

Low-class La Sagouine

By ELLEN REYNOLDS & BETH CUMMING

Neptune North's production of *LaSagouine* opened last Friday night at the Cunard St. Theatre.

Equipped with mop and pail, layers of old clothing and a colourful hat, Jean Orenstein certainly looked the part of LaSagouine. But, contrary to the adage, clothes don't make the woman.

LaSagouine, a "low class" Acadian charwoman, told stories of her life as she scrubbed the floor of an old CN rail station. The stories were revealing pieces of Acadian life adapted from the novel by Antonine Maillet. A humorous and entertaining script became slow moving and was lacking soul on stage.

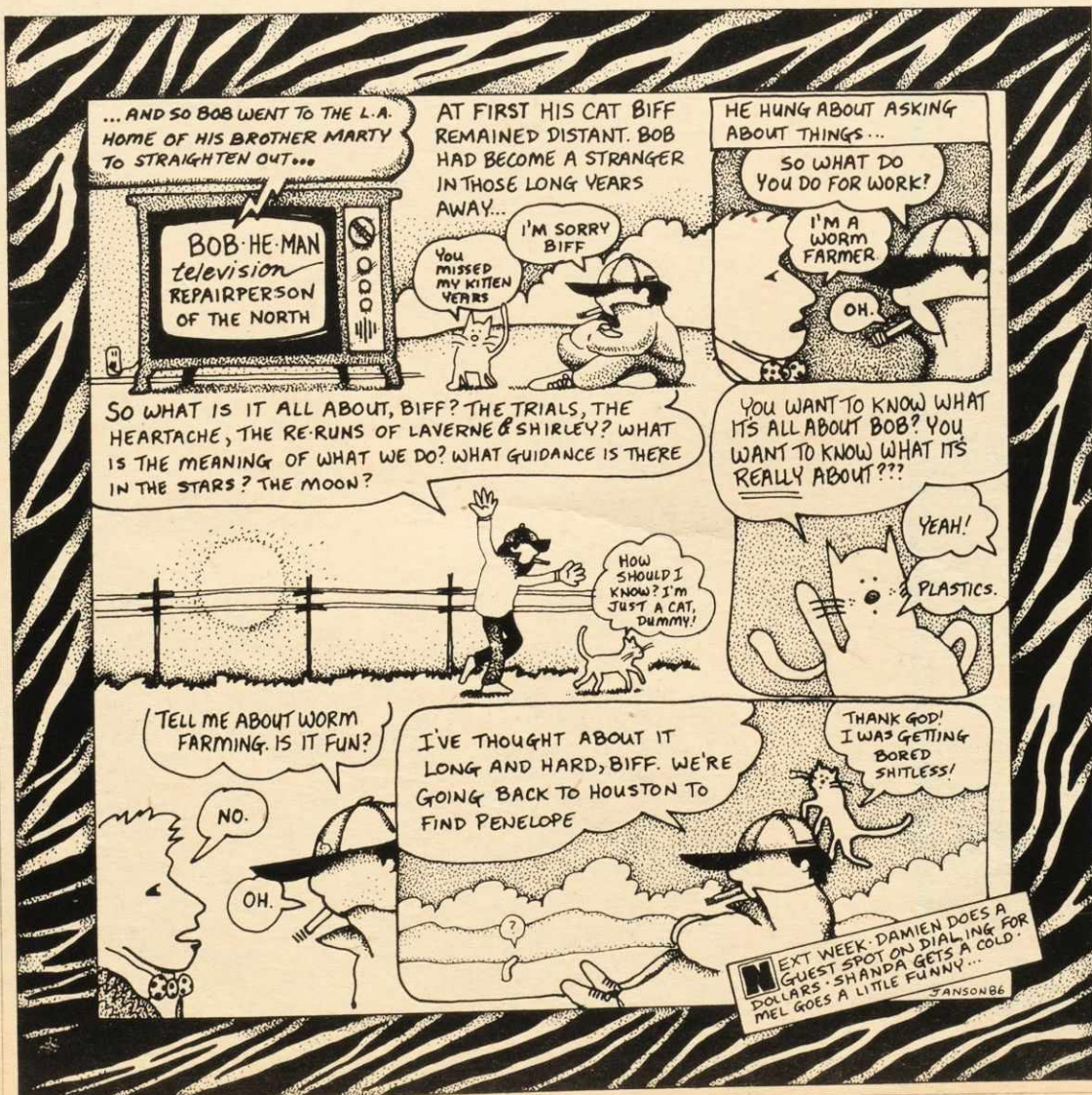
Orenstein tried to sound Acadian but spoke too slowly and kept slipping into her English accent, creating a barrier to the audience's involvement. The dialogue dragged and an essential empathy with LaSagouine was missing. When she mispronounced words like 'conscription' and 'census', the audience seemed to be laughing at, rather than with her.

With the combination of dark sets and clothing, the stage was visually boring. In spite of an effort to look real, through detailed props, the set was neither stylized nor realistic.

LaSagouine is playing at the Cunard St. Theatre, 5527 Cunard St.



Joan Orenstein's accent too highfalutin' for yer basic scrubwoman?
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