

Shadow Box



Gwen Knight (Agnes) and Doreen Boss (Felicity) rehearse for Kanata Theatre's third production of the season, *Shadow Box*. Ron Maslin directs this play which runs March 4-7 in the Earl of March Theatre.

Kanata Theatre gets ready to Shadow Box

Kanata Theatre

E. Kubler-Ross, M.D., felt a person will experience five different stages when he faces the fact of his own death: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

These stages will last for different periods of time; they will replace each other or exist at times side by side. But the one thing that usually persists through all these stages is hope.

Shadow Box, Kanata Theatre's third production of the season, is a study of three people facing their ultimate fate. A Pulitzer Prize winning play of 1975 written by Michael Cristofer, *Shadow Box* can also be referred to as a dramatic piece in two acts.

Ron Maslin brings many years of experience as both actor and director to this

play; in fact, this is the thirteenth play he has directed for Kanata Theatre.

Rehearsals are well under way, and the cast is as follows: Marvin Boss (Joe), Gwendy Tolley (Maggie), Christie Watson (Steven), Doreen Boss (Felicity), Gwen Knight (Agnes), Mitch Wexler (Mark), Tom Kolosak (Brian), Sally Rayney (Bev), and Ron Maslin (interviewer).

Annamarie Copple is producing the play. *Shadow Box* runs March 4-7, in the Earl of March Theatre. Call the box office at 592-1715 for tickets or information.

Kanata Theatre would like to note the play expresses themes and language which may be considered offensive and unsuitable for children, and parental discretion is advised.



Shadow Box interesting but not totally satisfying

By Iris Winston

Death is the thread that links the characters in *Shadow Box*. Three are terminally ill. The rest must learn to accept the imminence of the death of their loved ones.

Michael Cristofer's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Shadow Box* is the third of the season.

It's a tough play, not only because of the difficult subject matter but because of its stylized structure.

And despite the universality of the theme, characterizations are somewhat dated, particularly of the foul-mouthed son of one patient and the pleasure-loving ex-wife of another.

The setting is a group of cottages on the grounds of a hospital in California. Dying patients are sent here to spend their last days with their families.

The focus shifts from the dying, who always think that they have

Theatre review

Shadow Box
Kanata Little Theatre
Earl of March High School, until Saturday, 8 p.m.

a little more time left to their families who are trying to accept the unthinkable.

Joe (Marvin Boss) seems calm enough. It is his wife (Gwendy Tolley) who tries to believe that Joe will recover.

He, meanwhile, is increasingly angry that he achieved so little success in life.

Brian (Tom Kolosak) is at first willing to joke about his own demise, to dance with his former wife (Sally Rayney) and to spend his remaining time with his lover (Mitch Wexler).

Yet his anger at his life and his disgust with his own deterioration eventually surface.

Felicity (Doreen Boss) seems to have struck a bargain with death. She is waiting for her

younger daughter to visit her.

Only her older daughter (Gwen Knight) knows that this visit can never happen.

And despite the lack of hope, they all keep hoping.

Director and set designer Ron Maslin, who also plays the unseen interviewer (death), makes it clear that *Shadow Box* is as concerned with the visitors and family members as with the terminally ill.

Particularly towards the end of the play, he uses a technique reminiscent of a Greek chorus and underlines that death, rather than any character in this ensemble, is the true protagonist of *Shadow Box*.

An interesting play and a fairly effective production, but not an easy or totally satisfying drama.

(Iris Winston is an Ottawa freelance writer who covers community theatre for the Citizen.)











