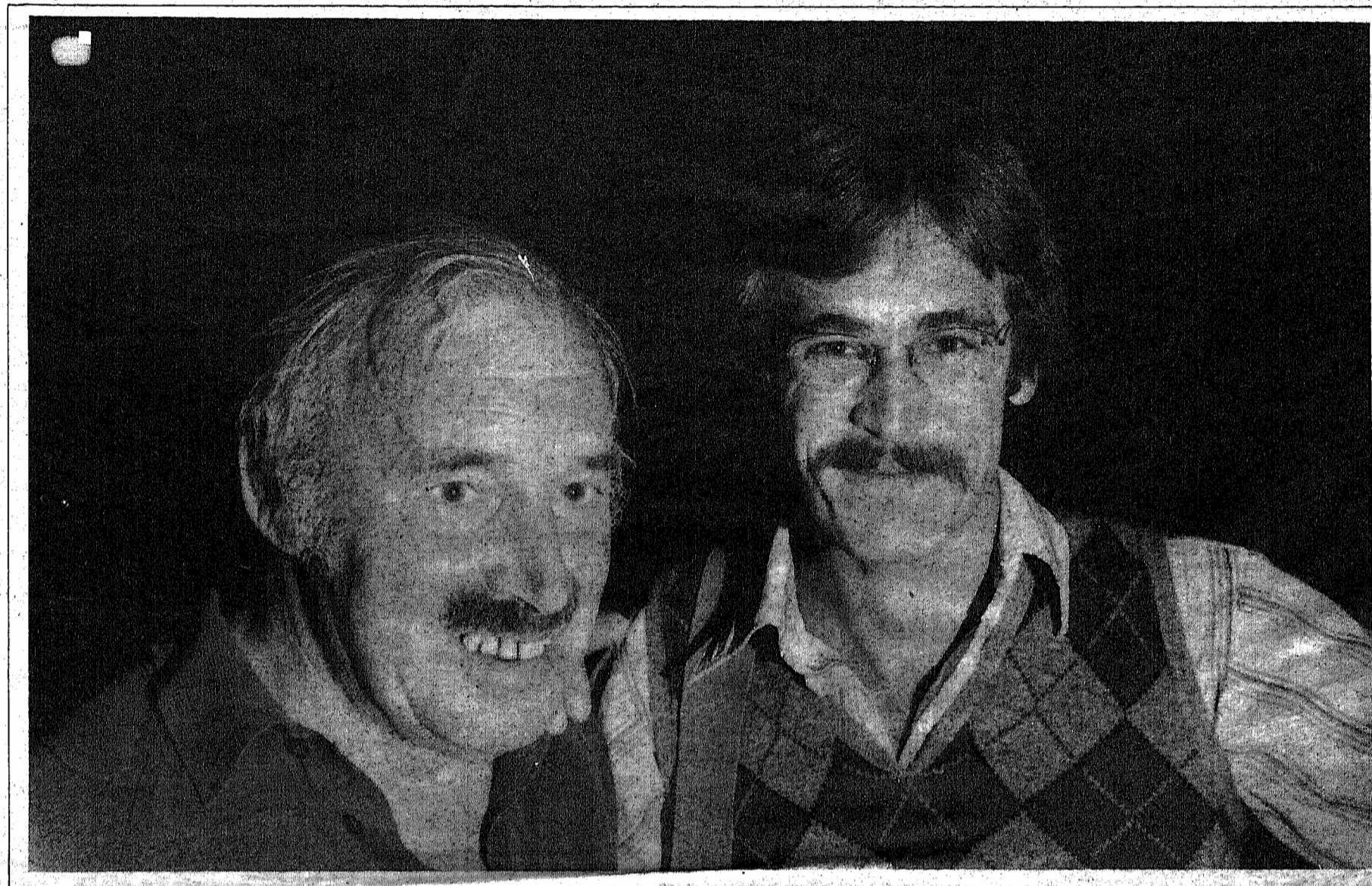


## Getting it together



### Young writers and the New Establishment

I can see no reason why South Australian poets should not receive the recognition they deserve, as good poets.

