



"Let the 'Ah' go..."

Taking advantage of the unexpectedly fine weather, Patrick Christopher, Head of the Dalhousie Acting program (left foreground with checked jacket) leads a class through warmups and breathing exercises in front of the Rebecca Cohn Theatre on Wednesday. Warmups are routinely done before doing scenes. The class, Theatre 2800 06R, is part of the Acting second year program.

Playwrights Cabaret: straight up theatre

BY CHRIS OULLETTE

For once, a theatre function where everyone in attendance seems to be here on their own free will, that's my initial reaction of the *Playwrights' Cabaret*.

When you first enter, you may notice the atmosphere's congenial, if not a little over the top. Most people in attendance sport creative facial hair or faux fur of one sort or another and best of all, there's a bar.

That's right kids, a bar. The theatre is converted into a cabaret of sorts — chairs set around tables where patrons can enjoy a beverage in the company of friends, indulge in some people watching and take in some theatre.

The *Playwrights' Cabaret* is designed to allow playwright students of Dalhousie to transform their words from paper to the stage. It consists of a compilation of about a half dozen pieces that range from the serious and mundane to the lurid and obscene. Each play is short, so those who find their attention wandering can always go back up to the bar.

Some of the pieces are rather anti-climatic, but for the most part, they're interesting. *Tar Babies*, writ-

ten by Paloma Hanlon, tracks the breakdown of a Cape Breton family struck by ironic tragedy.

Nicole Heringer's *Modern Love* pits a feisty Aphrodite against an egomaniacal Cupid in their quest to help others fall in love. And if the action on stage isn't enough to keep you engaged, then just look around and take in the sights of those sitting near you.

The crowd consists mostly of current and former Dal Theatre students who have come out to show their support and vie for the off-stage spotlight. Except for the four guys getting wasted to my left, most of the audience was as much in-tuned with themselves as their counterparts on stage.

Not since *Medieval Times Dinner Theatre* has atmosphere played such an integral role in the enjoyment of theatre. Why? Because the *Playwrights' Cabaret* is more than just theatre, it's a night out of drama on and off stage. So throw on some pleather, have a few gin and tonics and enjoy the show.

The *Playwrights' Cabaret* is free and runs until March 18th at the Arts Centre. Performances begin nightly at 7:30 — arrive early to ensure prime see and be seen seats.

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Regular meetings are held every Monday at 4:30 as well.