



Zany professor is worth a mad dash to Kanata

Funniest Professor
By Tom Stoppard

Zany, heartwarming and entertaining well deserves the Kanata Theatre's production of Tom Stoppard's play, *Enter a Free Man*.

And the most delightful performance of all is given by Don Maslin in his role as George Riley, the mad inventor who hopes for vindication for his invention of the double patented envelope.

Maslin is a great abundant professor, the type who burns his fingers every time he tries to light a cigarette.

Riley is lost in his thoughts but Maslin has

great command over the character. He shouts and rants and raves with infectious fury, but unfortunately his tirades fall on deaf ears in his family.

His saucy daughter Linda, played by Jenny Haynes, argues with the same kind of passion as her father. She is the impatient, young daughter who supports her family because her father's inventions have never earned them a cent. The 19-year-old faces indifference versus family security is always there in Haynes' performance.

She arouses sympathy from the audience, as well

as from her mother, played by Rosemary Scott. The mother is dutiful, tidy and what one might call typically British. She listens to her husband's crazy ideas with warm acceptance of the inevitable outcome - failure.

The story takes place in the pub and the family home. The set, designed by Tony Francis, keeps the play flowing smoothly. There is no abrupt transition from one scene to the next; just a subtle change of lighting and you've moved from Carmen the barman's establishment to the Riley household.

The only fault in the

production might be in the supporting cast. Harry, played by Maurice Dubras, is a con man whose cons don't really come across. His girl, Florence, played by Ann Dubras, is a little coquette who just looks too uncomfortable in a tight, red dress.

The barman is played by John Gilliland and two other visitors in the bar by Murray Hayes and David Williams.

Enter a Free Man, a delightful dramatic comedy about a British kind of Walter Mitty, is well worth the trip to Kanata.

The play starts at 8 p.m. in Earl of March High School in Kanata and runs until the end of the week.

"ENTER A FREE MAN" was also presented at Mont Ste Marie, P.Q.

Page 54, The Citizen, Ottawa, Thursday, October 19, 1978

Enter a Free Man

Maslin plays tough role with warmth, skill

By Betty Swimmings
Assistant music and drama editor

The Kanata Theatre Company has taken one of English playwright Tom Stoppard's early plays, *Enter a Free Man*, to open the current season and although it's not an easy play to produce Wednesday night's opening at the Earl of March High School came off rather well.

The play, a comedy in the theatre of the absurd style, is wordy, full of linguistic gymnastics and tells the story of a would-be inventor George Riley.

A dreamer and eccentric, Riley moves through the world thinking no one understands him or his genius. But it's small wonder he's misunderstood when his inventions are as unworkable and impractical as his latest effort—an envelope with gum on both sides of the flap so that it can be used twice.

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His relationship with his family—a wife named Constance whom he calls Persephone and a daughter Linda—is strained and rather sad. Riley and Persephone have lived together for more than 20 years yet there's no real communication between them.

They talk at cross purposes and never really listen to one another.

With his new envelope invention, however, Riley thinks his life will change for the better and Harry, one of his drinking buddies down at the pub, jolies him along helping to build the fantasy. Things, of course, don't turn out as he expects.

Stoppard loves words and he uses them in long, convoluted soliloquies mixing philosophy, bitterness and social commentary in equal portions in long tongue-twisting lines for the pivotal character Riley.

But director Jim Homes showed great insight in choosing Ron Maslin to play the part of George Riley.

Maslin developed the multi-faceted character with genuine warmth and understanding for this man who felt unappreciated by his family and accepted only by his cronies at the pub.

And he showed considerable skill, too, in delivering the involved, complex lines, making sense out of what could have been meaningless gibberish.

Maslin got some very good support from Rosemary Scott and Jenny Haynes, who played his wife and daughter. Although they did seem a bit insecure in their parts at the beginning of the evening they settled into their characters fully during the second act.

Tony Francis's set—a cottage livingroom on one side of the stage and an English pub on the other—made it easy for the director to move his cast from scene to scene without interrupting the flow of the play.

But things did drag at times despite this asset. There were memory lapses and groping for lines which made things slow down considerably.

On the whole, however, *Enter a Free Man* has been given a very fair go by Kanata and makes a good start for the new season.

Enter a Free Man continues tonight to Saturday at 8 p.m. at the Earl of March High School.



kanata
theatre

ENTER A FREE MAN

by
Tom Stoppard

tenth season
1978-1979



















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Journal Review
By Trish Irvin

Zany, heartwarming and entertaining well describe the Kanata Theatre's production of Tom Stoppard's play, *Enter a Free Man*.

And the most delightful performance of all is given by Ron Maslin in his role as George Riley, the mad inventor who hopes to gain due recognition for his invention of the double-gummed envelope.

Maslin is a great absent-minded professor, the type who burns his fingers every time he tries to light a cigarette.

Riley is lost in his thoughts but Maslin has

great command over the character. He shouts and rants and raves with believable fury, but unfortunately his tirades fall on deaf ears in his family.

His saucy daughter Linda, played by Jenny Haynes, argues with the same kind of passion as her father. She is the impatient young daughter who supports her family because her father's inventions have never earned them a cent. The emotional dilemma any 19-year-old faces - independence versus family security - is always there in Haynes' performance.

She arouses sympathy from the audience, as well

as from her mother, played by Rosemary Scott. The mother is dutiful, tidy and what one might call typically British. She listens to her husband's crazy ideas with warm acceptance of the inevitable outcome - failure.

The story takes place in the pub and the family home. The set, designed by Tony Francis, keeps the play flowing smoothly. There is no abrupt transition from one scene to the next; just a subtle change of lighting and you've moved from Carmen the barman's establishment to the Riley household.

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