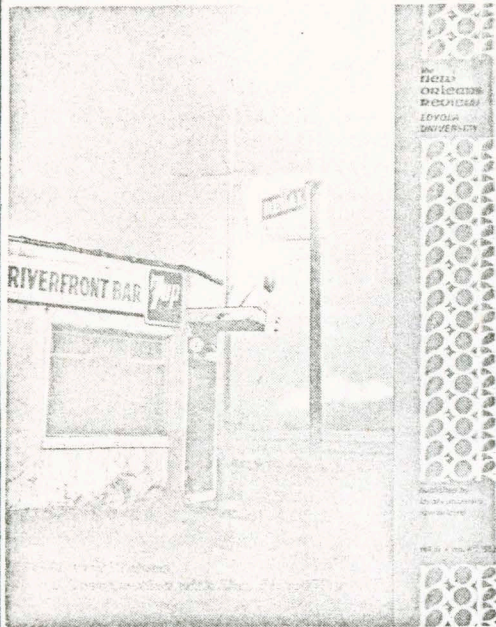


Books



THE NEW ORLEANS REVIEW. (Vol. 5, No. 4. \$1.50.)

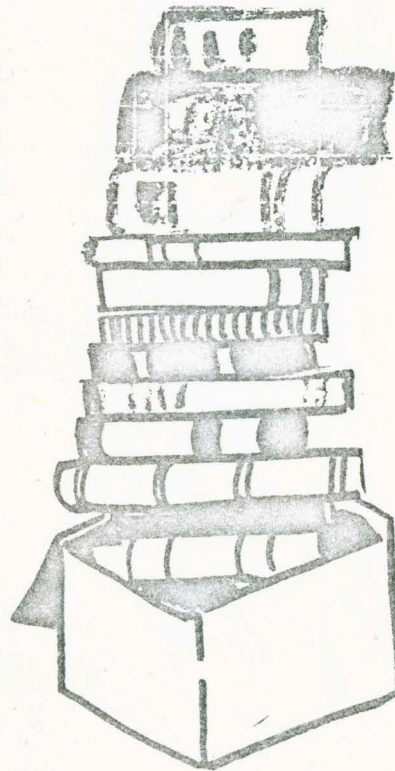
The current issue of *The New Orleans Review* is distinguished by some remarkable photography, well reproduced; by a lengthy portion of a unique and intriguing New Orleans novel, published here posthumously; and by several good poems in a variety of styles. As always the format of *NOR* is appealing, with a striking cover photograph, by Bernard J. Carpenter, of the abandoned Riverfront Bar shrouded in fog. At \$1.50, a copy of the review is an authentic bargain in these inflationary times (even such a sleazy periodical as *Time* sells for \$1.00).

Most remarkable among the entries of the current issue is the excerpt from a novel by John Kennedy Toole entitled *A Confederacy of Dunces*. In an introductory note, Walker Percy describes how the manuscript was delivered to him by the mother of the young author when Percy was selecting students for his 1976 novel-writing seminar at Loyola. Judging by the excerpt, the novel must be original indeed, the story of Ignatius J. Reilly, a New Orleans character described by Percy as "Yossarian, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote and a mad Oliver Hardy rolled into one and set down . . . on Constantinople Street near Magazine." Toole manages to capture in print that particular but elusive quality of zany chaos that is a part of life in this city, and he fills his pages with a wide cross section of local character types. Reading it will give the out-of-towner a notion of what he might observe at any Schwegmann's on a Saturday afternoon.

There are three other works of fiction in the current *NOR*, the only one of special interest being a story by Henry Roth, author of the underground classic novel *Call It Sleep*. The selection, like much of Roth's writing, concerns itself with his ambivalent relationship with Judaism.

There is a wide selection of poetry ranging from the very good to the mediocre. Two works of Vassar Miller—always a joy to read—are the most impressive poems here. One, a sonnet called "Resolution," has as its subject the suicides of poets in recent years—Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman—and the poet's humorously stated resolve to endure and write. Five poems by Laurence Carmody (unfortunately, we are informed in the Contributors Notes that he died at 25) are clever and effective with lines that are memorable, lines that are not prosaic. Finally, there is a concise and well-structured tribute to that most marvelous of vegetables, "Okra" by Madeleine Butler.

For film buffs there is an interview with Lina Wertmuller (I, for one, am weary of the woman), a collection of impressive though somewhat stagey photographs by James Stewart and assorted essays and book reviews.



Almost every reader, I think, will find something of interest in the current issue of *New Orleans Review*, and upcoming issues promise to be exciting, with, among other entries, a portfolio by George Dureau.

—W. Kenneth Holditch



SOMETHING'S AFOOT: worth noting, from left, Tringali. The greased-back look is a bit heavy here, Theatre through the month.

Theatre

"SOMETHING'S AFOOT"—tickle the toes

Something's Afoot, a British comedy-whodunit-musical, now playing at NORD Theatre in Gallier Hall, is a cute little production with some wonderful performances by some vastly-improved NORD regulars.

The direction in this snappily silly show is good, with director Ty Tracy carefully following a script which calls for a whole lot of business. When characters make entrances, they slap their capes into the face of a waiting butler. When furnishings begin to dispose of characters, the murder objects are swiftly active. When the company is called upon to enter into song and dance, each and every one of them does it with a sly, "wait-til-we-put-it-to-you" expression.

The show has a few problems in that musical numbers with outrageously ridiculous lyrics are allowed to go on too long. There is also the problem of the woman with the most solos (Vicky Kent) also having the weakest voice.

Helen Blanke plays a Miss Marple character, and she tosses her youth out of the window in order to come up with a dowdy, believable matron.