

Toronto Free Theatre's "Me?"

New play shows everything but says nothing

by MICHAEL CHRIST

When Toronto Free Theatre presents its production of Martin Kinch's *Me?*, it offers the playgoer nudity, simulated copulation, and a scene of homosexual seduction. For the married audience, the director, John Palmer, has also included for your enjoyment a touching bout of

sado-masochism as a husband and wife indulge in an enthusiastic fight scene which leaves the set in shambles and the combatants dripping with blood.

For the jaded palate and those who have done everything in their time, the play can still leave one amazed at the sheer energy and

theatricality a cast can generate and still leave an audience unmoved.

Written and directed by Martin Kinch earlier in 1973, *Me?* met with enough critical encouragement to be made into a feature film. Harkening back to the spirit of the sixties and containing enough momentary truths and topical allusions for the time, the play, seen today, wears badly.

Me? is the story of an improbable young writer's search for selfhood. Already the golden boy of Canadian literature at twenty-seven, it is perhaps endemic that this writer has no sense of identity and fills the void by exhibiting a lifestyle which conforms to the popular misconception of the delinquent artist.

The play adopts a serious as well as a comic tone, at serious expense. The comic humour is destructive, and while it solicits laughter, it does so at the price of creating distance at the alternating serious moments where the audience is challenged to find cause for empathy with the dehumanized cast.

Great emotional versatility is demanded from the audience as the playwright plays with sentiment. Turning on the emotions, like the proverbial taps, first cold, then hot, the result is expectedly lukewarm.

It soon becomes evident that the actors themselves do not know where to turn. Abandoned between two conflicting camps of acting styles, between English characterization and American method acting, the script is unable to



sustain either approach. Emotive through lines or consistent characterizations are qualities sacrificed as Kinch involves his characters in as many situations as possible that might strive to be considered either controversial, shocking, or humanly significant.

Me? is Toronto Free Theatre's premiere in its newly renovated \$500,000 quarters at 24 Berkeley Street. Although the production

demonstrated all the external trappings of a successful company, it failed because of the inability to find and communicate the inner truths that cost nothing but come with artistic maturity. Kinch, at 33, has experienced unusual success in Canadian theatre, now that his struggle to realize the physical growth of his company is in many ways complete, his real test as an artist begins.

History is recalled in broadcasting book

by GRAEME SHONE

Who played Tonto in the *Lone Ranger*? What is *Columbo's* first name? What was the name of the first soap opera? When was the first sportscast? Who starred in *Car 54 Where Are You?*

The *Golden Years of Broadcasting* (by Robert Campbell, published by Rutledge) has it all — from the first television image produced in 1930 to the historic 1969 coverage of the moon walk, from radio's Amos 'n' Andy to TV's *Sanford and Son*, from Milton Berle to *Star Trek*.

The text of *Golden Years* is rich in nostalgia, recalling radio's hesitant beginnings and its subsequent blossoming into such full-scale productions as the *Chase & Sanborn Hour* and the *NBC Symphony* featuring Maestro Arturo Toscanini.

The Golden Years of BROADCASTING

A Celebration of the First 50 Years of Radio and TV on NBC
by Robert Campbell
foreword by Bob Hope



The list of stars could fill a Hollywood "Who's Who". Yet the book also speaks very much about today. Via T.V., events of the entire world are brought — almost instantly — into our homes through coverage of the news and documentaries such as *The Tunnel* and *The Kremlin*. In addition, the reader learns how such facets of journalism are prepared.

The 256 page book looks behind the scenes and shows:

How weekly drama has evolved — *Barney Blake Police Reporter*, for instance, has become today's *Columbo*.

How soap operas are created — the daily grind of taping *Days of Our Lives* is indeed gruelling.

How quiz shows work — the excitement generated on *Break The Bank*, *High Rollers*, or *Stop The*

Music is no accident.

How realism is achieved in NBC's dramatic specials — *Robinson Crusoe* was filmed in Tobago, *Macbeth* in Scotland.

How audiences are brought new movies through World Premieres.

How weekly comedy has — or maybe hasn't — changed over the decades: from Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy to *Chico and The Man*. (Remember the Flying Fickle Finger of Fate Award?)

How Johnny Carson keeps in shape to keep viewers awake with late-night television shows — such programs, from Steve Allen's *Tonight* to Chevy Chase's *Saturday Night*, have always been painfully demanding of the stars.

In short, the publication celebrates NBC's first fifty years, while at the same time giving glimpses of the progress of CBS and ABC. With over 200 superb black and white photographs on top of the 64 brilliant full colour plates, "The Golden Years of Broadcasting" literally illustrates the fifty short years that have led to modern television broadcasting, now the single most important fact of modern living.

Answers to the questions in the first paragraph: Jay Silverheels played Tonto; *Columbo* has no first name! Painted Dreams was the first soaper; May 17, 1939, a baseball game (Princeton beat Columbia 2-1); Joe E. Ross and Fred Gwynne as officers Toddy and Muldoon.

Major art show coming Sunday

The Samuel J. Zacks Gallery in Stong College (Stong 109) will open its 1977 season on Monday from 5 to 10 p.m. with "The Great Canadian Ass Series" by sculptor Valdis Ilgacs along with 18 others on view and on sale in this exhibition.

The show, titled "Media of the Artist: An Historical Perspective", is also holding a preview specifically for the York community. This preview will be held

Sunday from 1-5 p.m.

This potpourri contains examples of Sculpture, Painting, Printmaking, Photography, Tapestries, Pottery and 18th century silver-smithing.

Such noteables as Leger, Picasso, Avery, Braque, and Micossi are merged with the matured works of Altwerger, Drutz, Danby, Finsten and Stong

Fellow Hannah Sandberg. Shared in the show's limelight are young Canadians Amar, Chisholm, Erickson, Armstrong, Ilgacs, Stevenson, Balfe, and York students Keeley and Poplawski, with canvas so recent that the smell of the paint may be louder than the roar of the crowd!

Regular Gallery Hours: Sunday-Thursday 1 to 7 p.m. The show closes February 10.

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