

# Sweet Memoirs

**Brighton Beach Memoirs**  
Citadel Theatre  
til Oct. 18

review by Rachel Mackenzie

"Life is tough when you're fifteen years old; especially when your name just happens to be Eugene Morris Jerome. I mean, that has to be the second worst name in the world — next to Hassnel Fleischmann!" so begin the adolescent frustrations of young Eugene in Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs* playing at the Citadel until October 19.

From the point of view of straight entertainment, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* is full of laughs.

The year is 1937 in Brighton Beach, New York. For Eugene, life consists of fulfilling two very important goals. First, he wants to play baseball with the Yankees, second, he wants to rig the bathroom door lock so that he can watch his cousin Nora in the shower.

Philip Lee Baker does a commendable job as Eugene. He is full of energy and always ready with a quick reply. For those of you who saw adolescence as one long obstacle course, Eugene and his antics are bound to make you chuckle.

But aside from the laughs, this play suffers sorely from Eugene's almost overwhelming presence. He is both the narrator and the main character in the play, but it is the other

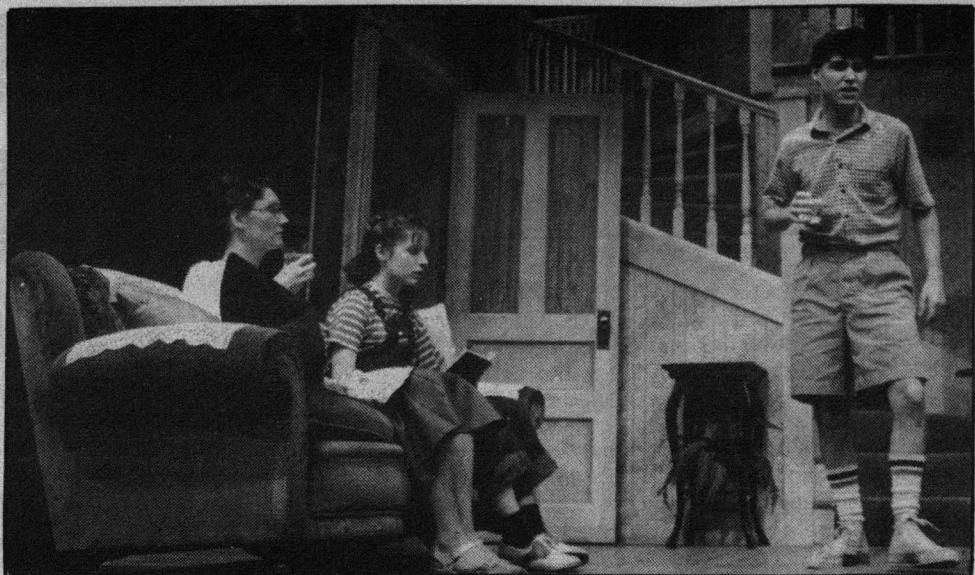
characters who truly demonstrate the actual message behind the play.

The main thrust of the play focuses on the interaction of the family members in a time of crisis. The Jeromes are a Jewish family desperately trying to make ends meet in an era of great economic strife. They live in a genuine state of anxiety for their relatives in Europe.

The play exposes the way in which family members can become too dependent on each other emotionally and financially. It examines the issue of individual goals versus the well-being of the family. The play has the potential to explore the concept of resentment and how it can destroy a family. But these important themes are buried beneath slapstick comedy which for the most part is delivered by Eugene. It was as though Simon fell in love with Eugene as a character and allowed him to subvert the other characters completely.

The play also suffers from sentimentality. Darlen Bradley plays the rather indulgent character Blanche in a very unconvincing way. When the self-pitying Blanche finally comes to grips with the fact that she has to start pulling her life together, the acting is grossly sentimental.

Judy Mahby as Blanche's sister Kate is also weak. This critic was expecting something more from the role. Kate is the Jewish



Eugene Morris Jerome (Philip Lee Baker) making his plea in *Brighton Beach Memoirs*

housewife; a traditionally strong role within a Jewish family. Mahby does not come across as a strong character. When the two sisters, Blanche and Kate, fight and later reconcile, the scene is grossly sentimental where it could have been very moving.

