

Review

Workshop plays vital role in theatre

By TOM DAVEY

The real Inspector Hound is an ambitious attempt by the Summer Theatre Workshop to stage a difficult play which takes a theatrical poke at theatre in general and critics in particular.

Actually it is a play-within-a-play and opens with two critics who become so involved in the production, they ultimately cannot distinguish fact from fiction.

The play is a success in that it also involves us in this deception yet continually surprises us with the twists and turns of the plot.

The ending is totally novel and unexpected when the complicated plot is unravelled, almost at the very last line of dialogue.

Being a workshop production, it would not be fair to apply the usual critical criteria in judging performances but overacting seemed the order of the day.

William Medland, for example, as the first Inspector Hound, overacted even the extensive boundaries extended in parody.

But, when he became a critic, he became more plausible so I feel the fault lay in the direction.

Then too, the play makes it tempting to overact. The playwright, Tom Stoppard, uses most of the time honoured theatrical clichés including several murder suspects isolated in the mandatory English

mansion in the play within-a-play that goes onstage as the critics watch, along with the audience.

The dialogue is particularly funny when the critics, watching this, pour out their pretentious judgements which are really trite critical clichés masquerading as erudite philosophies.

Tom Stoppard is getting his own back at critics here and he uses the scalpel deftly.

David Phillips and Clay Warner handle the critics' role adroitly and make the most of their conversational shafts.

But the play at best is an uneven work to begin with and the cast lacks the polish to gloss over the weaknesses which are really written into the play.

Still, as a place to nurture talent, the workshop has much to commend it. It has been going for a number of

years now but this is the first production I've attended. It will not be my last.

Students rehearse, build sets and work lighting and sound equipment during the summer training period which culminates in a real production, now reviewed.

Such workshops obviously have a vital role in the attraction of new acting talent to community theatre.

Canadian play to be among theatre's five

A work by Canadian playwright, Warren Graves, will be among five plays to be presented by Richmond Hill Curtain Club in 1977-78.

Graves' play, The Mumberley Inheritance, will be the club's final offering of the season, running from May 26 to June 10.

Described as "a good-time melodrama in the tradition of East Lynne, it was first produced at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre in 1971.

Curtain Club veteran Cicely Thomson directs the play, which is subtitled "His Inheritance Frittered."

Starting off the season will be I Am a Camera, adapted from the Berlin Stories by Christopher Isherwood.

The play, which later became the hit musical, Cabaret, looks at life in a Berlin rooming house of 1930 at the time of the rise

to power of the Nazi party.

Brian J. Moore, another veteran director and actor, will direct the production, which runs from Sept. 30-Oct. 15.

David Phillips, who conducted a summer workshop in Richmond Hill this year, and who appeared in last season's Curtain Club opener, See How They Run, will direct the club's second play, The Day After the Fair. Play time is Nov. 25 to Dec. 10.

Based on Thomas Hardy's short story, On the Western Circuit, the play, which is set in 19th-century England, has as its theme, "the irony of love."

In it, the lives of three people are dramatically altered.

"A play with music," is the way the third offering, Oh! What a Lovely War, is described.

Written by Joan Lit-

tlewood, it "looks at the First World War with a comic and satirical eye."

Ron Scott, a principal in numerous club productions over the years, will direct.

The play is scheduled to run from Feb. 3 to Feb. 18.

Alan Ayckbourn, author of many a zany club effort down through its 23 seasons, gives them yet another one to play with.

This time it's Table Manners, all about the attempts of a man to deal with the women in his life. Gerry Crack, who has been behind a few productions, himself, at the club, will direct.

Table Manners will run from Mar. 31 to Apr. 15.

For the first time in its history, the club will increase the number of its performances per play from 10 to 11.

The extra showing will be on the Sunday of the second week.

Old home week at Richmond Inn

It was old home week, country and western style, at Richmond Inn last week.

For that's when the Richmond Hill group — Canadian Zephyr — with its own brand of "outlaw" country music and bluegrass, made its appearance and was watched by another band of local stars — the Good Brothers.

The latter, who have also appeared at the Inn, have become one of the top country and western groups in Canada, and were on hand to watch their fellow citizens in action during an interlude in their own schedule.

However, they only accounted for a portion of the large crowds who were on hand, many of whom also knew the band way back when.

TWICE NAMED
Nominated twice in the past three years for the Juno Awards for top country music — the Good Brothers won theirs last year — Zephyr was also nominated for the Academy of Country Music's top country award.

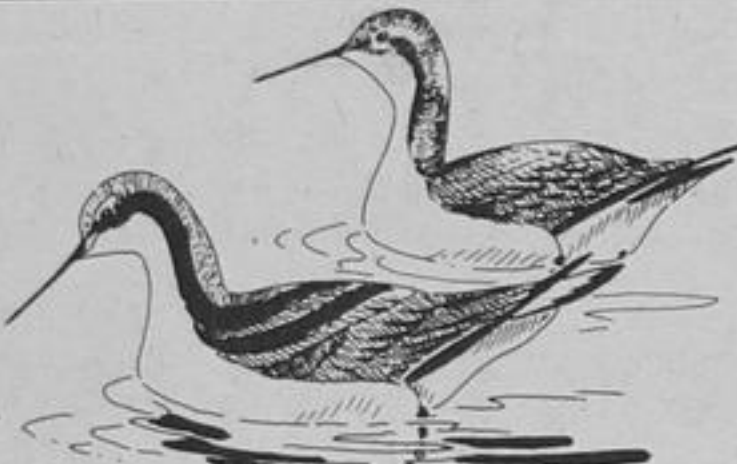
The group will be producing its fourth album and single — "A Country Mile Better" — later this month. There's

a chance, too, the album might come out under the name "Stop Right There."

Members of the band, who will be appearing at El Condor, Highway 27 and Albion Rd., Aug. 29,

are John Hayman, who writes much of the music; Garth Bourne, Ron Musselwhite and John Howard.

Canadian Zephyr will be back at the Inn sometime in the late fall.



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