

UNIVERSITY NEWSBEAT

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MFA theatre performance program

Ensemble is taught fresh, vital ways

Students in the new MFA theatre program, Canada's only graduate-level degree-granting program in theatre performance, gave their first public performance on November 18 and 20 in the Bethune College Studio.

The 22 members of the company acted alone or in pairs to present scenes they had scripted from genres such as cowboys and Indians burlesque, horror, satire, science fiction, romance, and detective stories.

The ensemble is composed of 15 actors, two directors, two playwrights, one critic/drama-

turge, one designer and one management student. Almost all left professional jobs in theatre to study at York.

The past eight weeks has centred on drawing these artists into a cohesive theatrical ensemble and on developing the essentials of basic communication. Along with the intense pleasure and excitement of being groundbreakers in a new school of theatrical training, has come the insecurity and discomfort of having the ingrained habits of a lifetime questioned.

Program directors David Smukler and Michele Collison

George explain that performers must be released of the unconsciousness of habits in order to tap into vital unblocked core energies and to be free to act from choice rather than from established pattern. Students are also asked to give up the goals, "the end-gaining", and to deal simply and freshly with their inner impulses.

Helping the students in their efforts will be a number of visiting international artists. Victoria Santa Cruz, Peruvian folklorist, composer, choreographer, and one of the many speakers in the theatre department's Distinguished Artist

Series, gave a one-week workshop for the ensemble members to expand their understanding of rhythm.

The current two-year program in theatre was created to answer an "already existing need in an immediate market," says Prof. Smukler, who explains, "one of the main problems in theatre today is that it is in a state of functioning on manufactured, instead of real, energy."

He adds that existing schools tend to train people in skills so that they can enter immediately into repertory work and into jobs apprenticing with companies such as those of the Stratford and Shaw Festivals.

Simple skills and techniques, however, are insufficient for surmounting the wall, "the mid-career crisis" faced by many performers, writers and directors when the accolades of being in theatre, simply aren't enough.

"The price one has to pay," he says, "is terribly hard...the work on one's self and one's craft, the search for a much more direct means of communication and a means to enter into a living relationship with the audience."

David Smukler is an internationally recognized voice expert who comes from a classical background and is interested in new exploratory work and new forms. Michele Collison George, who is interested in the classical tradition, has worked for years in experimental theatre in New York and is one of the founding members of Peter Brook's International Research Centre in Paris. Theatre department chairman Don Rubin describes them as "the Yin and Yang of world theatre" and states that together they will be "looking at classical work with a fresh eye and new work with classical discipline."

They regard the two past evenings of performances as an important opportunity for ensemble members to be fed by audience reaction, and as a chance for them to gain some perspective on the searching and accomplishments of the first two months of the program.



Victoria Santa Cruz and two graduate theatre performance students.

Many similar formal and informal performances will follow on campus, prior to the company's performing two plays in repertory during May, 1981 as part of the first international Toronto Theatre Festival.

Distinguished artists visit campus in '81

"Theatre comes out of reality, the social situation, the world, and must feed back into it. Otherwise it's just art for art's sake," says Don Rubin, chairman of York's theatre department. He says that while the department is working within a strong Canadian context, it is constantly seeking challenge on an international level.

To this aim he has established a Distinguished Artists Series, scheduled weekly on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in Room 312 Fine Arts, to bring playwrights, critics, dramaturges, directors, and performers of international status to York. Few theatre classes take place in this time slot to encourage theatre students to attend and participate.

Scheduled for January through March of 1981 are Polish critic Roman Szydlowski, Canadian playwright Michael Cook, American critic and playwright Eric Bentley, French actor and director François Dunoyer, and Greek director George Cristodoulakis.

For further information, contact the department of theatre at 667-6266.

Deadline nears for projects in Ontario-Quebec exchange

The deadline for submitting a project for the Ontario-Quebec exchange program is January 31, 1981.

Projects will be considered if they involve exchanges of Ontario full-time students who wish to attend a full program of credit courses for one or two semesters in a Quebec institution; of groups of students to participate in educational and cultural activities at the host institution; and of students to improve their knowledge of the second language and/or the methods of teaching the second language.

