

Entertainment Outlook

Weir play garners nominations

The *Idler*, a play written by Thomson News Service humor columnist Ian Weir, has been nominated for seven Vancouver theatre awards. "I'm really pleased," said the Vancouver playwright, currently in Toronto awaiting Thursday's opening of the play at the O'Keefe Centre. After 10 radio plays, a few one act plays and 30-minute television productions, *The Idler* is Weir's first full-length play. "One act plays don't get that much attention. This time the whole evening's devoted to the work," said Weir. The playwright says *The Idler*

"more or less is an offbeat look at the unemployment situation." His hero, Wilfred Grimshaw, is chronically unemployed and feels he can use his idle time to help bring the country into a new era. Yes, Grimshaw falls in love - with the wrong type of woman, of course. Calamity comedically falls upon catastrophe. While it's basically a comedy, Weir says serious themes lie awaiting within the text. Cast as Grimshaw is 40-year stage veteran Donald Davis, supported by Stratford actor Ric Reid, who portrays J.J. Davenport.

The play has previously been presented in Vancouver and Kamloops. Thursday will be Weir's first opening night in Toronto. "I sit around on opening night very, very nervous. I get a seat near the aisle in case I can't handle it," says the playwright. Weir has a weekly humor column that appears in many Thomson Newspapers. *The Idler*, produced by Theatre Plus, will run at the O'Keefe Centre's Jane Mallett Theatre through June 18.



ASK DICK KLEINER

Where is Luana Patten?

Dear Dick: What can you tell me about Luana Patten, who played in a very good movie in the '40s? I would also like to know the name of the movie. — L.T., Millford, Ind.

Dear L.T.: I'm sure you're referring to the Disney classic, "Song of the South." Miss Patten, a teen-age star of the '40s, is 50 now and, she tells me, her health has been very poor since a cancer operation in '77. She has undergone several operations in the last decade — a kidney removal and, recently, heart by-pass surgery — and she says her health is so poor she doubts she will ever work again.

Dear Dick: A few months ago, the TV listings said there would be a world premiere of a movie called "Moving Target," with Jason Bateman. But I never saw the movie. What happened to it? — N.B., Reading, Pa.

Dear N.B.: It was duly aired by NBC on Feb. 8. It is possible that the NBC affiliate in your area elected not to carry it, but it was aired throughout the nation. Maybe you slept through it.

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Dear Dick: I loved Julie Christie in the movie, "Far From the Madding

Dear Dick: Joanna Kerns of "Growing Pains" has a sister who was an athlete. But I can't remember who it was. Can you help? — L.S., Watontown, Pa.

Dear L.S.: Joanna's sister is the ex-swimming champ, Donna DeVerona.



Jason Bateman Julie Christie

Crowd." Was it made before or after "Dr. Zhivago"? Is it available on video? Why don't we see the fabulous Julie Christie any more, or have I just missed her? — J.S., Cedar Hills, Utah.

Dear J.S.: Her most recent films have not been very good; they've come and gone quickly. They had such names as "Miss Mary" and "Power." But watch for her in a forthcoming CBS mini-series, tentatively called "A Long Way From Home," with Victor Banerjee. "Dr. Zhivago" was released in '65 and "Far From the Madding Crowd," which is not available on cassette, two years later.

Dear Dick: What was the name of

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Sooner or later, it had to happen. The world is already full of experts on positive thinking, self-fulfillment and creative selfishness, all of them writing books and sharing their secrets on the Carson Show. And now, someone has gone straight to the heart of the issue — one Peter Suba, a 64-year-old Toronto wig-maker, has founded the Archimedes Foundation, the world's first centre for academic research into human happiness.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir
Thomson News Service

To tell the truth, I remain just slightly unclear as to why a wig-maker would decide to spearhead the investigation into human happiness. Perhaps it's just a logical extension of his work — having covered up the baldness, the next goal is to upgrade the whole man. And apparently the academic community remains decidedly unenthusiastic about the project. Says Mr. Suba: "I thought the idea would catch on, but it hasn't. They're not ready for the study of happiness yet."

