

TV star Macnee returns after 21 years

When you've created and played a role for eight years, you're neither surprised nor perturbed when the public stops you and calls you by the wrong name.

The character of John Steed, the unflappable, dapper detective of the TV series, The Avengers, is so familiar to his creator, British actor Patrick Macnee, that Macnee takes no notice of him unless reminded.

"It's kind of like having a one-eyed aunt," Macnee explained in a chat after the Toronto opening of his play Secretary Bird at the Royal Alexandra Theatre.

"She sits there in the corner unnoticed by the family for 20 years until someone comes along and says 'Who's that one-eyed lady over there?'" he chuckled.

Remembering the old days

But Macnee would rather talk about the old days in Toronto, when, as a starving, young actor, he worked for both CBC radio and television as well as acting in plays at the now defunct Crest and Jupiter Theatres.

That was in the 50s. Before The Avengers. Before Toronto had Sunday movies.

Back when elegant dining was a choice of the Royal York's Imperial Room, the King Edward's Victoria Room or the newly opened Lord Simcoe's Pump Room—a room that no longer exists.

Back when newspapers discouraged their photographers from taking pictures of people at parties holding drinks in their hands.

Twenty-one years ago to be exact.

Macnee's not had much time yet to explore Toronto's astonishing changes.

He arrived here last Friday, straight from New York city where he's been starring as Andrew Wyke, the eccentric English author in the Broadway production of Sleuth.

Busy with rehearsals, he's had little chance to do more than amble down Prince Arthur Ave. to the Park



ACTOR PATRICK MACNEE, who is known to TV fans as John Steed of The Avengers series, is back in Toronto to star in Secretary Bird at the Royal Alexan-

dra Theatre. He recalled his early acting days here at a party. Chatting here are Barbara Hamilton, Macnee, Janet Eccles and her father, Michael Eccles.

But eating out at Toronto's posh restaurants may not be on the agenda.

Macnee has shed 50 pounds—one for each of his birthdays—since he began a startling diet that substitutes fasting for booze, food and sex.

Drinking black coffee after having eaten a light meal (and some garlic bread) at the after-party at Carman's Club, Macnee said he only ate one meal a day.

Fasting is really invigorating. "It clears the head," Macnee said.

Sex, at 50, is not so necessary any more, he deadpanned.

Attempts by Secretary Bird's publicist Gino Emery to round-up Macnee's old cronies for the party met with small success.

Only Barbara Hamilton and Michael Eccles, a Wedgwood China executive, and Eccles' daughter, Janet, 18, could make it.

And musician Sammy Hershoren, former CBC orchestra leader.

"Sammy will have to tell Macnee who he is," said his wife, Jeanie.

She was wrong. Macnee knew him and was delighted to see him.

Macnee is charming, svelte, easy to talk with and most obliging.

The party was hosted by Secretary Bird's producer-director Paul Elliott, who brought Move Over Mrs. Markham, another British farce, to the O'Keefe Centre earlier this month.

The title role of Mrs. Markham was played by British actress Honor Blackman, who starred with Macnee in The Avengers in early episodes. She was replaced by actress Diana Rigg.

Elliott threw the party because "Honest Ed" Mirvish has discontinued hosting opening-night cast parties except in rare cases. Mirvish usually entertains the cast during the show's run.

Although invited, Mirvish did not join the 30-odd guests, who included British Trade Commissioner R. McCartney Samples. Mirvish went home to bed.

Secretary Bird runs until May 12.

Witty parody by anti-feminist

The play, a bitter but witty parody of married life, is admittedly anti-feminist, said Macnee. But he's not embarrassed by it.

"It was written by a man. It reflects a highly personal episode in the author's life, I think. Anyway it's the male point of view and he's entitled to it," Macnee said.

Incidentally, Barbara Hamilton said she'd never seen Macnee as Steed while The Avengers was running. She's now catching the reruns of the show on CITY-TV.

What's happening Nora McCabe

Plaza and along Bloor St. a little bit.

Macnee lived in a Prince Arthur garret after his fortunes improved enough to allow him to vacate his room at the YMCA.

Toronto's the place that Macnee credits with starting him on the road to acting fame.

Commanded torpedo boat

"I didn't become an actor at all until Toronto," he says.

Before this he'd done some work in England, including his first film, Hamlet, with Laurence Olivier, and a stint with the Royal Navy in World War II, dur-

ing which he commanded a torpedo vessel.

Toronto's filled with memories of a star-studded cast of Canadian showbiz notables who are his friends.

These include actresses Barbara Hamilton and Kate Reid; Crest founders, actors Murray and Donald Davis; Don Harroo; CTV's president Murray Chercover; CBC television drama head Robert Allen.

Then there's CBC radio's stalwart Andrew Allan; Lorne Greene; Toby Robins; Christopher Plummer; CBC producer Norman Campbell; filmmaker Norman Jewison; singer Bob Goulet and National Film Board chairman Sydney Newman.

