

## Symphony goes Saxy

by Terry Po nich

Last Saturday evening the audience at the Jubilee Auditorium was entertained by a different type of symphony program. Except for a Haydn symphony, all of the music played is rarely heard in normal repertoire.

The program was opened by Haydn's *Symphony No. 4* the 'London'. The first movement, marked Allegro, opened in the ominous tonic minor and Hetu made the most of the pleasant contrast when the work changed into the major. This was bold and cheerful, but I think it lacked warmth in the colour of the slower parts of the middle section.

The slow movement, was neat and well balanced between the different sections of the orchestra. The vibrato from the cellos and basses added a nice richness to the tone. In the third

movement, a Minuet and Trio, I think the orchestra lacked enough vigor in the Minuet so the Trio was not the contrast that it could have been. However, when the Minuet returned - this was good music! It was really muscular and robust. This feeling continued through the last movement, marked Allegro spiritoso, so that even the more serious parts were lively. In this movement tremendous vitality is needed to perform the powerful scoring of this simple tune, and Hetu had his orchestra play it well.

In the next part of the program, the soloist for the night came out. Jack Kripl was quite a contrast from the usual parade of soloists who tour. The biggest difference, of course, was the use of the alto saxophone as the solo instrument. Besides that, Kriple is fairly young and even wore high-heeled boots

under his tails.

The first work Kriple played was the Concerto for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra by Glazunov. It was dedicated to the saxophone virtuoso of the time Sigurd Rascher. The somber theme is first displayed in the opening andante and reoccurs many times throughout this one movement work. Kriple made the music flow so easily. He produced very smooth playing and seemingly perfectly shaped phrases.

The scoring of this relatively unknown work is for string orchestra. However, there did not appear to be enough mass of instruments to sustain a good depth of tone that it seemed to need in the slower parts. This was probably because the concerto was designed to show off the saxophone, which Kriple did very well. In the cadenza, he displayed excellent technique, and his shading was top notch. This display led into the lively final section of this concerto.

In the second half of the program Kriple returned and was received by a warm applause. This time he played the Concertino da Camera for Alto Saxophone and Chamber Orchestra. The Concertina is another "modern" classical work written in dedication to Sigmund Rascher by the Frenchman Jacques Ibert. Despite some very jazzy parts within it, this concerto was written in the standard classical outline, the movements being marked allegro con moto, larghetto, and animato motto.

The opening movement is extremely rhythmic and Hetu had the orchestra going at a great pace. At times it seemed as though Kriple wouldn't be able to keep up with it, but he always managed to come through to the audience very well. His articulation was flawless as he sailed through this material. This opening movement shows off every aspect of the saxophone as Kriple did an excellent job of plang his instrument to its limits as well as showing us its beautiful even tone. The second movement was much more realxing. The orchestra was very quiet throughout. The saxophone stood out and led the way through most of the movement. The last movement was very lively, but at times I felt the string section was not playing to its potential. However, Kriple played his saxophone very fluently and was in control of the movement and again led the way as the composer had planned. It is too bad that there is so little music written for the saxophone because it is such a nice change from the usual type of music one hears.

The last work was another 'modern' piece by a Frenchman. This was the Petite Suite by Roussel. The brilliantly colourful movements of this abstract work are marked Aubade, Pastorale, and Mascarade. To appreciate this work one should be thinking of some extremely picturesque setting - the best description is in the program: it quotes Basil Deane as saying "in spirit the Petit Suite evokes the Arcadian World of Watteau and Marivaux." Here we had a hazy picture, but gobs of colour and excitement gushing out all over. Hetu directed his orchestra through this work the way the composer wanted it and I think it was a good ending for an enjoyable evening.



### Sparky Rucker

A small but appreciative crowd enjoyed the relaxing blues of Sparky Rucker as he played at SUB Theatre last Thursday.

### This weekend at the Hovel

Don Audet and Richard Baker will appear at the Hovel on Oct. 25, 26, and 27.

Audet and Baker are dedicated young Canadian musicians who, over the past few years, have worked together as a performing and recording group and, individually, have gathered experience as studio musicians in diverse musical idioms ranging from blues, ragtime and reels through modern pop to the classics.

Their music, which they

perform on acoustic and electric guitars, piano, harmonica, violin, viola, and Dobro, is a stylistic blend of all the many personalities and traditions that have shaped their musical identities; as such, it has brought them into a great variety of performing situations.

