

**MERRY WIDOW, from page 10**

and the charmingly pseudo-ethnic costumes designed by Susanne Mess. Irving Guttman, stage director, caused his reasonably large cast to move with an unprecedented sense of ease, motivation, direction, and lack of fussiness, although I found the pacing of the dialogue (especially in Acts I and II) to be very slow indeed.

Celia Franca's choreography provided the Alberta Ballet Company with some material which was, for once, vital and fresh, and which they obviously enjoyed dancing. I have never seen the dancers look so enthusiastic in any EOA production as they did in Act II and the Act II can-can of *Merry Widow*. One could only have wished that Miss Franca had assisted members of the chorus and the principals in the art of waltzing. Act II also included an amusing and entertaining male kick-line which drew an appreciative and vocal response from the audience.

The chorus, under the direction of Alexandra Munn.

was strong, seemed reasonably in tune, and did not seem to be overly taxed by their assignment. The orchestra projected a clean sound, but lacked much in the ways of vitality and stylistic empathy. Pierre Hetu, who conducted the performances, approached the work with a certain stolidity which made his tempi sound even slower than they actually were.

The title role was sung by Canadian soprano Heather Thomson. Miss Thomson has a good solid voice of no exceptional cast, and handled her material with ease. She looked well in the part and she was, for the most part, dramatically effective. Unfortunately her speaking voice was distorted, possibly for projection, and the penetrating sound which resulted made her dialogues seem endless. Baritone Alan Titus made a dashing leading man, Danilo, both vocally and visually. He possessed a warm and fairly rich - but not overly powerful - voice, he moved with ease on the stage, and his speaking voice was

natural and effectively projected. The extraordinarily versatile baritone Claude Corbeil again proved himself to be a true singer-actor, with his delightful interpretation of the doddering cuckold Baron Zeta. The primarily dramatic role of Njegus was admirably portrayed by Allen Stewart-Coates. The Vancouver mezzo-soprano Judith Forst, although vocally and dramatically equipped for the role of Valencienne, suffered from poor diction in much of the musical portions of the role. Camille was sung by tenor John Walker, who possessed a rather small, forward-sounding voice which showed signs of forcing in the top register.

Of the many secondary roles, not much more can be said in this space than that they were more than adequately filled. Noteworthy were two suitors of the widow sung by Alan Crofoot and Donal Cant, and the six Grisettes - a heterodox assortment of distaff shapes and sizes.

I attended two performances of *Merry Widow*

and was amazed at the obvious care taken in the production and the enthusiasm of most concerned. Hopefully the EOA

will be able to extend some of this care and enthusiasm to its genuinely operatic productions.  
F.N. Crory

## Try this -expletive deleted - course

Alberta, The Censor and You, a ten-week survey of censorship issues in Alberta, is a new course offered by the Continuing Education Division of Grant MacEwan Community College.

This course looks at several major topics including the legal and political background of censorship, "managed news", art and pornography, effects of violence and the formation of values. These areas will be examined specifically in the light of Alberta's Advisory Board on Objectionable Publications, the film censorship board, provincial legislation and histories of local censorship cases.

This program has been developed and coordinated by

May Archer, an instructor at the College. She will be aided by several interesting guest speakers in the presentation of the sessions.

Mr. Jerry Ezekiel from the film censorship board will lead two sessions entitled: Everything You Always Wanted to See, But the Film Censors Were Afraid to Let You, and Violence and Media.

Inspector Bill Stewart from the Edmonton Police Department will be the guest lecturer for a session entitled: Dirty Pictures, Dirty Words, an examination of the "girly" publications in relation to the Alberta Advisory Board on Objectionable Publications and law enforcement in this regard.

Mr. Mike Jansson will cover two sessions including one on Alberta: The Politics of Censorship.

A final session, with a panel of experts, will examine censorship and how it relates to children - how and what they learn.

Alberta, The Censor and You begins on Monday, February 3rd from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. and continues for ten weeks at a cost of \$20.00. The course will be held in the Edmonton Room of the Centennial Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square.

For further information please call the Continuing Education Division at 484-7791.

# IMPORTANT MEETING FOR NON-ACADEMIC STAFF OF U. of A.

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