

# Tests is a study in disjointed dialogue and nutty skits

by Frank Liebeck

Tests, as written by Paul Ableman, and as presented at the Studio Lab Theatre provides its audience with some of the best

## Clean, bluesy Sounds on Super-Session

by Neil Huta and George Bihus

The decline of the Beatles-super-composers-electronic wizards image as a major force in rock and the recent acceptance of the blues and jazz as related musical forms has opened the door for great LP's like Super-Session.

Mike Bloomfield, Al Kooper and Steve Stills are gifted musicians who can create more great music on the spur of the moment that most bands can after days of composing, arranging and rearranging. Their album shows the high quality of music that could be produced if only the public's taste would mature past the top 40 stage.

The blues jams on the first side feature Bloomfield at his best, playing tastefully with a sound that always is clean and bluesy. On one cut, "His Holy Modal Majesty," there is a fantastic interplay between Kooper's organ, Bloomfield's guitar and horns added by Kooper as an afterthought. Kooper's ability as a brass arranger has improved tremendously since "Blood, Sweat and Tears" for the horns are tight and tasteful, never overpowering.

The second side has Kooper and Steve Stills, late of the Buffalo Springfield, playing together. Stills does his best work on Donovan's "Season of the Witch" with a completely un-Hendrix wah-wah pedal that's light and always under control.

The album finishes with a great version of "You Don't Love Me" and "Harvey's Tune," the first song ever by Harvey Brooks, who played bass for Bloomfield in the Electric Flag and now produces for Columbia.

On the whole, Super-Session is a great album, an original spontaneous album and I hope it's an omen of things to come.

by Frank Liebeck

Who says we don't need a Chapel? After watching JB, I think we're all ripe for committal. Orson Welles was once asked to do the voice of God in Huston's film, "The Bible", but refused. "No one can do the voice of God," he said.

Obviously Archibald MacLeish thinks somebody can. I tell you right now, he doesn't go to York. I don't mean Peter Stephens' masked God. His power becomes God, but never God himself. I mean having the old Boy piped through on the Burton tape recorder. Then the actors have the nerve to look around and ask, "Who's that?" Shades of Cecil B. DeMille! Who the hell did they think it was?

MacLeish has gone to the Bible for his basic story, and the Greeks for a method of presenting it to his audience. The gods working to destroy a great man is well known to all lovers of Sophocles, and somehow you've even got Homer in there because you actually see the gods fooling around, rather than feeling them at work like you do in Greek Tragedy.

The only thing is of course is that there is no empathy for Job's suffering. I don't think this is Archie's doing, so we'll split

entertainment this side of the Japanese Current. At 41 Collier Street, two blocks north of Bloor, east of Yonge St., three cute angels and two charming semi-hippies play the night away in a series of disjointed dialogues that sound like a lecture on modern communications.

Paul Ableman wrote Green Julia, and if the Star's theory of its origins in Beckett's Waiting For Godot has any basis, then perhaps one can go further and also see a tie with Ionesco whose conversations sound somewhat like those in Tests.

The idea behind Tests is the application of various emotions by the different actors using fragmented dialogue which has

nothing to do with the situation at hand. The five actors introduce each other as Simeon Creel. It goes on for about seven minutes and the results really kept the onlookers enthusiasm in the air, and stomping the turf.

It takes highly skilled actors to keep just the right amount of emphasis on the lines without over-acting. No one ever got carried away with his own cleverness, and all worked together to form a compatible format for the speeches.

The second half of the show included a series of improvisations, where the audience wrote dialogues of ten words or less on a scrap of paper and handed them to the actors. They would

then use only those words and form a skit. It proved the theory that the spectators have to be as nutty as the people involved in the show to enjoy it in the first place.

Some of the sentences that were written would test anybody's acting ability. "I have a cannon ball in my stomach" or "bad acting" were two. I really gave it to one of them, by writing the words Gregor Johann Mendel, together with a phone number. The actor who got mine cried for a minute, but pulled off a good bluff anyways.

Don't listen to the mini-skirted wonder who welcomes you at the door. It's not new theatre. It's about as new as World War I, which was about the time Dada

came out. Sunday nights they have only happenings, where the audience also participates. Apparently everybody does get carried away, even the most conservative. It's an alternative to Ed Sullivan at any rate.

## Riopelle at Winters

by Sandy Souchotte

The impressionistic art currently being exhibited in the Winters College Art Gallery is the work of one of Canada's most famous artists, Jean-Paul Riopelle. He was born in Montreal in 1923 and by the age of seventeen had helped found the wild untrammelled freedom of the Automatism group of painters.

He first experimented with non-figurative paintings in 1944 and participated in an international surrealist exhibition in New York in 1946. The same year, after travelling across the United States and through Italy, he settled in Paris where he lives today. In 1963 he painted a mural for the Toronto International Airport.

Although Riopelle first experimented with sweeping brush strokes his works soon showed evidence of a firmly controlled technique. These early influences are obvious in the paintings he is producing today as well as an interest in colour developed from an admiration of such painters as Tintoretto, Gericault and Van Gogh.

Riopelle has been called one of the world's best examples of a human being practicing full personal freedom in a collective age. The sensual and active nature of his character dominates the urgent freedom of his work. It permeates itself through all the paintings from the conglomeration of leaf etchings and wildly entangled line detail to the impressionistic bull-moose in the forest.

These paintings are an interesting contrast to the realism of the previous collection by Robert Bateman, another well-known Canadian artist.

Riopelle's art is on loan from the Albert White Gallery of Toronto for a two-week display.

in her that I felt the greatest tragedy. She seemed to feel the loss of her children more than Job did, since he was too busy defending God at the time to give the matter his undivided attention. She stays with him as long as is humanly possible until his lack of condemnation for his own plight is too much for her to bear. The kids, thank God, (little joke there) got knocked off fairly quickly. The rest of the cast was plausible and the Messengers were actually quite excellent.

