

Hot L script boring

Studio Theatre's production of *The Hot L Baltimore* by Lanford Wilson? All I have been saying since I saw it has been 'Jesus Christ!'. That's about all I would like to say in this review but the paper is short of copy.

The *Hot L* is one of those there slice of life plays centring around some fairly mundane theatre characters, specifically three prostitutes, two old people, an aggressive sister and her weepy brother, two desk clerks and some dude out of prison looking for his grandfather. So the play would have a neat title, it is located in some sleazy hotel designated for demolition by urban renewal officials. Lanford Wilson knows that making up a plot for this kind of play is something like trying to get a piece of money in a birthday cake it's not the end of the world if you are unlucky and this time the playwright seemed to slice a hunk with some kind of idea like 'look at the strange mixture of humor and sadness in life.' My sympathies to all for not showing some kind of concern and sensitivity but this sort of play gets like institutionalized meat loaf. The first time you eat it, it's a tasteful delight. After four or five times one starts, however, to wonder if Dr. Ballard isn't the cafeteria's main supplier if the green stuff isn't cracked off ceiling paint, and more importantly, why the hell you keep

sitting down to eat this crap.

Because of a high crime rate and a poor garbage pickup, I suppose I could forgive the New York Drama Critics Circle for picking the *Hot L* as the best American play of 1972-73. But dear Mr. Director, Frank Bueckert, why in the hell did you choose to do a play that rehearses what Williams said almost twenty years ago, is about as intellectually enlightening as Garner Ted Armstrong to anyone with a grade ten education, and about as entertaining and tearfully humorous as the dozen or so times it received polite audience laughter? Jesus Christ.

While Wilson's writing may be partly responsible (boy, I didn't think 1972 and 1973 were such bad years), five of the actors came off with very good stereotypical mimics of two elderly people, two struggling whores, and a middle aged Jewish mother. Heather McCallym and David Diamong as a dyke sister and brother team do fine jobs of capturing the nuances and subtle motivations of their characters. The rest of the cast service their parts well though at times I wasn't sure if the boredom on their faces was part of their roles or displays of personal lack of interest in the play, too.

While the *Hot L* has enough

Vallarium to put to sleep a herd of horny bull elephants, director Bueckert and his cast facilitate the drift into sleepy boredom. For seemingly the sake of proper dramatic presentation Bueckert keeps the stage perfectly balanced with blocking with about as much subtlety as Tom Wilkinson calling an audible and with about as much

creative motivation and tact as compulsory figures in an ice skating competition. The actors emphasize an episodic play structure by predictably and forcibly launching into and peaking their section of script.

John Wright Stevens' set was colorful, interesting, workable and didn't fall down. Because this week's edition

of *The Gateway* will be late, I will probably have terrible guilt feelings about not standing in front of Studio Theatre telling people to go back and study or clean up their bird cages. Through until Saturday the 22nd. *The Hot L Baltimore*. Hot stuff.

Lawrence Wargrave

Ike and Tina hot stuff



Photo by Jim Hagerty

by Jim Hagerty

The fantastic Ike & Tina Turner Revue played the Edmonton Gardens last Friday. They provided two hours of all-out entertainment for a crowd of 4,000.

After a short set by Jayson Hoover with Stuff, Ike Turner's band Family Vibes came on and started to play, and play they did.

The nine member band quickly set the mood for the audience to start rocking. The five piece brass section immediately showed the audience the powerful music that could be generated by a tight horn section. As the crowd was getting wrapped up in the musical competence of the band, the Ikettes were introduced.

Hot Stuff.

Among screams and howls, three funky chicks danced on stage looking beautiful in their scanty outfits and sounding even better. The Ikettes sang and gyrated through three numbers and had the audience howling when Ike Turner stepped onstage.

Ike picked up his guitar and took his place at the back of the stage where he remained for the greater part of the evening, stepping forward only a couple of times to demonstrate his guitar playing.

The real show was Tina and the audience was hot and ready when she bounded onstage. With energy generating from every square inch of her body, she showed why she has been called "The hardest working woman in rock and roll."

