

The arts

The Donnellys: Murder the means

Tuesday night's performance "The St. Nicholas Hotel", part two in the trilogy on Ontario's Black Donnellys, was an imaginative, unusual, and therefore interesting, production.

The NDWT Company's portrayal of the Donnelly murders saga is presented in a medley of theatrical styles. Players assume multiple roles and make use of narration, song, and mime to unravel the mystery surrounding the late 1800's event. At times the abundance of activity and frequency of scene and character changes is confusing, but the resulting effect is quite satisfying.

The cast is dynamic and energetic, if not overly zealous in developing distinct characterizations. Still, this may or may not be intentional, and is excusable at any rate. The script calls for role-changing, and the company's interpretation of it focuses more on events and relationships than on characterizations.

Several actors do emerge as showpieces though. Particularly impressive is the character of Mrs. Donnelly, who is plain and simply a delight to



Patricia Ludwick (left) and Suzanne Turnbull in "The St. Nicholas Hotel"

observe. Also noteworthy is the character of William Donnelly. Both actors lend the production that touch of the tragic needed to round off the show's impact.

The content of the play is most interesting, as is the means in which it is conveyed. This is a talented and well-rehearsed group; despite a complex staging pattern the production went over without a hitch.

The remaining productions ("Sticks and Stones" today, "Hamlet" on Friday, and "Handcuffs", part three of the trilogy, on Saturday, all at 8:30 pm in SUB Theatre) should be just as entertaining and enjoyable as "Hotel" was.

Kim St. Clair

Mahogany no dark horse

Dark, rich and exotic, Diana Ross glitters in her tailor-made role in "Mahogany", now showing at the Westmount B. Yet despite Ms. Ross' polished performance, the film has an unfinished quality which leaves the viewer pondering over a few unanswered questions.

"Mahogany" is a pseudo-autobiography in that Mahogany herself is a fictitious character. It is the story of her struggle to fame and her fear and disillusionment when she achieves it.

The introductory scene presents Mahogany at a time when she first achieves distinction as a fashion designer. Flashbacks take us to a time when her ambitions and goals are definite but as of yet unrealized. These ambitions create conflicts within herself and with those who try to suppress them.

Three individuals, all of them men, play significant roles in her life. One is an aspiring young black politician who feels negroes are an oppressed people. Though no open discrimination is expressed, numerous scenes imply their persecution.

The second is a crazed fashion photographer who glorifies Mahogany to the point of classifying her as an inanimate object, and the third is a wealthy count who acts as her fairy godfather.

The love-hate relationships Mahogany shares with these men mold her into an increasingly distinct character, although her underlying desires to achieve success still dominate her motives.

An unexplained aspect of this movie is the amount of time it spans. It gives little indication as to whether it occurs over a few weeks, a few months, or years.

The most obvious error in the movie is one Ms. Ross has created herself. In designing her own costumes, which are ultra-fashionable, she has created a gap between herself and the status of the other blacks in the film. Her gorgeous clothing and ghetto apartment contradict one another. However, the splendor of the scenery combined with Ms. Ross' performance overshadow the film's obvious errors.

The plot is built on easily identifiable morals; perhaps they are one-sided, but then, autobiographies are never omniscient.

The film's complexity would confuse many people. To understand it more fully one must look below the surface personalities of the characters. Upon first thought many of Mahogany's actions do not cohere, but by looking deeper one finds that they do serve a constructive purpose.

This story is one of a few that still leave a lasting impression on this viewer. Nudity and other forms of sensationalism are carefully avoided, but then they are unnecessary in this film.

The movie's realism provides both the good and bad in life, yet it is a satisfying blend of the two. Above all, it remains a story of achievement and hope.

Jamie Stanley

Hibernation to end soon

This weekend the Edmonton Folk Club shrugs off the dormancy of summer and returns to life with a two night benefit concert, featuring most of the best folk musicians to be found locally. Soon after the concerts a general meeting will be held for all members and interested persons.

