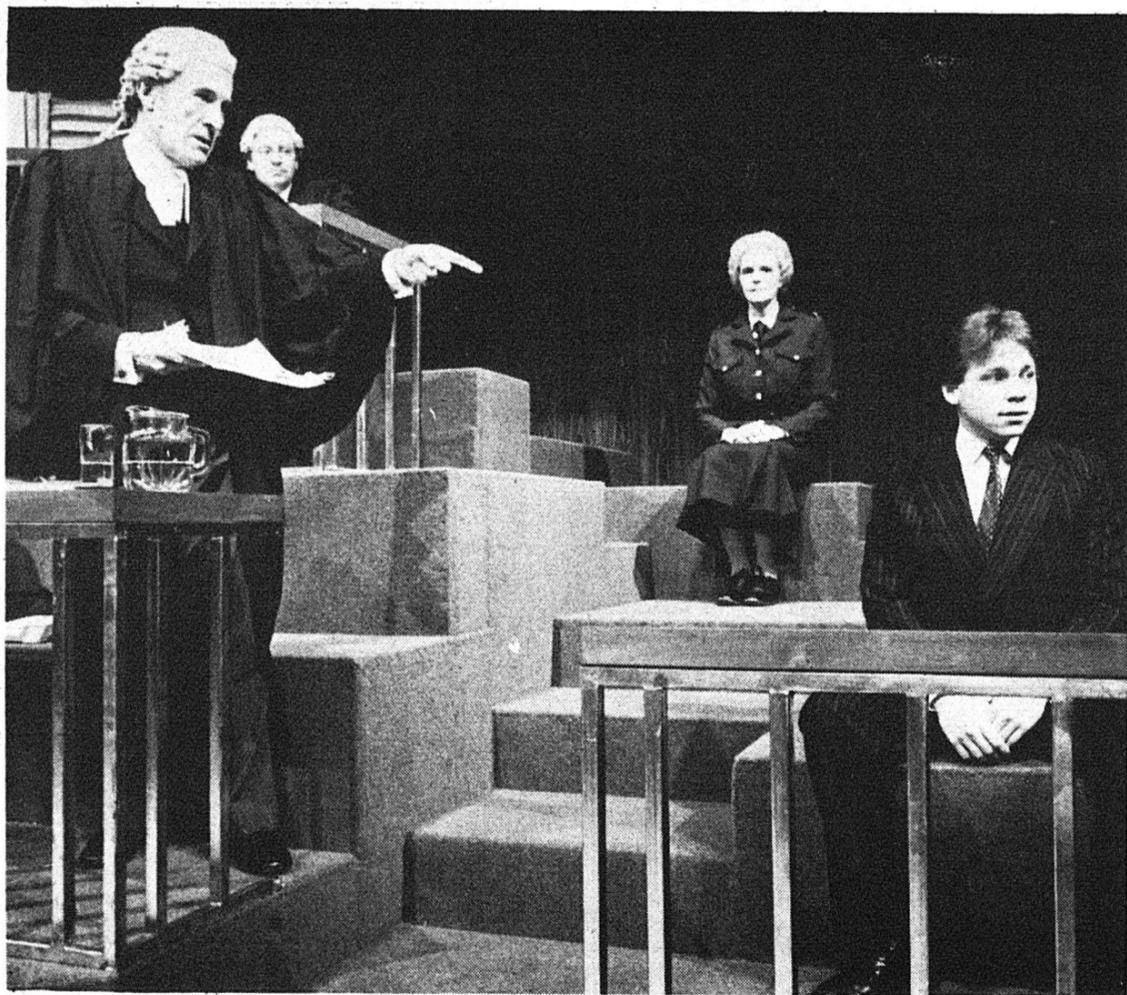


arts



by Shirley Glew

Eng. Dept public readings

The first of the second term public readings by Canadian authors, sponsored by the Dept. of English and the Canada Council, will take place on Thursday Jan. 25 at 12:30 pm in AV L-3 of the Humanities Centre.

The reader will be prose-fiction writer Ruth Nichols, author of *A Walk out of the World* (1969), *Ceremony of Innocence* (1969), *The Marrow of the World* (1972 - awarded the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians' Bronze Medal), *Song of the Pearl* (1978), and, her most recent, *The Left Hand of Spirit* (1978). As a writer of fantasy, she is called a children's writer, a term which displeases her: "Fantasy at its best is esoteric wisdom. And I hope that the success of Tolkien and people like him will help to restore it to consideration as a medium for intelligent and mature people. I like children ... and I'm delighted they like my books ... And furthermore I know that people who read me as children will be reading me in thirty years, when they're not children." She chooses not to impose meaning upon her art, but says, rather, "I allow my imaginative universe to reveal meaning to me, and if all it can reveal is the anguish of the question, then that is what I will record. I think that I am an honest philosopher, inasmuch as I am a philosopher. And if I claim to teach in my books, which I do claim to some extent, I think one should remember that I am also always being taught" (Ruth Nichols interviewed by Jon Stott in *Can. Children's Lit.*).