A reading held for some of Adelaide's poets and organised by Graham Rawlins tended to show, that while they wrote well their readings fell rather flat and became boring. Maybe they don't possess the belief in their convictions, or maybe they were too busy competing with each other to realise there was an audience who wanted to be entertained by hearing poetry delivered to them.

This is not to say that all was bad, maybe the acoustics of the otherwise excellent setting (Edmund Wright House) added to the dilemma. Stephen Measday, Richard Tipping and Rob Tillett were the most impressive.

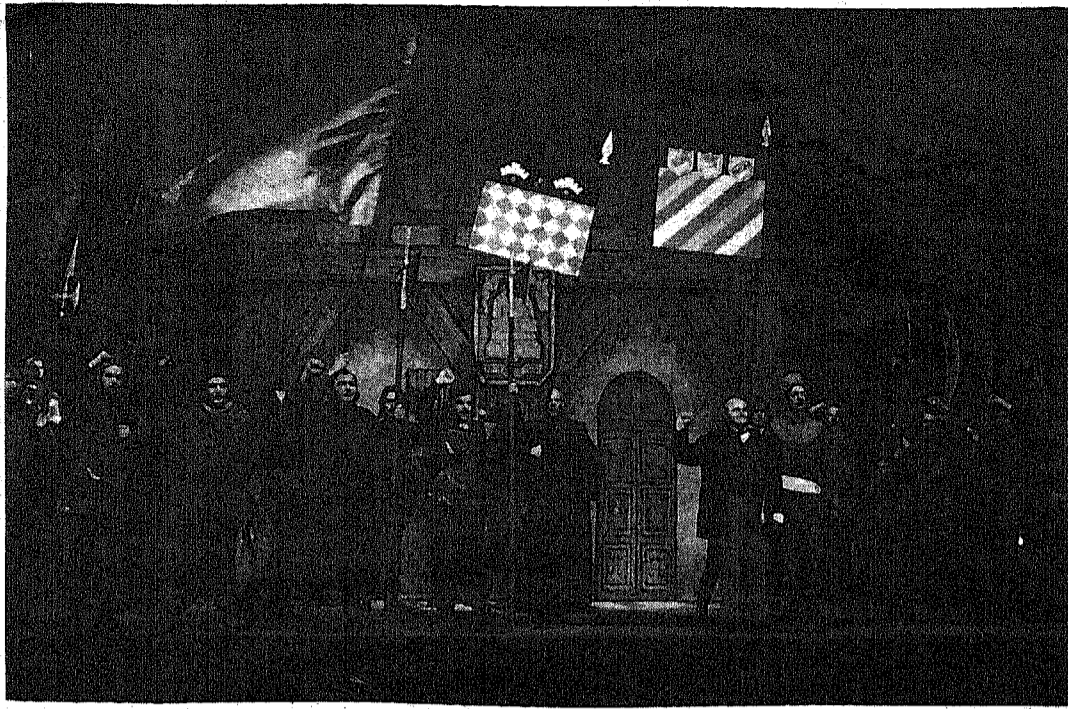
Rob Tillett came across as a performer, his reading (from a soon to be released collection) was alive and enjoyable to hear.

Future sessions of Young Writers Reading I suggest that we not only have poets, but a whole host of 'artists' expressing themselves. This may overcome the rigidity and monotony I found for most of the evening.

dh



# New Opera



This highly over-rated opera has been received uncritically by Adelaide reviewers, one can hardly dignify them with the Popelian term "critic", much to the eventual disadvantage of New Opera, one suspects.

Fortunately this reviewer is spared the embarrassment of having to recommend that readers do not attend, because the season concluded on Saturday March 16. Four days too long, it was. And four days too expensive for the taxpayer.

