

Mulligan turns in 'healthy' performance

by Alex Burton

Terry David Mulligan can act! No, don't laugh, it is true. I saw him last Wednesday night at Neptune Theatre's production of *Health — The Musical*. He plays the lead and he can act.

Health — The Musical is a fun production chronicling the life of Mort, a yuppie executive on his way up on the corporate ladder. The only drawback to his success is his health. His body is unhealthy and so is his marriage. He drinks and smokes too much and he can't communicate with his spouse. His mind is none too healthy either and his conscience is haunted by his ever so typical parents.

There are four other actors in the production besides Mulligan. Alison Woolridge plays an assortment of roles including the wife, the enticing secretary with whom Mort has an attempted affair, and the doctor, whose solution to health problems always involves pain killers. Woolridge turns in a fantastic performance, display-

ing her diversity and vocal range.

The three other parts are played by males (I was surprised to see only one woman in the cast). Jerry Etienne, Hank Stinson, and John A. MacFarlane play various parts of Mort's body. Most of the play's dialogue is between Mort and his body. Etienne plays the role of Snake (do I need to tell you which part of the body that is?) with just the right amount of playful arrogance, and obviously has fun with the well-written part.

Stinson's performance as Bum is adequate, although he was a little awkward on stage at times. MacFarlane, a graduate of the Dalhousie Theatre program, put in a solid performance as Mort's sweet-talking Mouth.

As for Mulligan, I must admit I was impressed. Perhaps I was expecting the worst from the MuchMusic VJ (video jockey) but he was quite believable as the overambitious, slightly nervous yuppie. His voice, although shaky in the first act, was strong.

For anyone who has seen his

show on MuchMusic, he probably looked familiar, especially with his mannerisms, which include rubbing his nose and licking his lips too often. However, it did not really take away from his performance.

The set and staging were top notch as was the musical score performed by John Alphonse, Simon Kendall, and Paul Simons.

As for the play itself, my first impression was that it was a two-hour yuppie whine. Poor Mr. Executive can't show his emotions, and loses control of his life as the long term abuse of his body catches up to him. Sympathy doesn't exactly ooze from my pores. Yet, amongst all the pretensions of the baby boom generation gone bad are some universal themes about loneliness, communication, and the appreciation of the finer things in life. The production should be a success and perhaps the casting of Terry David Mulligan might draw in some new, younger theatre goers.



Female Shakespeare

by Janice Fiander

For those of you who have not yet seen Dalhousie Theatre Productions during this 1989-90 season, your last chance is coming, March 28 to April 1. DTP's fourth play, called *Shakespeare's Women*, is written by Libby Appel and Michael Flachmann.

The play is composed of themes and dialogue from sixteen of Shakespeare's plays. Sewn together, in their new context, they make up a coherent whole which works surprisingly well. The audience is forced to reconsider Shakespeare from a new perspective and it is refreshing.

Shakespeare's Women calls upon the spectators to re-evaluate the role women play in Shakespeare's plays and, more importantly, the role they play in relationships today. The play emphasizes the universality and timelessness of Shakespeare.

Act I develops out of themes based on marriage and emphasizes men and women as they

weave together on the stage. Act II differs from the first spatially and thematically. The women become more isolated so they become the focal point. They band together and often move together on the stage.

Certainly, this play presents many challenges. The actors face the normal complications of diction and stage action (made difficult by long, heavy costumes and stairs) but also, potential problems arise from the fact that they are working with characters whose lives are based in different contexts. Another difficulty is the fact that individual students are playing more than one role during the course of the play.

It is also challenging to keep the momentum flowing because it seems possible, given the nature of the script, that the play could become more like an in-class exercise than a public performance piece.

As difficult as this is, the students performing in this produc-

tion have been well prepared for the challenge throughout the year and meet it more than adequately. For their first production this season, *Cloud Nine*, and the third, *The Dining Room*, the students were required to change and intertwine roles. Friday night's rehearsal revealed how much more comfortable and proficient the third year students have become with this technique. If you have seen the previous productions of this year, it will be interesting and satisfying to see the improvement and development that the third year acting students have undergone.

Shakespeare's Women is directed by Patrick Christopher. The spectacular set has been designed by Peter Perina and the costumes have been executed by the students of the Costumes Studies Department, under the direction of Robert Doyle.

Tickets for *Shakespeare's Women* are available at the Arts Centre Box Office. The ticket information number is 424-2646.



No vamps - still good

by Gurn Blanstien

Three years ago an unknown director named Kathryn Bigelow burst on the movie scene with a small but startling debut effort. The film was called *Near Dark* and it brilliantly melded the vampire and western movie genres together.

Unfortunately, regardless of *Near Dark's* universally good reviews, it was eclipsed by another vampire movie that year. It was called *The Lost Boys*, and it had all the big-money backing of a major studio film. The sad part is that if one compares the two, *The Lost Boys* plays like an "Afterschool Special".

Near Dark, on the other hand, is both a darkly comic and creepily atmospheric thriller. The credit must go to Bigelow, who is the most unusual and interesting stylistic director to emerge from the United States during the 80s. Her stylized violence and eye-opening light and camera tech-

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scoundrels

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