

Sean O'Casey's drama termed a success

By JOHN TIMMINS

Sean O'Casey's ability to outline precisely the follies and hypocrisies of his native Ireland, while at the same time, in a scintillating word or exchange, capturing their inimitable charm and strength, is nowhere so evident as in "Juno and the Paycock".

O'Casey was one of the first modern dramatists to define tragi-comedy in the modern sense, creating characters and situations where laughter and grief are not only directly related but coincidental.

The things we laugh at in his characters are the same things which make us ache over their ignorance and hypocrisy, while the great moments of serious self-awareness (as in Juno's last

speech) are followed immediately by laughter.

Workshop Productions' presentation of it captures faultlessly the humour and charm in O'Casey's Irishmen but not so firmly the inherent tragedy. For the most part, the accent was handled fluently, which is important if the effervescent moments are to succeed. The celebration at the end of Act 2 was perhaps the most uniformly best scene in the play, with high energy and stage concentration all round, rivalled perhaps by the sneaked breakfast of memories between Joxer and Bayle.

The serious and melodramatic Act 3 did not fare quite so well, with tension on stage diffused instead of heightened.

Joan Spurway's energetic Juno

is securely handled; her shrill haranguing ensures that the character does not become sentimentalized in the later scenes. This Juno is a fighter as well as a sufferer, which is why I disagree with the interpretation of her last prayer — which I feel could be pitched even higher than Mrs. Tancred's grief. Juno's smaller moments are especially well done. The opening of Act III rang completely true that this was a worried upset mother advising her daughter, mostly because of the sharpness and clarity of Ms. Spurway's reactions.

Bob Doyle's Captain Boyle manages the appropriate gestures and spirit of age with a great virtuosity. The necessary false bravado of Boyle's windy blarney and tales that don't quite succeed

in hiding the lazy drunkard behind them, are very subtly handled by Mr. Doyle, yet still his performance captures the lilt and poetry of O'Casey's Irish, as abundantly does Sean O'Hara's Joxer.

An aged agility and an amusing feline grace help make his reactions the neatest and most precise in the show, and as with Mr. Doyle, stage charm still leaves room for each to portray the less flattering attributes which O'Casey paints so effectively.

Smaller roles were filled colorfully; notable were the subdued grief and intensity of Mrs. Betty Vander Grient as Mrs. Lancred, and the well-timed ramblings of (a not audible enough) Heather MacKenzie as Maisie Madigan. Both showed a stage concentration not always

present in other smaller roles.

On opening night, lighting seemed erratic and unsure. Set design was one of the finest things in this production, giving the breadth needed, yet still giving the strong suggestion of the tight spaces of a tenement. The decreasing heights of designer Alvin Shaw's flats keep tightening the focus in and down. (The breaking walls and wall-paper are the most effectively ugly I've seen for a while.) The direction of Alvin Shaw and Anne Matthews has captured vitally O'Casey's unique and deliciously vulgar humour, only not quite bringing the same intensity out in the grimmer Act III. They are to be congratulated for achieving a large amount of the very specific atmosphere of a difficult period piece.

Country music's pride and joy - Charley Pride



Country Music's pride and joy, Charley Pride will be appearing at the Aitken Centre Saturday, April 16 for two shows at 8 and 10 p.m. Appearing with him is Dave Rowland and Sugar.

Tickets are on sale at Mazzuca's Variety Store on York Street. Prices are \$6.50 for rush tickets and \$8.50 for reserved seats.

With 20 plus albums in his catalogue (12 of them Gold Albums) and a steady stream of chart-topping country singles including the million selling "Kiss An Angel Good Mornin'"), Charley Pride is today the industry's biggest country artist, his popularity having long since spilled over into the mainstream of popular music.

An insight to Pride's talents, one need only ponder some of his achievements. He has been chosen Artist of the Year and Best Male Country Vocalist of the Year by the Country Music Association (CMA); Entertainer of the Year by the Music Operators of America (MOA); Top Country Artist on albums, Top Male Vocalist on singles and Top Male Vocalist on albums by Billboard and Top Male Vocalist in Cash Box's Country Music award list. In addition, he has Grammys for Best Country Performance, Male, for his album "Songs of Love By Charley Pride" among others.

With his first appearance with the Grand Ole Opry in January, 1967, Charley Pride assumed a permanent place in the field of country music, and became the first black performer to be recognized as a major country talent—and he remains one of the very few black country artists to achieve stardom.

An RCA recording artist since Chet Atkins signed him in 1965, Charley has developed into a true hit-maker through his many singles, which have been near or at the top of the C & W best-selling charts, and the albums he has made for the label, beginning with "Country Charley Pride". "The Best of Charley Pride" became his first Gold Album.

As a stage performer, he is one of the hottest tickets in country music, drawing sellout houses on completely booked-up tours.

He became a country music star after sampling the world of big league baseball and is now internationally recognized in his new field and is in demand in top rooms catering to country music both in this country and throughout Western Europe. Network TV exposure has ranged from the Lawrence Welk Show and the Kraft Music Hall to Hee Haw and the Johnny Cash Show.

Dave Rowland & Sugar is the most promising group to hit the

country music scene in a long time. Blending tight vocal harmonies with a dynamic stage presence, they are both exciting and entertaining. The trio is Charley Pride's tour group, opening Charley's show and later coming back on to give Charley backup vocal support.

Dave Rowland, organizer and leader of the group has grown in the country music field. He was born and raised in Los Angeles and started his singing career at the age of four. Since then his professional career has spanned the country with his many talents that include playing the piano, drums, guitar, bass guitar and trumpet.

A born entertainer and showman, Dave fronts the trio and directs the group with superb vocal arrangements and staging. Vicki Hackeman was born in Louisville, Kentucky and later moved with her parents to West Palm Beach Florida. She started her singing career in the first grade with the lead in a class play. Growing up she was active singing in church choirs, the school chorus, and sang with a popular local group throughout high school.

Jackie Frantz hails from Sidney, Ohio and made her musical debut by winning the Ted Mack Amateur Hour at the age of fifteen with a trumpet solo. Singing has always



been second nature to Jackie, and while attending Western Kentucky University she sang and played trumpet with an all girl group that did several USO tours in the

Caribbean and Europe. After graduating from the University Jackie moved to Nashville to further develop her talents as a singer and songwriter.

Toronto dancers delight audience

By ROSEMARIE HOPPS

The Toronto Dance Theatre played to a responsive house at the Playhouse last week.

Favourites among their repertoire were "Recital" and the "Ray Charles Suite".

Claudia Moore seemed the most accomplished dancer, although the others certainly displayed a high calibre of performance.

David Earle and Peter Randazzo choreographed two numbers each, with Patricia Beatty choreographing "Against Sleep", a particularly stirring arrangement.

The "Ray Charles Suite" which extended the length of the third act was the most varied, including interpretations of "Eleanor Rigby", "Ruby", "Yesterday" and "Hit the

Road Jack". With the Toronto Dance Theatre members were Leslee McGee, Ken Salmon, Josephina-Anna Sembini, Diane Hamilton and Sharon Gilmore, all from the UNB Dance Theatre under the artistic direction of Nenagh Leigh and Claire Pigott, (a former member of the UNB Dance Theatre.)

It was a most enjoyable evening. I would recommend the Toronto Dance Theatre to the dance connoisseur or the novice alike. It is good entertainment.

The UNB Dance Theatre under their new title the Maritime Contemporary Dance Company will perform for the Learned Societies, in the Playhouse, on May 31st and June 10th.