

Try a little theatre

Most kids would rather act in something than watch it

PAT DONNELLY
THE GAZETTE

One of the best ways to wean your children away from the TV set is to send them to theatre school. Most children would rather play baseball than watch it, and a similar instinct makes participating in drama preferable to passive absorption of it.

Although there are numerous private theatre schools in Montreal offering a variety of courses, not all are of equal value, so investigate the organization before signing up. Beware of those who promise instant stardom. The best sources of information are fellow parents whose children have already attended the school.

Montreal's most enduring private theatre school, Children's Theatre, was founded 63 years ago by Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters. Both are now deceased, but Sheila April, who taught at the school for 30 years, took over five years ago.

The back-to-the-basics training in movement, diction and self-confidence, for children from 5 to 18, remains essentially the same. "We're training them to learn about themselves," says April, "to teach them to use their voices, express their feelings and be confident in life."

The major differences since April has taken over is that the school no longer produces end-of-season shows for the general public. Also, evening courses are now offered for adults. The tuition is the same, \$416 (taxes included), for all ages. Courses begin in October and con-

tinue until May. Children's classes take place after school, in early evening or on Saturday mornings.

■ *For further information, call Sheila April at 484-6620.*

The Geordie Productions theatre school, now in its sixth year, is a comparatively new kid on the block. But its credentials are solid. The company is headed by Elsa Bolam, a professional theatre director who has worked across the country. The theatre school is an offshoot of a touring company which brings English-language theatre to Quebec schools.

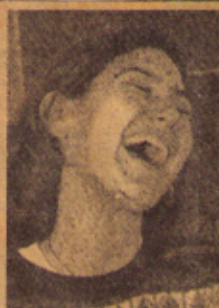
The age range at Geordie is from 5 to 17. There are no courses for adults. Courses begin on or about Oct. 4 and continue for 10 weeks. A second semester begins in January. Fees vary with each course.

Pretending for Real, for ages 5 to 6, costs \$150 plus a \$15 registration fee. Beyond Pretending, for kids age 6 to 8, costs \$160 plus \$15. Classes for the Student Actor, ages 9 and 10, costs \$160 plus \$15, as do Classes for Student Actor II, ages 11 to 13.

Scene study with the school's director, Rachelle Glait-Mishal, aimed at ages 13 to 17, costs \$200 plus \$15. This course is designed for more experienced young actors who will be mastering a scene to be performed at the end of the semester.

The Musical Theatre Workshop class, taught by professional musical theatre director Corey Castle, is for teenagers, age 13 and up, who want to explore their musical talents as they improve their theatre skills. Tuition costs \$250 plus \$15.

■ *For more information call Rachelle at 488-1291.*



Snowdon area.
Classes for children
of all ages from
five years.
Also adults.

Phone for
brochure
484-6620



We'll bring out the best in your child

The curriculum at The Children's Theatre was developed to prepare children for work in television, film, radio and theatre, and equally important, to raise their level of self-confidence.

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Established in 1933
by Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters
Director: Sheila April