

strong performances in mandragola

compiled by Kristy Gordon

The music dept. is presenting a series of events you shouldn't miss.

A *Music Marathon* featuring 18 pianists performing Beethoven, Chopin, Morel, Brahms, Bach etc. will be held on Dec 1 at 12 noon in DACARY Hall. Admission is free.

At 3pm on Dec 4 in the Winters Senior Common Room, there will be a *Graduate Programme in Music Colloquium* featuring a talk on "The World of Music at a World's Fair" presented by **Dr. Philip Bohlman** of the University of Chicago.

On Dec 5 at 7:30pm the **York University Jazz Orchestra** will perform with **The Twilights**. **Rick Wilkins**, one of Canada's finest jazz composers will conduct. This first joint concert will be held in the Winters Senior Common Room. Admission is free, and a cash bar will be available.

At 3pm on Dec 6 there will be a *Student Improvisation Concert* featuring original improv. Admission is free at DACARY Hall.

Don't miss the *Jazz Bash!* on Dec 6 at 5pm. All the music student jazz workshops will present an evening of jazz in the Winters Senior Common Room. Admission is free, a cash bar will be available.

The final chamber music ensemble concert of the term will be held on Dec 8 at 12 noon. This *Student Chamber Music Concert* will feature the **York Percussion Ensemble** under the direction of John Brownell. Admission is free at DACARY Hall.

Seth Feldman, associate dean of fine arts, will be featured on the CBC radio programme *Ideas*. "There Go The Eighties," his documentary featuring interviews with Margaret Atwood, Douglas Cardinal, Laurie Anderson, Tomson Highway and others will run Dec 14, 21, 28 at 9:05 am at 740 on the AM dial.

The IDA Gallery on the first floor of the fine arts building, will feature recent works by fourth year sculpture students. The show runs from Dec 4-8. The gallery is open weekdays from 10-5.

On Dec 1 at 8pm and Dec 4 at 1pm an international theatre event will be hosted at the Crowsnest in Atkinson College. **Robin Ramsay**, Australian film, theatre and tv star will perform his play *Borderland*. This solo performance focuses on the life of nobel laureate, poet **Rabindranath Tagora**. Admission is free. Phone 736-2100 x2480 for tickets. The performance is presented by the Australian Dept of Foreign Affairs, Global Cooperation for a Better World, and the Atkinson College Association.

York Dances Dec 7 at 2 and 7pm and Dec 8 at 12noon. York student dancers will perform a special presentation of new works by York faculty **Anna Blewchamp** and **Jean-Louis Morin**. Admission is by donation (\$3 is recommended for students) in the Burton Auditorium.



Natasha Press (r) and York theatre graduate Gregory Danakas (l) are now performing in the production of *Mandragola*.

by Stephen Caglo

When the name Machiavelli is mentioned, the image of a tyrannical "Prince" is brought into mind. Our imagination takes us to dark places of dictatorial oppression and unknown consequences. However, there is another side to this misunderstood philosopher and social commentator; that of comic and great wit. This can be clearly seen in the recent production of *Mandragola* currently at the Robert Gill Theatre.

The plot is relatively simple. Callimaco (Jon Jordan), a young Parisian aristocrat is dying from his love for Lucrezia (Andria Williams) but does not know how to get around her old husband Nicia (Sabastian Mark DeGrandis).

Director Anita Press, who teaches here at York, has created a visually beautiful piece. She has done a great job utilizing the space and extracting from the actors the incredible energy that is demanded from the author. She has created a feeling of urgency, heat and never ending action.

The play is enhanced by two other York alumni, Tanny Mendes (set designer) and Robert Holmes (lighting designer). Their work gives the play its hot atmosphere and Italian setting. The costumes by Minda Johnson and Martha Mann are in period and also help transport the audience

to sixteenth century Italy.

Mandragola comes alive with the actors. Gregory Danakas, a graduate of the York theatre department, gives a very strong performance as the "secular" priest. His intentions are related to either money or sex and he creates a character we love to hate. Jordan, as the young lover, adds a Latin charm to his performance and we can all empathize with his pain while in love.

DeGrandis shines in the difficult role of the cuckolded husband. His ability to maintain the audience's sympathy is admirable. Diz Altschul and Williams as mother and daughter portray the heat of Italian passions with humour and strength. Lugurio (Derrick Emery) keeps the action connected, but despite his efforts, he is left with the least at the end of the play. Also we must not forget the supporting roles of the Woman and Siro (Natasha Press and Jamie Kastner) who bring out the youthful vivaciousness to the play.

This is definitely a "must see" production, especially for the York connection it offers. It is obvious that York is producing some great talent and we should support it in the cultural community.

