

JOE EGG: EMOTIONAL THOUGH JOVIAL

by Alison Manzer

Neptune Theatre's "Joe Egg" is a play about a social issue but it is also a play about individuals. The issue is the right of a human 'vegetable' to be allowed to exist despite the effects this may have on the immediate family. The individuals are the parents of a spastic child so severely affected that she is unable to make the most rudimentary motion.

The action alternates between the present relationships between Sheila and Brian, the parents and Joe, the child, and sequences from the past. The relationship between Sheila and Brian is revealed largely through the actors' speeches directed to the audience. There are also subtleties of the partnership shown through the jokes Brian frequently makes throughout the play. The past is presented in a humorous light as the two parents act out their experiences of the earlier times

with their daughter.

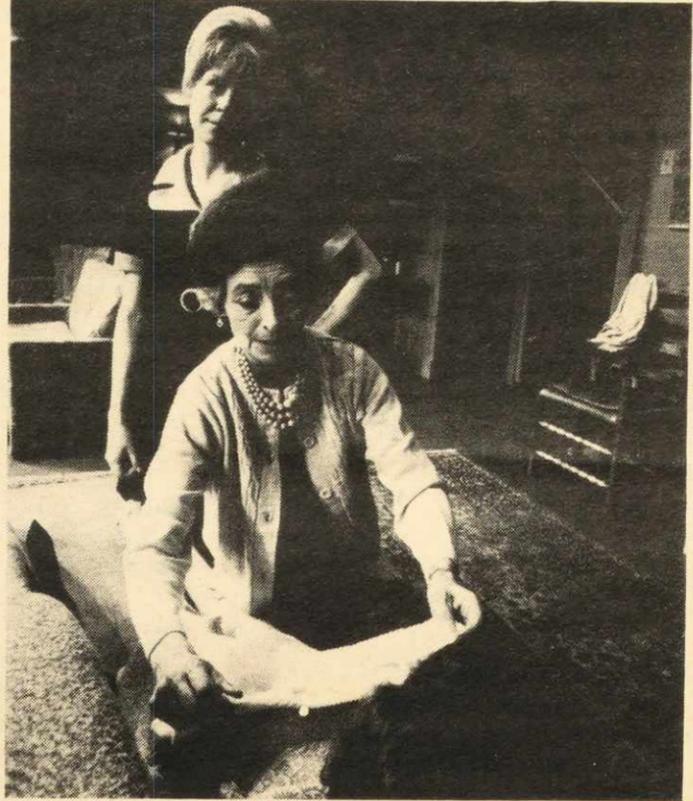
In no way could the play be classified as a comedy but the humour is genuine and good. Colin Fox, who played Brian, is superb in the comic role. He presents the characters off-the-cuff jokes with a flair that prevents them from becoming corny. The situations acted out by Anne Butler and Colin Fox, as they present their visits to doctors when Joe was very young are amusing because of the caricatures done by Fox.

The play is not a comedy, despite the amount of humour, because the basic story is rooted in the pathetic. Sheila's absorption in Joe, causing the destruction of her marriage, is a major pathetic theme. The basic situation of dealing with Joe is pitiable as are the reactions to all possible solutions posed by Brian and minor characters. The humour is all that stops the play from becoming bogged down in the details of the pathos.

The acting in the production is excellent. The leads, Colin and Anne Butler, are notably good. Fox is able to reveal difficult and momentary changes in mood and emotion with remarkable ease, so that, in places where the action tends to become disjointed, the play does not lose continuity. Anne Butler portrays well a compassionate, loving type of person; from the moment she walks on the stage she seems to project a warmth which ideally suits the part.

Some mention should also be given of Elizabeth Thomson who played Joe. She does a very adequate job in a difficult role and is indeed credible in the part. The strong emotional impact the play delivers is due to these performances. I left the theatre filled with conflicting emotions but concerned and thinking about the play's major theme.

The play is well worth seeing and I urge anyone to attend.



PETER NICHOLS': JOE EGG

On January 29

Women confer

Nova Scotia will soon witness its first conference to talk about the problems of women in this province. The day long meeting, limited to women and sponsored jointly by the Women's Conference Committee and the Halifax Women's Bureau, will be held on Saturday, January 29, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. at King's College on Coburg Road. It focuses mainly on the issues of women and the law, and organizing women.

The morning session includes a panel discussion on women's rights under the law, with Gail Mason from the Human Rights Commission, Susan Perly from the Halifax Women's Bureau and Mary Casey, a Halifax

lawyer.

The featured speaker of the afternoon is Grace Hartman, national secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees who will talk about women in trade unions. CUPE is one of the largest representatives of working women in Canada and has been a leader in helping its members work for better conditions as well as equal pay, maternity, leave and day care. Both sessions include question periods and small group discussions.

For further information call the Halifax Women's Bureau at 429-2254.

Pier 1 opens for '72; two plays presented

Pier 1 Theatre opens 1972 with two original one-act plays running from January 26 to February 20. Since its last production, "Wind in the Branches of the Sassafras", the theatre has expanded its technical and artistic abilities with a little help from the Federal Government.

Michael Cook, author, journalist and producer of the St. John's Festival of the Arts, is the author of "Seal" — a political, farcical satire on Newfoundland's present chaotic situation.

The other half of the evening's entertainment is an original work by John Culjak — "The Resurrection of Philip Jerome Michaels or How Can I Rest in Peace?"

Mr. Culjak has enjoyed a large amount of success directing off-Broadway in Cafe la Mama and Cafe Cino. His

plays have been produced in New York and Boston and he is currently residing in Canada, where his time is divided among writing, directing at Pier 1 Theatre, an actor's workshop at the theatre and teaching drama at the Free School in Halifax.

"Resurrection" is a subtle black farce revolving around the dreams of the poor and the ambitious.

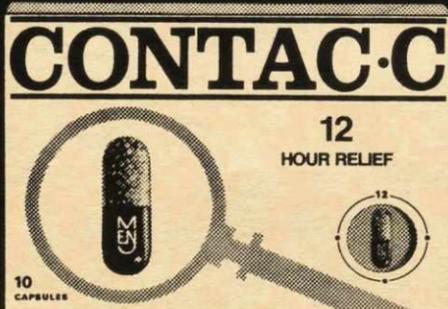
Four newcomers to the Pier 1 stage, supplemented by the Pier

1 Company actors, will perform the two one-acts. John Culjak and John Dunsworth, the directors of "Resurrection" and "Seal" respectively, are giving the plays a contemporary and sometimes startling treatment.

Tickets and reservations may be obtained from the Dalhousie Central Box Office on University Avenue. Reservations may be made at Pier 1 Theatre by telephone.



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