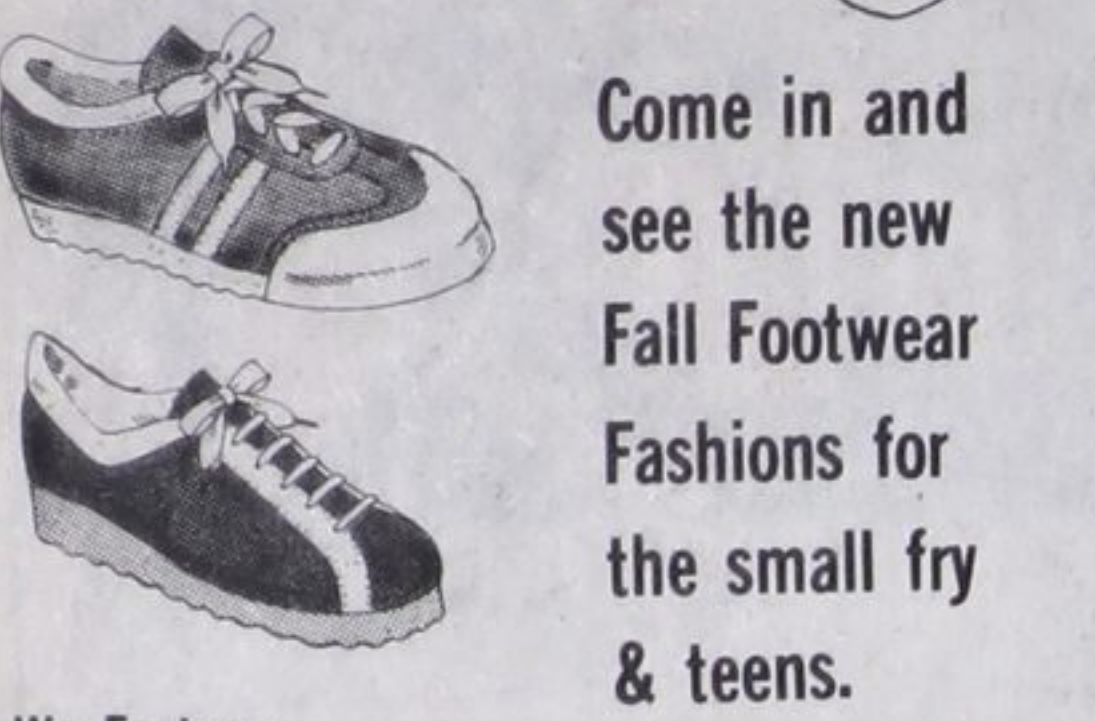


Ends rollicking theatre season



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by Shirley Whittington
 There was a lot of on-stage shouting at the Georgian Theatre last Monday night, in the current production of Neil Simon's *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*.
 Some of that shouting night have been reserved to mark the end of a remarkably successful season at Gryphon - one which Theatre Coordinator Wendy Hicks termed "very up".
 Subscription sales were up - five hundred more than last year - but the

happy surprise lay in the fact that there were as many seats sold for each performance as there were subscriptions. This is a reflection of the holiday mood of Gryphon's audience, and of the light-hearted nature of this summer's selection.
Prisoner opened Monday night, and runs until September 4.
 This is a tragi-comedy, about the sterility and madness of modern high-rise living. Mel Edison loses his job, is robbed,

has a nervous breakdown, suffers a smothering clutch of anxious relatives and watches his wife slide into nervous collapse in a bathtub for which there will be no water until later in the evening.
 Not very funny stuff, but both Mel and his wife Edith snap wisecracks at each other with a desperate humour which cuts close to the bone. In the end, they sit in an updated American Gothic tableau, embracing a shovel and grateful for New York's most recent disaster - a snowfall which will enable Mel to bury his neighbour alive.
 There's a lot of angst around, and this is where the shouting comes in. Mel and Edith yell their despair, their anger, their fright, suspicions and frustrations. I don't think director Mulcahy could have found a way around this foot-lit hog-calling contest. Unrestrained yelling is perhaps a hallmark of American tragi-comedy. Maude and Archie Bunker and the Jeffersons all yell a lot.

