

# Arts cont'd

## a night that breeds no horror

by J.A. Stephan

*Nightbreed*  
directed by Clive Barker  
Twentieth Century Fox

Clive Barker's *Nightbreed* is like a slasher movie within a *Star Trek* episode. The story follows a knife-wielding, psychopathic psychologist in designer suits (David Cronenberg) chasing his pretty boy patient (Craig Sheffer) through a playground created by set decorators, make-up artists and special effects wizards.

The hunt begins with Boone searching for Midian, a place of his dreams where all sins are for-

given. Guided by murderous intent, his psychologist Decker follows in pursuit. Lead by his witty friend, Boone discovers the lost city of the undead. Midian is colonized by mythological beings, shape-changers and strange people from the Old Country of the imagination. Decimated by the encroachment of civilization, they have hidden in the underground of northern Alberta, like draft dodgers waiting out the war.

Boone's demise at the hands of the good doctor brings him among their ranks. An obsessive girlfriend soon uncovers his whereabouts. She exposes the community to Decker, who is bent on

killing the same man twice. Intending to eradicate Boone's brethren as well, Decker calls on the bumbling, dimwitted police force for reinforcements. All the players converge on Midian; Boone to do battle with Decker, and the seemingly defenceless monsters to face the weaponry of hell-bent, save-the-day Canadian cops. This farcical fantasy needs an epilogue to answer all the loose ends it leaves hanging.

What originated as fiction in Barker's *Cabal* fails to transform itself into a frightening film under the author's direction.

Keeping the audience as detached as the slasher towards his prey, *Nightbreed* never draws us close enough to become emotionally involved. We may be fashioning ourselves after the actors, who display no shock or wonder at the implausibility of their situation.

Maybe it's the artificiality of the city of Midian and its inhabitants. The cemetery that sits atop Midian suffers from unnatural lighting and an all too apparent backdrop to add depth. Mentally, we never get beyond the set of Pinewood Studios as we journey below to a rat's maze of tunnels dotted with creature-feature rejects. Their non-threatening appearance is intended to instill sympathy, but make-up artists have merely created an overdone Halloween party.

Unspectacular special effects are reserved for bloodshed and gore, monster magic and the forces of destruction. Whatever anticipation built-up towards the final conflict fizzles among the confusion of haphazard editing. Out of this chaos neither good nor

evil emerge victorious, leaving the last two hours as a purposeless mission to have observed.

This film follows *Hellraiser*, Barker's directorial debut, a nightmare that left audiences shaken. The critical and financial

success of his first project gave him the leeway to produce this self-indulgent muddle of mythology and mayhem. Barker has been touted as the future of horror, but *Nightbreed* offers little promise of a decent scare.



David Cronenberg plays the psychopathic Dr. Decker in *Nightbreed*.

## a reading of sentiments en francais



Jason Schwartz

French students displayed genuine emotion at Moot Court.

by Zubin Hooshangi

On the nights of February 28 and March 1, the students of French 4090 and Stong College put on a performance of *Je Me Souviens*.

Unfortunately, *Je Me Souviens et Paroles de Jacques Prevert* could not be seen as originally scheduled at the Samuel Beckett Theatre — some administrative genius had ended up double-booking the space. This led Prof. Marjollet and his 21 students scurrying, at the last minute, for a place to perform. As luck would

have it, Osgoode Hall Law School kindly donated the Moot Court for both evenings, and so the show went on.

The show began with the students reciting poems of the deceased Jacques Prevert. These poems are full of characterized souls who question the appearance of everything in the realm of our existence. At times, some of the characters are figures of loneliness and tragedy, and at other times, living paradoxes.

After expressing the sentimentality of Prevert's poems, the students played out their own past memories in the second part of the performance. There were authentic memories of what the students remembered the most. Many times during their sentimental voyage into the past, I identified with their experiences. It was hard not to.

On the whole, *Je Me Souviens* was a well-directed and performed play which reflected a lot of sweat and tears.

For many of the talented students who performed in this sentimental journey through time and space, it was their first time on stage. Even if the audience didn't understand a word of French, I'm sure they shared the *souviens* that came straight from the hearts of these young actors.

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\* \* \*

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