

THE COUNTRY GIRL

By
CLIFFORD ODETS

20th - 23rd
February

eleventh season
1979-1980



Ron Maslin, Mary Mauger and Jim Holmes in rehearsal for Kanata Theatre's production of "The Country Girl".

Kanata Theatre

Presenting "The Country Girl"

Kanata Theatre will be presenting Clifford Odets' *The Country Girl* this week. This dramatic play will be presented at Earl of March High School, Kanata, February 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. Curtain time 8 p.m.

Clifford Odets (1906-1967) is perhaps best remembered for his plays of social realism set in America in the 1930's: *Awake and Sing*, *Waiting For Lefty*, and *Golden Boy*. Odets was an early American proponent of the Stanislavsky school of acting and his plays of theatre-life attest to his life-long interest in "The Method." *The Country Girl* was first produced in New York City in 1950 and in 1952 was staged in London under the title *Winter Journey*. This latter production starred Sam Wanamaker, George Weathers and Michael Redgrave.

The play is a cleverly contrived back-stage drama which unfolds in a series of emotionally-charged dramatic scenes. The story centres around a once-famous actor now gone to seed through weakness of character and inebriation; his enigmatic wife and the young director who tangles his regeneration with fanatical determination. Hailing it as an "outstanding success," *Theatre World* continued: "It is remarkable to observe how Odets has taken the most trite of themes... and by sheer strength of his psychological approach lifted the play on to a different plane altogether."

The Country Girl was subsequently made into a movie starring Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly and now is being revived by Kanata Theatre. Those interested in the ambitions, loves, hates, successes and failures of the theatre-world and its inhabitants should enjoy this glimpse back-stage.

The Cast
In This Production
Larry - Murray Hayes;
Phil Cook - Bob Knight;
Bernie Dodd - Jim Holmes; Paul Unger - Art Solomonian;
Nancy Stoddard - Kathy McEachran; Frank Elgin - Ron Maslin; George Elgin - Mary Mauger; Ralph - Tony Beak.

Admission charge is \$3.50 and \$2.50 adults, \$2.00 and \$1.50 students and senior citizens. Box office number is 592-1715.



KANATA THEATRE
presents

**THE
COUNTRY
GIRL**

a drama by Clifford Odets
February 20 - 23
Earl of March Auditorium

8 p.m.
Tickets: Adults \$3.50 and \$2.50
Students and Seniors: \$2.00 and \$1.50
FOR INFORMATION CALL THE BOX OFFICE AT
592-1715

























Kanata stages gritty drama

By Audrey M. Ashley

Citizen music and drama editor

We are indebted to the Kanata Theatre for giving us the opportunity to see the work of Clifford Odets, which is seldom performed these days.

Odets, who was much concerned with the social issues of America in the 1930s, was a proponent of realism on the stage, and it's refreshing, in a perverse sort of way, to see

THEATRE REVIEW

this grittiness applied to the theatre milieu.

Peter Jefferson and Gwen Knight have directed *The Country Girl* with an eye and ear for its subtleties, so that the theatre people on stage are not the slick, clever, superficial beings that playwrights usually foist on an audience, but come across as serious, earnest and rather weary people.

The protagonists in the play are Frank Elgin, a down-and-out actor who has seen better days; Bernie Dodd, a theatre director who believes he can still draw the old magic from him; and Frank's wife Georgie, the enigmatic "country girl" of the title.

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Ultimately the play is a battle between them. Bernie — and sometimes the audience — sees Georgie as a dominating shrew, while she believes herself to be her husband's sole strength and means of survival. We are kept guessing about the truth of their relationship until the closing scenes of the play.

In a competent cast, Jim Holmes stands out in the role of the director, Bernie, always going straight to the heart of the matter without regard for niceties.

Mary Mauger gives a compelling performance as Georgie. She projects a strangely abrasive personality, and it works, despite the occasionally unbelievable dialogue Odets has given the character.

Ron Maslin has the monumental role of the actor, whom someone describes as "a seedy guy hiding power and majesty." It's a tough assignment, and the acting-within-the-acting presents a special problem for any performer. Maslin is not always up to the challenge, and despite some noble efforts, he leaves a stronger impression of the character's weakness and self-indulgence than his former glory as an actor.

David Freedman's set is bleak and comfortless, as it should be.