But for some of the audience, this gave the impression that they were eavesdropping on a frightful and perpetual row.
 But the dialogue was very funny ("Listen Edith," says Mel "Why don't you just go and lie down in the bathtub and wait until the water comes on?") and in spots, poignant ("Has everybody gone out of business?" demands distraught Edna. "Has America gone out of business?" and the audience never stopped laughing. On Monday night they even laughed when poor Mel, a drained and broken man, pillowed his head on his wife's bosom and wept.
 Richard M. Davidson played Mel with alternate brittle humour and zombie-like withdrawal. His performance was as close to multi-dimensional as St. Simon of Broadway ever allows his characters to be. Mel Edison touched me, and I guess I can't blame him for shouting.
 Toby Tarnow played

Edna and looked too young and beautiful to be the mother of two kids. She delivered the anguished one-liners deftly. Her wardrobe was the envy of lady Gryphon-goers.
 Three harpies adorned the second act, in the persons of Ed's sisters, and their combined impact plus the overbearingly successful brother, played by Guy Sandivo provided ample background for Ed's insecurities.
 Guy Sandivo was grand. He rode self-congratulatory herd on the terrible trio of sisters with pompous panache.
 Of the sisters, Pearl (Marie Pringle) gesticulated and did an excellent caricature of a distraught Jewish matron. Pauline (Barbara Brown) was formidable visually, but sometimes throatily inaudible. Jessie (Murline Mallette) sniffled meaningfully, and did not yell.
 Timlock's set was appropriately cool and impersonal. I hear that doors leading off stage, and portions of the dining area were not visible to parts of the audience. Since significant spots of action (this is where Ed Pounded his wrath at the neighbouring stewardesses, for instance) - took place in these areas, it seems not a good idea to have them invisible. Better angling would have cured the problem.



Runs until Saturday

Toby Tarnow portrays Edna Edison in "The Prisoner of Second Avenue" by Neil Simon, the Gryphon Theatre company's final production for the 1976 summer season. "The Prisoner" runs through to Saturday, September 4, 1976.

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It has been a good humoured and rollicking season at the Gryphon, and the "Gryphon family" (Sean Mulcahy's happy phrase) loved it, and excited laughing.
 Next year's menu may be a little weightier, with plays like *Dear Liar*, *The Patrick Pearse Motel*, *California Suite* and some Tennessee Williams under consideration.
 Whatever is decided upon, Mulcahy will deliver, spectacularly.
 Carry on Gryphon. You've been a bright spot of sunshine in this year without a summer.

Call Contact

526-9333
 Hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Monday to Friday (Except Holidays)
 Contact had a great variety of calls this week, ranging from requests for the name of the new District Hospital to when the boat flotilla would be arriving in Penetanguishene and why were they coming.
 We received over one hundred calls last week. Of the hundred calls that were answered twenty-eight of them were for housing. This is the most critical of all calls. If you have housing of any kind register it with Contact.
 It will soon be time for monthly meetings of Church groups, YMCA programs and College courses to begin. If you would like to have this information given to our callers check with us so that we will be sure to have exact information and telephone numbers for them.
 We have read a lot about Pet Rocks and the great fun people are having with them. While I was at the cottage and rain kept falling on my head forcing us to stay inside a discussion centred around Christmas and things children could make at little cost to them. Pet Rocks became the subject. We have so many nice shaped rocks and pine cones and shells for decorations with a bit of dried moss for hair, a bit of paint and paint brushes it becomes fun to design a pet rock for Uncle Charlie, or a cousin. Who knows you may discover that you have a budding artist in the family or even a designer.
 Contact will once again be holding their monthly luncheon meetings beginning September 21st at 12 noon. During the last year I have met many of the people who are involved with Social Services in some way. It gives each of us a better understanding of the services that are available and what relationship each has to the other.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Brian Parkhill announce the birth of a son on August 27 at St. Andrew's Hospital. They live at 1037 Glenmore Crescent in Midland.
 A daughter was born on August 28 to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Black of Port McNicoll.
 On August 29 a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Leclair of 446 William Street in Midland.



N. BRUCE WILTON
 N. Bruce Wilton has been appointed Manager of the Simcoe Branch of The Canada Life Assurance Company.
 The Simcoe Branch, with headquarters in Barrie, serves many other communities in this area including Alliston, Collingwood, Meaford, Midland, Orillia and Owen Sound.
 Mr. Wilton has had almost thirty years of experience in the life insurance business. He joined the Canada Life in 1950 as Manager of its Victoria Branch. Before his present appointment he was Manager of the Toronto Osgoode Branch of the Company. He succeeds Jan E. Nelissen, who has been associated with the Canada Life since 1951. Mr. Nelissen is retiring from management but will continue to serve his large and growing clientele.

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