

Three sisters: impressive production

by Jean-Luc Prost

Moscow, Moscow, Moscow: a golden city reminiscent of a happy childhood to which three sisters dream to go back. Moscow, Moscow, Moscow: hope, illusion and dreams which are torn to pieces as the action of the play goes by, in this dreary little garrison town.

Three Sisters which is Chekhov's most frequently performed play opened at Theatre Glendon on March 14th. It might be argued that such a production is a very ambitious one when done by a group of students. It is however a challenging attempt and as such deserves at least our curiosity if not our admiration.

The set is very impressive, being divided in two parts: a salon on the foreground with two large symmetrical sections of walls on each side and at the far end there is a dining room. This dining room is separated from the salon by a dark screen which gives a sense of remoteness to the dining room which seems almost unreal.

The play opens with the remembrance of the anniversary of the death of the sisters'



One of the most entertaining productions at Glendon

father, which actually coincides with the birthday of the youngest sister. The action takes place in the house they share with their brother. The three sisters are in order of age Olga, Marsha and Irina. It is true that Irina in particular, a frail and graceful girl, is very well por-

trayed on stage, holding her little teddy bear in her hands at the outset of the play. Then she remains the most powerfully developed character until the very end.

There is another woman who becomes a very predominant figure as the action goes on: the

wife of the sisters' brother who turns out to be, in some way, the ruler of the household. There are other mentionable characters such as an old disillusioned drunken doctor, an army lieutenant-colonel admired by the sisters, a baron lieutenant in love with Irina. One cannot

forget to mention two other characters who, despite having minor roles, provide a lot of the comic relief as well as the doctor: Anfisa and Ferapont.

One can be surprised that Chekhov declared about his play that "What I have written is a farce." Even though there is an obvious effort on the part of the director (Banuta Rubess who teaches the course Approaches to Theatre) to turn this tragic situation into some kind of comedy. It is undeniably a very grim one and the laughter is of a very bitter nature.

The play has an overall unity even though there is a large time lapse between each act. However, a stronger contrast between those four acts might have emphasized the passing of time which is a very important spect of the play.

On the whole, it remains that **Three Sisters** is a very enjoyable show supported by a good cast and interesting directorial choices. It is certainly one of the most entertaining productions of Theatre Glendon this season.