

THEATRE REVIEW

"I have lived not for myself but for my people," intones England's pious Queen Elizabeth I (Sara Holmes) as she sentences her sister, Queen Mary of Scotland, to death.

It is the exceptionally strong performance of Holmes, in conjunction with other notable performances by Tiffany Jamison-Horne, Matthew Kennedy, and Richard Davidson, which saved the Dalhousie Theatre Department Production of *Mary Stuart* by Frederick von Schiller.

The remainder of the cast deliver uninspired performances. Without exception, the supporting cast is supremely forgettable.

Luckily for this production, the strength of the drama rides almost exclusively on Holmes, Jamison-Horne as Mary, Kennedy as Sir Edward Mortimer, and Davidson as the Earl of Leicester.

The best male performance goes to Kennedy who is absolutely intoxicating. He commands the stage with a great performance and gives the dialogue a life of its own.

Jamison-Horne also gives a strong performance. One fault is that in her climactic showdown with Elizabeth, she fails to match the energy and strength of her "sister". She does not inspire sympathy, and Holmes is undoubtedly the winner. Otherwise Jamison-Horne does an excellent job of establishing her character as a true martyr.

The ambiguous Earl of Leicester is ably played by Davidson — the audience was never sure where his loyalties would fall un-



Sir Amias Paulet (Brett Delaney, left) confronts his nephew Sir Edward Mortimer (Matthew Kennedy, right) in DTDP's production of *Mary Stuart*. The show runs every evening until Saturday at 8 p.m.

til the his final confrontation with Elizabeth.

But this play truly soared because of the mesmerising exhibition provided by Sara Holmes. Her Elizabeth is captivating, and she provides most of the play's conflict almost single handedly.

This play is well directed by Jure Gantar, with excellent timing, and movements that are perfectly choreographed for maximum dramatic effect.

I was struck by the austere stage and costume design. Clearly minimalism was desired, and well accomplished. Despite this, the costumes manage to exude the regality of the play's setting. Although I warn those who suffer from depression or just hate darkness...stay away from this show.

The design of this play confirms something I have thought for some time — less emphasis on sets, costumes, or other accoutre-

ments means that more emphasis is placed on the actors. The difference between Holmes and the supporting cast was demonstrated by this minimalism. With Sparse design, exceedingly strong performances are required and when they are not strong it is like stapling a neon sign to the actor's head which blinks "Look at me, and be bored!"

Tuesday's performance was preceded by the presentation

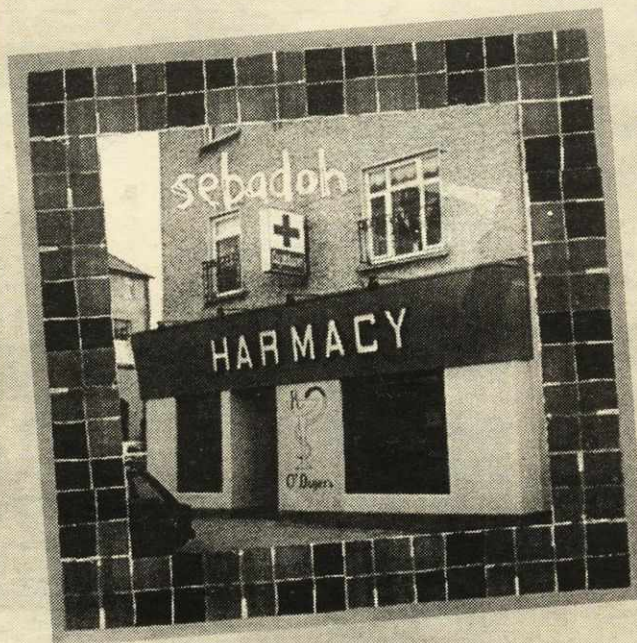
of Neptune Theatre's Blackmore award for technical theatre to Mhiran Danson-Faraday, a graduating Dalhousie student.

Mary Stuart continues until November 30th with nightly shows starting at 8 p.m. in the Sir James Dunn theatre. There is also a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday. Tickets are \$5 for students and seniors, and \$10 for regular admission.

DANIEL CLARK

Sam the Record Man

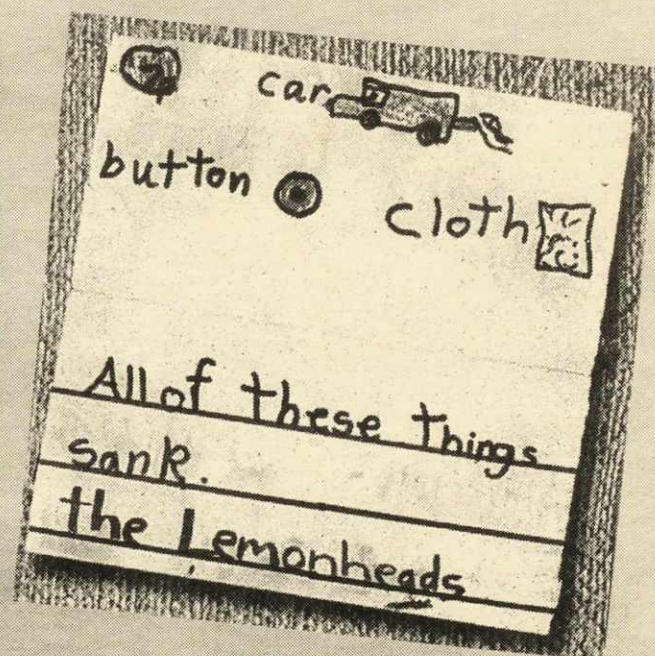
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