One might possibly be moved to excuse New Opera on grounds that it was an experiment — and therefore commendable in itself — or on the grounds that Ostoja Kokowski's brilliant sets are the best ever seen in Adelaide. Technically the opera was delightful, and that was all that could keep this reviewer seated for the post-interval duration — though the second Act improved upon the banal and unexciting first.

The music was too loud, and this is more the fault of

Janacek than Thomas. The diction was not good, though people seated in other areas of the theatre advised me they heard every word, so I give the company benefit of the doubt and presume I hit an acoustic 'dead' spot. The scenario is uninspiring and dull. There is not a whisper of modernity, let alone a hint of the avant-garde about the libretto, and the opera relies upon novelty and gimmickry to inject vitality into its deadening duration. The audience were obviously

affected by the lack of originality, and applause was polite, but cool. Civil.

Marilyn Davidson has a sweet voice, and Thomas Edmunds a rich one. Both were drowned. Gregory Dempsey pretended he was Mr. Broucek, but it's such a fool of a role that he had his work more than cut out for him.

This opera, in its Adelaide production under John Tasker, fails. It has colour, but no depth, potential

humour, but no joy, fantasy, but no reality. It lacks contrast, vitality and balance, all elements which contribute to the drama of opera, all essentials of avant-gardism. Mr. Broucek appears as a 1920's exercise in mildly-intellectual whimsy, of a kind appealing to the eastern European sense of humour, but hardly suited to the grimmer wit of even southern Australia.

It was the wrong choice.

## collegium musicum

It is difficult to praise such a performance as that which these people put on, anyone having been to one of the concerts would realise the difficulty in expressing the recitals.

Heinz Helliger's virtuosity appeared limitless. His oboe playing was superb to say the least and in relation to the conditions (the night was very hot and humid) where he appeared on the verge of collapse due to this inclement weather his playing was the more excellent.

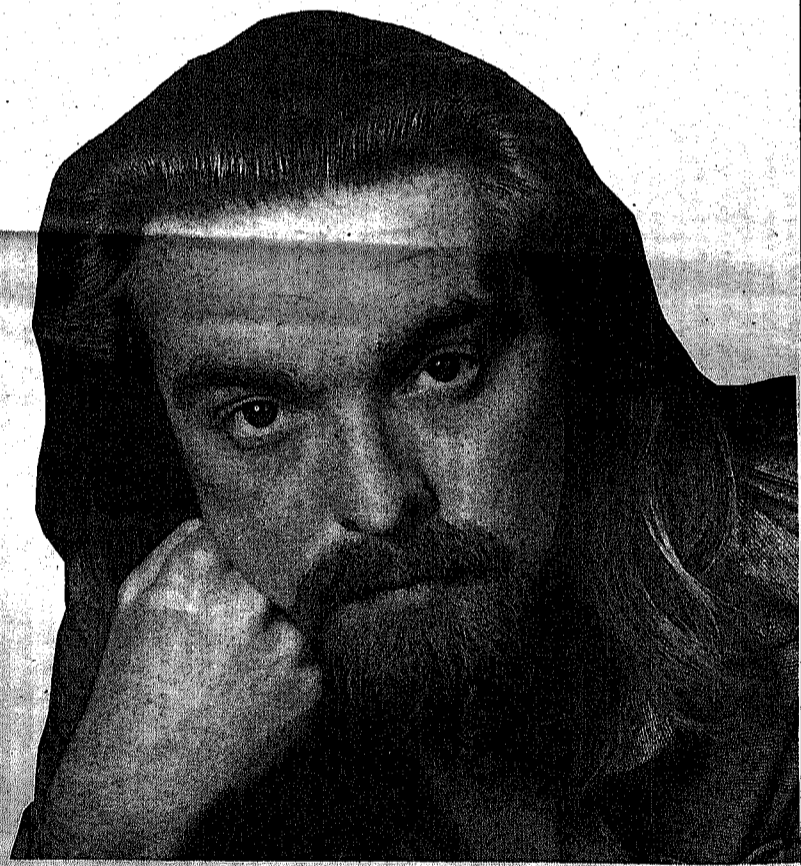
For a number of musicians to come together and play duets to display their ability as was done on this particular night one must be apprehensive as to the result.

