

WEEKEND STAGE

A CAST IN THE CLASS

TEACHER TEACHER, the Anthony Hinkson play that was successfully performed both here and in Trinidad back in 1978, returns to Barbados' theatrical shores next Friday.

This time around, the **Pinelands Creative Workshop** is staging the play which takes a humorous but deadly serious probe into the colonial educational system. Ralph Walker is producing the play and Dorsie Boyce directs the 25-member cast which he founded in 1980.

Explained Dorsie, "It is an examination of comprehensive schools in the '70s, but we have brought it up to date by setting it in a newer secondary school."

The comedy, which is essentially Barbadian and about people, still looks into aged attitudes held by the educational authorities and the conflicts which arise between students and teachers and parents.

Teacher, Teacher has retained its stereotypes — Foxy George, the headmaster, played by Hamilton Lashley, Education Officer Brookes, played John Collymore and the parents.

They represent the old system, older values and ways of thinking, based on the colonial teaching standards formulated in years gone by.

We are zoomed straight into 1984, however, by a number of added factors. In between classes, the children no longer play hide-and-seek, hand-clapping games or hop-skotch, they break dance. And much of language used by the school students has been up-dated also.

The play focuses on five such students, regarded as educational misfits, brought together in a class called, The Den, and also their teacher, Mr. Waithe.

Each pupil represents a different character as originally formulated by Hinkson: Oxford played by David Morgan behaves as if he has swallowed both a dictionary and an encyclopaedia; he unleashes torrents of verbosity in a condescending manner upon teachers and students alike.

Rabies, no less intelligent than Oxford, is a violent nature and, according to Winston Pindell, the actor who plays him, he is hot-headed. "He picks on the headmaster and other students and

by Linda Deane

unlike Oxford, uses his own blunt words to make his rebellious statement. He comes straight ...

Then there is Stools, the revolutionary, Wayne Riley, who plays him, says he can be violent like rabies, but also offers advice to his fellow Den-mates, and is all out to change what he believes to be a faulty system.

Joan Taitt plays Erma Sandiford, described as the down-to-earth type who gets along well with everyone and enjoys the noisy bantering with the boys in the Den. Says Joan, "she's a girl who doesn't really care; she comes out bodily and tells it like it is — but she can be serious."

Definitely serious and studious in Jacqueline, who is held in high esteem by her peer group, but who secretly likes the "big life" and eventually faces problems after becoming emotionally involved with a teacher.

As mentioned previously, all the Den's students are highly intelligent, perhaps above average in this respect — it is their extreme natures however, that make them appear uneducable to the school authorities.

But the students do want to learn. Oxford is determined to learn at all costs, no matter the teacher; Rabies and Stools remain adamant they will learn only if they get a teacher who operates at their own level.

Which brings us to the question of Mr. Waithe, their new teacher, played by Nigel Clarke, alias Iastafari. As his name suggests, he is a rastafarian and this

is where Dorsie has again modernised **Teacher, Teacher**.

"In the 70s, rastas were not so prominent; but today we have people like Adonijah teaching, and lecturing at Cave Hill; Mr. Waithe is a radical and he is the only one able to communicate with the kids in The Den," he says.

