

Theatre

UNDER MILK WOOD

By Christine Couturier

Visualize the following: dawn in a small Welsh town by the sea with its every inhabitant immersed in dreamland. Vivid accounts of each character's dream dance across a stage, and then on the "out-of-bed-sleepy-head-Polly-put-the-kettle-on townhall bell" awakens the residents of Hareggub. As events unfold sequentially, the town becomes a panorama of individuals going about their day's chores. But no more about the plot...

Dylan Thomas completed Under Milk Wood approximately one month before his death. Although he had no time to do a final revision of his play, he laboured at it for ten years, and every word reflects his linguistic wizardry. Under Milk Wood is a play that was written for radio broadcasting: the full title was given as Under Milk Wood, a Play for Voices. The play is

indeed entertainment for the ears of the public. However, Dr. Terry Pratt has undertaken the task of perhaps transforming the play for voices into a play for eyes. What could be more entertaining than adding lively pictures to lively words? Sneak previews for crew members have proven that Dr. Pratt's endeavours have been successful.

Credit can not only be extended to the director, but must also go to cast members. There are sixty-nine characters in Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood. There is no exit nor any entrance to be made during the entire production. Thus the casting of eight men and eight women calls for "doubling characters." This requires challenging intellectual demands upon an actor's ability to rapidly change from one character to the next because each citizen in the play must have his

or her own area on the stage. However, the position of an actor is sometimes a hurdle that can not be overcome. Therefore, a mere phrase or two had to be changed to adjust to a particular situation. The overall change is barely noticeable to even a well-learned student of Dylan Thomas's work.

Under Milk Wood has been chosen as UPEI's 1982 spring theatrical production because it belongs in the public world. Dylan Thomas once told the first cast to perform his play to "love the words". That is precisely what any audience will do. Radio broadcasting often limits one's imagination of a certain description, but a stage brings to life words that deserve an individual's unlimited imagination and appreciation. Thomas loved small Welsh towns by the sea, and he wanted to capture their spirit in words so that people who have never

experienced such towns could share in his adoration of them. Under Milk Wood is "broadly humorous" and never does a dull moment sneak onto the stage.

Under Milk Wood is entirely cast with students. For some cast members, it is a first time appearance on stage. For others, it is a new and enticing theatrical piece to add to their list of performances. The result is one of professionalism, as is Thomas's work. Actors and actresses portray Thomas's characters to their fullest. The final outcome is a play whereby one cannot only love the words with his ears, but can also delight in them with his eyes.

There will be three performances: Friday, March 12, Saturday, March 13, and Sunday, March 14. Tickets are available at the UPEI Bookstore. All three performances will begin at 8:00 p.m. in the Steele Recital Hall.

Haunting Memories

By Larry Loveless

The ghost of the Nixon era seems to be haunting the Reagan administration once more as memories of Vietnam are rekindled. One of the good-old-boys, Thomas Enders, is back doing the same thing for Reagan in El Salvador that he had done for Nixon in Vietnam. According to Sydney Schanberg of the New York Times (February 10, 1982) Mr. Enders was a "can-do" man for Nixon in Cambodia.

Mr. Enders, the present secretary of State for inter-American affairs, was the supervisor in charge of US bombing raids into Cambodia during the Vietnam war. These bombing raids were in direct violation of US federal law under the Cooper-Church amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. Consequently, Mr. Enders persistently tried to discount or discredit reports from journalists in the field. Just prior to the congressional ban of

August 15, 1973 on American bombing of Cambodia, and after thousands of civilians had been killed, wounded or turned into refugees Mr. Enders made a monumental error which revealed the true nature of his duty.

On August 6, 1973 an American B-52 dropped over 20 tons of bombs on the wrong target, a government-held village. Nearly 200 people were killed and over 300 were wounded. In an attempt to cover up the incident, Mr. Enders sent an aide to tell the press corps that probably only 25 people had died but certainly no more than 65. Then he issued orders to block reporters from getting to the village. They got there anyway.

Now Mr. Enders seems to be covering up for the military in El Salvador. In December 1981, according to eye witnesses and human rights groups, the Salvadorean military massacred over 700 people in the Mozote

region of El Salvador. However, Mr. Enders said, as the American authority on the subject, that, "No evidence could be found to confirm that government forced systematically massacred civilians. Nor does the number of civilians killed even remotely approach the number being cited in other

reports about the incident" (Toronto Globe and Mail, Feb. 10, 1982). There is something frightfully haunting about his words. Mr. Enders later had the audacity to assert that the Salvadorean government was actually making significant progress in human rights.

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