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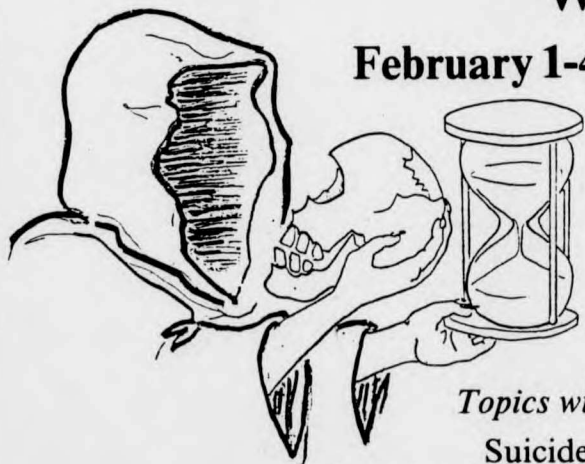
for graduate study in preparation for **Executive Positions** in **Jewish Federations** across North America.

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**Furniture, carpets and walls speak out on feminist issues**

By E.A. JOHNSTON

A single parent, nurse trainee (Louise Garfield) is given notice by her landlord to vacate her apartment because the home is to be sold. Apparently it is the only house in Toronto going for under half-a-million (it's a "fixer-upper"). In the midst of the nurse's housing dilemma, the walls and furniture suddenly come to life, offering their views and concerns about the crisis.

This bizarre domestic scene serves as a backdrop for the feminist issues explored in *Up Against the Wallpaper*, a theatrical work from the well-known Toronto performance artists The Clichettes at Factory Theatre Studio. The Clichette's approach to feminism is perhaps best described in a scene in which a squat swedish lamp (Garfield) falls in love with the real estate woman who has come to see the house. The walls later tell the lamp that humans don't marry inanimate objects. "What about Housewives?" the lamp retorts. This sarcastic exploration of women's issues is continued later on, when the vacuum cleaner (Janice Hladki) is scandalized at the amount of dust build-up. "What kind of a woman is it that doesn't keep her house clean?" she asks.

One soon realizes that all of the characters, animate and inanimate, are women except for a doctor (who advises on how to get rid of unwanted tenants), and a rug, who has a habit of lying to female objects in an effort to get what he wants.

*Up Against the Wallpaper* was written in collaboration with the costume designers after the costumes had been constructed. Designed by several innovative artists, including York Fine Arts instructor Renee Van Halm, the costumes serve simply and effectively as symbols of the woman as object and commod-



**MY INTESTINES REALLY SUCK!** A vacuum cleaner (Janice Hladki) and other assorted inanimate household objects discuss feminist issues in *The Clichettes' Up Against the Wallpaper*, running till Jan. 31.

ity. The decision to place the vacuum hose over Hladki's arm rather than somewhere else on the costume is just one of the ways in which the reality that women face, defined by their work function in the home, is driven home to the audience.

The piece evolved from

November's *Let's Go To Your Place*, produced at Nightwood Theatre's Groundswell (New Works) Festival. Maureen White, Nightwood's artistic director, directed both pieces. *Up Against the Wallpaper* runs until January 31 at Factory Theatre Studio Cafe. Don't miss it.

**Audience left 'Out of Balance'**



**UP, UP AND AWAY . . .** York faculty member Paula Thomson is artistic director of Northern Lights Dance Theatre.

By BONNIE MITTEN

Was there some pre-planned irony in the way *Life Out of Balance*, the Northern Light's Dance group's recent performance at Harbourfront began? When those patriotic notes of 'Oh! Canada' began and when as good, patriotic Canadians, everyone stood only to feel foolish as seconds later the music changed into a tribal beat by 'Collage,' one couldn't help but wonder whether it was the audience that was to be left out of balance.

*Out of Balance* was conceived by Paula Thomson and Maurice Godin. Thomson is the Artistic Director for the Northern Lights Dance Theatre foundation and a professor in the Physical Education Department at York.

Other dancers in the performance who had received their training at York include Berkley Laurin and Dawn Morrison (both members of the Northern Lights Dance Theatre) and Kim Boufford, a York dance student apprenticing with the dance company.

The performance is based on the demise of our culture prophesized by the Hopi Indians (concurrently the subject of Coppola's latest film, *Koyanniquatsi*). "If we dig precious things from the land, we will invite disasters," the prophecies warn; "Near the day of purification there will be cobwebs spun back and forth in the sky" and "a container of ashes might one day be thrown from the sky, which could burn the land and boil the oceans."

The question that Thomson has attempted to address in her interpretation of the prophecies is, "What happens when what makes life worth living bears little resemblance to the life we live?" The series of dance scenes are deliberately unsyncopated to illustrate the idea that there is a friction between our creative and destructive sides which seems to have gone out of our control.

The message is emphasized in the performance in reference to modern society's pre-occupation with the pursuit of wealth as a road to happiness. Most of what is presented about our society in *Life Out of Balance* is generally negative with the few optimistic moments focusing on nature, the last refuge of sanity in a world out of control.

Perhaps the best technical aspect of the performance was the intriguing atmosphere created by the music. Phillip Glass, College (Brian Eno, Talking Heads, Tom Waits), Paul Halley, and David Sylvian's works were chosen to further modernize these ancient Hopi Indian legends and provide rhythm and mood change.

One of the latest dancers to join the dance group seems to offer the group its strongest focal point with her ability to capture and mesmerize the audience. Sonia D'Orleans Juste was interesting to watch because of her ability to be expressive and fluid in her movements while using her strength for control.

There was no "happy-ever-after" ending in *Life Out of Balance*, no redeeming force the work pointed to that might save us from the perils of our lifestyle, and there is no doubt that some people would have found this just a bit too pessimistic. The performance was effective, however, in communicating to the audience that anything positive we plan to do with the future is up to us.