

Better season for Passe Muraille and Global Village

Success of small theatres adds to new boom

By BRIAN PEARL

Toronto's theatres, big and small alike, are going to have a genuine boom year. Not only are the best plays and talent on the international stage making their way to Toronto for the first time, but the long hard years of development and experimentation by the smaller theatre companies with intimate theatre are beginning to pay off. But I think that the success of the smaller theatres is, in the long run, far more important than that of the large houses which cater to popular tastes and proven styles.

Theatre Passe Muraille's first play of the new season is called *Free Ride* and in the magnificent

tradition of all those golden essays on *What I did For My Summer Vacation*, it is about hitch-hiking across Canada, a contemporary participatory sport played by a hundred thousand Canadians this summer.

The play was written by the cast of six and, not surprisingly, is a series of sketches. The locals of the cast moves westward with each blackout; the opening departure from the tearful, threatening parents to the finale in Vancouver where the travellers turn around and come right back again.

The show is natural, honest, true-to-life touching and funny. All the actors multiple roles, but standouts

include (as usual) Saul Rubinek and Paul Thompson. Thompson was especially fine as a rider who goes schizophrenic to escape the claustrophobia of a crammed Volks between Kenora and Winnipeg.

Thompson's directing was often quite good, such as the use of people to simulate the body of the cramped Volks. But the staging of the play often was uncoordinated and lines delivered upstage were lost in the noise of the shifting backstage for the next scene. The set design was very functional but only slightly appealing to the eye, which is not too bad a compromise. The cast said they had a bad night and that I

should see a good one before reviewing the play, but I enjoyed myself thoroughly and suggest you go on a better night than I did, and enjoy it more.

The *Golden Screw* at the Global Village is a series of skits and songs wrapped about the story of the meteoric rise to superstardom of a folksinger. The play was written and directed by Tom Sanky, a tall blond-haired New York playwright who started with the Shakespeare Festival Company there (the group that brought you *Hair*). He won an Obie theatre award in 1967 for the off-broadway production of *The Golden Screw*. Sanky is also the lead singer with a fine, honest voice: a very talented guy.

The play is divided between alternately biting skits and burning songs with a rising pitch to self-destruction and a cyclical return to the beginning, pugged and renewed.

All the cast, musicians and actors, were into the play and knew what they were doing. The musicians supplied the poetry and the actors did satire, a potent combination. One of the best songs was a folk-rocker called *Burn It Down*, a ballad about the destruction of an Asian hamlet and its people by Americans. At song's end is a call for revolution in the States to end the possibility such atrocity could happen again. My favourite skit was the *Impressario*, played by Elan Ross Gibson with shattering volume and grossness.

By the time the mythical superstar gets through all the hypes and ego-trips surrounding his popularity and cuts out for the simple past, we can see the truth in the opening song, the simplest and best in the play, entitled *A Song to Sing*

You know I got a song to sing,
A song that I alone can sing,
A song that I alone can hear,
It's in my heart and not my ear,
And I'm gonna' sing it for myself.

Passe Muraille in Trinity Square and the *Global Village* on Wellesley near Bay, are both alive and well and living in Toronto. The Village is nervously awaiting a well-deserved grant from the Ontario Arts Council and *Passe Muraille* already gets assistance from both the province and the Canada Council. The *Passe Muraille* company is showing far more strength this year than they did last year, when they were getting it together, and for all the criticisms of their "mumbling and giggling", the fact is that's the play's the thing, not the style.

Global Village will produce a lot of new plays this year, including a new work by Bob Swerdlow, whose last play *Justine* is opening this month off-Broadway in New York under the new title *Love me, Love my Children*.

The admission for students at both *Passe Muraille* and *Global Village* is \$2.00, which is still cheaper than a film and a lot more interesting.

The Move fight rumors of breaking up with new album

By STEVE GELLER

Despite the countless rumors that *The Move* have broken up, their third album, *Message From the Country* (Capitol Records ST-811) which was released a few weeks ago is an indication that the group is still very much together.

Actually *The Move* have been together since 1966 but have not seen the inside of a recording studio very often. The reason for *The Move's* smallish record output is that they're nearly always too busy moving up and down England doing one-nighters. The group originated from Birmingham and decided not to take up residence in London for the sole purpose of more recognition. Drummer Bev Bevin explains that "today we're as close to celebrities as Birmingham has but we've kept all our old friends because we've never tried to come on superior. We still all go out together and get pissed

with the geezers from the meat market."

Originally, *The Move* came across as being one of the most commercial showcases ever to come out of England. These darlings of destruction were into smashing TV sets and cars and flashing picture-tube likenesses of Hitler and other such celebrities on a screen behind them. The group wore Capone outfits and did Motown-style dances on stage.

These antics were left in the past and *The Move* and their public seem happier because of it. Looking back on their now legendary routines, lead singer Carl Wayne explains that "we were never terribly happy about the idea. All the energy we wanted to channel towards projecting our music properly, we expended instead on exploiting these visual gimmicks which were very dangerous. When we used to stick axes through televisions, someone could have lost an eye or something."

