

eue

montreal repertory theatre

Speaking
of
Murder

by

Audrey and William Roos

in this issue

CHANGES AND CHANCES

PLAYBILL

BACKSTAGE NEWS

A NATIONAL "OTHELLO"



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CHANGES AND CHANCES

When each new play is chosen, a production planned, there are always hope and pleasurable anticipation at the start that something beautiful, important or entertaining may be created. If it were not so, the theatre would not recover from its trials and errors sufficiently to live and know some triumphs.

As each spring approaches, MRT starts looking towards its next season and planning to do better than its last. If there is one dull spot to the general eye in this planning process, it is that vague and shadowy group known as the Board of Directors. Its functions and duties are undefined; its virtues unknown; its responsibility for all financial crises, lapses in standard, and probably even the colour of the walls, apparently limitless. What is the MRT Board?

The MRT Board is the punching bag for criticism on both sides of the footlights. Too great a care for thrift results in cries of philistinism from the artists; too lenient an attitude towards expenditures (never endorsed by the treasurer) results in accusations of extravagance from members and public alike. The worries, the disappointments, the changes and chances of personnel and of productions, the financial strain, the long, tiresome meetings, the twisting and turning to save a penny here and raise a dollar there — these are the duty of the Board. Bleak periods, critical periods, desperate periods are all the lot of the Board, and from them there is no escape.

Montreal has grown into a big city since 1929, when MRT was born, and Canada has stretched out tentacles of a national culture. Governments are developing a pattern of encouraging art along certain lines, and the public is widening its tastes and sharpening its critical faculty.

In all this growth and expansion, a small, tentatively professional theatre such as MRT has a difficult time adjusting and surviving. In Montreal, particularly, the English theatre is faced with many problems. Toronto attracts many English-speaking players, and Montreal's professional French theatre offers stiff comparisons to those who remain.

All these factors combine with the natural contrariness of the theatre to make a steady level of performance and operation for MRT impossible. During the past twelve months, however, it seems fair enough to say that the Board of Directors has kept MRT from foundering altogether. At this moment, MRT seems closer to getting onto a steady course than appeared possible a year ago.

The Board, with most members willing to shoulder their burdens again and heartened by the prospect of new blood to give it strength, renews its faith with the spring. During the summer months, the MRT Board will cultivate its plans with care and look for a vigorous and healthy harvest in the autumn.

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MRT SUMMER SCHOOL of the THEATRE

The innovation of a Summer School at MRT proved so successful last year that plans are now being made to resume classes again this year at the Playhouse.

It is most important that early notice be given by all those interested in attending these classes.

For information about these classes please call

JULIA MURPHY - WE. 5-4684

LEARN TO ACT

There is still time to join the classes for the
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JULIA MURPHY, Director of the School

TO OUR MEMBERS...

A regularly producing theatre group like MRT owes its continuing existence to a regular and continuing membership. It is the foundation upon which our whole structure rests.

Through a series of experiments and struggles we have managed to survive the crisis of a year ago, and to learn a number of valuable lessons from our operation this past season.

With the appointment of Jean de Savoye as the Board member who will be largely responsible for the artistic side of MRT's operation, we feel confident that we can offer an interesting and rewarding season of productions in 1959/60. Directors have already been approached about plays and plans are beginning to take shape.

To you, our members, I want to say thank you for your support during the season now drawing to its close, and, on the practical side, please renew your membership now. If we are assured of the renewals of our present members this spring, we shall be free to concentrate during the summer months on planning a vigorous drive for new members next autumn.



Our membership, is our life-blood, and as it strengthens and renews itself, so can MRT improve and grow.

CHRYSTIE L. DOUGLAS,
President.

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS NOW

MRT would be greatly assisted in making plans for the forthcoming season if members could send in their Renewals NOW.

MRT is planning ten productions for the 1959-60 season.

Please enrol me as a member of the Montreal Repertory Theatre in the category below:

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SPEAKING OF MURDER

Directed by JULIA MURPHY

RICKY ASHTON	Anthony Tremblay
CONNIE BARNES ASHTON	Beryl Baxter
JANIE ASHTON	Simone Lowe
CHARLES ASHTON	Henry Ramer
ANNABELLE LOGAN	Kay Tremblay
MRS. WALWORTH	Dorothy Danford
MILDRED	Carlene Cooper
MITCHELL	Eric Donkin
POLICEMAN	Paul Hecht

Synopsis of the Scenes

Time: The present.

