

entertainment

Nothing to Lose for play's workers

By Norm Faria

Ending up in a warehouse job is perhaps for many students the ultimate punishment of academic failure. Yet this attitude to manual work is probably being softened as inept government policies and an increasingly competitive labour market throw many graduates into occupations utilizing few of their acquired skills. After all, the pay is good in the unionized jobs and there is always the possibility that Union Carbide or Bell will reply to the applications.

For the drivers at a large wholesale food company in David Fennario's new play *Nothing to Lose*, however, there is not even that hope. They are working class through and through and will always be, just like their fathers who worked at Dominion Coal and Steel. For them it is a life of drudgery and frustration. As one of the characters says of his friends: "All the guys are either crazy, dead, in jail, or working."

Set in a tavern across the street from the loading docks, the tense action of the play revolves around the outcome of the blocking of the bays with a truck belonging to a high strung worker named Jackie, superbly played by Montreal actor Peter MacNeill. A break for a few beers is stretched out into an impromptu anti-management protest

which finally ends up as a sit-in on plant property. In between, Jackie and his comrades banter, throw temper tantrums, and trade insults. It is a brief respite from the harsh discipline, meted out by the boss's foreman who bears an uncanny resemblance to Kojak. We look on with satisfaction as Jackie and the rest respond to a provocative attack and pummel him outside in the snow with pool cues.

Nothing to Lose, which is Fennario's second major play, ran successfully in Montreal before being brought to Toronto by Toronto Workshop Productions. Its cast comes from the English language Centaur Theatre Company in Montreal. Fennario, himself a former warehouse worker, now makes his living solely from playwriting, and resides in the Pointe St-Charles district of Montreal.

The play is an improvement on his 1975 work, *On the Job*, which was set in a Montreal clothier's warehouse. Fennario skillfully retains the anti-union bureaucrat attitudes so evident in the earlier work. However, unlike the cynicism and aimlessness which led to a disappointing rejection by the employees in *On the Job* of all union activity, there is in the new play a strong sense of solidarity. In the end we get the feeling that the union official (played by Toronto's

Lubomyr Mykytiuk) is not totally opposed to the sit-in as a tactic.

On the night this reviewer attended there was some excellent acting all round, especially by the stern-faced but agreeable writer (convincingly portrayed by Denys Nadon). However, I found the period leading up to the expected arrival of the bandaged foreman

and the police more hilarious than realistic. The set, complete with scribbled messages on the grimy wall near the telephone, is competently created.

There is a general myth, even more prevalent in the student milieu, that unions are only for the immigrants and TTC track repairmen but, as the recently

launched campaign by the Canadian Labour Congress to organize Canadian bank workers shows, it is something many of us will have to come to terms with in the future. The play *Nothing to Lose* is relevant and deserves some attention.

Nothing to Lose. A Centaur Theatre Production at Toronto Free Theatre. Students \$4.00.

Canadian book on rape a first

Rape: the Price of Coercive Sexuality Lorene Clark and Debra Lewis, authors Reviewed by Rhonda Salsberg.

This book is the first feminist book written on rape in Canada. Although its academic style makes it tedious reading in spots, it is useful in providing Canadian information and statistics.

Part One is somewhat boring, with charts, figures, and statistics. It does prove, however, that a very small percentage of rape cases do actually result in a conviction of the rapist. This is directly due to court and police procedures.

This book would be useful to any woman who is raped, by preparing her for what will happen at the police station and in court. Police will not even go through with a rape case unless they think there is a good chance of conviction. An ideal case would be a 35 year old virgin who was raped in the street by a certified psychopath!

Since rape is seen as a crime of sex and not an assault, "consent" must be proven in court. This is virtually impossible, if the woman has not been beaten. She is not allowed to give any evidence to prove that she has not consented.

Part Two is much more interesting, as it analyses rape in society. Though the book basically makes the same arguments that feminists have been making for years, they bear repeating.

Marriage as we know it was set up by feudal upper-class men who wanted to be sure of the paternity of their heirs. Rape laws were (and are) a reflection of this. Wealthy men wanted to ensure that lower-class men could not steal their "property" by rape — since rape was an acceptable way of obtaining a wife.

The book points out that, in our society, women are seen as sexual property. Women do not have the right to their bodies — they belong to someone else.

This is reflected in the rape laws and in the way they are enforced. Rape laws are against the abuse of one man's property by another (a man can't rape his wife).

