

Entertainment

The Innocents

Ghosts lack spirit

By Jim Irving

AURORA — Theatre Aurora's choice of "The Innocents" as its entry in the Central Ontario Drama League festival, as well as for its present showing, seems an unfortunate one.

Not that it's badly done, but other than providing a showcase for the fine talents of young Melinda Tomlinson as Flora, it doesn't provide all that much in the way of the gripping entertainment, which was no doubt its purpose.

One wonders — considering the frigid temperatures of the Factory Theatre — whether the group chose a play with ghosts in it, thinking that the audience might believe those chills they were getting, were the result of all those spirits around and not from the frost in the walls.

Those same spirits, too, probably slowed the thing down as much as anything, appearing too often as peeping toms, instead of as the unreal thing.

Had there just been some method of making them seem to dissolve — a flimsy curtain, or a vapor of sorts — instead of having them step to one side whenever observed.

The spirits set the mood right from the beginning when the new governess arrives at a bleak country house to take charge of the two young children there, one of whom has just been expelled from boarding school.

Their uncle is away someplace and the only one around — other than the ghosts — is the housekeeper, whose chief role seems to be to exclaim "Miss Flora!" She has completely blocked out any knowledge of what's happened, refusing to show in any way that the children are anything but the normal, fun-loving youngsters they so often appear to be.

Foolish, frightened and well played by Thelma Wrixon.

The governess, on the other hand, is almost as bad in her handling of the situation. Although she soon realizes the children are possessed, she is so determined to be fair at all costs — good versus

evil? — she is unable to approach or reproach the children. As a result, when she finally convinces the young boy that she is on his side, it is too late, the ghost is gone, but so is he.

Gillian Ball is a fine governess and expresses her anguish eloquently. Unfortunately, the playwright is not so eloquent. Everytime he lets her build up to a point where she is about to take the kids aside and ask them what gives, he just as quickly lets her slide. And she turns away from her duties without any indication why, letting both the story and the audience down.

An incomplete play, somehow, but still worth seeing, if only for the two children, especially Miss Tomlinson.

Almost perfect She is so good that one would think she had been dealing in such intrigues all her short life. She is the happy, playful, young child one minute, both charming and precocious, and in the next she is the strong-willed, child-adult, ready to indulge in whatever machinations she feels necessary to avoid confronting the issue at hand.

To use a fellow reviewer's phrase, her performance is "almost perfect." And the only reason one says "almost", is that nothing's supposed to be perfect.

Christopher Ball is also excellent.

His role doesn't call for the same sort of precocity as Miss Tomlinson's, but he is still capable of rising to whatever dramatic heights he wants.

His delivery of the poem, where he in effect lets in the devil, is done skillfully and movingly, and is one of the show's best moments.

Peter McNaughton's set, although well-executed, seemed to demand something more than a couple of wall hangings and a picture, plus that drab paint job to give it the look of an old English mansion.

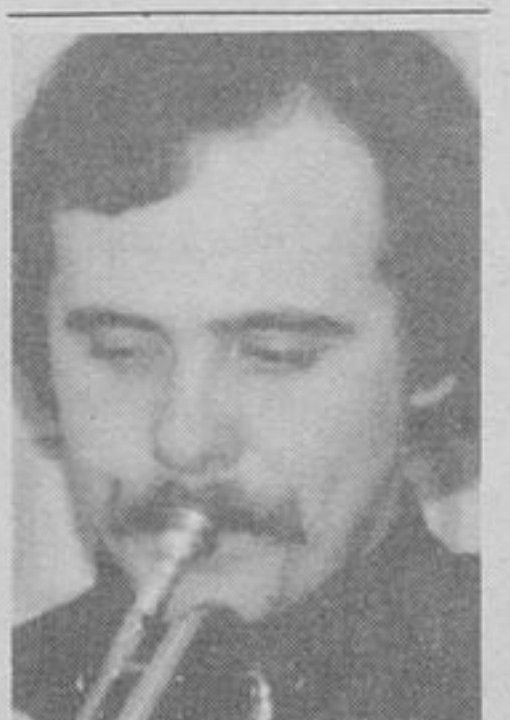
There was nothing wrong with the costumes, though, they were magnificent.

The theatre, as pointed

out at the beginning, left nothing to the imagination as to its temperature, and could have much to do with the small crowds of late.

Factory Theatre has a production crew of some 30 people, handling everything from set construction to program design.

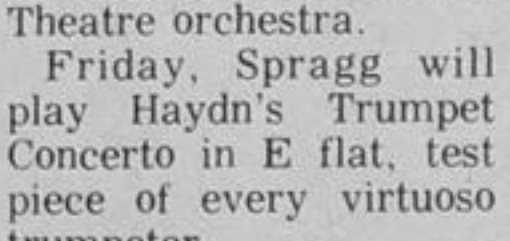
Now if only they can find someone qualified to turn up the heat.



Beryl Radke

Richmond Hill's Curtain Club, and never more true than for the present production of All in Good Time.

