

Overlaid overdue

BY CHRIS LEPAN

The King's Theatrical Society production of Robertson Davies' *Overlaid*, was finally showcased last weekend, one week overdue. The entire original cast was unable to perform for a variety of understandable reasons, so, in came Gordon Cameron, Sue Mossing and Bob Mann to save the day. Mossing and Mann had a mere five days to get into character. Suffice to say, they did a quality job.

The play began somewhat strangely, as a number of audience members scrambled to find their seats. It wasn't until I sat down and removed my coat that I realized the two main characters were already acting on stage.

Cameron and Mossing, playing the roles of Pop and Ethel, offered an effective glimpse of what to expect from their characters as they moved about the set. Pop tapped his foot and tossed his head in jubilation to the sound of the opera *Lucia di Lamermoor*, coming from his old radio, while Ethel worked diligently, cooking and cleaning, hating his music.

The two characters' silence during this ten-minute period was an excellent way to draw attention to the finer points of the play, such as the elaborately-decorated kitchen setting. The order, cleanliness and inherent sentimentality of Ethel's kitchen provided a realistic backdrop for the particular struggle Pop and Ethel faced.

Ethel's orderly kitchen was a symbol and product of her duty and sense of self-righteousness. Her Pop represented a direct contrast to this life style.

Seemingly fed up with small town life and family commitments,

Pop antagonizes Ethel with his New York City dreams of Dionysian abandon.

Cameron conveyed Pop's mocking nature humorously, particularly when G.B., the shady insurance broker played by Bob Mann, enters the kitchen to settle Pop's insurance plan.

Mann's elastic facial expressions offered comic relief amid the conflict between Pop and Ethel over what should be done with the insurance money. Pop ridicules the broker, until he agrees to give him all his money in one lump sum. After the insurance bozo storms out of the kitchen in a huff, the emotional father-daughter struggle reaches a climax.

At this point, Cameron and Mossing showed their true worth. Pop and Ethel reveal the depths of their souls as they try to understand what was at the root of their conflict. The more Pop tests his "emotionally under-stimulated" daughter the more she reveals about her rigid life.

Mossing effectively conveyed the emotional strain of a woman whose every action is motivated by a need "to be remembered". Though Pop finds his daughter's request for a granite gravestone somewhat ludicrous, he shows compassion when he gives her the insurance cheque. The play ends hopefully, with father and daughter having reached a new plateau in their relationship.

In charming fashion the three main characters reappeared on stage for a dance waltz outro. This delighted the audience, hyping their applause for an engaging presentation that directors Colin Lake and Tessa Logan-Wright should be proud of.