Women who are virgins or married (that is, those with real potential value) have the best chance of seeing their rapist convicted.

The book also attempts to analyse rape as part of a sexist society. In fact the title of the book makes this very clear.

The Price of Coercive Sexuality

the title explains that all male-female relationships contain some coercive aspect. Women must "sell" to the highest bidder — trade sex for money, security, or status. Even among women and men who understand this "monetary" aspect of their relationship and try to avoid it, it still exists. It may take more subtle forms.

As well as women having to "sell", men must buy. They must have something to trade. Lower-income men can't offer security or status; so it is not surprising most rapists are working-class. This is backed up by statistics.

By mentioning this, the book brings up the idea of class. Because some men (upper class) can trade successfully for sex, and some (working-class) can't — there will be rape.

Also some women have value and

status being middle-class, and have some protection under rape laws, and some women (lower class) have no status, and can therefore be raped with impunity.

The authors feel that more is required than changing the laws; that the structure must be changed. They are not clear on how they think this will happen; they have some vague idea of "education". This is probably a good idea, providing that the government agencies you are trying to re-educate will give you the money to do it!

A book that is about rape should fill you with anger or arm you with arguments. *Rape: the Price of Coercive Sexuality* really does neither. A much more ambitious and thought-provoking book is Susan Brownmiller's book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. I would recommend that book.

Student video mundane

By Alan Fox

No, fellow Yorkites, *Lynda Benglis Presents The Amazing Bow Wow* [1/2 Hour Colour Video] With *Rena Small* is not a put-on by some expelled fine arts student. It really does exist, although its the only thing I've ever seen worthy of the term "pretentious". Ms. Benglis' 'video', supposedly a statement on the position of the artist on society, comes across as a reflection of the old 'You can fool some of the people ...' axiom. The poster, to which the tape bears no resemblance (in case you're wondering), makes the same statement without the waste of resources and time.

Video Art is fantastic. Like the poster says, "Video is Being Invented". But not by you, Ms. Benglis. Video is *not* television, while Ms. Benglis' tape is. Video is part of the technology that developed to carry the signal for commercial TV from the studio into the airwaves. Video Art is a purely graphic use of that hardware. While it isn't relative to the quality of Ms. Benglis' work, it's nice to clarify the matter.

As a TV show, *The Amazing Bow Wow* is sort of a *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*-style program. That is, it's cliché, badly acted and full of mundane camera set-ups. If this were related to the subject of the tape that would be fine. Except that this isn't a tape about the banality of television, or if it is, it's a failure. It is a tape about the artist, though.

The allegorical artist is a hermaphroditic dog which is displayed in a side-show by a husband and wife (or vice-versa) team. The dog is an hilarious 5 foot high person in a dog suit, complete with a set of erect male genitals inside a set of female ones. Well, the dog can talk, and the wife realizes that there's money to

be made, while the husband sees the dog as almost messianic. He knows the dog is advanced beyond its years.

After the dog rapes his wife (or maybe attempts to rape — who knows) the man decides to render the dog a eunuch. However, he's a philistine, and cuts out the tongue instead of the penis. I hope I haven't ruined the show for you, but now you'll be able to spend thirty seconds studying the deep meaning of all this.

I question the need for art that's about the plight of the artist. Wailings on the plight of the artist should be saved for trips to the grad pub, where one can sit communally and cry in one's beer. It doesn't serve your audience to complain that they don't understand you. It's not going to get you any more understood; so you either change your style or work for yourself; both valid alternatives.

