

Political frame surrounds a personal canvas

Nothing Sacred

presented by PlayMakers Repertory Co.

Wednesday, Nov. 1 through
Sunday, Nov. 11

8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday
2 p.m. Sunday

Paul Green Theatre

Tickets: \$12.50 students, \$17.50 adults
For more information call 962-1121

Under the loving guidance of PlayMakers Repertory Company, Canadian George F. Walker's *Nothing Sacred* has been brought vividly to life.

The play, a modern adaptation of the 1862 Russian novel *Fathers and Sons*, by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, is not bound by time, and the PlayMakers' production clarifies that point.

The play has a political frame and a personal canvas. Things that are clearly black and white on the outside become shades of gray on the inside. The direction, as well as the set, lighting, and costumes replicates this structural form — the fringes are harsh, simple contrasts while the center is earthy, complicated and real.

On the outside, there are two extremes, namely Pavel and Bazarov, played by Edmund Coulter and Sam Potter. They are the power characters, defined by their beliefs and their generations. They push the play toward resolution.

Pavel loves tradition and style, the old ways and European dress. He is ridiculous and remotely respectable on the outside, but on the inside he is passionate. He feels an obsessive, misdirected love for a woman he doesn't even know. He is flowers and

GREG MILLER

Theater

tradition and, perhaps, stagnation. Coulter allows this love to be real. There is an unexpected purity and understanding of the emotion he cannot feel for himself. When Pavel opens up his heart and reads a love letter he wrote, he is warm, pitiable and memorable.

Unfortunately, a flaw in the production needlessly detracts from this moment. For this scene the stage is split, half in light for the love scene in the garden and half in darkness, set for the next scene in the dining room. The unlit scene should freeze. When the stage is split, the theatricality is already confessed and a freeze is not only acceptable but necessary. Movement from the unborn scene does nothing but distract from the scene that is in full bloom.

Bazarov is the young nihilist who would trample tradition and structure and start the whole thing over from scratch. He outwardly seems to feel that love is trivial. But he loves Russia, and to him, Russia is her people. As Bazarov, Potter gives an inspiring performance.

Pavel and Bazarov are defined by their beliefs, or lack thereof. They are the opposing outer edges. Inside are found the real people, easy to relate to, who struggle to find an understanding of the forces around them. The questions are not just whether to cross the line, but where to draw the line in the first place.

If there is a protagonist, it is Arkady, Bazarov's college friend and disciple. Arkady returns home to his father's farm after a long absence and brings Bazarov to meet his family. Played by Daniel Krell, Arkady is at first totally



Make a wish: Daniel Krell, Stephen Haggerty and Sam Potter obviously enjoy starring in 'Nothing Sacred'

committed to Bazarov's cause, but when he sees the relentless cruelty of Bazarov's methods applied to his family, he wavers. He runs into a wall founded on his own principles. Krell's work is clean and convincing.

Arkady's father, Nikolai, is played by Tobias Andersen. Nikolai is another of the inner characters, very human, working to come to terms with the cards life has dealt him. Andersen wastes nothing. Every action counts; he is a wonderfully disci-

plined actor.

Comic relief is provided throughout. Stephen Haggerty is hilarious as Viktor Sitnikov, another of Bazarov's disciples. Haggerty turns Viktor into a talking, laughing version of Jackie Gleason's "Poor Soul."

Nothing Sacred explores the relation between generations, tradition and revolution, father and son, society and the individual, humility and ambition. It is about coming of age, a journey each of us makes. The chords

struck by the play resonate deeply within us all — PlayMakers' production sounds these chords beautifully and harmoniously. Walker's script attests that the macro-revolution is made up of many micro-conflicts which are clones of the final product, differing only in scale. When there is love and understanding, there is an ecstatic merging of opposed forces. When there is selfishness and confusion, the blacks and whites become red.

Artists prove admirable but pointless

Somerhill Gallery

Exhibitions:
Anders Lunde, Paul Hrusovsky
and Cathy Kiffney

Eastgate Shopping Center

968-8868

Metal, clay and wood are usually put to more utilitarian uses than art, but the Somerhill Gallery's new exhibitions are trying to change perceptions about what constitutes artistic material.

The premise is that experimentation and divergence from traditional artistic forms are needed. The gallery currently is showing the works of Anders Lunde, Paul Hrusovsky and Cathy Kiffney, three artists who attempt to meet this challenge.

Anders Lunde carves wooden

ISABEL BARBUK

Art

figurines and creates what are known as "whirligigs," figures or scenes with sails like windmills. His work is brightly colored and more than slightly resembles a child's toy. However, he tackles serious issues with work like "Confederate general," which shows a man with windmill arms. In one hand the figure holds the Confederate flag, in the other, a map of Bull Run.

Unfortunately, Lunde's style is overly simplistic and lacking in sophistication, making it impossible to take the subject seriously. The figures are not detailed and would not look out of place in a back yard with the bird bath.

The Somerhill Gallery's main exhibition is not any better. Paul

Hrusovsky uses mixed media for his pictures, creating a curious neo-classical effect through a combination of paint and carved metal. These paintings are the best of his pictures, although they become fairly repetitive.

His other works, however, illustrate modern art at its worst. The paintings are of a series of pointless squiggles, repeated numerous times in a variety of colors. The style is tedious and resembles the doodles of a bored student. The titles of Hrusovsky's work — such as "Perfect Man Society" — suggest a depth that is not apparent in the pictures. Also, a giant piece of green metal labeled "leaf" is not the sort of thing usually considered art.

The work of Cathy Kiffney livens up the display somewhat. Her ceramic fish, mingled with the work of Hrusovsky, are both colorful and humorous. These fish are vividly portrayed on everything from plates to boxes. They are almost cartoon-like,

particularly because they all sport maniacally evil grins. But somehow one gets the distinct feeling of having seen it all before. It may seem odd, but there is nothing particularly original about a flying fish.

The premise of all three exhibitions — to display new media — is admirable. However, the artistic merit of the resulting exhibits is questionable. Art should be challenging and make the viewer think about human situations or evoke feelings within him or her. Because of its highly personal nature, both in terms of artist and audience, art is likely to be controversial. Regardless of everything else, however, it should not be boring.

This exhibition shows the Somerhill Gallery regressing to its collective childhood. The result is pointless. It says nothing and reaches no one. Unfortunately, "liberal" art also may be boring art and may not be worth the time wasted to view it.

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