

PRODUCTION A 'DISGRACE'

Sad opening at Stratford

by JAMIE PORTMAN
Southam News

STRATFORD, Ont. — Is the Stratford Festival afflicted with a death wish?

Having already admitted that it's in a mess financially, it now seems intent to prove that it's in a mess artistically.

Moliere's The Misanthrope, which landed soggly on the boards of the Festival Theatre Monday night, is a sad and leaky launching for the 1981 Stratford season.

The most charitable thing that can be said is that it suffers gravely from delusions of adequacy — unless, of course, it is the intention of new Stratford management that the ideal classical theatre should reject flesh and blood in favor of the odor of moth balls and decay.

This production is a disgrace to virtually everyone connected with it — including a lot of people who should know better. One of the latter is its director, Jean Gascon, who made an inglorious return after seven years to the theatre he once

headed. Another accomplice in the carnage is that normally magnificent actor, Brian Bedford, who delivers the least interesting performance of his Stratford career in the title role of the jaded Alceste.

Bedford, whose assignment it is to portray the character in despair with his society, tends mainly to behave like an actor in despair with this production. His major device is his grimacing mannerisms; it's all rather like a bargain-basement Malvolio, the character whom, incidentally, Bedford has played with distinction on two previous Stratford outings.

The Misanthrope is supposed to be a blockbuster production and also the potential salvation of a season which is currently \$1 million down in its advance sales from the same period a year ago. The season is opening in the wake of public forecasts by incoming artistic director John Hirsch of a possible \$2 million deficit by the fall.

The depressing calibre

of The Misanthrope — a production the festival is stuck with through to the end of September — is not a happy omen for the future.

Some members of the new Stratford hierarchy have already suggested publicly that if this season is a disaster, it won't be their fault — they have seemingly attempted to buy themselves insurance for, whatever disasters may result by blaming all their troubles on the controversy over the Festival's artistic succession which rocked Stratford last winter and to make much of the limited time they have had to assemble a season.

The problems have certainly be real ones but they can't take the new Festival leadership com-

pletely off the hook. The fact is that this year's schedule is offering eight productions half the size of Robin Phillips's final remarkable season a year ago.

Yet, virtually the same number of actors is being employed, and the \$7.7 million budget matches the 1980 one in size.

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Warning: Completely concerned with sex. B.C. Director

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No admittance to persons under 18

HIGH RISK
JAMES BROLIN
ANTHONY QUINN · LINDSAY WAGNER

Warning: Some coarse language and swearing, occasional violence. B.C. Director

odeon cinema 1 **MATURE** Shows: 7:00 & 9:00 p.m.
314 & VANCOUVER — 562-2935

Here's to our friends...

Warning: Occasional coarse language & suggestive scenes. B.C. Director

the Four Seasons
odeon cinema 2 **MATURE** Shows: 7:05 & 9:05 P.M.
314 & VANCOUVER — 562-2935

The comedy for everyone who's had it up to here...

...Robert Hays hasn't had this much fun since "Airplane!"

TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT

Some coarse language. B.C. Director.

odeon cinema 3 **MATURE** Shows: 7:10 & 9:10 p.m.
314 & VANCOUVER — 562-2935

Indiana Jones—the new hero from the creators of JAWS and STAR WARS.

RAIDERS of the LOST ARK.

A PARAMOUNT PICTURE
TV Guide: Labeled as TV MA (Mature Audience Suggested)

SHOWTIMES 7 & 9 P.M.
Warning: Some gory violence, occasional swearing. B.C. Director.

CINEMA 2
PLAZA 400 CINEMAS
564-7011

EXPERIENCE THE FANTASTIC

CLASH OF THE TITANS

SHOWTIMES 7 & 9 P.M.
Warning: Occasional Nudity. B.C. Director

PARKWOOD **GENERAL**
564-5200

HE'S NOT ONE OF THE BEST. HE IS THE BEST!

ENDS THURS.

SHOWTIMES 7 & 9 P.M.
Warning: Some violence. B.C. Director.

SPRUCELAND **MATURE**
562-1662

GEORGE A. ROMERO'S KNIGHTRIDERS
The Games... The Romance... The Spirit... Camelot is a state of mind.

SHOWTIMES 6:45 & 9:15 P.M.
Warning: Some violence, nudity and coarse language. B.C. Director.

CINEMA 1
PLAZA 400 CINEMAS
564-7011

PEANUTS

By Charles M. Schultz

I'M ENTERING A KID'S GOLF TOURNAMENT NEXT WEEK, MARCIE, AND AFTER I WIN, I'LL TURN PRO...

WHAT ABOUT COLLEGE, SIR? YOU CAN'T NEGLECT YOUR EDUCATION...

I CAN ALWAYS GO TO COLLEGE, MARCIE, AFTER I'M RICH AND FAMOUS...

YOU'RE WEIRD, SIR

JUDGE PARKER

By Paul Nichols

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT BOB'S DEATH THAT WOULD LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE IT WASN'T ACCIDENTAL, MAGGI?

YES! ONE THING WHICH NEVER OCCURRED TO ME AT THE TIME!

HE LEFT THE HOUSE ABOUT EIGHT THAT MORNING! NORMALLY IT TOOK BOB 20 MINUTES TO GET TO THE OFFICE! ACCORDING TO THE POLICE, THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED AT 9:05!

IT MEANS HE STOPPED SOMEWHERE FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES TO AN HOUR!

B.C.

By Jonny Hart

saline-phobia

a fear that if you look over your shoulder you'll turn into a salt lick

zoro-phobia

the fear of your acupuncturist showing up wearing a mask and a cape

BLONDIE

By Young & Raymond

BOSS, I JUST FINISHED THE POLLY YOU ASKED ME TO TAKE

FIFTY PERCENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES THINK YOU'RE HEARTLESS AND OVERBEARING

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER FIFTY PERCENT?

THEY THINK "HEARTLESS" COVERS IT

DOONESBURY

By Gary Trudeau

IS THAT MY FAVORITE GRAND-DAUGHTER?

GRANDMA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE SO EARLY?

WELL, I CAME TO HELP OUT WITH THE PLANS BUT IT SEEMS I'M NOT NEEDED. WHAT'S THAT YOU HAVE, DEAR?

MOM'S BRIDAL GOWN. I JUST POKE IT UP FOR HER.

HOW NICE. WHAT COLOR IS IT?

WHITE, OF COURSE. WHAT ELSE?

WELL, I WASN'T SURE. SHE'S BEEN MARRIED BEFORE, YOU KNOW!

YES, I KNOW. DAD TOLD ME.

TIGER

By Bud Blake

WOULD YOU LIKE A PIECE OF THE ACTION?

LEMONADE 5¢

THE HEART OF JULIET JONES

By Stan Drake

PEOPLE IN LOVE USUALLY PLEDGE THEIR TRUTH PRELIMINARY TO EXCHANGING VOWS... ALL TAKING PLACE BEFORE A RECOGNIZED MEMBER OF THE CHURCH.

YOU KNOW, JEFF... IF I WAS MORE SOPHISTICATED I'D IMAGINE YOU WERE PROPOSING MARRIAGE.

THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO!

WHEN DO I GIVE MY ANSWER—WHICH WILL BE "YES" NOW... OR DO I WAIT A DECENT INTERVAL?

WOULD YOU NOW?! ODDLY ENOUGH...