

arts

Camino Real highlight of season

by Lawrence Wargrave

Here follows an article with an unusually small amount of sarcasm for this critic.

Studio Theatre's production of Tennessee William's *Camino Real* is good. Good to excellent acting. Fine direction. An interesting and colorful set.

Terrific considering Director Mark Schoenberg has picked a difficult play — one rarely done due to its large cast and highly abstract abstruseness. *Camino Real* is a play drama people like to tag as 'expressionistic'. While this most frequently means that no one especially understands the plays, such a label can generally be taken to mean a play that has a dreamlike quality and that in some way evolves from the source of the writer's Congo River of the soul. William's play basically involves a motley mixture of characters (such as Lord Byron, Kilroy of "Kilroy was here fame", Casanova, Marguerite Gautier of Camille fame) who are stranded in some sort of limbo on Camino Real, a section of hotels and bars in some unspecified Latin American country.

Because of the personal and consequently diffuse nature of the play any further explanation of plot and theme would take up the next three thousand issues of the *Gateway* and could not possibly describe all facets of the play. Very wisely, Director Schoenberg has realized that this play could never be completely and logically assimilated by an audience but rather that it must be directed at some warp seven point four level of each audience member's subconscious. In workman-like fashion, perhaps too slickly workman-like fashion, Schoenberg simply raises the curtain on his production and lets it flow. The result is a production that bathes if not at times floods the audience with William's nightmarish visions.

The play has a cast of over fifty and Schoenberg has done an excellent job of choosing

actors. The many minor and walk on parts are filled by people who must live on Camino Real once they finish work. Amazingly, performers in minor roles, as well as major ones, act with an admirable amount of concentration and focus. Consequently Schoenberg is able to present extremely complex scenes, both emotionally and physically with at times overwhelming and symphonic smoothness.

Most notable in the cast are two final B.F.A. students in major roles. Howard Storey, as Kilroy, is excellent, blending with his head and gut all the kindness, brusqueness, broken-heartedness and American bravado within his role. After some early forays

towards grasping an approach to his character of Jacques Casanova, Rick Stojan brings forth an equally memorable portrayal of a torn and wavering denizen of Camino Real. While not wishing to detract from the many merits of this production I felt that Heather MacCallum's portrayal of the female lead, Marguerite Gautier was too intense and also peaked too early. Also perhaps Miss MacCallum's voice lacked the range and variety necessary for the character.

Because of both picturesque costumes by Jill Moffat and make-up, and Larry Kadlec's suggestive set, the actors could have just stood on stage and to use a cliché, conveyed thousands of words. While some performers

started speaking and slowly began to squander their thousand word bonus, they failed to detract greatly from the overall impact of the production.

Something in my gut tells me that the production came off just a little too slick to call it great or even excellent. Perhaps I have endured too many of the banquet for coprophagans (look that one up) offered by Edmonton theatre people over recent years. Perhaps I tried to rationalize too much for an expressionistic play. Nevertheless, Studio Theatre's production of *Camino Real* is by far the best theatre Edmonton has been offered this year. The production runs until December 14 — make every effort to see it.

Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" Edmontonians will have the opportunity to enjoy them again, as Phase II Theatre presents a special adaptation of this favorite Christmas story.

The Edmonton Planetarium will be the backdrop for this multi-media production which will fully utilize the special setting and equipment that the Planetarium provides. Technically, the presentation will involve the use of: the star machine, astral effects, the gyroscopic sound system (with music specifically devised for this system), and six projectors for 40 drawings.

Performances of "A Christmas Carol" will be held nightly except Mondays, from December 10 through to December 22, at 9:00 p.m. (following the Planetarium's regular show). Matinees will be held December 14, 15, 21, and 22 at 1:00 p.m.

Tickets will cost \$1.00 for adults, 50 cents for students and senior citizens, and 25 cents for children. Tickets will be available on the day of each performance, and at the door.

Citadel

The Citadel's touring company, the Citadel-on-Wheels, returns to town to present two of their productions this Christmas.

Halfway through their eight-month touring stint, the "Wheels" company will be staging *The Rainstone* and *Tales from Everywhere*, from December 18th thru 28th (except 21st, 24th and 25th) in the morning and afternoon at the Citadel.

