

Characters fail play

Freeman's Jamie-boy complex and unbelievable

By MIRA FRIEDLANDER

The realization that Canada can produce its own playwrights and scripts of value has produced a slowly growing trend toward a hard, uncompromising realism.

A quick glance at the productions arising from our smaller "Canadian Content" theatres over the last two years, particularly from the Tarragon, reveals a pattern of producing plays dealing strongly with real and powerful social problems. There seems to be little interest in light-hearted fluff and melodramatic classics, a fact I find refreshing and challenging.

Perhaps we are returning to a time of naturalism, of the use of theatre as a platform for social thought and meaningful plots. Certainly with the Tarragon's latest production of David Freeman's new play *You're Going to Be Alright Jamie-Boy*, this trend is again encouraged.

This time, while dealing with the common theme of alienation of father and son in a working class family, (shades of *Leaving Home*), Freeman introduces us to another problem just as traumatic: the idiot box. Here is a family whose father has molded himself into the stereotype patriarch of his favorite family, the Waltons.

The problems which crop up in the family's relationships with one another as a result are both pathetic and outrageously funny, but make for a complex, slightly unbelievable plot. One gets the feeling that Freeman is trying too hard on too many levels.

His play, though undeniably funny in parts, is interspersed with moments of such forced laughs that I found myself cringing in my seat. Swearing can be funny when it fits the character and the dialogue, but here is a case where the attitude seems to be one of "we need a laugh here, let's insert 'fuck'." Had he left well enough alone, the entire first act would have been much tighter and funnier.

NO SYMPATHY

Turning to the second act we are confronted with another problem. Suddenly there is an emotional intensity on stage that is in no way warranted by the first act.

We are suddenly asked to care deeply about these people who have previously been caricatures, to listen to their morbid true confessions, to understand and sympathize with the hard luck of having such a warped father. But really, by this point, I couldn't care less. The sudden switch from comedy to tragedy doesn't work and the result is a bombardment of the audience's senses.

I must be quick to point out however, that this is also partly due to the acting. Hugh Webster as the father had short moments in which he almost became real, but these were quickly destroyed by his mostly shallow performance. He became a reader of lines, a vision of how Archie Bunker reacts each week on TV with no seeming insight into his own character of Earnie.

Jamie, played by David Ferry, is caught up in the dilemma of giving everything to a part which has nothing there to work on. He is the title character of the play, but that is all; he's a mere symbol.

The mother is present only as a necessary part of the furniture who can jump at her husband's commands, and Lillian Lewis plays the part as though she would really secretly rather be elsewhere.

CAROL SHINES

The highlight of the evening however, comes in the form of Carol, Jamie's sister, played by Jayne Eastwood. I couldn't help thinking the girl from *Goin' Down the Road* had simply got up and changed locations. Here is an actress whose feeling and sense of timing, both tragic and comic, brings everything alive.

Miss Eastwood understands clearly the situation of such a family and plays as though she has never known



Hugh Webster and Stuart Gillard square off in David Freeman's *You're Going to Be Alright, Jamie-Boy*, at the Tarragon.

another life-style. Unfortunately, her husband, played by Stuart Gillard, comes off as a ludicrous ape, seeming even more unreal and shallow alongside Miss Eastwood's brilliance.

Perhaps the direction is also at fault. Bill Glassco's usual instinctive understanding of his plays' characters

seems to have failed him, and so they never reach the peaks he has been known to achieve. Although I would not classify *You're Going to Be Alright Jamie-Boy* as a total disaster, I think that next time Mr. Glassco and Mr. Freeman should do a lot more re-writing together, as they did so suc-

cessfully in *Creeps* and *Battering Ram*.

The show continues until Feb. 24, with performances Tuesday through Sunday at 8:30, and a pay-what-you-can performance at 2:30 p.m. Sunday. Student tickets Tuesday through Thursday are \$2.50.