Co-producers Beryl Radke and Pera Miller, who have done their stint both on stage and backstage, feel that, in Beryl's words, "people don't realize how important backstage workers are. Without them, the play doesn't go on." As producers, their job is to find club members to do the work and to see that the show gets to opening night with



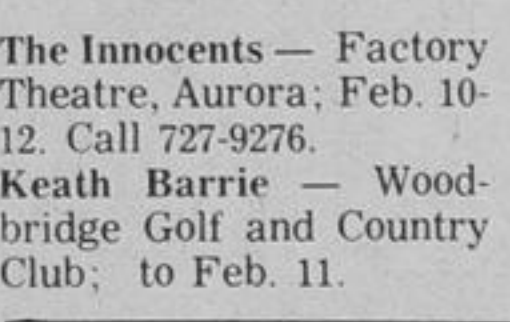
James Spragg

Richmond Hill — James Spragg, a native of Aurora, will be guest soloist with York Symphony Orchestra, Feb. 11 at St. Mary's Anglican Church at 8:30 p.m.

During the 1974-75 season, he was first trumpet for the Quebec City orchestra; in 1976 he played principal trumpet in the Stratford Festival Theatre orchestra.

Friday, Spragg will play Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in E flat, test piece of every virtuoso trumpeter.

Also on the program is the vigorous Prague Symphony by Mozart; Samsund by Schubert, and the Academic Festival Overture.



Lilian Howard

as few technical hitches as possible.

Set important The set, of course, is enormously important. Michael Matyas deserves kudos for his work in this area. He was a consultant on Ron Scott's award-winning set for Lion in Winter last year. So far this season, he has designed and helped to build the set for The Rape of the Belt and the current production, and intends doing yet another. A professional set designer in his native Czechoslovakia, Mike and his wife Dagmar came to Richmond Hill 16 years ago and have been with the club for 14 of those. Semi-retired now, he has recently designed the multi-cultural theatre for the Harbourfront. Dagmar has produced and directed several

The Innocents — Factory Theatre, Aurora; Feb. 10-12. Call 884-2638.

Keath Barrie — Woodbridge Golf and Country Club; to Feb. 11.

Unseen backstage beavers pack punch

By June Abbott
Anyone who has ever been associated with theatre on any level will be aware of the hard work that goes into the production of a play by backstage beavers who are never seen, and who get only a brief mention in the program.

This is certainly true at



Chris Steel

shows for the club in the past.

Light and sound are also part of the 'sine qua non' of a theatrical production.

Tony Cook designed the lighting for the present run and operates it with the aid of Terry Gosling and Paul Sutton.

Sound research and recording were executed by Ron Solloway and operated by Audrey Randall-Smith, John Postlethwaite and Tony Durrant.

A qualified electrician, Durrant attended a lighting workshop at Brock University last year.

Costumes, make up and hairstyles are all researched by members of the club. The present play takes place in the mid 60's so Lillian Howard and Marion Postlethwaite, a member for 18 years, have made themselves responsible for finding out what was worn then.

Although she prefers acting, Marion feels that in any theatrical club it is necessary for members to spend time doing other jobs as well.

Still driving Madge and George

Madge Nicholson and George are two more stalwart members. As theatre manager, George comes into the club regularly to check that all is well. A driver for the TTC for 25 years, he is now retired but drives a taxi locally to keep himself busy. Madge is house manager and is also doing properties for this play.

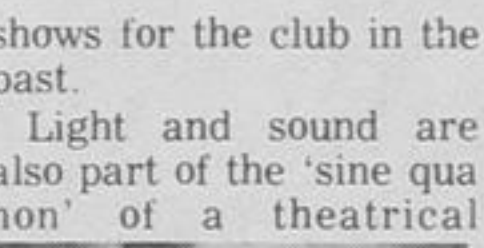
"It's a pleasure to work with such a nice group of people," comments Madge.

Perhaps the sergeant-major of the backstage army is the stage-manager, a role which is old hat to Chris Steel. He was so busy marshalling his troops that his son Rob, who is in the play, had to be interviewed on his father's behalf.

A past-president of the Curtain Club, Chris headed the building committee when the present theatre was erected some years ago.

Many others have also invested their talents for no other reward than the pleasure of seeing the results of their hard work actually "on stage".

After all, in the theatrical world, "the play's the thing..."



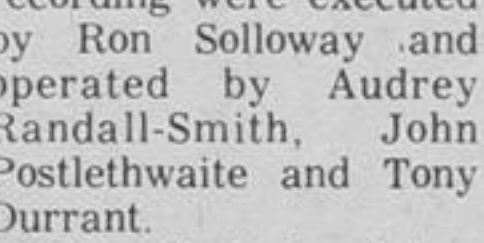
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Tony Durrant

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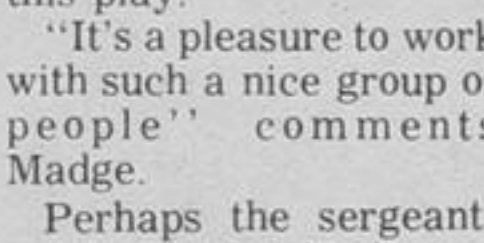
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Advertising helps plan your budget.

The Annual Meeting of The Unionville Home Society will be held on **Thursday, February 24th, 1977** at **UNION VILLA** 4300 Hwy No. 7, Unionville commencing at 7:30 p.m.

The agenda will include:
Approval of the Auditor's Report
Reports of Committees
Election of Directors
And such other business as may be properly brought before the meeting.

William B. Thomas, chairman of the Board.

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