Macnee has sent telegrams to those friends who are still in Toronto and plans to get together with them if possible.

Social Notices

For assistance in placing your Social Notice or Announcement just call Miss Field at 368-3611. Or, if you wish, send it in by mail.

- ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- BINGO**—Tues. & Wed. \$1,000 jackpot must be won by regular games & big specials. Luna Hall, 30 Gordon St. (at Bay St.) Thurs. 7:30 p.m. at Fairview opposite Gordon Mackay Rd.
 - GIANT SALE**—Merchandise new clothing & household goods. Toronto. Thurs. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. 300 Baiten W. Thurs. Apr. 26, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. 300 Baiten W. Thurs. Apr. 27, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. 300 Baiten W.
 - GIANT THERIFT SALE**—Thursday April 26, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. VIVA! 230 Spadina. 5000 of used clothing & household items. Sponsored by Pioneer Women.
 - RUMMAGE SALE**—On Thurs. April 26 at 9 a.m. at St. Philip of Neri Church, 270 Jane St. (at Wilson). Auctioneers Sisterhood of Our Lady's Help.
 - RUMMAGE SALE, DENTONIA PARK**—1125 D. PHILIP, Dunes Road & Denton Park Ave. Thurs. April 26, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Good clothing & household items.
 - AN EVENING OF CHAMBER MUSIC**—Sunday April 29, 8:30 p.m. with Frederick, Skutch, piano, Marco Rev. Gino, and Gerard Kantarian, violin. First Unitarian Auditorium, 175 St. Clair W. at Avenue Rd. Tickets \$2.50.
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 - RUMMAGE SALE** at St. Vincent's United Church, 21 Bathurst St. Rd. at Dundas West, Sat. April 28, 10 a.m. till noon in the Scout Hall.
 - RUMMAGE SALE** at New Beach United Church, 6000 St. E. & Winona Ave., Thurs. Apr. 26, at 7:30 p.m.
 - RUMMAGE SALE** at St. John's Church, Woodbine & Kingston Rd. Fri. Apr. 27, 1 p.m.
- ENGAGEMENTS**
- MR. & MRS. R. W. FINKLE** and Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Tiffin, would like to announce the engagement of their daughter, Christine Patricia Finkle, to Mr. James Fletcher, son of Mr. & Mrs. G. Fletcher, Fredericton, N.B.
 - MR. & MRS. LOU SIMMS** of Dundas, Ont., are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Linda Ellen, to Mr. Mark Lawrence Waxman, son of Mr. & Mrs. Irving Waxman of Hamilton. Proud grandparents Mr. & Mrs. Sam Zigaram & Mr. & Mrs. Joseph S. Mizow of Toronto & Mrs. R. Waxman and Mrs. L. Peizer, of Hamilton.
 - DR. & MRS. SCARLET ALBRIGHT** are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Lou Caryn to Sheldon Lewis, son of Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm Brangwyn. The wedding will take place at St. Basil's, Boston Temple on Thursday May 24, 7:30 p.m.
 - MR. & MRS. LORNE DALLEY** are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Diane Jean to Jason David Brown, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Brown of Richmond Hill.

