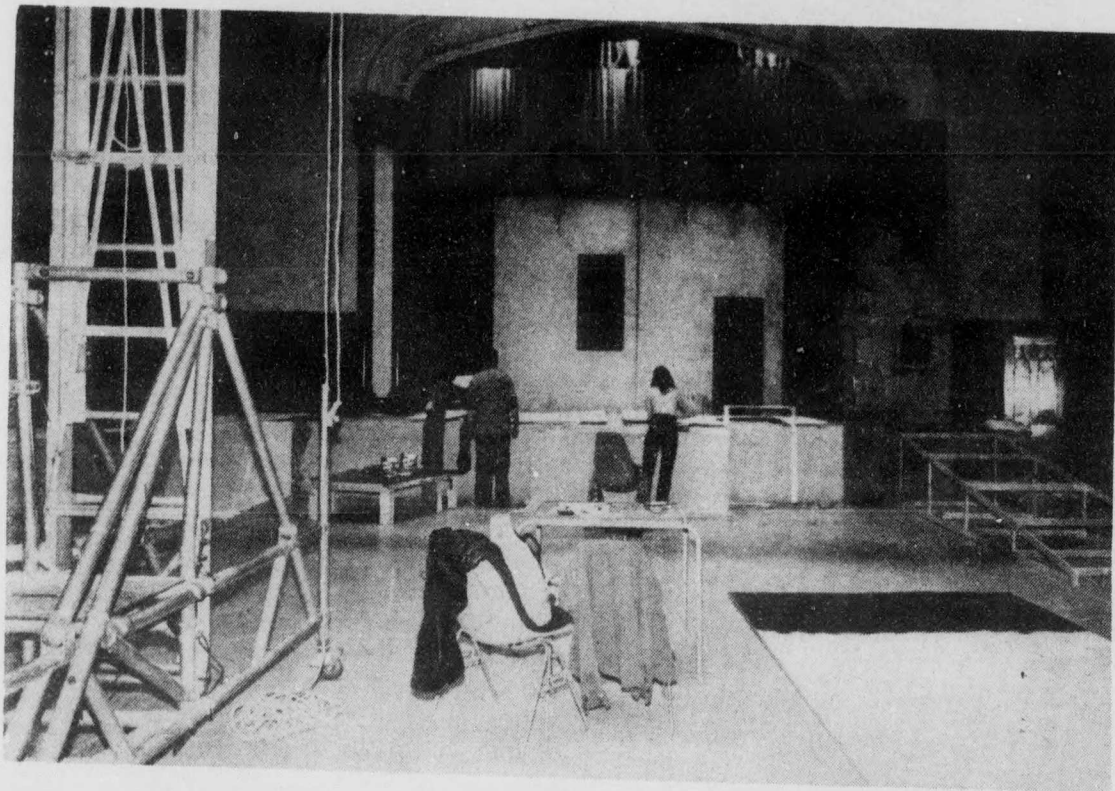
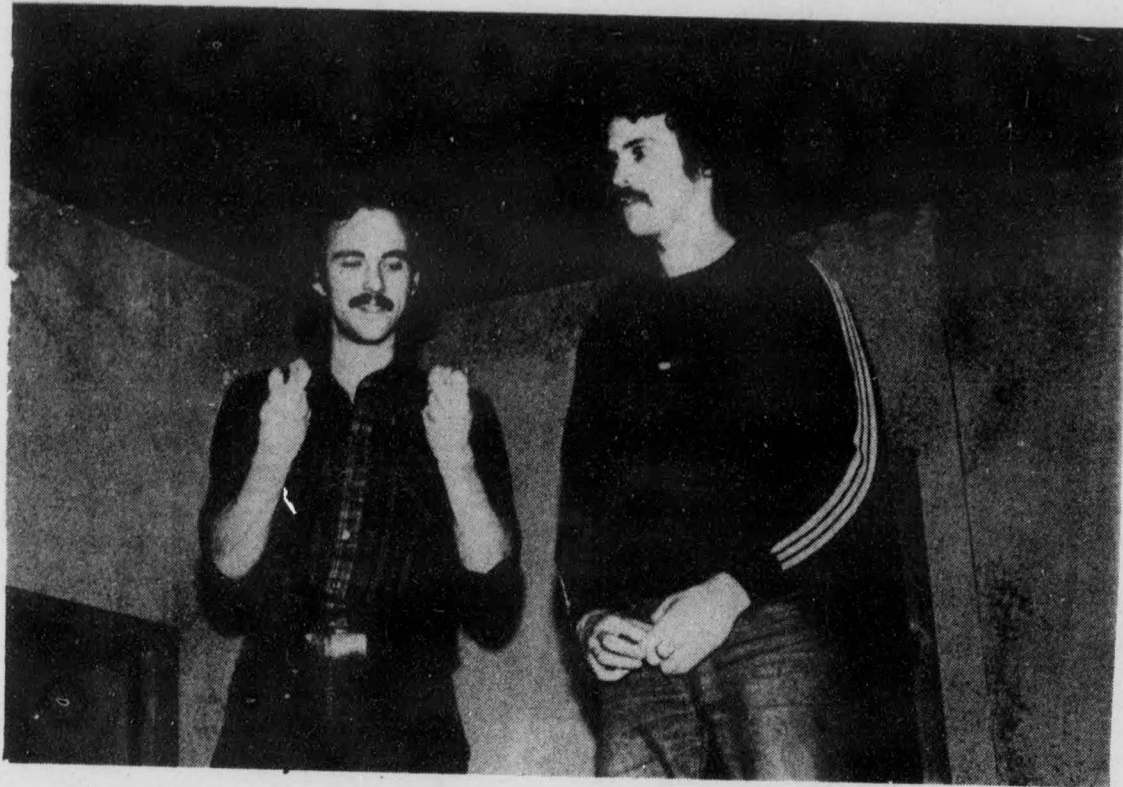


