

Extremities promises excitement with a dynamic edge

By BRIAN POSER

Extremities, a play which was recently performed to a string of full house audiences at Leah Posluns Theatre, is coming to York's Samuel Beckett Theatre April 8-11.

The York production will have an exciting, dynamic edge, promises Kevin Prentice, the play's director.

William Mastrosimone's *Extremities*, which is both brutal and blunt, addresses the frightening issues surrounding rape. "It is a confusing issue because the tenderest act of man and woman is used to disguise the most brutal and sadistic. The extremities of the spectrum are brought together," Mastrosimone explained in an essay about the play.

Yet according to Prentice, "Only in the briefest fashion does the play discuss the politics of rape; the misconceptions of rape; the legal systems' biased approach in the handling of rape cases; or any of the other myriad of problems and issues concerned with acts of rape. Nor does the play discuss the behaviour or the motivations of the rapist."

Prentice says, "What the play does examine is the rape of the human spirit; the violation of one's dignity. The rape that Marjorie (Rachel Derry) experiences is a universal one; the plundering of one's rights."

The play's scenario is centred around Marjorie who is resting in her country house when a stranger, Raul (Mike Edwards), arrives on the pretense of looking for a friend. In a flurry of motion, Raul slams Marjorie's door, rips the phone from the wall and nabs her. "You smell pretty, is that perfume or is that your smell? . . . You wanna take a shower

first—I could soap you up real nice . . . I'm gonna fuck you . . . I'll fuck you in ways you never even heard of," Raul says.

The act of intercourse never actually takes place in the play, because Marjorie retaliates. She is able to subdue Raul until her roommates, Terri and Patricia (Terri Heacock and Dawn Robb), return home.

The remainder of *Extremities* revolves around the competition for allegiances between Raul and Marjorie: Raul is fighting for someone to believe in his innocence; Marjorie is desperately in need of someone to believe in hers. Throughout the scenes of brutality and personal anguish, Raul and Marjorie switch between roles of victim and victimizer.

The play is a psychological trial. "Characters shift . . . and become plaintiff, defendant, prosecutor, judge, jury, witness," wrote Mastrosimone. Such a trial can only be

intensified for the audience by the design of the performance.

"The audience will virtually be sitting on the living room floor of the performance," says Prentice. The people in the audience will participate in the action. They will want to reach in to retaliate or to rescue, but will have no choice but to sit bolted to their seats, horrified and lame.

The actors agree that "Our characters have all been raped by the end of the play—each has lost dignity and each has suffered the plundering of his or her spirit."

Prentice concludes that, "Looking at rape as a spiritual and emotional pillaging as opposed to a mere physical act, who can then say that woman deserved it? What could one possibly do to deserve such mental anguish?"

Although it is recommended for adult audiences only due to the violent extremes of this play, *Extremities* is sure to be exciting, thought provoking and well worth seeing.

ARTS CALENDAR

Compiled By Jennifer Parsons

GALLERIES

The Modern Spirit-Glass from Finland, produced by the Finnish Glass Museum, the exhibition traces the distinctive contributions and design innovations in glass since WWII. AGYU (N145 Ross), April 2 to May 3.

Sylvie Belanger, experimental constructions by the artist. La Maison Du Culture (Glendon Hall), March 31 to April 29.

J'ouis Sens, a show featuring works by Vera Lemecha. IDA Gallery (102 Fine Arts Bldg.), March 30 to April 3.

Poesis '87, a show featuring works from the Founders Student Art Competition. Includes prints, paintings, sculpture and photography. Founders Gallery (120 Founders), March 25 to April 8.

Nancy Hoytgrove, an exhibition displaying colour-themed acrylics on canvas. Zacks Gallery (109 Stong), March 25 to April 10.

Emotional Directions, works by Anna Di Liddo. Calumet Common Room (Atkinson College), March 30 to April 10.

Line and Form, an exhibition of works from the Glendon Studio Course. Glendon Gallery (2275 Bayview Ave.), April 2 to 24.

MUSIC

Student Recital, Rosalba Lamanna, Soprano. McLaughlin Hall, April 2 at 7 p.m.

Student Chamber Series, a varied programme given by students ensembles. McLaughlin Hall, April 7 at 3 p.m.