With *Message From the Country*, *The Move* again progressed, this time along the lines of their own musical abilities. Some of their middle-phase satire is still very much present and evident with cuts such as *Don't Mess Me Up* and *Ben Crawly Steel Company*. The latter cut is an excellent take-off on the country and western sound and this particular stab follows right through with its timing and lyrical implications.

The rest of *Message From the Country* shows *The Move's* potential. Pieces such as *It Wasn't My Idea* and the title tune, *Message From the Country*, allow the group to display their ability to diversify and control their sound. The use of various wind instruments introduces a new euphoric element to *The Move's* already extensive diversifications. *Message From the Country* can only point to future good things from an energetic music ensemble.



Lights, Camera, Action!

Rip-Off — a first rate script

By DAN MERKUR

I saw *Rip-Off* at the *New Yorker* last week. I was talking with Don Shebib, who made last year's *Goin' Down the Road* as well, and his five principal players last spring before production and from the way they described it, I expected *Rip-Off* to be another small, trying to be nice but badly flawed movie. It wasn't. It was a lot better. I had a very good time watching it.

It's a story about four typical kids, in their final high school years, looking for their first women, not knowing what they're going to do with themselves exactly, getting stoned and given hell in class, trying to put together a rock group and failing, trying to get together a commune and failing. One kid drops out of school and finds himself a woman. The others are headed for college. A typical, real story.

The script was first rate, bringing out the pressures and conflicts within the kids, showing the maturing of the various boys, centering on the major character, a tall red-headed nice guy played by Don Scardino, a tall, skinny, red-headed nice guy trying to make it in the picture business. The film is just full of lovely scenes. One really brilliant one had Scardino come home about six in the morning after failing to get his commune going, and seeing his father, played by Hugh Webster, making himself breakfast and going out to work.

"I never knew you got up at this hour," says the son. The old man explains, "Only when I work the morning shift. There's no point waking your mother." Insight into father as seen through the boy. The boy sees what it is to be a man and understands why the father really wants him to go to university, which he couldn't get excited about. Shebib doesn't dwell on whether university is a valid exercise or not.

Shebib's work with his cast is admirable. Some

of the kids were pros. One, Peter Gross, was in theatre at York until the film offer came up. Others were complete amateurs. The work Shebib got from them was fresh, honest, warm, natural for the most part. The scenes of conflict, of outward anger or internal anguish, were almost as well done. The scripting was good enough to show conflict while drunk, allowing the players to argue while smiling, a tricky scene to watch, not so hard a scene to play. Very good work.

Richard Leiterman's cinematography (*Warrendale*, *A Married Couple*, *Goin' Down the Road*) is improving and gaining absolute polish. The sound work was good. The editing was tight and unobtrusive, the way it should be.

Rip-Off is not a comedy; it's a serious drama about the lives of some close friends who are shown to share some really good times and a few really bad ones. It's a really nice movie. I went alone. I was a little depressed. I came out smiling.

The Ontario Film Theatre out at the Science Centre is having a festival of five Harry Langdon features, a silent comedian mostly ignored today but ranked back then with Chaplin, Keaton and Harold Lloyd. His gag-man and writer and director of two features was Frank Capra, who later became one of the most important directors around, taking three Oscars, making the first million dollar movie and a lot of simply delightful films. Incidentally Capra will be in town this November and should be coming up to York.

The films the OFT are showing are: *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp* (1926) tonight, October 14; *The Strong Man* (1926, directed by Capra), Oct. 21; *Long Pants* (1927, directed by Capra), Oct. 28; *Three's A Crowd* (1927) Nov. 4 and *The Chaser*, (1928) Nov. 11. All dates are Thursdays at 8 p.m.

MCLAUGHLIN SOCIAL AFFAIRS

118 McLaughlin College — 635-3506

weekly

Thursday, October 14

McLaughlin-Winters Afternoon Concerts

From 12 noon to 2 pm in Winters Dining Hall, this week featuring:

Horace Hind and his brass quintett

Friday, October 15
Saturday, October 16

Earth Weekend Concerts

Three shows from 9 pm on in Argh! Coffee Shop, room 051 McLaughlin College. This week featuring:

Sy Potma

Thursday, October 21

McLaughlin-Winters Afternoon Concerts

From 12 noon to 2 pm in McLaughlin Dining Hall, this week featuring: Oktoberfest fun with:

The Bavarian Villagers

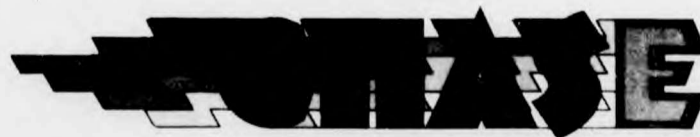
Friday, October 22
Saturday, October 23

Earth Weekend Concerts

From 9 pm on in Argh! Coffee Shop, room 051 McLaughlin College. This week:

Peter Naugler

Sunday, October 24



in concert

8 pm in Tait McKenzie Gym. Tickets \$3.00 (\$2.50 York students) available at the York Bookstore and all Eaton's attraction offices.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS FOR MCLAUGHLIN AND THE YORK COMMUNITY