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# entertainment

## Theatre project week approaches

By Andrew C. Rowsome

Theatre is doing and it is generally held that it is impossible for actors, directors and technicians to become good without essential experience. Continual contact with an audience is a necessity. If that audience is one which can give feedback, so much the better. Every year the theatre department at York cancels all its classes during the second week of December and gives its students this crucial opportunity.

Student Project Week this year consists of four solid nights of plays. According to Sarah Knowing, the week's producer and chief organizer, "This year is the biggest Project Week ever. We have around 30 productions going on." It is also an extremely varied week with productions ranging from absurdism to a children's

show. "It gives people a chance to try something different," notes Sarah.

Perhaps the most daring example of "something different" is a production of *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Isn't Enuf* using a mixed cast of males and females, black and white. "Jacques Lorenzo and I saw the production when it was at the Royal Alex and really wanted to do it," explains Mimi Zucker. "But who would cast us in a play about black females? So now we have a chance to do it ourselves." Janet Sears, the only black in the production adds, "We've changed the title to *For Those Who Have Considered Suicide* and I think it works. It's not really a question of colour, the theme applies to everyone."

Charlotte Dean is in charge of coordinating costumes and she

feels that part of the value of Project Week is that "It's more professional. Chances are that they've done productions in high school but all of a sudden the lighting crew has to know exactly what is going on and there are specific hours for picking up costumes."

"The hard part is in cooperating, in telling them what they can and can't have," adds Sarah. "Sometimes we have to put our foot down and just say 'that's too bad but it's impossible.' Just learning to make do with what resources we have can be a very valuable experience."

One first-time director is Sheri-Lee Guilbert: "It's great. I'm learning so much; how talented everyone else is. All the technical people know so much about their crafts. I've suddenly realized how much I can rely on them. It's also good in that in Studio classes we're

molded in a specific direction, which is good because they know so much, but here we have a chance to try something on our own. If I fall flat on my face I have no one to blame but myself but at least I tried. It's great to get out on stage and do something you've helped create."

"Although the faculty is not officially involved and Project Week is entirely student run, we've received a lot of help whenever we've had problems," Sarah points out. As well, some of the more advanced performance students have lent their support as coaches. Mimi explains that "As a first year student I was really separate from the department as a whole. I was so busy getting used to the university and trying to get my gen. ed's done I didn't really know who to ask for help. This year I'm very involved with the department so we've received a lot of help."

The entire philosophy of Project Week is simple says Sarah, "The proof of the pudding is in the tasting, if we don't get a chance to do shows on our own how are we going to know if we can?" Janet sums it all up, "In first year you get no chance at public performance except for cabarets, in second year only one. It's great; Project Week gives us a chance to actually act."

York's theatre students will be mounting their productions on December 6 through 9 with a different program every night. The performances begin at 7:00 in the Atkinson Studios and admission is free.

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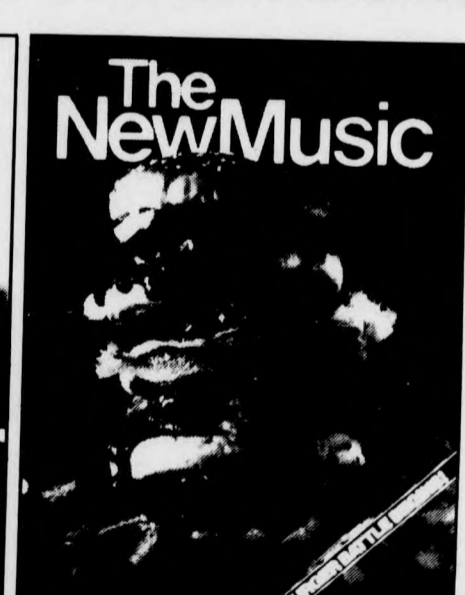
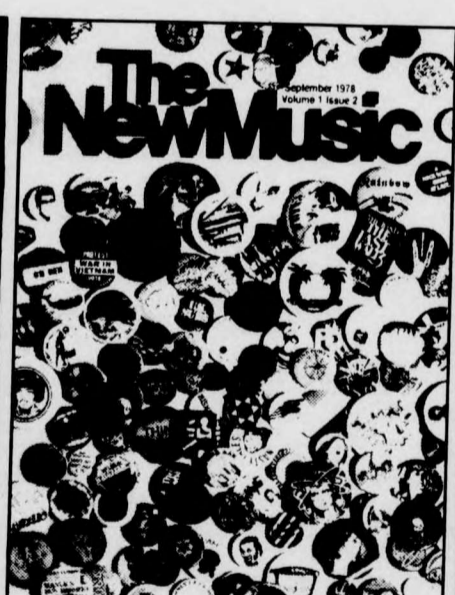
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