A selection committee, composed of representatives of both governments, will determine the quality and relevance of the projects according to a number of criteria. The projects should be innovative and tied as much as possible to the studies and professional concerns of the participants and thus contribute to their education and personal enrichment. They should also involve close and sustained contacts between participants on each side of the exchange.

Preference will be given to projects involving extensive use of the second language and of sufficient duration to produce a lasting impression on the participants.

Since 1974 many exchange projects have been approved and

financially assisted in Ontario by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

For more information on the exchange program contact the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, at 965-6865.

Jazz bash tonight



York Jazz Orchestra pictured here under the direction of David Mott, performs occasionally on campus and off campus. Tonight, the annual Jazz Bash features performances by the jazz workshops, and starts at 5 p.m. in Sylvesters, Stong College. The workshop—a smaller version of the jazz orchestra—is heavily into improvisation, with many of the compositions written by students. Composed of the more experienced members of the orchestra, the workshop is currently recording a record to showcase the accomplishments of the jazz department to the university. Workshop members wrote the music on the record, expected to be available at the end of January 1981.

Air quality on campus found OK

Last year the Ministry of Colleges and Universities asked the universities for information on the use of exposed asbestos in the form of sprayed surfaces.

The consulting firm appointed by the Department of Physical Plant has issued a report based on the results of 15 random air samples taken in several buildings on the York campus including Osgoode Hall.

Its conclusion was that the average ambient air quality in the buildings tested exceed the most stringent criteria. It recommended that further testing be done on an annual basis.

A similar set of tests has been completed at Glendon campus and results are expected before the end of the year.

Pending the findings of the Ontario Government Royal Commission on the Hazards of Asbestos Use, the Department of Physical Plant is asking the Ministry for assistance in an asbestos abatement program.

Three art students get kudos

Three York art students were selected to participate in a public exhibition of paintings recently held in the upper banking hall, Royal Bank Plaza.

The exhibition was the first in a 1980-81 series presented by Artventure, a Royal Bank sponsored program, which offers the province's top art students two vital elements in their career development—significant exposure and recognition—through a unique forum of professionally organized exhibitions with cash awards.

Ruta Graveljs was awarded an honourable mention and \$100 for her oil on canvas entitled "Vic Park Copper". Works by Mark Dodick and Tim des Clouds were also

featured in this exhibition which includes artwork by 18 student artists from six schools. Mark's work was an oil on canvas entitled "Homage to Seven" and Tim's entry was an acrylic/pastel on canvas entitled, "Rose Womb".

Introduced in 1978, Artventure now involves 25 colleges, universities and art schools across Ontario. Senior faculty members recommend their students' best works for the exhibition and entries are judged by a rotating panel of visual art professionals.

Schools represented in the "Painting I" exhibition are: Art's Sake Inc., Ontario College of Art, York U., Queen's U., Fanshawe College and Sheridan College.

First recipient named of Lily D'Urzo Bursary

The first recipient of the Lily D'Urzo Bursary, which was awarded for the first time at the Athletic Banquet in March 1980, is Bernie MacGregor.

Ms. MacGregor, who is truly committed to athletics at York, has been a member of the Yeowomen Swim Team for the past three years and co-captain of the team this year. She has also been Awards Co-Chairwomen for the Women's Athletic Council during the past two years, and has taken a very active part in all functions of the council.

The Lily D'Urzo bursary fund was established in memory of Lily D'Urzo whose untimely death of the York campus in July 1979 shocked the entire community. Ms. D'Urzo was a graduate physical education student who was struck by a car while jogging.

Bursary candidates should possess the same high standards which were demonstrated by Lily, namely athletic endeavours, leadership, and involvement in the athletic council. The candidate should also exhibit vivaciousness, friendliness and enthusiasm for life.

The monetary value attached to the bursary, which will be awarded annually, will provide tuition fees for the recipients' final year of study. To date the fund has received more than \$4,500 from individuals, clubs and corporate donations. Contributions are welcome, and are to be made payable to the Lily D'Urzo Bursary Fund, York University; mailing address is Miss Mary Lyons, Coordinator Women's Athletics, Room 307, Tait McKenzie Building, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3; 667-2289.