



Entertainment

Betrayal explores a love triangle

Betrayal
Two Boards and a Passion
review by Paul Morigeau

The play *Betrayal* has at least as many instances of inaction as action. The production of it at the Chinook Theatre renders these moments very meaningful and the play is a delight because of this. The actors are pushed to great lengths to make these pauses moving. The action, however, is not always moving.

The consciously literary style of Harold Pinter, the playwright, is rather trying. One is left thinking that Pinter should have written a book in order to move beyond this sardonic comment on marriage and friendships. The acting in the play portrays this theme successfully for the most part. The triad of betrayers includes John B. Lowe as Robert, the betrayed and betraying husband. His unfaithful wife Emma, played by the sultry Kate Newby, and the confused business partner and unfaithful best friend of Robert, Jerry, played by Westin McMillan.

The most poignant moment occurs when Robert and Jerry are together. Robert is aware of Jerry's affair with his wife since Emma has told Robert without informing Jerry that she did so. McMillan is delightful as the nervous and confused victim of Robert's ambiguous wrath, while Lowe is merciless in his continuous and barbed cross-examining of Jerry.

The play moves back in chronological order, comes forward again, and then ends at the start of the affair between Jerry and Emma. The producer Michael James uses a



Actors meet the challenge of Pinterian pauses.

rather awkward public address system to denote the time of each act. The sound quality of the voice-over is rather poor, and the crackling of the sound system is distracting and brings one out of the drama at crucial moments.

The play's intensity increases dramatically and one can sense a heightening of emo-

tional variation as the play ensues. When Robert grills Jerry the audience doesn't know whether their laughter is appropriate because Robert evinces a sense of fine pathos.

The English accent of McMillan and Newby fails at times, but they remain engaging characters; and Newby is able to create an atmosphere of foreboding violence with

the simple process of removing a key from a key chain.

The production of *Betrayal* by the co-op Two Boards and a Passion succeeds because of the excellent sense of detail of the actors and the perceptive performance by John B. Lowe. The play runs Thursday through Saturday at the Chinook Theatre.

A clever satire of politics

Le Gars de Quebec : political graft comedy

Le gars de Quebec
Theatre Francais d'Edmonton
review by Tina Cristini

This season's third production of the Theatre Francais d'Edmonton is a very entertaining Tremblay adaptation of a Russian satirical classic.

Pierre Bokor, artistic director, and the rest of a talented stage crew, together with an unusually large cast of 12 amateur actors, succeed beautifully in bringing to life the clever political satire in this play.

Bokor, who teaches drama at the Faculte Saint-Jean and has been director of T.F.E. for

eight years, also speaks five languages fluently and was founder of the student theatre called Theatre a la Carte.

Well-known Quebecois playwright Michel Tremblay is Bokor's favorite. "In my opinion," states Bokor, "he is one of the best playwrights in the world today." This is the sixth Tremblay play for Bokor who says, "It's a joy for me each time to discover his world and his writing."

This play is inspired by the famous Russian satirical comedy by N.V. Gogol entitled *Revizor* or *Government Inspector* on which the well-known Danny Kaye movie, *The Inspec-*

tor General, was based. Tremblay achieves a very special adaptation by localizing the action in Maurice Duplessis' Quebec in the early 1950's, when communist paranoia was very common. Thus, when word reaches the villagers in Sainte-Rose de Lima, the only "red" village in an otherwise "blue" Quebec, that a high government official has been sent by Duplessis himself to inspect the town, desperate panic breaks out.

The corrupt mayor and all his other incompetent town officials devise a plan to cover up their indiscretions by trying to bribe Duplessis' emissary. Unfortunately, the "guy from Quebec City" that they treat like a king is merely a down-and-out civil servant who has just been fired. At first, he is extremely surprised by the behaviour of the townspeople, wondering what they could be wanting from him. But as he realizes their ulterior motives, he takes advantage of the situation and plays the role of the "gars de Quebec" to the hilt.

This theme provides ample opportunity to satirize the human foibles of overly ambitious and greedy minor government officials. Political graft and general corruption are unfortunately applicable to any time or place; that is what makes such classical satirical plays universal.

The title role is very effectively portrayed by well-known local broadcaster (in the French media) Andre Roy, who is presently host of the TV program *Auto-Route Electronique* on CBXFT. The stage comes alive when Roy makes his appearance almost halfway through the first act. His natural sense of timing improves the tempo of this act, which got off to a rather slow start on Saturday. Roy's love for acting is really obvious, and his effervescence is contagious.

The only university students in the cast, Genevieve Forget and Peter MacDonald, show real promise. Forget, who plays the mayor's daughter, loves Tremblay's come-

dies; this is already her third in the three years she's been involved with the Theatre Francais.

A novice to the theatre, Peter MacDonald came to the Faculte Saint-Jean directly from Quebec in the fall of 1986. He personifies the ideal bilingual and bicultural student, being half French and half English Canadian. "I speak better French," he states, "because all my schooling has been in French since the age of three."

This is MacDonald's second theatrical experience, having had major roles in the Theatre Francais' last presentation, a Moliere adaptation entitled *Gros-Rene Ecolier* and another one-act play called *Play Moliere*. MacDonald really enjoys his drama class at the Faculte and is looking forward to participating in ADRA 259's production of Spanish playwright Fernando Arrabal's *Pique-Nique en Campagne* on April 11 at the Faculte theatre.

Another enthusiastic drama student, Anne Louise Dugre, says that she "has been bitten by the theatre bug." Her meticulous work behind the scenes ensures that everything on stage will go smoothly. This is Dugre's first, but certainly not last, experience as a stage manager.

Although Saturday evening's performance of *Le Gars de Quebec* had a somewhat "cold" beginning due to a couple of seemingly missed lines by Benoit Pariseau as the mayor, the actors were very successful in helping the audience forget this small flaw by warming up to their roles as the play progressed and finally meshing as a team.

Bokor says that "this is a very ambitious play because it is quite long and difficult to stage due to the problems involved in finding a homogenous cast of 12 amateur actors." After the four remaining performances scheduled this week, he hopes to produce this play at the Fringe Festival in August as a fitting conclusion to a very successful season.



Photo courtesy of Le Franco-Albertain

Human foibles of greed and ambition are explored in Quebecois playwright Michel Tremblay's adaptation of a classic satire.