On Campus

Events for On Campus should be sent to Dawn Cotton, Department of Information and Publications, N817 Ross. Deadline is Monday, 12 noon.

SPECIAL LECTURES

Thursday 1:30 p.m. - Guest Speaker (Visiting Speakers Series) "English Music of the 16th and 17th Centuries" by Giles Bryant, organist and choirmaster of St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Toronto - Old Dining Hall, Glendon.

7:30 p.m. - E.G.O. Faculty (Centre for Continuing Education) "Theory of Small Group Dynamics" with Alex Owen - general admission \$6.00; students - \$4.00 - 107 Stedman.

Friday 3:00 p.m. - Guest Speaker (Graduate Studies, Economics) "How to Think About the Optimal Amount of Resources to Devote to Tax Collection and the Optimal Amount of Inflation" by Professor O. H. Brownlee, currently on leave (from the University of Minnesota) to the Department of the Treasury, Washington, D.C. - 110, Curtis.

Monday 4:30 p.m. - Biology Seminar Series - "Glycolate Metabolism in Algae" by Mr. B. Grodzinski, York graduate student - 320, Farquharson.

Tuesday 12:00 noon - York Poetry Series (Faculty of Fine Arts, Humanities, English) featuring George Bowering, recipient of the 1969 Governor-General's Award for Poetry - S869, the Ross Building.

8:30 p.m. - Humanities Lecture Series (Atkinson) "Dancing Worlds - Steps in Parsimoniously Comprehensive Human Experience" by Professor Larry Chisholm, State University of New York (Buffalo) - Moot Court Room, Osgoode Hall Law School.

Wednesday 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - Guest Speaker (Visual Arts) "The Emergence of a Work of Art: Raphael's Use of Drawings" by Egon Verheyen, John Hopkins University - B. Stedman.

FILMS, ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday 4:00 - 5:35 p.m. - Film (Humanities 283) "Night in Fog" and "Memorandum" - extra seating available - I, Curtis.

7:00 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. - International Film Series (Environmental Studies) "The Fixer" plus "Big Yellow Taxi" and "Dialogue" - admission \$1.00 - I, Curtis.

Friday 7:00 p.m. - Film (Film Department) "Tailor from Torzhok" (1925; by Protazanov) - L, Curtis.

8:30 p.m. - Concert (York University, University of Toronto) as part of the series of concerts and demonstrations of the music of India and Iran, Shambhu Das and Party will participate in a "Concert of North Indian Sitar" - general admission \$3.00; students - \$1.50 - Moot Court Room, Osgoode.

Saturday 8:30 p.m. - Films (Jewish Student Federation) "Duck Soup" (Marx Brothers) and "City Lights" (Charles Chaplin) - no admission - Faculty Lounge, 8th floor, Ross.

Sunday 6:30 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. - Film (Calumet) "Burn" (Marlon Brando) - admission 69¢ - Calumet Common Room, Atkinson.

Monday 8:30 p.m. - Performing Arts Series (Fine Arts) featuring the New York Jazz Quartet - general admission \$7.00; staff - \$5.50; students - \$3.50 - Burton Auditorium.

Tuesday 4:00 p.m. - 4:20 - Film (Humanities 283) "The Forbidden Games" - extra seating available - I, Curtis.

4:25 p.m. - 5:55 p.m. - Film (Humanities 179B) "Elvira Madigan" - extra seating available - I, Curtis.

6:00 p.m. - 7:55 p.m. - Film (Humanities 397) "Phaedra" - extra seating available - I, Curtis.

7:00 p.m. - Film (Film Department) "Double Suicide" (1969, By Shinoda and Masashiro) - L, Curtis.

