

Undergrad writes, produces play: wins Shield

By NANCY WHITE
Dalhousie undergraduate Brian Crocker wrote and produced a play for entitled "The Mediator" for the Phi Delta Theta fraternity during the one-act play competition here last week.

His efforts won the fraternity first place and the Connolly Shield.

Mr. Crocker's outstanding play and other entries in the three-evening event are reviewed for The Gazette.

Bear with me as I don my Linda Gillingwater robes and become last-minute substitute reviewer for the final night of the Connolly Shield play competition held last week at Neptune. It's a great thrill for me, being the first time I've done advance publicity, taken tickets, handed out programs and reviewed the same show. The whole thing has been a rich theatrical experience.

(Here follows a lengthy paragraph in which the writer notes with delight the infinite variety of the various casts, and comments encouragingly on the courage of the Dalhousie Glee and Dramatic Society in holding the show at Neptune and inviting other Halifax universities to participate.)

"The Club Bedroom"

The first of the three plays was "The Club Bedroom" by Louis Auchincloss. And since I have my Gillingwater robes on, I shall delicately describe the script as an abortion. Director Doug French's forte is obviously not the choosing of plays. (Now, acting is another story -- can see him as Senex in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" -- he's something to behold.) But that aside, the production was a pleasing one,

speaking subjectively, of course. Projection was a great problem for all three actresses in the cast, however. Neptune is small enough so that this could surely have been overcome.

All the same, Ronda Crowdis as old Mrs. Ruggles gave an extremely moving performance. She had lowered her voice several notches and changed her own character completely, and she sustained the changes quite well. She spoke those impossible lines with naturalness and, I thought, gave the character a wistful dignity that was quite touching.

Susan Haley did a nice job as Mrs. Ruggles' fast daughter, although her occasional memory lapses were somewhat unnerving, especially with her tendency to recite the next few lines on re-covering. But she is an interesting person to watch on stage and made some memorable gestures with her cigarette. Joan Robb was pleasant as Mrs. Miles, although there was a lot more Robb than Miles in her characterization.

(For some of us, the prize moment for this play came during the adjudication when the adjudicator was going on and on (he hated the play and the production -- hadn't a civil word for it at all) about how tacky the furniture in the set was and how it wasn't the sort of thing wealthy people would ever sit in. And we Shirreff Hall girls giggled shrilly because we could see it was borrowed from the hall library, and the play's producer, Pauline Fitch, had commented earlier that the chairs had recently been re-upholstered.)

"Passion, Poison . . ."

The next production was the Delta Gamma entry, "Passion, Poison and Petrification" by George Bernard Shaw, Shaw, of course, has a delicious sense of humour, and so has Velma Smith,

the director. Working with a cast of relatively inexperienced but obviously talented, players, she gave us a show that was quite professional in many ways.

One of the special things about this show was the number of mad sound cues (e.g. angel choirs singing "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?"), and Susan Miles deserves a bouquet for her work in this department. It's no easy job co-ordinating sound, as anyone connected with "Richard II" will tell you.

Peter Hinton was a wonderful villain. It's a hammy part, but he played it with taste, control, economy of movement and great humour. He was magnificently Shavian. All around me people were saying "Wow, I can't wait to see this guy in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," Feb. 16-19 at Neptune Theatre, can you?" and others answering, "I certainly can't."

Sheila MacDonald was charming as Lady Magnesia. She has a Carol Burnett quality and carried off the play's absurdities well. And Sharon Nicole was quite delightful as her maid. This is one of those cases where you're not sure if you're applauding the actress or the role. No, definitely both, I'd say.

Wayne Jewers was funny as the noble "first martyr to clothes", particularly in his matter-of-fact death scene.

Nancy Corston as the landlady and Rob Robertson as the policeman were camp and competent (competent? no? sorry.) and great fun to watch.

As the doctor, I thought Lynn Bowser lacked authority, but had she done all she did on a much larger scale she'd have been reasonably good.

Obviously a great deal of work went into this production, and it paid off in genuine audience enjoyment.

"The Mediator"

I don't think DGDS did it on purpose, but we somehow saved the best till the last. This was "The Mediator", the only original play among the nine in the festival, and a real coup for Phi Delta Theta fraternity. It was written by Brian Crocker and directed by Brian Crocker, who also happens to be one of the best actors on campus, so it was also a coup for him.

