

Mermaid Theatre and culture of the east coast

Wolfville's much-acclaimed travelling theatre company, mermaid theatre, is coming to Halifax to add sparkle to the Christmas theatre season. "Glooscap and the Mighty Bullfrog" will be seen Thursday and Friday, December 18 and 19, at 2:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 21, at 7:30 p.m. "The Invisible Hunter" will be seen on Friday and Saturday, December 19 and 20, at 7:30 p.m. All performances are in the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Dalhousie Arts Centre.

The Micmac Indians of the Atlantic region claim that Glooscap, their legendary hero, built his wigwam on Cape Blomidon, the majestic promontory that guards the entrance to the Bay of Fundy and Nova Scotia's lush Annapolis Valley. In the shadow of the same mountain, a young professional theatre company has come up with a unique art form especially created to retell Glooscap's stories with the respect and imagination they deserve.

MERMAID THEATRE's cast of ten makes its home in Wolfville, a small town some sixty miles from

Halifax in the heart of the apple-growing region. It is the site too of Acadia University, one of Canada's oldest centres of learning, where storage, construction and rehearsal facilities have been made available since the company's beginnings in 1972. Launched as a Local Initiatives Project by Evelyn Garbary, Director of Drama at the University, and Tom Miller, a young art instructor, MERMAID's subsequent development as a full-time continuously touring company has been fostered by Nova Scotia's Departments of Education and Recreation, as well as The Canada Council. MERMAID HAS toured Nova Scotia from one corner to the other, providing an introduction to live drama for hundreds of thousands of spectators in scattered rural areas.

MERMAID THEATRE has performed in Montreal and Ottawa, and the 1975-76 season will see the company travel from coast to coast in Canada, embarking on a mission to acquaint audiences throughout the country with the rich cultural heritage of the East Coast.

Peterson a wizard

by Ron Norman

Oscar Peterson, with a very fine display of musical wizardry, delighted a capacity audience in the Cohn auditorium last Friday evening. Having seen Mr. Peterson only with a trio, his solo effort on Friday came as a mild surprise. As it turned out, however, he didn't seem to miss his sidemen and the surprise was a pleasant one.

Mr. Peterson, a soft-spoken man, began the program in a subdued manner. Warming the audience with an easy-going opening number, he proceeded to mesmerize the crowd with his technical efficiency on the piano. There is no doubt that the man is a genius on the piano. His tempo varied from the easy and delicate to the intricate, involved and fast-paced.

Playing mostly in a jazzy frame of music, Mr. Peterson exhibited remarkable agility. On the delicate pieces, his touch was particularly nice - a kind of pushing at the keys;

on the jazzy numbers his right hand moved easily up and down the keyboard, gliding over the keys, so that from my seat it appeared that he wasn't even touching them.

On the whole the concert was a success. Mr. Peterson proved that he was capable of sustaining the attention of the audience and their appreciation was apparent with the standing ovation which they gave him. The only question in my mind came not from his ability, which he quite obviously exhibited, but with his selection of material. His runs up and down the keyboard became just a little too repetitious. Similarly, his termination of the pieces seemed too contrived; they nearly always ended with a delicate touch at one end of the scale, that gave them a cocktail hour tone which they certainly did not deserve. However, his ability to play so well made up for these deficiencies.

NUS referenda

Cont'd from page 12

McMaster University in Hamilton will vote on whether to join the national union.

Students at the University of British Columbia and the University of Lethbridge will hold referenda to approve the fee increase, as will students at Brock University in Ontario grads and undergrads at

the University of Toronto, and those at King's College and St. Mary's University in Halifax.

According to NUS spokesperson Dan O'Connor, other campuses may also hold referenda but have not yet officially decided. These include Waterloo, Manitoba, Western and Simon Fraser University.

Hard-core Zappa

by D. Wavrock

Zappa/Beefheart-Bongo Fury (Discreet-DS2234) In one of the most unimaginable events ever recorded (At Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin Texas), Frank Zappa and his band of assorted plus Captain Beefheart (Don van Vliet) have combined their talents together in a live recording that will not soon be forgotten. Frank Zappa here is at his best and it reminds one of the past live albums featuring him and the Mothers of Invention in which audience response seemed to add spontaneity to their verbal and musical antics. In **Bongo Fury**, Zappa and Captain Beefheart have pooled their material, playing abilities, vocals and in the case of Capt. Beefheart he's thrown in his shopping bags as an add-on bonus. (If you listen closely you may hear them, as well as the dancing of Bruce and Tom Fowler). But the whole album rather than featuring both Zappa and Beefheart seems to center around Zappa more and more as the album progresses to the final credits. Although Beefheart contributes material, it's in reality two short selections totalling only four minutes, but Capt. Beefheart harmonizes with Frank Zappa amazingly well and it seems to add something extra to the album (believe it or not some people have trouble harmonizing with Zappa).

