

Inflexible Players Foul Folly

W. Hurst
Theatre Plus' production of *Talley's Folly* might work on the radio, but it definitely fails on the stage.

In this one-act, two-character play at the St. Lawrence Centre, Kerrie Keane and George Sperdakos give dramatic readings instead of performances. There is little reason, therefore, to watch Keane as Sally or Sperdakos as Matt.

Set in Missouri in 1944, *Talley's Folly* is a run-down gazebo boat-house where Sally is wooed and won on a warm summer evening by Matt.

The script by Lanford Wilson charts a courtship of pain, pleasure and power which neither actor is able to fully exploit.

Sperdakos, as the Jewish emigrant lawyer Matt, uses his voice skillfully, inflecting and resonating. But the vocal drama is at odds with his body. With too much forehead slapping, arm spreading and head wagging, Matt looks more a Catskills comic than a desperately single man in love for the first time.

When he tells of his family's brutal death, Matt's stance and

gestures are no different than telling jokes. In another passage, Sally bites his hand so hard it bleeds. He cries out, but his hand does not pull away sharply—it lifts away slowly. The passions of the voice are negated by the lack of physical urgency.

Kerrie Keane is more successful as Sally, a single woman in her early thirties, though her accent is too sharp. When Sally thinks Matt is duping her, Keane's face and shoulders illustrate the indignation expressed by her voice. And when Sally explains that she is unable to bear children, Keane's body slumps under the weight of the revelation and Sally's day-to-day gestures disappear. In these moments the voice and body compliment one another dramatically.

Unfortunately, in the lighter passages, Keane is full of movements that are obviously just stage directions; her body is disconnected from her character. Without establishing Sally's physical identity early on, Keane overdoes her intense sections.

The most awkward part of *Talley's Folly* is the physical comedy; it interrupts enjoyment of the play. When Matt laces up ice skates and pretends that he and Sally are on a frozen pond, the script tries for whimsy. The actors achieve a good deal less. Sperdakos looks especially uncomfortable.

The lighting by Robert Thomson and the set by John Ferguson translate the mood and spirit of the script. Given the stage atmosphere, it is curious that Sperdakos and Keane manage so little physical presence.

The director, George Bloomfield

should have drawn more physical, integrated performances from both Keane and Sperdakos. As it is now, Bloomfield's version of *Talley's Folly* does not fulfill the promise of the script, at least not on stage. However, he does have two actors who might give an excellent radio presentation. The play may be set in the 40's, but it is meant to entertain an audience in the 80's.



Talley's Folly St. Lawrence's fool.

Talley's Folly runs until October 2nd.

Sunday's White Riot

Ian Pedley

The Clash has been at it for awhile. Having survived the punk years in England amidst such bands as the Sex Pistols, The Clash has moved on to produce some very powerful and commercially successful music. "London Calling", "Sandanista" and offerings on their latest album, *Combat Rock*, are all songs of revolution that have done well on the Toronto charts.

Their lasting appeal was confirmed Sunday, September 5th, when they captured a CNE stadium of punks, toughs and just plain volunteers.

Sporting a freshly groomed mohican, Joe Strummer led the British quartet through a series of politically defiant songs which packed the punch of a well-aimed cannon.

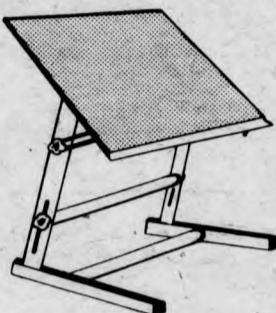
Battle Cry

Toronto responded. All the t-shirt peddlers, publicity hype and other various distractions were forgotten as the first chords of "London Calling" hit the crowd, and a seven-year-old Clash continued to play with an arrogance and determination that indicated they had only just begun the war.

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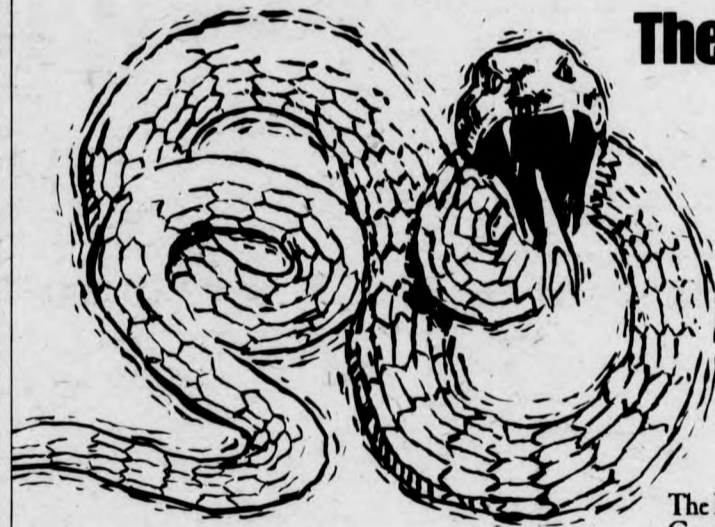
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