

Spotlight

WHO IS LAURIE SIEGAL?

Laurie Siegel is the man who plans to make York Campus immortal.

Next fall, Siegel, a Founders freshman, hopes to start production of a half-hour feature film, to be shot entirely on campus and to star our own students. The success of the venture will depend on how interested students are in joining a new club being formed to handle production, direction and promotion of the film. Siegel plans to apply for a club charter and for an accompanying student council grant which will help meet the cost of the film, estimated at slightly under \$2000. He has already spoken to Henry Best, director of Student Services, about getting a subsidy from somewhere, and Dr. Best has promised to give it a try. Why not the Canada Council? 'We haven't even considered asking them,' answers Siegel. 'If we tried and we flopped, we'd never get any money from them again.' In other words, Siegel is thinking long range, and sees the club as a permanent institution for future cinemaniacs at York.

He hopes to have the club fully organized before next fall, and the script written by the end of the school year. The plot is still in the idea stage, but Siegel describes it as 'very warm, very human; a boy meets girl thing with a special unexpected twist.' (He refused to comment further on 'the twist'.) He admits that the movie's success will ultimately depend on the performance of the actors to be chosen for the five or six main character roles. Siegel plans to direct the film himself, and wants a minimum of dialogue, preferring to rely on the eloquence of the camera. This technique will require that the actors be able to project their feelings in order to reveal the highly emotional atmosphere of the plot.

Film equipment presents a lesser problem. Two members already own 16 mm. cameras, but the film will have to be purchased from a commercial firm. Sound equipment is another story. Says Siegel, 'We'll need a very sensitive tape recorder, which will cost at least \$500 second-hand. We'd rather buy than rent, because that way it will belong to the club--we'd have it.' So far Siegel has no plans for distribution of the completed film. First he wants to see the reaction of the university community and 'take it from there'.

Does Laurence Siegel see himself as York's answer to David Secter? Not really. 'I guess it's inevitable that people will make comparisons. My plot is a love story, like his in Winter Kept Us Warm, but I think our motivations for film direction are basically different. I see it as something of interest, and I want to learn as much as I can about it before I jump in and make mistakes.'

The York project will be Siegel's first attempt in the film medium, but his experience in the theatre has to some extent prepared him for the venture. He spent the summer of 1965 as assistant stage manager at the Shaw Festival, and last year was Dennis Sweeting's production assistant at the Museum Theatre. He also directed Sean O'Casey's 'Bedtime Story' for the York Drama Festival earlier this year. Meanwhile, Laurie Siegel is very excited about the birth of York's first movie-makers' club.

by Anita Levine

And now that you know who he is, why not contact him at ME 5-6006 and get in on the most exciting enterprise to hit York in a long, long time.

SHAW'S LOFTY PULPIT

by Don McKay

The great white father of literature speaks and a hush falls over the theatre's audience. BUT, wait! That is the sleepy hush of boredom, not the worshipful attentiveness of students of Shaw. G. B. Shaw, in the play St. Joan, preaches to the audience. In three hours of theatre, Shaw wastes two hours in his lofty intellectual pulpit. No director can present this as it is written without boring his audience. If you forgive the director of the Michigan University Performing Arts Company, for not cutting the play, you can enjoy a reasonably entertaining evening of drama.

The cast contained every extreme. David Stevens as Chaplin de Stogumber was absolutely amateurish whereas Bernard Tato as le Dauphin exhibits top-notch professionalism. It was very noticeable that these American actors lacked the natural diction that most Canadian actors are born with. For such a young cast the quality of acting was high.

Technically the play was sound. The costumes were suitably spectacular and the properties, although sparse, were well used.

This was an average production of a sometimes humorous but often tedious play.

MURDERER'S ROW - BLECH!

by Frank Liebeck

Ann-Margaret is beautiful and good and anybody who disagrees is funny so call me anti-intellectual. I think every girl should look like Ann-Margaret. Think of it! Eight Hundred girls at York all looking like Annie. Why, it staggers the imagination. She's in a movie called 'Murderers' Row' but don't go and see it. Just stand outside and look at the pictures of Ann-Margaret. It's cheaper and you don't have to suffer through bad acting, a bad plot and mouldy popcorn. Oh yes, Dean Martin sings two songs--the stinging secret agent. He kills Karl Malden with a sour note and gets Ann-Margaret. That clown gets Ann-Margaret. I don't know what the world is coming to. Perhaps she wasn't loved as a child. That's show biz.

