

Firehall Theatre

Acting good, but Wilson's Sky is lemon

By **ROBIN BECKWITH**

The Firehall Theatre is continuing in its tradition of introducing little-known playwrights to the Toronto public.

To such names as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and James Reaney is added that of Langford Wilson, the author of *Lemon Sky*, the current opener at the Firehall. Unfortunately, the play itself, one of Wilson's earliest, prevents Wilson's being included amongst these now-eminent writers.

Alan the protagonist, both narrates the story of his confrontation with his father and becomes a

part of the action of his story. He jerks from character to narrator, thus preventing audience and actors from becoming deeply involved in a potentially valuable experience.

Alan's father and stepmother become narrators within Alan's story as well, so that one always feels hazy about where Wilson is in time.

Of all the elements of this production, Lucien Parmentier's set is the most striking. From the theatre's ceiling hangs a wooden frame of a roof from which are suspended wooden window-frames. There is a scrim behind the house's interior on which one sees the suggestion of

California mountains and through which shades of blue or yellow light are shone to give the effect of day or night.

Generally speaking, the acting—considering all but Chris Britten, who played Alan, are amateurs—was of good quality.

Those characters whose depth and

consistency was developed by the author were performed with like qualities by the actors. Cheryl Kramsky and Jean Melusky as Penny and Carol, two parolee-boarders, and Lawrence Beckwith as Jerry, Alan's half-brother, played three such fortunate characters.

Gordan Jocelyn, as Alan's father,

managed also to develop a feeling of continuity and involvement, in spite of Wilson's characterization.

Chris Britten, and Joan Shaw as Alan's mother, suffered the most from Wilson's shallow approach to his material.

It is good to see Toronto being exposed to new and rising playwrights. I just hope *Lemon Sky* is not a true indicator of what will be considered worthwhile theatre ten years from now.

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