

## Naturalistic treatment hurts Hedda Gabler

By DANIEL MOSES

The production of a full-length play is no small undertaking. It was extremely gratifying, therefore, to see the theatre department attempt to do so last week with their version of Hedda Gabler.

This tragic play about a woman trapped in society because of her own cowardice remains today, three-quarters of a century after its composition, both intellectually and emotionally stirring. It is a prime example of realistic theatre, despite the evidence of last week's production.

Director Joseph Green's approach was 'the successful mounting of a play of late 19th century realism'. The result was an unconvincing naturalistic rendering of the drama, a tedious rendering somehow, with its quickness of dialogue too modern.

This error posed additional difficulties for the actors. While they worked well together, with a naturalistic fluidity to most of their actions and dialogues, tight ensemble work seems altogether pointless when the characters being portrayed are neither tight nor together, but members of the static and petty bourgeoisie.

Helen Battersby's effort at the character Hedda Gabler was too hesitant and untheatrical, too naturalistic. One of the reasons the play works is the quite blatant fact that Hedda Gabler, despite her petty cruelties, is superior to all the characters in the play in her intelligence and in her passions. She is distinctly admirable, and must be played as the lady she is, though caged she maybe, to the hilt.

Steven Thorne had no more success with his George Tesman. He achieved an alertness and quickness of intelligence totally foreign to this respectable and not quite ridiculous but dull character. A little theatrical dullness, please.

Oksana Kalata, as elderly maiden Aunt Julie, had more success with her characterization, if only because oldness calls for slowness. Laurel Darnell as Mrs. Elvsted, the woman superior to Hedda Gabler in courage, came closer to the simple joy and adventure of her character's emerging spirit.

Errol Ramsay, despite his apparent advantage in this respect, did not successfully replace the dark and brooding anguish and anger of his character, Eilert Lovborg, with a surface of confidence, or by raising his voice.

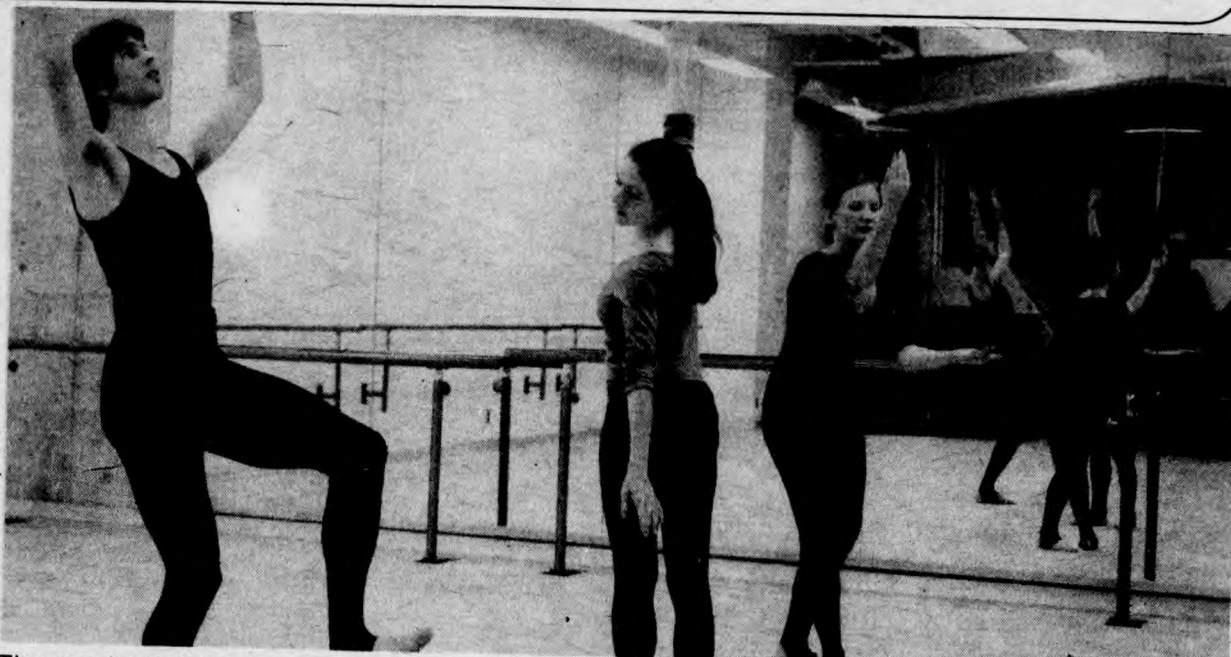
On the other hand, John Innes, as Judge Brack, shone. His performance, with its smooth movements and its voice, intermittently staccato and seductive, beautifully evoked this calculating hypocrite. Gina Laight gave the easily overlooked role of the maid, Bertha, both life and truth.