Since 1967 they have performed and entertained both individually and ensemble through the media of television, radio, recordings, festivals, and concerts.

## Shakespeare more than a "measure" of success

The problem of any director in staging Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* lies in smoothly combining the serious questions of sexual freedom and judicial indiscretion with the irreverent humor and playfulness present in the play. Marty Fishman's M.F.A. production over the weekend, did, to a large degree, tastefully blend these two different though not exclusive moods of Shakespeare's tragic-comedy set in Gothic Vienna.

A great deal of credit for the smooth transitions between comedy and seriousness can be credited to marvellous performances by the lead actors. Keith Digby, as Angelo, was simply outstanding, subtly though powerfully and sympathetically conveying the tortured motivations of a highly principled judge who rashly abuses his power for individualist satisfaction.

Similar to Digby, Catherine Bruce as Isabella, who strives to save her brother from beheading for supposed sexual impropriety, admirably displayed a wide range of emotions while still maintaining control and credulity. Save for a too weak and focusless grasp of character in the first scene and a tendency to overuse hand gestures of balance and spreading, Tim Gosley's characterization of Vincentio effectively captures the humour of a scheming duke who disguises himself as a friar to correct the indiscretion of one of his officials.

As one of the major comedic counterbalances, the character of the playful and deceitful fantastic Lucio, played by William Gray, is cleanly and emphatically utilized by director Fishman. In addition to giving

Fishman sturdy characterization which are able to withstand the transitions of mood, these actors obtained the utmost from the Shakespearian script through varied rhythms and wide tonal range.

While Fishman's production more than adequately conveys the main intent of *Measure for Measure*, it is flawed somewhat by inadequate portrayals of lesser characters. However difficult the task, these actors, most notably Hamish Body (Claudio); Dwight Cary Dutkiewicz (Escalus) and Clayton Jevne (the Provost), were not successful in firmly establishing their characters in

the limited stage time allotted their roles. Due to insufficient tonal and rhythmic differentiation (which caused meaning to be garbled) the stiff and unoriginal acting gestures (which created the impression of actors rather than actors creating human characters), these actors failed to move only a little beyond the stereotypes that can potentially be obtained from Shakespeare's lesser characters. Yet by the resolving fifth act, most actors had their characters in fairly firm control and Fishman's efforts at preventing comedy leaking into the despoiling serious sections of the play were rewarded by a unified

and masterfully engineered conclusion.

Save for a dark spot in the southwest section of the stage, Roger Spiecher's partially revolving set provided an adequately utilitarian stage area for both Fishman's blocking and actors.

Overall, *Measure for Measure* was a dramatically successful as well as entertaining production -- despite it being staged in the bum numbing and feet freezing combination freezer and staired barn more commonly known as the Thrust Theatre of the Fine Arts Building.

Laurance Wargrave

### Book review

### Parachuting into David Fennario's life

David Fennario's *Without a Parachute* is a self-portrait done by a master. With it he paints in living color his background, his friends, his trials, hopes, and dreams. It is a literary piece of art.

*Without a Parachute* consists of Fennario's daily journal in which he comments on his present life, remembers his past and hopes for the future. He comes across truthfully, without bitterness, in a vividly understandable recording of his life.

Fennario was born in 1947 in the Verdun working class districts of Montreal, where he grew up, attended school and gained a reputation "as an indifferent student."

He comments, "I believe it was flunking Art in Grade 3 that led to my academic downfall. From then on, I really got seriously indifferent. By the time I reached high school I was practically invisible."

After failing grade 10, Fennario travelled, worked, tried school again, and later became a street bum. After four years of life on the streets, he landed his first steady job, and began writing *Without a Parachute* although he did not then realize the extent of his talent or scope.

After being laid off his warehouse job, he enrolled in Dawson College, "was discovered" by one of his instructors and in his own words, "was transformed overnight from a cosmic loser to

a budding young author."

The characters portrayed in *Without a Parachute* are real. They are his friends, his fellow rebels, thieves, hippies, and drunks. His friends are policemen and drug addicts set in the turmoil of big city conflict. Fennario can see as an actor, the empathetic viewer what happens to people around him, and what has happened to himself, and through his amazing talent for realism and truth the book comes off simply and cleanly believable.

The book is published by McClelland and Stewart, and costs \$3.95. Read it, it'll give you a new insight into big city happenings.

Greg Neiman