

Entertainment

"let's cut the re-bop!"
—T. Williams—

Ready or not, here we come...

Vivian Bercovici

"The story is simple and direct, yet highly entertaining for the audience; healthy acting with no heavy philosophizing."

When a play hints at such lofty heights, as York Theatre's upcoming production of *Hide and Seek* does, it's worth seeing.

Written in 1975 by Lesley Havard, a Canadian national, *Hide and Seek* has previously been produced (under the title *Jill*) by several Canadian companies and ran for a short time on Broadway. Currently residing in California, Ms. Havard is negotiating for a film adaptation of the play.

Ron Singer, York faculty member and *Hide and Seek* director, exudes enthusiasm over the script, explaining that the "be all and end all is not avant-garde. Students must be able to bridge the gap between the crass commercial and the avant-garde. They should be experiencing everything."

Singer chose the play, "to give them the contrast. Many of them will be working for the CBC or CTV and they must be able to cope with this (commercial work)."

As he states in his program notes, the "*Hide and Seeks* of this world are show business staples."

Singer's exuberance reverberates throughout the cast and crew. As Sherri Lee Guilbert, a third-year performance student playing one of the female roles, explains, "it's not conceptual, it's a basic play." This, she feels, is very beneficial, because it provides the students with a better opportunity to develop their acting than would a more difficult or highly interpretative script.

Guilbert describes Singer's direction as being "very demanding on his actors requiring a lot of homework and, especially, that you know your character."

In return, though, he "gives you something concrete to grab onto. He's both (a professional and a teacher) and he makes you be a professional. Ron gives us the right questions but lets us find the answers."

To which Dan Lett, the male lead of *Hide and Seek*, quickly adds between scenes, "Singer's concept is: Action creates Character."

Singer brings to this production a wealth of experience from the amateur and professional worlds. He speaks of his "method" as a cumulative process, drawing from his experiences both on this

continent and in Europe. He further stresses the importance of "bringing an approach to the company to work on the text with unified clarity."

As another cast member interprets, "A character has an intention in a scene, with motivations. Ron provides us with tactics to achieve these intentions."

No one seems to be capable of

clearly articulating this "technique" which, Singer points out, is very experimental. "I may fall flat on my face," he states frankly.

This doesn't seem likely to happen, though, if the strong feeling of accomplishment and learning amongst this production is any indication of success.

This keen admiration and



Anne Cooke, Antonella Lorasso, and Dan Lett: bulging talent.

Bryon Johnson

respect is mutual, as Singer refers to this as "one of the most delightful productions I've ever worked on. They've thrown themselves in it with a kind of enthusiasm that you can't often

find amongst jaded professionals or amateurs.

"Occasionally, you run into a circumstance where everything clicks, and you long for that."

That, is *Hide and Seek*.

Sex changed elephants, etc.

Michael Monastyrskij

Imagine a place, an average suburb where people take pet elephants for walks and then exchange the elephants for two inch long boa constrictors. Uncle Ted, who is a woman, comes by train to this city, listens to a fifteen minute church service on the radio and then takes the train home. Of course this bizarre but enjoyable suburb doesn't exist, but it did last Saturday at the Samuel Beckett Theatre.

A *Resounding Tinkle*, written by N.F. Simpson, is a light farce that pokes fun at some of the inanities of suburban life. Throughout the hour-long comedy, the playwright twists normal customs and events in order to create absurd situations.

He does this right from the start. When the two principal characters, Bro and Middle Paradock, first appear on stage, they are arguing over what to call their new pet. There is nothing particularly odd about that until we find out that the animal is an elephant.

When Uncle Ted comes to visit, the three people talk, listen to the radio and propose toasts. The toasts, strangely, are not followed by a round of drinks but by the

silent readings of paragraphs describing the origin of the universe.

On paper this may not tickle your funny bones, but through the impressive acting skills of Jackie Wray (Middle), Elliot Royle (Bro), and Heather Sherman (Uncle Ted), the comedic lines come alive.

For the jokes to work, the characters must accept the play's absurd twists as every day occurrences. Often when the audience guffawed it was because of the dead pan way with which a character would make an outlandish statement. The best example of this occurs when Uncle Ted surprises the Paradocks with a visit and Middle calmly observes,

"Oh I see you've had a sex change."

Towards the end of the show the actors seemed to realize just how funny the lines they uttered were. After reciting their absurd lines in their usual calm manner, they would finish with a touch of a smile gracing their lips. In the small Beckett Theatre the audience picked up on the expression and dissolved into laughter more than once.

If you didn't see *A Resounding Tinkle* you missed out on a good time. But don't kill yourself yet, because between January 29 and 31 The Samuel Beckett Theatre will be presenting *Death* by Woody Allen, directed by Ric Sarabia or *Crunchy Sarabia*.



Cast members of *Tinkle* put the squeeze on their director.

Anderson Lookin

The earth is a depot, where Wingless Angels pass the time waiting for the long ride home. Seeing a small boy smiling in the corner I said, "You must be anxious to get home."

"I am home," he replied, "I just come here to play the games!"

—Oliver Mankin 1903

Ric dies laughing

Elliott Lefko

If Ric Sarabia has an army of clones, he isn't telling anyone. Yet he must because he seems to be everywhere and anywhere, all at once.

A third-year-theatre performance student, he is also the main man behind *Despite Straight Lines Productions* (chosen from a David Bowie rejected album title). This Thursday in the Beckett Theatre, Sarabia will be directing his fifth play in the last two seasons, *Woody Allen's Death*.

Previous Sarabia-*Despite* productions have included Edward Albee's *Counting The Ways*, *Cop Out* by John Guare, and two Sam Shepard plays, *Cowboy Mouth* and *Seduced*. Along the way the company has grown from Sarabia and his girlfriend to a bulging figure of 30-35 people.

For Sarabia, the productions are a "learning experience. You don't get enough chances to perform and direct in the Theatre Department. So this year I got the job as manager of the Beckett

theatre students, but for people who were genuinely interested in the production."

Death begins tonight at 8 p.m., Friday at 8 and midnight (licensed from 11:30), and Saturday at 8 p.m. Tonight can't arrive fast enough for Sarabia, who claims that *Death* isn't funny anymore. "We've been rehearsing so much that I don't know what's funny anymore. But that's the risk you take with comedy. You have to wait for the feedback. It could be nothing, or..."

"This isn't the

movies, Kleinman!"



Theatre so I could do more.

"I'm also learning technique aspects of the theatre. You can take courses, like how to manage a theatre, but first-hand experience is the best."

Sarabia has found his three years to be informative. "I wouldn't be here if I wasn't getting what I need from the classes," says the energetic and outgoing youth. "I'm really excited by *Coriolanus*—a war play by Shakespeare, which is the final major theatre production of the year. I'm excited, but I'm also scared. It's going to be quite a challenge to pull it off."

While considering himself primarily an actor, Sarabia will continue to direct productions including some children's theatre at The Tarragon Theatre later this year as well as an entry in the New Canadian Play Festival the week of April 6, also at The Tarragon.

Commenting on this week's production of *Death*, which includes a cast of 20, Sarabia claims that it's "a lucrative challenge to organize everybody and everything. I deliberately didn't look for

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