

## Sixties hit returns:

### Hair entertains

**Robert Fabes**  
York's Independent Theatre Productions' presentation of the rock musical *Hair* mixed music, lights, and cast energy to form a memorable night of entertainment—even though it wasn't a great theatrical success.

*Hair's* major problems are in direction and set design. Director Gregory Peterson seemed more concerned with creating show-stopping pieces than with achieving an over-all, well-rounded production. The individual numbers, while they didn't comprise the necessary whole, were energetic, well-timed segments which succeeded in dazzling the audience.

#### Casting difficulties

Director Peterson seduced the audience, leading them into the controversial nude scenes slowly and carefully. Rather than shocking them, it allowed a deeper understanding of the ideas of 1968's youth.

Peterson seemed to have casting difficulties. Some of the actors could sing, some could dance, and most did a fine job acting, but there were very few who could do all three. Since *Hair* is a musical it requires multi-talented performers.

Nandor Nyakas' set was problematic for everyone. Burton's small stage was severely cramped by the large, equipment-laden orchestra. Listening to twenty-nine people sing about being free while they are bumping into each other was both ironic and bizarre. In an

attempt to improve circulation, the actors used the auditorium steps. This was interesting in itself, but did nothing to clear up the inevitable traffic jams on stage.

In the end it was the actors' energy that made *Hair* an entertainment extravaganza. J. Scott Thompson as Woolf (the one who's in love with Mick Jagger) superbly combined street-wisdom with a reticent innocence. Thompson was one of the few who could sing and dance as well as act, giving one of the more complete performances of the evening. Monique Verlaan, as Sheila, performed with a rare intensity. Hamish Sutherland, as Claude, sang and performed well as the confused, newly-drafted hippie who won't burn his draft card.

#### One begins to wonder

The play's big disappointment was Stuart Hughes in the role of Berger, leader of the Tribe. Hughes showed the audience Berger's angry, rebellious side but didn't allow them to see the sensitive Berger who loves and is hurt by Sheila. Add this to the fact that Hughes lacks an ability to sing, and one begins to wonder why he was cast as Berger in the first place.

Steven Hill as Margaret Mead, Albert Shultz as Abe Lincoln, Jane Avery as Janie, and Mona McDonald as Mona were all strong.

*Hair* continues tonight through Saturday at Burton Auditorium. Tickets on sale at Soundproof Records.



David Main and Fiona Reid star in the Toronto Free Theatre production of *Night And Day*.

## Night And Day lost in dark

### Karen Sharpe

Toronto Free Theatre's production of *Night and Day* proves to be a night of incomplete understanding; Stoppard's script is not at fault; it is as lucid as day.

*Night and Day* is set in Kambawe, a fictional African country ruled by a terrifying president. The action centres around a Soviet-backed revolution that is threatening the present regime and the British newsmen that have rushed in to cover the story. Did I hear someone whisper Uganda and Idi Amin?

#### Conflicting views

Using the characters Ruth Carson (Fiona Reid), a bored and sarcastic parasite; her husband Geoffrey Carson (David Main), a mine owner; Dick Wagner (Tom Butler), an Australian-born veteran reporter; and Jacob Milne (Gregory Ellwand), an idealistic young journalist, Stoppard argues their conflicting views concerning freedom of the press, unions, politics, love, etc. throughout the course of the play.

Stoppard presents his characters' arguments equally, and equally persuasively. For this reason, the theatre-goer should not see *Night and Day* as an attack on journalism. Stoppard has said that *Night and Day* explores the idea "that the aspects of journalism which one might disapprove of are the price we pay for that which matters, and the part that matters is absolutely vital".

#### Clark Kent with intellect

Fiona Reid does not seem at home in her English, upper middle class character. She does not become "Ruth Carson", but stoops to performing a brittle Maggie Smith impersonation. The part has previously been played by Smith and the world already knows how she approached the part, so wouldn't it be better if we saw an interpretation that was entirely Reid's own?

Gregory Ellwand and Tom Butler are terrific in their roles. Ellwand, as the young reporter, is charmingly gauche. He's Clark Kent possessing some intellect. Butler maintains a solid Aussie accent in addition to reading a

series of different newspapers in appropriate accents. All this occurs during a scene that must be seen to be appreciated. His Wagner is an engagingly oily portrayal of a semi-sleazy character.

