

## Emergency Services Centre - 3333



Robert Benedetti came to York this fall to direct the Program in Theatre Arts.

## Odds & Sodds

### Graphic Art exhibit

The Art Gallery of York University will present an exhibition of graphics by the distinguished contemporary British artist Richard Hamilton. Circulated by the National Gallery of Canada, the exhibition will be on view from November 26 to December 15 in Room N145, The Ross Building. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 2:00 p.m. 'til 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

### OSSTF Conference

Plans are already underway for this year's Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation Professional and Development Conference to be held during Reading Week in February. Held by the Centre for Continuing Education in cooperation with the North York Board of Education, the two-day event will bring 2,000 North York secondary school teachers and a number of teachers from the York Board of Education to the 60 workshops on the York Campus.

Professor Robert McKay and Dean H.C. Sigman are working with the North York OSSTF Professional Development Advisory committee and North York teachers to ensure the success of the event.



### CHORICA DANCE THEATRE OF GREECE

The Chorica Dance Theatre of Greece will appear in the first of two special events in this year's Performing Arts Series on Monday, November 29 at 8:30 p.m. in Burton Auditorium. The Chorica company aims to reach a total and

effortless dramatic expression through unified training in the three disciplines of acting, music and dance. Excerpts from tragedies, comedies, and satyric drama will form the basis of this experimental performance combining choreography, speech, and music.

# University

## Benedetti seeks positive values in teaching theatre

Former Chairman of the Acting Department of Yale, Robert Benedetti is well aware of the problems of teaching the arts in a University.

"There are a host of problems in the teaching of any art, most of which are problems of balance: the balance between theoretical and practical work; the balance between the development of physical skills and conceptual skills; the balance of a sense of process which provides the dynamism of an artist's life, and the sense of product which gives direction to the process; balance in the enforcement of institutional discipline and the fostering thereby of personal discipline, and the balance between the teachable (materials, techniques) and the unteachable (the creative act itself)."

Dr. Benedetti feels that the teacher of theatre faces additional problems: the balance of ensemble technique with individual discipline and the balance of specialized skills with a realization of the wholeness of theatrical endeavor.

He believes that the Program in Theatre Arts was established with an awareness of these problems and that it has been evolving new solutions ever since.

The basic format of the Program has been one of three closely related areas of concentration: Performance (acting and directing), Drama Studies (literature, criticism, and writing), and Production (design, stagecraft, and management). Each of these areas of concentration is coupled with required experience in the other two, although the student has some freedom in selecting the manner of his involvement.

Although the form of the curriculum is important and still in the process of development, Dr. Benedetti and his teaching staff recognize that curricular structure will never of itself insure the delicate balances requisite to a coherent and evolutionary student experience.

"Only the integration of the specifics of day-to-day teaching in all areas, generated by a mutual vision and shared vocabulary to which each faculty member can subscribe with a sense of personal pride and fulfillment, will adequately answer the case."

He says that such a mutual vision is developed only in the process of work itself, that the teaching of artists is itself an art and the teaching of an ensemble art requires that the faculty itself be an artist ensemble. "Such an ensemble faculty must resist the normal academic pressure to compartmentalize; it must keep a close working contact, coupled with ongoing, in-process self-examination."

The Program in Theatre Arts is beginning to extend team-teaching, visitation to each other's classes, an effort to relate materials between courses, and the specific coupling of some courses in an effort to provide constant opportunities for faculty collaboration. Student

productions are presently being team-directed by the teachers of related courses to insure the direct extension of the classroom work into the performance laboratory. "We have begun to develop a hypothetical "ideal graduate", not to create a rigid set of objectives (since our ideal graduate would first of all be more effectively, more richly himself) but as a way of examining and sharing our teaching values."

