

Memories part II—forget it

By LYNN SLOTKIN

Memories For My Brother Part II (The Guns Of Silence) is best and, hopefully, easily forgotten because almost everything that happens on stage makes no sense.

The play, by John Palmer, is composed of unrelated incidents such as an encounter between Louis XIV and Madame DuBarry; a girl who fantasizes and the young man who loves her; and a rich girl and a wounded soldier, all talking gibberish most of the time. A sample of the dialogue occurs between the young man and a gryphon. The man is trying to return to a party he has left. The gryphon asks what will happen if he doesn't return. The man responds, "an explosion?" All right, the lines are taken out of context, but so is the whole play. The result is three hours of boredom which turns to frustration when one realizes, "I've been had".

It's difficult to comment on the performances because the actors are not identified by the characters they play. Maybe someone thinks there is protection from criticism in anonymity. Besides, if lines don't make sense, how can acting make sense? The unconnected words gave no clue as to what emotion or action was required. What can one say of the acting except that the performers tried their best to lift this dud of a play off the ground. They didn't succeed, but it was a valiant effort.

Henry Tarvainen's direction didn't help matters either. He was too busy trying to impress the audience with flashing lights, explosions, huge puppets, and having the actors enter and exit on platforms of all shapes and sizes, rather than helping them make sense of the play and their performances.

In the long run, the actors are the people who will have to endure the criticism. The director and the author can go their separate ways now that the play has opened; audiences can always walk out. But the actors must keep on going to the St. Lawrence Centre until February 10, and do the play. My condolences.



Hayward Morse and Louise Marleau in Memories

Behan's character incomplete in Shay Duffin production

By JULIE BAYLISS

Behan's work was a scream of protest against the Anglo-Saxons, but it was they who formed his audience as he well knew. One wonders how far the boozing and bottom-pinching were simply doing what his audience expected of him, even if it destroyed him, and how different he was with his real family in Dublin.

Shay Duffin, playing at the Theatre in the Dell. Behan as the essential Behan in his dramatic monologue. He emphasizes the drinker and story-teller rather than the serious writer. He makes Behan an enfant terrible rather than a rebel, and since his own comic and

theatrical personality is only a shadow of Behan's, one would have welcomed a choice of passages that would give insight into the mind of an Irish Republican soldier. There are many very funny lines and many that were funny when Brendan Behan said them. The audience at the Dell, sitting at tables with drinks and sandwiches, were determined to be amused, even by the horrifying irony of the passage from "The Quare Fellow." Duffin would do well to heighten the seriousness of his passage, both for a change of mood and out of respect for its subject matter, and to drop some of the cornier passages in the rest of the recital.

It was an amiable enough evening, sipping sherry and taking the masochistic waspish delight in hearing the English abused; but I met Behan a few times when I worked for his publisher, (Hutchinson, London), and I saw Joan Littlewood's production of The Hostage. There's more to him than jokey verbal meanderings on a bar stool, and I missed it in this performance.

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