Latest Citadel effort no big deal

It is the Opening Night of *Cause Celebre* at the Citadel Theatre and I'm trying to convince Alice to hand around for the free eats and wine. She's in a real huff because the ushers wouldn't let her out during the performance.

"Look," I told the guy, "she wants to throw up."
"The show isn't *that* bad," the usher said.
"You don't understand, she's *really* sick and doesn't want to upchuck all over some Citadel Patron"

"Oh forget it Milf - let's just suffer through this," and we're back in, fighting our way back to the seats trying not to wake up some dozing construction-company-owner types.

Now Alice, (my remedial English prof.) just wants to go home.

"I don't want to hang around here listening to you tell lies about how you liked the show to this opening glitter crowd. I've wasted the good part of a night on a bad play as it is."

The thought of Alice leaving me alone here terrifies me.

"Don't you want to talk to Keith Ashwell? Or Fil Fraser? Or the Premier - yeah *THE Premier*?"

"Look, you don't know what these people look like, let alone well enough to speak to them."

"Oh, yeah? Let's see. We'll have a little contest: You get one point for recognizing a celebrity, two for shaking hands with them and five if they talk to you."

"You're on," sez Alice. We start mingling.

"That's Ashwell," I sez, dragging Alice through the stream of waddling fur, sequins, penguins and cigarette holders. "I get one point," I sez.

"Talk to him," Alice whispers.

I grab his sleeve: "Excuse me, uh - we'd like to know what you thought of the show." He turns around and says "Absolutely wretched. Peter Coe's given birth to a real turkey."

"You lose," Alice chuckles into my ear, "he is *definitely not* Keith Ashwell."

"What did you think of it, old boy," asks the guy who is not Keith Ashwell.

"It was real slow," I sez, "a real waste of the talented actors he had for this show."

"No doubt, Ashwell's going to rave over this one too" sez the guy who's not Keith Ashwell and wanders off into the crowd.

"You're in the hole, Milf," laughs Alice. But just then I see Flora Bellowchuck, one-time NADP dairy princess and an old friend of mine from Thorsby.

"Hah," I sez, "I'm back in contention."

"Flora *who*?" asks Alice trying to hang onto by arm through the stampede that's happening because the wine bottles are being popped open at the bar.

"Milfred, how nice to see someone familiar," Flora sez.

"What did you think of the show?" I asks Flora.

"What a ripoff. We did better theatre in Mrs. Frumpstrom's drama class, didn't we Milfred?"

"But the acting was excellent," I sez.

"Barry Morse was super, and Glynis Johns. But the directing, Milf, was terrible. It was *cold*."

Alice agrees. "He had that poor woman (Glynis Johns) undressing and dressing onstage. What a crude, distracting thing to do to a charming, competent actress. Especially since she had a cold."

Between Alice, Flora and me we reach a general consensus. 1) The direction was dull, 2) The acting was great as far as Barry Morse, Glynis Johns, Brendan Barry and Micki Mausnell's performances went, 3) Lawrence Schafer's set design was unimaginative, 4) Terence Rattigan's script was irrelevant, trite and boring.

"It was too dull to even talk about it," sez Alice who's getting more irritated, the more we talk about this play which has done nothing for us.

"I've got four points," I gently remind her.

"That's not fair, Flora's your friend."

"Doesn't matter." Alice downs her drink in a huff and takes off to the bar. On the way she very deliberately bumps into Fil Fraser. And I can't believe it, he actually mumbles something to her.

"What'd he say?" I ask her when I catch up to her.

"He said, *Excuse me*," Alice sez, "Hah, I've got five points now. I'm beginning to like this game."

After drinking a lot of wine it is really easy to bump into people — and if you are nice about it people will actually talk to you. So I lost count after about 40, and Alice after 53 — but her figures are strongly suspect. But the real celebrities didn't really want to talk about the play — I guess it's like Alice says:

they've got to scratch each other's back so it looks good on their Canada Council grant applications."

I had to agree, things would have been a lot simpler if they'd just forgotten the play and simply held the bash; both the actors and opening night theatregoers would have had a better time.

by Milfred Campbell

Alice drags me away from the wine finally, and drives me home.

"Do you want to come in," I ask, trying to show her my bedroom eyes.

"I don't need anymore points," she sez, "You're the one who's losing." Then Alice in her sometimes cold, inscrutable fashion pushes me out the door. "Besides," she sez, "you're not Keith Ashwell."



British actress Glynis Johns in a racy scene from "Cause Celebre."