Good Production Of "Candida" Is Running At Curtain Club

By GEOFFREY MITCHELL

George Bernard Shaw's "Candida" (currently on view at The Curtain Club of Richmond Hill) was written in 1894-95 as—according to GBS himself—"a counterblast to Ibsen's 'A Doll House' showing that in the real typical doll's house it is the man who is the doll". The play was first performed for the public in 1904 and, contrary to legend, Shaw denies it was written for either Ellen Terry or Mrs. Patrick Campbell and that he borrowed the name Candida "from an Italian lady I never met".

What ever the history behind "Candida" it remains one of Shaw's most typical plays containing an idealized (and therefore unreal) characterization of "women"; diatribes against the established church; and condescension to "the lower classes" (they are the ones who provide comic relief).

The play's plot could be summarized in 30 seconds and merely serves as a platform for Shaw's opinions.

If you've gathered that I'm not an admirer of "Candida" you're right. I may as well compound the heresy by stating that most of Shaw's plays leave me cold.

But at The Curtain Club the other night I was pleasantly surprised. The production succeeded in keeping me fairly constantly entertained and this was obviously the case for the rest of the audience, too.

Director Gordon Diver kept the attention focussed on the right actors at the right times and made most of Shaw's points. I thought there were some unmotivated moves around the stage which upset the argument's flow but generally Mr. Diver maintained the correct pace and helped to remove most of the cardboard from the characters.

I had a few misgivings in the first act as Dilys Rubow as Candida seemed to be portraying a fairly ordinary housewife instead of the consistently fascinating female Shaw had in mind. But during the second and third acts she grew in stature and poise and eventually succeeded in dominating the action in her crucial third act monologue.

Antony Hiscoke as Candida's husband, the Reverend James Mavor Morell, delivered his lines with understanding but lacked the innate dynamism of the man whose success in life depended on his spellbinding oratory. I also thought his switch from man to mouse came a little too suddenly.

Antony Whitney as Eugene Marchbanks, the third member of the triangle, gave us a Byronic poet who convincingly sprang to life when the occasion demanded . . . and provided an attractive alternative from which Candida had to make her choice.

But, as has happened in several plays I've seen at the Curtain Club recently, the smaller roles almost ran away with the play.

Beryl Forrestall as Prossie and George Truss as Mr. Burgess were both delightful, grasping every much-needed opportunity to lighten the burden of Shaw's polemics. And Brian John Moore as Alexander Mill, the ineffectual curate (why didn't he wear a clerical collar?) did the best possible with his underwritten part.

Costumes, lighting, make-up—all technical aspects of the production were up to the usual Curtain Club standard with one glaring exception—the set design of Walter Smithurst.

I'm aware that Mr. Smithurst won an award from the Central Ontario Drama League for his design of the Curtain Club's last production, The Gioconda Smile. I think I described that as a feat of reconstruction rather than a stage set.

Mr. Smithurst has done it again. Again we see a mammoth reconstruction job which has nothing to do with theatrical design but merely represents a feat of transference—a Victorian living room plucked from life and set on stage.

This method worked to a degree in The Gioconda Smile, aided as it was by the addition of two extra scenes in the third act—but in Candida it does the production a great disservice. The red rose wallpaper fights the actors every step of the way and, at times, wins the fight, swamping the performers until they disappear into the background.

And if one is transferring reality to the stage one should go the whole way. I doubt if plastic briefcases were very common in 1895.

I hope the Curtain Club hasn't given up on theatrical design, settling for reproduction rather than creation and imagination. I remember with admiration the sets for such past productions as The Egg, A Delicate Balance, The Country Wife and Pygmalion.

"Candida" is the last play for the Curtain Club in their present premises and it's also the last play I'll be reviewing for "The Liberal." "I've enjoyed the experience . . . I hope it's been mutual.

Fencing And Planting To Protect People Beside Wilcox Arena Road

Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Committee will take all possible steps, by fencing and planting, to protect two property owners on the South Road, Lake Wilcox. They fear annoyance from the new road which will give access to the new arena.

Councillor Shaun Beggs, chairman of the committee, gave this assurance to council Monday night.

Council was in receipt of a letter from Solicitor Alan Irwin, a member of the Plaxton and Mann law firm, who represents Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Engel and Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Werner, owners of the properties.

Access to the new arena is being provided by using Lot 48, South Wilcox Lake Road, originally a residential building lot.

The letter said the Lake Wilcox residents are quite concerned about the access route and anxious to discuss their difficulties with council.

However, pointing out that if they came to council they would just be referred to the parks and recreation committee, Councillor Mrs. Lois Hancey suggested it would be better if they went to the committee first. She expressed grave concern that these two property owners, who had felt that they were protected by the residential building lot, were now deprived of that protection.