David Main plays Ruth's husband unrepentably. His cool, detached presence is exactly what is required of a host who is concerned about more important matters. President Mageeba (Eugene A. Clark) has imperial presence but he is not quite terrifying enough to be a psychopathic head of state. And George Guthrie (Michael Hogan), slips in and out of his working-class English accent

disconcertingly often; but he does have the right casual and slightly grubby demeanor of a photojournalist. It is a fine cast, in all, whose talents are not to be overlooked.

The set design, by Peter Hartwell, simplifies Stoppard's original intent, but it serves the play well. One weakness — it is ironic that the set's "outdoors" could as easily be a Willowdale backyard (in summer, of course) as Africa. It only emphasizes the fact that Toronto Free Theatre's difficulty with the play is adopting its British characters and sensibility successfully into a North American production.



Cast members put their hands up for *Hair*.

## Clippington exposes her controversial Critical Mass

### Lisa Kates

Bethune Gallery was the place to be last Thursday when former stripper, Deborah Clippington's controversial play, "Critical Mass" was read by several of York's Theatre students. Clippington employed the York performers to help her in revisions of this, her first play.

*Critical Mass* deals with bureaucratic injustices, specifically those surrounding the use of nuclear power. The crime, argues Clippington, is the collusion between "The Military" and the "Nuclear Industry." The essence of this conflict is clearly depicted by Deborah Darlington as a sly and satirical photojournalist who disguises herself as a man so she can find employment in a generating plant. (Women are unable to work in nuclear surroundings because evidence has shown that exposure to radiation, even in small amounts, causes sterility and cancer in women.) Darlington wants to communicate the

dangers which are frequently covered up.

Clippington clearly identifies with this character: "I would be the type of person to disguise myself and expose the truth."

*Critical Mass* was inspired by the story of Karen Silkwood. Clippington also says "It's a direct steal from a Bertolt Brecht play." About one year has gone into the writing and directing of it.

Clippington says she wrote the play because "the only way to get involved in a Toronto play is to write the play yourself." As a graduate theatre student from Trent University, Clippington has done some stage work, but she is known primarily for her work as a stripper. She is not stripping at present, as most of her time and energy is spent in developing *Critical Mass*.

Funding is still required, so for any budding impressarios here's your chance to invest in one of the most radiating shows around.

## Hamlet is a play on words

### Leora Aisenberg

"Theatre people and scholars hold each other in exaggerated awe," says Inga-Stina Eubank. Yet to say that this drama expert is anything less than awesome would be an understatement.

At Glendon, Friday, to discuss "The Moods of *Hamlet*", Professor Eubank demonstrated why she is known as one of the world's leading Shakespearean scholars. Eubank, who hails from Bedford College at the University of London, revealed new terrain in an area that has been incessantly explored.

Shakespeare's art rests upon the language in all of his plays, but especially in *Hamlet*. It is therefore of great interest that any discussion of the play's "moods" refers to his fusion of grammar and psychology.

Eubank pointed out that Shakespeare, in Elizabethan times, would have studied Lyly's grammar, which was derived from Latin. Lyly, a sixteenth century writer, outlined six basic "moods": the indicative, imperative, optative, conjunctive, infinitive and potential. According to Eubank's thesis, an examination of verbal patterns provides clues to a character's state of mind. And then, perhaps, "the barrier between the literary and the theatrical doesn't exist at all."

Eubank noted that most of the characters in *Hamlet* speak in a two-fold pattern: the indicative (giving reasons, be they true or false) followed by the imperative (issuing a command).

"Language is a measure of sensitivity," said Eubank. It is language that separates Hamlet from the rest of the court in Elsinore. "Hamlet is far more sensitive and wide-ranged in his use of moods and tenses," she added.

Much critical interpretation has been devoted to Hamlet's propensity to procrastinate. Eubank explained, in grammatical terms, that "something interferes between the potential

and the imperative.... Hamlet has difficulty with tenses because something peculiar has happened to his own past." Thus Hamlet, whose fond memories have been obliterated by the Ghost, speaks the truth when he tells Ophelia "I did love you once" and "I lov'd thee not".

Hamlet's speech, especially in his soliloquies, is largely optative (willing or desiring) rather than indicative. "Hamlet is the odd man out, puncturing the others' uses of moods and tenses," noted Eubank. Only after he kills King Claudius does Hamlet use the same pattern of indicative and imperative. "Whereas adjectives were substitutes for action, now action and the word are one."

The word and what it stands for may be two different things in *Hamlet*, but Professor Eubank manages to give meaning to the words of Shakespeare's theatre, not only as an academic exercise, but as an added dimension of the dramatic experience.