She danced and sang with bounding energy from the time she set foot on the stage until the concert ended. Every song was an experience, as she put all she had into each and every number, not only singing but feeling them as well. She went through a fine cross-section of their hits including, "Come Together", "Honky Tonk Woman", "Proud Mary", and "What you Hear is What you Get", before being called back for an encore. The crowd couldn't get much higher; they belonged to Ike & Tina.

The concert was one of the best ever to come to Edmonton and special mention should be awarded to Scenemaker Productions, who provided a very smooth and dynamic night of entertainment.

Artistic Chekhov production

Excellent characterization supports a masterful script in Citadel's presentation of *Uncle Vanya*. Written by Anton Chekhov, master of the Russian theatre, the play portrays unique and fascinating characters set in provincial Russia at the turn of the century. Through the sorrow of wasted lives Chekhov reveals the basic folly of mankind. The theme deals with life in its basest form; it exposes the blind ignorance men display in stumbling through life without building upon its resources. The play develops poignant human relationships which allow for in-depth characterization.

The storyline involves Sonya and her uncle Vanya, who have toiled for twenty five years to support a step-brother working in his professorship. Thrown together upon the professors' retirement, Vanya sees that his labour was wasted and begins to regret his lost youth, courage, and strength.

An underlying theme is discovered through the references to the dying Russian forests and their waning hope of survival. The cause of their destruction is labelled as the stupidity and inability of mankind to see the results his actions will have on the future. The inferred point is that mismanagement also causes the disintegration of countless human lives. In his own matchless style Chekhov urges each of us not to let life be wasted in childish ignorance of its workings, for it is too precious to let slip by unfulfilled.

Characterization was well developed on the part of all except Pamela Brook, who played the professors' wife. Her performance did not achieve the depth it could have. John Neville (the doctor) made good use of timing, pause, and varia-

tion in vocal speed and pattern.

The same can be said of Ray Michal's direction in general. Careful pacing allowed the characters to form a cohesive unit able to produce the necessary simmering, weighty tone of despair and pending ruin.

Both Mr. Neville and Ronald Hewgill (Uncle Vanya) gave dynamic and creative performances, but Zoe Alexanders' portrayal of Sonya was nothing short of excellent. Her approach was humanistic, touching, and professional in every aspect. I found her skill and confidence on stage both refreshing and admirable.

Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* unveils the essence of life as seen in intrinsic human relationships. The company has managed to develop this theme with flair and good sense, all resulting in a meaningful and artistic production.

Kim St. Clair

Three Comedies

The curtain raises at 8:30 p.m. February 20 for a three day run of 3 One Act comedies by three Directors, at Walterdale Playhouse, 10322 - 83 Avenue.

The three plays on the program are:

Pause by Frank Moher and directed by Jack Wilson, *Free Beer* by Thomas Whyte and directed by Jay Smith, and *The Still Alarm* by George S. Kaufman and directed by Kathryn Digby.

Tickets for a Night of One Act Plays are on sale at The Bay Box Office and reservations may be made by telephoning 424-0121.

Adult Drama Festival on Sunday

The Alberta Adult One Act Drama Festival will be held this Sunday, February 23, in the SUB Theatre. The Festival is sponsored by the Alberta Drama Festival Association, Edmonton Zone. Ten plays will be presented by a variety of amateur adult players. This year's entries include Chekhov's *The Swan Song*, Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, and *The American Dream*, and Owen Arno's *The Street of Good Friends*.

With ten entries this year, the Edmonton Drama Festival is enjoying unprecedented success. According to Edmonton region director Robert Fix, "The catalyst for this growth has been the Festivals' recent swing away from competitiveness, and toward a more educational type of festival."

Most regions are presenting double or triple the entries this year, Edmonton included. "This shift of emphasis allows for the smaller, more inex-

perienced groups to try their hands at the festival," stated Mr. Fix.

The Alberta Drama Festival Association is a body of volunteer workers funded by the Alberta Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

The Festival begins at 1:00 p.m. and continues through the evening. Student admission is \$1.50, non-student \$2.00. Advance tickets are available at the SUB box office, and at the door Sunday.