Student Recitals, Patricia Sonogo, Soprano; Anna Di Costanzo, Piano. McLaughlin Hall, April 7 at 3 p.m.

Student Recitals, Barry Craig, Clarinet. McLaughlin Hall, April 7 at 7 p.m.

Faculty Concert, Pianist Margaret Gibbs will perform a programme including the works of Beethoven, Debussy and Prokofiev. McLaughlin Hall, April 8 at 12:30 p.m.

Student Concert, a programme to be presented by the student percussion ensemble. McLaughlin Hall, April 8 at 4 p.m.

Wind symphony Concert, under the direction of James MacDonald. McLaughlin Hall, April 8 at 7 p.m.

Jazz Bash, an evening of jazz with all the student jazz ensembles. Cash bar. Winters Senior Common Room, April 9 at 5 p.m.

Student Recital, Paul Filippo, Violin. McLaughlin Hall, April 9 at 7 p.m.

DANCE

April Concert, first in a series of evening dance performances. Burton Auditorium (Fine Arts Bldg.), March 9 at 7 p.m.

THEATRE

Balm in Gilead, a play by Lanford Wilson and directed by Elise Menard. The final production by the third year acting ensemble. Atkinson theatre, March 31 to April 3, 7 p.m. Free admission.

Saltwater Moon, a play by David French and directed by David Burgess. Atkinson Theatre, April 8 to 11 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 or \$4 for students.

Extremities, a play by William Mastrosimone directed by K.W. Prentice. Samuel Beckett Theatre (Stong College), April 8 to 11 at 7:30 with a performance at 1:30 on April 10. Tickets are \$3, recommended for adult audiences only.

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French's play will have musical twist

By ANGELA LAWRENCE

An innovative theatrical twist will be added to the York production of David French's *Saltwater Moon* at the Atkinson Theatre April 8-11.

Newfoundland musician Jamie Snider, who plays traditional Maritime instruments (fiddle, guitar, concertina), will be used as a "geographical transport device," to set the play's mood, says director David Burgess.

Once a member of popular Newfoundland bands Figgy Duff and The Wonderful Grand Band, Snider will play before and after each performance of *Saltwater Moon*. "The music will entertain the people and add to the enjoyment of the play," Burgess notes.

Although it was written after French's popular plays *Leaving Home* and *Of the Fields Lately*, *Saltwater Moon* is the only play in the trilogy that focuses on the main characters, Mary and Jacob, in their youth.

The two-character play takes place during the 1920s in the coastal town of Coley's Point, Newfoundland. Eighteen-year-old Jacob returns to his hometown after living

in Toronto for a year. While in "the big city" he learned that "the girl he left behind" was about to be married. Now back home, Jacob tries to convince Mary that she shouldn't tie the knot with her fiancé Jerome. It is from this premise that *Saltwater Moon* evolves.

This play is an "unsentimental love story," Burgess says. "It deals with the subject (love) without the rose-coloured glasses of nostalgia . . . there is an assumption by both characters that they love each other, so they focus on the real-life obstacles that prevent them from manifesting their love."

The main obstacle the characters must overcome is the contempt that Mary feels toward Jacob because he had left town so abruptly. Jacob explains that he "didn't leave intending to hurt Mary, but because of tension with his father," says Burgess.

Although on one level the play is about love, economics is the crucial deciding factor for 17-year-old Mary. For Mary, her marriage to Jerome is the best way she can help support her younger sister. "*Saltwater Moon* has to do with the enormity of life's decisions that people in the 1920s had to make at a very

young age," says the play's director.

David Burgess is a fourth year theatre student who has won the York President's Prize for two consecutive years for his scripts *The Great One* and *The Orillia Opera*. He was very pleased to learn that playwright David French will be attending a performance of the York production of his play.

Burgess explains that the fourth year production of *Saltwater Moon* will be very challenging for the actors because it will be staged in the round. Assistant director Andrew Clark has compared the play to a tribal ritual because the two characters will be alone on the stage "stalking" each other with the audience surrounding them.

Kirk Dunn, who played Shylock in the York production of *The Merchant of Venice*, will play Jacob. Claire de Auer will play Mary.

David French is a Canadian playwright who has become well-respected for his incredible ability to capture the reality of life's situations. If the York production of his play *Saltwater Moon* is able to translate French's talent, it should be a joy to watch.

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