This is, to be sure, regrettable. Still, you can see why the average academic is not yet ready for the study of happiness. This would be a bit much to expect from someone who spends his life reading undergraduate essays.

Even so, it's heartening to know there's at least one man out there willing to devote his energies to finding out what might make us happy.

Granted, there have been previous attempts in this direction. As a student, for instance, I was overjoyed to discover the Greek philosopher Epicurus, who argued that the key to happiness is to devote your life to doing exactly what you feel like doing.

And then I read on and discovered the second half of Epicurus' prescription for happiness — which is to realize that the only thing you truly feel like doing is sitting in the library studying philosophy.

This is where ol' Eppie and I parted company. According to him, the key to happiness is to be unable to get dates, to live hundreds of miles from the nearest pub, and to have the bank machine eat your card at the beginning of a long weekend. Of course, there have been other, more practical prescriptions for happiness. For instance, wise men have pointed out that we should never bet on a horse with three white socks, never trust a redhead wearing black stockings, and never play poker with a man named Doc.

But these tips, while useful, are a bit limited. That's why I've been giving some thought to the secret that might lie at the core of happiness. And as far as I can see, the key to it all is to avoid situations and decisions which are almost guaranteed to lead to disillusionment.

As such, perhaps I could pass on my own small insights along to the Archimedes Foundation.

One: In a world of line-ups, never entertain the foolish hope that yours might be just the second-slowest one.

Two: Never tell house guests that there's lots of hot water.

Three: Never buy a used car from a man named Honest Ed. And while you're at it, never spend time with persuasive home-renovations salesmen who are stuck with a large inventory of lime-green aluminum siding.

Four: Never, ever cheer for a Canadian baseball team.

Five: Remember that it is nearly impossible to be happy in a troubled marriage. So do your very best to find a spouse who understands that your little failings pale beside your numerous wonderful qualities.

Six: Don't hold your breath.

Seven: Remember that we are bound to be bitterly disillusioned if we expect too much from our children. So we must not expect our kids to turn out any better than we did.

Eight: Pray for your children.

On the other hand, you might simply to disregard all of the above and simply focus on the Three Great Truths about human happiness.

One: If you really want to be happy, choose rich parents.

Two: If you don't have rich parents, marry someone who does.

Three: If you end up with neither of the above, stop whining. You've had two chances to be happy and blown them both.



FILMETER

What's new in movies and video
Robert DiMatteo

In Movie Theaters

SALSA (PG) Imagine a cross between "Saturday Night Fever" and "Dirty Dancing" and you have the essence of this movie. It doesn't come close to either, though. It's about Rico, a Los Angeles club habitue and prime specimen of beefcake — a guy who knows the full measure of his, uh, physical charms. Stepping out of the shower and donning a carefully placed towel, the lissome Rico cavorts in a manner that would shame Michael Jackson.

Rico dreams of becoming a big Latino jazz dancing star (a "salsero") and relocating to Puerto Rico. First, he must win the local salsa contest at Club La Luna. That is, if he can choose the right partner. Will he stay with his loyal girlfriend, who easily com-

mands the dance floor, or will he partner up with the reigning salsa queen — a voracious older woman in heavy eye makeup?

On the home front, Rico is obsessed in a different way — possessive of his sister Rita (Magali Alvarado), a supposed innocent who nevertheless knows how to get dolled up like a hooker to sneak into the club. She's also secretly smitten with Rico's best buddy, an "Anglo" who's known in the movie's rather self-conscious idiomatic parlance as a "bro in the amilla."

Directed by Boaz Davidson, this

glitzy urban fantasy is as silly as it sounds, even reviving corny conventions of '30s movies (not that kids will know). Characters say things like: "I don't want to get in the way of your dreams." And everything is hotted up for the camera, so that the movie resembles a succession of lascivious Latino commercials. Rico is played by former Menudo lead singer Bobby Rosa, and he's photographed with the sex-object adoration normally reserved for the likes of a Raquel Welch.

The two redeeming features are the music (by the likes of Celia Cruz, Tito Puente and Willie Colon), and the sensual and sometimes even dazzling dancing (choreographed by Kenny Ortega, who did "Dirty Dancing").
GRADE: ★½

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