



# entertainment



## The Fantasticks A Rare Kind of Charm

by Don McKay

A group of strolling players settled on the stage of the Royal Alexandra, Monday night. Unpretentiously they presented an unusual and exciting musical, 'The Fantasticks'.

The American musical comedy is generally the lowest art form going to-day. Even the so-called great musicals, such as 'Hello Dolly!', are really just colossal spectaculars, entertaining mainly because of massive sets, pretty songs and beautiful costumes.

The major set for the Fantasticks is a nymphish mute actor called the wall. The songs are beautiful and unusual. The costumes are simple, but humorous. Yet this play succeeds as art.

'The Fantasticks' has a rare quality in today's theatre—charm. It doesn't try to win the audience's favour by having toothy little children running around singing about the 'Sound of Music' or by having Carol Channing walk out into the audience throwing kisses and singing 'Hello Dolly'.

The plot of 'The Fantasticks' is a simple love story. The authors are trying to remind people of the old cliches that love is beautiful and that life must be viewed with realism. Their treatment of these topics is anything but trite.

This production at the Royal Alexandra is not as good as the Canadian production of two or three years ago. The actors perform well, but they are not great. The director had a large stage that he could have used more

creatively, but he maintained excellent pace.

For a refreshing change, see the Fantasticks.

## Cul-de-Sac, or I Die Laughing

by Frank Liebeck

Many years ago, two in fact, when the moon was black, a horror film, horrible in the intensity of its ghastliness, came out and critics hailed the director as another Hitchcock. At least the total impact was as ugly and cruel as Hitchcock could make it. The film was 'Repulsion' and the director was Roman Polanski. It dealt with the study of a beautiful schizophrenic as she hacked her way to total destruction.

When Polanski makes a film, every scene is as if he had painted a picture. The composition, when finished, must create a visual effect, but a visual effect that reaches all the senses. Polanski's latest, Cul-de-Sac is currently at the International Cinema.

The basic story is quite simple. An old man and his young and sensuous wife live alone in a castle by the sea, and one night are interrupted by a madman wielding a machine gun.

Cul-de-Sac means blind alley, and the castle, with its back to the sea, presents the place where the characters must stop and turn and possibly face what is chasing

A Canadian... ..with two wives?

## Arnie is a Bigamist

by L. Pivato

Efforts to celebrate Canada's centennial have been impressive. But Centennial projects bring out both the best and the worst in "Canadianism".

Thursday, September 28, I saw the results of many months of planning on the part of the Centennial University Players. Their two productions at Burton Auditorium were directed by Pierre Lefevre of the Theatre School of Strasbourg. Why not use a Canadian director?

The curtain rose with "Arnold Has Two Wives" by Aviva Ravel of Montreal. Arnold Axelrod, a university professor, secretly practices what he wishes to advocate to the public: polygamy.

Much could have been done by Mrs. Ravel with this idea of a modern-day man having two wives. The concept of the play was good and it could have been very funny, however, the writer contented herself with hackneyed and unimaginative dialogue and outdated political jokes, flabby anti-Americanism, and timid Canadian nationalism. Lots of pride but no imagination!

Despite the soggy material they had to work with, these all-Canadian players gave a most enjoyable performance.

John Innes, a York student, played that man of men convinced that polygamy was practical and only too workable in modern society.

Frances Kearney played the official wife. Exceptionally good in her part was Donna White as the unofficial wife, whom everyone thought to be a spinster dentist. The performers made good use of the stage and both the costumes and properties were suitable and colourful.

The second play of the evening "Les Fourberies de Scapin" (The tricks of Scapin) was typical of Moliere's humor. Through his impudence and cunning, Scapin, a very likeable rascal helps two pairs of lovers out-wit their tyrannical fathers. Once again we see Moliere's sympathy for youth and his understanding of the foibles of men.

Hubert Gagnon who plays Scapin evoked continuous and hearty laughter from the audience. Jean-Jacques Thibeault and Yves Bernatchez in the roles of the fathers added to the hilarity of it all. On the whole the play moved quickly and the ten performers spoke crisp, articulate French.

The two productions, though on the whole enjoyable, could have made better use of Canadian talent in writing (as well as in performing). In the first play the Centennial Players gave a good performance, considering their material, but they were not given a chance to show what they could really do. Why couldn't the Centennial Players have chosen a better Canadian play?

## A Bunch of Italian Jokes

The Italian cinema may have even the world Antonioni and Fellini, but it has also produced enough quickie westerns, muscle-man epics, and sex comedies to rival Hollywood as the capital of celluloid pap.

The latest import to be unloaded here is entitled, appropriately enough, "Made in Italy" --in case there is some confusion over its national origin. Still "Made in Italy" is disgustingly like the other hundred other Italian comedies we have seen in the last few years.

The film is a collection of miscellaneous sketches meant to depict the humorous aspects of Italian mores. Each of the episodes revolves around a weak joke, incapable of sustaining a one-liner, much less a story.

One sketch describes Anna Magnani leading her family across a busy street. It is funny if you think crossing a road is a hilarious experience. At least the director sees the comic possibilities, for this forms the film's highlight.

In another sketch, Virna Lisi announces to her lover that her rich old husband has finally died. Before the lover has a chance

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