14 Excalibur October 24, 1974

Dream and waking reality

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Reaney's Killdeer explores world of images

By ROBIN BECKWITH One of Canada's best playwrights, James Reaney, has recently been becoming widely recognized as each character acknowledges image such. The present Hart House as an integral part of his or her life. production of one of his earlier Mrs. Gardner is at once Harry's

plays, The Killdeer (in revised form), amply proves Reaney's value.

We enter a surreal world in which

mother and the prototype of the Mother, and she moves from one stance to the other in her conversation with her son Harry.

Harry, a rising lawyer cajoled by his mather into marrying for money, relates to her with ease as either. Thus it is that Harry can say in the presence of his mother, "I've always wondered how it is possible for women to bear men.'

The play is a fusion of dream reality and waking reality. The effect of what people have done upon those who are close to them is important to Reaney.

So we see, near the end of the play, Ely Fay struggling to stand up to his mother, whom he has seen killing his best friend, Clifford Hopkins (formerly his mother's lover), with a pair of scissors. He realizes Madame Fay caused his father, many years ago, to shoot the wife and two of the children of his mother's other lover, then to shoot himself; she is Ely's mother, he came from her womb, yet he has seen her cause untold destruction. How can he accept her as Mother and Murderess?

Reaney's resolution to this conflict

is the central theme of the play. A killdeer, which is a game bird, was the first creature Madame Fay ever killed. She killed it because as she could not have the love of its owner (eventually the mother of Rebecca, whom Ely marries) she could at least gain her hatred.

This childhood incident, from which Madame Fay has never recovered, is resolved by her son; he frees the killdeer which Rebecca has caged, thus forgiving his mother for having caused so many deaths, and resolving at the same time his conflict with her.

It is the play itself which is of major importance in this production, not how it was performed. Except for Frances Halpenny, who recreated her role as Mrs. Gardner from the original three-act production of 1960, the women did not manage to behave appropriately to Reaney's words.

Madame Fay, played by Maureen Fox, did not have the robust, straight-backed qualities necessary to give life to Reaney's words. Mrs. Budge and Mrs. Delta, played respectively by Judith Hunter and Barbara Santamaria, behaved as wild caricatures rather than as the carrion-crow harpy-like chorus Reaney intended them to be.

Howard Clarke as Ely Fay was the one member of the cast who fused his behavior to Reaney's words, and grave an excellent performance as a result.

The setting, designed by Reed Needles, excellently suited the play's dream reality by being at once a house in rural Ontario and the suggestion of a house.

The eerie, ethereal music of John Beckwith was an admirable accompaniment to the play.

Runs to Oct. 26 Hart House Theatre, U of T 928-8668

Mon., Oct. 28 - Fri., Nov. 1 featuring: Eli Mandel, W.O. Mitchell, Michael Ondaatje, Clara Thomas,

Stephen Bird and Richard Rose in Pistols for Two, one of Bethunesponsored Storytime Theatre's more 'adult' productions.

Storytime tells of Lamomba affair

By GLORIA ZAMIN

Any day now, the Bethune Junior Common Room will be swarming with little people as Storytime Theatre gets its second season underway with two new plays.

The childen's shows are played for children four to 11 years of age, and the cast adapts each performance to the age and temperament of its audience.

The first production, The Back Alley Band, can be seen next Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the Bethune JCR. It is the success story of Jake the Dog, Samantha the cat, Tilly the mouse, and Lamomba the bird, who get together regularly for jam sessions in the alley.

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