

NOT ABOUT HEROES



by **Stephen MacDonald**



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NOT ABOUT HEROES

by **Stephen MacDonald**

April 10 — May 27, 1984

THE CAST

Siegfried Sassoon **PETER MILLARD**

Wilfred Owen **JOHN O'KRANCY**

Music by: **JAMES GREEN**, synthesizer
PIERRE FRANZ TESSIER, cello

Directed by **SCOTT SWAN**

Sets & costumes designed by **GUIDO TONDINO**

Lighting designed by **ALEXANDER GAZALE**

Assistant Director **LESLIE TOY**

Stage Manager **CINDY SMITH**

Apprentice Stage Manager **BRUCE MCKINNON**

The acting area becomes a club in Edinburgh, two rooms in the Craiglockhart War Hospital, the countryside near Milnathort, Wilfred Owen's room in London, and a dug-out in France. The period in these scenes is from August 1917 to November 1918. The composite picture suggests a room in a country house where Siegfried Sassoon was living around 1932.

There will be one intermission

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STEPHEN MACDONALD (Author): is a writer/director/actor who was born in Birmingham, England. His other plays include "Billy Budd", a one-hour adaptation produced at the Lyceum Company in 1978; "The Jungle Book", an adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's novel, also produced by the Lyceum as well as Theatre Alba Company in Edinburgh; "All Ayre and Fire", described as an impression of Christopher Marlowe and winner of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe First in 1978. NOT ABOUT HEROES was produced by the Dundee Repertory Theatre at the Edinburgh Festival in 1982, and also won the Fringe First Award. It was later adapted for Yorkshire Television in 1983. Centaur's production marks the North American Première of this play.

SCOTT SWAN (Director): is a member of P.A.N.D. - Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament, and Artists for Peace, and was Founding Artistic Director of Northern Light Theatre in Edmonton, and has directed at most of the major theatres across the country, including the Shaw Festival, the National Arts Centre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Alberta Theatre Projects, and the Bastion Theatre in Victoria. His work at Centaur includes WINGS, with Ann Casson and the Northern Light Company, BLOOD RELATIONS with Dana Ivey and Terry Tweed, and DUET FOR ONE with Fiona Reid and Maurice Podbrey. Educated at UBC and in England at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, he has spent the last year producing and directing radio drama for CBC. This summer Mr. Swan will be directing "Richard III" for the Vancouver Shakespeare Festival.

GUIDO TONDINO (Designer): a graduate of the National Theatre School, has worked extensively across Canada. His most recent work for Centaur was David Fennario's MOVING. Other shows here include WEEDS, WAITING FOR THE PARADE and BLOOD RELATIONS, another collaboration with Scott Swan. "Relative Strangers" for Encore Theatre was his most recent work in Montreal. He currently divides his time between Montreal and New York where he is working on an adaptation of "A Lovely Light", a play based on the works of Edna St. Vincent Millay. He is also involved with several architectural projects.

ALEXANDER GAZALE (Lighting Designer): is Centaur's Technical Director, and a Resident Lighting Designer. He was Head Technician for 5 seasons, after joining Centaur in 1978. Mr. Gazale has designed lights for various companies in Montreal, and his most recent designs for Centaur were PLAYING THE FOOL, EMPRESS EUGÉNIE, MOVING, DUET FOR ONE, K2 and A MAJORITY OF TWO. He will design GLORIOUS MUD, Centaur's upcoming production.

LESLIE TOY (Assistant Director): has been, up until now, primarily an actress and singer. Her work and study in both music and theatre has taken her to Calgary, Texas, Louisiana, the Yukon, New York City, and England. For the past 3 years she has called Toronto home where her work has been seen in many musicals and touring companies.

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PETER MILLARD (Siegfried Sassoon): actor, musician, was educated at Trinity College School and the University of Toronto, and received his theatrical training at Toronto Workshop Productions thereby beginning a 12-year association which saw him as an original cast member in over 550 performances of TWP's TEN LOST YEARS (seen at Centaur in 1975) and more recently "The Medicine Show" and "Ain't Lookin' " which has been invited to this year's International Theatre Festival in Quebec City. His work has taken him to many theatres across the country including Magnus Theatre in "Hedda Gabler", the Manitoba Theatre Centre in "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "A Flea in Her Ear", Alberta Theatre Projects in "Stepdance" and "Bedroom Farce", Kelowna's Sunshine Theatre in "18 Wheels" and Stratford Festival in "The Country Wife" and "Death of a Salesman". Toronto appearances include Theatre Plus' "The Crucible" and Toronto Arts Productions' "Scapin" directed by Montreal's Albert Millaire. Television credits include CBC's "I Married the Klondike", and the continuing series "Backstretch".

