

## Students perform in Vid-Row

# Musical comedy a whimsical fan

By  
FRANK RASKY

### TORONTO —

Judy Silver says the essence of writing Jewish humor is this: "Out of misfortune comes a big laugh . . . if you look hard enough."

And Jeff King says the essence of writing humor for Jewish children is this: "You must be childlike, not childish . . . and never write down to kids."

You'll find both of these essences blended with loving humor if you take your children, aged 8 to 14, to see their original musical comedy, Vid-Row, which opened this week at the Leah Posluns Theatre.

A cast of teenage students from the Leah Posluns Theatre School is performing in the production until June 16.

It's a whimsical fantasy, spiked with funny ballads bearing such titles as Computerland and Have A Cookie and Saturdays Don't Matter Day.

And its plot revolves around a 13-year-old com-



Collaborators Judy Silver and Jeff King noodle around on the piano while co-writing their Leah Posluns musical comedy, Vid-Row.

puter whiz kid, frustrated by the frailties of his parents and friends in the real world, who escapes into a fantastical world of perfection he has programmed on his machine.

Judy Silver has written the stage play and directed it. Jeff King has written the lyrics and composed the music for its seven songs.

The collaborators, who have co-written four other kids' musicals for the Leah Posluns — most notably *They Don't Make Rubber Chickens Like They Used To* — were

and a very big laugh to match.

Jeff King, 32, describes himself simply as the practical joker who is the skinny and hairy-chested member of the team.

Together, from the merry tales they spin about their backgrounds, you can tell they make a very gifted combo.

Judy says she makes her real living as a drama teacher at the Leah Posluns Theatre School and Leo Baeck Hebrew Day School. She inherited her talent for creating

her about her compulsion to become an actress. "Is that a job for a nice Jewish girl?" Now, she says, "my Yiddishe mamma gets naches from what I do."

But her talent wasn't apparent when she was an 8-year-old acting in a parody of the traditional Purim play at Holy Blossom Temple.

"Haman was depicted as a poor fellow wronged by history and I played his daughter, Harriet Haman," she recalls. "I played her as a real dog of a daughter."

How was her acting skill?

"Well, theatre critics might say I gave a doggy performance. But let's be kind and say I played Harriet Haman with great gusto."

She says the two years she spent as a student in the theatre department at York University were a waste of time. "Too artsy," she says. "Too divorced from life."

But her two years in theatre at Ryerson were terrific. "They taught me not how to work in The Profession, as dilettantes call it," she says, "but in what I learned to call The Business."

Jeff King says he got the best literary advice from his feisty, 62-year-old mother, Annabelle King. Divorced from Bob King, a Kitchener radio announcer, she writes on

pragmatic thing worth doing for

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