suffered from the stiffness of the worst amateurs and at times shone with outbursts of inspired acting.

Uncommon Women, by American experimental playwright Wendy Wasserstein, was produced and performed mainly by second year theatre students. The play opens with five women meeting for coffee and then flashes back to their days at a women's college five years earlier.

The actresses appear nervous and tense, and although the nervousness never completely leaves, Frankie Van Meter relaxes enough to give a credible portrayal of Kate, the bright, successful student who is worried that her life is working out too perfectly, while Heather Wilson settles down to play the tough rebel Rita comfortably and sincerely.

Probably the most consistent performance is given by Ilse Von Glutz, who plays the quiet and introspective Lillah. This seems to rub off on Von Meter, as one of the highlights of the evening is a scene which the two girls share.

The actresses, without exception, are inconsistent although all of them have moments when they relax and become funny, moving, or just plain believable. Director Natalie Lue obviously lacks experience as the girls all have potential which is only sporadically tapped. She did, however, manage to interpret a difficult play, stressing the development of character to compensate for a weak plot. Lue also worked the lights which were slow and distracting, but she promises that this will be rectified for the remaining performances.

The cast unanimously agrees that producing a play like this offers a learning experience not found in second year theatre courses. All are excited about

putting what they have learned in class into practice. Perhaps it is the fact that the girls are obviously still learning, and, like the characters they portray, trying to find their niche, that makes *Uncommon Women* enjoyable. It runs one more time, tonight at the theatre in Stong College. It's free.

Your Cabaret needs you

Tom King
Lamont Alphonso
York Cabarets keep on coming. This past week's was *Your Country Needs You*, a large production with emphasis on sentiment.

It's wartime, our boys are on the "front", their loved ones at home. Bull, John, Jim, Ted, Ted, Tim, Tim, Jim, as played by Cary Meltz, Franco deFrancesco, Shawn Zevit, Tim Murphy sing of their lament. Their voices were vibrant and could easily work in unison with the resplendent five piece band lead by Dawn Eaton. They put out wartime tunes that fortunately were rarely familiar.

Never reaching the bawdiness of the average cabaret here at York, the action was somewhat subdued. It has a hard time holding this reviewer's attention, though it was interesting that writers Cynthia Stanhope and Deborah Tompkins (also the director) used consistent locales and characters from song to song.

Call cabarets what you like...song and dance, bread and butter theatre, show biz, entertainment, whatever...just go out and see them! The next two will be performed on Feb. 25, 26, 27, in Mac Hall and Mar. 4, 5, 6, Stong College.

Table Settings

Difficult to swallow

Lisa Kates

The dining room table is the star of a new social satire at the Bayview Playhouse Theatre.

Table Settings is a comical piece of theatre dealing with the traumas of today's suburban contemporary Jewish American Family and the problems inherent in their relationships.

The Russian Grandmother (played by Marcia Diamond) hasn't left her life in Minsk yet, and is very worried about being typecast by a sociology text. Aaron Schwartz plays her son who has broken years of Jewish tradition by marrying a dizzy gentle (Marcia Bennett). They have two children, Cookie, (Katie Ford) a scrumptious adolescent whose zany faces keep the audience in tears, and her brother, a neurotic 13-year-old who spends half the play under the table.

The next couple representing the screwed up 'me' generation are two young adults who are leading an aimless existence by routinely getting high and exploiting their sexuality.

Producer Carol Winberg plays an icy Jewish girl whose previous 48-day marriage has shattered her capacity for romantic involvement. Her sexual paramour, Jeff Pustil's life is equally without purpose. Both are convincing in their roles.

Table Settings lampoons the problems encountered by Jews of today. It satires conflicts which are being dealt with daily by this social milieu, without evoking any social statement about the seriousness involved.

There are faults in the dialogue such as innocuous statements being repeated in a translike speech. ("Freedom is money" and "Money is freedom"). The characters could have been further developed to avoid appearing shallow. But, on the whole the average Jewish family will probably get a big kick of seeing their life (or at least parts of their life on stage). If you see *Table Settings* be sure you take your transplanted grandparents; so they can translate and try to relate to this warped sense of reality.

Plays display potential

Robert Fabes

The previews for the York University Theatre Department's third-year production of Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke* and *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, provided this reviewer with an excellent script, fine acting, and a beautiful, multi-functional set designed by Nandor Nyakas.

Even though both plays contain some of the same characters and situations they are completely different. *Summer and Smoke* focuses on Alma and her problems, whereas *Eccentricities* focuses on the situation surrounding Alma, allowing us to learn more about the other characters. It is the two perspectives of the same conflict, the struggle between personal free will and tradition, that make the plays so different. What is appealing about both plays is that they are both significant for contemporary audiences even though they are set in 1916. This accomplishment must be credited to the directors of each play, Alexander Crawley and Rod Menzies.

Though we never forget that the plays are set in the "Deep South", or that the action occurs sixty-six years ago, we cannot help but make comparisons to situations in our modern, metropolitan lives.

Roberta Kerr, as Alma in *Summer and Smoke*, gave a strong portrayal

of the young woman struggling to solve the inner conflict between her desires and the constraints of her puritanical upbringing. Marni Walsh, from *Summer and Smoke*, and Sue MacLeod, from *Eccentricities*, both gave well-developed characterizations of the slightly neurotic Mrs. Winemiller and provided some comic relief in these otherwise serious plays.

Mark Owen, as John Buchanan, and Cynthia Stanhope, as Alma, both from *Eccentricities*, also gave strong performances. Their individual performances, though, were not as striking as how they interacted.

There are some pacing problems in both plays. At times the action seemed to lag, but whether this was due to directorial problems or to the fact that these were only previews will be decided by the actual performances.

If these productions, composed entirely of third-year performance students, are any indication of what to expect in the '82/'83 season, York will be treated to some fine acting. The casts exhibited strong potential and with further training some will turn out to be excellent performers. *Summer and Smoke* and *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* will be presented at the Atkinson studio on alternate nights until February 13. Tickets are \$1.00.

Iolanthe: a 'fairy' opera

Marcia Johnson

One of Gilbert and Sullivan's most renowned operas *Iolanthe* will be presented by Stong College's Titwillow Ensemble. The shows (which will run from February 24-27) promises to be a good performance.

Iolanthe has been called the "Original Fairy Opera." Its a fantasy about a band of fairies who clash with the House of Lords over the interest of a young half-fairy (played by Tim Murphy). According to director Richard Linley, "It's Gilbert and Sullivan's satire of class distinction."

Linley went on to state that he believes it is an enjoyable production an everyone involved is really enjoying it.

Auditions were open to anyone, so *Iolanthe* is a collaboration of talents from various areas. Musical director,

William Wescott is a visiting music lecturer, some cast members are from other York colleges, some aren't affiliated with York at all, one member is from Glendon, but on the whole, *Iolanthe* is a Stong College effort.

RADIO YORK

*** FEATURE ALBUMS ***

- °Reason-ep/Kinetic Ideals
- °Another Day/Another Dollar/
Gang of Four
- °Ten Out of Ten/10cc
- °Questionaire/Chas Jankel
- °I'll Do Anything For You/
Denroy Morgan
- °debut/Ray Materick
- °Frenzy/Split Enz
- °The Best of.../Dave Edmunds
- °Sleepwalk/Larry Cariton
- °Renegade/Thin Lizzy

