

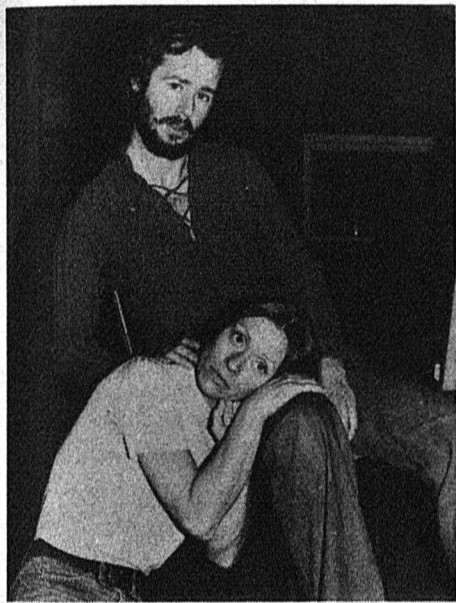
Theatre 3: filling a gap

Theatre Three takes a different approach to drama than the Citadel, the other professional theatre in Edmonton. It fills a particular kind of area in the community not being served by any other theatre at the moment. The approach is that of an art theatre concept with interest primarily in the creation of theatre as a work of art and less towards the commercial aspects of it.

Audiences attending Theatre Three will notice this difference. They produce plays that will not get produced otherwise. "That's clear to our audience, they come to Theatre Three to see things which haven't been produced elsewhere," says Mark Schoenberg.



Currently reconstructing "A Doll's House"



Holte Davidson and Judith Mabey, playing Torvald and Nora respectively, are featured in the company's opening production of "A Doll's House".

Schoenberg is the artistic director of Theatre Three. He has focused his life on writing and the theatre. As well he is currently the film reviewer for CBXT and book reviewer for the Journal. Schoenberg has been connected with the theatre as a working vocation for almost 25 years. Until last year he was an instructor at the U of A.

Theatre Three's season will be at least half Canadian content. The Christmas show, the Grimm Brothers Road Show, was written by an Albertan playwright Frank Moher. It is a very modern adaptation of Five Stories from the Grimm Brothers Fairy Tales. The music is also being written by an Albertan, Larry Reese. Mark Schoenberg explains the Canadian content. "I feel very strongly that any theatre company should reflect the artistic input of the community in which it exists."

He feels that Theatre Three audiences will gain an appreciation of Alberta talent. "I think it is unfortunate that an artist has to go away and make himself known so that he can come back. It is possible now for people to recognize there are artists here who are as worthy as those anywhere. Our whole company is composed of professional actors from western Canada. The exception is one girl who is from Texas, but is now living here. I think it is as good a company as can be put together."

After the Christmas play Theatre Three will produce a classic, The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams.

Schoenberg explains the manner in which it will be produced so that it is distinctly Theatre Three.

"I am just going to produce it the way I think it should be and I don't know how that will differ or vary from other production. I do know the present production, A Doll's House will contain some significant surprises for people who have pigeon holed it and made certain assumptions. We are doing things very differently in this production. However, I don't set out to be a non-traditionalist or wave the banner for the avant garde. I produce the plays as I see them."

"A Doll's House will be different than many productions of it, The Glass Menagerie won't be. I have a very strong feeling for The Glass

Menagerie and I don't think there are very many ways you can produce it beyond the original expectations. I am doing the play because I love it. In fact our entire season is a reflection of what the company wants to produce."

The artistic director of Theatre Three is very optimistic about the future. "I think the theatre in this province is healthier than any place else in the country simply by virtue of the fact that there has been an enormous explosion generated in part by the fact that the money is here. This province supports the performing arts in a way no other province in the country does. There is a real explosion of theatrical activity in Edmonton in particular."

Theatre Three is making a big push for student involvement in the theatre. Special matinees have been set up to get the students into the theatres. "We are very eager to do

this because Theatre Three feels our audience is more intellectually oriented than those attending other theatres in the city. We are interested in making a particularly strong connection with universities and high schools."

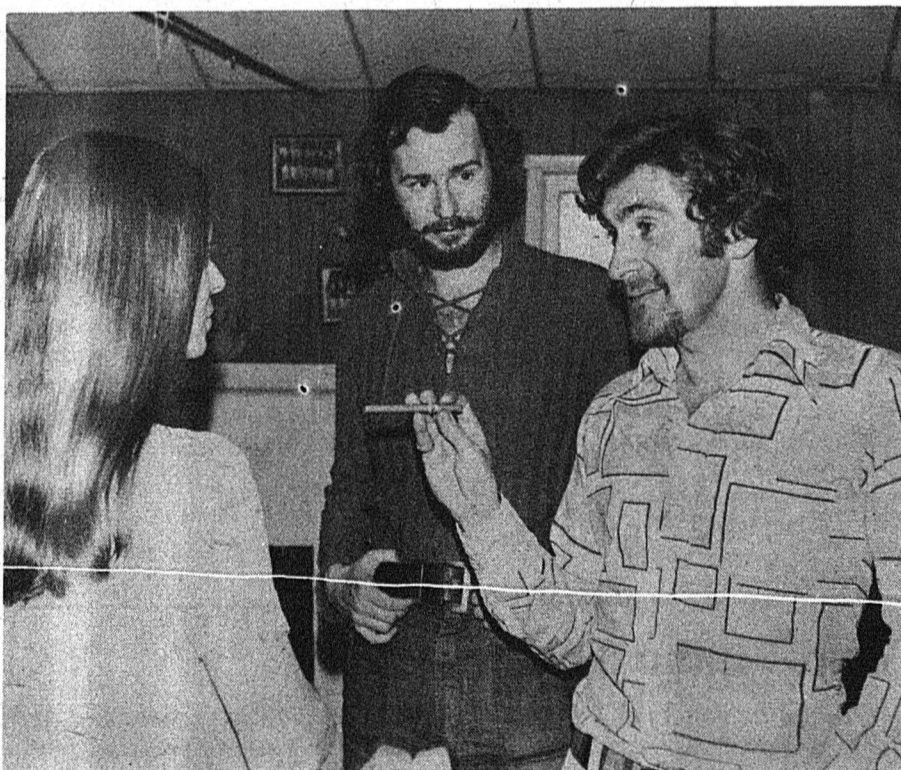
"My specific plans for Theatre Three once we get into our new theatre space is to establish a resident company, a core of actors who will spend an entire season with us. We also hope to have a playwright in residence. This is all in a year or so. I am quite looking forward to it."

Theatre Three is currently rehearsing its season-opener A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen. It was written about 95 years ago and remains one of the great plays to come out of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Later in the season two new plays will be produced. First is The Broken Globe, based on a short story written by Henry Kreisel the former vice president academic of the U of A, and adapted to stage by Frank Moher. Its about the Ukrainian community with a definite Alberta thrust to it. In March Theatre Three is coproducing a revue with Northern Lights Theatre. It is being written by the theatres involved and is called Happy Birthday America, a satirical look at 200 years of American-Canadian relationships, in celebration of America's Bicentennial. The season closes with Macbeth.

Schoenberg explains some of the problems with Edmonton Theatre. "We are very insulated in the world of theatre in this country. It is very difficult for the people in Toronto to keep up with what is happening in Edmonton. There are no strongly established lines of communication and we don't get to see each other often enough to keep abreast of what is happening in other parts of the country. It has to be broken down eventually, but I don't have any answers."

feature by Brent Kostyniuk



Photos by Mark Schoenberg

Joining Mabey and Davidson is Drew Borland as Dr. Rank.