

Performances good, but play's unworthy

By Tom Davey

theatre review

RICHMOND HILL — Playwright William Douglas Home is a man with little to say yet he uses torrents of words to say it. In the Curtain Club's current production, *The Secretary Bird*, the cast struggles heroically in the sea of trivia which the author unleashes onstage.

Somewhat optimistically, the program describes the show as a comedy; but laughter is little in evidence during the first part of the production.

True, in the second half, the laughter flows sporadically — indeed there are even a few lines which rock the theatre — but the playwright makes us earn our few precious moments of glee, with a spate of contrived situations and platitudes.

The story is about an upper class English couple about to part after fifteen years of marriage.

A Latin husband might have resorted to poison or the knife, but, being both English and upper class, this husband greets the lover with the gusto of a coach welcoming a new member to the team.

The role of the husband is a demanding one and Malcom Martin strives hard, with some success, to

make the best out of the slender material but I felt Beryl Forestall was badly miscast as the wife.

Judy Swift brightens the stage as the Secretary Bird and Dennis Empson is suitably handsome and sporadically plausible as the much married lover. But all the parts seemed little more than cardboard clichés, with the possible exception of the maid, as played by Beryl Radke, who turned in a pleasing, but predictable, cameo performance.

The kindest thing I can say about this production is that the set design is excellent, reflecting a Curtain Club tradition which recently won them an award.

It must be said that some of the audience seemed to like the play, but, to emulate the convoluted statements of the author, my cup of tea is not.

It was directed by Geraldine Diver and produced by Anita Stainer and Dorothea Painter.

Book publishers future in doubt

THORNHILL — The future of Thornhill-based Simon and Schuster Canada Ltd. remains in doubt following a recent federal government decision under the Foreign Investment Review Act.

Company spokesmen interviewed last week declined to speculate on the ownership question except to hint of an eventual determination "through the judicial process."

The government, according to Toronto newspaper reports, is demanding Simon and Schuster, a wholly-owned U.S. subsidiary, become Canadian controlled with as much as 75 per cent Canadian ownership.

Takeover stopped

The cabinet refused to allow a proposed takeover of Simon and Schuster Canada by Gulf and Western Industries Inc. of New York.

The government became involved last year when the parent, Simon and Schuster Inc., was taken over

by Gulf and Western, changing the ultimate ownership of the Canadian branch and requiring approval under the Foreign Investment Review Act.


In effect, the decision means the company's long-time owners are prohibited from retaining ownership and control.

33 employees

Simon and Schuster Canada has been located in Thornhill since the spring of 1974 and was previously in Richmond Hill for almost 10 years. It was established 33 years ago.

Company officials told *The Liberal* they have been attempting to expand their Canadian editorial operation and increase the number of Canadian authors.

All of the 35 employees are Canadian, as are four of the five directors.



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The 1976 Richmond Hill Spring and Summer Directory of Recreational and Cultural Activities has been distributed throughout the town either by mail or direct delivery. If you have not as yet received a copy of the Directory, please call the Parks and Recreation Department at 884-8101 Ext. 74, and a copy will be delivered to you.



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