

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Student wows 'em at Sam. Zacks Gallery

Brent McIntosh

The Samuel Zacks Gallery is presenting a one-man exhibition by fourth-year student Michael Boulter. It's a collection of recent Xerox works, monoprints and paintings, and it deserves to be seen.

The works on paper are unexceptional; interesting as sketches, they seem nonetheless insignificant in comparison to the paintings. There are 12 paintings in the show, and these are raw, colourful and dynamic works in the New Image tradition.

Most of the paintings are oil and collage; paper, sawdust, tin foil, cardboard cut-outs, and other materials are used to enliven the painting surface. Boulter's skillful compositions, assured handling of paint, and competent use of colour attest to his attention to and mastery of the formal aspects of the paintings.

As much as the technique, it is the content which makes these works truly memorable. The images are figurative—each painting depicts one or two people, usually located in a landscape or a room. The beauty of Boulter's figures is that although the faces are always expressive, it is often difficult to discern quite what emotions or thoughts their features are communicating. In "Sunday Afternoon", is the toothy smile of the automobile driver one of sexual anticipation—or is it something more sinister? The nature of the drawing adds to the mystery, the distortion and awkwardness serving to make actions less distinct, less readable. It is this ambiguous quality that makes the paintings enjoyable: Boulter suggests a story, and the viewer completes it according to his own perception of the work.



Alex Wolosewych

Disillusionment with suburban life and fantasy are two themes which recur in Boulter's work. Fantasy scenes, such as "Magic Raft" and "Legend of the Long Neck" have an appealing gentleness to them. With the suburban scenes, the quiet sense of humour that Boulter instills saves them from being morose.

The show is not without flaws. The most recent painting, "The Happiest Answer", does not work as well as the others in terms of colour, possibly because it is the artist's first time using acrylics. But on the whole, it's a fine show, and well worth the walk over to Zacks.

(Located in the basement of Stong College, The Samuel Zacks Gallery is open Monday thru Friday, 9 to 3. The Boulter show continues until October 18.)

## Cabaret is coming, folks.

Robert Fabes

Cabaret is one of the more popular theatre attractions at York. Artistic director Valerie A. Sipos, and Robert Berry, her assistant, want that to continue. A showcase for singers, dancers, and actors, the Cabaret is an excellent chance for students to perform. "I'm very excited about this," says Sipos, inviting any members of the York community to try out for any of the six shows this year.

between different colleges' common rooms, in the hope that the new spaces will generate a closer tie between the actors and the audience. Sipos' main objective, though, is for as many students as possible to get involved. So, if there are any aspiring cabaret stars out there, keep your eyes open for the next call and get involved. □



### Short-story contest: Win BIG prizes!!!

Excal Entertainment announces its first ever (ever!) Short-Story Writing Competition. Entries should be five to seven typed, double-spaced pages of raging brilliance; the subject is up to you. Deadline is noon on Nov. 28, 1981. No Excal toadies need knowingly apply. The winner gets their entry featured in Excal and wins BIG hard-cover fiction-type book-prize. Runners-up too. So start scrawling and deliver entries to Excal, 111 Central Sq., or drop it in the internal mailbox at the Central Square post office.

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## Sanguine Blood Relations...

# Lizzie Borden's no hack

Toni Elkins

"Lizzie Borden took an axe,  
Gave her mother forty whacks,  
When she job was nicely done,  
She gave her father forty-one."

Or so they say. Did Lizzie do it or did she not? Although she was finally acquitted, it is a question that has been posed *ad nauseam*. The Tarragon Theatre's production of *Blood Relations*, however, sheds new light on the well-worn legend of Lizzie Borden. Sharon Pollock's play couples the known facts with dramatic fantasy, a union which is both intriguing and entertaining. It is a clever play which is performed, for the most part, with professional skill, under the direction of Cecil O'Neal.

The plot of *Blood Relations* is somewhat more sophisticated than the average rendition of the Lizzie Borden story. The play is set in 1902, ten years after the fact. The action opens with a scene between Lizzie and her rather outgoing friend, The Actress. The Actress complains that Lizzie will only "paint in the background" of the murder, without ever admitting to or denying the "foreground". To quiet her friend, Lizzie proposes that The Actress, given all the surrounding details, play out the entire drama herself. The Actress then becomes Lizzie, 10 years earlier, involved in the evil and stifling life of the Borden household. In this dream-sequence, The Actress, as Lizzie, is pushed by circumstances and by her own forceful character, to commit the axe murders. But still: Did Lizzie do it or did she not?

Clare Coulter gives an excellent performance. As The Actress, she is flamboyant. As Lizzie, she is a tortured and quick-tempered young woman. In both roles, Coulter commands the stage. Samantha



Langevin applies Vulcan Death-Grip on an agreeable Coulter.