There was no need to be the playing throughout, was precise, crisp and clear.

The first piece (by Schuman) featured a piano duet, using two pianos on stage. The piece required strict timing as the musicians moved through some very tight, intricate scale progressions and the effect was brilliant.

This piece and two others, in which Heinz Helliger played oboe proved the abilities of the musicians concerned.

It seems that Helliger dominated the night's performance, which he did, but there were equally beautiful pieces played by Peter G (on flute) and Ursula Holliger on Harp.



## Therry

### BIERDERMANN AND THE FIREBUGS

The Therry Society have again succeeded in presenting first class entertainment with this play at Willard Hall.

While all the players were convincing, Claire Liverpool (Babette Beidermann) was outstanding, in her quiet submissiveness.

The set is very cleverly contrived, the whole style of presentation being reminiscent of "Godspell".

The play itself is clever, original, and brings many a wry smile, as one recognises one's own tendency to bury one's head in metaphorical sand, in the face of impending disaster.

The final act is the least impressive, as Joe and Willie... but I shan't spoil it for you.

B & The Firebugs is definitely worth-while entertainment. It is a pity the Therry Society have not the advantage of a suitable theatre for their work.

G.K.

### EDUCATION ACTION WEEK

As part of a nationwide campaign to focus student and general interest upon education and all its aspects, particularly exams and assessment, a week of activity is planned for late April in Adelaide. There will be a series of forums and publicity, culminating in a TEACH-IN on the afternoon of THURSDAY APRIL 25 which also happens to be the Anzac holiday. The publicity and teach-ins will involve secondary and tertiary students and will attempt to raise fundamental issues and criticisms of present styles of education at both types of institutions. At the moment, things are very much in the formative stage and people are desperately needed to provide energy, enthusiasm and ideas to make the whole thing work successfully. Contact Nadine Golding or Education Action at the Student Activities Office to find out what is to be done.

It seems pointless to try and find a purpose for writing a review on something that strives only to reveal pointlessness. If there is any point in this review, then I don't know what it is. What purpose did Samuel Beckett find in pointing out man's pointlessness? I tried starting this little rave several times but somehow, something was wrong. It didn't feel right to bother about a review. If you have read or seen performed any of Beckett's works, you'll know what I mean. (The worst insult he can give man is to call him a critic!). But anyway I go on talking, just like Beckett's typical character who talks and raves to himself absurdly and endlessly just to fill in time before he reaches death.

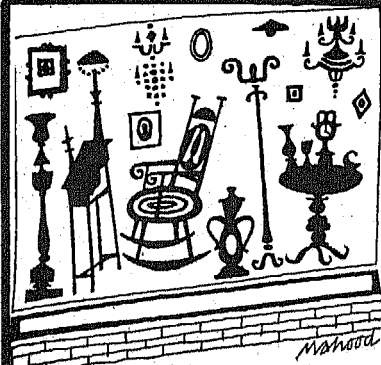
'A Remnant' is a collection of extracts from Samuel Beckett's works as performed by Jack Emery. Each extract involves only one man and that one man's thoughts in an eternal monologue that circles back on itself, explores memories and associations and finally goes nowhere.

Emery plays the one man, - a different colored spotlight, a different posture for each item, but the feeling is just the same, and after a while each section begins to hammer in the one before until the final item is a cacophony of despair, shouting that man is an animal born in a cage, lives in a cage, and dies in a cage, while we sit in our seats, enveloped by this crescendo of pessimism, with fear in our hearts! These internal voices screaming of man's hopelessness leave the man speechless. Then there is total darkness. Like a ghost, Jack Emery then came out saying that there was no more, and that was a rather morbid way, considering everything, of saying that the show was over.

