

# Oh Dad, Poor Dad'

## — a 100-minute sick joke

By Our Drama Critic

Arthur Kopit's strangely undisturbing play *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama's Hung You in the Closet, and I'm Feeling So Sad* is not a black-hearted comedy (as advertised), but a lily-livered quasi-tragedy which reeks of clotted blood. In fact, it is a long sick joke, lasting for 100 minutes. The cuckoo clock is possibly the funniest thing on the stage, which figures; being cuckoo is some fun, isn't it?

Death stalks everywhere. The unmerry widow accompanied by the stuffed body of her husband (whom she had killed) and by her over-protected son and props and appurtenances like collections of stamps and coins, a carnivorous plant and a piranha fish, comes to a hotel in search of more misery and money. There the son is set upon by a girl while the mother sets upon a creaking old commodore. And after a series of well-delivered orations of her vampire philosophy, she leaves the scene with practically everything and everyone (bar the old salt) dead.

Death has its comic and its tragic faces; so do sex, frustration, cynicism, world-weariness and greed; but surely a mad mixture of all this and apparent symbols of cruelty and ugliness cannot make drama, or can it? It adds up to little more than a dare, an aberration, a spittin gat the clouds.

Pearl Padamsee's widow is compelling enough. Sabira Merchant plays the slut with enchanting seductiveness. Raghu Sudon as the son and Sylvester da Cunha as the decrepit sailor are wonderful. But why, why? It is an impertinence to inflict such monstrous theatrical experimentations on a play-starved Bombay, however sophisticated and slick the production.

The Theatre Group is wasting its time and talent by indulging in this kind of grotesquerie. Adaptation, design and direction by Alyque Padamsee. Three more shows at the Tejpal.

Vacation libraries will be conducted by the municipal education department in 50 centres in Bombay for 20 days from May 1 to May 20.

# Memorable show

## by Raza

By Our Art Critic

The one-man-show of S. H. Raza, now on at Gallery Chemould, will be remembered by the art lovers in Bombay for a long time as an extremely satisfying display.

Raza has been living and working in France since 1950. It is after a long time that he is holding a show of his paintings in Bombay. Most of the exhibits have been prepared in the last few months of his sojourn in Bombay, which he is visiting for the second time since he migrated to France 18 years ago.

Raza is an extremely conscientious painter. Each painting is carefully planned and meticulously executed in every detail.

Colour has always been Raza's strong point. He spreads the pigment on canvas almost as thinly as water colour and yet achieves striking richness and depth. What is more, his colour is so meaningful; significant in its emotional content.

Ranging from the simple black and white to sombre browns and luminous yellows and greens, the hues he selects appear in effortless juxtaposition, in poignant depiction of the burst of light through the billowing clouds, the blinding blaze of the tropical sun or the lush verdure of a river valley.

### MULTIPLE PLANES

The success of Raza's canvases is no less due to their formal arrangement and feeling of space. In simple shapes the artist has broken up the two-dimensional surface of the canvas into multiple planes, thereby giving it a highly intensive quality.

The most charming aspect of Raza's pictures is that they ring a bell, bringing back a familiar feeling or an experience, at times rather elusively. It is not unlikely that Raza's paintings will mean different things to different people. Yet the impact is unmistakable.

Indeed, many a piece on display is a masterpiece of thought and condensed expression.

The show remains open till April 27.

## "IMPRESSIONISTIC LANDSCAPES"

By Our Art Critic

In his second solo exhibition, Mri-gank Joshi exhibits 16 oils at the Je-



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