

rock is star of show

by James Martin

I suppose one could say that *The Promised Land* is only half a play. Now before you take that to mean something negative, let me explain that the majority of this production is per-

formed with the curtain raised only about two feet off the stage floor. This allows for some interesting and entertaining technical and theatrical delights.

Terra Promessa or *The Promised Land* is La Theatre de la

Marmaille's latest production at Young People's Theatre. Its a collaboration of the creative talents of six people: Nino D'Introna, Daniel Meilleur, Graziano Melano, France Mercille, Giacomo Ravichio and Monique Rioux.

The Promised Land is designed as a children's piece but is also appropriate for adults. The play is about the evolution of man and the earth, beginning five million years ago. The story involves a rock, and shows how everything

except the rock changes and evolves over time.

The opening curtain is raised only a foot, and as the music begins, a light is cast across the stage to reveal sand and salt pouring down and covering the earth. Two feet appear and slowly move apart, casting an image of a skinny giant. A number of scenes are played out showing the evolution of the world throughout the ages. The rock remains constant throughout the play's entirety. At the end, the audience is directed to applaud for the rock's performance.

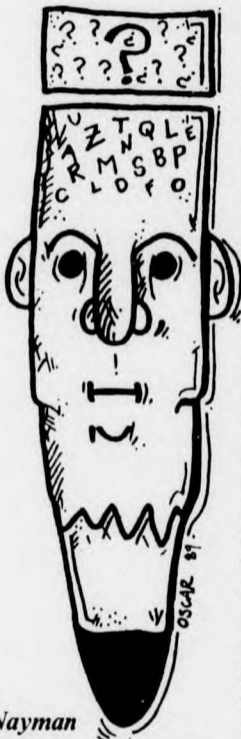
What really makes the play is the musical score and sound, engineered by Michel Robidoux. From the simple sounds of the wind blowing to the sounds of a war, Robidoux creates music that suits every scene.

The Promised Land is as entertaining as it is original. It will be playing November 18 and 19 at 1 and 4 p.m.



Strange happenings in *The Promised Land* at the Young Peoples Theatre.

the writers block



Ira Nayman

Ira Nayman is a York student with vast experience as a writer. Ira has written numerous newspaper columns as well as dabbling with CBC television and radio.

It was the only time a television programme has ever made me cry. During an episode of *LA Law*, a woman was tried for murdering her husband. Her testimony was low-key and poignant, her story of systematic abuse by her husband made her actions sympathetic, if not entirely justifiable. (The focus of the story was on the lawyer defending her, but, hey, that's the risk you take being a day player on somebody else's series.)

It's not what you think. Two days earlier, I had submitted a script to *Street Legal* in which one of the sub-plots was of a woman who was on trial for assaulting the husband who had systematically... well, you get the idea. I immediately realized two things: that I was probably being made to atone for the sins of a previous life, and that my script wasn't going to be accepted. Not having a bathroom stall handy, I turned my anger and frustration inward, producing tears.

Guy Mullally, the executive story editor of the show, was very encouraging despite the fact they couldn't use the script, (it took characters in directions he hadn't intended). In a phone conversation and subsequent letter, he

said, "The time and effort you have put into this script is indeed worthy of praise. I especially enjoyed your strong characters and crisp dialogue." He suggested I develop some new story ideas, which we would get together to discuss some time after the show went into production.

A couple of months later, not having heard from Mr. Mullally, but with enough outlines to choke a horse (or fill three or four episodes, whichever I was called upon to do), I tried to contact him. Somebody else in the writing department told me that Guy Mullally wasn't meeting with writers, that the show was badly behind schedule and that he was spending all his time whipping scripts into shape (Jane Fonda take note). Since there was no way of knowing when he might have the time to meet with the writers, my best bet at that point was to send my outlines to him, which I immediately did.

Summer quickly passed, the leaves on the trees turned carbon monoxide grey and young men's fancies turn towards thoughts of snow tires. A couple of months later, I phoned *Street Legal* to find out what happened to my outlines.

A woman named Francesca apologized for having taken so long to respond (the staff had gone through many changes over the summer) and promised to look into the matter for me. Although the person I should have been speaking to was Cathy Danson, Francesca had done what Ms. Danson was doing now, so Francesca knew enough to help me. The circle was now complete: Francesca (I never knew her last name) had been the person I originally submitted my script to all those months ago, after Mary McEwen had left the show and before Guy Mullally had replaced her.

I'll put a schematic diagram of these relationships on the board after class.

Francesca was particularly nice when she explained that *Street Legal* had already contracted out enough writing to fill the season and she was very sorry, but if my ideas were good enough, it was always possible that I could write for the show next season. Hmm... I don't mean to sound ungrateful (well, not more than is absolutely necessary), but there is far less to this golden opportunity than meets the eye: I likely will not

be writing next year, *Street Legal* may or may not be renewed for another season or, most likely, the staff will turn over once again, and I will have to impress a whole new group of executives.

To borrow wise advice from an old song, square one is the loneliest number you could ever do.

Less than a week after my discussion with Francesca, The CBC started its advertising campaign for the new season and, of course, *Street Legal* was heavily promoted. The tag line was "Embrace the law," although I found the law to be a fickle partner. (That may be profound, but I doubt it.)

I was just getting adjusted to seeing the ads in buses and subway cars (after all, I could take the taxi if I had to) when they started being displayed outside, where they were a lot harder to avoid. I finally had reason to understand, on an emotional level, how Winston Smith felt about Big Brother (or, to use a more obscure example, how Buster Keaton felt in *The Goat*).

Sometimes, destiny sucks.

And, yes, I'm not proud to admit it, but there's a bathroom stall at York University with my fingerprint in it.

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