

'Captivating and exuberant'

Threepenny Cabaret challenges the audience

By TED MUMFORD

The York Cabaret's latest production, *The Threepenny Cabaret: A Musical Manual for Survival*, was presented four times last week at the Open End, each time to a full house.

The Threepenny Cabaret was conceived out of 19 Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill songs selected by Forster Freed. Director Sky Gilbert then wrote the dialogue to give the singers character, and to link the

songs with the story of Mr. M. C.'s (Matt Walsh) quest for "the good life" in Sammy's Bar.

Along the M.C.'s path there are the dirty jokes and merry songs that one might expect of a cabaret. But Gilbert took the cabaret style one step further.

"We're trying to get the cabaret audience to expect something besides dirty jokes in a cabaret atmosphere," he said.

The songs and dialogue confronted

the audience with the problem of survival in a world filled with greed, lust and illusion, and accused them of being complacent university students, but the cast was ready to do battle with the audience if confrontation was not sufficient. During the second Friday show, Fanny Schlugger (Silvana Jasaitis) and Jenny Towler (Celeste Freed) came into the audience and sang in the face of a narrow-minded heckler.

Gilbert feels that audiences in a

bar may be violent or responsive, but the bar atmosphere is always lively. Though some factions of the audience seemed distracted by their beer, there was also some of the positive audience-player interaction that had been hoped for.

All the players, including Gail Kerbel as Barbara Schlugger, Jon Marks as Sammy Schlugger, and Kevin Fennessy as Bobby Shrift, were captivating, and Matt Walsh portrayed the M.C. with such ex-

uberance that he could have carried the show single-handedly, had it been necessary.

Musical director Josh Rosen provided the musical backbone on piano, with the help of Don MacMillan on trumpet and sax and Robert Weissfeld on bass.

Together, the players and directors gave me a memory of an evening I had expected to be only amusing, but which turned out to be vastly entertaining and educational.



"An educational and entertaining evening."

School for Scandal is uneven

BY DANIEL MOSES

The Toronto Truck Theatre's current offering is an unevenly played and cheaply mounted production of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*.

This ever-popular comedy pits scandal-mongering hypocrites against honest men, in intrigues involving reputation, money, love and, like all good middle class comedies, marriage. It is filled with finely sketched characters in comedic conflicts.

The Truck Theatre's production has a few fine moments, most of them supplied by Tom O'Hanley as Sir Peter Teazle. His characterization of the wise but world-weary

Lord has the strength of a W. C. Fields and the wit and timing of a Jonathan Winters. O'Hanley has a fine rapport with his character and his audience.

Equally outstanding is Art Austin as the dissolute but good hearted Charles Surface. Forced freshness and cheery wit in the face of poor fortune is not easy to play; he achieves more than a modicum of success.

The rest of the cast tries too hard, which probably explains the rather weak ensemble work, the tediousness of many expositional speeches and sadly failed asides.

The action is played before a black and white cartoon-like setting in three quarter round (which in itself

may contribute to the death of the asides). Props are white and black cartoons on plywood, and the costumes as merely bleak grey attempts at evoking the era. They are completed by splashes of welcome, but nevertheless vulgar colour.

The physical limitations of the set lead to the production's single piece of innovative staging. For the scene in which Charles sells his gallery of family portraits, members of the audience are supplied with picture frames in order to become themselves the portraits to which the action is directed.

This token audience participation seems a lonely spark of imagination in the midst of a rather mundane production.

Major Hoople on tap in Bethune

Next Wednesday Tap 'n' Keg features Major Hoople's Boarding House in the Bethune Dining Hall, at 8:30 p.m. Cover is \$1.50 general admission, 75 cents for Bethunites. This pub is not the only one, however; every Wednesday there are more in the Bethune JCR, with live entertainment.

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Film and TV magazine expands

Pulse, the "practical" film and TV newsletter published at Atkinson College, is about to become a monthly 40-page newsmagazine.

The publication, which focuses on the informational, technical and business aspects of the Canadian film and TV industries, has to date appeared twice a month.

"We try to view the Canadian process in terms of the whole international film and television scene, which our creative and technical people are gradually finding their way into," said Harris.

Pulse can be reached at 661-5449.

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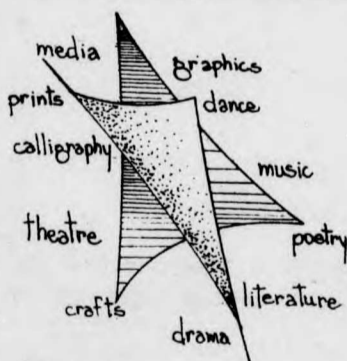


Friday, February 14,
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Tickets will be on sale in Rm. 102
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- "Making a Mezuzah"
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