

Ah-Ha! A thespian in the woodpile!

"I was amazed at the reaction the play received in Ottawa," says Chief Dan George of the Burrard Tribe, British Columbia. "People came to us to say that now, for the first time, they understood a little of what the Native Peoples have suffered and are suffering." Dan George was speaking about *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, the first of four major productions Studio Theatre plans to offer during its twenty-first season. *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* was first performed at the Playhouse Theatre in Vancouver back in November 1967. Since then it has had an exciting (for Canadian drama) history. Frank Bueckert will direct the Studio Theatre production. Gwen Keatley is designer. Tom Peacocke, new Chairman of the University of Alberta's Department of Drama, commenting on *Rita Joe* said, "Our first choice and season-opener for Studio Theatre ... doesn't speak purely for Canadians, because all great theatre worthy of the name must be universal in its appeal, but it does not relate specifically to a situation that we have here in Canada — the condition of the Native Peoples — and it is a fierce, hard-hitting and uncompromising piece of theatre." *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* will run from October 21 to October 30. From December 9 to December 18, Bernard Engel directs Tom Taylor's *The Ticket of Leave Man* with designer David Lovett. February 10 to

February 19 Mark Schoeberg directs Eugene O'Neill's *Ah Wilderness!* Larry Kadlec, designer. The final production of the season will run from March 23 to April 1. Says Tom Peacocke, "Our final selection is still uncertain at this time, but there is strong possibility that it will be either a Canadian original, or James Reaney's retrospective masterpiece: *Colours in the Dark*, written for Centennial Year and subsequently produced at the Vancouver Playhouse in 1969. Reaney himself says: "...you can just sit back and watch the sequence of colours in the play: from a white section, to red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple sections, finally to black and then out to white again. Watch the colours and images the way you'd watch the peacock's feather."

If it isn't Pa, Ma, Gramp, Gram, Son and Niece in *Colours* it could well be *A Flea in Her Ear* by Georges Feydeau, or *The Diary of a Scoundrel* by Alexander Ostrovsky. Or, as Peacocke pointed out, an original play. In any case, Christopher Newton, former Artistic Director of *Theatre Calgary* will direct the fourth production. And, Gwen Keatley, who also will be working with *Rita Joe* will do design.

But in addition to the above, there will be a number of special events to which the public will be invited. The fourth year professional students will give

four performances of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* in the Theatre upstairs, Room 318, Corbett Hall, on Saturday and Sunday, October 9 and 10, at 2:30 and again at 8:30. This production is directed by John Terfloth and designed by graduate design student Lee Livingstone. Other events will be announced on this page in the future.

Season tickets for the four major Studio Theatre productions may be obtained from: Studio Theatre, Room 312 Corbett Hall, 112 str. & 82nd. Avenue, or by phoning 433-3265. Subscribers are entitled to two tickets to each of the four plays, for a registration fee of \$5.00. Early registration is advised.

A full programme. Or, as Tom Peacocke says, "something ... that is not being done anywhere else in Canadian theatre, and that is: to expose the country itself. I don't mean this in any nationalistic, flag-waving sense, but in the sense of reflecting an awareness of our condition here, our environment, our sense of life that is peculiar to our country or to the part of the country in which we are living. Canadian Theatre as it stands, in no way speaks to the public about the Canadian way of life. Accordingly we will be looking for plays of merit and we will be encouraging in every way possible, new Canadian playwriting, that fulfil this objective."

Good jazz from Preservation Hall

It was way down south in New Orleans about the turn of the century that some local darkies started playing a new kind of music. In those days they called it "jass". They played it at weddings and wakes. They rode around the streets in horse-drawn wagons, rival groups doing musical battle when they met on the street corners. It must have been quite a scene. The music they played had rhythm, it was primitive, funky, and far too "decadent" for most respectable white folks.

Preservation Hall is the name of an old (c. 1750) building in the French Quarter of New Orleans not far from Basin Street. In 1952 it became an art gallery and the proprietor began inviting original jazz musicians to come in and "rehearse", leaving a small wicker collection basket at the door for anyone who wanted to come in and listen. Before long the music took over the building and the art gallery had to move next door. The neighbors weren't always too pleased about all the noise, and the judges weren't too sympathetic when the owner and the musicians were up for violation of white supremacy and disturbing the peace, and by 1961 they were having real problems surviving. But in 1961 Sandra and Allan Jaffe took it over, operating

it as a business.

Fearing that the original New Orleans jazz was dying with the last of the original musicians, they have turned it into an unstructured school where young musicians could come to jam with the old bands. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band is the name of the best of the old bands that are now touring the country, showing people what New Orleans Jazz is really like. Which band shows up in Edmonton depends on a lot of factors, including, I suppose, the state of their health, considering their age. In Billie and DeDe Pierce's band, trombonist Jim Robinson is 77 years old.

Proprietor Allan Jaffe says, "I mean, when you talk about these guys its like talking about Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Their styles are copied all over the world. And this music has a purpose: making people happy or sad. They play it at funerals, at picnics, at cornerstone layings. They never talk about how they played, but how the audience reacted. They want you to feel it."

Jubilee Auditorium is the place, Friday at 8:30 p.m. is the time. You can buy tickets for \$2.50 at Mike's and the SUB information desk, or you can buy them for \$3.00 at the door. All seats are rush.

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