

Business as usual, a Comedie

Pollution revue blends wild skits and pathos

By JAMES McCALL

In *Business As Usual, A Comedie*, a series of vignettes — some quite funny and others serious, even moving — are built around a controversial political issue.

But the intent of the production is to entertain and not to persuade the audience to change anything.

Business, performed by the Open Circle Theatre, is about lead pollution. Too much lead in the blood of a human being can cause lethargy, mental retardation, even death.

Although a great many such facts are presented throughout the evening, no attempt is made to give equal weight to both sides of the issue. Clearly, according to the "play", business, labour, and government, if not actually conspiring, are in effect in collusion against workers in lead smelting factories and working class families who live near such factories; but perhaps it is not the function of theatre to make logical arguments.

Many scenes in the revue are taken

from actual incidents or even directly from transcripts of victims of lead pollution, according to the director, Silvia Tucker. The injunction brought by lead companies in Toronto against the CBC's radio programme *As It Happens*, restraining it from broadcasting a show on lead pollution, is used in a sequence which suggests that business has attempted to prevent the truth from becoming known about lead pollution.

There is a particularly moving

scene in which an Italian-Canadian mother, played by Leah Peterson, recounts the destructive effects of lead pollution on her children; more than any other scene, it illustrates the helplessness of the poor against powerful interest groups in society.

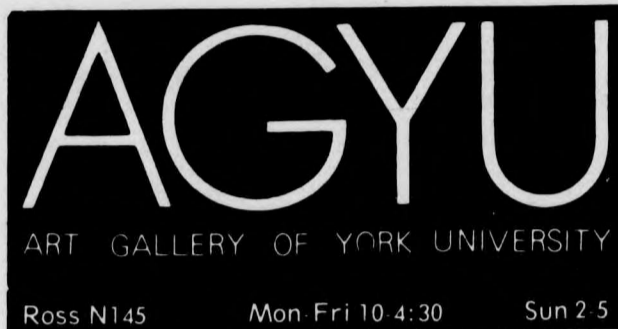
The pace of the show is excellent, never allowing the pathos of one scene to drag on for too long before an amusing one begins. The music, written by Kevin Knelman and Derek McGrath, is excellently played by Knelman on a guitar,

usually as an accompaniment to the quite good singing of the cast. The script was compiled by three researchers who interviewed people and obtained information which has been used by the cast for improvisation.

The humour of the revue ranges from a rather broad but nonetheless funny sketch of Pollution Man, with Michael Kirby serving an injunction against a broadcasting station, and the same Kirby as Sharky, Q.C., the lawyer for the Canada Lead Company, cross-examining his wife for breach of contract in not providing his customary Wheaties at breakfast, to a brilliant satire of Her Majesty's Ministers evading responsibility at a meeting of irate citizens.

The Open Circle Theatre is a repertory company which has already performed three plays of a similar nature: *No Way, Joe* (about welfare in Toronto), *Cop* (about the metropolitan police), and *The Island Show* (about the Toronto Island controversy).

Business As Usual will run until October 26, although an extended run is possible. The company, now performing at St. Paul's Church, 121 Avenue Road, does not yet have a permanent home; but, according to Tucker, the company should have a permanent theatre by the premiere of their next production, *The Beggar's Opera*, in January 1975.



ANN JAMES

'Juxtapositions'

An environmental work

until October 20

now appearing
GEORGE BENSON
opening Monday

(SEPT. 21 - 26)

GROVER

WASHINGTON JR.

COLONIAL TAVERN

203 YONGE STREET

CBC RADIO

10:30 TURN ON



GREAT CANADIAN GOLD RUSH

MONDAYS 10:30 to midnight.
Solid rock with host Terry David Mulligan

TOUCH THE EARTH

TUESDAYS 10:30 to midnight.
Today's folk music with host Sylvia Tyson

COUNTRY ROAD

WEDNESDAYS 10:30 to midnight.
The best of country & western with host Vic Mullen

JAZZ RADIO - CANADA

THURSDAYS 10:30 to midnight
Authentic jazz with host Lee Major

MAJOR PROGRESSION

FRIDAYS 10:30 to midnight
everything you need in the rock pipeline with host Jim Millican

NIGHT TIME AUDIO HIGHS

Expose Yourself to CBC Radio

CBL 740



Student flicks and French hits

The film department presents two surprises. The first is an afternoon screening of works by York film students, tomorrow at 2 p.m. in Curtis LH-I. All welcome, free admission.

The second is a series of films from France, to be shown Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. in Curtis LH-L. The first, *Pickpocket*, will be shown October 22, and great titles like *La Femme Infidel*, *Que La Bete Meure* (*The Beast Must Die*) and *La Nuit Americaine* (*Day for Night*) are on tap.

Excalibur staff meeting today
2 p.m. Room 111
Central Square.
Everyone Welcome



Hundreds of Poplin, Nylon, Leather, Melton, Corduroy
Jackets, Slacks & Sweats & T-Shirts

CRESTED POPLIN JACKETS \$8.95
(including individual course name)

Canadian Novelty Shirt & Sportswear Co.

2462 Yonge Street Telephone 486-0997 486-0999

AUDIO SALE

Thorens	AR	Harman Kardon
Pioneer	Nikko	Sherwood
Rectilinear	Sony	Technics
Dual	JVC	Fisher
Avid	TEAC	Elac
Dynaco	Shure	ADC

Over 50 Brands!
If You're Shopping for Price,
Call Us!

CONSUMER STEREO WAREHOUSE
3402 Yonge
(4 blocks N. of Fairlawn at Melrose)
481-0123
Ask About Our Price Guarantee