

# Entertainment

"Old cats know how to fall."  
-Tennessee Williams-

## Live Ponty spills salt

Hacker & Goldstein, Inc.

Some people think that reporting on a musician's local performance is a simple task requiring about the same amount of work as your average college tutorial. Well it's not. In fact, it's saltier, as this writer's notebook will testify.

**8:07 a.m.** Woke up and put *Civilized Evil*, the new Jean-Luc Ponty album on the turntable in preparation for the afternoon's interview. Kind of nice for morning listening though sometimes repetitive. Not quite like the *Aurora* days but nevertheless quality music in its own way. Song titles like "Happy Robots" and "Good Guys, Bad Guys" made me feel like I was back in Social Science 101. Overall an enjoyable album.

**12:30 p.m.** On subway going

downtown for interview. The carrot muffin from home has a way of sticking to my upper bridge.

**1:00 p.m.** In lobby of Chelsea Inn. Rendezvous with Chris from WEA Records. He tells me the interview will take place over lunch. A few minutes later, Jean-Luc arrives and we sit down at a table. He turns out to be one of the most thoughtful musicians I've encountered and he seems to get almost as much enjoyment out of reflecting upon his music as he does performing it. I learn that he prefers to play music composed by himself and his own compositional preference is the simplistic one.

"Since *Cosmic Messenger* I have willingly looked for simplicity. As simple as I could get, which is the most difficult thing for the sophisticated

trained musician," Ponty pointed out.

The interview was informative and the onion soup, though a bit salty, was quite good. However the cheese's affinity for my beard was quite embarrassing.

**2:30 p.m.** Checked out Yonge St. for albums and then had dinner.

**6:00 p.m.** Having downed the salty roast chicken it was off to the Royal Ontario Museum to catch the early showing of Wenders' *Goalkeeper's Anxiety*.

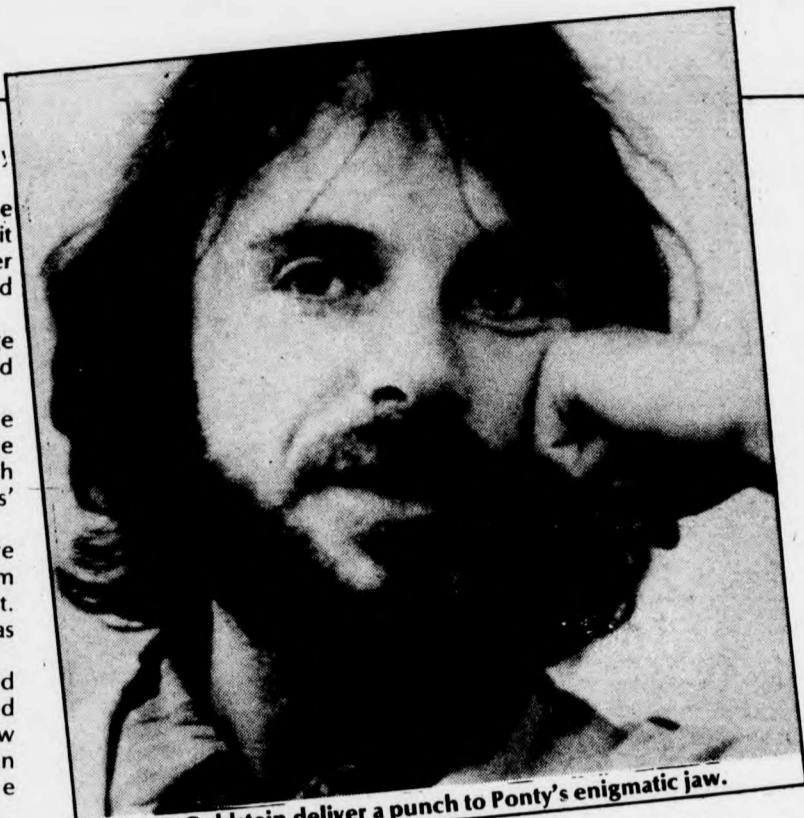
**8:30 p.m.** Unlike *Bullitt* there was no car chase and the film seemed to suffer because of it. Not one of Wenders' best, it was on to the Soup Company.

**9:20 p.m.** Having devoured two muffins I quickly checked out the record stores for new releases and then boarded an eastbound subway for the Danforth.

**10:05 p.m.** At the Music Hall Theatre. While waiting for the concert to begin I bumped into a bogus old high school acquaintance.....It was real.

**10:15 p.m.** Eberhard Weber's "Colours of Chloe" fills the room. This might be pretty good.

**10:25 p.m.** The concert begins. Dry ice, laser beams and skinny ties were all conspicuously absent.



Hacker & Goldstein deliver a punch to Ponty's enigmatic jaw.

**11:50 a.m.** The concert that started with so much promise has finally mercifully ended. Ponty's tendency to use repetitious rhythms was okay for the first hour but as he continued it became less and less effective. It got to the point where it appeared that most of the audience looked like victims of bad somnolence habits. The encore of "New Country" was played to a near empty hall as most of the crowd had already sleep-walked their way out of the theatre.

The concert was quite a disappointment, especially after hearing the new album and finding Ponty to be such an intelligent and sincere fellow during the interview. As Milton Friedman pointed out, "Sincerity is a most overrated virtue in our society."

**1:30 a.m.** Finally, the voyage is over and I'm back at the turntable listening to Lester Bowie and eating left-over roast beef. You know it's true—nothing does beat home cooking.

## Film breaks barriers

Vivian "Kaspar" Bercovici

German director Hans-Jürgen Syberberg describes himself as having acquired a "certain reputation from long documentaries." His latest film, a seven-hour docu-drama called *Our Hitler* (in which Syberberg fulfills the triple task of producer, director and writer) reaffirms this claim.

