

## entertainment

## Stong master revitalizes theatre

By Judith Lynn

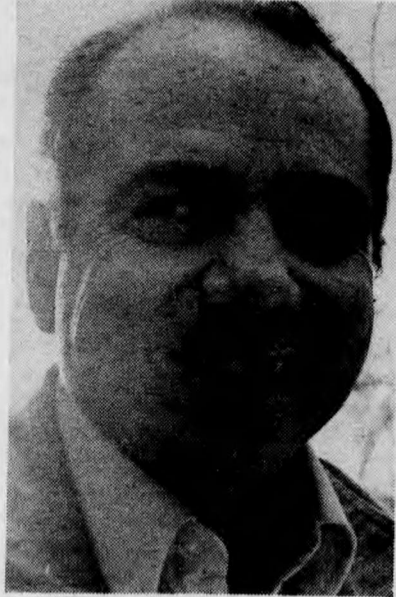
What is about to take place in the Stong theatre this year may be directly attributed to an enthusiastic man who possesses a limitless amount of innovative ideas, Hédi Bouraoui, the newly appointed Master of Stong College.

Primarily concerned with the revitalization of the college, Bouraoui feels that an academic identity is a vital requirement of a college which has already become a cultural as well as a social success story. He sees the theatre as an ideal vehicle for the establishment and development of an academic, intellectual ferment in Stong.

Ideally, the theatre will serve as a nucleus from which further academic activities and programmes will emerge.

By focussing in on one particular theme, that of multi-culturalism, Bouraoui hopes to interest and involve the University community as well as the outside community in the creation of a new and different theatre in Stong.

The college should set the precedent in its search and creation of an academic identity



Hédi Bouraoui, Stong master.

by specifically opening its doors to the various ethnic groups and cultures in the Metropolitan Toronto area.

Bouraoui feels that this open community invitation has not yet been extended, and it is his desire to initiate the move.

Having written, acted in, and directed numerous plays, as well

as having written articles concerning the theatre published world-wide, Bouraoui's background in the theatre is appropriately rich and diverse. He has worked on Beckett, Giradoux, and the Belgian theatre, and has at one time worked with Peter Brooks and Grotowski. He is currently hoping to publish a book on the eminent Polish director-playwright Joseph Szajna. Stong is in store for a new, unique and different genre of theatre, according to Bouraoui.

In an attempt to stay as far removed from duplicating what has already been done and is being done at York, Bouraoui envisions the creation of an experimental theatre at Stong.

Since the college theatre is bound by no restrictions whatsoever in curriculum, this would hopefully enable more imaginative and creative productions to emerge. The theatre is readily available and open to whoever may be interested in putting their ideas into practice.

In an effort to involve the different ethnic groups which comprise the mosaic of the city,

Bouraoui's proposed plans for the Stong theatre include:

- A presentation of the Feminine Mystique in *Finnegans Wake*, directed by Harry Pollock, with Lisa Creighton.

- A selection of French plays by Emmanuel Roblés, to be presented by Professor Ann-Marie de Moret, Department of Modern Languages, St. Louis University.

- For the first time, the creation of an international poetry reading (in Greek, Italian, Ukrainian, Spanish, German, etc.) co-ordinated by Professor Margarita Stein, Department of Languages, Literature and Linguistics, York University.

- A collage of items selected from *Waves*.

- Yeats' *Purgatory*.

- Multi-cultural activities by York's Ethnic Groups and Toronto's Ethnic Communities (eg. Chinese Opera and Dance, Ukrainian choir, Polish Theatre).

- An international film series, sponsored by Stong College.

- Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days*.

- Original material by Stong and York students, with full

cooperation with the Faculty of Fine Arts.

Bouraoui and colleague Harry Pollock the artistic director for the Stong Theatre, hope that by initiating such diverse activities in the theatre, more and more people will desire to become directly involved in the production and presentation of experimental plays, music, dance and film.

The interest and enthusiasm of the students, however, is essential, in order to prevent the operation from becoming a mere exercise conducted by faculty alone.

A dialogue between the college and the community, and also within the University community, Bouraoui feels has yet to be established. He sees the Stong theatre as a possible crossroads for all ethnic groups in the creation of such a dialogue, and openly extends the invitation to everyone to bring their ideas and culture to Stong, to experience what Stong is doing, and to feel free to join in.

If the Stong theatre can in any way successfully begin to create such a dialogue, then the college will finally possess a *raison-d'être* in Bouraoui's eyes.

## "Interiors"

By Colin Smith

With the release of Woody Allen's *Interiors*, we may be witnessing the passing on of a great American comic. Allen has decided with this film to mine a vein of high-minded seriousness.

If he continues we'll be seeing very little comedy. If subsequent films are of the calibre of *Interiors*, we'll be seeing reasons for re-evaluating Mr. Allen's standing in the film community.

For what we have here is a major artistic failure. *Interiors* is a lifeless abomination — 90 minutes of Woody trying, and failing very badly, to do an Ingmar Bergman imitation (with touches of Godard mixed in for irritation's sake.)

Even if it worked this wouldn't

be an easy film to watch.

Allen's dissection of an uptight upper-class WASP family going through a family crisis is unemotional and distant. The film is almost entirely static, using no dissolves, one fade, two dolly shots and maybe five pans over a 90-MINUTE STRETCH. The cast stands around arranged in self-conscious poses mouthing banal pseudo-intellectual bullshit that is at a far remove from real people and real dialogue.

