

Four (count'em) four great plays

At Studio Theatre, U of A's drama students learn by doing

"For drama was the first child given to the first man and woman born to the world. Wherever two or three of them are gathered together, there is the theatre. Wherever we sit down, stand up, lie stretched; wherever we sing, dance, work, weep, curse and swear, or play games; wherever a child be born, or a man or woman die, there the theatre is, and ever will be.

"And now, wherever a soldier's camp is fixed, a gun goes off, or a bonny young airman flies upwards or crashes down to death; wherever a field is tilled, or machines rush round in a factory there is the stuff that drama and dreams are made on. As high as we can reach to heaven, as low down as we may get to hell, and all between, is the theatre proper and the theatre grand."

Fifty drama majors at this university live Sean O'Casey's words. Guided by their faculty, they are learning to enact the life that playwrights have created and explored. They study by doing: doing entire plays and parts of plays, doing exercises and improvisations, doing plays well within their grasp and often attempting plays which will require years more of dedication and discipline for mastery.

The University of Alberta's Studio Theatre produces four plays each year as a part of these actors' and technicians' training. In these performances the students learn to use their voices, their bodies, their environment and controlled emotion in the attempt to give new life to the feelings and philosophies of mankind as the playwright has re-created or re-emphasized them. These considerations were dominant in Studio Theatre's enterprising and, I think, wise choice of plays for the coming season.

The year will open on October 24 with the production of "A Month in the Country", directed by Frank Bueckert and designed by Gwen Keatley. Turgenev's play is a romantic comedy of unhappy love in provincial Russia in which he uses a continuous sensitive wit to prevent the misfortunes of his characters from dragging the play down into bathos.

It is suffused with a repressed fretfulness, fragmented and overlapping dialogue, and a seeming absence of time which is almost Chekhovian. But "A Month in the Country" has none of the sombreness or occasional turgidity which characterizes Chekhov's plays; it remains a collection of delicately crystallized moments almost too light to grasp.

In December, "O Holy Ghost Dip Your Finger In The Blood of Canada and Write I LOVE YOU", a recently completed play by Wilfred Watson, will receive its premiere performance under the direction of Thomas Peacocke. This play was specially commissioned by the City Centennial Committee, who chose it from submissions made by playwrights across Canada.

February brings a contemporary British drama, Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party", directed by John Terfloth. The season ends with Bernard Engel's production of

"Volpone", Ben Jonson's witty, often sarcastic, exposé of greed and lust.

Each year Studio Theatre reserves a number of tickets to each performance for the student body. These are distributed free of charge.

Students can obtain free tickets upon presentation of their I.D. cards (one ticket per card) at the Department of Drama General Office on the second floor of Corbett Hall. Tickets will be released from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each weekday, beginning the Wednesday before opening night and continuing through the week of the performance. Each play will run from Tuesday through Saturday.

Tickets for the October 24-28 production of "A Month in the Country" will be available from Wednesday, October 18, through Friday, October 27. Since tickets are usually all taken by opening night, it is advisable to pick yours up early.

—Shirley Neuman

The naked truth! Daring expose of Filmsoc erotica

A popular local superstition, tenuously supported by the nefarious researches of, among others, Mr. B. Westgate (of unknown qualifications) and Miss J. Andrews (past, current, and imminent mucusologist), holds celluloid in general and foreign celluloid in particular to be pernicious and poisonous.

This year that sterling organization known acronously as the EFS, officially as the Edmonton Film Society, and affectionately as the Erotic Film Smugglers will effectively undermine that vile calumny by presenting for your delectation / entertainment / education (please delete the alternatives which you feel will offend the Censor least) some twenty fine films.

These will be divided into two series, the Main and the Classic. Admission to either or both of these may be had at the student rate of five dollars per series (only a paltry fifty cents per superb film). The films to be shown include, in the main series:

Red Desert, Antonioni's first colour film;

King and Country, starring Dirk Bogarde and produced by Joseph Losey of *The Servant* fame; and

Electra, a new attempt at Euripides. But why go on? The mind boggles at the brilliance of the rest of the selection. Nor can we be disappointed at the offerings of the Classic Series:

Phantom of the Opera, the 1925 Lon Chaney thriller;

A Hard Day's Night, the first Beatles film;

Dr. Strangelove, with Peter Sellers, a satire on nuclear warfare; *To Have and Have Not*, with one of Humphrey Bogart's truly great performances in a Hemingway adaptation; and many more, all an equal delight to the eye and ear.

The Classic Series gets underway October 23, the Main on October 30; the films are presented on alternate Mondays.

