

ARTS

Hoffmann: potent opera, but lackluster show

Edmonton's opera fans are now being treated to Offenbach's best opera *Tales of Hoffman*. The music and intricate plot as well as the unusually good sets at the Jubilee make this a fine opera. Unfortunately many of the major roles are poorly performed.

The opera opens with Hoffman agreeing to tell his bar friends about his previous love affairs. The first is with Olympia, who is in fact a doll, the second is Antonia, a singer who, like her mother, dies of exertion while singing, and the third is Giulietta, a courtesan who runs away with another man. Hoffman's present girl-friend, Stella, enters the bar only to find him dead drunk. She leaves with another man, Lindorf, who is Hoffman's enemy and the evil genius behind the failure of his earlier loves.

Michael Myers gave a poor perfor-

mance as Hoffman which made compassion for this wimpish would-be lover difficult. Heather Thomson who played the parts of Giulietta, Antonia, and Stella also gave a weak performance. One bright light appeared in the first act in the form of Nancy Hermiston playing the role of Olympia. Her light and enchanting portrayal of the mechanical doll quickly captured the hearts of the audience. The only good and consistent performance was that of Samuel Ramey playing the parts of Lindorf, Coppelius, Dappertutto, and Dr. Miracle. This conniving basso easily stole the show.

Tales of Hoffman is a good opera but overall this performance is dull and un-moving. The opera will be performed again at the Jubilee Auditorium February 1 at 7:00 p.m. and February 3 and 5 at 8:00 p.m.



Photo Ray Ciguere

Superb sets and some good performances could only barely redeem this production of *Tales of Hoffman*.

Theatre Sports coming soon

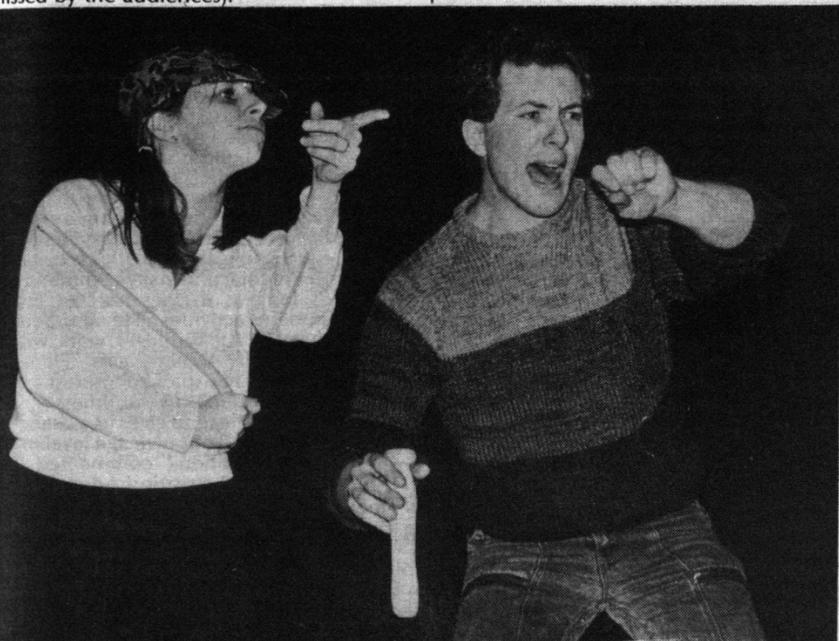
Watch out, U of A! You're going to get **Theatre Sports**. On February 2, 3, and 4 (for a mere 99¢) you can participate at this farcical endeavor. It will be held February 2 & 4 at noon to 1 pm, February 3 12:30-1:30 pm. Audiences offer suggestions to the actors, the actors try to get something in return. Two teams of actors do improvisational games, they are scored by a panel of judges (who periodically get hissed by the audiences).

Lucky audience members are selected to creampie the losing team in the face.

As Kristi Heath of Theatre Network (who presents said event) says, "Audiences always have a good time."

In one game, called "Physical Attributes," one player tries to get from the audience, in mime, two physical attributes and an occupation, which as you might imagine can be devilishly clever.

It's rather like charades to a higher power.



Theatre Sports are coming to the media room on the first level of the Fine Arts building Wednesday through Friday at noon (or thereabouts).

the feed bag

Cucci's
Jasper Ave. on 99st

by Wesley Oginski

Once again we braved the concrete jungles of downtown Edmonton, fortunately we found a veritable paradise during one of this winter's few cold snaps.

My friend J. and I dined at Cucci's, a luxurious restaurant in Edmonton's downtown sector, located across the street from the Citadel. As we entered to escape winter's icy grip, J. pointed out, "Hey, this place has class, real wood bannisters. That means we can describe the decor as warm."

She was right, the decor of the restaurant is warm. A combination of wood panelling and live plants made for a nice cozy atmosphere.

The hostess seated us, then the maitre de served us the wine menu. Finally the waiter took our order. (Is this service or what?) Cucci's employees are friendly while being unobtrusive but prompt.

From the menu, I can tell you, this particular eatery is beyond what most student budget's would allow on a regular basis, or even an irregular one. It is well worth the expense though.

We started with a bottle of Gallo Chablis Blanc, a nice light white wine. Next we ordered appetizers. They have a large variety, including soups, salads and other dishes. We also found the Escargots, French onion soup, and Caesar salad were being offered free of charge for a limited period. I have a fetish for French onion soup and

decided to satisfy it. J. ordered Caesar salad.

J.'s Caesar was delectable and large, while my soup was disappointing. French onion soup is served piping hot with the cheese still melting. My order was nearer lukewarm, but I will admit the cheese had indeed melted.

For our main course, J. ordered prime rib from the regular menu, and I asked for the Steak Alaska from the gourmet specials. Each is offered with a side of either rice or a baked potato and carrots. J. gasped as the waiter served her well-done prime rib, "Migawd, they've given me half a cow." Her rib was medium and quite edible. A nice touch to the rice were the bits of chopped onion for flavor. J.'s carrots were also quite good.

My medium rare Steak Alaska came, as ordered. Steak Alaska is basically a filet wrapped around crab, actually a very tasty combination. My rice was perfect, but the carrots tasted too mature for me.

As dessert rolled around, we both ordered coffee. The dessert menu offered a nice diversity from cakes to fruits to ice cream. J. became fascinated by the Black Forest Cake while I was tempted by a dish called Snowball Adrift. Beginning to develop a complex, J. complained, "What is it about me?" Her serving appeared to be one-quarter of the entire cake. Fortunately there was nothing whatever wrong with it, she enjoyed her tour through the Black Forest to the ultimate. My "Snowball Adrift" basically comprised an upside down sundae. A scoop of ice cream was wrapped in chopped coconut, set in a sea of chocolate Grand Marnier sauce. Naturally it was wonderful to my palate.

We finally topped everything off with coffee and Grand Marnier. Our total bill came to \$49.10, about what we anticipated. Though this restaurant experience was more than we usually like to pay, J. and I felt it was well worth splurging on. Think about it when you graduate.

P.S.: We also managed to gander at Cucci's luncheon menu. The prices are more reasonable for students, and the variety offered was excellent. If the food is as good as it is in the evening, definitely try the lunch.

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