

THE SISTERS' TRAGEDY
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were distracting, unrelated to the happenings elsewhere on stage. She acted an actress acting a pretty fiancée who isn't quite there with her sisters. She delivered her lines to the wings. Her unrelated playing gave the false impression of an absurd play with the non-communication emptiness, cliché, whereas it should have been clearly a domestic realistic possibly symbolic, tragedy.

Bonnie Sherman as Lowrie the youngest sister tended to overact in relation to the others, but her soliloquys or rather speeches to the deaf-dumb-blind brother Owen were convincingly pathetic and her movement across stage was always expressive. I believed her when she was praying, she was the focal point in communicating the tragic atmosphere, periodisation and message of the play!

Yet when she went mad she repeated her speech several times without a modulation in intonation; she became louder but not more intense.

Dirk Visbach as Owen made an excellent duo with Lowrie he was deaf-dumb-blind. For an amateur actor to make his silent presence felt more than that of other speech actors is a great achievement.

Gerry Allaby as John had a very minor role. He was neither an out-sider nor within the narrow family, nor a pleasant fiancée and his tum-about at the end was unsurprising and unmotivated, for he had no previous presence or character on stage. If he meant to demonstrate the bastardy of a nice bourgeois chap then he succeeded well.

The motive for the murder-suicide was the marriage plans, but the couple around whom the others acted was negligible. So a multicharactered play became a two actor performance of the young girl and invalid brother with moments of eldest sister participation.

The director Steve Kuzyk could not possibly move the actors on the heath stage setting. In the beginning the directing was inapparent, only towards the end did it become successful, eg. the murder attempts and the use of the window through which Lowrie saw the rabbit's and Owen's death and the table under which the rabbit was thrown, and on which the body was lain.

On the excessively large stage representing merely a living room the actors were lost, lonely and disconnected. This emptiness of atmosphere was reinforced by the city skyline meant to be the outline of the house. The blue light and missing wall gave a universalizing interpretation to a limited tragedy. The offstage noises were effective as the use of the window and of the night door.

The play itself was a pleasant surprise. The rabbit — young girl symbolic duo, anti-feminism and domestic tragedy smelt strongly of the Wild Ducks of Ibsen and of 19th century Russian drama.

A smaller stage and stronger initial direction would have made the job of the actors easier, their relation closer, the air thicker and the play even more enjoyable.

BOX AND COX
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certain extent, almost hysterical. Both his speech and his movements tend to run away with his role and as a result his poor timing on certain potentially good lines loses laughs. Both gentlemen use "British" accents in their parts, Mr. Rose to good effect, speaking at times with overly emphatic preciseness yet with a flexibility of tone demanded by the dry, sarcastic type of humor. Mr. Baxter's accent is credible for a non-native but once more, the accent seems to overpower the words and, combined with a very fast, high pitched delivery and unchanging tone, make certain portions of the play completely unintelligible.

Ann MacLeod, playing the third role, that of Mrs. Bouncer, the landlady, is quite competent. She is a source of information for the audience, establishing the situation and then serving as the connection with events off-stage, usually related in letters which she delivers. As an elderly woman her movements and voice are good, although her non-English accent clashes with those of the other two.

The direction of Eric Thompson, a post-graduate student studying English, is quite straightforward, as it must be, for the play leaves little alternative. Perhaps a little more emphasis on the timing of some of the speeches would have made the play easier to understand, and resulted in better audience reaction. The set is very large as mentioned before, the result being long pauses during several cross-room journeys. The various doors and props are adequate although not the sort to inspire confidence. The material of the bed hangings, being both too bright and insubstantial looking, gives the room a very unreal appearance.

When the timing of the dialogue between Box and Cox is good, the play is light and funny, but when that timing is gone, it becomes tedious and repetitive, dragging on with no help from the script. It's an actor's play and as a result it can change easily and instantly from fun to boredom and back again, as it did on Friday night.

HE AIN'T DONE RIGHT BY NELL
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by Mr. Yule contributed to the effect of home-spun domesticity; however, the stage-grey chairs and table seemed out of place with a mahogany dresser and china cabinet. The position of the doorway directly behind Granny produced some awkward exits, and several actors were forced to exit through the bedroom where actors preparing to come on stage were occasionally seen by the audience, which tended to be distracting.

Miss Clarkson's realistic and convincing performance as Granny set the tone for the ensuing action. Her voice and gestures were quite natural and the makeup was carefully done. The gossipy Lolly, played by Miss O'Neil, contributed to the domestic effect, although her role as the chattering town babler could have been more emphasized.

Mr. van Burek's arduous role as the villainous Hilton Hays was excellently carried out. His fine performance may have been improved by less impetuosity in his gestures, and the duplicity in his character could have been exaggerated to an even greater degree if he had been more suave in his treatment of Granny and Vera. The prolonged initial entrance under the delightful green light tended to distract from the information being passed between Granny and Lolly. His exaggerated and obvious asides to the audience contributed well to the comedy of the situation.

Miss Thornton's role as the sophisticated Vera Carleton contrasted nicely with the innocent hill-billy heroine, Nell, played by Miss Cumming. The initial entrance of both girls was very effective and their exaggerated use of stage gestures produced fine comic effects. Perhaps Nell could have worn a white dress to emphasize the contrast with the black, evil villain, and thereby heighten the parody.

Mr. Alexander's role as the distinguished Burket Carleton was well handled. By exaggerating the delight in discovering his 'long-lost' daughter he may have produced a more comic effect. Mr. Attis displayed obvious skill in the pacing of the play in the final scene.

Needless to say, the sound effects, an integral part of the melodramatic tradition, contributed well to the farcial element. The obvious delay in the sequence (wind — door opens, and visa versa) was very effective in producing the burlesque quality of the presentation. An occasional flash of lightening might have added to the fun on stage. The skillful piano accompaniment of Mr. Archibald throughout the play helped to sustain the tone and melodramatic tradition.

Although Melodrama, in its historical context of the 19th century, was useful in keeping alive people's interest in terror and evil, and emphasized to a great extent the moral concerns of that unimaginative age, we have been given an example this weekend of the process of social change. Instead of sighs and thrills, we heard laughter and saw good comedy.

Casting for Drama Society
Spring Production
Monday Night, Nov. 20
Room 139, Carleton Hall

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This year Treasure Van will offer a variety of exotic and unusual goods greater than that of all the Expo boutiques combined — and at lower prices. Many of them will be items never before on sale in Canada — including native leather goods from Argentina, pottery from Bulgaria, zari handbags from Pakistan, "trolls" from Finland, carvings from Haiti, bracelets from Brazil, wood ware from the Philippines, ladies sandals from India, and new types of brassware from Spain.

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Treasure Van is organized by WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICES OF CANADA, a voluntary association of students and professors who organize projects designed to encourage international cooperation within the University community. The profit from the sale of goods help to further the work of WUSC in organizing seminars and conferences.

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