Mrs. Hancey said, however, that the municipality was within its legal right in using the lot for a road. "I am reassured the municipality is going to do all it can to ameliorate their problem," she said.

THE LIQUOR LICENCE ACT
NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Licensing District No. 6

TAKE NOTICE that BRYN ENTERPRISES LIMITED of the City of Toronto in the County of York will make application at a Special Meeting of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario to be held at the OFFICES OF THE LIQUOR LICENCE BOARD OF ONTARIO, 55 LAKESHORE BLVD. EAST in the City of Toronto in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto on Wednesday the twenty-fourth day of May, 1972, at the hour of 9:30 o'clock D.S.T. in the forenoon for the issuance of a Dining Lounge Licence for the sale and consumption of liquor where food is available, for the following premises: The Copper Kettle, 7529 Yonge Street, Thornhill, Ontario, a suburban full service restaurant.

Any person who is a resident in the licensing district may object to the application, and the grounds of objection in writing shall be filed with MR. H. J. BROWNE, the deputy registrar (acting) of the licensing district, whose address is 55 Lakeshore Boulevard East, Toronto 2, Ontario at least ten days before the meeting at which the application is to be heard.

DATED at Toronto this 24th day of April, 1972.

BRYN ENTERPRISES LIMITED,
Suite 2500,
401 Bay Street, Toronto

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND OTHERS
In the Estate of
Jesse Erlin Campbell Kaiser

All persons having claims against the Estate of Jesse Erlin Campbell Kaiser late of the Town of Richmond Hill, in the Regional Municipality of York, who died on or about the 12th day of October, 1971 are hereby notified to send particulars of same to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of May, 1972, after which date the Estate will be distributed, with regard only to the claims of which the undersigned shall then have notice, and the undersigned will not be liable to any person of whose claim they shall not then have notice.

DATED at Richmond Hill, this 11th day of April, 1972. Florence Emmaline Kaiser and Lawrence C. R. Kaiser, Executors of the Estate of Jesse Erlin Campbell Kaiser by their solicitor, Robert H. Blackburn, c/o Messrs. Lawlor, LeClaire, Stong & Nevins, Barristers & Solicitors, 55 Yonge Street North, Richmond Hill, Ontario.

York County Hospital Increases Services In All Its Departments

The annual report of York County Hospital in Newmarket distributed at the April 13 meeting of York Regional Council showed an increase in services in just about every department.

Patients admitted increased 33 percent over the past two years, to 11,476. Births were up 22 percent to 1,246, and surgical procedures up 63 percent to 6,365.

Days of patient care, however, had increased only four percent to 82,289, and the number of days of care per patient (excluding psychiatry) decreased 22 percent to 6.6 days.

90% MORE EMERGENCIES

There was a marked increase also in out-patient service with the greatest increase — 90 percent in visits to emergency — a total of 21,628 in 1971. There were 16,459 patient visits to X-ray — an increase of 44 percent, and 16,295 visits to physiotherapy — an increase of 61 percent. Psychiatric out-patients increased 76 percent to 5,726.

Improved labratory facilities nearly tripled the service in this area — with 18,513 patient visits, an increase of 272 percent.

Two new services were provided for the first time in 1971. A total of 1,238 patients received out-patient occupational therapy and 1,438 were given inhalation therapy.

Referring to the hospital's building program, Board Chairman Lawrence Rubin reported construction had begun on the west parking lot which is needed before construction of the building addition could begin. The addition to begin this year will provide expanded out-patient facilities as well as increased bed capacity.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Ambulance service was introduced in 1971, and two programs were introduced to provide continuing care of patients after they leave the hospital. These are a home care program and social service department.

"Major objective of these programs is to co-ordinate the health care and services required after discharge from hospital with that received while in hospital," said Rubin.

Operating budget for the year was $5,275,829 compared with $4,719,303 in 1970.

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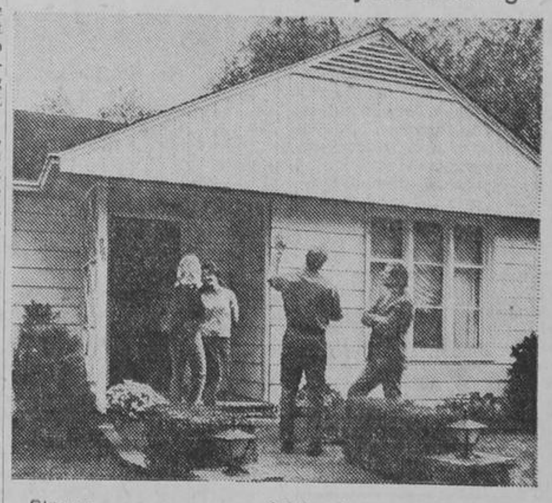

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