

Entertainment

"Longs arrows are becoming fashionable."
-Herzog's Impaled Soldier-

The sound and the Thury

Robert Fabes

For their annual major theatre performance of the year Vanier College wanted to break tradition and go with a play that director Fred Thury describes as being "a classic that is not of the regular diet."

Next week, Vanier will present an adaptation of Jean Giraudoux's *The Madwoman of Chaillot*.

Thury has decided to change the setting of the play from being outside and in the Madwoman's dungeon-like basement to being simply in a regular basement. His reasons for doing so result from his decision to change the context of the play from dealing with the aftermath of World War II to a theme which has more relevance for a modern audience.

Another important change is the prominent presence of music and songs. Thury believes that this will give the play some life, and the audience a break from the mentally taxing script.

"*Madwoman* is not a musical," he explains, "it is a play with music." The songs are based on English madrigals, the melodies for them having been written by

Thury himself. The cast are all competent singers and will be accompanied by a four-piece orchestra.

Thury is very aware of his audience. The choice of *Madwoman* is meant to be something out of the ordinary, a play that one must deal with on an intellectual level.

Of special note, this being the International Year of the Handicapped, the deaf-mute in the play, performed by Doug MacMillan, will be using actual sign language and will also be 'signing' the songs. Another cast member, Irma, played by Monique Verlaan, also had to learn sign language as did Paula Barfoot as the Harlequin. Both were taught how to sign by Margaret Perotta, a deaf woman referred to Thury by the Canadian Hearing Society. Ms. Perotta volunteered a great deal of time to teach sign language to MacMillan and Verlaan.

The play runs on February 5, 6, and 7 at 8:00 p.m. in the Vanier Dining hall. An unusual experience.



Steve Walker, John Gazey & Zwolinski taste the poison.

Bryon Johnson



Steven Diner, Gord Robertson & Leslie-Anne Bentley.

Death can be fun

Ronald Ramage

The directors of *Death*, staged last weekend at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Ric Sarabia and Silvio Oliveriero, pit themselves against some of the toughest problems in theater, and come up winners.

The theater-in-the-round format meant that some of the audience was forced to look at the performers' backs, but the action was kept so lively that it really didn't matter where one was seated. With the crowded stage, there was a sharp risk of rampant confusion, yet the audience's attention was kept acutely focused.

The highlight of the fluid choreography was the rival gangs' fight scene. Seemingly out of nowhere came knives, spoons, table legs, pipes, wrenches and other implements of destruction. The scene seemed like magic, but it wasn't—just good solid theater work.

The play did slump at times, though, especially during some of the duologues in which success depended upon the performer's ability more than the directors' skill.

As Kleinman, Steve Bruce Diner

showed a good sense of comic timing. The only flaw in his performance was his inability to enact anything but nervous hysteria, but it seems more a question of experience, in this case.

In *Death* author Woody Allen makes some weighty statements about life, living, and attendant absurdities. Because the directors have made the play successful on a surface level, as a comedy, they have allowed the audience access to the buried message, clearest when Kleinman meets his Killer with open arms, and later tells his too late rescuers, "He was just like me, like me."

If you missed *Death*, you are just a poor square.

Lobster's Choice

Debbie Harry and Pat Benatar have risen to the top of the pop charts with songs and personalities that are irresistibly attractive. Last year the two chanteuses were involved in a dramatic film entitled *Union City*, a new wave mystery made in the film noir style of the 1950's. Though not a musical, it does feature an interesting score by Harry's hubby, Chris Stein. Next Tuesday The Reel and Screen will be presenting *Union City* along with

Cinofrenic, a new wave horror film that was made in Toronto last year and features some local talent like Cardboard Brains and Space Phlegm. 7:30, Curtis L, only \$2.75.



Critic Cohen cuts Can-culture

Abbe Edelson

Nathan Cohen: A Review now playing at Theatre Passe Muraille is a salute to Nathan Cohen, the notorious drama critic for the *Toronto Star*. Cohen was one of the severest critics of Canadian theatre, believing Canadians were capable of producing high quality original material.

Although the play is entertaining, giving us the chance to laugh at ourselves and the dim state of Canadian culture, the numerous quotes and one-liners from Cohen's reviews become tiresome. Douglas Campbell as the older Cohen provides us with a powerful picture of Cohen's strong, explosive attitudes towards the theatre, but he is inhibited by the lack of depth written into Cohen's character. We are told nothing of Nathan Cohen as a person, the emotions and relationships which make up the personality responsible for these pieces of criticism.

The one scene which takes us back to Cohen's family's roots in Cape Breton is poorly executed behind a screen. His father stops in at a rural farmhouse looking for shelter and encounters blatant anti-Semitism. As an attempt to portray Cohen's cultural background, it is extremely shallow. The story itself could be moving, but is out of context with the rest of the play, which takes place in editors' offices, theatres, or in interviews with famous literary or theatrical figures.

The play traces Cohen's career from his attendance at the Dominion Drama Festival to the Stratford Theatre which he

criticizes because he is unable to hear. Cohen was displeased with the import of American musicals such as *Man of La Mancha* and urges us as Canadians not to look to foreign models for the substance of our art. But Cohen was not interested in promoting talent merely because it was Canadian.

Although *Nathan Cohen: A*

Review is extremely humorous and the acting fast-paced and versatile, a play dealing with Canadian culture either past or present should be able to push us into the future—telling us more than what we already know about ourselves. Too Cohenesque?

Check the play out for yourself. Until Feb. 15 at the Theatre Passe Muraille

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