

## Great Rift premiere next week

**Nicol becomes first playwright-in-residence**

By AGNES KRUCHIO

Quick: who is the funniest man in Canada, a multiple Stephen Leacock award winner and a columnist in a major daily who has written several books and is now turning into a playwright of considerable merit?

If you answered anything but Eric



*I have learned very quickly. I arrived Tuesday — and the students could hardly wait to tell me what was wrong with my play. Talk about an ambush.*

Nicol you will deservedly turn into a jaundiced Canada goose, and no one will shed a single drop of maple syrup for you.

It was on almost such a Canadian note that the celebrated humorist arrived at York a week ago last Tuesday, to try out his very new and very Canadian play on a number of unsuspecting innocents better known as Theatre 301. For the duration of the workshop, he will be known as York's playwright-in-residence (the first such achievement in Canada), and will be rehearsing, rewriting and re-writing his play, *The Citizens of Calais*.

It is a play about that part of Canadian geography known as The Great English-French Rift, and takes place in a little town of Rideauville, a "Quebec town smaller than Ottawa but larger than a breadbox." An English director, with the ominous name of Ted English, governed by the stars in his eyes, descends on the little town with a mixed English and French population, to try to bring the two factions together.

The not-so-subtle play he decides



*Hockey is just too popular not to indicate something about the Canadian character. But Football... any nation that can gather a turnout of 20 to 30 thousand people just to watch the castoff athletes of another nation is in a pretty strange shape.*

to use is a historical play about the French town of Calais, under the siege of the English for 11 months — and the self-sacrifice of six of the good burghers of the city to the English.

The idea came to him, Nicol told Excalibur in an interview, when he saw the Rodin sculpture of the six citizens. The similarity between Calais, a French city, which after the

events portrayed in the play became English for 200 years, and the Province of Quebec, surrounded by the English also for 200 years, struck him.

It takes anywhere from three to four weeks to get a play ready for the stage, said Malcolm Black, director of the theatre department, who has done three other plays with Nicol while artistic was director of the Vancouver Playhouse.

"Normally that is when we invite the critics, who usually kill it — and the playwright and director are only then ready to start working with it. Broadway plays for example, have at least three to four months' work put into them in workshops and on tours, and there is a system of previews for a new play in England also.

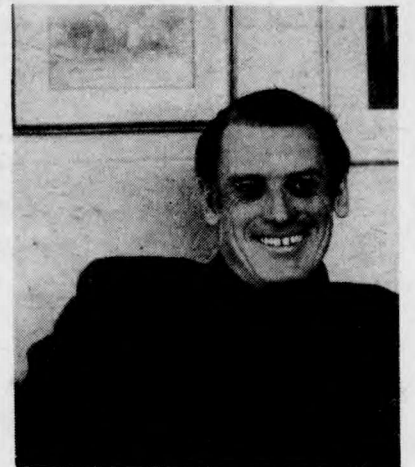
"There has always been a reluctance to use student actors in workshops," said Black, "because they do not have the skill to perform well enough; however students are the best kind of workers precisely because they do not have the experience to cover over rough spots."

Experienced actors are also more ready to ignore inconsistencies in a character if they like his lines.

"It is a two-way street for the theatre department," continued Black. "The students gain a learning experience, and some of them are quite surprised to see just how much has to go into a play while it is being written."

Nicol wants to write more plays; this is more or less his hobby and not his livelihood, and he says he is "still learning". He is looking forward to the audience's reaction, he says. He will have his chance when the play runs at Burton next Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30 p.m. and Friday, at 4 and 8:30 p.m. and the audience will have a chance to voice their opinion in a discussion period with him after the performance.

It is not every day students get an opportunity to make a permanent mark and interest is already high in the sessions. Canadian comedy, here we come.



*A student is a hard backboard to throw your ideas against — he'll bounce your ball right back to you, into your teeth if necessary.*

**String quartet reveals sensitivity**

By ROBIN BECKWITH

Last Monday evening York University wisely chose to host one of the most exciting sound sensations open to man's experience — a good string quartet. Square, maybe? If one can reduce beauty, profundity and sensitivity to squareness: yes.