—Michael Ellis

leftovers

At the end of every meal, there are leftovers; and at the end of every Casserole, there is this column.

Like the remains of a sumptuous repast, it will be completely amorphous. The only predictable thing about it is that it will appear at the end of every issue of Casserole, marking the end of the reader's sampling of cultural delights and his retirement to the billiards room, so to speak, of the Sports page which follows.

We may find here, perhaps, in future, issues, the low moanings of frustrated Casserole contributors, pitiful attempts at humour concocted by tired editors in the early morning hours, or cynical viewpoints on the mad world which engulfs us.

For now, we will sample the wit and wisdom of John Thompson, who has cooked up a summary of cultural events to come.

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N.B. This will be a regular Gateway Arts feature, unless the entire staff succumbs to the blue feebles and loses heart completely sometime in the long, cold months ahead.

We'll try to list everything we know that's happening. But we're not omniscient (surprise!), so if you're involved in some enterprise you'd like our readers to hear of, drop off a note telling us about it at the Arts Editor's desk.

* * *

After all that buildup, it's humiliating to confess that we're not organized enough yet to help much this week. Forage for yourselves, and good grazing!

But now's definitely the time to order your tickets for the British National Theatre's production of Congreve's dazzling comedy of manners, *Love for Love* (Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 9-10 in the Jubilee). Tickets are getting scarce; after all, how often does Sir Lawrence Olivier breeze through town?

For tickets, phone 229-3124 or drop in at Room 414 of the Legislative Building.

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Past experience indicates that if you want to see the Walterdale Playhouse production of Christopher Frye's drama, *A Sleep of Prisoners* (directed by Jack McCreath, with John Plank, Vic Sutton and Wilf Rowe), you'd better get tickets for it now too.

The Walterdale is Edmonton's minitheatre, and generally maintains reasonably high standards. Its opening production will run 10 nights from Oct. 5. Tickets at the Allied Arts Box Office in the Bay.

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And bear in mind, for long-range entertainment planning, that only members are admitted to programs of the Edmonton Film Society and the Edmonton Chamber Music Society.

So if you want to attend either of these exceptionally fine programs, you should be thinking of buying season's tickets.

Student prices are \$5 for Main and \$5 for Classic Series (each ten films, Monday nights in the Jubilee and Tory Building respectively), and \$4 for Chamber Music (six concerts).

Tickets for both at Allied Arts; Film Society patrons may purchase memberships at the Extension Department in Corbett Hall as well.

Poverty-stricken film-lovers who'd like to usher and thus see Main Series FREE are urged to leave a message for John Thompson in the Arts Page office.

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Movies to catch: *Loves of a Blonde*; *In the Heart of the Night*.

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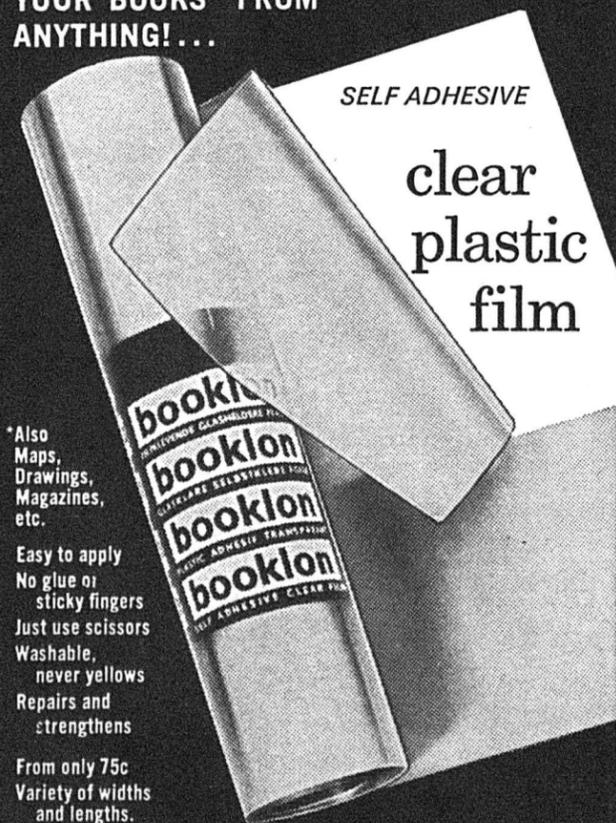
NEXT WEEK—Watch for a feature article in Casserole expounding the wonders of the new Students' Union Building, in which we take you on a tour of what is surely one of the finest buildings of its kind in North America.

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