

Reviews

# Area Theatres Offer Varied Entertainment

By DEX HUTCHINS  
Collegian Reviewer

"The Deadly Game," by James Yaffe, currently at Mateer Playhouse under the direction of Max Fischer, is a warned over "human nature" study, with an added dash of the macabre, which provides a somewhat unusual albeit palatable theatre fare for the audience.

The play concerns a group of former agents of the law, a judge, a public defender, a public prosecutor and a hangman, who in retirement decide to pursue their professions — "in the privacy of their own home."

To pursue these ends they have devised a deadly after dinner game in which unsuspecting house guests are tried, and usually executed, for the moral transgressions of humanity in general.

Robert Reifsnider, as Joseph Pillet the aged hangman, contributes most to the overall spirit of the play. It is his characterization which adds the element of unmitigated evil to the group's actions—the horror of men gone mad in their own self-sanctity.

Mark Rhudy is well cast as the retired judge of great legal and epicurian skills who serves out his sentences as a second course to exotic souffles.

Ed Anderson as the defense attorney Bernard Laroque gives his best performance on the Mateer stage this season. Anderson seems now accustomed to the intimacy of the small playhouse which allows him a relaxed and natural presentation of his role.

Will Gregory as Howard Trapp,

a traveling salesman who is forced by a storm to visit the house of Carpeau — and unwittingly finds himself a pawn in the deadly game — has a role which complements his energetic style of acting.

The gusto with which he enters this part, however, does not allow the character Trapp to express explicitly the realization of his ultimate fate — the fact that if this "court" finds him guilty he must actually hang.

When the time for his "moment of truth" finally arrives therefore, the action Trapp takes seems rather anti-climactic.

Visitors at the Poal Barn Playhouse this week and next will enjoy a fun filled excursion into the world of 19th century melodrama by the of Morland Cary's "Because Their Hearts Were Pure" (or — The Secret of the Mine).

This play offers a pleasant interlude to the theatregoer who is tired of the modern "intellectual" play. It is a change from the play with a mission in which identification with a character becomes a process of figuring out first who the good guy is, second is he really is good, and lastly if he's good enough for you.

Here it is not necessary for the audience to mentally strive for the "dramatic experience."

The shenanigans on stage may see like pure "corn" but this corn is made memorable by the efforts of a clever and talented cast.

# Author Comments On 'Arts'

By JUDY SCAFFIDI

We have both commercial fishermen and sport fishermen. The commercial fishermen are interested in catching fish; the sport fishermen are more interested in sport.

This is a rough approximation of the difference between academic and professional writers according to Malcolm Cowley, featured speaker this week at the Pennsylvania Contemporary Literature Conference.

"Professionals feel that people who are supported by academic salaries have life easier," he said.

The academicians, according to Cowley, a noted critic and author, have a captive audience of students and colleagues, while the professional has to create an audience.

Commenting on a topic causing much controversy today, Cowley said, government subsidization of the arts should be confined to the arts that need subsidies.

At the present time, he said, he would include in this category certain types of theatre, the opera, ballet, and a national symphony orchestra.

The state could support sculpture and painting, he continued, by using these arts in public buildings much in the same way that commercial buildings are using them.

But, he emphasized that he did not want to see government control of the arts.

Concerning recent developments in the arts, Cowley said

that there is a "good deal of ferment in poetry. Poetry published in the last two or three years is more interesting than any published for the last ten years."

He said he saw no significant new "schools" in the novel but some "very hopeful individuals." Among the best "in the current crop" are J. D. Salinger, John Cheever and Saul Pellow, he said.

Cowley said he finds the teaching of English and literature on the college level generally good. However, in grade school and high school it is extremely bad — "much worse than 40 years ago although now getting better."

Language is the most important creation of a society, he said, it should not be so badly neglected.

Often college training can make up for deficiency but sometimes "the damage is irreparable." Often schools are organized in such a way as to suppress talent."

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### Bad Book--

(Continued from page four) here. Self-censorship is another, and with that we are concerned. I don't seek sex in a work of art, rather I seek craftsmanship, a well told story, and if possible, the creation of empathy between reader and writer.

Granted, sex has its place in literature, but then let us not call Mr. Spillane or Mr. Miller writers of literature.

Perhaps, of all places, "Tropic" was best summed up by "Life" on June 23: "Tropic will be defended by critics as an explosive, corrosive Whitmanesque masterpiece (which it is) and attacked as unbridled obscenity (which it is). It will probably sell a million."

### Dateline--

(Continued from page four) able story. Still not newsworthy. But the experience gained — unlimited.

So, believe it or not, she learned that most politicians know quite definitely how they stand on each issue. They have, however, an incredible knack of not communicating what they know unless it serves their purpose, not yours.

—Kay Mills

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