Place: The entire action of the play takes place in the library of the Ashton home, forty miles north of New York City.

ACT ONE:

Scene I. Late afternoon, early July.

Scene II. Half an hour later.

ACT TWO:

Scene I. The following Friday, shortly before noon.

Scene II. Later that afternoon.

ACT THREE:

The same afternoon, five o'clock.

There will be a ten minute intermission between the acts.

MRT PLAYHOUSE, CLOSSE STREET . . . April 7-11 and 14-18

FLOWERS: Carl

BACKSTAGE NEWS

OUR PLAYERS

Anthony Tremblay (Ricky Ashton) is only 12 years old but has already buckled nearly three years theatre know-how under his belt. He appeared with MRT in *The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker* (1957) and has also acted for *The Mountain Playhouse* and *North Hatley Playhouse*.

Beryl Baxter (Connie Barnes Ashton) is a well-known London actress who has made her home in Montreal. She appeared in the following West End productions: *The Hollow*, *Fifty Fifty*, *Room For Two*, *Birthday Honours*. Since coming to Montreal she has appeared many times — CBC television plays (*The Colonel*, *The Stranger*, *Depth 300*) and on radio. Her most recent stage appearance was in the *Freelancers'* production of *Graham Greene's* play, *The Living Room*.

Simone Lowe (Janie Ashton) is the youngest member of the cast (11) and also a New Canadian. She came to Canada two years ago, from England, and has had two parts with the National Film Board—the *Ugly Sister* in *Cinderella* and *A Sunbather* in *Radiation*.

Henry Ramer (Charles Ashton) is well known in Montreal as an actor, director, and has done much work on radio and television.

Kay Tremblay (Annabella Logan) is one of Canada's best-known actresses. Trained in England at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School and Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, she has starred in dozens of Canadian stage, radio and television shows.

Most recently she appeared in the MRT production of Shaw's play, *Arms And The Man*. During 1958 she acted at *North Hatley Playhouse* and at *Montreal's International Theatre — La Poudrière*.

Dorothy Danford (Mrs. Walworth) is another well-known Montrealer who performs regularly on CBC radio and television, at MRT (*Kind Sir*) and at *The Mountain Playhouse* (*Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Life With Father*). In 1957 she acted in the National Film Board production, *The Whole World Over*. Miss Danford received her stage training at the MRT school and with Miss Eleanor Stuart.

Carlene Cooper (Mildred) is a relative newcomer to Montreal theatre. She trained with Diana Maddox and Eleanor Stuart and recently appeared in the MRT musical comedy, *I Love Electra*.

Eric Donkin (Mitchell) is one of Canada's best-known young actors with a host of radio, television and stage performances to his credit. He trained for three years at MRT school and has since acted at the *Erie Playhouse*, *Erie, Pa.*; *Montreal's La Poudrière*; *CBC Television* (*Montreal and Toronto*); *National Film Board*; and regularly throughout this season at MRT.

Paul Hecht (policeman) is a 17-year-old day student at MRT school. He appeared in *McGill's Red and White* revue, *Wry And Ginger*, last year and was also in the MRT production of *Inherit The Wind*.

NORTH HATLEY PLAYHOUSE

North Hatley, Que.

- Opening Date: WEDNESDAY, JULY 1st, 1959.
- Curtain Time: 8.30 P.M.
- A new production each week — Wed., Thurs., Fri. and Sat. through July and August.
- Applications from apprentices now being accepted . . . For information write to NORTH HATLEY PLAYHOUSE, North Hatley, Que. or inquire at MRT office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to **Seeds and Birds Co., Limited, 1392 St. Catherine St. W.**, for the loan of a birdcage for "You Can't Take It With You".

Thanks to **Mrs. Margaret Poirier, 116 Clemont Ave., Dorval, P.Q.**, for the loan of a xylophone for "You Can't Take It With You".

ANY OLD COPIES OF CUE?

