



Nicole Mallet and Gerard Guenette celebrate Guenette's 25th performance with TFE by re-enacting a scene from *Les Chinois*

Photo: Tim Kubash

French play is captivating

Comediens Malgre Nous
Theatre Francais d'Edmonton
Through Oct. 28

review by Gilbert Bouchard

The Theatre Francais D'Edmonton's (TFE) season opener, *Comediens, Malgre Nous*, is an anniversary celebration on two counts.

Comediens, Malgre Nous, a collection of six Anton Tchekhov vignettes, has the distinction of being both the first play of the TFE's 15th season, and Gerard Guenette's 25th play with the TFE.

The first vignette, "Le Chant du Cygne," is a tribute to Guenette's contribution to the TFE. Guenette plays an aging actor, Vassili V. Svetlovodov, who wakes up backstage after a drunken celebration, still in costume (a toga, perhaps from a production of Julius Ceasar), and plummets into a wild depression where

he bemoans his sordid past and relives the dramatic highlights of his career. But artistic director Pierre Bokor removed the Shakespearean soliloquies that Tchekhov had the actor mouth, and had Guenette act out the highlights of his career with the TFE.

Not only does Guenette relive the great performances of the past few years: he does so with the aid of the actors and actresses who starred with him in the original performances. Reginald Bigras redoes part of *Britannicus*; Anne Mansfield relives part of her role in *La Pomme*; CBFXT's Andre Roy hams up in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*; and Nicole Mallet revisits her role in *Les Chinois*.

These vignettes are popular exercises in drama classes, and it puts the fine TFE cast through their paces.

Tchekhov's brilliance keeps the actors poised between the slapstick and the tragic. Be it a frustrated old maid trying to rope an out of luck, over-the-hill bachelor, a prostitute caught between a screaming couple, or a henpecked professor, Tchekhov's glimpses into the human condition are still relevant and funny three-quarters of a century later.

Comediens, Malgre Nous plays tonight, Friday night and Saturday at eight at the Faculte St. Jean auditorium (8406-91 St.) with a Sunday afternoon matinee at 3 pm.



With the last weekend of October looming, there are plenty of ghoulish delights coming up on the entertainment scene. Here's a handy guide to these and other not-so-scary events coming up real soon:

- Tonight, Nexus Theatre: opening of *Poe: the Highly Unusual Life of Edgar A.* 8:00 pm.
- Sunday, Oct. 28, SUB Theatre: rock guitarist Kim Mitchell.
- Sunday, Oct. 28, Convocation Hall: the Department of Music is sponsoring a concert by the St. Cecilia Orchestra, 8:00 pm. Tickets at the door or at the department of Music, 3-82 Fine Arts Building.
- Tuesday, Oct. 30, SUB Theatre: The Friends of the Edmonton M.S. clinic is hosting a Halloween Variety Show. Call Mike at 426-2525 for info.
- Wednesday, Oct. 31, SUB Theatre: double feature - *Horror on Campus* at 7:00 p.m. and *The House on Sorority Row* at 9:00.

Hardly a convincing villain

Tartuffe
Studio Theatre
Through Oct. 27

review by Mike Evans

One of France's greatest men of letters is Jean Baptiste Poquelin Moliere, the seventeenth century comic dramatist. His most

controversial play, *Tartuffe*, is currently being tackled by the graduating BFA acting class as the Studio Theatre season opener.

In the third edition of *Tartuffe*, published in 1669, Moliere accompanied the play with a preface in which he wrote "... The function of comedy is to correct vices ... (and) it is a vigorous blow to vices to expose them to

public laughter." In light of Moliere's own intention and the fact that his own comedy evolved out of the tradition of *commedia dell'arte*, the Studio production of *Tartuffe* is ... disappointing.

The play suffers from an unusual interpretation by visiting director Douglas Riske: the villain, Tartuffe, seems utterly unaware of his villainy, and the result is colourless comedy. There is little or no exploration of the duplicity behind Tartuffe's actions, and hence there is little satisfaction at his downfall.

Despite performances of conviction from virtually the entire cast, the production elicits little laughter until Act IV (immediately following intermission) when Elmire (Judith Hawking) tries to reveal Tartuffe's (Leslie Bland) treachery to her husband (Raul Tome). For the briefest moment, the comic elements of Moliere's script are manifest, only to be lost again in Act V.

The entire company should be complimented for making a difficult verse script intelligible. A particularly strong performance was turned in by Kathy Newbie as Madame Pernelle and is deserving of mention.

The set and costumes by David Lovett are exceptional, evoking the period effectively and elegantly.

Tartuffe runs nightly at 8:00 p.m. until October 27 at Studio Theatre in Corbett Hall.

Billy B. flies again

Billy Bishop Goes to War
Workshop West Theatre
ends Oct. 28

review by David Jordan

Billy Bishop is in town...again. For the third time in a year and a half, Workshop West is bringing this tribute to the WWI flying ace to Edmonton.

This time around, Billy Bishop is sponsored by the Alberta Aviation Council, in their bid to draw attention to Alberta's aviation industry.

Billy Bishop is the kind of play that naturally attracts sponsorship. Education boards will be glad to fund an alternative to textbook Canadian history, war vets will enjoy reviving the old troop spirit, and flyers will appreciate

the tribute to an aviation pioneer.

This two man show is both humorous and educational. The lead actor (David Lareaney) is a one man war movie, playing everything from John Wayne to Marlena Dietrich, to Winston Churchill.

The "straight man" on piano, Jan Randall, provides the appropriate war-time bar room atmosphere.

This is the second time around for David Lareaney as Billy Bishop, and he delivers his lines flawlessly, while slipping in and out of more than a dozen roles.

If you haven't seen *Billy Bishop* yet, and you enjoy a good war story, you should catch this limited time opportunity.

Billy Bishop is playing at the Chinook Theatre through Sunday, Oct. 28.

CABARETS

DINWOODIE
2nd Floor SUB

DOORS
8:00 pm

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd floor SUB) and various club members.
NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff and guests. Absolutely no minors admitted!



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present Capitol Recording Artist
DAVID WILCOX
"Bad Reputation"
plus guests **SNEAKERS**
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Hallowe'en Boogie (costume prizes)



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present from Toronto
ZAPPACOSTA
"Passion/Runaround"
plus guests
Friday, November 2

U of A Squash Club
presents
Saturday, November 3
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