The Dusseldorf String Quartet consists of four students — Gerhard Schulz, 1st violin; George Eckle, 2nd violin; Hariolf Schlichtig, viola; Christine Newland, 'cello — who met in Dusseldorf and have played together for two years. Their playing certainly reveals an assurance and sensitivity which only time and persistent hard work can provide a basis for.

They chose three very musically satisfying pieces: Haydn's Quartet in B-flat op. 64 No. 3, Beethoven's in-

tense and moving Quartet in F minor op. 95, and the first piece which they ever performed together, Schubert's Quartet in A minor op. 29. Except for a couple of uncomfortable dissonances in the Schubert piece, the intonation was excellent. This provided a solid basis for what is most commendable in this group, their emotional vibrancy.

It is no accident that strings were once made of cat-gut. The connection between the sound produced by horse-hair drawn across cat-gut and an emotion felt in the gut is very close. The sound vibrations produced by the players on their strings are the "vibes" to which a listener's gut responds.

There is as well an intellectual satisfaction inherent in good string quartet playing. To this end, each of these players matched the musical

understanding of the composer and brought it out in his or her playing. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for some time in the future, the Dusseldorf String Quartet has returned to Europe — for more study!

If they return to Canada or make any recordings, be sure to expose your senses to them. You won't regret it.

**AUDIO TAPE SALE  
TDK Low Noise**

	1-10	10+
Cassette C-60	1.29	.99
C-90	1.49	1.29
Open Reel - 1800'	4.49	3.99

Send cheque or money order:

**TAPE SALES**  
102 Whitehorn Cres.  
Willowdale, Ont.  
M2J 3B2  
491-3748

**SUNDAYS  
6:10 p.m.**

**"LET'S DISCUSS IT!"**

Dial Radio 1010 for CFRB's erudite panel discussion of contemporary Canadian events ... with the newsmakers.

**CFRB  
1010**

**STEREO SALE  
UP TO 40% OFF ON COMPONENTS & T.V.'s**

We Carry: Altec Lansing, Kenwood, Dual, Sansui, Dynaco, Toshiba, RSC, Norelco, JVC, Sherwood, KLH, Shure, Avid, Transcriptor, Electrohome, Rotel, Garrard, Watts, Zenith, Telefunken, etc.

**TAVAT STEREO**  
1393 LAWRENCE AVE. W. (AT KEELE)  
free parking 241-7380 or 241-8235

An evening of Indian Classical Music with the Master Sarod Player

**ALI AKBAR KHAN**

Massey Hall

Friday November 22 8:30 P.M.

Tickets \$4, \$5, \$6, \$7 at: SAM'S, EATONS ATO, A&A's, ROUND RECORDS  
Simpson's Phone in 861-2333  
Massey Hall Box Office 363-7301

**DESIGN COMPETITION:  
1975/76 YORK CALENDAR COVER**

You are invited to submit entries for the front cover of the 1975/76 Undergraduate Calendar. The winning designer will receive an award of \$150. Entries should comply with the guidelines presented below and be submitted by **January 6, 1975**. Direct all entries and questions to Professor Doug Morton (Room 206, Fine Arts Centre/Phase II, 667-3238).

**DESIGN COMPETITION GUIDELINES:**

- Eligibility:** — All York students, faculty and staff — except those directly associated with the jurying processes.
- Size:** — 6 3/4" x 9 1/4" vertical format, bleed or non-bleed
- Colour:** — Any two colours of ink and combinations thereof which production permits
- Paper Stock:** — Twin coat (coated one side) 8 point
- Copy:** — York University - Undergraduate Programs - 1975/76
- Presentation:** — A white mat two inches on the top and both sides plus three inches on the bottom - making a matted presentation. Entry should be as comprehensive as possible - all colours, typography and visualizations appropriately and precisely indicated. Entrant's name, address, and phone number must be clearly indicated.
- Selection:** — Entries will be evaluated on two levels: 1. design 2. appropriateness to the University. The jury's decisions remain final and they reserve the right to reject any or all entries.

**THE WINNING ENTRANT WILL BE EXPECTED TO SEE THE DESIGN THROUGH TO PRODUCTION.**