



Traveler's Paris

These Montmartre artists are included in photographer Doug Jones' travel film, "The Paris of the Parisians," to be presented at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at The Community House, Bates and Townsend, Birmingham.

'Trial' sloses around in theatrical vacuum

By CRAIG REYNOLDS

There is a gulf between the simply ridiculous and the Theatre of the Absurd, a gulf in which "The Trial" merrily sloses. Adapted for the stage by Andre Gide and Jean-Louis Barrault, Franz Kafka's nightmarish work fills the fourth slot in the University of Detroit-Marygrove College season.

THEATRE OF the Absurd, no less than any other style, requires that willing suspension of disbelief by the spectator in order to work its power, but drama must suspend from something identifiable.

Gide and Barrault to the contrary, it is not enough to thrust Kafka's Joseph K. onto the stage and do a dramatization of a novel about metaphysic

al anxiety and modern man's impotence through isolation. If the modern age has indeed isolated people one from another and left no faith for comfort in that solitude, then it is the severing that is both historically and dramatically important, the suspending of old relationships and concrete values that supplies the thread of modern tragedy.

About all we know for sure in "The Trial" is that three women and a painter want to debauch Joseph K.; his contracting syphilis would have greater dramatic impact than his officially sanctioned murder which closes the play.

"THE TRIAL" needs more hard evidence and less visual sophistry to prove its case.

Guest Artist-in-Residence George Mallonee has directed "The Trial" with great splashes of movement highlighted with grace and wit, the kind of colorful staging commonly ascribed to French work of this genre and to Jean-Louis Barrault in particular.

Patricia Kuhn and Susan Ives Cook, both of Birmingham, and Beata Jachulski perform outstandingly well as the three women eager for sex with out passion; and Henry Mustelier is

equally notable as the charming, languorous painter.

Owen J. Anderson of Southfield is pleasingly offensive as the stiff, steely-eyed locust of a deputy bank director, while Mary Gutzi imparts a genuine feeling of warmth and fear in the role of the accused Joseph K.'s landlady.

JOSEPH K. himself is played as the epitome of trusting bureaucratic restraint by David Regal. Joseph K.'s severely reasoned plea for justification in Act Two becomes, with Regal, a triumph greater than the impersonal state's offhand execution of a minor entity.

Setting and lighting by Timothy R. Dewart are a mixed bag of Brechtian epic, Samuel Beckett textures and musical comedy illumination. On the whole, it doesn't hang together, and too many dark, fearful images are chased into the relaxing security of bright lights.

"The Trial" must finally be viewed as an experiment on one frontier of the modern theatre. It's an interesting experiment: one that's enjoyable to participate in and argue about. But as an experiment, it provides only a few dramatic techniques in how to ask the next set of questions.



David Regal as Joseph K. and Susan Ives Cook as laundress.

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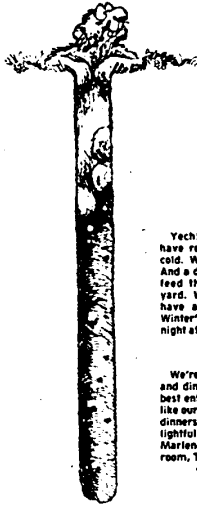
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