

# Entertainment

"245 grams are better than a damn."  
—Ron "Whitey" Wood—

## Screen gems

Frank McGee

All those who enjoy a good free show will be glad to know that the standard set for future York Cabarets has risen a few notches following the latest Cabaret. **Screen**, which was presented five times on the Thursday and Friday before Reading Week in the Stong JCR, was a tribute to Hollywood. It showed creativity, talent and intelligence.

It's not customary to review the audience but I must say that I could have enjoyed the show more if a group of hostile hecklers (second show Thursday) had not created a tense atmosphere. But the performers stayed calm and seemed unaffected by this needless reaction.

The cast was at its most entertaining during the chorus numbers. The "Jeepers Creepers" number was bright and lively as was the opening song, a repetitive spelling of the word Hollywood. However, the audience never seemed sure whether such numbers were supposed to be straight or satirical.

This ambiguity was also present in Dan Lett's performance as an MC. Why did he mess up his lines in the poignant extract from Nathaniel West's **The Day of the Locust**? Was he impersonating a sleazy MC or a drunk?

The hour-long show ran smoothly and quickly due to the direction and script by Guy Babineau. Simple and effective tricks, such as the visibility of the entire cast throughout the show, kept things lively.

Now for the high-points-of-the-show category.

The cleverest piece of writing award goes to the ingenious Raymond King-Faye Wray skit, performed ably by Cynthia Duncan and Mark Owen. Owen played a tourist on top of the Empire State Building who has the unfortunate luck of encountering a broken-hearted Faye Wray.

Liza Hocura gave a good comic performance in a solo femme fatale piece, and Debra Alywin and Cynthia Duncan were amusing in a stage-brat skit. Other sketches, such as the old couple's nostalgic look at the depression, played by Sylvia Schmid and William Barratt, served the purpose but were uninspired.

Siobhan McCormick was outstanding in a rendition of a song about Judy Garland. Her exotic stage presence and genuine emotion in this song put her far ahead of the rest of the cast.

The cabaret showed there is talent in the performing community at York. The **Screen** I saw Thursday night was definitely a silver one.

## Off York

### Theatre

**Mother Country**, Margaret Hollingsworth's first full-length play to be produced, opened to a warm reception last week at the Tarragon Theatre. The slightly contrived plot deals with a mother-daughter relationship. Janet Montgomery, a manipulative, domineering English matron and her three, very different adult daughters, convincingly played by Clare Coulter, Patricia Hamilton and Susan Morgan, come to terms with their relationships during the course of Janet's retirement celebration. We learn of their strained domestic situation and that the unseen but omnipresent ex-husband/father is now an anchor man on the national news.

Despite some dialogue like, "I love him, nothing you say can change that," the audience remains attentive because of the Neil Simon-like humor that Hollingsworth has injected. The relaxed cast and the beautiful naturalistic set give the audience a real sense of intruding on a private domestic drama. **Mother Country**, which runs until March 29, is a good night at the theatre. Watch for a surprise ending.

The All Toronto Youth Festival (not connected to any school), a "semi-professional" theatre company of people between 15 and 20, did their best last week at the Fairview Library Theatre in a production of **Frankenstein** by Tim Kelly. They came out looking professionally dignified despite a ridiculous script. Why a company trying to make a name for itself would work with such trash is beyond me.

All the technical ingredients were there for a successful production but the whole play lacked passion. Gene Tishauer, director for this production and co-founder of the Solar Stage Lunchtime Theatre, should have been able to draw more emotion from a promising cast.

Despite this failure, the All Toronto Youth Festival is moving up. Their next production, **David & Lisa**, a play dealing with mental illness, will be held at the Harbourfront Theatre, March 20-23 and 27-30. For ticket information, call 481-6689.

