

# Theater: Drahos's 'Reunion of Sorts'

Blackfriars Presents  
70th Original Play

REUNION OF SORTS, a comedy-drama, by Mary Drahos, staged by Walter Cooley, settings and lighting by T. Fabian, costumes by Alice Merritt. Presented by the Blackfriars Guild. At the Blackfriars Theater, 320 West 57th Street.

Olga ..... Hazel C. Wolffs  
Miss Smithson ..... Robert Kerr  
Miss Stuart ..... Shirley Guskys  
Mrs. Liz Road ..... Maureen Fitzgerald  
Mrs. Ellen Coswell ..... Mary Jennings Dean  
Doctor Abbott ..... Off Seaby  
Liz Road ..... Robert Gulliver  
Brad Coswell ..... David Archer Tardell

By MEL GUSSOW  
MARY DRAHOS'S "Reunion of Sorts" is the 70th original play presented by the Blackfriars Guild—a Roman Catholic organization—certainly a record unequalled on or off Broadway. During its 28 years of producing the guild has staged plays about St. Patrick, Pontius Pilate, Pope Pius XII and Catherine of Siena, among others.

Occasionally, the group has dabbled in more contemporary concerns, such as the generation gap, the subject of Miss Drahos's last previous work at Blackfriars. This time she considers abortion. She is one not surprised to discover, very much against it.

It would be difficult to question the sincerity of the author's position, or the receptive audience it is directed to. The Blackfriars Theater was filled last night with oohs, ahs and tsks-tsks of recognition. The audience obviously knew what it was coming to see and—as if it had heard a good rousing sermon—was apparently entertained and moved.

On the other hand it is easy to question the dramaturgy. Sadly, "Reunion of Sorts" is no more stageworthy than a sermon—better read than enacted. Almost from the opening minute the characters and the issues are absolutely clear, and continue unswervingly in type until the sentimental conclusion.

Two old school chums, Liz and Ellen, accidentally share



Jeanne Fields, left, and Mary Jennings Dean

a hospital room. Ellen is in for an appendectomy, Liz for a . . . therapeutic abortion (her doctor thinks she has had German measles). Ellen not only had problems giving birth to her one child, but also her husband (the ladies' former school football hero) was crippled in the Korean war, and is so firmly anti-abortion that he has testified to that effect at legislative hearings. One opposing witness was Liz's doctor, your friendly legal abortionist, a genial sort until the last act when he suddenly reveals master-race tendencies. Miss Drahos never stops, even when she's behind.

The confrontations—repeated and repetitive—are exemplified by this exchange of dialogue:

Liz: "A woman should be able to do what she wants with her body."  
Ellen: "Doesn't a baby have the right to its body?"

Liz: "A deformed one!"  
Enter, in the last act, the husband on crutches.

Between scenes of high emotion, there are ones of low comedy, concerning a senile male patient and a fat cleaning lady with an all-purpose accent. "Som-of-a-guna," she shouts at one point. "When you gonna make operation, you?" Whenever the curtain drops, corny Hawaiian music burbles on the loudspeaker, perhaps to remind one that, its auspices aside, "Reunion of Sorts" is really not very far removed from a "One Man's Family."

The acting is, for the most part, unsure, the direction, stagey, but the one scene—the hospital room—has an authenticity largely missing from the drama. The program clarifies that issue, crediting "St. Clare's Hospital, New York City, for a complete semi-private hospital room."

Sarah Faunce Is Appointed To Brooklyn Museum Post

The appointment of Sarah Faunce as curator of paintings and sculpture at the Brooklyn Museum was announced yesterday by Thomas S. Buechner, director. She succeeds Donaldson F. Hoopes, who resigned July 1.

Miss Faunce has been curator of art properties and executive secretary of the Art History Advisory Council of Columbia

University. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wellesley College. She earned a master's degree at Washington University and is working for a doctorate at Columbia. Her field of concentration is 19th century painting.

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