Arts and entertainment

Splinters: sharp, biting and accurate



WORLD OF THEATRE

by ANN NUGENT

ONLY ONE new show opens in Canberra this week — *Cry Stinking Fish*, devised and presented by the performing arts group — Splinters. Splinters has recently returned from the Spoleto Fringe where it played *Cry Stinking Fish* at the old Port Melbourne Seaman's Mission. I saw there earlier *The Massive Love of Risk* in the hall at Corroboree Park, and *Crime of Yelling* at a disused cottage on the edge of Downer Oval.

Splinters is made up of a group of intense young performers with sometimes bitingly accurate comments on contemporary society — although unorthodox, their performances are never dull. Last year Splinters took *Crime of Yelling* to Western Australia for the America's Cup and it must have provided a sharp contrast to the jingoistic hubbub that surrounded that event.

For *Cry Stinking Fish*, Splinters is moving to G Block, Gorman House, a more conventional venue than is customary with the group. It is a short season, Thursday, October 22 to Saturday 24, at 8pm with an extra 11pm show on Saturday.

Human Veins Dance Theatre's season *The Best Of* continues Wednesday to Saturday this week and next, 8pm at the ANU Arts Centre. Bookings 571077.

With Interact having finished its program for this year and the demise of Fortune Theatre Company, there is very little live theatre in Canberra for the remainder of October. Canberra Philharmonic Society opens the musical comedy *Show Boat* on October 29 for five performances only at the Canberra Theatre. It promises to be a spectacular production with a cast of 80. Colin Salter features as Gaylord Ravenal, Maria Brigid Ryan plays Magnolia and Andrew Collis as Jow sings the Paul Robeson song *Ol' Man River*. Bookings 571077 or 474144.

The drama department of Narrabundah College is staging Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy* from Tuesday to Saturday, October 20 October 24, at 7.45pm in the school hall with a matinee performance on Thursday, October 22, at 1pm. Previous productions I have seen at Narrabundah College have achieved very high production standards and Shaffer's humorous comedy of errors should be as strong.

At Dickson College Ron Verburgt will be directing his last Canberra production before leaving to take up a lectureship in Drama/Theatre Studies at the Capricornia Institute in Rockhampton. *Anything Goes* previews on Thursday, show only at 8pm, with dinner and show on Friday 23 and Saturday 24 at 7pm. Dinner and show $18 — inquiries and bookings 475377.

November brings increased theatrical activity once again. Patróns will be able to choose from at least four mainstage shows: Eureka's production of Michael Gow's *Away* at the ANU Arts Centre from November 7 to 28; *The Sunshine Boys* by Neil Simon playing at the Canberra Theatre, Tuesday, November 10, to Thursday, November 19; *Caravan* directed by Peter Williams also at the Canberra Theatre for a one-week season November 25 to 28 and *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* opening at Theatre 3 Saturday, November 14. Christine Dunstan will be directing Rep's production of *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* with Andrew Kay, Jenny Decolongon, Greg Toohey, Ian Drake, Kate

Brown with Andrew Kay, Jenny Decolongon, Greg Toohey, Ian Drake, Kate Raymond and David Pearson in the cast.

The Sydney Theatre Company has issued its very attractive 10th anniversary program for 1988. Included in the 10 plays offered is Michael Gow's latest play *1841* which is being presented in conjunction with the State Theatre Company of South Australia in April. The play explores Professor Manning Clark's claim that by 1838 it was clear that the battle between barbarism and civilisation would be fought out in NSW.

Darlinghurst Nights, a musical by Katherine Thompson and Max Lambert opens the season in January, followed by Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *1841* directed by Michael Gow and John Gaden, *Dinkum Assorted* (takes its name from the biscuits) and has a cast of 15 women, *Serious Money* by Caryl Churchill, Botho Strauss's *Big and Little*, Joe Orton's *Loot* and finishing up with three classics — the Jacobean play *The Mortal Falcon* (an adaptation of Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*), *The Game of Love and Chance* by Marivaux (1730) translated by May-Brit Akerholt and *An Ideal Husband* by Oscar Wilde. This is a fine line up. The Sydney Theatre Company is offering season tickets for six, seven or eight plays at reduced rates. Bookings Sydney Theatre Company, PO Box 777, Millers Point 2000.

Simon Webb, community arts officer for the Arts Council of the ACT, tells me that the Tuggeranong Community Youth Theatre, one of the Arts Council's projects in Tuggeranong, is expanding rapidly. The youth theatre is offering a training program for three age groups — nine to 12, 13 to 16, and 17 to 25-year-olds , in voice, movement and performance skills. The youth theatre groups are also planning performances to be held later this year. Inquiries to the Tuggeranong Youth Theatre Director Peter Rush, 959639 or Simon Webb 922033.

Young performers from the Stagecoach Theatre School's Living Art Workshop are presenting *Timeless Merilda*, a fantastic adventure about a witch who wants to escape into real life, as part of the training program for the six to 11-year-olds. The production opens at Living Art Centre, Woden Valley High School, Saturday, October 31, at 2pm and plays Saturdays and Sundays until November 15. Inquiries 851134.