One of the unsung heroes of JB was Don Acaster. His set design was something else. People walked into the auditorium and were dumbfounded. Talk about the circus coming to town, and no doubt the crew that built it deserves some congratulations.

And what of the meaning of the play? There's always somebody who's got to pry into every closet. Like flies to wanton boys, so we are to the gods, who kill us for their sport. I've got that quotation all wrong again. So what. As Nickles says, upon seeing Job's useless misery, "This is ridiculous."

Yep

## Rats steal the show

# Flood flood flood flood flood

by Jill Pivnick

Not being too sure what it was about makes writing about it a bit difficult.

I am referring to Gunter Grass' Flood, being presented by Toronto Workshop Productions at their theatre at 12 Alexander St.

Actually, an obscure plot and experimental theatre-type productions are purely consistent with TWP endeavors. In this case Grass had provided the former, and they, in their inimitable fashion, have abundantly provided the latter. One can always rely on this company for modern dance-contortion effects and they are ever-present in this production.

Plotwise, the play concerns the

flood of biblical fame. On the ark we have Noah and various assorted characters of now particular fame.

There's Noah's sister Betty, played by Gay Rowan, who spoke like a 60-year old, but for all the make-up, looked about 25. Then there is daughter Yetta, her fiancé "the hairdresser" Henry. Son Leo and Leo's friend Congo. The inspector is a weird character who adds narrative blurbs and generally confuses the audience.

There are two rats aboard, namely Pearl and Point. They keep things lively and put in a plaintive cry for the rats. "How terrible to use them for experimental purposes." Charlene

Roycht and Ray Whelan are very, very good and as some member of the audience remarked, Whelan really did look like a rat.

Back to the main plot — ostensibly the play is anti-religious, so we have Aunt Betty about to make parasols out of yellow material, and we have Yetta forsaking Henry for her new love.

That really does seem a little obscure, so I suppose its a personal bias for the company and the way they perform which makes me recommend Flood. The play itself is one of those which you watch without really knowing what's happening — and that tends to make many people a little insecure.

Peter Stephens as he played Mr. Zuss in the play. Dave Cooper of the intrepid Excalibur staff took this religious photo.

## J.B. A Game by

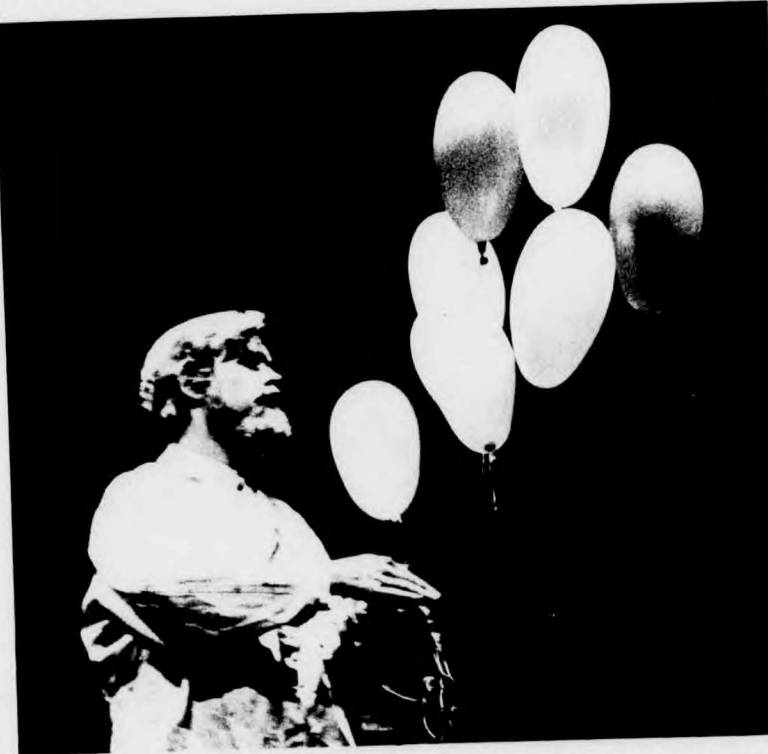
## God and Archie

the blame between Nicholas Ayre, the director, and David Schatzky, who played Job.

The other thing about the play is that JB isn't destroyed, which waters down Sophocles some more, and never mind the chorus of old women. It is Job's agony that should compare with other figures whose fate has been pre-planned by the gods, and so the audience should pity the unfortunate and unknowing wretch.

Actually, my sympathies were all with his wife. If he had said "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away" once more, I would have let him have it with my perverbial chrome plated crucifix.

But despite its basic flaw, J.B.



is good theatre. The lines always come on with impact that carry the audience with their intensity. You can't help feeling the force that is generated as Zuss and Nickles put on their masks to play God and Satan.

And here Nicholas Ayre's directing took pleasure in creating the Drama as they play the greatest game of all. He matched the two up perfectly.

Peter Stephens was a kind and fatherly looking man. He was soft spoken as he was taunted by Satan to test the sincerity of Job. He was always sure that he'd win.

John Innes was panther-like as he jumped and crept from platform to platform, up and down

the ladder. Indeed he is a great actor whose leap up to the Stratford Company is only a beginning.

And then we get back to earth and things aren't so hot. As the prosperous JB, David Schatzky was right on. Complete with wife, kids and Thanksgiving turkey, his assured affluence and his matter-of-fact thanks to God and confidence in his children's understanding of His good grace, he stood as a state ready to be toppled.

In the second act he wasn't as convincing, and his recovery came a bit too quickly considering the fall he had endured.

Ellen Green as his wife Sarah gave a fine performance. It was