The physical side of the production was more successful. The set looked indeed like a room in a nineteenth century house, though the abbreviation of a far room into a mere hallway made one doubt if this truly were the grand mansion it was supposed to be.

The decor, except for an out of place bookshelf for Hedda to stare at and Tesman's diploma on the chimney, was credible. The lighting, except for some incredible sunlight, was pleasantly unobtrusive.

Not so the special effects, or lack of them: the supposed entry of fresh air through the French doors had no effect on leaden curtains; taped music never convinced one of the presence of a real piano in the next room; and a cap pistol can in no way supply a suitably loud bang for a credible pistol report.

The audience's consolation is that the theatre department undoubtedly learned something, and will do better next time.



The year's first dance workshop featured three members of the dance composition class 401; shown are Dale Woodland, Susan Daniels and Oonagh Fitzgerald.

### Fraser and Debolt at Burton

## Folk team delivers uneven show

By IAN BALFOUR

The second concert of the Performing Arts Series, last Tuesday at Burton Auditorium, featured Fraser and Debolt with the Pleasure Band, a folk-oriented group with a couple of albums on Columbia to their credit.

The programme notes promised inspired songwriting and musicianship, and conjured up visions of quiet country life, close friends and other good things. There were certainly enough references to these latter items, but inspired music was not to be found in every song.

The group seemed to aim for a looseness similar to The Perth County Conspiracy, and sometimes they succeeded in achieving this without sacrificing the quality of the music.

Often, however, the music lapsed into amateurish awkwardness, as they demonstrated that they had, as a group, little conception of crescendos or diminuendos or the like.

Despite the obvious rapport between Fraser and Debolt, the instances of real musical dialogue among the group as a whole were few and far between.

The concert, however, was not without its moments. There were times when Fraser and Debolt exhibited great musical sensitivity and lyrical grace. At their most tender moments, they were simply enchanting. On several songs, such as their 'classic' Them Dance Hall Girls, their voices were vibrant and controlled. On the majority, however, Daisy Debolt screamed and Allan Fraser semi-talked their respective ways through the songs. This technique, though at first effective, very quickly lost its appeal.

Perhaps the most satisfying aspect of the concert was the humour of Fraser and Debolt, both during and in between their songs. If he failed as a folk-singer, Allan Fraser could probably make it as stand-up comedian.

His impromptu monologues were witty and refreshing, especially in between some of the less interesting songs. The humour fortunately infiltrated much of their lyrics which range from subjects such as postcards from Waikiki to surrealistic bullfights. And it certainly takes a special type of imagination to write a song called the Casa Loma Blues.

The reactions of the audience corresponded to the unevenness of the performance. A considerable number of people left the auditorium before the end of the

three-hour show. On the other hand, there was a small group of hard-core fans who responded to the concert by giving Fraser and Debolt a standing ovation.

Fraser and Debolt undeniably have the creative potential and musical skill to do good things, but if their concert at Burton was any indication, their act still needs considerable time and effort before it matures into an important force in Canadian music and the folk scene in general.

