## Drama on Canadian Campi **A University of Toronto CUP Feature**

by Pearl Parnes

twelve universities to a CUP questionnaire sent out by the Varsity, the calibre of Canadian amateur acting is on a high level. Support of the university drama group, however, ranges from the apathetic state at Western to the well-filled theatre at the University of

Acadia, too, suffers from the mediocre reception given to its productions. It has an ambitious programme including a Shakespearian play, a current Broadway hit, French plays, a religious one-acter by S.C.M. and an interclass drama festival with entries by each of the four years. It is headed by Prof. H. S. Sipperell, probably the beest dramatic coach in Eastern Canada", according to the report received. Yet one of the productions Joan of Lorraine, despite enthusiastic reviews, brought out only one-tenth of the student hody. student body.

Dalhousie, with superior stage and lighting equipment, and act-ing of "amateur excellence", fares rather better, with one-half to two-thirds of the students attending on student nights.

Bob Toye, president of the Players' Guild of the University Players' Guild of the University of Western Ontario, gave a discouraging report of drama on his campus. The acting, he claims, "as amateur acting, is amateur". He blames lack of dramatic atmosphere and general lack of interest on the campus for this condition. The stage available to the Guild is very small, with no dressing rooms and poor lighting igned and made all stage props dressing rooms and poor lighting signed and made facilities, "a very high-schoolish and costumes."

Judging from reactions of welve universities to a CUP quesonnaire sent out by the Varsity, are calibre of Canadian amateur cting is on a high level. Support attended.

> Paradoxically, it is the smaller colleges which generate the great-est enthusiasm for dramatic productions. The Sock and Buskin Drama Club at Carleton College, equipped with a very good stage and actors who participate in the Canadian Repertory Theatre and the Ottawa Little Theatre as well as in the campus productions, creates a good deal of interest, prompting the following editorial comment in the College newspaper:

> "The Buskins deserve praise and encouragement for their full schedule of dramatic endeavours. If the other clubs on the campus showed as much interest in their work as this group, Carleton would be the most active club centre in the university field".

> The University of Montreal, with only two productions in the last two years, has reached a high standard of excellence. "Fantasio" by Alfred de Musset, viewed by University of Toronto students on one of the Carabin week-ends, sent the Toronto people home signed and made all stage props and costumes. Concentrated ef-

fort is put into the production, with the actors of Oedipus Rex spending one week up north to get perfect precision.

Saskatchewan, with a drama school, a small but adequate heatre, good stage and excellent lighting equipment, produces all their own scenery and costumes. Their usual six to eight night stands, including Russian and Greek translations, are well supported on the campus. McMaster, with facilities which are "torrible and the campus." with facilities which are "terrible or worse" still manages to produce a three-act play and partici-pate in the Inter-Varsity Drama League Festival.

St. Francis Xavier, another small college, specializes in modern three-act plays. Despite crowded rehearsal time, little or no pre-vious training, and few produc-tions, the enthusiasm and interest created in the student body is excellent, particularly musicals, (e.g. Brigadoon), comedies and farces. Serious drama does not draw well, however, and fifteen to twenty per cent of the students will not attend any production. An excellent auditorium in the basement of the college chapel possesses a large, rather disproportionately long stage, with good lighting equipment. All scenery and costumes are made by the students, as at most of the universities. Muslin covering is used here for sets, since it is cheaper than canvas, and adequate for the purpose. As is the case in most universities, there is a lack of construction and storage space for scenery.

usually range from 50 cents to one 40 cents.

The kinds of productions in the various universities is fairly convarious universities is fairly constant, including one-act and three-act plays in English, French and German, Shakespeare and modern productions. Attempts at "theatre in the round", the arena style productions in which the audience sits on all four sides of the stare have on all four sides of the stage, have been made at Toronto and Western. "Silver Cord" and First and Last "Silver Cord" and First and Last (Galsworthy) have both been produced at Toronto, with enthusiastic receptions. The Western University's Players' Guild did "Exodus". Abstract plays are in vogue as well, with The Huggers and No Exit creating furors at their respective universities. spective universities.

In general, opportunities for original productions are good, but interest in them is lacking. At the University of Toronto, few plays are entered in the Robin Godfrey competition for the best student-written play. The winn-ing entries are produced by the University College Players' Guild. Floor shows for dances at Carleton College are written by students, but a competition for student dramas produced only one result. At Western, there is a standing

Somebody Got the TAR Beat Out of Them!

one-act Guild, but interest has been poor, Prices for campus productions and the prize has never been sually range from 50 cents to one awarded. Dalhousie has produced dollar, with the University of two original plays by students, Ottawa, which gets an excellent student support, charging 25 to original radio scripts.

Toronto and Alberta appear to be in the forefront in the attempt to produce Canadian plays. Several one-act plays have been done by the college societies of the University of Toronto, and Fortune My Toe was a successful Gill production last year. Another Robertson Davies play, At My Heart's Core had a successful two-week run at Alberta run at Alberta.

The University of Toronto rama Committee, an organiza-

Guild prize for any student-written cal show, with the All-Varsity play produced by the Revue, when it is produced, collects talent from the entire campus. Student interest in the theatre is excellent, particularly for musicals and the three-act plays presented at Hart House

> Several universities participate in provincial, inter-collegiate and Dominion Drama festivals. Western this year plays host to six universities in the Inter-Varsity Drama League Festival.

Newspaper coverage on the whole is good. Several universities have permanent critics covering all campus and important pro-fessional shows. St. Francis Xavier has even secured the assistance of the local radio station. Most of the papers print advances tion which includes representatives from each of the college guilds, produces several bills of one-act plays each year. There are "invitation" evenings, in which plays are exchanged between colleges. Every large faculty and college produces at least one musi-

Swan Song

You are lost God has drawn you beyond my reach Yet indelible marks are etched upon my soul Time shall never erase Nor eternity dull the depth.

MEN.

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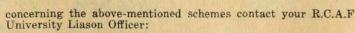
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