Frank McGee

## Coming up

LONDON CALLING—THE CLASH (Columbia)

SOLDIER—IGGY POP (Capitol)

BEST OF BARRY MANILOW (Phew)

THE UNDERTONES (Sire)

METAMATIC—JOHN FOX (VIRGIN)

GARY NUMAN (WEA)

## Waiting for Beckett

Mike Fisher

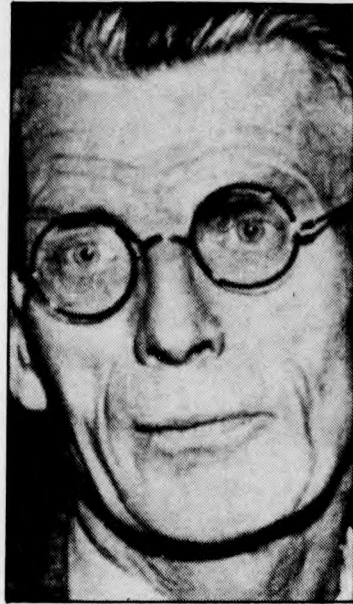
Two years ago, Samuel Beckett received a letter in Paris postmarked from Toronto. The letter informed him that "we propose to establish a Samuel Beckett Theatre revolving around the Stong College experimental theatre—a fully-equipped, intimate, flexible playhouse—to be designated formally as the **Samuel Beckett Theatre** to present plays and adaptations of the works of Samuel Beckett. In addition, we expect to host conferences and offer a curriculum which will truly make this College and York University a world-wide centre for Beckett studies." In Toronto, professor Harry Pollock resumed another academic year, and waited.

Weeks later, a letter arrived. Beckett's reply was brief. "I am deeply moved and honoured by the news (this) brings me and extend to you all at Stong College my gratitude for this great mark of your esteem."

Harry Pollock is still beaming. His office desk is cluttered with Beckett memorabilia; downstairs, Stong theatre manager Leslie Barton is directing a rehearsal of the three Beckett plays to be presented for the official dedication of the Samuel Beckett Theatre, beginning at 7 pm tonight.

"The theatre is just the first part of this project," explains Pollock with missionary patience. "It will be run by students. The Centre—the academic, professorial program—will come later, hopefully next year."

Since his correspondence with Beckett, Pollock has had the enthusiastic support of Master Hedi Bouraoui and the Student Government. Both Pollock and Bouraoui praise Stong students



for maintaining an interest in academic projects over the years. "It has been very good here," notes Pollock, an Associate Fellow. "We hosted a successful Joyce-Beckett symposium in '74, and now there is a Beckett symposium planned for next year which should launch the Centre."

Pollock and Bouraoui envision the Theatre and the Centre as invaluable teaching aids which could be incorporated into the curriculum. Bouraoui begins, "Starting next year, there will be a college tutorial on Beckett. We have also suggested to the Council of Masters that we establish a minor in an arts degree. This project, you see, is growing step-by-step: first the theatre, then the plays, then the tutorial." Pollock adds, "The Theatre and the Centre go hand-in-hand. For example, I foresee the tutorial as a series of lectures, and students might then, as part of the tutorial, mount projects in the theatre." Bouraoui smiles, then continues. "Also, if we have

## Hawk talk

"I got this thing inside me, that's got to find a place to hide me, I only know, I must obey, this feeling I can't explain away."

—Becker and Fagan  
Ronnie Hawkins a child? 42 year old, a busted gut, a rocker for most of his waking and passed out hours. But a child?

The voice crackles over the wires. The whiskey and cigs have long since damaged the vocal chords. Ronnie Hawkins has come to a halt for an instant. In 20 minutes he'll climb into the car and drive a couple of hours to the next gig. Barrie, Midland, York, Night after night, the music continues until the early hours.

The Hawk (who'll be at York tonight) has recently taken on a new career, that of the film actor. After his performance in **The Last Waltz**, The Band and Martin Scorsese's gala concert-film, Hollywood re-discovered the big man. Last year he made **Heaven's Gate**, for Michael. **Deerhunter** Cimino. Hawkins on Cimino: "He has a photogenic movie. One of the brightest young men I've met." Since, there was to be a project with Sam Peckinpah, but **The Wild One** fell ill, and the film had to be temporarily shelved.

Without delay, Hawkins returned to playing in the dark clubs and smoky halls. This time around though, the Hawk is enjoying the greatest popularity of his career.

