



WHO WAS THAT GORILLA I SAW YOU WITH LAST NIGHT? Marsha Nichols poses primitively as Robert Rozen begs for the audience's indulgence in Posluns Theatre's production of *Cabaret*.

Cabaret fails to capture despair

By WENDY QUINTON

Come to the Cabaret old chum... come to the Cabaret!! Here life *ees beautiful*" echoes the Master of Ceremonies. The year is 1929, the setting, Berlin, at the onset of Hitler's rise to power. The Kit Kat Klub, a sleazy third rate nightclub is a window into the corruption taking place in Germany. *Cabaret*, Leah Posluns Theatre's latest offering, revives this historic scenario until November 22.

The emcee, played by Robert Rozen, and his "Kit Kat girls" engage in ceremonious songs that ponder the search for an escape and an answer to the moral sickness invading Germany. In *Cabaret*, the deterioration of relationships parallels the deterioration of Germany.

It is in the Klub that we meet Cliff (David McCann), an American writer, and Sally (Norma Dell'Agnes) a British dilettante singer. Lovers,

Cliff and Sally, live at Fraulein Schneider's (Helen Hughes) boarding house. Fraulein Schneider, an elderly widow is courted by Herr Schultz (Allan Price) a Jewish fruit merchant. The political and social divisions that occurred in Nazi Germany are reflected in the relationships between the characters. Cliff acknowledges the escalation of the Third Reich and in fear flees to America leaving Sally behind.

Sally's ignorance and low self-esteem bind her to continuing her life as a third rate singer at the Klub; Fraulein Schneider breaks her engagement with Herr Schultz upon realizing the threat to her own life if she marries a Jew; and Herr Schultz ultimately realizes that he is a true victim of the hated Nazi party. It becomes evident that even love does not withstand the mark of the Nazis.

Robert Rozen as the emcee is filled with enthusiasm and musical vigor. His singing and acting effectively combine to create the lustful milieu

of the period. However, Norma Dell'Agnes failed to inspire the audience's emotions when singing such songs as "Maybe This Time" and "Cabaret." In addition, aggression was missing from the deeply emotional songs important to the theme of the play. Helen Hughes teetered between a German and English accent when playing Fraulein Schneider. Such faltering minimized the conviction of her actions.

The music, directed by John Karr, was superb. The choreography of the Kit Kat girls was an entertaining array of dance steps and blended nicely with the emcee's bawdy character. Although the director, Reva Stern, has made an equitable attempt to depict the degradation of a society, the play's acting does not produce the cohesive bond needed to convey *Cabaret's* obvious despair. Instead, the play lacks a sense of direction and is revealed as no more than a "cabaret" of conflicting personalities.

Sunny forecast for Connolly

By LISA WARNER

The Tarragon Theatre has just wrapped up its annual series of "works-in-progress" play readings by members of the theatre's 1985-86 Playwrights Unit. The annual event is an opportunity for the writers to have their pieces workshopped in order to attain audience reactions.

The last reading in this series was former York student Michael Connolly's small-town comedy *Bad Weather* on November 1. Michael Connolly is a talented graduate of York's Fine Arts programme. He is currently apprenticing to become a voice and acting teacher and hopes to be able to teach at York or another school in the future.

Bad Weather centres around three people: Dick, a hot-tempered door-to-door "Amway" salesman; Mary, his extremely religious girlfriend and Dick's brother Bernie, who is in the

midst of having a nervous breakdown. The play dramatizes the events which take place during the course of one night in the lives of these characters. It manages to delve into their relationships with their work and with each other.

Connolly's humorous look at religion and the selling business has Mary questioning the value of her faith, Dick the value of Mary and Bernie the value of life. Although *Bad Weather* is a comedy, it also contains many dramatic moments which contribute a realistic element to the work.

The play was given a fine reading by the four actors involved (Michael McManus, Colin O'Meara, Sherry Smith and Shannon Lawson), and took a little more than one hour to perform. *Bad Weather* received an enthusiastic response from the audience about 50 people in the Tarragon's small Maggie Basset Studio.

As in all the play readings in the

series, the audience was given the opportunity to discuss *Bad Weather* and make suggestions for improvements. Some recommendations regarding the depth of the characters were made, but overall, the play was well-liked by the audience.

Bad Weather is Michael Connolly's first full-length play and it took him approximately eight months to write. He has had some of his earlier works produced but presently has no plans to have this play produced. Although some production offers have been tabled, Connolly says that he may want to rewrite the play before it is produced.

Right now, Michael Connolly would like to take a break from *Bad Weather* and possibly turn his attentions to writing another play. If *Bad Weather* is an indication of the quality of Connolly's work to come, we can look forward to his future projects.

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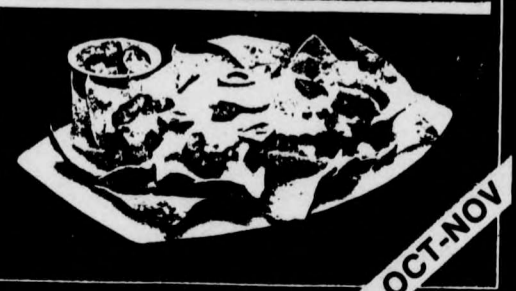
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