# UNB Drama Society

Photos by Bernice Mullin



The Woody Allen phenomenon has achieved such widespread exposure in recent years, that not everyone realizes that it had its beginnings in the early 1960's, with Allen's essays and short plays. Centering on the New York city mileau, from the Greenwich village upbeat, to the Jewish accents of Brooklyn, Allen's early work compresses a tight, acid and hilarious inquiry into philosophy and life, flavoured with that schlemiel-like self deprecation that is his trademark; but, free of the excess and indulgence of his more recent material.

Allen's own wry version of paranoia - the poor schlemiel endlessly plagued by a sniggering cosmos - is every bit as evident in "Death" as it was in "God", but the former has a darker tint lurking behind the frantic proceedings. If "God" was Myron Cohen bred on Aristophanes, "Death" is Allen King wrestling with Pirandello. Again we have an Allen Everyman, Kleinman, caught up in a frenetic rush of events that he can't control; which leads him to a blind date with destiny that he'd prefer to avoid.

On one cold night, Kleinman is threatened and bullied into joining a vigilante group in their amorphous plan to catch a maniac killer. As the absurdities of the situation multiply, Allen insinuates an increasingly disturbing surreality behind abstractions like "the plan", "part of a chain", "it is cold out there", "we are all in it together"; until it becomes obvious that the cold dark night that Kleinman has been thrust into is broader than twelve hours. His bizarre encounters while trying to discover his part in "the plan" satirize various insufficiencies in man's attempt to come to grips with reality. This is a range which varies from the emptiness of the purely scientific, to the emptiness of the purely sensual, to the emptiness of phony spirituality. Predictably, the climax, after such rat-racing, is an encounter with the title character which is as understated as it is incisive.

In "Death", Allen lives up to all of the roles that his fans will demand: the stand-up comic, the social satirist, the offbeat Greenwich village neurotic. However, in this early piece, he wears a new mask, seldom seen since; the one that Lawrence Ferlinghetti called "the face of the smiling mortician".

Both of these plays open February 8th, at Memorial Hall at 8 p.m. They will play until February 12th. Tickets will be on sale in the Student Union Building from February 5th - 8th, inclusive, from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

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