One can't help but wonder just how Jack Emery himself fits into it all, and wondering how the actual content of 'A Remnant' really effects a human being, being so deeply involved in such a philosophy. But all this is very reviewy and having justified myself and explained the pointlessness of a review, I'll leave it at that.

LYNNE ASHBY





## guild

Eureka Stockade is undoubtedly the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild's best production in recent years at least, and was a highlight of the Festival of Arts' dramatic fare.

Kenneth Cook's play is not merely "a rip roaring musical play of the 1854 miner's revolt" as its publicity promised. It is also a sensitive study of some of the people involved, their motives and their circumstances. I use "people" because the play is concerned with more than the Lalor's and the Thomas' of the revolt.

Nor is its relevance limited to 1854. Contemporary issues rear their heads from the garb of Ballarat: The burning of miner's licenses, historically accurate apparently, is a strong evocation of the anti-conscription campaign of the last decade. And the question of the legitimacy of violence under oppression is of immediate importance.

This production, directed by Robert Kimber is powerful, compelling drama. He has drawn performances of excellent quality from a large cast, and the realization of the play is a fine piece of directorial craftsmanship.

Kenneth Cook's sympathies clearly lie with the miners. His Captain Thomas, the commander of the soldiers, is weak and vicious, and a sexual deviant to boot. His Captain Wise, an intelligent and educated second-in-command, is an amoral soldier. On the other hand his miners have families, and are passionate and human.

Between the two George Black moves uncertainly. The editor of the Diggers' Advocate he counsels Peter Lalor against violence and argues with dispassionate logic against the inevitable armed confrontation. At the same time he seeks a reconciliation with the military through Captain Wise. In neither case does his abstract cogency prevail for in the one case he fails to recognize that violence — even if certain to be unsuccessful is a release from the misery of oppression, while in the other he forgets that Wise is dutiful soldier as well as not realizing that Thomas' weakness will not permit him to do anything that may appear weak, or, put differently, Thomas is not strong enough to compromise.

The part of Black is critical to the cohesion of the play and John Trinder discharges the role most admirably. One sees in his face and his body the toll his failure to secure the avoidance of the violence he

perceives, so accurately in his detached way, to be purposeless. It is a masterful performance.

Michael Moody has the difficult task to portray the larger than life figure of Peter Lalor. In this production he not merely has to be a man who can lead a polyglot group of miners in united resistance, but is also required to sing. His is also an excellent performance.

To mention all the performances that deserve favorable comment is impossible, but I thought the following were the best of uniformly good cast: John Low [Quinlan], Keith Norbury [Thomas], Jenny Smith [Liz.], and Alan Shepley [Hotham and the magistrate].

A superbly choreographed fight between John Low and Mark Holden [Johnny] had the audience drawing its breath more than once.

Acknowledging the risk of being pedantic there were a few minor points that detracted from the production: the wailing of the women and the burning of the Bentleys' pub were too long, and perhaps one less song at the end of the play would have prevented the dissipation of drama I felt in the last minutes.

The production was designed by Greer Druce and the set was a magnificent vehicle for the play. It allowed both for the isolation of individuals and small groups, and for massed movement.

The one major criticism I have of the production is the lighting. Backlighting is a useful device to lift actors from their background. In film and television is almost

essential. In Union Hall, with its limited lighting facilities, backlighting is an extravagance that cannot be afforded. It is frontal lighting that enables the audience to see [other than in silhouette] the actors and particularly, their faces. Inadequate light from the front means that expressions are lost in shadows caused by the available lights. This, unfortunately, was what happened in this production.

The inadequate light available led also to what I consider an excessive use of follow spots. The role of follow spots in drama, as opposed to revue or music hall, is very limited. In this production they were used as substitutes for fixed lights, something that follow spots do badly unless out of focus, and for actually following people, for which they need to be in focus. The operators' task was unenviable, particularly when one actor, Alan Shepley, while being held in a very tight spot on his head insisted on repeatedly moving his head sharply out of the light.