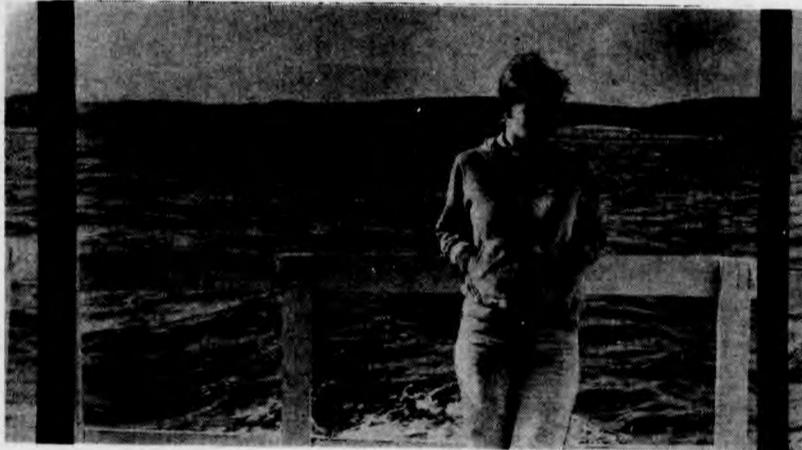
On the other hand, I loved the poster. That little list of epigrams beside the photo illuminates it perfectly. It certainly is "Frozen Gesture" and "A Serious Dirty Picture". And I wonder if "Grace Flexibility" is the name of the model. Also, "Rubber Development" and "Foam Structures" are sure to fuel speculation about what is and isn't real in that photo. Is it really that big? Which reminds me of the definition of criticism in a short story: The measurement of another man's penis.

Finally, Ms. Benglis only serves to aid the arguments of the nationalists. Why should we import people from out of the country to show such flutulent work when any Canadian could do just as badly? What happened to the myth of the New York American Artist?

Meredith Monk, a New York based dancer and choreographer, will appear with the performing ensemble The House in Burton Auditorium, tonight and tomorrow at 8:30, as the sixth event in the Performing Arts Series. The House is a group of actors, musicians, dancers, writers, painters, and a scientist who stress the interdisciplinary aspects of their work in order to arrive at new forms of performance. The will present *Tablet* tonight and *Songs from the Hill* tomorrow. Tickets, which cost \$3.50 for students, \$4.50 per faculty and \$5.50 without York I.D., can be purchased in the Burton Box Office between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Mary Fraker

Photo's subtle thrills



By Alan Fox

For those who like their thrills a little subtler, Nick Rotundo's exhibition *Planes Through a Vision*, now at Founders, should be just the ticket. Although very loose, filled with cut-off limbs and large empty spaces, Rotundo's photographs have a certain energy that makes them effective.

The first three photographs, all of young people, have the greatest intensity. Even from across the room they hold your interest, primarily because they are the only photographs in which the subject looks at the camera. As one goes around the room clockwise the subjects are progressively older, yet it is only the youngest subjects who are able to open up enough to look directly at the camera, or rather at us, so that we can scrutinize them.

In all the other photographs the subject looks off to the side of the

frame. This, coupled with arms and legs severed by the frame and large open areas of background give an immense feeling of unity between environment and subject. One is always aware that this is, after all, a photograph, and that someone has chosen, almost arbitrarily, what to include in it. These photographs are but bits cut from a continuum.

Consequently the viewer has to get into the environment. There isn't the flamboyance of a Scavullo or the theatricality of a Karsh; the only thing that says *photograph* is that it's a black and white image.

Probably the 'best' picture in the exhibition is the one on the poster, of the girl leaning on a fence with the lake behind her. Yet in the poster, the enlarged frame size, as well as the poorer resolution, lacks the force of the comparatively small exhibition print.

"Crash" novel has side effects

The Crash of '79. Paul Erdman, author. Simon and Shuster. Reviewed by Cynthia Rantoul.

He was hired to spend Saudi Arabia's \$billions; money acquired from every nation in the world for their most precious resource, oil.

Bill Hitchcock had a lifetime of experience in international banking. With the Saudi backing, he had the power to break the world's financial back and by the time he was out of a job, he had done exactly that.

A fast-moving book, it would especially appeal to anyone with business acumen. The unsettling part is that the players existed and

the fiction, developed from what is now fact, is not outrageous as a prediction for our future. The proof is floating around today's stock markets and devalued currencies. A system of banking that has kept many an economy viable suddenly falls apart as a complete fraud. Where the fiction starts and fact ends is almost impossible to determine.

Globe-trotting between Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, St. Moritz, New York and Bern, to name but a few, the world of the people in power is laid out as only one who has lived it can see. Paul Erdman could not have developed such a calculated fiction

novel without a great deal of insight into such a tight clique.

There are definite side effects to having read this book. Never again when Saudi Arabian money or the Shah of Iran's military front is mentioned will you ignore it completely. Now, you begin to realize that despite the speeches of the politicians around the world, war and peace is not only made in the offices of the kings and presidents. More importantly in the inner recesses of their big banks, the silent majority confer and never have to explain what they are doing or why until it all comes tumbling down around.