

Heroes and villains

By Wanda Paszkowski

If there is anyone out there who thinks that the only theatrical talent at York is found solely within the confines of the theatre department, they need only have attended last weekend's staging of *The Visit* to be proven dead wrong. Director Fred Thury's production of this Friedrich Duerrenmatt play opened last Thursday at Vanier College to an appreciative, although not capacity audience.

The play itself is one of those chalked full of symbolic and hidden meanings. On the surface it is the story of the small-town girl, played by Gloria Evanoff, who, after being driven out of town in disgrace at an early age, finds herself a string of wealthy husbands and returns many years later to wreak vengeance upon her old lover (Stuart Clow) and indeed, upon her old hometown itself. The plot begins to build with her arrival and thickens as details of her sordid past along with her vengeful schemes are revealed.

There is far more to the play's story than that which immediately meets the eye. A bitter stab is taken at man's materialistic values. The righteous citizens of the small town of Guellen who jeered Claire when she left town, a seventeen year old mother-to-be, now stand in awe of her as she returns waving her money under their noses and walking all over

them. At her bidding and for the sake of her money they put to death her ex-lover who had hitherto been the town's most respected citizen. Falling victim to her guile they change from ordinary small town folks to money-hungry mindless fools who act on spur of the moment impulses never thinking of the consequences. It is interesting to note as the play progresses how similar they become, both to each other and to the little company of goons and servants which Madame Zahanassian brings with her. Their dress becomes trashy and their talk meaningless to the point where, in the final scene, they are all identical replicas of each other, as they stand upon the stage chanting the praises of money and possessions.

What makes the play even more interesting are the circumstances under which it was produced. Each year Fred Thury, who, although he has years of theatrical experience behind him, is not a member of the local theatre department, holds auditions for York students who have an interest in acting but are not theatre students. This cast, having been chosen in late fall, took a mere two months and 32 rehearsals before the act was ready to face the public. With leading lady Gloria Evanoff the only member of the cast holding a background in theatre, the entire

troupe managed to generate an air of professionalism while at the same time being responsible for the props, make-up, and some of the costumes.

Heroes and villains? The play appears to have more than its fair share of the latter, and yet from the grovelling burgomaster to the scheming Madame Zahanassian herself, they all seem to be victims of circumstances. After dominating the second act, Stuart Clow appears to be the obvious choice for hero, as does John MacIntyre in his role as the doctor in the final act, but in the end they both succumb; Clow, to execution, and MacIntyre, to the old philosophy of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

Although the above-mentioned threesome of Evanoff, Clow, and MacIntyre were without a doubt the stars of the show, an honourable mention goes to Liz Lundell and Cindy Recchia, who in their roles of the two blind men did some exceptional mime and synchronized monologue.

Campbell on dance

By Ronald Ramage

"Superman, said Emmy Award winner Norman Campbell, "is the ultimate dance movie. Deep in everyone is the urge to fly, like Peter Pan. And the essence of ballet is to give the illusion of floating.... Christopher Reeves and Margot Kidder soaring over the rooftops of New York is the ultimate dance scene."

Dance Department Chairman Yves Cousineau introduced Norman Campbell to a winter-small crowd with a brief biography of his career. Besides major CBC productions of National Ballet performances, (including *Romeo and Juliet*, winner of two Emmys) he has also directed major situation comedies such as the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *All in the Family* as well as specials, for stars like Andy Williams, Bing Crosby, and Olivia Newton John. Lately, his credits include *Toronto Symphony in China* and the upcoming *Karen Kain Super Special* on CBC, March 11.

"After our production of *Swan Lake* in '56", Norman Campbell told the crowd, "a newspaper in Newfoundland printed an editorial bordered in black." The editorial gave huge praise to the CBC for making dance accessible to its remote public. Even now CBC's dance shows still capture a large share of the Neilson's pulling an audience of nearly one and a quarter million people.

Showing clips of his work, Norman discussed his technique as formed by the medium. He went into some depth about the limitations imposed and the freedoms given to the director in using film or television, and how dance itself changes for a television program, or a film show.

"The eye has a built in zoom and always finds the best shot. I try to make the camera find that shot from the best seat in the house," he said.

Where normally he was given weeks for rehearsal and shooting to do a dance production (a time always shrinking because of budget cutting in the CBC) to do *Sleeping Beauty* with Rudolph

Nureyev live, in performance, he had only four hours of rehearsal, and two performances to shoot. Using six cameras, all rolling, and all the video equipment that could be found, including the hockey game's video recorder, he was left with seventy miles of video tape to edit to an hour and a half of air time.

Over juice and cookies in the post-show gathering, he answered questions, and talked further about shows and techniques. "A zoom lens has made the camera-man lazy. It is so easy to zoom, but a follow pan, or a camera dolly-in has a lot more excitement, and more visual motion within it."

Barely scraping the surface of his vast store of experience and collected works, Norman Campbell made a strong impression upon the regrettably small audience.

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