The lighting, however, was the only substantial defect in this production which I would rank after only the Imaginary Invalid of the drama productions I saw during the Festival. If the Theatre Guild can maintain this standard for the rest of its productions this year, it will have established itself as a major force in drama in this State.

Justin O'Halloran.

## blattyhoo

I can't help wondering how the makers of "Exorcist" knew that they would make so huge a profit for such a film. No, to be more accurate, I wonder that people justify their expectations of such profits by flocking to see the film.

Are we naturally drawn to the disgusting? Are we attracted by the sight of vomit and excrement, by the sound of language obscene for obscenity's sake?

When I saw this film, I noticed nothing worth the experience of seeing such degrading rubbish thrown up at me.

Even people who haven't read the book know most of the story of "The Exorcist" by now, and some of its more lurid details: the twelve year old daughter of a film star shows increasingly alarming symptoms of psychological disturbance.

Doctors and psychiatrists are baffled, and the priests are finally called in. We all know, of course, that the girl is possessed, as the priests soon find out for themselves. After many a scene of blood and vomitus . . . well, I won't spoil the end for anyone who wants to see the film.

Actually, the advance publicity does the film more harm than good. Instead of asking "What is coming next?" the audience asks "When is it coming?" and when it comes, it is not as bad as imagination made it out to be. The effect is anticlimax. This anticlimax is heightened [or should I say lowered?] by the technique of cutting from a particularly horrific or disgusting scene to a more ordinary and mundane one. The contrast is often ludicrous, allowing the audience a nervous giggle.

Between the more spectacular possession scenes the plot maintains a token interest in the hero of the story, Father Darrien Karras, the exorcist. If you are quick, you may notice that he is losing his faith, and that the devil is really after his soul, not the little girl's. The devil is fairly well represented, with statues, sinister images, and suitably evil behaviour. His opposition is less formidable — lucky charms like holy water and incantation. God or Jesus Christ are seldom mentioned except in blasphemy. So much for theology.

"The Exorcist" is a sordid little film that hardly merits the controversy it has stirred up, but if you are attracted by the atrocious and drawn by the disgusting, it is definitely the film for you.

John Coleman.

**FOR SALE**  
1974 SUZUKI 100cc. street bike 1500 miles, still under warranty. In perfect condition, plenty of reg. left. \$350. Call at 67 Light Tce., Thebarton after hours.

Students of Italian background wishing to join us in forming an Association to combat the problems of Italian children in our schools. Contact: Kitto 465968.

### PUBLIC LECTURES

in first term to be held in the

horace lamb lecture theatre

each TUES March 19<sup>th</sup> through to April 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm

## PAUL BARNETT



Evangelical

Union

on

The Revelation of the scriptures

The Authority of the scriptures

The Infallibility of the scriptures

The Inspiration of the scriptures

The Use of the scriptures

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

On Dit

needs staff



# ESSON

It was almost fifty years ago that the Pioneer Players of Melbourne first performed "The Bride of Gospel Place", in the Abbey Theatre Melbourne. Written by Thomas Louis Esson, who grew up in Carlton after migrating from Scotland with his mother in his early childhood, it portrays the life of people involved in the under-ground movement, in the late 20's.

Last Saturday week the curtain rose at the Arts Theatre, Angus Street — the first time for Esson's *Bride* since June 1926 — to the music

most characteristic of that era, revealing Spiro's Blue Bird Cafe, with its Greek restaurant owner, his assistant Joe, Bush Reynolds, Renie a colourful lady, a taxi driver, the Master (formerly an articulated clerk), and Milky Davis.

In the first Act the initial dialogue is slow and develops as Renie takes control. Although She is not an important figure in the plot her flamboyance overshadows the weaker performance of the principal characters. The theme in this act, in the all night cafe creates a good reflection — but only that — of the bored lower class society, tending to be nostalgic rather than an in-depth study of the

people and the era.

