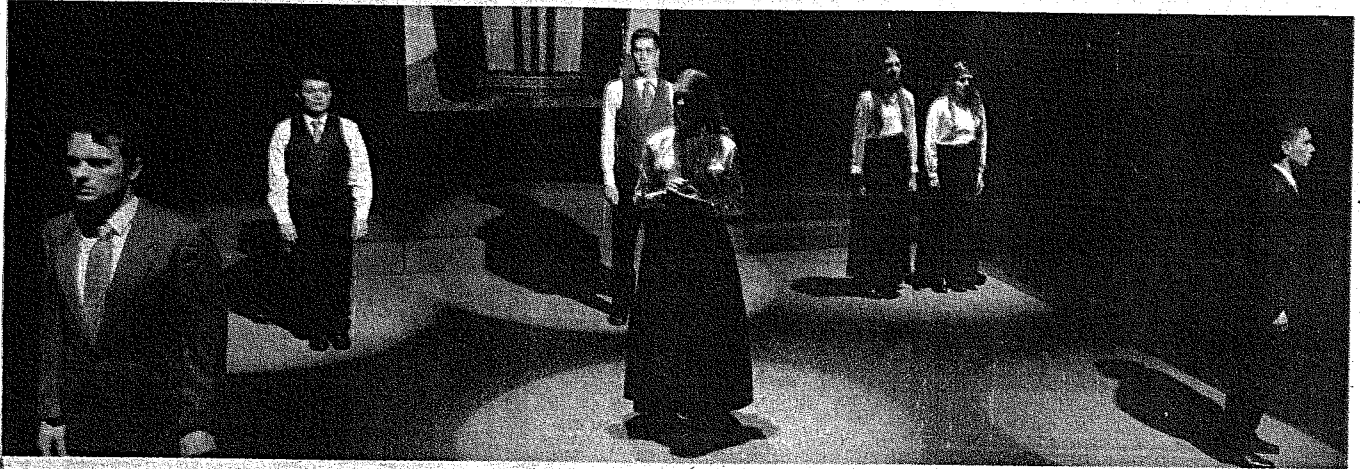


TGIF

Your weekend entertainment guide



Theatre Erindale presents *Rebel Daughter* until Sunday. Here, the cast learns the Second World War has broken out. Pictured are, from left, Samuel Turner, Jaime Hernandez Lujan, Tomas Ketchum, Eilish Waller, Angelica Appelmann, Brittany Miranda and Roberto Esteves.

Best Bet

Rebel Daughter has fighting spirit

By DAVID PATERSON
Staff

Actors often speak of the invisible fourth wall between the stage and the audience, but in Theatre Erindale's *Rebel Daughter*, it's the glass ceiling that looms large.

The latest production from the student-run theatre group, which opened last Friday, is an inventive re-telling of the life story of Doris Anderson, a journalist and one of Canada's foremost feminists of the 20th century.

Adapted by the company's students from her autobiography of the same name, *Rebel Daughter* follows Anderson's journey from the windswept plains of Medicine Hat, Alta., to editor's chair at *Chatelaine* magazine, a position she occupied from 1957-77. During that time she revolutionized the magazine's content, throwing grenades like articles on rape, abortion and sex into its traditionally wholesome and housewife-friendly editorial pages.

Theatre Erindale takes a similarly unconventional approach to the telling of her story, breaking her life up into a series of 20 or so vignettes. The play starts with a chaotic scene as the current staff of *Chatelaine* try to put together a (fictitious) special edition marking Anderson's 2007 death and flash back to her family's arrival in Canada, her rather miserable childhood, her travels in Europe, her two decades as an edi-

tor, her frustration at being repeatedly passed over for promotion in favour of less able men and her work to have gender equality enshrined in the Canadian constitution.

That's a lot of ground for one play to cover, but under the sure hand

of Dora Award-winning director Heinar Piller, what could easily have ended up a disjointed mess turns out as a vivid impressionistic portrait of a time when "career woman" was an oxymoron. The scenes are staged inventively with a flair for

visual humour, like representing the *Chatelaine* board of directors as three Macbeth-style evil spirits, and there are a few songs and even a dance number or two to add variety.

This is an ensemble production through and through, with each of the actors taking on multiple roles, including the title one. Instead of casting one or two actors to play Anderson, Piller has opted to have each of the 13 female actors in the cast take turns at playing her, passing a key on a blue ribbon — a nod to the meaning of the word *chatelaine* — from one to the other as they take up the mantle.

It's an interesting idea but it does prevent the audience from really getting to know the woman at the heart of the story, consigning Anderson to being a representation of the struggle of womankind rather than a living, breathing character. It would have added another dimension to the play if space could have been found in the script — which at times feels like it could have used a more ruthless editor itself — to illustrate some of her human flaws.

In all, this is a creative and accomplished production telling the story of a woman who deserves to be recognized for striking a hefty blow against sexism and prejudice in Canada.

Rebel Daughter runs until Sunday at Theatre Erindale (on the UTM campus). Performances are presented Thursdays to Sundays. Tickets cost \$10-\$15.



Mercedes Morris is Doris Anderson in Theatre Erindale's production of *Rebel Daughter*. With her is Roberto Estevez.