

# GATEWAY TO THE arts

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PAGE FIVE

## Yardbird Suite Features Two

By Jim Pasnak

Yardbird Suite's most recent dramatic features were two standard absurdist plays, "The Bald Soprano" and "Krapp's Last Tape."

"Bald Soprano," one of Inesco's earlier plays, deals with a familiar theme, the lack of communication between the individuals of modern society. It is also a rather cruel burlesque of English and English life (Inesco is French).

Danny Walsh, director, did a reasonable job. Reta Stocks and Robbie Newton as Mr. and Mrs. Smith were suitably lower-middle class vulgarities, although I did think Mrs. Stocks tended to be a bit forced in her delivery at times.

### CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

Corinne Strowger and Bill Kellet as Mr. and Mrs. Martin had some of the best scenes. In letting the clothes make the man, the top hat, tails and evening gown projected an air of bored and insular elegance quite well. I felt Miss Strowger had the best grasp of the total absurdity of the play.

Jamie Slosky as a firechief projected the image of a fumbly red-nosed clown, which is as good an interpretation as any.

An added attraction was Loretta Donnenworth as Mary, the maid. Miss Donnenworth cannot really act very well, but if she continues to wear that kind of costume she won't have to.

### PROBLEM

The problem, I think, lies more with the play than the players. "Bald Soprano" is early Inesco, written before the playwright had mastered his craft. He starts with something to say and a vague idea of how to say it, but before long, he is caught in his vehicle, unable to extricate himself.

There is no denying this is a very witty play, but it is also intermin-

able. The playwright, in sheer desperation, finally brings on the stage manager to cart away the set and the actors, so ending the play.

Just as "Bald Soprano" is a promising rather than a good play, the Suite's presentation was an adequate rather than a great performance.

I was much more pleased with Beckett's "Krapp's Last Tape." Danny Walsh and his tape recorder made the play significant and, incidentally, salvaged the evening.

### MORIBUND PIECE

"Krapp's" is rather a moribund piece. I believe the play was originally written in German, but the double entendre of the name is probably intentional.

Krapp is a man who has let everything pass, leaving him with nothing but memories of past delights, recorded in a trunkful of tapes. He is offered a last chance when, from 30 years ago, he hears of tape recording of a vision he once had, a moment of truth.

But the tired, old Krapp doesn't want to hear it. He switches it off and winds forward to the sensuous memories.

Like all of Beckett's writing, "Krapp's Last Tape" is simultaneously confusing and obscure and moving and vaguely frightening. Danny Walsh captured both aspects superlatively.



—U of A Photo Service

SO WHO WANTS TO DIRECT TRAFFIC—Two policemen (Ron Sadownik and Stuart Gillard) make beautiful music together in Studio Theatre's presentation, "Red Eye of Love."

## Red Eye Of Love -- A Unique Comedy Gives Impression Of Inane Farce

By Jim Pasnak

"Red Eye of Love" is a unique theatre of the absurd comedy. It is funny comedy.

On paper, Arthur Weinstein's play gives the impression of inane, frenzied farce. But with some excellent stage business and the addition of well chosen songs and mood music, director Thomas Peacocke intensified it, bringing out the bite in each scene.

As a satire, it takes swipes, both subtle and heavy, at

every aspect of American life, from war to mother-worship. As an absurd drama, it stresses the lack of communication in modern society: each character seems barely to hear what the next man is saying. Only meaningless isolated phrases come through. And, as a comedy, the whole thing has a decidedly happy ending.

"Red Eye" describes the love story of Wilmer Flange and Selma Chargesse from extreme youth through the maturity and middle-age.

Selma—played superbly by Susan McFarlane—is the all-American heroine, torn between love (Wilmer) and money (O. O. Martinas, the meat department store owner). In truly American fashion, Selma resolves her problem by embracing both love and money.

Wilmer Flange is the Great American Dilemma, the earnest young man searching for the key to the universe, and trying to earn a living at the same time. Naturally enough, he ends up trying to read the key into every occupation he tries.

Played by John Arntzen, it was a fine performance, probably the best in the whole play. Wilmer came off with just the right amount of serious humour.

### MYSTIC BUTCHER

O. O. Martinas is the mystic butcher played by Stuart Carson. I was not completely satisfied with Mr. Carson's interpretation of the part. It seemed like a cross between W. C. Fields and Emmett Kelley. Martinas should, I think, be a bit more ignorantly ruthless. Still, having taken his position, Mr. Carson proceeded to hold it with

gusto. It was an entertaining performance.

Most of the other parts were of the cameo variety. Some were quite well done.

Stuart Gillard and Ron Sadownik, as two corrupt but soft-hearted policemen, bounced in and out of the action, managing to carry off a goodly portion of the laughs.

### BOUQUET

There were others who caught my eye. Wilf Rowe did a great job with three parts. He played the High Hat Robber (straight from melodrama), a German-speaking Japanese soldier, and, best of all, a violin-playing Tough. A special bouquet to you, Wilf Rowe, for making Mozart sound better than he has in years.

I was pleased to see Studio Theatre has finally found a part suited to Sidney Kozak's unique talents. He played Big Bez, the son of Wilmer's ex-wife's husband. Ted Kemp—who else?—played Uncle Sam. Enough said.

Robert Dietle handled the technical aspects of the play well. Wood and canvas drops were wisely used in place of the usual solid set. Considering the scope of the play, nothing else would have been nearly as effective.

### BUILT AROUND MUSIC

In a sense, this was a show built around music. Someone had a stroke of genius in placing a live pianist on the set.

Harry Alwood's keyboard set the tone for every scene from the opening chord (which fooled the audience into standing up for the national anthem) to the high point of Marg Kopala's rendition of "Where have all the flowers gone."

"Red Eye of Love" reminds one of the British "Goon Show"—one is likely to miss a lot, even with close concentration.

Comparisons are difficult since "Red Eye" is unlike any other play Studio Theatre has done in recent years. But it is a good production and well worth seeing—two or three times, even.



—Bayer Photo

HOW TO SUCCEED—The Varsity Varieties '65 cast show succeeding is an energetic process. They are brought to their collective knees during a particularly lively and exhausting routine.