The Rainstone, which is for children seven and under with an adult, is based on an old Japanese folk legend and is written by the company's director, Irene N. Watts. The show tells the story of a founding boy who saves his village from drought by called on the aid of the Rain Dragon.

Tales from Everywhere contains a collage and series of improvisations based on folk stories and legends, and includes songs, dance and tales. The stories contain a great deal of humour, and one calls for complete audience participation.

Admission is only 75 cents for children and \$1.00 for adults. For tickets, and detailed information on performance times, call 424-2828.

Sylvia Tyson explores radio broadcasting

Canadian folksinger Sylvia Tyson is hosting a CBC Radio show entitled "Touch the Earth"; ninety minutes of contemporary folk music with a smattering of blues and country. The program includes live folk concerts recorded on location, introductions to new singer-songwriters, and documentaries on various aspects of the folk world. It is broadcast weekly on CBX 740 in Edmonton, Tuesdays at 10:30 p.m. and on CBC-FM, Sundays at 5:30 p.m.

Sylvia's main contribution is to interview guest artists. "They aren't interviews as much as conversations," Sylvia says emphatically. "I know a lot of the people personally and naturally, we have a lot in common."

Sylvia Tyson is a performer who's been making Canadian history since before the days of Gordon Lightfoot and Joni Mitchell; a composer, possessor of an international reputation; and a lady who is very much down to earth.

In 1959 she went to Toronto, determined to be a folk singer. Soon afterwards she met Ian Tyson, a commercial artist and sometime cowboy and rodeo rider from British Columbia. They formed a duo, singing the rounds of coffee houses and folk clubs. They evolved a brilliant singing style, based on their separate backgrounds and common link of musicianship, which launched them on a successful songwriting and performing career.

Although Sylvia can no longer be typed as a pure folk singer, she is still very much influenced by roots music — folk, blues, country. She now writes and sings mostly in the blues idiom, while Ian is more into country. "There's no better training than folk music; it's been distilled over the years, become so refined, it's great for songwriters to learn it."

Sylvia began writing songs

about a dozen years ago, her first was "You Were On My Mind". Since then, she's written over 200; their current repertoire consists largely of songs written by both Tysons, individually and jointly. She hopes to have a new single coming out soon, "Yesterday's Dreams", which Ian produced. "I consider it's the best thing I've ever done, in terms of writing and performing; it's the first important session of this kind," Sylvia enthuses.

Sylvia has just sold the idea of an original musical on a Canadian historical theme to the

CBC-TV variety department, with Sylvia in the dual role as performer-arranger. Later this season, CBC-TV will telecast *Touch a Legend*, a musical tour of the Trail of '98 during the Yukon gold rush for which the Tysons wrote the music and in which they act as hosts. But while she is better known through her concert and TV appearances, it's plain Sylvia enjoys being involved in radio. "Radio takes the pressure off appearance, you don't have to worry about makeup," she laughs.

Kim St. Clair

Symphony's Christmas concert

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Pierre Hetu, and the Edmonton Symphony Chorus under the direction of John Barnum will present a choral concert December 21-22 at the Jubilee Auditorium.

Diane Loeb will sing the Mezzo part in *the Gloria*, as well as "But who may abide the day of His coming" by Handel. Ms Loeb has had extensive experience in recitals, concerts and opera. She has won a number of awards, the latest being Regional Finalist for the Metropolitan Oper National Council Auditions.

In addition to the soprano part in *thy Gloria*, Yolande Delauriers will sing "Rejoice" from *The Messiah* and the

Andante from *The Christmas Cantata* by Scarlatti.

The Edmonton Symphony Chorus was originally founded to sing a specific performance of *The Messiah* with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra approximately ten years ago. This mass chorus of over 90 persons combined with soloists and the music of a professional orchestra will be the ideal start to a joyous Christmas season.

Tickets are \$4.00, \$5.00, \$6.00, \$7.00 at the Symphony Box Office, Jubilee Auditorium (enter via Stage Door) 433-2020 (24 hrs), and the Box Office, the Bay Downtown 424-0121. Rush tickets on sale at the door one hour before concert time; \$1.00 for students, \$2.00 for non-students.

