

18th century poems says:

Irish men fall asleep on their wedding night

By WARREN CLEMENTS

An 18th century epic poem lacerating the cream of Irish manhood was the highlight of a poetry reading given by actress Brenda Doyle in Stong College Thursday evening.

Written in the 1780s by Bryan Merrymann and translated from the Gaelic in 1945 by Frank O'Connor, *The Midnight Court* detailed an Irish girl's complaint that the young men of that day married for money and fell asleep on their wedding night. Doyle's suggestive poses and pouts underlined the desperation of the message:

"Their appetite wakes with age and blindness

When you'd let them cover you only from kindness

And offer it up for the wrongs done

In hopes of reward in the life to come."

Also on the programme was James Joyce's *Boarding House*, a short story from *Dubliners* and three poems by W.B. Yeats, selected by the Dublin-born actress with the help of Harry Pollack, leader of a Stong tutorial on Joyce:

"We tried to stay away from material Siobhan McKenna might have done in her one-woman show," she explained. "Easter 1916 (a Yeats poem dealing with the abortive Easter Rebellion, in which the Irish fought for Home Rule) seemed appropriate in the light of the current situation, and we thought we should include at least some Joyce."

Doyle, on the stage for the past 20 years, has just completed a television adaptation of Joyce's *Clay* (also from *Dubliners*) for the BBC,

as part of a six-part series which may be sold to Canadian stations in the near future.

"I chose to read *Boarding House* in the program because Clay would have been too depressing, and the plot — a Halloween ritual where a blindfolded person chooses between a ring, which augurs marriage, water (a journey) and clay (death) — would have required too much explanation."

Doyle also played a bit part in Joseph Strick's film of *Ulysses*. "I was the singer who took over from Molly in the concert, and one of the whores who picked up Stephen on the dock." Last year she played in a well-received documentary about Belfast, *War of the Children*.

This was her first trip to Canada, and her reaction to Toronto was

rapturous in the finest dramatic tradition: "I love it. It's cold here, but it's a dry cold; the sun is shining, the sky is miles high. In Ireland the sky is down there (indicating forehead) and the wet cold goes through anything you could be wearing."

Following Doyle was Des McHenry, a McLaughlin folk singer with a single currently topping the

record charts in Northern Ireland ("Come out, ya English huns/ Come out without yer guns"). He came to Canada in September "because I was fed up over there, it's very depressing". His folk-singing sets ran through everything but Irish Eyes and Drink To Me Only, from soft to bawdy, traditional to original, and the audience of 40 clapped hard to match his beat.

Catalpa - our house band

By JOHN OUGHTON

Catalpa has to be one of York's most durable house bands, having played its coffee houses for about three consecutive years.

A recent set by the band at Vanier's Open End proves that they have used the experience and consistently improved. David Partridge, lead singer and guitarist, writes much of the group's material and along with flute and sax-man Chris Keen has been Catalpa's mainstay. Partridge has widened the range and variety of tonal qualities of his voice, and now has quite a repertoire of songs to offer, from sardonic rockers like *Ladykiller* to softer, folk flavored numbers.

Lately Derek Pantling on piano and vocals and Allen Blatt on drums have joined the group. Pantling's voice is still a little thin and untrained, but he contributes some good original songs and a solid piano style. Blatt's drumming fits right into the acoustic rather than electric sound of the group, building and accenting the beat without drowning out the other musicians.

It's Chris Keen's flute and sax work that really differentiates Catalpa instrumentally from other

folk-rock groups. He provides a mellow, rather than brassy sound, which is interesting musically without straying too far from the melody. Occasionally the flute is somewhat inaudible, but the set suffered from many sound-system hassles. Lions, one of the band's longer numbers, contained some very nice improvisation.

On the whole, Catalpa is a satisfying and entertaining group deserving a bigger and more attentive audience than they usually get at York. Catch them if you can.

Vietnamese dancers celebrate peace

By CARL STIEREN

Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, was celebrated Saturday with the first cause for rejoicing in over ten years.

In Paris, the peace agreement for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of U.S. troops was signed on January 27. In Toronto, almost 500 Canadians and Vietnamese watched a company of graceful dancers from Vietnam, under banners which read "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom".

The changing mood of Vietnam from the founding of the NLF in 1960

to the cease-fire in 1973 was shown in a progression of dances from the first offering, the revolutionary storm has risen! to the final number, man is man.

The dancers, gracefully combining a ballet form with the content of folk dance, presented a sharp contrast to the media's image of Viet Cong. The dance entitled the singing rice-field showed peasants at work planting rice when the roar of a bomber made everyone stop and look toward the south. After explosions were heard far away, the farmers went back to work. Then a

jet fighter was heard approaching: this time the peasants raised their rifles, trained them on the passing plane, and fired in unison, bringing down the plane. Then, after the cheering had stopped, they quietly picked up their hoes and went back to work, intent on raising their crops.

The next to last dance showed a demonstration against Thieu and the Americans by students in Saigon. One youth under banners that read "a bas la dictature de Thieu" sang a protest song written by one of the student leaders in Saigon.

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