Finally, after 30 years of virtual silence, the German conscience is examining itself. As one of the first German films to be so concerned with this history, *Our Hitler* should be taken seriously.

Throughout the film, Syberberg emphasizes Hitlerian tendencies throughout history. All great empires and nations sacrificed humanism for the sake of ideals of national greatness.

"Why," implores Syberberg, "do you judge the Germans so harshly? Who asks, when admiring the pyramids of the Pharaohs, how many slaves perished in the process?" The essence of Hitler is in all of us; he is "Our Hitler."

In his early years, Hitler failed miserably in his efforts at becoming a successful commercial artist. His energies were then channelled to politics instead. Hitler still "sensed the power of



*Our Hitler* plays for 2 more Sundays at the Fine Arts Cinema. Above: puppet Hitler in a surreal sequence.

the cinema and wanted to become a film hero. Whoever controls film controls the future." Hitler's valet, Lange, talks openly of the Fuhrer's film fanaticism and private life ("...no one could tie a perfect bow-tie for Hitler.") in a drawn-out scene of Part Two, "A German Dream." Syberberg's use of the objective correlative (a literary device popularized by T.S. Eliot which Syberberg uses in many of his films in this 45-minute sequence

is so painfully obvious that it tends to boredom. While we hear of Hitler's human idiosyncrasies, the background is interspersed with German battle communiqués from WW II, reminding us somewhat of what's happening. Lange continues to tell that each night in his bunker, Hitler, a big fan of John Wayne and Marlene Dietrich, would view two films. Once the war began, though, he would watch newsreels of the war before anyone else."

In an offhanded way, Syberberg ventures to deal with the plight of the victim of the Third Reich. Here, there are not dramatic portrayals, only background voice tapes and stills. Just as soon as pity is evoked for the victim, it is undercut by actors portraying Hitler and/or Himmler, delivering monologues which reaffirm the Nazi cause. The fact the Jews singled out for persecution is treated incidentally. On rising from the grave of Richard Wagner clad in Roman toga, Hitler demands, "How could I have conducted the war without a hatred of the Jews?" A narrator later tells us that "the Jews is always in us and it he didn't exist, we'd have to invent him." In Syberberg's doctrine, only acceptance of this

cont'd p. 10

## Brook chirps

Paul Turrin

The York Dept. of Theatre, in its infinite wisdom, saw fit to enlighten the unenlightened with Theatre Explorations, a weekend's claptrap dealing with research in the contemporary theatre. Following the rave performance by the Lobster King in a rare public appearance Friday night, dramaphiles infested Burton Auditorium again on Saturday morning, demanding among other things to hear Margaret Croyden's discourse on the work of Peter Brook.

Croyden, an American theatre critic and former Brook groupie, first met Brook in London in 1968 when he was just beginning his research into theatre. It was amid the student uprising in Paris that Brook was to form The Centre for International Theatre Research that same year.

The purpose of the centre was to "break the habitual uses we make of the stage...to rethink theatre." As suggested by the title of his book *The Empty Space*, Brook sought to "find out how to make visible on stage what is invisible in life."

Among the experiments undertaken by the centre was the Orghast experiment. With the help of poet Ted Hughes, Brook and his group created a language of their own—Orghast. In this language the sound of each word was to convey its own meaning. Croyden was impressed with the unsophisticated quality of a performance she saw which

utilized this language (taking place on top of a mountain in Iran for some reason), saying it "looked for the feeling beyond words."

This and other experiments led Brook's group to Africa. It was there that the group sought to perform an improvisational version of a 12th century allegorical poem, "The Conference of the Birds." Travelling to remote villages spread over 5 countries on the African continent, Brook felt he could achieve "a moment of unity" among people with whom he did not share a common tongue. One experience related by Croyden was when the group arrived, performed, and left a village all the same night so that they "knew the hearts but not the faces" of the villagers.

After this trip Brook returned to Paris, acquired a decaying theatre, and returned to an earlier interest—Shakespeare. Amid the peeling doors and rotting walls of his theatre he served up fragmented versions of *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, seeking to combine what he called "the holy theatre with the rough theatre." All this, it seems, was part of his never-ending battle to "get rid of style."

After completing an uncharacteristically lush version of "The Birds", Brook's theatre is now on sabbatical. With this knowledge the faithful slowly departed. Coffee and doughnuts were waiting in the lobby.

## Leave it to beaver



Remember folk music? Mose Scarlett, a superb guitarist, songwriter, and singer, has been travelling around Canada for the past ten years, keeping the tradition alive.

This Wednesday at 8 p.m. Scarlett and Thomas Handy will be appearing in the Calumet Common Room. Tickets are \$3 and \$5.50 at the door, refreshments included. Be weird, grow a beard. It'll be chic.

The Fan Man

## Ringwood chirps

Diane Wilson

A course on modern drama offered here at York has 20 playwrights on its reading list—all of whom are male. When asked about the lack of woman dramatists, the prof said that he didn't "know of any women who write good contemporary drama."

Since last week, this professor may have revised his feelings. York was visited by a fine writer who has been turning out plays and other material for many years. And she's even Canadian. Gwen Pharis Ringwood, at 70 years of age, has written innumerable short stories and novels in addition to her 40 plays. She is best known for her play, *Still Stands the House*, about life in Western Canada. Her visit to York was both enlightening and enjoyable.

Ringwood first described the playwriting process and then went on to read from *Mirage*, her play about family life on the prairies. With a strong, throaty voice, she almost seemed to bring her characters to life. It was easy to see why she has been recognized as "the most important playwright produced by the university-affiliated theatre and little theatre movement of the 1930's and 40's."

No good contemporary woman playwrights? Hardly. Talk to Gwen Pharis Ringwood—she'll set you straight.