

Milner bows to conventionality

The City
Arthur Milner
 Workshop West at the Kaasa
 Through December 17

review by Perry Gereluk

There is something about *The City* that leads me to believe it was done in a rush. I think that this is probably due to the severe creative deficit of the script.

Arthur Milner, the playwright who wrote *The City*, should stand up and take the blame for its problems. He writes in one of the most conventional and unoriginal ways that I have ever seen. It is incredibly obvious sometimes, and you will often find yourself knowing what is about to take place before it actually does.

The City is chiefly about political ethics, with a few other topics in there for the ride. The problem is that nothing in this play is profound and it comes out as almost a light, light comedy. That would not be so bad if it is meant to be a light comedy but *The City* is supposed to be a thought-provoking drama. It has the depth of your average "Three's Company" episode.

This play would be spectacular if the playwright is a junior high school student, but Milner is not a novice. He is a prominent veteran of the Canadian theater scene who

has received good reviews before. His problem is based on his workload, as he is putting out three separate works this season. I believe that he has overloaded himself due to the fact that his income from writing has significantly dropped (as mentioned in recent interviews) and he would like to earn more money. When an artist works for the dollars and compromises his or her art, it is a sure sign that it is time for that artist to consider some other job.

The actors and actresses are believable but mediocre. They are given some brutal lines to say and they say them brutally, which is not altogether their fault. The musician, Ian Brise, is fine but occasionally plays music that does not really fit the atmosphere on the stage.

The City is not all bad. The lighting is done very well and the stage itself is pretty good. Milner is renowned for having short plays and *The City* is no exception. It is just the right length and cannot be accused of dragging. The audience seemed accepting and would laugh at the slightest provocation. Maybe it just had a bad opening night and is actually a play to be seen. Just kidding.

I would not recommend you see *The City* unless you are a playwright. If you are a playwright, then you should see it to understand the tragic results that occur when a writer bows down to conventionality.



Colin Northcott

Four actors pass the glass in Workshop West's production of Milner's *The City*.

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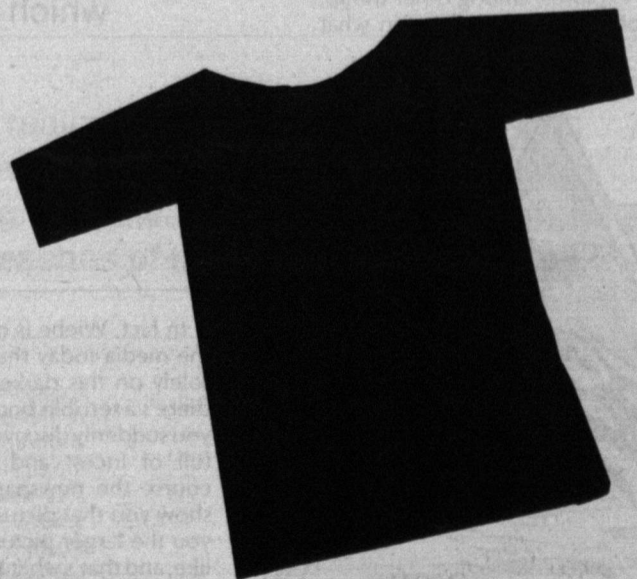
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