

Clarkson actress making a political statement with 'Two Rooms'

By SANDY MCLEAN
Special

From high school actress to founder of her own theatre company, a former Mississaugan is making waves with the production of *Two Rooms* — a political play about a hostage taking in Beirut.

In many ways the play parallels the true experience of a Montreal woman's family after she was abducted at gunpoint in 1985, said Laura de Carteret (formerly Egan), who's family still lives in Clarkson. The woman has not been heard from since.

"It is not a comfortable play. It is very emotional," de Carteret said. "Essentially what the play is about is political chess playing."

Two Rooms explores the emotional turmoil and isolation involved when an American professor is taken hostage in Beirut and his wife strips his office of furniture at home so she can symbolically share his ordeal.

The American government doesn't do anything to effect his release, refusing to acknowledge him as a hostage until his wife tells their story to a newspaper reporter.

In real life, the Canadian son of Henriette Haddad — abducted while vis-

iting family in Lebanon — was unsuccessful in gaining government help to find his mother until he contacted the media. The Canadian government considered her a missing person, not a hostage. More than six years after her abduction, the United Nations recognized her as a hostage. Her whereabouts and status are still unknown.

"I think it will prove somewhat unsettling to theatre goers. You can't just write it off as another American play about American things," de Carteret said. "The parallels are startling and frightening."

She hopes the play will help put further pressure on the government to take action on Haddad's behalf.

Producer de Carteret portrays the professor's wife in *Two Rooms*.

"The play is getting a lot of attention not only because of its entertainment value, but because it's a news item as well."



de CARTERET

Away from the commercials, radio spots and television work she's been doing for several years, which included an appearance with Christopher Plummer in *Counterstrike* and a role in a recent episode of *Top Cops*, de Carteret said she is glad to be involved with something that moves her.

"It's an incredibly emotionally demanding part to play. It's been a labor of love on many different levels. It can be somewhat soul destroying if you're not working on something that moves you. I formed the theatre company to mount this show and we'll go on to do more shows."

de Carteret grew up in Mississauga where her roots in theatre first took hold. As a high school student, she was in every play going and went on to graduate from York University's theatre program.

Today, she is the founder of Paramour Productions, a newly-formed theatre company dedicated to producing politically and socially relevant plays.

Two Rooms, directed by well-known Canadian actress Rosemary Dunsmore opened May 13, at the Theatre Centre 1032 Queen St. W. (west of Ossington) starting at 8 p.m. It runs Tuesday-Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. until May 30. Tickets cost \$12 for Wednesday and Thursday performances, \$15 for Friday and Saturday, \$10 for Sunday and pay-what-you-can on Tuesday. Call 538-0988 for tickets.