Langevin, as the 'real' Lizzie, makes the best of a role which was written without the fire and conviction of the younger Lizzie. *Blood Relations* does not, of course, deal strictly with Lizzie; there are many other entertaining, if slightly stereotypical, characters that are played to their best advantage.

Unfortunately, the Tarragon Theatre, with a seeming disregard for subtlety, creates a set with red sofas, carpets, lamps and stools, and uses

red lights for several scenes—an unnecessarily heavy-handed background.

*Blood Relations* is a clever production which takes that too-often-told story of Lizzie Borden, and successfully revamps it with the introduction of dramatic fantasy. It's a play well worth seeing.

(*Blood Relations* is at the Tarragon through October. Give them a call at 531-1827. Student prices are cheap.)

## No chains in *The Marriage Bed...*

# Anti-feminist tract is realistic

Kim Hartill

*The Marriage Bed*, by Constance Beresford-Howe, Macmillan of Canada, 240 pp., \$12.95.

Rule Number One: Don't get pregnant while in school. Rule Number Two: Don't get married too young. Rule Number Three: Pursue a career.

These are rules our mothers try to instill in us and most of us try to abide by at least one of them. But Anne Graham, the heroine in Constance Beresford-Howe's *The Marriage Bed*, breaks all three. By age 24, she has two children, is nine months pregnant, and has abandoned her desire to pursue a graduate degree in order to become a full-time mother.

Set in Toronto, the book is Anne's account of three days in her problematic life. Her husband, Ross, has deserted her to live with his secretary, and his subtly-criticizing mother visits Anne, as does her own rather clairvoyant mother. The ironic, if slightly dry humour, revolves around the wacky 'exploits' of the two small children. The situations are familiar to most readers, and the resulting identification proves effective—*The Marriage Bed* is very realistic reading. The book culminates in Anne's delivery of her baby on the living-room floor of her husband's secretary's house, and manages to leave one with an optimistic feeling about Ross and Anne's relationship.

The book's themes invite the reader to analyze his/her own values. Anne is torn between her desires. Friends and relatives try constantly to steer her back into school and the work-force. To them, Anne is wasting her talents, rotting away amongst diapers, strained apricots and broken toys. However, Anne feels that she should postpone her education until the children have grown a little. When her stepfather suggests that she take a vacation with her mother and leave the children behind, she explodes:

"I like being at home with my children. I'm not a victim or a martyr. I'm a natural, normal woman. There is nothing being wasted here. Do you

really think what happen in kitchens and bedrooms isn't important? I tell you, half of what goes on in labs and offices and classrooms is trivial by comparison. This is where it's all at, not out there...So will you get it through your head, I'm not some poor victim in chains. Even if were, I'd stay in them. My kids are not going to wander the streets with a door-key 'round their necks. They are not going to be entertained by the neighbourhood flasher while I'm somewhere else being liberated."

This, in essence, embodies Anne's crisis and her final resolution. Throughout the novel the woman's new liberation by way of a career beckons to her, while her instinct for motherhood nags. It's a crisis many women will be able to identify with. Anne's character, after all is finished, is a strong positive one.

Beresford-Howe has taken a familiar situation and given it new insight and meaning. Anne shouldn't be ridiculed for choosing children over a professional career, she should be applauded—it was her decision. Yet, after reading this book, some feminist out there will say she should have got that Master's degree and gone back to work. □

## New in paperback...

*Confessions* by Barbara Amiel, Totem Books, 260 pp., \$3.50.

Here is an important book for all students who are interested in finding out the truth about freedom as it may or may not exist in Canada in 1981. MacLean's columnist Barbara Amiel wrote *Confessions* as the defense for her right-wing liberal views to those people who felt threatened by them—namely the Ontario Human Rights Commission. They tried to "counsel" Amiel and get her to change her views about society and government. The "Thought Police", as Amiel refers to them, are apparently gaining increasing power in Canada and Amiel is worried. The book sets out her views against the background of her own life, from childhood to her present hobnobbing with the rich, famous and trendy. Amiel is an extremely intelligent and articulate writer, and her book *Confessions*, as well as her syndicated column and many freelance articles, reflect careful insight. It is an important book; happily it is also easy reading. A must for all students.

Linda Hill

## Taboo subjects surface in Winter's Gallery

Linda Hill

Winter's College Art Gallery (room 123) is showing several installations by Nancy Kembry, a fourth-year Visual Arts student at York. The pieces range from traditional pastel drawings to a bed cum coffin filled with earth and laced with plastic tubing of the blood-transfusion type.

Some works are kinetic and can be operated by the viewer. This participation level is fortunate because it keeps the art from remaining too personal and inaccessible. Kembry is dealing with what could be very

private subjects—death, life and resurrection. By filling the gallery floor with her work, she invites the viewer to walk around it and join her contemplations.

This art is not depressing despite the often taboo subject of death. Kembry seems to have reached a resolution in her feelings toward death by focussing part of her attention on life and growth.

You should make a point of seeing this thought-provoking installation before it closes tomorrow. □