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# A Lie of the Mind is a waste

by Karl Turner

**M**Y MOTHER TOLD me, if you have nothing good to say, don't say anything at all. After watching the Dalhousie Theatre Production of Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind* I went to her and asked, "What do you say if you have nothing good to say, but must say something?" She replied, "You tell the truth."

Ah, the truth. Philosophers have deicated their lives to the understanding of it. The consensus has been mixed about what it is, but I am sure if Plato were asked the Truth about *A Lie of the Mind*, he would say, "It sucked!"

It has always been my understanding a chair in a theatre is placed so the play can be seen. Not so at Dalhousie. In a break from tradition DTP has seated the audi-

ence so half the time you can't see anything.

You stretch, crane, and contort your body in ways unimaginable to merely glimpse the action through rows of others doing the same. When I grew tired of this and sat in the chair the way it was designed to be sat in, facing forward, I had a spectacular view of frozen actors waiting for the next scene. (If you were lucky you could see them move.) What is absolutely pathetic about this is a member of the Department suggested this set to me because it was "better" than my first choice.

The "better" seat did serve some purpose. As I sat facing forward listening to the play, I had time to reflect on the word "better". Better days and better plays. Oh, how I longed for the time you could heckle and throw fruit. It is really too bad it is no longer kosher to make a person pay for designing a

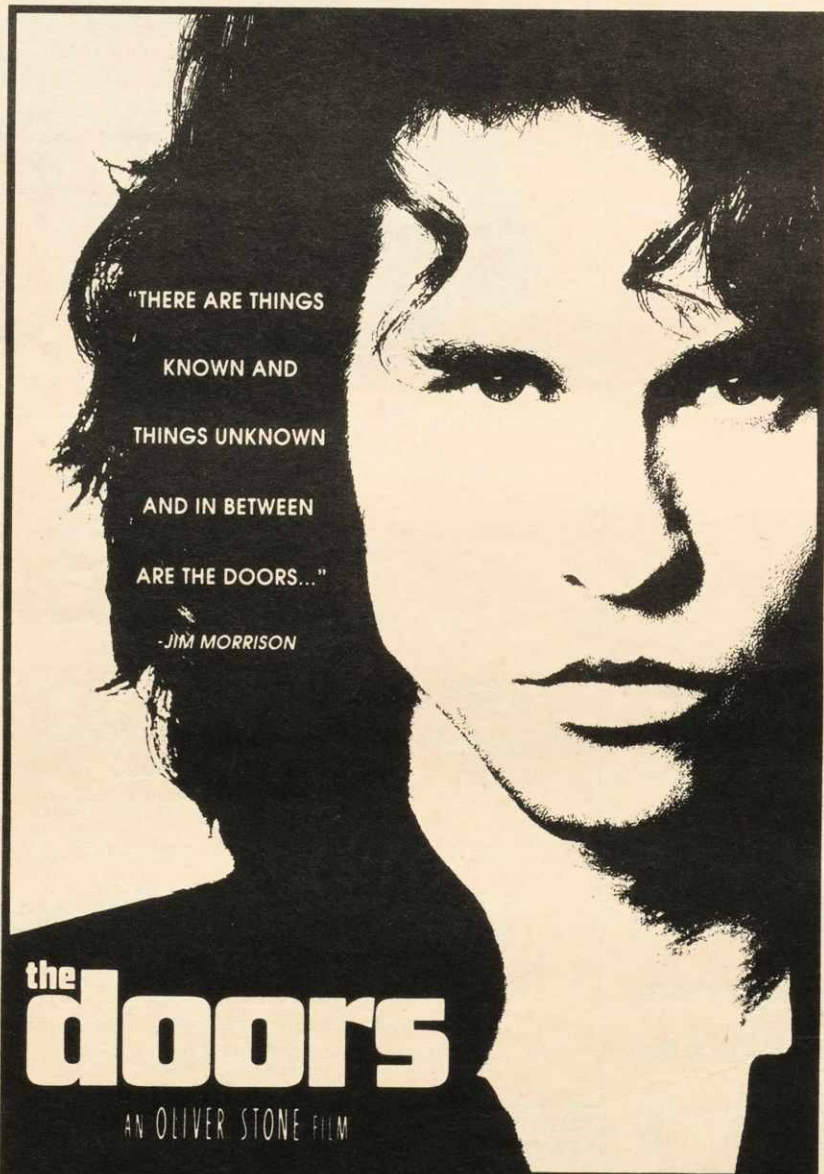
bad set. I suppose throwing tomatoes would serve no purpose. The actors didn't design the set and the majority were wearing red plaid shirts anyway.

*"the best part was the intermission"*

When you dress a farmer at DTP it must be mandatory to give them such a shirt. It's not enough to say he is a farmer, you must hall out the stereotypical farmer garb. Maybe I'm wrong. The costume designer might have known it was a bad set, anticipated revolt and decided to avoid messy costume clean up by giving the actors red plaid shirts. Who knows.

Probably the best part of the evening was the intermission. Oops, I'm sorry, it was the first of the two I liked. The second was good, but it just didn't compare to the technical cast of thousands required to remove a huge hospital bed. I was glad to see it go for it squeaked and diverted my attention from thoughts of better days and better plays, like DTP's last one. It amazes me how this production can fall short of the precedent set by *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*.

Things weren't all bad, Joy Renzi and Stephen Szewczok were a relief whenever they entered the play. They were well worth the stretching, craning and contorting. That is more than I can say for the production as a whole. The three hours spent watching it were a waste. When you consider the average person has but 675,000 hours of existence, think twice about wasting them.



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KNOWN AND  
THINGS UNKNOWN  
AND IN BETWEEN  
ARE THE DOORS..."

-JIM MORRISON

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