### Famous bursary for film students

Famous Players Ltd. has donated \$1,500 to York's film department to provide for an award of excellence and for a bursary fund for final year film students.

The Maple Leaf Award will go to the leading fourth-year student in recognition of outstanding scholarship or talent. The successful student may demonstrate his excellence through film theory or through a film-making program.

Based on a review of the student's standing and performance by faculty members in the film department, the \$100 award and trophy will be presented annually at Fall Convocation.

It is expected that between two and five bursaries will be awarded each academic year.

## Genesis environment warm, cohesive

By ANNE CAMOZZI

"Genesis is about Life".

So say Sam Caputo and Dorsey James about their current show in Fine Arts Phase II gallery. Caputo and James, fourth year visual arts majors, are both concerned in their work with the cyclical movement of life and creation.

The show of drawings, paintings, and sculptures uses the gallery space to create a warm and cohesive environment, with the work of each artist complementing the other.

Caputo's strongest works are the 20 textured line drawings that he feels have "evolved" from his earlier work, to become "intuitive and unconscious" explorations of space, depth and organic themes. The lines are meant to generate an "essence and life force common to all things".

Caputo successfully animated the surface of his drawings by complex and detailed cross-hatching. His 'misty' paintings in subtle pastel

colours come closer to generating the spirit he is trying to evoke than the earlier paintings, which lack the technical proficiency and discipline his later drawings and sculptures begin to reveal to us.

James, who is exhibiting 32 exciting wood and metal sculptures, is interested in "warmth, life and movement". These interests evolved from his distaste for the "hostile environment" of the ghettos of Philadelphia where he was brought up. His sculptures are symbolic explorations of biomorphic forms and each possesses a "story, personality, and presence".

James is successful in instilling in his work life and character through his sensitive approach to the media he is working in — particularly wood, where he allows the natural grain and colour to become important parts of the total work. James consciously "limits abstraction so that people can relate to the subject" because "art today is too big, too abstract, and too damned expensive".

Caputo and James share a common spiritual philosophy about their work on display this week, and that is to "impart to the viewer a feeling of life". Their work carries the essence of their thoughts positively, and both feel that their work will evolve to expand their own potential as artists who are able to generate life.

The gallery will be open tonight until 5 p.m., and tomorrow, the last day of the show, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Sam Caputo (left) and Dorsey James (right) examine one of Dorsey's sculptures in their joint show in Fine Arts Phase II gallery, on until tomorrow.

## Debras' piano out of tune but student Maier excels

By ROBIN BECKWITH

Last Friday evening Louis Debras and his students exercised their pianistic abilities on a Bluther piano in Curtis F. I am assured that Bluther is a good make of piano; this one, however, was seriously out of tune, thus obscuring its basic fine tone. This fact made it difficult to judge the accuracy of the pianists, and impossible to enjoy a well-played piece without wincing.

Of all Debras' students, Gerrald Maier stood out as playing with the greatest accuracy (as far as I could tell) and sensitivity. He chose a piece (Schumann's Arabesque) well within his scope and evidently worked hard at it.

Except for Ever Hui's performance of two pieces for children by Debras, the pieces the others chose were beyond their abilities or, more likely, underpracticed.

Debras' compositions have a quality of yearning, of nostalgia about them. His own manner of playing is

serious, sensitive and lugubrious. Obviously his favourite is Chopin, not the Chopin of mazurka and polonaise, but the minor-keyed nocturne and slow-moving prelude.

All in all, a better-prepared evening on a well-tuned piano later in the year would most likely have shown Debras and his students to better advantage.

### Charlie Brown on stage tonight

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, along with the entire Peanuts cast of characters, will descend upon Stong Theatre tonight, tomorrow night and the night after as the Stong cultural committee presents the musical that made Charles Schultz famous. Performances start at 8 p.m., and admission is \$1 for Stong and \$1.50 for general students.