

Waiting for Godot only knows what

Five young actors are performing *Waiting for Godot* at Studio Theatre this week. Elmer Hohol and Dave McCulley play Estragon and Vladimir, the two purposeless tramps of Beckett's tragicomedy. Alex Diakun is Pozzo, and Mel-drum Tuck is his slave, Lucky. Patrick Terfloth plays Godot's young messenger.

In spite of the flaws inevitable when such young actors play the world-weary Beckett characters, they perform their roles with notable sympathy. Estragon and Vladimir particularly establish the tenuous rapport, the rapport always

tinged with the doubt of "perhaps we'd be better off alone" which is so essential to the play. And Pozzo and Lucky establish their meaningless interdependence, impose their form on the play, with equal force.

Director John Terfloth has said that he wanted to stress the form, the non-sequential aspects in Beckett's play. And in this he realizes success. Over and over again the pattern of *Waiting for Godot*, the irreducible statement of the two tramps' existence, reasserts itself: "there is nothing to be done."

The major fault of the performances is their constant over-inten-

sity. Here the immaturity of the actors reveals itself. Only very seldom does one feel that McCulley and Hohol really comprehend the despair they attempt to portray. The result is a constantly high pitch which leaves the audience longing for the quiet despair of acceptance of meaninglessness which should be a far larger part of the two tramps than it is in Studio Theatre's Vladimir and Estragon.

One wants to say, with Estragon, "there's no need to shout": explore Beckett's silences and "A-a-ahs" instead. These continuously shouting tramps of the Studio Theatre production don't sound old.

This same over-intensity tends to mar the comedy of the play. There are magnificent comic scenes in this production: the two tramps' concern with Estragon's boots, the "thinking" of Lucky, the scene in which everyone has fallen and no one has the will to rise. But the ironic dialogue which packs the play often goes unnoticed in the fury with which it is delivered.

The anguish and despair which are such an integral part of the play manifest themselves in wit as well as in emotional intensity—this production could be improved by a greater emphasis on the wit.

Visually, the production is exceptionally well done. Gwen Keatley's set is in the blacks, dull reds, and earth browns which symbolize the play's character and moods. Her stones, trees, and garbage heaps are, appropriately, far more nightmarish than realistic, and seem to surround audience as well as actors with their bleakness. They provide in themselves a statement of the play's theme.

New campus magazine offers little for the general reader

There is very little to be said about *Pluck*, the new literary/cultural magazine privately published by a group of U of A students. The magazine is attractive, being printed rather than mimeographed and being arranged, if not with outstanding ingenuity, at least sensibly. But when one comes to examine the contents of the magazine, he comes to the usual impasse confronting anyone who wishes to say anything cogent about the quality of literature produced by amateurs.

(I must point out at this juncture, however, that the magazine does contain poetry by non-amateurs as well—i.e. those who have been published nationally. But the following remarks apply at least partially to them as well.)

I cannot criticize the poetry, to begin with, for formlessness, because no poetry can be considered formless in this age; nor can I criticize it for being carelessly done. The only accusation I can level against it is that it is boring, completely and utterly boring, like almost everything else that has appeared in local literary magazines of recent years.

(To retreat into parentheses again—I hope a mere undergraduate can be forgiven for criticizing the work of his betters. I feel that criticism should not be reserved for the .001% of the populace who are English professors.)

Pluck, like so many of its companions, is guilty of the sin of artistic arrogance. It speaks down to the reader; it says, in effect, "Look up, ye uninitiated, and reverence he who is THE POET". It is THE POET who decides what poetry is; he can fill his work with private jokes (witness the poem on page 13) and personal symbols, and the reading public be damned.

Arts calendar

Next weekend is Guest Weekend, and the preceding week holds forth many entertainments for the theatre-goer.