In the Second Act, however Esson helps the audience understand the type of community structure which is of importance to the people of Melbourne lower class society. Some of the characters develop, to reveal deeper personalities than first meets the eye. The respect which is shown for Madame Delia, (played appropriately by Mary Mackay), and the common feeling against Constable Dobson, (perhaps willingly played by Leslie Dobson alias Homicide), reveal the closely knit community spirit which prevails throughout the play. The highlight of this Act is the card playing scene with Lily (The

Bride), Renie, Suzette and Madame Delia. It creates a feeling of empathy between the characters and the audience — unlike the closing scenes of the same Act between Bush and Lily, which are melodramatic rather than dramatic, and climax in Bush striking "the Bride", and walking out leaving her helpless. In Act Three, the hospital scene is pathetically true of what was (and often still is) experienced today in public wards. It is not long before we realize that Lily is dying quickly of consumption, which tends to shock the audience after her fall. She still has a strong feeling for Bush, as she clings to him, in the hope that this love will not

be brushed aside like her previous one in Sydney. The scene is saddening, (evidently, judging by the number of Hankies and Scotties), and Esson has used it to reveal the shallowness of the medical practitioner — who solicits the young nurse immediately before and after Lily's death.

In the final Act the audience realizes that few of the characters have any deep emotional feeling — apart from Madame Delia who is totally responsible for the funeral arrangements. Constable Dobson contributes a note when the Master takes around the hat, (and then pockets the takings), while the others find it difficult to

scrounge a few pence. More melodrama erupts when Bush enters, finds Lily dead and swears he will do all he can for her in his next fight.

The Stage Props were very well designed and helped create a feeling of that era. Michael Pearce, once again, has created scenery which has a strong significance — the verandah posts, lace iron work, (visible through the house and face windows), the open fire places, cafe scenery and added touches provide considerable depth and meaning to an understanding of Esson's *Pride*.

ROD LAWRENCE

# BUZO

Until the interval the Nimrod Street Theatre's production of Coralie Lansdowne Say No at Theatre 62 confirmed an opinion to which I am slowly, and reluctantly, coming — namely that many present Australian playwrights have a grave difficulty in giving their characters more than one dimension.

The only exception to this was Coralie Lansdowne, brilliantly played by Jude Kuring who with one line revealed that she loathed her vituperative indolence which to that point had been the whole basis of the play. It was with one line revealed that she loathed her vituperative indolence which to that point had been the whole basis of the play. It was one of the finest

moments of drama I have experienced.

After interval more of Alexander Buzo's characters assumed a fuller personality, but particularly with Stuart Morgan the second act's character was hard to reconcile with the first act's.

The play presents Corlie Lansdowne, a "29 year-old, out-of-work teacher with big boobs", beset by three suitors described in the programme as "her former lover, Paul, a stud; Peter, a cool Australia Party lawyer and Stuart, a young public servant who's a poet manque".

She eventually marries Stuart to the astonishment of Paul and Peter, and that of anyone who remembers his wooden, taciturn and ineffectual first act. Marriage works wonders with his becoming mobile, witty and resourceful on their return from the reception.

The play's highlight was the

commanding and sensitive performance of Jude Kuring. With deft touches she exposed the tender and uncertain core hidden in a shell of stingingly vicious repartee. Her comic timing was flawless.

The most credible performance apart from hers came from Robert Newman as Peter York. His pompous posturing and empty phrases wherein he accommodates anything to his "worldview" is a savage indictment of flabby, armchair liberals.

Once the play allowed him to do more than stand still with clenched hands and introduce himself as "a poet and a public servant" Kevin Howard as Stuart performed creditably as the only suitor who realizes Coralie is vulnerable and in need of support.

Donna Ackerston was good in the limited role of Coralie's young sister, Jill. Her

aspiration is to be the secretary to a Minister, and she acts as Coralie's middle-class conscience when Coralie is trying to convince herself that she is "a high flying bird" to quote the programme again.

