

Poor quality hinges! but...

'What the Butler Saw' was still worth seeing, too

By PAM SAUNDERS

The UNB Drama Society presented Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw" Nov. 23, 24, 25. This outrageous modern British farce was handled well by the cast in a fast paced production that realized most of Orton's satire.

The play involved the misadventures of a psychiatrist, Dr. Prentice (John Timmins), who in the process of hiring a secretary became caught in an incredible tangle of mistaken identities and motives. Timmins was outstanding successfully portraying the rather bewildered cynicism of the doctor, and his growing desperation as events get out of control. Timmins exploited the comic possibilities of the part, particularly in Act 1.

The secretary, Geraldine Barclay (Mary Freeze) was the innocent victim, who did nothing but protest helplessly about her plight. While the part was one dimensional, Freeze failed to create a believable character the

audience could sympathize with. She was too assured, and not sufficiently frightened and primly outraged by the whole episode. Mrs. Prentice (Nicole Picot), sophisticated, cool and controlled, humoured her husband's antics, but eventually lost her calm and her reason. Picot handled her role with authority, projecting the cynicism, distainfulness and sense of superiority which the part demanded. Her diction was extremely clear.

Nicholas Beckett (Sean Clark), an employee of a hotel of dubious quality, became mixed up in the mistaken identity farce. His was a purely humorous role, realized by Clark's ease on stage, his development of a brash, easy-going stage personality, and his authentic British accent.

An inspector by the name of Dr. Rance (Matthew Hendrickson) visited Dr. Prentice unexpectedly, and not surprisingly, he too lost his sanity by the end of the inspection. Hendrickson obviously

enjoyed himself, and grew mad by degrees most convincingly. On occasions, his speech was too rapid to be fully understood.

John Lawrence as Sergeant Match, solemn, dutiful and unshakingly rational served as a foil to the rest of the cast. The imposition of imperturbable Brit-

ish justice into this madhouse was hilarious.

The place built up gradually, climaxing in a frantic chase/shooting/reunion that was chaotic on stage, but came off well considering the difficulties involved. Orton's totally farcical conclusion was unexpected, and

undercut some of the realistic satire seen earlier in the play.

The set was well thought out and constructed, despite the fact that a crucial door came off its hinges in the final performance!

Generally, it was a very competent performance of a difficult play.

The CBC Air Farce hits the air

Five years ago in snow-blown Richmond Hill, Ont. a nervous cast of five and a curious audience of 150 gathered in a small theatre to go through the strange ritual known in broadcasting as a pilot.

The term must have some connection with test flights, since in broadcasting circles it's just that: the test of an idea to see if it takes off.

This particular pilot was called The Royal Canadian Air Farce. The pilot took off, and the Farce has been flying high ever since.

The first episode was broadcast Sunday, Dec. 9, 1973 on CBC Radio, and now, 151 episodes later, Air Farce is celebrating its fifth anniversary. To mark the five-year milestone, the pilot episode will be re-broadcast, Sun. Dec. 10 at 1:05 p.m., 2:05 a.m., 2:35 nst, 4:05 p.m. And on CBC stereo it will be heard Sat. Dec. 9 at 10:30 a.m., 11, Nfld.

Over the years, Air Farce's unique comedy has developed hit status and a loyal following, attracting one of CBC Radio's largest listening audiences. Writer-performers Roger Abbot, Dave Broadfoot, Don Ferguson, Luba Goy and John Morgan fill their weekly half-hour with comic characterizations from the sublime (Trudeau, Clark, Carter, The Queen) to the ridiculous, their own inventions such as the inarticulate jock Bobby Clobber, the quasi lewd Pastor Quagmire,

the vegetable-mad scientist Heir-onymous Wombat, the outrageous dowager Amy de la Pompa, and Dave Broadfoot's zany Renfrew of the Mounted.

The original episode to be re-broadcast is still typical of Air Farce lunacy. It begins with a K-Tel commercial parody. Next comes Dave Broadfoot in his first Air Farce appearance as Sergeant Renfrew. "The story you are about to hear," he intones, "has been taken from the files of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. And until now has not been missed." He and his canine companion Cuddles set out to solve the case of the Resdan Smugglers.

Then come sketches involving marriage counselling, boring people, coffee shop encounters with opinionated crazies, and medical madness in the operating room. There's a Temporary News report with targets which were topical at the time. Rather less so

now, they still haven't lost their punch. The show winds up with what used to be a regular feature, the home life of Pierre and Margaret.

Re-broadcasting the original show is just one of the ways Air Farce is marking its fifth birthday. During December there'll be more replays of highlights from past seasons. In addition, CBC is releasing The Air Farce Comedy Album, a stereo LP featuring 45 minutes of Air Farce favorites. The album costs \$6.98 (including postage). A cheque made out to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and sent to Learning Systems, Box 500, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1E6, will bring you your very own album to laugh at and cherish.

Make a date to join the birthday party with the Royal Canadian Air Farce, Sun. Dec. 10 on CBC Radio. More fun than a picnic!

CBC plays it again with Bob Pye

When veteran record buff, Bob Pye, first began to compile a music library, he probably never dreamed that one day he would have a priceless collection of over 20,000 recordings featuring piano rolls, ancient gramophone discs and early radio broadcasts. This rich treasury of recording history can be enjoyed this winter when CBC Radio's nostalgia series, Play It Again, Bob, returns for a new season on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 8:04 p.m. (8:34 nst).

Play It Again, Bob looks at the first thirty years of recording history, presenting in-depth musical profiles on the early stars, and including recorded personal re-

mini scences and studio interviews with some of the surviving artists. he series also showcases music from the teens, twenties and thirties, performed by the original singers and orchestras.

This season, Pye will look at Broadway during the twenties and thirties, present a special on the early comedy teams and showcase the talents of such stars as Al Jolson, Bing Crosby and Ethel Merman (heard in their very first recordings). Play It Again, Bob will also examine the early movie musicals and feature many of the earliest recorded singers including John McCormack and the immortal Enrico Caruseo.

Canadian troupe tours world

Eight years of pioneering experience, both individual and collective, went into the creation of this new theatre enterprise. This accounts for the fact that Theatre Beyond Words is one of

Canada's most seasoned professional ensembles, and puts them on a par with the world's finest mime companies.

Rehearsing and performing year round, producing their own material, this talented group of performers tries to fill the ever-increasing demand for the entertainment they have to offer. Their unique style of ensemble mime has been a revelation for the public and has earned them outstanding international critical acclaim.

Theatre Beyond Words starts where Marcel Marceau left off, assuring that mime does not remain a museum art, but continues to grow and expand into an ever rejuvenating form of entertainment.

Theatre Beyond Words presents "visual theatre". Based on mime, it moves far beyond the concept of the white-faced clown picking imaginary flowers. It is silent, where silence is stronger than words, but marries sound, music and vocalization with movement and gesture. Their show mixes "ferocious comedy, occasionally with lyrical mysticism, sometimes with grace." It is above all appealing to audiences of all ages and all walks of life.

During 1978-79, Theatre Beyond Words tours throughout Canada and next season has invitations to tour France and the Soviet Union as well as to return to Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

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