MISCELLANEOUS

Friday 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. - COSMICON - Winters College third annual comic art, horror, fantasy and science fiction convention; included in the three-day convention are panel discussions, slide shows, and lectures featuring representatives from Marvel Comics, National Periodicals, Quebecomix, National Lampoon, Mad Magazine and Warren Publications; art display rooms will be set up for individual guest artists; over thirty feature films will be shown and will run continuously in two different theatres (today's films will run until 5:00 a.m.) - advance weekend passes are \$5.00; passes at the door are \$7.00, or \$3.00 per day - the convention will be held at Winters College; for further information call 667-3888.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. - COSMICON - continued; today's films run until 5:00 a.m.

Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. - COSMICON - final day; films will run until midnight.

7:30 p.m. - Roman Catholic Mass - 107 Stedman.

Monday 3:30 p.m. - OFFICIAL OPENING OF BETHUNE COLLEGE - a plaque will be unveiled by Su Shi-Min, First Secretary, Cultural Division, of the Chinese Embassy, in honour of Dr. Norman Bethune; at 4:15 p.m. - the Lewis Walsmely Collection of Contemporary Chinese Art will be exhibited; 9:00 p.m. - N.F.B. film on the life of Dr. Bethune.

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - Christian Counselling & Religious Consultation - Call Chaplain Judt at 661-3738 or 633-2158.

11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. - CHINA WEEK (Bethune) **11:00 a.m.** - Multi-Media Slide Show on China (218 Bethune); **12:00 noon** - "Chinese Foreign Policy" by Daniel Tretiak, York Professor (JCR, Bethune); **3:30 p.m.** - "Continuities in Chinese Philosophical Perspectives" by Henry Rosemont, City University of New York (218 Bethune); and **8:00 p.m.** - "The Origins of Chinese Music: An Illustrated Lecture and T'ai Concert" with Prof. Chou Wen-Chung, Columbia University and students of York's Theatre Department (Bethune Dining Hall).

Wednesday 11:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. - CHINA WEEK (Bethune) **11:00 a.m.** - Multi-Media Slide Show on China (218 Bethune); **12:00 noon** - "Reading Mao" by Ioan Davies, Master of Bethune College (JCR, Bethune); **3:30 p.m.** - "The Look of People's China: the Artistic Heritage" by Richard Edwards, University of Michigan; **7:30 p.m.** - "Canada-China Friendship Ballad Troupe" with Kate Stevens, University of Toronto (218 Bethune).

ATHLETICS, RECREATION

Friday 8:15 p.m. - Basketball - York vs. Queen's University - Tait McKenzie

Saturday 1:00 p.m. - York University Invitational Indoor Track Meet - third annual meet - South Industry Building, Canadian National Exhibition.

Sunday 1:00 p.m. - Recreational Indoor Soccer - Main Gym, Tait McKenzie.

Monday 12:15 - 12:45 - Conditioning for Men & Women - Tait McKenzie.

Tuesday 7:30 p.m. - Scuba Diving Class (British Sub Aqua) S203, Ross.

CLUBS, MEETINGS

Thursday 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m. - York University Faculty Association - A, Stedman.

Monday 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m. - Hatha Yoga - JCR, McLaughlin.

7:30 p.m. - York Bridge Club - Venier Dining Hall.

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. - Christian Science Organization - S737, Ross.

COFFEE HOUSES, PUBS

For days and hours open, please call the individual coffee houses:

Absinthe Coffe House - 013 Winters (2439)

Ainger Coffe Shop - Atkinson College (3544)

Argh Coffe Shop - 051, McLaughlin (3606)

Buttery - Founder (3550)

Cock & Bull Coffe Shop - 023, Founders (3667)

Green Bush Inn - T.B.A. (3019)

Just Another Coffe Shop - 112, Bethune (3579)

Open End Coffe Shop - 004 Vanier (6386)

Orange Snail Coffe Shop - 107 Stong (3587)

Osgoode Pub - JCR, Osgoode (3019)

Pizza Pit - 124 Central Square, Ross (3286)

Tap'n Keg Pub - JCR, Bethune (6 p.m. - 12:30 a.m., Wed.

Beer Lunch - JCR, Stong (12 noon - 2 p.m., Thurs.)