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Anne Frank a harsh reminder

By B.J.R. Silberman

After sitting idle for forty-six years, the old stables building on 165 Front St. E. was re-opened in 1975 and converted into the Young People's Theatre Centre.

The theatre is currently staging *The Diary of Anne Frank*, headed by a superb cast including the family team of Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson and Roberta Wallach. Canada's Kate Reid is also part of the cast.

The sad, biting story of Anne Frank and her family's attempt to hide from the Nazis during World War II is well known. The play is set on the two top floors of the old house in Amsterdam where the Frank family, along with a dentist called Dussel and the Van Daans,

spent twenty-six months. Together, the eight people managed to survive on the food brought in by two friends.

Anne was played by Roberta Wallach. It's her first theatre venture and her projection was excellent throughout, although she tended to overact.

Eli Wallach gave the best performance as Anne's father. One felt the strength and courage of Mr. Frank, and at the same time the compassion he possessed for his family.

Kate Reid played Mrs. Van Daan and really caught the character of the spoiled, self-centred woman. Henry Ramer portrayed her moody, pessimistic husband who finally broke down when he was caught stealing bread from the cupboard at night when even the children were starving.

Paul Soles, well known for his pantomime skits in the old CBC series *This is the Law*, played Dussel. The dentist was a hypochondriac and had an irritating way of interfering in other people's business. One thus got to see how the pettiness of people could be built

up, especially under such enclosed circumstances.

The sound was inexcusable. The recordings seemed to have been made on cheap equipment from low-budget records. The music of a flute playing in the beginning and at the end, which was supposed to have created the mood of the play, failed miserably.

The play reached a climax when the Nazis discovered the Frank's hideout. The secret police broke down the door and the lights faded to a blackout.

The stage version of Anne Frank's diary left out a number of instances including things too intimate or personal to be done in the family theatre. Perhaps this served to lessen the harshness of the diary, but the theme remained intact.

Afterwards, walking along Front Street, and even days later, one could still feel an anger and a certain guilt. The plight of the Franks and millions of others like them throughout history, all over the world, will forever haunt humanity. Such memories can have no death even for the innocent.

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Courage is cleansing

By Eric Walberg

Mother Courage, playing at the St. Lawrence Centre until March 18, is an epic drama, a tragedy which uplifts. It is a uniformly fine production. The pervasive despair and destruction of the Thirty Years War have a cleansing effect on the audience.

What is unique and exciting about Bertold Brecht is his involvement of the audience in his drama. It is never merely entertainment nor merely didacticism.

The stage is the *real* focus of playwright and audience. What happens there must involve us with Brecht's *reality* (which thereby becomes our reality).

This Brecht does through contradiction, both within each character and between them. The play cannot be reduced to its actors, but only to the dynamic relations *within* and *between* them.

Thus there are neither heroes nor villains in Brecht. *Mother Courage* is the contradictory force of humanity, fighting in her own way the soldiers of fortune and religion, to maintain intact both the sanity of herself and her children.

Yet she does not have *within* her the source of her courage — she finds it in her struggle for survival. In this fight, *she* must be contradictory, playing *all* roles: heroine and coward, mother and father.

To be merely *motherly* is impossible, since *Courage's* husbands drop in endless battles like flies, leaving her alone with her brood in a cruel and war-ravaged world, which seems to care little for its many casualties. She must be *father* to her family and husband to herself.

To be merely courageous and *heroic* would be foolhardy. She is surrounded by now Protestant, now Catholic soldiers, who vow "to make short shrift of those who don't want to be free"! One must be a *coward* at times, to avoid losing

oneself and loved ones in the name of 'freedom'.

An example of the contradiction between characters is the army recruiter (In peace, people are so deprived, they don't even have names) versus *Courage* (The dead have no names. In a decent country there is no need for virtues).

Brecht makes effective use of symbolism which is never pretentious and yet is so powerful as to move us to tears. *Courage's dumb* daughter, reviled and mocked, forfeits her life in order to *sound* the alarm to a village under attack.

Her son, Swiss Cheese, is filled with eleven bullet holes. "When the cheese is gone," says one actor, in reference to life when the war is over, "what happens to the holes?" Is life only war, and peace merely an illusion?

No. Victory and defeat in war are equally a sham, an illusion "for us little people." However, peace is difficult. It is easy to drift along and lose one's identity. But only peace allows us to face up to ourselves, to do away with injustice.

But surely this emphasis on war is dated?

On the contrary, our society breeds war both within and between nations (just as Brecht's characters are contradictory both internally and between themselves).

It is no coincidence that *Mother Courage* is a merchant, refusing to pay her son's ransom or to help some dying peasants, or that the Thirty Years War drew its inspiration from the Protestant ethic.

There is no moral here — Brecht's aim is to produce a critique of the spontaneous ideology in which men live. He turns the spectator into an actor who can then complete the unfinished play.

If there is any moral, it is that we will someday see our warlike society (be it Hot or Cold) as a sham, that we can create a life which has no need for victory or defeat.

ATTENTION: GRADUATING STUDENTS

The schedule of 1978 Spring Convocation ceremonies appears below. Students planning to graduate this Spring should note the following information.

1. You should consult your Faculty Calendar if you are in doubt about the academic requirements for graduation. Any enquiries about eligibility should be directed to the appropriate Faculty's **Office of Student Programmes** (O.S.P.), or the **Graduate Records Office** if you are a graduate student.
2. If you are graduating from the Faculty of Arts, Fine Arts, Glendon College, Graduate Studies, Education or Law, your name is added automatically to the graduation list and you will be sent an invitation in May. Invitations are mailed by the College Master's Office (for students in the Faculty of Arts) and by the Student Programmes Office (for all other students).
- 3.
3. If you are graduating from the Faculty of Administrative Studies, Science, or Atkinson College, **you must indicate your intention to graduate** before an invitation is mailed. Consult your Calendar or O.S.P. for details.
4. If you are registered in an Honours (4-year) Programme but wish to graduate at the end of the third year (i.e., fifteen credits), **you must apply for this transfer** by a specified deadline. Consult your Calendar or O.S.P.
5. Your name will appear on both the diploma and the Convocation programme in the same form that it appears on your **Study List**. You should notify the Office of Student Programmes (or the Graduate Record Office) if you wish to change the recorded version of your name. Such a change should be registered as soon as possible.
6. By resolution of the University Senate, degrees shall be withheld from otherwise-eligible students who owe (a) outstanding tuition fees, (b) outstanding library fines, and/or (c) overdue library books beyond a period of sixty days.

1978 Spring Convocations

FACULTY OF FINE ARTS
Thursday evening, June 1st

GLENDON COLLEGE
2:30 p.m., Saturday, June 3rd

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE, GRADUATE STUDIES,
ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES,
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**
3:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 7th

FACULTY OF ARTS (Winters, McLaughlin,
Calumet and Bethune Colleges)
10:00 a.m., Thursday, June 8th

FACULTY OF ARTS (Founders, Vanier, Stong)
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
3:00 p.m., Thursday, June 8th

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL
3:00 p.m., Friday, June 9th

JOSEPH E. ATKINSON COLLEGE
10:30 a.m., Saturday, June 10th

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York University
22 February 1978.

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After *Brecht on Brecht* on March 9 and 10, the last show of this year will be a variety show tailored to suit those who haven't had the time to devote to a full length Cabaret, but don't want to miss out on the fun. If you've written a skit or have an act to perform, or even the ghost of an idea, contact Jamie Pearl at 633-8763, or leave a message in the Cabaret box in the Theatre Dept., 2nd floor Admin. Studies. Maximum length: five minutes. Subjects: no holds barred!