

ARTS

Coming to grips with self

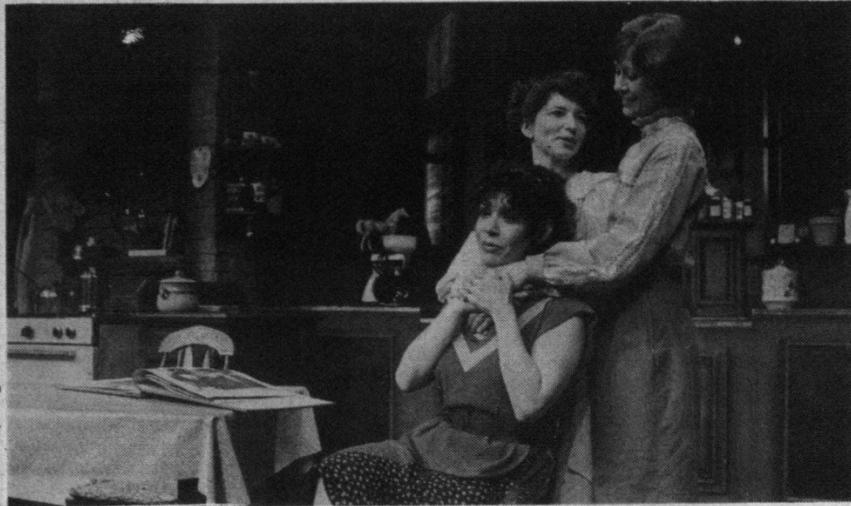


photo Ray Giguere

Mutual consolation can't save *Crimes of the Heart* from boring our reviewer.

Crimes leads to annoyance

Crimes of the Heart
Citadel Shoctor Theatre
Until March 13

Review by Charmaine Roux

I was very disappointed in this production insofar as I felt tantalized by the promises of the first act, let down by the non-fruiting of my expectations, until finally I was enveloped by feelings of complete boredom and annoyance.

"How interesting" I thought, at the end of the first act. "How unusual to attend a play and feel that we are being asked to dispassionately withdraw from the turmoil of the character's lives and observe, without emotional immersion into tragedy. For a change, we can laugh at human frailty and sorrow because the characters can look at themselves, at others and at life with humour, and laugh."

But for me, the humour turned sour. Laughter stuck in my throat. I could not even view this production as black comedy. No doubt due to the highly wrought, over-enthusiastic pace of the acting. We'd move from a line of despair to a rapid fire response back to the comic. There was no time to digest the pathos and appreciate

the humour. On the whole the acting lacked subtlety, thus effectively destroying the poignancy of the theme of human frailty and the humour based on self-discovery and acceptance of self and life.

The story involves three sisters brought together by an attempted murder. The youngest sister Babe, played by Lorraine Behnan, has shot her husband in the stomach and her two sisters rally round to support her. The would-be murder is the focus for the action, but by the second act we realize that all three sisters have trouble coping with life. The problems stem from their childhoods, when their mother committed suicide by hanging. They were brought up by a domineering "granddaddy" and each of them grew up with individual insecurities. Meg, played by Gale Garnett, cannot maintain a relationship with any man. Lenny (Judith Mabey) has always felt herself plain and unacceptable to her family and Babe, well she felt alone and lonely, so she shot her senator husband who physically abused her.

This doesn't sound altogether too humorous does it? The wry, painful humour is there, but this production lacks the subtle touch.

Hosanna
Workshop West, Citadel Rice Theatre
by Dave Cox and Grant Little

Workshop West's production of Michel Tremblay's *Hosanna* can be considered a qualified success.

The script is wonderful — one of the better modern Canadian plays. Set in the Montreal apartment of two homosexuals (one a transvestite, the other a leather-clad biker), the play explores their search for self-definition. Identity, not homosexuality, is the theme of this play.

Richard Gishler as Hosanna and Jack Ackroyd as Cuirette provide convincing and sympathetic portrayals of their characters. They argue, trade caustic one-liners, and play venomously off one another's insecurities.

And do they have insecurities. Hosanna, having just been publicly humiliated at a drag costume ball, faces a crisis in "her" self-perception. Cuirette has come face to face with his advancing paunch and age.

The play's major tension is that these two dynamic characters are caught in a static relationship. As the two come to grips with their changing selves, the relationship is forced to change with them.

The major flaw in the production is the

lack of an emotional edge in their exchanges, particularly in the first act. Gishler is guilty of delivering too many of his biting attacks in a flat voice. The volume in his voice was high, but the intensity and passion seemed to be missing.

Gishler redeemed himself in the second act, however. As Hosanna gives "her" personal history the audience gains an appreciation of the dimensions of the conflict in his/her identity. Perhaps the most poignant scene comes when Hosanna tells us that "she" is afraid to remove "her" makeup for fear of what "she" will find underneath. Both Gishler and Ackroyd are absolutely believable as they rebuild their relationship. Their mutual efforts are at first hesitant and awkward, but they begin to crystallize as each reveals more of himself to the other.

Workshop West should be commended for the technical aspects of the production. Given the difficulties in working with theatre-in-the-round, the staging (by Debbie Wells) and direction (by Gerry Potter) were very good. The lighting (by Brent Thomas) was excellent.

All in all, *Hosanna* was a play worth seeing. If the opportunity arises again to see it, seize the chance.

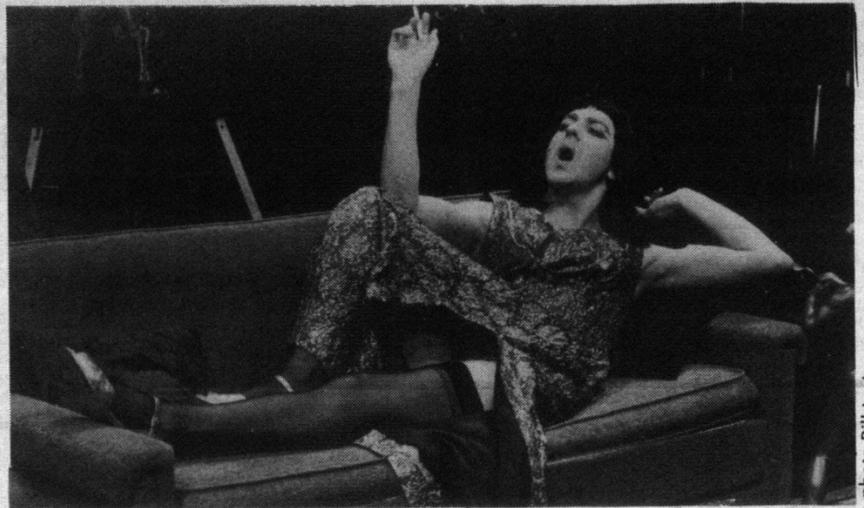


photo Bill Inglee

A relaxing moment in Michel Tremblay's *Hosanna* - a play worth seeing.

CAFÉ

DINWOODIE
2nd Floor SUB.

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor, SUB) and various club members.
NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests.
Absolutely no minors admitted.

Education Students' Association
presents
Friday, March 4; 8 p.m.

Beach Party
come make waves
with us
featuring
The Blue Prints
The Shades
Sweet Leilani's Dancers

Costume Contests & Prizes
Tickets at ESA office & S.U.B.

AIESEC
presents
Friday, March 11; 8 p.m.
from Calgary

QWEST

Theta Chi Fraternity
presents
Saturday, March 5;
8 p.m.

**Slash and the
Bleeding Hearts**

U of A Womens' Centre
presents
Saturday, March 12;
8 p.m.

from
Toronto

The POPCATS