Both of the dominant female roles in the play were essentially weak. This was especially apparent when they had to share the limelight with Eugene, who had an inconvenient way of stealing the show all the time.

The one really excellent performance in the play was provided by Jay Brazeau as Jack Jerome. He was the only character in the play that gave any significance to how the family stood in relation to their faith. It was not that

there should have been a dissertation in the play on the Jewish faith. What was really lacking was any sort of identity with the characters themselves as Jews. The year is 1937. The Jeromes often talked about their relatives in Poland. This critic was waiting for some kind of insight to come from any of the characters as to how they related with their faith.

Although the play does suffer from a kind of imbalance in strong and weak characters, it is certainly worth seeing. There is a bit of Eugene in everyone and because of this, it is possible to forgive the obvious faults of the play.

# Crocodile Dundee exudes charm

**Crocodile Dundee**

review by Elaine Ostry

New York or the Never-Never: which is the true wilderness? *Crocodile Dundee* poses this question as it instills life into the typical plot of future lovers from different places experiencing each other's culture.

Sue (Linda Kozlowski) is a rich New York reporter on assignment in Sydney. She ventures into the Aussie outback to find the elusive folk-hero, "Crocodile Dundee". His claim to fame is surviving a crocodile attack and crawling through hundreds of miles of snake-infested swamp to safety.

Enter Crocodile Dundee (Paul Hogan) into the small town bar, a stuffed croc under his arm. He immediately starts waltzing with Sue, during which he KO's a man, without missing a beat. He is a Real Man — in "a man's country."

The first thing Sue learns about Dundee is that he has a knack with animals. He can hypnotize them. He calmly strangles a snake while discussing aboriginal rights. Of course, he saves her from "The Jaws of Death."

The Australian scenes are beautifully filmed, and a sense of danger is always present. The film then switches its locale to New York, where Dundee accompanies Sue back home at her paper's expense.

The atmosphere of bustling New York, with its own sense of prevailing danger, maintains the excitement of the film. Upon learning how many people lived there, Dundee exclaims, "New York must be the friendliest city in the world."

The Man from Walkabout Creek proceeds to take on the city, standing out in the crowd in his snakeskin jacket and hat. His only tools for survival are his sense of humour and his 12 inch knife. He encounters objects and people unheard of in the Back of Beyond: escalators, elevators, cocaine, hookers, transvestites. He manages an attitude of cool naivety: "No worries", he keeps saying — even when he takes a walk on the wild side.

Dundee's charm pervades the movie. An example of his extreme friendliness is his first day in the city, when he tries to say "G'Day" to seven million New Yorkers.

Fortunately, he is too down-to-earth to be seen as paragon of virtue. You can't help but fall in love with him, just as Sue the reporter does.

Yes, of course this is a romantic comedy, and yes, there is a love triangle. But all of this love business is not taken too seriously. The characters are too cool for angst. The audience just knows Sue couldn't choose her pale Yuppie boyfriend over tanned, strong Dundee. The film is warm, not

sentimental.

The acting is superb. Paul Hogan in particular excels in his portrayal of culture shock. His face is subtly expressive; it's no wonder he is the leading comedian in Australia. The movie itself has been number one at the box office there for nearly a month. Hogan originated the story and collaborated on the screenplay.

Linda Kozlowski as Sue cannot match

Hogan's charm. Indeed, she is quite irritating as the sophisticated society girl ("Daddy owns the paper") of New York, almost a snob, and she loses some of the viewer's sympathy. Mark Blum is just obnoxious enough as her boyfriend.

Peter Faiman's direction is light and sure, making this film thoroughly likeable. Don't bother waiting for \$2.50 Tuesdays to see *Crocodile Dundee*; it's worth five bucks.

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to assist S.U. President David Oginski in representing the student body at the President's Club.

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In 75 words or less, indicate what makes you a good individual to represent the student body in this club?

Responses should be directed to David Oginski, Rm. 259 S.U.B.

Deadline for entries is 3:00 p.m. Friday, October 03/86.



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## OLSEN vs. DECORE

other candidates invited.

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**WHERE:** SUB Theatre

**TIME:** 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

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