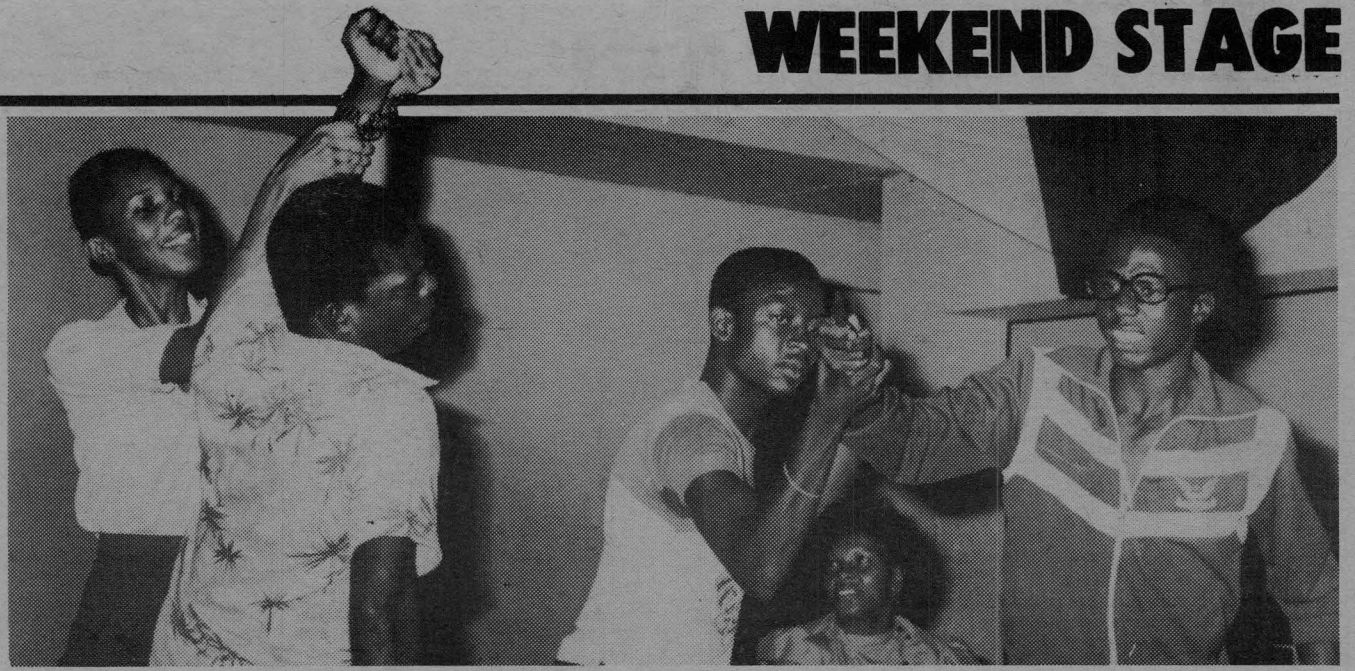
Of his role, Iastafari notes, "The rasta sees himself as an educated man; with education, he could get anyone to succumb to his approach and get them disciplined."

The education officer is a fanatic, says John Collymore, "a rigid stickler for rules that others may deem insignificant". Others consider him hostile, but he has a very close relationship with his cousin, headmaster Foxy George, played by Hamilton Lashley.

Hamilton has produced in the headmaster a typical personality, at the mercy of collins-wielding parents, and ever anxious to please all, while retaining stability and the good reputation of the school.

DEVOTED TO BARBADIAN PLAYS

The **Pinelands Creative Workshop**, in its five years of existence, has devoted itself to Barbadian plays, all by local playwright, Hinkson. John Collymore explained: "We stick with Hinkson, because we can identify with him. I am not being critical of others (theatrical companies) who have given me opportunities to join them, but in my



PINELANDS Creative Workshop rehearsing for **Teacher, Teacher**, a play by Anthony Hinkson.

opinion, Hinkson's plays are geared for the proletariat."

He intimates that plays put on by other groups are not always so directed.

"The masses can come to grips with our plays, because they are actual and factual realities."

Dorsie Boyce calls it socio-drama, and the same label can be attached to plays like **City Manor**, which the workshop performed for Carifesta, **Jackpot** in 1982, **God's Daughter** and

Children In The Moonlight, which won a distinction at NIF-CA. **Nigger Yard**, was presented for television and nominated for an award in Germany.

All of these plays discusses aspects of Barbadian and/or Caribbean life in detail.

The venue for **Teacher, Teacher** is Parkinson School, the Pine. When asked if in their plans to grow and develop even further they wished to take the play to the Queen's Park

Theatre, both John and Hamilton agreed that taking a play to Queen's Park is not the be-all-and-end-all.

Rather, bringing the theatre-goers to Parkinson would be more of an achievement for the **Pinelands Creative Workshop**.

Teacher, Teacher can be seen at the school next Friday and Saturday; July 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15. It is indirectly associated with the 1984 Crop-Over activities.

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