Zappa is known for his satire, both lyrical and musical, as he satirizes not only middle class America and its grey-suit elite but utilizes music that imitates the style of some very well-known American rock groups. In this album the whole trend of Zappa's satire continues to a bewildering degree and it's 'beefed-up' by some good image-verses from Capt. Beefheart; i.e. "Sam with the Showing Scalp Flat Top" and "Man With the Woman Head".

The album opens with "Debra Kadabra" a selection that seems to carry on the well-known continuity of Zappa's music. The lines 'Cover my entire body with Avon calabna... Drive me to some relative's house in East L.A..../until my skin clears up' seem to be a carryover from **Just Another Band From L.A.** in which Magdalena (a Montreal girl) was smothered in mayonnaise and also a carryover from **Absolutely Free** in which another girl was smothered in chocolate syrup by a brown shoe executive who didn't make it. In "Debra Kadabra" we see a liberated Magdalena-type female who rubs exotic, sticky substances on a person of the male gender, proving to us (undoubtedly) that Zappa keeps up the the changing trends of middle-class society in his material. "Carolina Hard-Core Ecstasy" tells the story of a not too nice girl and it is here that we see music arrangements similar to Doobie Brothers material being employed including one of their infamous choruses. But the music satire doesn't end there, scattered throughout the album are brief spurts of satire on E.L.P., the J. Geils Band, blues artists in general, country music. The Grateful Dead and a few other groups that I haven't been able to figure out yet. In a selection called "Cucamonga", Zappa does a fine satire on a very tired subject; of rock groups singing songs about how hard it is to be a touring musician.

Also on **Bongo Fury** there is included a two song modern-day satire dealing with the up-coming bicentennial celebrations in the United States in 1976. "Poofster's" Froth Wyoming Plans Ahead", a cowboy song, warns people about all the centennial do-dads they'll be conned into buying as reminders of

the 200th birthday of their country. "200 Years Old", a blues number, bewails the fact that the U.S. can't grow no more, but Zappa says that, 'she could grow a moustache'. "Advance Romance", is basically a cut allowing Zappa, Beefheart, and the Mothers of Invention to exhibit their playing abilities and judging from the results of the eleven minute plus selection, some fine improvisational jamming resulted. Knowing Zappa, he probably felt he was justified in including some of it on the album, and justified he is. In the selection there is yet another reference to previous material, namely **One Size Fits All** in which there is reference to Bobby from "San Ber'dino" whose head 'looks like a potato'. Zappa and Beefheart also deal with basket cases and eccentrics in "Muffin Man" an eccentric researcher who loves muffins and "Sam With the Showing Scalp Flat Top" who had a haircut that came to a point.

Although you'd probably say that Zappa and Captain Beefheart are basket cases themselves, if you've read the subject matter of their material described above, the music on the other hand reflects genius not only in the way it has been composed to act as instrumental replies to some pointed remarks from Zappa and Beefheart in the lyrics but also in the way it has been interpreted by the Mothers of Invention, Zappa and Beefheart. Although most people speak of Zappa as a satirist and an all purpose nut at times, his ability with a guitar is indeed noteworthy and some say (gasp!) that he's better instrumentalist than he is a writer. However, **Bongo Fury** has to rate as one of Zappa's best efforts in quite some time. In comparison with a recent album, it approaches **Apostrophe** if not exceeds it in quality and in style and with Beefheart included in the workings of this album the final effort is an album that will be much in demand by a critical public.

King Harvest-King Harvest [A&M-SP4540] After a three year absence King Harvest have reappeared from the depths of a recording studio with a brand-new album featuring their brand-new sound. This group from Canada, known for their single and album **Dancing In the Moonlight**, seem to have spent a great deal of time refining their material and technique in order to resurface with a much stronger album and hopefully stay on the surface with other such future tight and compact albums. Their first album gave one the impression that it was a one song album, with nine other songs being added as filler. It seems rather obvious that **Dancing In the Moonlight** was released too soon and then only to cash in on the success of the single. But that's in the past and King Harvest can be thankful for that.

In **King Harvest** we see a highly acoustic album of MOR material including such selections as "Jumbie", "Borderline", "Vaea", and "Country Pie". "Borderline" is interesting as it is similar to their hit single of three years ago. In the album's production, members of Chicago and the Beach Boys were involved in a number of the vocal arrangements and although it isn't indicated on the album credits, they may have helped the group in the advisory department. So it can clearly be seen that King Harvest are not out after another shot in the dark for the material and production on this, their second album, indicates that the group is in a better position, musically, than they were three years ago.

Dalhousie Cultural Activities

in co-operation with

Dalhousie Department of Music presents

William Tritt
a free piano
recital

Sunday, December 14, 3:00 p.m.
Rebecca Cohn Auditorium
Dalhousie Arts Centre.