

Entertainment

"Spider at night makes delight."
-Gerty Stein-



4th-Century Chinese photo depicts Turandot expecting rain.

Renuka De Silva

Bert at Burton

Vivian Bercovici

What would Bertolt Brecht think of York theatre department staging *Turandot*, his final and unedited play?

Director Alan Richardson and Ilene Thalenberg (both of the theatre faculty), subjected the original "large and unwieldy" script to some heavy editing and rewriting last summer, with the intention of producing it this fall.

Once a working copy was formulated, a cast of 60 theatre students was chosen to make it all happen. Three of the six weeks allotted to rehearsals were devoted strictly to dramaturgical work. Along with a team of Theatre students and Faculty (Larry Cox, Donna Lipchuk, Rob Berry, Ric Sarabia, assistant director, and Bronwyn Weaver), Richardson and Thalenberg further revised their working script, never losing sight of Brecht's probably intentions.

Editing will continue during rehearsal, says Richardson, until the day of the performance. He adds that he has yet to write a short scene for the second half of the play in order to substantiate some of the characters.

Richardson not only recognizes but emphasizes the philosophical Marxism in *Turandot*. The play is based on an ancient tale and deals with corruption—corporate corruption. Continuing in this vein, *Turandot* rides on the concept of "debased intellectualism", as it caricatures the leading Nazis of the 30's and 40's.

The excitement of creating a finished and polished product from Brecht's script has spread throughout the cast and crew. As one student said, "It's been fun, and that's what's most important."

Turandot will be staged Dec. 1-3, 8:00 p.m. and Dec. 4, 2:00 p.m., in Burton Auditorium. Tickets are \$1.00. Phone 667-2370.

Pix nix poems

Lillian Necakov

The Collected Works of Lionel Douglas, Emanation Press, 1980, 84 pp. \$2.95

The Collected Works of Lionel Douglas is a gutsy piece of work in which poetry takes on photography, and inevitably the latter conquers.

The Toronto-born Douglas, who died last year, aged 35, only began writing poetry at 30, when he started to explore the "inner being". Unfortunately he doesn't stand outside this inner being, he is tangled up in it, and his poetry becomes obscure and far too introspective—a jumble of images which Douglas leaves us to plow through.

Most of the poetry leaves the reader empty and indifferent. However there are a few poems ("i

like those fleshy pink protrudences" and "The Last Fountain Night") that stir something inside, but only slightly. Nothing really pokes you where it counts.

Douglas seems to be much better at capturing others than he is at capturing himself. And so his photographs are slick, clean and overpowering with an amazing sense of movement. He makes photography look as easy as "hey, let's go catch a flick", but each photograph is perfectly contrived and executed. Douglas manages to give children, men, pumpkins and motorcycles all a look of elegance and refinement.

At its best *The Collected Works of Lionel Douglas* reveals an original and truly talented photographer, with a sharp eye that never opened for his poetry.

Ontario playwright's showcase...

Can-dram opens doors

Lloyd Wasser

"The existing Canadian playwright is an endangered species," claims Tom Hendry, director of the Toronto Free Theatre. "However, there are enough outlets that, if you write something good, it can be produced."

Hendry was giving advice to almost 100 novice playwrights at Hart House during the recent Ontario Playwrights' Showcase, a week-long extravaganza of seminars, writing workshops, readings and performances. The focus was on the hard work and home-grown enthusiasm of the Canadian playwright—with an emphasis placed on showcasing new talent and developing the work of fledgling dramatists.

The Showcase first took form three years ago when Theatre Ontario's Roy Higgins approached the Provincial Theatre Services Board with a plan for a major playwrighting festival in Toronto. The Board was enthusiastic about the project, but it wasn't until Evva Massey joined Theatre Ontario in 1977 that it really got out of the planning stages and closer to becoming a reality.

Massey began working with Theatre Ontario staff to mold the Showcase. Radio messages and the slogan "Write Your Own Ticket" were created to appeal to playwrights across the province for scripts, and five \$5,000 prizes were offered, as well as the promise to produce the top five plays at Hart House during Showcase Week.

"Around Christmas we had five scripts," says Massey, looking back at the Showcase's early days, "and it occurred to me—what happens if we only get two scripts after putting in all that work?"

What they ended up with were over 370 full-length scripts from playwrights across the province. It was then up to a panel of theatre professionals to judge each and come up with a selection of the best. From there, the top scripts went to three final judges—Bill Glassco, Jean Gasco, and Herbert Whittaker—who were responsible for choosing five winners and 14 runners-up. No easy feat.

"I was interested in finding new scripts for my theatre," explains Glassco, Artistic Director of the Tarragon Theatre. "I thought maybe I would discover new

playwrights and at the same time it would force me to sit down and read scripts." And several long weeks later, the winners were announced.

One of the winners, Alexis Bernier (*Centenarian Rhyme*), says about her work, "I wanted to write a play and that's what came out. I write out of a desire to be involved with theatre."

The Ontario Playwrights' Showcase made great strides towards an appreciation of the Canadian dramatist and his work. And it has also entertained and educated hundreds of people. But most importantly, it gave five talented writers a chance to see their characters, their words, and their blood walk and prance about on a stage.

It is indeed sad that the organizers have decided against holding a similar festival in future years. Perhaps a continuous succession of such showcases could help build up our wealth of dramatists and expand on their works. I hope someone else will decide to revive the Showcase, for a festival of this type must continue if we wish to keep Canadian drama alive and kicking.

Roll over Marlowe - here's Nurse Jane

Scott Williams

A brisk November wind whipped the fallen leaves into frenzied swirls as Scott Williams, University Student, manoeuvred his roadster into the parking lot.

"What's this," he pondered. Before him stood a neatly arranged display of Harlequin Romances. As he stooped down to peruse them, the overhead lights flickered ominously. The play was about to commence.

Settled comfortably in his seat, Scott watched as one character after another appeared upon the tastefully decorated set. First to face the audience was Doris, whose "Dear Cloris" column was syndicated across the country. Next, husband Edgar, Geography Teacher, with Vivien Bliss, Novelist (Nurse Jane in *Daycare Night-*

mare), and, gasp, mistress of Edgar. Then came Bill, beseeching advice from bemused Cloris.

Scott pitied the poor soul. For twenty years, Bill had lived with his sister Peggy, free-lance journalist, knowing all the time that he was not her brother, but in fact, her father. Oh no! Edgar and Vivien have been discovered by Doris and Bill, whom Vivien takes to be a mad-rapist. Could it have anything to do with the panty hose on his head?

Suddenly the audience froze. Who was that knocking on the door? Curse the cruel fates, it was none other than Peggy, F.J.,

coming to interview Doris/Cloris for the United Church Advocate. Manfully wiping the tears from his eyes, Scott waited with baited breath as another knock echoed throughout the theatre. Struggling to control herself, Doris opened the door, only to be greeted by Peter Prior, stranger.

"Mom!" he shouted, as the lights failed.

Nurse Jane Goes to Hawaii, written by Allan Stratton, directed by Steven Katz, at the Phoenix Theatre, 390 Dupont St., until December 7.

Lobster's choice

The world premiere of Anne Marie de Moret's *The Placer* will be held Thursday thru Saturday at 8:30 p.m. in the Sam Beckett Theatre. The play questions the very basis of male/female relationships. It's free and it's a good bet. So, follow the Lobster, mobster!



Don't miss the Art Gallery of York University's current exhibit: *Ernst Barlach: Woodcuts and Lithographs*. It'll be a rare opportunity to see this German craftsman's fine work. So direct your feet to Ross Building N. 145 between now and Dec. 19.

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