

Entertainment

Editor: Warren Clements

The Merchant of Glendon

Centuries-old comedy of errors still delights



By AGNES KRUCHIO

For an academic audience weaned on Shakespeare and growing up on the theatre of the absurd, it is a refreshing change to see a simple ancient farce whose purpose is unashamedly to entertain us sometimes at our own and sometimes at our fellows' expense.

It is especially refreshing when the production is as skilful and as im-

aginative as the one presented last week by the Glendon College Dramatic Arts Programme, Plautus' *The Merchant*.

It is remarkable how little humankind has changed in the 20 centuries that have elapsed since the play was written. One of the major sources of entertainment in this farce is indeed the recognition that we have changed so little; even if some of the social customs, such as slavery, are somewhat alien.

We wince whenever we hear of the beautiful maiden Pasicompsa being bought and sold by the competing merchants in the scenario. The ultimate irony is that she, the slave, completely dominates the lives of the men and their wives in the play. She is the only one who is above all the ruckus she is causing; and catching the waft of things, she cleverly manipulates the situations to her own advantage.

The situation is this: Demipho, an Athenian merchant, has banished his son, because on his twentieth birthday

he had "made the acquaintance" of a beautiful maiden. During his exile, Charinus, the son, has fallen in love with, and partially purchased, another.

On returning home, short of cash, he has trouble claiming his beloved. His relic of a father, not to be outdone, meets, falls in love with and (you'd never guess) purchases the same maiden for his own mistress, behind his wife's back, of course.

What follows is a comedy of errors, where most, if not all, the men on the scene lust after the nymph, her true love banishes himself because of sadness, and the wives plot their revenge on their husbands. But all turns out well in the end, and the young couple lives happily ever after.

ACUTE TIMING

Michael Gregory's direction of the Glendon production was characterised by an acute sense of timing, so crucial in comedy, and in this he had the aid of an excellent cast; the timing was a shade off in only a few spots. While the characters were of necessity caricatures, their two-dimensional nature had been rounded out by many

small touches, and the result was a sense of depth of a sort not always achieved in farce.

Acanthio, a slave, was shown to be a lout as he picked his nose while his anxious master showered him with praises; and Pasicompsa the nymph, played by Caroline Mizen, showed just what kind of training she has had by the slightest undulations of her hips.

Charlie Northcote, who played Charinus, is a (two)-seasoned veteran of Stratford and scion of Glendon College, and gave the young mooner an air of innocent clumsiness; we felt he got more in his new wife than he had ever bargained for. Eutycus, his buddy, was given strength of character by Martin Gorman's clear, full-bodied voice.

Caroline Gregory's attractive costumes captured the sense of the period. David Weatherston's set, dominated by phallic columns, most emphatically underlined the real values of the society whence the play sprang and was perhaps an attempt to redress the lack of balance created by the dominating female characters.

All in all, a light, bawdy and enormously entertaining play.

Tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m., Glendon presents *Everyman*, a shocking medieval play, in the Pipe Room, for 50 cents (York students) and \$1.

Lenny show at Cabaret

Lenny Bruce, a bitterly ironic monologist whose insight into taboo social issues of the 50s and 60s won him a small but devoted following, became something of a martyr to that following after the authorities hounded him for his shows and after his death from an accidental drug overdose. Now, Marty Doyle appears as Lenny Bruce Taling Dirty, at the cabaret tonight and tomorrow night in Vanier's Open End at 9 and 10:30 p.m. (two different shows). Today's show will be carried live on Radio York, with an interview with Doyle between shows.

Voigt is new sir

Comrack, a new film by director Martin (Sounder) Ritt, will be screened courtesy of the film department tonight at 7:30 p.m. in Curtis L.H.L.

Ritt is arriving from Los Angeles for the screening, and will speak following the film. Comrack, starring Jon Voigt, is the reverse half of *To Sir With Love*, and involves a teacher on a small island off the coast of Georgia.

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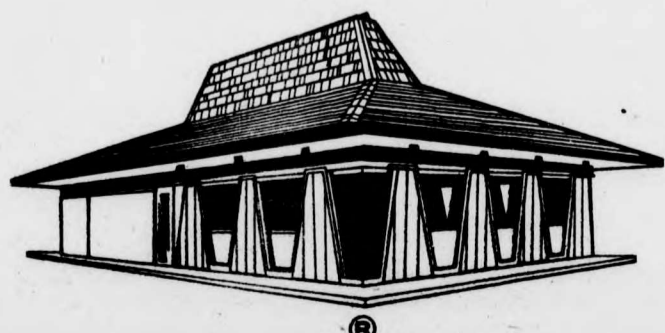
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