



George Merner is shown as he portrays the role of Jimmy Perry in the current production at the Neptune Theatre, Neil Simon's **THE GINGERBREAD LADY**.

Middle age * * motherhood

by Cheryl Downton

Is motherhood buying two turtles named Irving and Sam at 2 for 85c, and finding them floating feet up the next morning? Neil Simon's **The Gingerbread Lady**, now playing at Neptune Theatre, explores not only the ups and downs of motherhood, but the everyday strengths and weaknesses of everyday people.

The story is nothing out of the ordinary: Evy is a middle aged alcoholic divorcee with a loving teenage daughter, a pot-bellied homosexual 'never going to make it' actor friend, a make-up coated 'tell

me I'm beautiful' friend, a thirty-three year old on-again-off-again musician and lover, and a Puerto Rican grocery delivery boy who fancies he's God's gift to women. The visible action takes place in a crowded (3½ rooms for \$120 / mth.) apartment in New York.

Mary McMurray plays Evelyn Meara with a strength and seemingly uncanny awareness of the character she portrays. Her Evy is so life-like one would not be surprised to see her in any bar, by any roadside, or in any crowded brownstone apartment surrounded

by her friends with glass or bottle in hand. Her inner strength and stability which is usually lost on herself is always there for her friends and those she loves. Her problem seems to be that she expends so much of her energy on others that she has none left for herself and her own survival. McMurray gives easily one of the best performances yet to be seen on the Neptune stage.

Melody Ryane plays Evy's seventeen year old daughter Polly to perfection. Her helpless frustration at her mother's inability to cope with her alcoholism is climaxed with an angry display of desperate inadequacy. Ryane captures the feelings of futility, love and adolescent understanding befitting any teenage child / woman.

George Merner as the well-meaning but weak-in-spirit Jimmy, gives an admirable performance. His anguish at his own inability to become 'discovered' as a serious actor blinds him to the needs of his friend Evy. He finds he is unable to overcome her strength and succumbs to his own weakness; he can do little more than follow—in hope that he is being well directed.

Middle age can be approached and dealt with in many manners. Evy's friend Toby, played by Toby Tarnow, chooses to hide behind caked-on layers of makeup and solicited compliments. ("Tell me again Evy—am I beautiful?") Toby, as does Jimmy, brings her problems and uncertainties to her friend, refusing to see that Evy's strength is being sapped, leaving her with nothing but the tightly gripped bottle.

The second rate musician and songwriter Lou Tanner played by Don Allison is sufficiently sleazy and unpolished to raise the ire of the audience. Deni Allaire as the

delivery boy Manuel really looks the part in faded denim and long greasy hair, but his accent is inconsistent.

The excellence of the actors made **The Gingerbread Lady** an enjoyable evening's entertainment, but the only one who really seemed able to handle the Neil Simon brand of humour and keep it out of the dust was Mary McMurray's Evy. It is hard to find much to laugh about when one sees the destruction caused by alcohol. Many theatre patrons, however, were smiling on their way to the bar.



The man at the door really gets into good music

THE MAN AT THE DOOR SHOW

Good Music from the past and present with An F.M. station accidentally misplaced on the AM Dial

TOM CLAHANE AND LEWIS HUMPHREYS WEDNESDAYS 10 P.M. CKDU 610 AM

Tritt dazzles



by Daniele Gauvin

William Tritt's Sunday afternoon concert at the Cohn was a true audience pleaser. His confidence, his dazzling pyrotechnics and his dramatic stage presence culminated in two encores and repeated curtain calls. The audience, chiefly made up of music students and faculty, was treated to a rare combination of talent and showmanship.

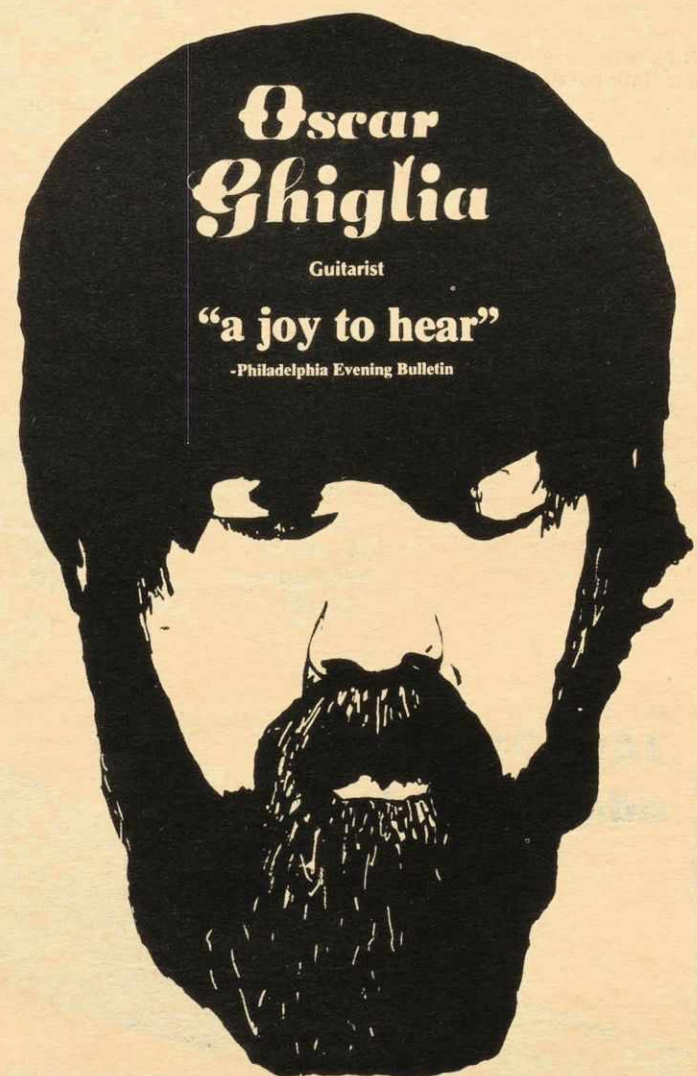
Tritt, despite his attachment to the Dalhousie music faculty, is a seasoned performer who has travelled on scholarships to study in Munich, France, and the United States. Since his debut with the Montreal Symphony in '71, he has appeared with the Toronto Symphony, the Atlantic and Calgary Orchestras and given recitals throughout Europe and Canada. Sunday's repertoire included a Bach-Liszt piece which is seldom played in concert nowadays be-

cause of its flamboyant Romanticism. Tritt handled it with grace, however, enchanting his audience while underscoring the opulent lyricism of the work.

William Valleau's sensitivity riveted everyone's attention during the Rachmaninoff Sonata for 'cello and piano Op. 19. Valleau's passionate concentration intensified the dramatic qualities of the duet pieces.

One of the afternoon's most pleasant surprises still lay in store; Chopin's well known "Funeral March". Tritt infused the reputedly gloomy work with a majestic beauty that is often hidden underneath its dramatic morbidity. Skillfully and lovingly, he brought out the inherent beauty of the 'March'. It is this combination of technique and sensitivity which has earned him the praise of critics everywhere and which made last Sunday afternoon memorable.

Rebecca Cohn presents



**SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 8:30 P.M.
REBECCA COHN AUDITORIUM
TICKETS: REG. \$5.00/\$4.00
STU. & SR. CIT.: \$4.00/\$3.00**