The MRT Library appeals to all MRT regular attenders for back issues of our magazine. If you have any copies of CUE at all, it would be much appreciated if you would either send them or leave them at MRT, 1429 Closse street, Montreal.

IN THE LOBBY...

This month's lobby display brings together the talents of many of the people connected with the theatre. Designs by Peter Symcox, and Art Voronka, paintings by Kay Kinsman, our resident director and head of the school Julia Murphy and the works of Henry Ramer and Agnes Evans. The lobby displays throughout this past season have been organised by Kay Kinsman, the wife of R. D. Lewis Kinsman, a director of MRT. We think you will agree that the time and energy put into arranging these varied exhibitions has been appreciated by many.

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MAPPIN'S

A SHOW YOU SHOULDN'T MISS...

Lachine Civic Theatre will present "The Winslow Boy", by Terence Rattigan, on April 22-23-24-25th., at 8.30 p.m., in Lachine High School Auditorium.

Jean de Savoye, one of Montreal's leading theatre personalities, is directing the play which will feature Winifred Dennis and Alfred Gallagher, who are being specially brought in from Toronto for the production.

A strong supporting cast includes Kay Tremblay, Beryl Baxter, Basil Schapiro, John Codner, Donald McGill, Eric Kosky, Judith Todd, and Maurice Whitby.

Michael Tremblay will be seen in the title role.

For further information please call ME. 7-3498.



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“OTHELLO”

The selection of Le Théâtre du Nouveau Monde's Jean Gascon and Robert Prévost as director and designer of "Othello" at the Stratford Festival promises to result in one of the most interesting productions of the seven-year old dramatic event. Co-directing with M. Gascon will be George McCowan, young Toronto director, who last year collaborated with Michael Langham in staging "Henry IV, Part 1".

The 1959 Stratford season also sees the return of Irene Worth, who will star in one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies, "As You Like It". The British actress, whose outstanding performances opposite Alec Guinness in 1953 helped to establish the international reputation of the Ontario venture, will play the witty Rosalind with Toronto actress Kate Reid as Celia.

In "Othello", Douglas Campbell, former Old Vic actor and since 1953 one of Stratford's leading citizens, plays the Moor with Douglas Rain as Iago and Frances Hyland as Desdemona.

Probably Canada's most redoubtable director-designer team, Jean Gascon and Robert Prévost have won an enviable reputation both in their native country and in France.

It is the talents of this pair which have been largely responsible for the international recognition given the celebrated Théâtre du Nouveau Monde. During that company's visits to Paris in 1955 and more recently on their Canada Council-sponsored tour, their fresh, vital productions of Molière won enthusiastic acclaim from theatre-wise critics and public alike. Their talents have also been much admired at Stratford where the same classic French comedies have been presented as part of the Festival's ancillary activities

during two seasons and where M. Gascon appeared with great distinction in Michael Langham's production of "Henry V" in 1956. The Stratford "Othello" should prove to be a production with a distinctly Canadian flavour.

As a contrast to the violent passions of "Othello" the colourful pastoral comedy, "As You Like It", will alternate with the tragedy throughout the 12-week summer season. Directed by Peter Wood and designed by Desmond Heeley, two of the most promising young figures in British theatre circles, the comedy will be presented before the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh during the royal couple's visit to the theatre.

Complementing the dramatic events will be the music, film and art activities which have become a regular aspect of the Stratford Festival. Highlight of the music season will be another "Anglo-French" collaboration — an adaptation in English by Robert Fulford and James Knight of Toronto of Jacques Offenbach's comic opera, "Orpheus in the Underworld" starring Metropolitan Opera baritone Martial Singher and American soprano Irene Jordan. A national orchestra consisting of leading players from many of Canada's major orchestras will present a series of concerts featuring outstanding Russian, American and Canadian soloists. Soviet pianist, Lev Oborin will join 'cellist Leonard Rose, violinist Oscar Shumsky, oboeist Robert Bloom, flautist Julius Baker and soprano Lois Marshall in programmes of orchestral and chamber music. A Scottish fantasy entitled "The Heart is Highland" with Lennox Milne, a revue with Jack Creley and Dave Broadfoot, films, exhibitions and folk music round out the season.

Neil Carson

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