The least convincing characters are the sometime stud, Paul Coleman, and his wife, Anne. For a stud and commercial Mr. Fixit Paul (John Oresic) seems strangely introverted and retiring, while remaining a demanding and arrogant male chauvinist.

While it is difficult to believe he once lived with Coralie during her high flying period while he regularly copulated with others, it is inconceivable that he ever married Anne. She is hopelessly stultified with correct grammar and totally egocentric interests.

At the same time as the audience is asked to believe

that this very prim English lady never uses "you" when "one" would do, it is also asked to accept that she repeatedly tells a group including people she barely knows how she dropped her toothbrush in urine at a road house! At least this demand on credibility is a preparation for her melodramatic death.

What appears to be an error in her otherwise nauseating but proper language is her use of "bowser" to describe a petrol pump. To the best of my knowledge "bowser" is an Australianism derived from the name of the company that marketed the device in this country, and it is very unlikely that Anne would have adopted this one local word.

The verbal barrages are clever and often extremely funny. On the night I saw the play the audience's delight at the scathing references to Canberra and its inhabitants was heightened by the

presence of the Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck).

The flourishing of lethal words, however, does not necessarily make a good play. Like its characters the first act of the play has, with the exception I have already mentioned, only one tone — duelling with acidic words. The verbal wounding, though, are sufficiently funny, vicious and rapid to prevent the play from lagging.

Although the play itself is, in my opinion, flawed, the production was interesting and exciting.

JUSTIN O'HALLORAN.



Dying is a long and tiresome business, as Samuel Becket observed, but for a hypochondriac, it is an engrossing hobby, and for a Moliere audience, a glorious romp, undiminished after three hundred and one years. In the hands of the Stratford National Theatre of Canada and its director Jean Gascon, it is rather measured by Comedie Francaise standards, but a romp nevertheless.

Moliere's Argan, the Imaginary Invalid, like Monsieur Jourdain or Orson a man to whom one would most like to sell a used car, is given among other things, to colonic irrigation or lavage, as the discreet advertisements in The Times personal column used to offer so temptingly. His G.P. Purgon, and friendly Guild Chemist Fleuron, show no lack of imagination in the

provision of diagnoses and nostrums, nor in their disregard of the most common fee.

The only medical scheme available to Argan is to marry his daughter Angelique to Thomas Diafirus, a singularly repulsive (superb make-up) and stupid newly-qualified doctor. Angelique has, needless to say, other plans. Add to this the usual Moliere servant [Toinette] — blunt, down to earth and sensible as Hazel, an avaricious young second wife, and a couple of impersonations to confuse Argan, and all the ingredients are assembled for Moliere's magic mixmaster to blend its last Molotov cocktail to be thrown into the laps of the quacks, charlatans, dupes and obscurantists whom he detested so heartily.

William Hutt, Stratford leading actor and director, belches and farts his way through Argan's role with a sure touch and excellent if expansive timing. The slight surprise of a mid-Atlantic accent in classical theatre is soon forgotten and Donald M. Frame's translation with its occasional North American colloquialisms is never out of place.

Rendering the final scene, spoken in pig latin presents increasing problems as modern audiences become more and more ignorant of Latin, and Moliere's puns of necessity, become a little diluted. The overall effect, however, with its brilliant stage business, is pure classical gas.

As the secret has been out a long time, nobody's fun will be spoiled in revealing that all

dilemmas are resolved by persuading Argan to have a doctor's degree conferred upon him. The ceremony befits what is, after all, the transference of apostolic succession, and it would be a rather engaging change from the rather dreary affairs which take place annually in the Bonython Hall. Induction into a rapacious Freemasonry deserves the best that Moliere can give.

Tania Moisevitsch's Hogarthian set and costumes are admirable and the whole production adds up to an evening of very satisfying and amusing theatre.

To any dissenters, I can only recommend — 'Glysterium donare, Postea Seignare. Ensuitta pungare'.

Peter Wells

(Adv.)

If you are  
wondering  
what this  
Space  
is about  
keep looking  
in  
On Dit.