



The emotion of "Brussels Sprouts" is captured in this moving scene.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS LAUDED

by Daryl Urquhart

BRUSSELS SPROUTS a play by Larry Kardish is about three young people roaming through Europe whose paths meet for one brief moment and then continue on as before. It concerns the freedom, happiness and anxiety of a traveller who must live for the moment and then forget it once it has passed. The setting is an attic hotel room in Brussels and the actions are those of freedom lovers or just lovers. Most of the play is acted without clothing and the most useful properties are beds. This brings me to the question of nudity in theatre, which I aim at the director Charles Northcote.

There are two methods in which one can present nudity effectively on a stage. The first is with refined taste; that is not abusing or mistreating the naked body with respect to sex or love. The second is to carefully reserve it for key moments when its effects will be most powerful. The latter unfortunately, I feel to be the problem in Mr. Northcote's edition of Brussels Sprouts. I thought that although the characters are constantly jumping in and out of bed in this play, an undergarment of some sort might have been a good idea until the final block when all three characters lay in bed together. The point here is that nudity can be effective and additive to a play if used only when necessary, but if employed constantly throughout a play it can have an adverse effect and actually become a deterrent factor to the overall production. One becomes aware of the three naked people on stage rather than the characters themselves, in this case. Moby, Ernie and Charlotte.

Apart from this my most respectful compliments go to the director

Charles Northcote, whose ability I admire immensely. Of all directors, the very best are people who give the actors working room in which to develop their own characters, and of course aid by adding certain directional guidance. A director who lays down the character point blank and molds the player to his idea, often ends up with an emotionless robot carrying out computer card orders. This was definitely not the evident case in Thursday night's performance of "Brussels Sprouts." The players apparently flowed freely within their own images and were in fact quite believable.

John Frankie from the pain of his "deep" shoulder scrape to the enthusiasm of hopping into bed with the lovely Charlotte, held a character so natural that I found myself looking to him as a mediator for the play. I found it easy to understand him and sympathize with him, and therefore he became very real to me. This I found to be his most commendable attribute. I did find though that John should be careful of his voice. At times it seemed a bit strained and over-emphasized.

Doreen Hess in the role of the fun-loving, almost-childish Charlotte, was exactly that. As Moby once insinuated in the play, she was a dream come true. She seemed to me to have been a girl brought up in a staunchly conservative background who, when reaching a point where her parents would let her cross the street alone, took extreme use of every liberty given and experienced a life which she dreamed of, when in the days past she was overprotected by her parents. Of definite Elizabethan characteristics,

Pro Tem
Dec 4 1974
Vol 14
No 13