"TCHIN-TCHIN" OR "WHO'S BEEN SLEEPING IN MY BED"

by Anne Dublin

A very funny play is now at the Central Library Theatre. It is Francois Billetdoux' 'Tchin-Tchin' (for those people not keep-up with their Chinese, this means 'Hello-Goodbye').

The title contains what the play is about: the meetings and departures of two people--Pamela Pew-Pickett (Hilary Vernon) and Caesario Grimaldi (George Sperdakos) whose mates (inmates?) have run off together to Las Vegas, or New York, or some such den of evil. And now Pamela, who looks 'like a tea-bag', and has a father-fixation that Freud would have had great fun with, and Caesario, who works in concrete,

and sleeps in a construction shack, are left to pick up the pieces.

They can't do it, but they have a ball trying. They renounce everyone, from the neighbours, to the Church, to the United Nations. And all they get is poverty and ruin... But I've given too much of the story away already.

This play is almost a tragic-comedy, for underneath the humour there is a serious note: Mr. Billetdoux is saying that communication is desperate and rare, always difficult and seldom total, but possible all the same. The play ends on a sad, somewhat rueful, but heartening tone.

Although the play is interesting, it is not faultless. The action is generally fast-paced with especially effective endings to each scene. Sometimes, however, the action is slow, or even stops, or there are moments of confusion when the situation is difficult to grasp. (Like, who was Caesario's wife sleeping with anyway? with Pamela's husband? with the TV man? with Pamela's son, 'baby Bobby'?)

Hilary Vernon and George Sperdakos on the whole gave fine performances, and complemented each other well. The only trouble was that they were not in their roles completely. Hilary Vernon sometimes gave the impression of what she thought she should act like the role, instead of living the role. George Sperdakos was sometimes over-melodramatic.

But these are minor considerations. The play is well worth seeing, and is a fine beginning to the series of plays which will be presented by Aries Productions over the next few months.

CENTENNIAL PLAYERS COMPANY

University students across Canada have been auditioning for the Centennial Players Company during the past week.

Pierre Lefevre, director of the Theatre School of Strasbourg's Centre Dramatique de l'Est, spent last week interviewing over 150 students from Vancouver, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

The Company is sponsored by a

grant from the Centennial Commission to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Some twenty Canadian universities will be visited by the company in September and October 1967. The plays to be presented are: LES FOURBERIES DE SCAPIN by Molière, and ARNOLD HAS TWO WIVES by Aviva Ravel of Montreal. The plays will be directed by M. Lefevre and will go into rehearsal in August 1967.

MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Frank Liebeck

John Osborne said, 'There aren't any good, brave causes left. Just the Brave New-nothing-very-much-thank-you. About as pointless and inglorious as stepping in front of a bus.' That's what makes 'A Man for All Seasons' such an optimistic film. That's what makes it such a stirring picture. There is a noble cause here and a man willing to die for it. Whether you're atheist or Hindu matters not, as long as you're somewhat of a romantic and can feel the wonder of absolute convictions. Thomas More does not die a loser. On the block he turns to the headman and says, 'Friend, be not afraid of your office. You send me to God.' You know, one isn't supposed to commit himself today. That's what the wise men say. Freedom, that's where it's at. But there is no freedom in vaguery.

The original play and screenplay is written by Robert Bolt, the genius who also wrote the script for 'Lawrence of Arabia' and 'Doctor Zhivago'. Paul Scofield plays Thomas More as a quiet and frightened man who seeks every exit available before he finally realizes that he is to die. There is a cameo appearance of Venessa Redgrave as Anne Boleyn. She never says a word yet is able, in about four minutes, to portray a beautifully alive and sensuous woman any king would marry. Robert Shaw is a jolly and childish Henry VIII, yet always conveys that he's a king intent on getting his own way. It's a fine film and never sinks to becoming merely a rehashing of the stage production. It doesn't talk down to you with religious garbage but centres on the individuals and the reasons for their actions and this is what's important. That's art.