JOHN O'KRANCY (Wilfred Owen): makes a return appearance at Centaur following his acclaimed performance in QUIET IN THE LAND last season. His wide range of roles in theatres across the country include 'Paul' in "St. Sam" at the Blyth Summer Festival, the title role in "Sonny" at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, 'Sebastian' in "Twelfth Night" at Manitoba Theatre Centre, "Bus Riley's Back in Town" for Toronto Arts Productions, the role of 'Charley' in "Charley's Aunt" directed by legendary Joshua Logan, and the original Canadian production of "The Dining Room" directed by James Roy. Television credits include lead roles in "The Collaborators", "Sidestreets", "Police Surgeon", continuing roles in "Mr. Dressup" and the OECA series "Well, Here We All Are", as well as five episodes of CTV's "Littlest Hobo". Film credits are "Critical List", "The Paper Chase", "Class of '44", "Don't Cry for David", and "Ice Sculptures". Currently Mr. O'Kranczy is a company member of the Brave New Works program at Factory Theatre Lab in Toronto.

CINDY SMITH (Stage Manager): is in her second season at Centaur having worked on TRANSLATIONS, QUIET IN THE LAND and PLAYING THE FOOL as Assistant Stage Manager last season, and as Stage Manager for this season's K2 and MAJORITY OF TWO. She returns to Kawartha Summer Theatre this summer for her 5th season.

BRUCE MCKINNON (Apprentice Stage Manager): a graduate of the Ryerson Theatre School, this is his first season at Centaur. He worked as a carpenter for the Kawartha Summer Theatre and Technical Director for the Canadian Opera Co. Summer Festival before returning to Kawartha last year to begin a Stage Management Apprenticeship. Other A.S.M. work includes "Sister Mary Ignatius..." and "Science and Madness" for Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, as well as K2 and A MAJORITY OF TWO at Centaur.

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SASSOON'S LIFE

- 1886 Siegfried Sassoon born at Weirleigh, Kent, the second son of Alfred Sassoon and Theresa, née Thornycroft
- 1905—6 At Clare College, Cambridge
- 1906-14 Lived mostly at home, hunting, playing cricket and writing poems, which he had privately printed in small editions
- 1915 Commissioned in Royal Welsh Fusiliers
To France with his battalion
- 1916 Awarded Military Cross for gallantry
- 1917 Wounded in shoulder. In hospital and convalescent home in England
The Old Huntsman published
His statement against the continuation of the war read out in House of Commons and reported in *The Times*.
Attended Medical Board at Liverpool and was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital, near Edinburgh, where he was a patient of W.H.R. Rivers and met Wilfred Owen
- 1918 Posted to Limerick.
Posted to Palestine.
Rejoined another battalion in France.
Counter-Attack published
Wounded in the head. Subsequently invalided out of the army
- 1919 Lived for a short time in Oxford
Appointed Literary Editor of the Socialist *Daily Herald*
War Poems published
- 1920 Reading his poems in America
- 1928 Published *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*
- 1930 Published *Memoirs of An Infantry Officer*.
- 1933 Married Hester Gatty.
- 1936 Published *Sherston's Progress*
Birth of son, George
- 1957 Converted to Catholicism
- 1967 He died in September.

A Post-Mortem

Searching for souvenirs among some rubble,
A post-atomic warfare man observed
That 'Those who made this little bit of trouble
Got only what they asked for and deserved'.
Then, in a kindlier afterthought's release,
He pitied 'them that only asked for peace'.

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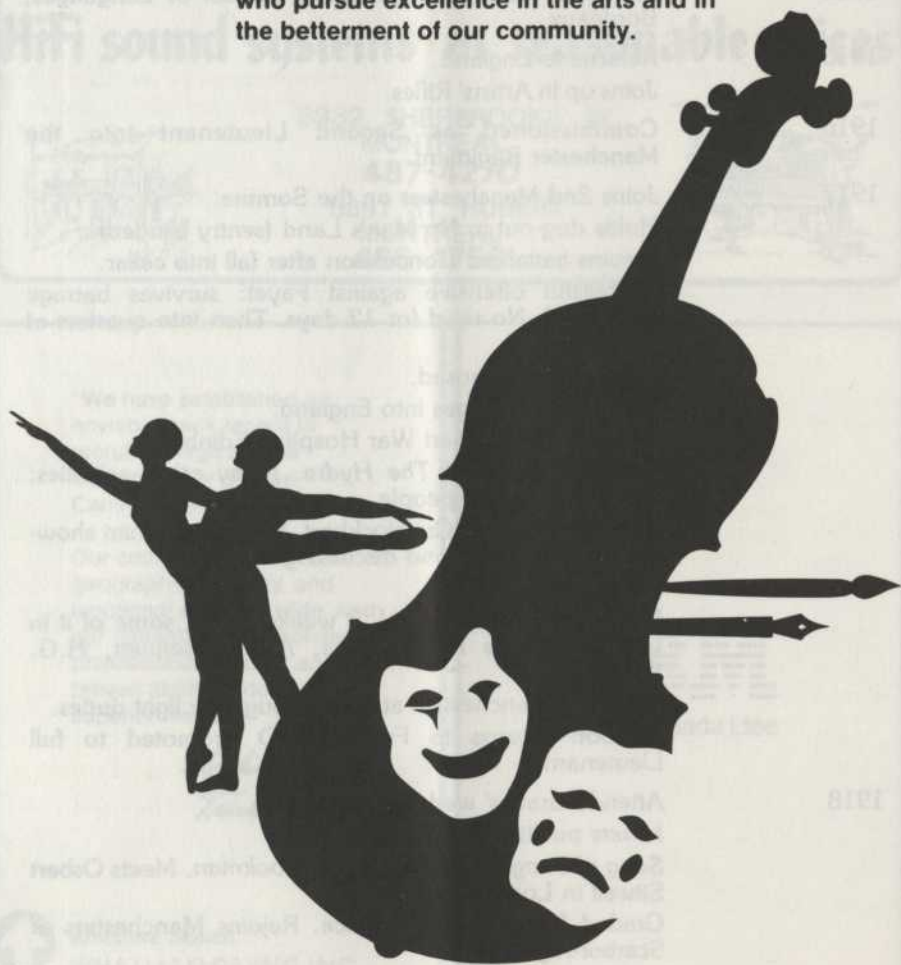
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OWEN'S LIFE

