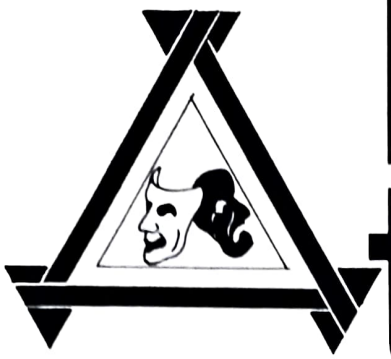


kanata theatre

DIARY OF A SCOUNDREL

by ALEXANDER OSTROVSKY

EARL OF MARCH SCHOOL

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
MARCH 7th – 10th, 1979

8:00

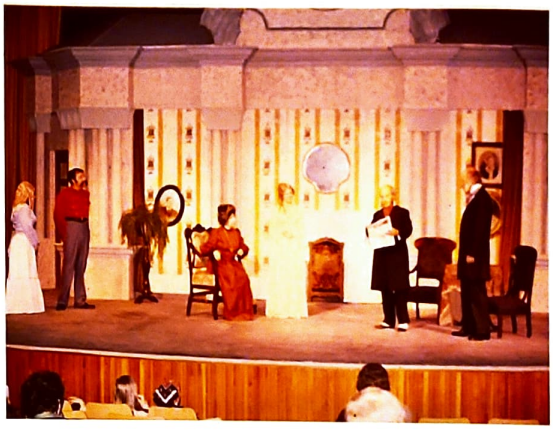
Tickets, all seats reserved $2, $3
Students and senior citizens half price

592·1715











kanata theatre

DIARY OF A SCOUNDREL

by ALEXANDER OSTROVSKY

7th – 10th March

tenth season
1978 – 1979





Unfinished Diary

Kanata Theatre comedy looks better than it is

THEATRE

By Betty Swimmings
Assistant music and drama editor

There's a leisurely, old-world charm about the Kanata Theatre's presentation of Alexander Ostrovsky's comedy *Diary of a Scoundrel* that can almost lull you into thinking it is much better than it really is.

Ostrovsky takes three acts to build up his story of an impoverished young Russian and his mother and their struggle to improve their lifestyle and move in the exalted upper circles of Moscow's social life.

And what schemes, plots, conniving and blackmail goes on in this period piece as they pursue their goals. At times it's hard to tell the rogues from the good guys even with a program. And the farcial denouement is pure melodrama.

Director Ron Maslin has designed a fine and incredibly workable set for the play, which helps not only to make scene changes rapid and unobtrusive but also provides handsome and varied backgrounds for his production.

And although the setting *is* pleasant, the pacing right in keeping with the story and the lines witty and thought-provoking, Wednesday night's opening at the Earl of March High School still had an incomplete air about it.

Ill-at-ease

The problem stemmed from having too many uncertain actors on stage. It was only when such seasoned players as Laurence Thornton, Doreen Boss, Chris Robinson, Dorothy Beak and Brooke Kenefford came on that things moved competently and comfortably.

Bob Horsey, playing the poor young man Gloumov, was decidedly ill-at-ease in his role and had a disconcerting habit of dropping his voice or mumbling so that many of his best lines were lost.

At the end of the play, when he was defending himself from the pious utterings of the hypocritical upper-class Moscovites, he lacked the fire and scorn needed to make his scathing remarks hit their marks. And although he looked the part of Gloumov, Horsey needs more confidence in presenting it.

Christine Clark had some very good moments playing an eccentric old aunt, more interested in the occult than in guarding the interests of her niece, but she too had a tendency to throw lines away because she spoke too quickly and too softly. And the niece herself was a shadowy, unreal characterization that never did come to life.

Even the generally reliable Jim Holmes had memory lapses and jumped cues and really didn't come up to his usual standard until the last act. Then he gave a very good presentation of the slightly stunned guardsman Kourchaev.

Real edge

But it was Laurence Thornton, playing the pompous old Mamaev, who gave the play its real edge. There was never any question about the character he was portraying. This Mamaev was conceited, sly, manipulative and a dandy, and Thornton played him right down to the fingertips.

Doreen Boss, as his coy, over-blown wife, fluttered and flirted with Gloumov in a thoroughly natural way, so that the character was always completely believable. And Chris Robinson, as Gloumov's servant Styopka, made the best of a small role by developing it quietly and competently into a very real presence.

But there's still need for work on *Diary of a Scoundrel*. It's all very well to have good-looking backdrops and a few good performances, but it's important that the lead be more confident and the smaller roles more attentive to cues, blocking and their lines.

Diary of a Scoundrel is an interesting comedy with a lot of potential and continues at Earl of March High School until Saturday with curtain each night at 8.

















