

Unleashing Ubu at York University

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reveal his great work to the avant-garde community. Little did Jarry know that the riot-causing success of *Ubu Roi* would be the beginning of his end. Act One culminates with the successful Paris release of *Ubu Roi* in 1896 and the unexpected death of his mother.

In the two-hour first act, the production's best work is found. Jarry is delightfully played by Michelle Martin. Even in the quietest moments, she holds the audience's attention.

Greg Danakas (as Père Heb and Ubu) comically creates a waddling, pontificating, image of excess. Elizabeth Wilson portrays a man and a woman with a skill and split-second timing that is worth the price of admission alone. There are no weak characters in this production. Special mention must go to the Ubesque characters that appeared, representing the faceless, figureless, masses of mediocrity. These androgynous figures (which look and sound like a group of Pillsbury Dough Boys who have sucked too much helium) work with herd-like precision, and provide a hilarious and effective choral element in the play.

Act Two reveals Jarry's post-Ubu phase. The stage becomes a stunning collage of Jarry's personal experiences and memories. A blackboard and a six-foot phallus dominate the stage while an eerie graveyard stands hauntingly in the background, and moving portraits of Jarry's dead mother are shown.

Sitting on a self-contained platform, Jarry, now a consummate alcoholic, induces his hallucinatory states by inhaling ether. His "friends" proceed to unravel Jarry's post-Ubu life as a failing writer and creator of a pseudo-science he calls pataphysics. Unfortunately, his later works never rival the immense suc-

cess of *Ubu Roi*, and Jarry is haunted by the guilt that Ubu is really the original work of Henri Morin. Stricken with poverty, Jarry dies of malnutrition. His last request is for a toothpick.

While the second act succeeds in portraying a total metamorphosis, it does not live up to the originality of the first act. It merely becomes a disjointed narrative of Jarry's life. Unfortunately, too many things were happening for the audience to follow the second half's loose plot. The heavy fog which was sprayed at regular intervals became so suffocating that people left their seats for higher ground. Disappointing too was Jarry's costume. The flamboyant outfit which suited Jarry's nature in rock star like fashion. The audience's belief that Martin was just another male in purple and green velvet lasted until the character bent forward revealing generous cleavage. The believable male image vanished.

The production did have some problems. Some scenes were too lengthy and difficult to sit through when coupled with muffled, pre-taped dialogue. Easing the flow of some of these lengthy scenes was the strong acting of a superb supporting cast — Alda Neves, Richard Burdett, Peter Farbridge, Gord Mackenzie, Glenn rea, Maureen Cassidy, and Melody Johnson.

While arguments may continue for some time as to whether the production was successful, one thing is certain — Tom Diamond and crew have succeeded in breaking the pattern of dull, safe theatre that has plagued York's theatre department.

Ubu Unleashed can be seen in Burton Auditorium until tomorrow. Showtime is 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for seniors and students and \$7 for adults. Call the Burton Box Office for reservations.

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EVENING

THE KAYAPO INDIANS OF BRAZIL: A fundraising event with David Suzuki, Margaret Atwood, Gordon Lightfoot and the Nylons. St. Paul's Anglican Church, 227 Bloor St. E. Monday Nov. 28, 1988, 7:30 pm. Tickets \$10 available at Faculty of Environmental Studies, Lumbers Bldg. Tel. 736-5252.

YORK INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP presents Roots: A Discussion on Evolution and Creation. With Prof. Dan Osmond (Prof. of Physiology at U of T). Thurs. Nov. 24, 5 pm, Winters Senior Common Room.

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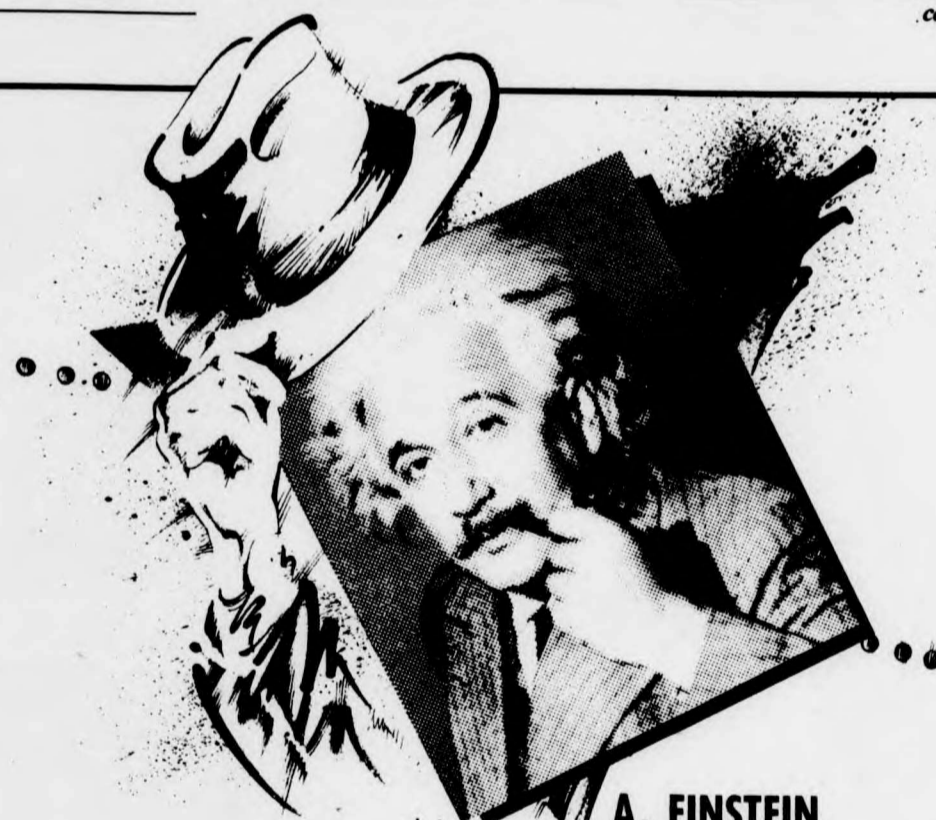
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