A number of articles written about Hawkins have stressed his long love for alcohol. I posed the question delicately and he answered honestly. "Look, I drank as much as anybody," he says. "I've had to cut down. My stomach lining is torn, the acids get through and burn away. I

can't have more than a couple of drinks."

On stage tonight, the problems of the past will drop away like smooth chord changes. The flu that has bugged Hawkins and band will fall to the background, and Hawkins will be a kid again. York, Barrie, Amsterdam (where he'll go as part of a European tour next month)—it is all the same. Hawkins will stop the clock and spread the feeling.

## Rat chat

Dr. Rat

Theatre

Shawn Zevit has not stopped working this year. The guy seems to be in every theatrical presentation around campus. On March 5, 6 and 7, at 8, 9, 4 and 8 pm, respectively, Zevit will unveil **Where the Lions Sleep**, a play he wrote and directed. The work premieres at the Samuel Beckett Theatre, in Stong. It will also run in the Canadian Play festival, in the first week in April. And the Withwood Library Theatre on April 10 and 11. Shine, Shawn.

Play Contest Winners

Con, from Smooth Truth Productions, has risen from the spirit world with news of some winners from a play-writing contest announced a few months ago. Congratulations winners, you are: 1st prize for **Not Why, Why Not**, Darlene Harrison and Scott Thompson. And 2nd prize for **The Rats in the Cellar, Can Immorality Play?**, Alan Borden.

a symposium on Beckett next year, then we might edit these talks for a text to be used in the courses we teach." Pollock nods. "As you can see," says Bouraoui, laughing, "this project is open-ended and flexible."

Apparently, there are other benefits for the York community to be gained through the **Samuel Beckett Theatre and Centre**. First, explains Pollock, the theatre, which is being made available to any theatre group which wants to use it, should help to "break down the wall between the York community and outside communities." Second, the Centre should give York "an international reputation," attracting both students and scholars from abroad. "We are an enthusiastic group," claims Bouraoui. There is no doubting that. But as for the future...we wait. (If you would rather get involved, contact either Harry Pollock or Hedi Bouraoui at Stong. Or attend repeat performances of **Theatre 1, Krapp's Last Tape, and Fizzle One** at 8 pm on Feb. 29 and March 1 in the new **Samuel Beckett Theatre**.)

## New Oates

Mark Monfette

**Cybele** by Joyce Carol Oates, Black Sparrow, 1979, 204 pp., \$7.95.

"You know," Edwin says, half-sobbing, "I only want to live. I want to live. I have a right, don't I, to live. I don't want to die without...without having lived."

The man speaking is Edwin Locke—54 years old, Harvard educated, vice-president of a large American corporation and the unhappy protagonist in Joyce Carol Oates' latest novel, **Cybele**.

For most of his life, Edwin had never doubted that he was making the most of his time. He has attained what was supposed to have made him happy—marriage to an attractive woman, two sons, upper middle-class affluence—and he believed that he was. He discovers in middle age that he isn't.

Oates cleverly traces Edwin's disillusionment and his attempt to finally achieve freedom from role-playing and middle-class values. Without leaving his job (his one continual source of fulfillment), Edwin moves from one woman to another—abandoning his wife for the middle-aged wife of a colleague, on to a younger, more sensuous woman, and so on.

Along the way we are shown a gallery of morally and intellectually bankrupt middle Americans. The citizens of Wainboro; the office "girls" and technocrats at Edwin's company, Monarch Life & Auto Insurance; his neighbours in the carefully groomed suburb of Woodland. This should not suggest, however, that the characters are cardboard: anything but. Oates notes their cultural similarities while underlining their distinctiveness.

Nor is the writing vacuous and dull. Oates writes with ironical detachment and with humour. In a satire on Love Therapy, Edwin and his ex-wife are reunited, on the recommendation of their psychiatrist, for a second, hedonistic "honeymoon." It is funny indeed.

Oates' eleventh novel (she has also written 11 books of short stories, eight books of poetry and three works of criticism) offers no new insights into American life—but her retreated vision, captured in such lucid prose, is worth discovering again.