

# entertainment

## Of Proffo, Parot and sex in CYSF

By Paul Kellogg

He's an obnoxious little man. His name is Proffo, a character in last week's cabaret, *Waiting for Parot*.

Proffo spends his life masquerading as a thinker, spewing out books and research papers in an attempt to justify his position as a professor at some obscure university.

Except he doesn't think. His lackey does that. She's his research assistant. You know the ones: at York they're members of the Graduate Assistant's Association, and 300 of them probably won't be back next year. No money for lackeys.

Proffo has a claim to fame. He proudly states that "Yesterday I received the *Jean-Paul Sartre award for Depressing Philosophical Thought* for my essay: *'Why We Should Give Up - A Look at the Hopeless Position of Man in the 1970's'*."

Proffo, academic fart that he is, forgot to mention the hopeless position of women, and perhaps that explains the subsequent suicide of his overworked, underpaid lackey (Sarah McCallum).

Now here's the catch. All this happened, as I say, in a cabaret staged last Thursday and Friday. It was hilarious on occasion, had pretty decent acting (especially from Peter Rosa, who played Proffo), had some thought-provoking content in the guise of satire, caricature and a series of never-ending puns — but it wasn't really a cabaret.

No Liza Minelli-types, no pre-World War II decadence, no smoky coffee-shop profundity, no urban decadent lewdness. It was, however, a fine and entertaining play, so it really didn't matter.

*Parot* was written, directed and designed by Alan Fox. It's the story of two students (Estrogen and

Testosterone, sometimes referred to affectionately as Esti and Testi, played by Ingrid Birker and Alan Sinclair respectively), and it seems that they used to be lovers. I say seems, because one of the weaknesses of the play is that its opening is a bit disjointed and confusing and it takes a while for the audience to figure out exactly what Esti and Testi are up to.

What Esti is up to is trying to squeeze some student aid money out of the government. Testi is trying to patch up his relationship with Esti. They spend their time in a combination of York's student awards office, and the Queen's Park Office of Harry Parrott (thinly disguised in the play as Parot), minister of colleges and universities.

Like Godot, Parot never shows, and our poor students are left (like thousands like them) holding the bag, with no grant money to fill it.

Janet Sears does a good job at both her roles as Parot's secretary

and singer, and she really outdid herself in a song about CYSF. The verse that got the most laughter and applause could be described (loosely) as dealing with the sex lives of our student leaders. "Now Harbinger counsels on matters of sex two thousand five hundred won't be nervous wrecks. But students don't count in the budget that's next. For they're celibate folks in the CYSF".

The play goes on to deal with Central Square pastries, the alienation of urban life and the mindlessness of being a commuter.

In the end, as I said, Esti doesn't get her money. But it ends on a mellow note with Esti and Testi coming to some type of a reconciliation, in spite of the still standing financial barriers to education.

Let's hope that Cabaret itself can surmount some financial barriers so it is around next year to provide enjoyable evenings as it did last Thursday and Friday.



Proffo (Peter Rosa) and his lackey (Sarah McCallum) in last week's cabaret *Waiting For Parot*.

## New German cinema changes face of film

By Steve Collins

The New German Cinema is possibly the most fascinating of all contemporary film movements.

Since 1966, when Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* first premiered at the Venice Film Festival, a number of talented young German filmmakers have acquired a great deal of international attention and acclaim. And well they should for they are led by such cinematic innovators as Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders.

A thorough and precise investigation of the social values of modern Germany constitutes the central focus of nearly all of their films. They are filmmakers who constantly question those life-styles

and values that, since the Second World War, have been derived primarily from foreign cultures. As one critic so aptly observed "Germany is probably the only country ever to fall in love with the occupying army".

Wim Wenders' work in particular clearly emphasizes the tensions and contradictions that abound in a country that has so willingly adopted American cultural models — cultural models that are perceived to be both liberating and alienating. The love-hate attitude Wenders has towards 'Americana' is given full expression in his latest film, *An American Friend*, now playing at the Fine Arts Cinema.

Of all the new German films *An*

*American Friend* is perhaps the most exciting and entertaining. Due to the fact that it may be categorized as a 'psychological suspense thriller' it is quite accessible to the general North American public. It belongs somewhat to a film genre we are all very familiar with. Actually the film can be seen as an interesting updated confrontation with, and reworking of, such American 'classics' as Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers On a Train* and Howard Hawks' *The Big Sleep*. As a matter of fact *An American Friend* is based upon a novel by Patricia Highsmith entitled *Ripley's Game*. Hitchcock also adapted one of Highsmith's stories when he made his brilliant 1951 thriller.

Basically the film details how an innocent Hamburg picture-framer, Jonathan Zimmerman (Bruno Fanz), convinced that he only has a short time to live because of leukemia, is coerced into committing a murder. He is offered \$50,000 by a cool, ruthless Frenchman (Gerald Blain) to kill a man he has never met. Presumably, the money will be left to his wife and son when he himself dies. Zimmerman is transformed into a callous murderer due to his chance association and peculiar relationship with a newfound friend, a mysterious American psychopath played with gusto by Dennis Hopper.

Once Zimmerman becomes enmeshed in a world of intrigue, double-cross and murder there is no returning to his orderly, sane existence. His own desperation and morbid curiosity trap him in the frightening yet exhilarating urban arena of violence and crime. He becomes yet another alienated drifter attempting to regain his identity in a global village that offers him no solace or escape.