This production was beautifully neat -- everything about it finely chiselled. You could have shot a movie of it and used every frame as a publicity still -- and there aren't many shows that applies to "The Mediator" has unmistakable style.

The lead roles were played

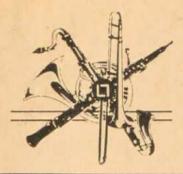
by Sudsy Clarke and Hammy McClymont, who turned it what were for my money the two strongest, most professional pieces of acting in the competition, incredible when you realize they'd rehearsed less than a week. Their moves seemed always right, and they both have a beautiful voice quality. (I've lumped them together because they played a matched set of characters, Velvet and Silk, but they didn't give identical performances. There was individuality of characterization in spite of similarity of costume.)

Tom Dunphy did a good job in a difficult role as the mediator, although by times he didn't seem to be a strong enough threat to the other two characters.

Smaller roles were competently handled by Ted Rowan-Legg as Alfred, and Bob Waind as the lighting director, and Bob's count-down at the beginning of the play was handled very imaginatively indeed.

I hope Brian Crocker takes "The Mediator" a few steps further, for it is certainly worthy of publication. As for the rest of us, we must prepare to follow Brian's career with interest and applause.

The evening ended with the presentation of the Connolly Shield to Phi Delta Theta for "The Mediator". Leslie Campbell won the best actress award; and the plaque for best actor was awarded to a group, the entire cast of the St. Mary's production of "In the Zone". Terry DeWolf was named best director for his



the arts

polished production of "Antigone".

By ROBIN ENDERS

This year's Connolly Shield one-act play competition showed conclusively that the quality of theatre on this campus has improved. The traditional three plays was expanded to nine, with other universities competing for the first time. One play, "The Mediator" was student written, and most of the others were student directed. In general, direction showed imagination and experimentation absent in previous years.

Unfortunately, the first selection on Wednesday night didn't display many of these qualities. Mt. St. Vincent's choice of Jean Genet's "The Maids" was a mistake. This play demands highly skilled acting and directing which was completely beyond the capabilities of those involved. The shifting of roles between the maids as they impersonate their mistress, and the rapid reversing of power, the sado-masochistic seesaw, were obviously recognized by the actresses but were neither subtly nor powerfully executed. Their efforts probably

could have been aided by blocking which would emphasize the continual power play, but this was not done.

"The Maids" contains scenes of perversion, and again, this was recognized but not effectively portrayed. I think that they were as honest as can be expected in their interpretation, but simply were incapable of depicting the depravity of the maid's relationship -- neither the hatred nor the love between them was convincing.

The lesbian and flagellation scenes should have been performed with relish; one can't exactly blame the actresses for not doing this, but again, the choice of play was at fault.

Pat Purcell, as Solange, seemed the most aware of the implications of the script, and although projection was poor at times, she showed promise. Joanne Marini's Madame was well acted but the characterization of this role, again the fault of direction, was so misjudged as to be almost unrecognizable from Genet's original role. Instead of corrupt majesty we were shown coy emptiness. The social issue of the cruelty and thoughtlessness of the ruling classes was overplayed to the detriment of the more interesting human issue in which the Madame seems deliberately to mock the maids attempt to mock her.

The second selection, Cocca's "Antigone" was held together solely by the excellent portrayal of Antigone by Leslie Campbell. With the exception of Tiresias, hers was the only character who was alive, convincing and moving, and capable of demonstrating the central theme of this production -- that the Antigone myth is still vital and relevant to our time.

The play was poorly rehearsed and the once again must fall on the director who showed a fair degree of irresponsibility. At times the costumes and the blocking seemed so stylized that one

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Reporter is fired

MONTREAL (CUP)--A student newspaperman who exposed discriminatory practices in hiring executive staff of the Expo youth pavilion has been fired from Expo 67's youth advisory council.

Harvey Oberfield, arts 3 and a reporter at The Georgian, student paper at Sir George Williams University, was approached last year by the committee and offered the post of public information officer.

He had previously written an article rallying support for the youth pavilion. But when 13 of 14 executive staff members appointed turned out to be French-Canadians, the reporter got off the Expo bandwagon.

He then wrote a letter to a Montreal newspaper condemning this action as discriminatory, urging that action be taken to rectify further paid appointments.

The matter was raised in the House of Commons, when Robert Coates (PC--Cumberland) questioned trade minister Robert Winters as to the validity of statements Oberfield made in his letter.