- 1893 Wilfred Edward Salter Owen born at Oswestry.
- 1897 Owens move to Birkenhead
- 1906-7 Family moves to Shrewsbury. WO attends Shrewsbury Technical School.
- 1911 Sits University of London Matriculation exam.
Visits British Museum to see Keats MSS.
Offered unpaid post as lay assistant and pupil to the Vicar of Dunsden, Oxon. Matriculates without honours.
- 1913 Becomes teacher at the Berlitz School of Languages, Bordeaux.
- 1915 Returns to England.
Joins up in Artists' Rifles.
- 1916 Commissioned as Second Lieutenant into the Manchester Regiment.
- 1917 Joins 2nd Manchesters on the Somme.
Holds dug-out in No Man's Land (sentry blinded).
Rejoins battalion. Concussion after fall into cellar.
Successful offensive against Fayet: survives barrage unharmed. No relief for 12 days. Then into quarters at Quivières.
Shellshock diagnosed.
Evacuated by stages into England.
Arrives Craiglockhart War Hospital, Edinburgh.
Becomes editor of *The Hydra*. Many other activities: meets many local people.
Sassoon arrives at Craiglockhart. WO calls on him showing him his poetry and discussing it.
Meets Robert Graves.
Discharged from hospital, 3 weeks' leave, some of it in London. Meets Robert Ross, Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells, etc.
Joins 5th Manchesters at Scarborough for light duties.
Sassoon returns to France. WO promoted to full Lieutenant.
- 1918 Attends Graves' wedding in London.
Miners published in *The Nation*.
Song of Songs published in *The Bookman*. Meets Osbert Sitwell in London.
Graded fit for general service. Rejoins Manchesters at Scarborough.

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July	Sassoon wounded and sent home.
August	To Base Camp, Étaples, again.
September	Rejoins 2nd Manchesters. Successful assault on Beurevoir-Fonsomme line. Awarded M.C.
October	Into the line for the last time.
4 November	Killed in the early hours of the morning in an assault on the Oise-Sambre Canal, near Ors.
11 November	News of his death reaches Shrewsbury.

Dulce Et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
 Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
 Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
 And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
 But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
 Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
 Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of fumbling,
 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
 But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
 And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
 Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
 As under a green sea. I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
 He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, —
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
 Pro patria mori.

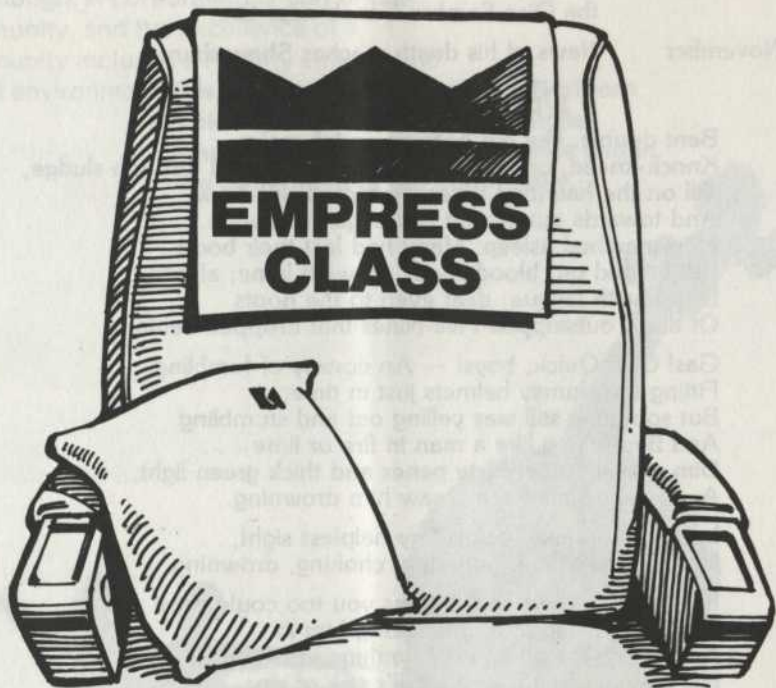
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