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- TULIP TIME**—HOLLAND, MICHIGAN. 3 days—dep. May 18. See tulip farms, ponds, Kiewit dancing, etc.
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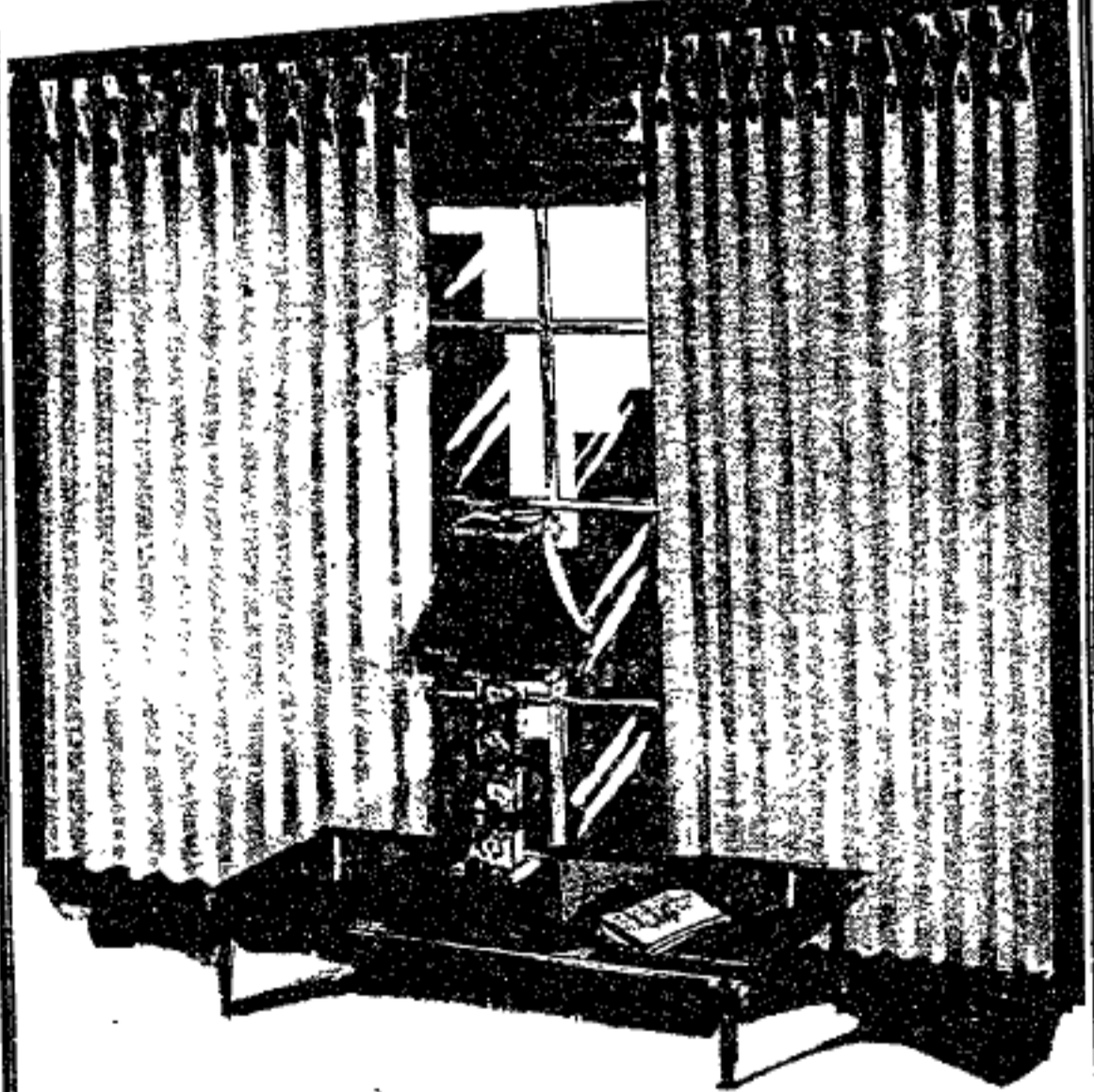
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Movie 'depresses' censor but Last Tango gets okay

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP)—A threatened closing of the movie Last Tango in Paris has been rescinded by the prosecutor in Oakland County here.

After seeing the movie, L. Brooks Patterson said it failed the "dominant-prurient-theme test." He said it would be allowed to open at a local theatre.

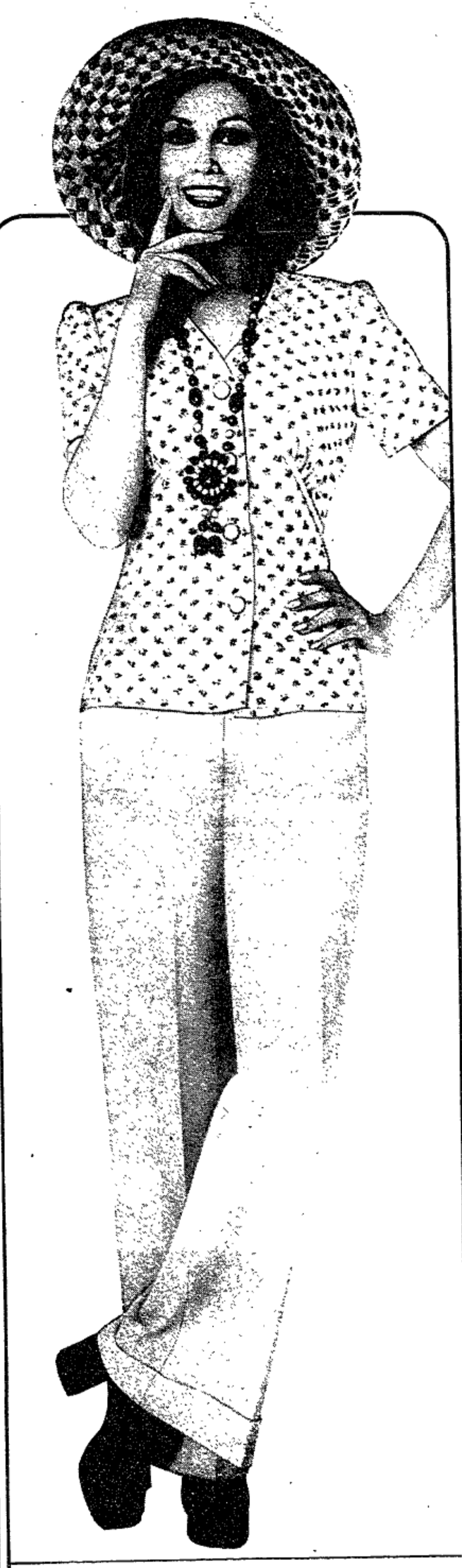
"It's the most depressing movie I've ever seen," Patterson said. "But there's nothing wrong with a suggestive movie."

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