The minister replied he would look into the matter, and later in the week, reported to the Commons that indeed 13 of the appointees were French-Canadian.

But he maintained no discrimination was involved. Meanwhile, Oberfield received a letter from the youth advisory committee informing him he had been sacked by a unanimous vote of the advisory committee.

Lobbies from coast to coast

This month the Canadian Union of Students and youth wings from all major political parties are trying to dispel a medieval superstition about the number 7.

They're acting in unprecedented concert to have federal and provincial voting ages reduced to 18 by persuading political parties at both government levels to approve private members' bills on the long-standing question.

Back in the Middle Ages, males were cared for by their mothers from birth to age 7. From 7 to 14, they were made pages. During the next 7 years, they came of age. At 21, formally finding themselves to chivalrous conduct, they were knighted and welcomed to majority age.

Thus, argue proponents of change, an arbitrary settlement of voting age was arrived at out of a medieval superstition about the number 7.



Why American students come to Dalhousie

By SHARON COOK
GAZETTE STAFF

Even the most chauvinistic Canadian has to admit that educational opportunities are better and more varied in the United States.

Why, then, are so many American students motivated to study in Canada? Is the reason simply claustrophobia and the desire to learn in a less populated area? Or perhaps the additional mileage between them and their conscription-conscious country will make tracking down prospective draftees a little more time-consuming? Maybe it is the yen to explore unknown territory and venture into the wide open spaces of the Canadian wilderness—a concept of this country that is still accepted by a bewildering number of our southern neighbours.

The Gazette undertook a sampling of some American students at Dalhousie to discover their reasons for attending this University. Here are some comments from a few of the 95 Yankees who constitute 3 per cent of the Student Body:

Eric Kranz:
My reasons for comin' here are simple. I didn't get accepted at any universities in the States; it's the only place where I could play football and become a star; it's small so I won't get lost, and it's far away from home. I also want to dodge the draft and it's tougher to find a "conscientious objector" like me up here. If I did get drafted, I couldn't fight, 'cause in twenty years or less, all those guys in Viet Nam are going to be in a very bad light for what they did... so, I'd rather be in a blockhouse... it's safer in the years to come. Besides that, my father graduated from here...he liked the place.
Barbara Ellison:

My father worked in Halifax for the Canadian Government before, and so I began University here. I haven't made up my mind about Viet Nam -- lack of information -- anyway, I'm prejudiced because I don't like Johnson. Conscription is necessary in order to maintain the Armed Forces.

Rick Rodgers: 27-17-44-10
I escaped from the U.S. with the F.B.I. after me and have applied for a landed immigrant status... was refused deferment on teaching status... could have gotten a C.O. status, but didn't. I graduated from Worcester Junior College. I might go back home on a motorcycle some day to see my relatives.

John Randell:
Education's cheaper here. I've had several deferments and I'd go, if I got drafted...it's all built up in the newspaper--chances of going to Viet Nam aren't as great as publicized. I'll beat it as long as I can, but the obligation to go is there.

Beth Coombs:
Some of my relatives went to Kings and it's experience in a country about which I know nothing...this campus is small with large opportunities; beating the draft doesn't hold because I know of one Kings student being pulled out, so tabs are kept on us.

Benny Emery:
I had a friend here three years ago, who really liked the place, and I can play football here. It's a different country and I like it. It's stupid to go home, bitch about Halifax and Canada and then come back like many do... it doesn't show too much intelligence. I've had four deferments but I'd fight in Viet Nam if I hadda.



BRIAN CROCKER, shown here in his role as the Prefect in the recent production of "Right You Are," wrote and directed the prize-winning play for the Connolly Shield one-act play competition. "The Mediator" was sponsored by Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

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CAMPUS EVENTS
Feb. 9 Centennial Film Festival Rm. 117, Sir James Dunn Science Bld. - 8:00 p.m.
Feb. 10 Hockey at Mount Allison Dal vs. Mt. A. - 8:00 p.m. Basketball, U.N.B. at Dal (women's) - 8:00 p.m. Basketball, U.N.B. at Dal (women's) J.V. - 6:00 p.m.
On Friday, February 10 at 8:30 the Haliburton at King's College will host the King's Players who will present an evening of A.A., Milne stories, songs, and poems. All are welcome refreshments served. Haliburton Room, King's College.
Feb. 11 Hockey, Dal at U. de Moncton - 7:00 p.m. Basketball, Mt. St. Bernard at Dal (women's) - 3:00 p.m.
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