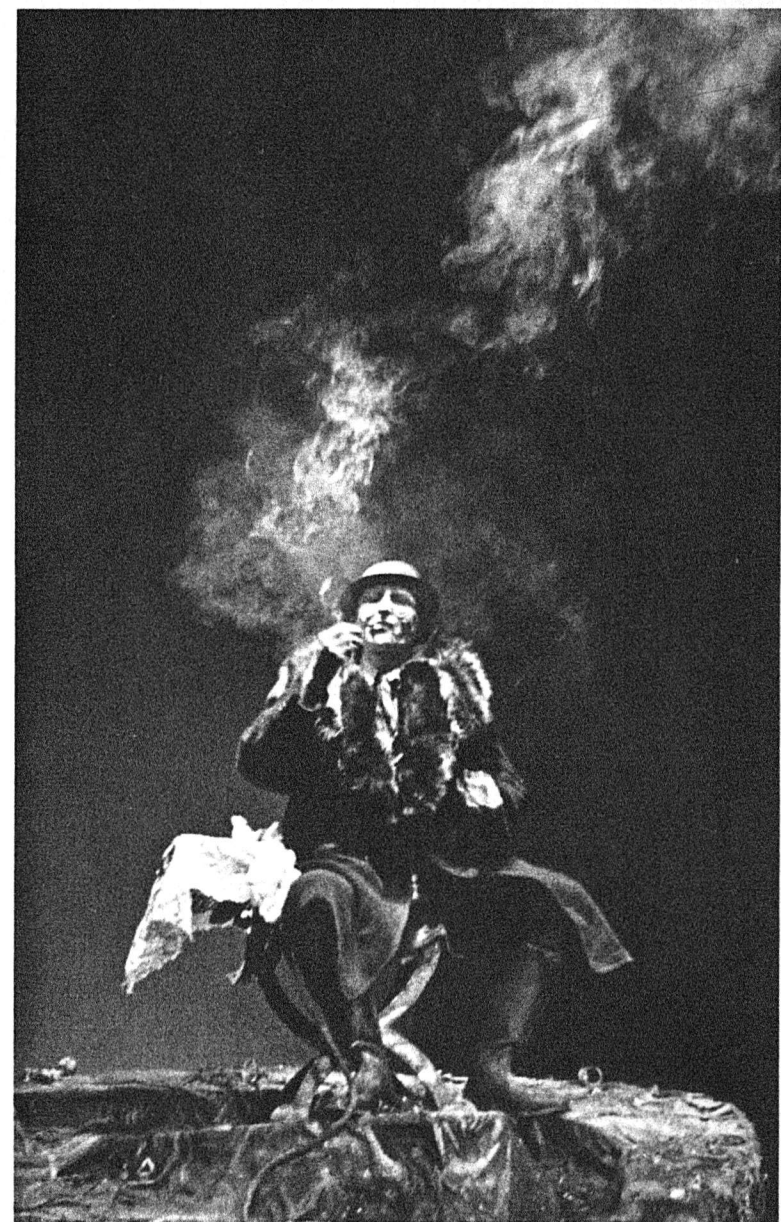
On Wednesday, the 14th, French-Canadian mime Claude St.-Denis will appear in the SUB theatre. Tickets are on sale in SUB and at the Bay.

On the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday following, the Jubilaires present Finian's Rainbow in the Jubilee Auditorium—tickets from \$1.50 up, \$1.00 up on Thursday.

On Wednesday the Citadel starts the run of its next play, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, a comedy by W. Manhoff. The setting for the play is San Francisco.

In the more distant future, *West Side Story* will open at the Jubilee on February 27. We are informed by the producers that two University of Alberta students have won parts in the play—Orest Semchuk, arts 2, who will play the part of Baby John, and Bonnie Knowlton, arts 3, who has a dance role.

The musical is being staged by Canadian Artistic Productions, a locally-based firm who intend to bring professional musical theatre to Alberta.



SMOKEY POZZO —Peter Emery photo
... Alexander Diakun

I am not, of course, asking that poetry be subject to the whims of the stinking rabble (among whom I count myself); but published poetry does have an obligation to be at least entertaining, even if only in the most intellectual sense. And the poetry in *Pluck* falls even to be that.

The rest of the magazine—that is, the prose works—are interesting and informing. Some of the illustrations are top-notch, and do much towards making the magazine worthwhile. And indeed it is worthwhile, as any attempt of this sort is—as long as it does not forget its obligations to those who buy and read it.

—Terry Donnelly

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