Mandragola runs Nov. 21 — Dec. 3, at 8 pm (Sundays at 2). The Robert Gill Theatre is on the 3rd floor of the Koffler Center, 214 College. Call 978-7986 for info.

by Ira Nayman

I'd like to comment on my experiences with the CBC but, before I do, I should make two things clear. First, I wholeheartedly support the concept of a publicly funded national television network; as we move into the information age, it will be an important nation-building tool.

Second, I have tried to the best of my ability to relate events in an impartial (but ultimately entertaining for a general audience) way. However, some self-serving elements are inevitable in this process, so supply your own parallax to arrive at the truth.

A couple of *mea culpas* (*mea culpon?*) also seem to be in order. I've never been good at self-promotion, and I could certainly be accused of not sufficiently pushing my own interests. It's simply not in my nature. I believe that being more aggressive would only have gotten me rejected sooner but, of course, we'll never know.

Of greater importance is my inability to change my creative ideas in order to fit the CBC's needs (particularly in the case of *In Opposition*). Every artist has to make a choice between what he or she would like to do and what he or she must do in order to become successful; I may well have been too inflexible in making my choice. (For the record, I always write with the assumption that my audience is adult, intelligent and involved; whenever I have strayed from the premise, the results have been disastrous, so I don't do it any more.)

Whither the CBC? First, a general observation: in form, much of the CBC's entertainment pro-

gramming mimics American shows, while in content a lot of it had nothing to do with Canadians and their lives.

There are two obvious reasons for this: the influx of executives with American television experience (Ivan Fecan, Lorne Michaels, producers of *Material World* and *Street Legal*) gives prominence to American styles of programming; and the federal government's financial cutbacks and emphasis on maximizing outside income (reflected in Conservative appointments at all levels of the corporation) puts pressure on producers to minimize Canadian content in order to sell their programmes in foreign markets, especially the United States.

Thus, Canadians who look to CBC for quality entertainment are being seriously short-changed. *In Opposition*, which started out being *Yes, Prime Minister*, ends up being *Mister President* (or, worse, *Not My Department*); stripped of its political satire, it becomes another typical situation comedy. The main knock against *Street Legal* was the poor quality of the writing; while that has improved over the last couple of years, the emphasis of the show has been shifted towards romance in a blatant attempt to win viewers. Also, the cost of producing local fluff like *Mosquito Lake* is that resources are diverted from better programmes (like *Degrassi Junior High*).

On a personal level, with the exception of Keith Duncan, I have found the CBC to be staffed with people interested only in the project or projects that they are personally involved with; nobody seems to be responsible for working with new writers, help-

ing those with talent develop and find a place within the organization.

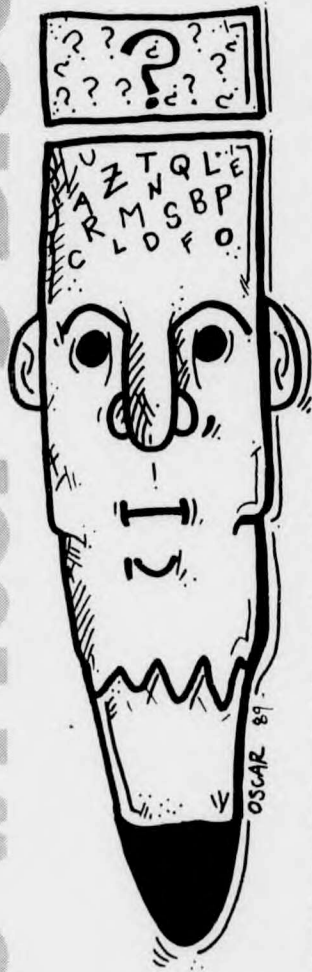
I know my life would have been a lot easier if, at virtually any point in my involvement with the CBC, somebody had referred me to a person whose sole job it was to work with writers (keep in mind that I got good notices from two of the three people I dealt with — for the most part, my talent as a writer was never in question, only how that talent could be harnessed). If there is such a person, none of the many folks I dealt with told me about him/her.

This observation is clearly in my own interest, but it is also in the long-term best interests of the CBC to develop new writers. For one thing, it is part of the mandate of the CBC to find and develop talented Canadian artists. Beyond that, the corporation is committed to increasing Canadian content during prime time to 95 per cent, and maintaining it there. This will necessarily mean an increase in entertainment programming. The CBC will simply need more writers, and it should be doing what it can to find and develop them now in anticipation of that need.

The argument for supporting the CBC is that, in the absence of a market imperative, it can supply Canadians with programmes they aren't likely to find on commercial networks.

If, due to external (a recalcitrant federal government) and internal (haphazard talent recruitment, too much American influence) factors, the CBC's entertainment programmes end up looking like everybody else's, it will undermine one rationale for its own existence.

the writer's block



Ira Nayman is a York student with vast experience as a writer. Ira has written numerous newspaper columns as well as dabbling with CBC television and radio.