The sets are sparse to the point of non-existence: aesthetically perfect, toneless, and colourless. Everyone is dressed in non-descript shades of grey, off-white, pastel, beige and weak brown. The rigorous austerity of *Interiors* would only work if an important comment was attempted; it's not.



Family members try to rekindle Geraldine Page's interest in life with a birthday party, in Woody Allen's "Interiors".

The script (Allen's) is portentous and banal. Underneath the high style lies another soggy story

about people trying to "find themselves". As the dialogue consists mostly of rambling chit-chat and discussions on furniture arrangements, not even this tired angle gets explored. And this renders the austerity not only useless, but tiresome.

This also defeats the purpose of having a talented cast on hand. Geraldine Page offers a grotesque caricature of a mother, E.G. Marshall is uncomfortable as a father, and Diane Keaton is close to unconscious as one of the three anguished daughters (the other

two, Marybeth Hurt and Kriati Griffith are also unconvincing). Richard Jordan and Sam Waterston as the two husbands are equally vapid.

In fact, the only redeeming quality of the film is Maureen Stapleton's energetic Pearl, a vibrant "vulgarian" who is unasily introduced into the family. The incongruities that result through this class crash are quietly hilarious, and provide the only moment of humour and vitality in this otherwise regrettable venture.

## "Dusa, Fish..." is enthralling

By Hugh Westrup

*Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi* are odd names to attach to female characters, but indicative of the uncommon lives portrayed in Theatre Plus' current production at the St. Lawrence Centre.

British playwright Pam Gems has created characters rooted in the past yet bursting conventional bonds with anger and intelligence. Vintage models of dependency—the girlfriend, the prostitute, the devoted wife and mother—are Gems' taking off points.

Stas, the high bracket call girl, is also a cool rationalist dedicated to scientific truths, turning tricks to finance an education in marine biology. Fish, a wealthy American Feminist, rhapsodizes about her love affair only when she isn't printing political literature and speaking before labour unions. Meanwhile, Dusa, abandoned by husband and children, is undergoing a painful reconsideration of her role in the family.

The women talk about money, men, careers and success in language that is lively, direct and salted with "male" humour. (One could detect more than a few sensibilities being rattled at last Wednesday's performance.)

It is unclear how women

representing such diverse lifestyles ended up under the same roof, but they interact in a credible living arrangement. Above all, they are able to afford each other the security of a home where there is room for individual choice.

To realize an atmosphere of mutuality and respect, director Pam Brighton, who guided last year's productions of *The Club* and *Ashes* has enlisted the aid of four expert actresses—Maja Ardal as Dusa, Diane D'Aquila as Fish, Susan Hogan as Stas and Mary Ann McDonald as the anorexic Vi. McDonald, whose singing voice almost stopped the show in *The Club* last winter, has dyed her punk haircut green and white, coloured her face with warpaint and has been costumed in peddle pushers and purple lamé sneakers.

It would be easy to laugh at Vi, clowning and jiving about the stage, but McDonald projects from beneath the trippy exterior the subtle tensions of a woman looking for an identity that are barely revealed in the story. Ardal and Hogan are equally as good. Only D'Aquila tends to lose control at times becoming a parody of an assertive woman shaking her curls and walking in great Watusi strides.

Brighton's unforced directorial style keeps one enthralled in the ebb and flow of the four intermingling life lines until the final scene; a plunge into cheap dramatics, when Fish is discovered dead from an overdose of pills and liquor. She holds in her hand a note that says, "we won't do as they (men) want any more and they hate it."

The suicide appears to be a revolutionary cry of despair but Gems has failed to prepare us for such a message. How is one to believe in this sudden, violent act of victimization by the strong, vital Fish? She has been deceived and dumped by her lover, but the break-up cannot be linked to the social injustices suffered by women as the cause for liberation, especially when the man's point of view is absent. Could Gems be displaying a misplaced hatred for upper class American women?

Fish's suicide belongs in that traditional women's entertainment — soap opera. It also undermines her assertion that, "women must look sideways to each other" unless we are to believe that women must abandon men altogether.

## Assorted cinema chestnuts

**Who Is Killing The Great Chefs Of Europe?** Ted (*The Apprenticeship Of Duddy Kravitz*) Kotcheff's latest is a good reason to stay home watching TV. This stale comedy-mystery is overlong, unfunny, and unmysterious. George Segal and Jacqueline Bisset are surprisingly terrible. Robert Morley's acidic food critic earns a few honest laughs, though.—C.S.

**In Praise Of Older Women.** Non-controversial film cut by Ontario censors is inoffensive and fails to grasp any direction. The basic premise of the film is not developed or made clear. The result is a lifeless study that does little to praise the virtues of older women, or young men either.—Stephen Burr.

**Days Of Heaven:** Terrence Malick indubitably fulfills the promise his first film, *Badlands*, assured. Visually and aurally excellent, *Days Of Heaven* is a poignant story, full of nuances and subtlety; both wonderfully entertaining and intellectually satisfying. —Michael Korican.

**A Wedding:** Not likely to fulfill the expectations of Robert Altman fanatics—it's surprisingly shoddy on a technical level—but nevertheless even second-rate Altman is more worthy of an audience than the entire summer's movie fare put together. Carol Burnett and Pat McCormick are delightful as illicit romantics amid the chaos of this midsummer's afternoon dream.—Hugh Westrup.