Dr. Benedetti believes that what is taught has little impact if the student does not learn how to apply it to his own initiative. The Program has created a "student project week" during January. For a ten-day period classes in the formal sense will be suspended and the facilities of the Program put at the disposal of projects developed entirely by students. He hopes this will serve not only to allow students to exercise their initiative free of the pressures of evaluation, but also will give the faculty an opportunity to judge the effectiveness of their teaching.

Dr. Benedetti came to York from Yale University where he was Chairman of its Acting Program. He has taught at the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, and the Carnegie-Mellon University. He has been a member of the Second City Theatre, a director and actor for the NET Playhouse and the CBS-TV, and a frequent director for the Colorado, Great Lakes, and Ashland Shakespearean Festivals. His first book, *The Actor at Work*, was published last year, and he will write two more by next year.

Quite an impressive host of new faculty join Dr. Benedetti in his new endeavors: Neil Freeman, who taught speech and voice at the University of Alberta; Jeff Henry, former dance and movement teacher with the National Theatre School of Canada; David Pequegnat, costume cutter with the Wardrobe Department of the Stratford Festival; Ernie Schwarz, Director of the Studio Lab Theatre; Norman Welsh, leading Canadian actor; Bill Lord, who has been designer with the Belgian State Theatre and the Canadian National Opera Company; Leon Major, Artistic Director of the St. Lawrence for the Arts; Ken Gass, Director of the Factory Lab Theatre; and Ross Stuart, who came to York from the University of Toronto to teach theatre literature.

The Program in Theatre Arts began its year with a two-day retreat in the country. They sat quietly by a stream, asking themselves just what it was, which they as a group, hoped to do and how they could do it. Their main discoveries were in terms of what they did not want to do. As far as they were concerned, this was an important start.

"The search for positive values is continuing and we will return in the Spring to examine the year and plan ahead."

### Quote of the week

It is good to have an open mind, but be sure that it is not open at both ends.

— A Toronto preacher, *qu.* Willison's Monthly, Oct. 1925. 173.

## Urges universities become detached from society

Eugene V. Rostow, Sterling Professor of Law and former Dean of the Law School at Yale University, delivered the first lecture in the 1971-72 Gerstein Lecture Series on November 17.

In his lecture, Dr. Rostow stressed that "The university necessarily lives in a state of tension between its national and its universal ties," and "That stress can be creative or destructive, depending upon the circumstances".

Considering the historical development of North American universities, as they have evolved from British and continental models, Dr. Rostow said they faced a challenge new to their experience — that of responsibility for fundamental and philosophical thought. "This need," he stated, "is more acute than at any previous time in history because both the inner and the outer world of man is more unstable and more threatening, than any universe in which man has had to live since the collapse of the Roman Empire. It follows that innovative thought is the central problem of the age, and the innovative process a central problem of national policy."

Dr. Rostow characterized his proposals for meeting this challenge as "radical indeed, compared to the prevailing orthodoxy." Rather than having the universities become more practical and mount the barricades, he urged that universities become more detached, more

philosophical and more theoretical. "The life of a university," he said, "is not passionate action, but passionate thought. There are many to undertake action, but only a few capable of indispensable thought."

The environment most favorable to intellectual work of this quality, he continued, is the university apart. "If the university is to serve the nation well," he said, "its moral and intellectual perspectives should continue to be international. A purely national university, confined in its personnel and its outlook, becomes the victim of the state, narrow, parochial and ultimately sterile. My years in Washington and in the United Nations reinforced my conviction that what government needs most from universities is not research assistance and tactical criticism, but the benefit of detached and disciplined scholarship, totally independent and capable of opening new vistas."

This goal will be difficult to achieve, Rostow conceded, because of the empirical bias of the American outlook. But, he contended, the effort must be made if the values of civilization are to survive. "For the ultimate function of the university," Rostow said, "and its ultimate test, is that of forming the elite of the nation and of the world — the men and women who embody two ideals of the nation, exemplify them as a model and transmit them, reconsidered, to the next generation."