

Sleeper of the season

AND THAT DOESN'T MEAN
IT'LL PUT YOU TO SLEEP

BY WAYNE EDMONSTONE
Sun Drama Critic

IN the uptight commercial atmosphere of a growing theatre scene "social theatre" is normally thought of as something you get all dressed up to go and see, and newly-formed theatre companies can appear and vanish with about as much impact on the city as a gust of wind.

However, as amply proven by *Buy, Buy, Vancouver* is short but pungent review of songs, skits and satire based on the current housing crisis, used properly live theatre is a medium that can hold itself out of the playpen and into "the street" and still be as invigorating as a breath of fresh air.

This 45-minute exercise in iconoclasm, which I saw last night at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, gets my vote as the "sleeper" of the season. And by "sleeper": I don't mean a show that puts you to sleep, but one that unexpectedly does the reverse.

Buy, Buy, Vancouver is written

and performed by a group of young actors who call themselves Headlines Theatre.

Their plan (potentially an exciting one) is to take productions based on current social issues and perform them in legion halls, churches, schools, or anywhere they can find the space and an audience willing to pay whatever it can afford to see the shows.

Among those who come in for a spanking in their first feisty and funny little review are landlords Zen and Aquilini; and Linda, Parks and Housing minister James Chabot — of whom one wag in the audience was heard to remark: "I think his mandate must be to take all the land out of the parks and build houses on it."

It's a show that doesn't shy away from taking potshots at live targets. And it deliberately encourages exactly that kind of audience identification with the house-busting heroes and heroines of its skits as it gets around to delivering a worthwhile message.

Underneath the skits and anecdotes based on interviews conducted by the cast, what the show has to say to the low and middle income people

**A SCENE
from
Buy,
Buy
Vancouver:
the best
bargain
in town**

for whom it's really intended is that tenants, home-seekers, and whole neighborhoods must organize to fight the housing issue out with profiteers and ineffectual politicians.

If they don't they soon won't be able to afford to live anywhere in this city, which is rapidly becoming the most expensive in Canada.

But while the style is polemical (in

the spirit of European satirists such as Dario Fo) it's neither preachy nor whiny. In the hands of director Suzi Payne and her cast the routines — including landlord and tenant battles staged as a TV game show and a wrestling match and an hilarious hilariously song called *Soured Heaven* — are funnily and zestfully performed.

Working with a maximum of

imagination and a minimum of trappings, Heidi Archibald, David Diamond, Jay Sawwald, Colin Thomas and Nettie Wild get this portable little show off to a flying start.

If you want to find out where it's appearing next, call 734-1681 for information. Unlike Vancouver real estate, it's the best bargain you'll get for the price anywhere it's located in the city.



STEVE BROWN