

Brussels Sprouts worth watching at the Factory

By RON GRANER

Brussels Sprouts at Factory Lab Theatre, a new play written by Larry Kardish, is almost a delight from beginning to end. I say almost because the ending is a bore. This alone would have been forgivable had it been tagged onto a lesser work but the main body outshines its end.

Stunningly directed by Stephen Katz, the play is a tour de force for its three actors Don Le Gros, Ken Wulff and Sue Helen Petrie, who are on the stage all the time.

The action takes place during a night's stay in a Brussels hotel, Ernie and Moby arrive to recuperate from a disastrous motor scooter ride. Neither of them can drive worth a damn and are barely alive by the time they arrive.

By a clever stroke the author and director begin the action off stage. The audience faces the bare hotel room and we hear Moby and Ernie enter, crash up and down the stairs, try to use their key on the wrong room and get propositioned in the

hallway before we get to look at them.

When they finally appear, there has been tremendous curiosity aroused.

One would expect the dramatic intensity to fall down in much the same way it does in a horror movie, when we finally do get to see the monster, but Ernie and Moby live up to our expectations and more.

They are typical tourists, young, American, wearing all the outlandish gear usual to their lot; faded and torn army reject jeans, American flags and boldly painted cycle helmets. Not only that, but they come complete with a tourist mentality. A sort of moronic unconsciousness bordering on complete lunacy. They are dedicated to seeing the greatest number of sights with the least amount of appreciation. While they do not quite succeed in transplanting the cultural wasteland of Akron, Ohio to Belgium, they do manage to cover the dresser of their two-dollar hotel room and its dime store Madonna,

with a pile of soiled shorts and dirty sweat socks.

If I said that Ernie and Moby are typical tourists then I am wrong. In actual fact they are super tourists, who manage to lace genius into their stupidity.

Ernie and Moby are tied to each other by a key because he is physically inept, but Moby is really no better. He can fit the key in the lock, but he is not able to find the right room. Each craves the other as his physical and emotional counterpart but there is a part missing that could bring the two together. That piece (sic) is Charlotte who appears as their guardian angel in a dirty tee shirt and the most wicked and knowing smile I have ever seen on a woman.

While Ernie and Moby are out taking a bath Charlotte steals into their room and commandeers one of the beds and all the pillows.

When the two return, in the dark,



there is a comedy of errors while the trio establish their sexes.

The rest of the act is a dream, a wonderful surrealist dream with camels on fifth avenue and Arabs in Singapore.

While Charlotte weaves her spell over Moby and Ernie, we suspect that we are watching part of an endless ritual that has happened in the past and will again occur in the future. That in some strange way we are allowed to explore a great emptiness in which we also dwell. The first act ends as the three pull their beds together to reproduce that void and make themselves whole.

The second act begins the morning after. Ernie has gained what confidence Moby has lost. Charlotte has got what she was after but has emptied herself in the process. Ernie can now use his key.

Brussels sprouts reverses the procedure by which most plays operate. Instead of building to a climax, Brussels sprouts falls to a Nadir. The effect however, is no less stimulating.

The play comes to an almost satisfactory ending as Charlotte disappears into thin air, as does the two boys' motor scooter.

Could she be the same girl who stole Ernie's wallet the week before? Do the events of the previous night endlessly repeat with small variations to the unknown future?

The author in a short coda or epilogue tries to answer the question but somehow has lost hold of the logic and the idea that built the rest of his sonata.

I suspect that he tried to write the ending a few months after he had finished the rest of the work. He has hopelessly intellectualized a process that is really better off left unconscious.

The main body of the play is a dream. We do not necessarily understand all the events but we feel perfectly at ease resting in its logic. To think it out is to rob it of its flow.

This the author has done. He has stopped the flow and with it our interest. It is a shame that after two hours of delight we are confronted with fifteen minutes of boredom.

Fortunately the play is complete enough to survive without the coda. The end can simply be scissored out. All in all, very much worth watching.

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The magazine will sell for \$1.00 and probably be on sale at the Atkinson Week-end and Central Square. The aim of WAVES is to provide "a focus for creative minds" at York. With luck, it might just do that. Contributions for issue No. 2 are now being accepted at Room 141, Petrie Science Building.

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