

Players make the most of The Anniversary

BY A GUEST CRITIC

THE Garrison Players' (Bob Arnold) is the most sympathetic role. Terry is presentation of Bill MacIlwraith's "The Anniversary" is undoubtedly one of the best amateur productions to be seen in the Colony for some time.

It takes a few minutes to warm up, but with the entrance of Mum (Enid Eden), a self-righteous dragon who every year throws a "party" to mark the anniversary of her husband's death, the play's success is assured.

MacIlwraith's dialogue is devastatingly witty—and the fact that most of the best lines are delivered by Miss Eden in no way detracts from a superbly timed, beautifully restrained performance.

Of the three sons, Terry

David Simpson, as Tom, and Mike Clarke, as Henry, the other two sons, turn in adequate performances, and Christina Stead, who completes the cast, playing Shirley, Tom's girl-friend who proves to be the catalyst which eventually breaks Mum's vice-like grip on the family, competently handles an essentially light, none-too-demanding role.

"The Anniversary" ends its four-day run at the City Hall Theatre tomorrow evening. It's well worth a visit.—I.B.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

10th OCTOBER, 1969.

ANNIVERSARY BLASTS OFF THEATRE SEASON

THE 1969-1970 THEATRICAL SEASON is off with a first from Garrison Players of playwright Bill MacIlwraith's *THE ANNIVERSARY*, a story filled with

THE ANNIVERSARY — Garrison Players at City Hall Theatre tonight and tomorrow.

humour and pathos, about an aging Mum reluctant to give up her sons, even though the eldest is close to 40.

There are six lead roles, played by David Simpson as Tom, Christina Stuart as Shirley, Mike Clarke as Henry, Bob Arnold as Terry, Erica Bridgman as Karen and mum, played by Enid Eden.

Opening night played to a packed house, and at the end of the first act, everyone knew that *The Anniversary* was a very appropriate choice.

With all plays and their actors, nothing



Mum (Enid Eden) and her two sons Terry and Henry (played by Bob Arnold and Michael Clarke) toast long dead Dad on the occasion of Mum's wedding anniversary in a ceremony which Mum insists on maintaining every year. Hence the title of Garrison Player's presentation "The Anniversary" at City Hall.

takes the place of practice, but when it comes to actually performing in front of an audience, the weaknesses of the actors, and the mistakes of the director (in this case Bob Allenby) rise to the surface.

The story is a very balanced one, and hits

home with every punchline. The punchlines are bawdy, subtle, very funny, and come as fast as bullets in places. Half of them are missed though, because the actors do not wait for the audience to stop laughing before continuing.

With a little polishing, *The Anniversary*

will be excellent by closing night. Director Allenby has apparently done a lot of work on it, and set and costumes are all appropriate and adequate.

Very fine entertainment, *The Anniversary* should prove a memorable evening at the theatre in City Hall.

— RITA DRAGOMER

TIGER
STANDARD

10th OCTOBER
1970

Here's a mixed up family - but why do we laugh?

SO, you think YOU'VE got domestic problems! Then go along to "The Anniversary" and you'll see what trouble-in-the-home can really be like.

The Garrison Players are presenting the play - and the production is tragically funny.

You'll meet Mum. Bitchy, insulting, spiteful, snarly, rotten to the bone and a woman who doesn't mix words.

"Move away, dear," she says to her future daughter-in-law, "I can't stand anyone with B.O. ..."

And you'll meet Mum's three sons: Terry, who shot out one of Mum's eyes when he was a child; Tom, who is always getting engaged to girls; and Henry, who likes to wear women's bras and panties.

Real life

A mixed up family, yes - but think about it, and you'll probably know people in real life like them.

Enid Eden plays the mother who often takes out her glass eye to scare her in-laws.

Her rapid-fire insults give the play a machine-gun pace and an enthusiastic audience at opening night at times were forced into continuous laughter.

STAR entertainment

It wasn't laughter at jokes; it was laughter at cruel remarks by a domineering mother to defenceless sons - and as you sit laughing with everybody else, you start to wonder: "Blimey, is it a bit kinky to laugh at THIS?"

That's the power of Bill MacIlwraith's play. The Devil is at work, and people think it's amusing.

Competent

David Simpson as Tom and Christina Stuart as his present fiancée are competent, but Mike Clarke is totally unconvincing as a pervert. Thank goodness for Mike, otherwise we could well imagine barrister friends of Mike good-naturedly playing jokes, by posting him a bra or two.

Bob Arnold plays the part of Terry and he gets a lot of laughs when it's revealed Mum pays him 1,000 pounds every time he gets his wife pregnant.

'Find'

The real "find" of the play is Erica Bridgman, as Terry's wise wife who gets an extra 1,000

pounds to buy more groceries, by pretending she's pregnant when she's not.

This is Erica's debut on the Hongkong stage and the Garrison Players should snap her up for all future suitable roles.

Bob Allenby produced "The Anniversary," which is on again at the City Hall Theatre tonight and tomorrow night.



● TOM gets in some pre-marriage romancing with Shirley, as curious Henry looks on.

THE STAR

11th OCTOBER 1969