This Saturday and Sunday there will be concerts held at the Orange Hall 103 St and 84 Ave. between the Strathcona library and the south side bus barn. Concerts will start at 8 p.m. each night and will feature the following people and/or groups (although not all on the same night): The Covenant, Richard White, Steve Goffe, Brandywine, The Spirit River String Band, the late great Larry Saidman and many others.

In addition, everyone attending will have a chance to

participate. At the end of Saturday's concert an Open Stage will be held, in which anyone who wishes to can get up on stage and do two or three songs. At the end of Sunday's concert, the tables and chairs will be pulled back. The Spirit River String Band with Peter Gamache will play (and call) and an old country style square dance will be on.

Admission to the concerts will be \$2.00 per night for E.F.C. members (\$3.00 for non-members). That breaks down to less than 50¢ per performer, which is quite a deal. Memberships will be available at the door, (\$5.00 per year.)

Coffee, herbal teas, cookies and such will also be available.

If you would like further information call Sue Burwash at 436-2726, or Richard Patching at 439-2253.

The classic Romance

Preview: "Letter From an Unknown Woman" (Edmonton Film Society, Classic Series, Oct. 27, Tory Lecture Theatre, 8 p.m.)

Misunderstood by most 1948 critics, "Letter From an Unknown Woman" was labelled mere sentimental nostalgia or worse. In fact, the film has been recently rehabilitated, and

How to be refined without falling on your Pas

Following up on this week's SUB performances by the NDWT Company is yet another travelling theatre group - Theatre Pas Muraille.

Pas Muraille is one of the foremost proponents of refined improvisation. Having all but eliminated scriptwriters, the company chooses to make their plays, drawing material from the people and experiences available to them. Whereas most plays are developed around a pre-planned script, Pas Muraille forms their plays first and then puts them down on paper.

Continuing with their reputation for dealing with original Canadian content, Theatre Pas Muraille has put together a collage involving stories and heroes of the west. "The West Show" plays Monday and Tuesday at eight in SUB Theatre. Tickets are going for \$1.50 for children, \$2.50 for students, and \$3.00 for non-students. Tickets are available at the door.

declared a consummate work of art; it is one of those films that time has finally vindicated.

The star of the film, Joan Fontaine, initiated the screen version of this haunting story by Stefan Zweig, acquiring it for her production company and hiring Max Ophuls, a European director of uncommon artistry, to helm the project. The result is compelling and showcases Fontaine's most effective screen performance.

Seldom has the "unrequited love" theme been given as serious and thorough a going-over as in this picture. Fontaine, then thirty, runs the gamut from age fourteen to age twenty-nine as the idealistic girl who falls in love with a handsome young concert pianist (Louis Jourdan) who lives in the neighbouring flat in a Vienna apartment house, circa 1885. Enamoured from her first sight of him, she listens dreamily to his playing from the garden below and wistfully watches his numerous shallow affairs.

When her mother remarries and they move to another city, she continues to yearn for the pianist, whom alone of all men she loves. Years later, now a lovely young

women, she rejects a marriage proposal from a handsome Army officer to return to Vienna and seek out the musician. The film follows her tragic odyssey, highlighted by her humiliating surrender to a love that is unreciprocated. By her obsessiveness, the stubbornness of her will to love this one man against all reason and logic, by the total defiance of social rules, she becomes not only the architect of her fate but the precipitator of her downfall, and thus a tragic heroine. She is radical in her refusal to follow the "normal" path of a woman's destiny.

The film often outrages modern audiences unaccustomed to the exposition of a romantic ideal. The audiences have it wrong. They are really seeing a Romantic ideal - capital "R" - and perhaps the most stunning expression movies have given us of a form of awareness that in our literature goes back to Keats. Fontaine plays a heroine of deprivation. Before the movie is over her triumph will have been to have made something, not only of her love, but also of her deprivation.

Ralph Horak

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