

Theatre in Review

# Play took on too many issues

Unionville Theatre Company celebrated its 10th anniversary last week with a production of an original play by Unionville resident Mike Johnston, who is also artistic director of the company.

The play, called *The Appraiser*, concerns a being from outer space who comes to earth in a search for the perfect planet so that his advanced race can migrate.

But his planet actually sounds preferable because unlike earth it has transcended war, violence and antagonistic competition.

Once on earth, Gus, the spaceman, settles in a rundown store which he transforms into a club for teens. Here he can observe their behavior and learn what makes the human race tick.

Author Mike Johnston, producer Shirley Ward and director Sherry Sawas must be credited for taking a cast of 45 actors and a crew of about 40 and molding them into a team — a feat which

## THEATRE IN REVIEW

Isobel Thompson

takes patience, time and enormous energy.

The set designed by Marilyn Marchesseau and the decor under the supervision of Peter Marchesseau were imaginative and worked well on the whole.

Johnston, however, had all the woes of the world on stage in this 2 1/2-hour long production. Pollution, cancer, clean water, religion, race, violence, nuclear power, politics were all touched upon.

Unfortunately, there were too many things to focus on and it was difficult in the short scenes for characters to act, react and

relate meaningfully with each other.

Dan Sampson, playing the lead role of the appraiser, was on stage the entire time and was often forced by his director to be upstaged by minor characters, which made it hard for him to be the dominating influence.

He was given a lot of repetitive and unnecessary business, particularly in fiddling with the map and turning the radio off and on, which slowed the play to a crawl in spots. Sampson had some good moments though, particularly in his scenes with Lewis and Dana.

The director, with such hordes of people, tended to move them on and off stage in lines, often without proper motivation. Once on stage they were left to mime their scenes which is difficult enough for experienced actors and this really proved to be distracting.

It was obvious that Johnston wanted to use as many youngsters as he could, but the

play would have been stronger if the director had known how to use the huge cast more efficiently or if fewer people had been used to more effect.

When the cast had something meaningful to do such as the air band scene, they were terrific, and the live music by the band Green Revolution brought life into the production.

As a play, *The Appraiser* would have been more effective if there had been less scenes. This would have enabled the audience to concentrate more on the story line and on the more interesting characters.

We look forward to further productions from this enthusiastic young company but I would strongly suggest that an emphasis be put on speech and voice projection which is a most vital part of theatre.

Playwright, director, producer and actors all are secondary to the most important people in the theatre — the audience.

# Juno nominee at Deer Park

### O'Farrell's

Located at the Deer Park Inn in Stouffville is the area's newest nightclub, O'Farrell's. Having recently been nominated for the Most Promising Female Vocalist Juno Award, Jannetta performs at O'Farrell's through April 9 — Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

### La Bamba

La Bamba Nightclub and Restaurant, located at 96 Main St. N. in Markham, is pleased to present Yuk Yuk's Comedy Kabaret tonight at 8:30 p.m. Think you're funny? La Bamba invites you to go on stage! Amateur comedians are welcome to perform before the pros come on stage.

Several comedians will be featured from the well-known Toronto-nightspot, including one of Yuk Yuk's hottest comedians



### WHAT'S ON

Nancy Hoskin

Glen Foster. Glen's television appearances last year include Just for Laifs on CBC and Improv Tonight on Arts and Entertainment. Joel West is tonight's Master of Ceremonies.

Cover charge is \$5 per person. For further information and reservations call 471-2772.

### Nag's Head North

Nag's Head North features Surf 'n Hears, a Stones, CCR and John Cougar tribute band, Thursday evening. Cleveland is

back by popular demand with favorite songs and full stage make-up, Friday night. On Saturday evening Screamer, a Led Zeppelin tribute band, takes the stage. Nag's Head North is located on Woodbine Ave., north of Steeles.

### Brodie's

Conrad Benjamin entertains audiences this weekend at Brodie's, located on Hwy. 7 in Unionville.

### O'Toole's

Every Sunday night O'Toole's will show two feature films on their big screen at 6 and 8 p.m.

### Markham Theatre

From March 16-18 The Cosmopolitan Opera Society performs Rossini's Barber of Seville in Italian, fully staged with elaborate costumes and the

Cosmopolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

Spend an evening with The Good Brothers on March 19. Enjoy country music at its best with this award-winning group in a benefit concert for the York Centre for Children, Youth and Families.

On March 28 and 29 Salome Bey performs at the Markham Theatre. Canada's great lady of rhythm, blues and jazz performs her vocal magic in a concert sure to please.

The National Ballet of Canada presents an exciting evening of classical and contemporary ballet, featuring the best leading soloists and principals March 31 and April 1.

For tickets call the box office at 479-0201.

### Duchess of Markham

Enjoy Syd Simkins, every

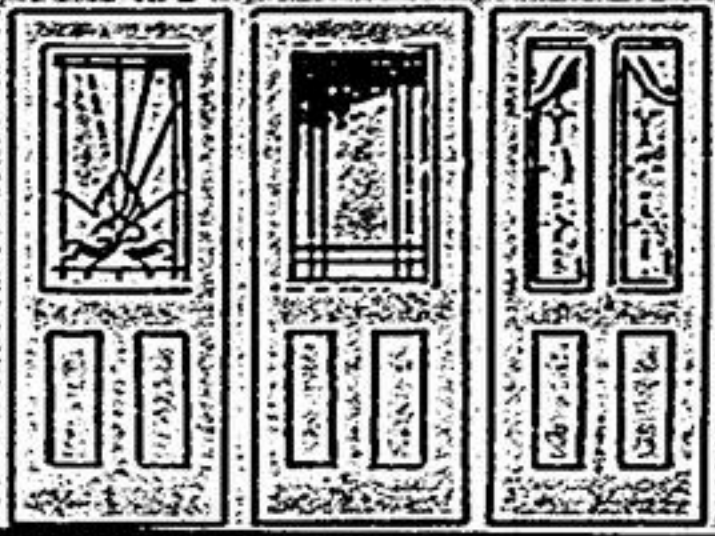
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