Some may find the movie's fragmented narrative style a bit too confusing and simply too complex for easy comprehension. I would contend, however, that the narrative disjunctions and ellipses actually reinforce the enigmatic nature of the film, thereby enhancing it as a bizarre mystery film. It is the tone and atmosphere of it, created primarily by the magnificent colour cinematography, that is truly important.

Does it really matter if we often do not know exactly what is going on or if certain events are left unexplained? I still do not know who killed the chauffeur in *The Big Sleep*. It will always remain a 'classic' film noir just as *An American Friend* is surely to be key illustration of the resurgence of West German filmmaking.

## Student production illuminates Twelfth Night

By B.J.R. Silberman

Once again Theatre Glendon opened its doors last week to the public. The play, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, marked the company's tenth season in the realm of the theatrical.

While the performance side of the show was good, there were multiple design problems. They were caused primarily by the open arena stage.

To begin with the audience had to walk across the stage in order to secure their seats. This might have been a good idea had it given the audience a chance to acquaint themselves with the performing area. But the lights were so low that one had more interest in guarding against a fall off the platform. The low light setting also hindered the upcoming "mood" of the play preparing the audience for "tragedy" rather than "comedy".

As a result of this and a number of other minor problems, *Twelfth Night* did not begin to vibrate with life until Act I, Scene V when Lady Olivia and Malvolio entered for the first time. From then on, the play was rich in humour both verbally and visually which may be largely attributed to Michael Gregory's fine directing.

One thing that Gregory did not intend was the wig of Viola's (Masha Buell) twin brother Sebastian (Rob MacDonald) falling off. The company attempted to cover up the error valiantly. No one lost character but the audience was thrown into further fits when Sir Toby Belch tried to stuff the wig down Sebastian's jacket and Sebastian, finding this uncomfortable, solved his dilemma by tossing the wig off the stage into the audience.

A number of the student performers really had their parts under their belts. Olivia, played by Tori Cattell, made an excellent countess.

The only problem was her attempt to do an English accent. The latent result was that only the odd word such as "asking" which was said as "osking" appeared British and everything else sounded Canadian.

Debbie Leedham, who played Feste, made a good sardonic clown. Her make-up, designed by Charles Northcote, gave her part a lot of dimension even though it was basically the white face of a mime. Leedham also composed the music for the show. It may not have made the top ten in the Elizabethan charts but it fitted the play very appropriately.

Various other characters had good make-up such as Sir Andrew (Edmund Thomas) with his irresistible beauty mark.

Sir Toby Belch, played by Ronn Sarosiak, looked too young for the part. However, this student managed to give fine belches and his facial expressions and blocking were well timed. The only problem was that the role called for drunkardness

— something almost too difficult to incorporate into Shakespearian lines.

The costumes, by Caroline Gregory, were authentic looking. The dressing and sewing were done by the students as part of their production experience. What was perhaps so well thought out was the type of clothes each character would wear, this aside from the actual fashions of the time. In particular, Malvolio's (Frank Spezzano) costume was a riot. He was especially at his best in the third act when he appeared in "yellow stockings and cross gartered".

On several fade downs a blue light remained on giving the effect of nightfall which was decidedly unintended. A total blackout would have been less confusing.

There was a good use of pattern holders (gobos) in the lights. In one scene where Malvolio was imprisoned by the practical joke of Sir Toby Belch, the pattern of a cell window was created on the stage

## Osgoode Mock Trial: lawyers show off

"My child, you are a child of the universe," murmured Osgoode Hall dean Stanley Beck to the kneeling figure before him.

"There remains but one question, grasshopper. Do you understand?"

"Yes, master," the kneeling disciple intoned breathlessly, dressed, like his master, in flowing robes.

"When you can snatch the pennies from my hand, it will be time for you to go," the master said. Needless to say the disciple passed the supreme test, and the unreal world of the mock trial Osgoode's annual satiric extravaganza, was off to a running start.

An energetic, and at times almost

professionally competent cast regaled an enthusiastic home audience with skits, original musical compositions, stories and sendups of popular songs, all building to a great crescendo of enthusiasm for "law" and resounding cheers for the school at the end of a nearly three hours show.

While not all numbers were even in quality, most were well-written and well performed. It would be impossible to mention all the good acts and actors-actresses by name.

To the tune of Randy Newman's "Short People", a woolly-wigged and balck-caped barbershop quarted, the Negli-gents, crooned,

"Well, I don't want no law students 'Round here...".

A takeoff on Monty Python's "Dead Parrot" skit was a classic number, and spoofed profs. ("I know a dead professor when I see one, and I am looking at one right now." "No sorry, he's not dead. He's got tenure.") In this number professor R.W. Hogg was scintillating in his role as a dead professor, John Evans, also a teacher at Osgoode, made a remarkably believable clerk.

Impersonating Elvis Presley on a scale that was almost larger than life was Dan Rafferty, who has a good voice in his own right. Susan

Peacock, in a skit of "Regina, versus" seems to have appropriated the rounded vowels and regal wave royally. Jerry Levitan, in a number in which he played Jerry Lewis sponsoring a telethon for disbarred lawyers managed mannerisms and a suitably enough squeezed voice to make this reviewer, never a Jerry Lewis fan, even less fond of that personality.

A special mention has to be made of the Osgoode Brothers Band a group of students, some of whom have played professionally, before coming to Osgoode who worked very well.

A.K.