

# Dyck has Nunsense spirit

interview by Kevin Law

The Citadel Theatre is currently presenting *Nunsense*, a musical comedy on the Rice stage. The play is about a group of nuns hosting a variety show to raise money, utilizing a repertoire that includes song, dance and sales spiels.

Playing one of the five nuns in the production is Jill Dyck, a former U of A Fine Arts student. Graduating in 1982 with a BFA in Drama, Ms. Dyck has worked steadily since, last appearing at the Citadel in *The Treehouse* at the *End of the World*. Other stage roles include *Coneril* in *King Lear* and *Olivia* in *Twelfth Night* for Theatre Calgary.

Dyck also has film to her credit, including a role in the critically acclaimed production *Loyalists*, and she has also participated in 1985 and 1987 Dramalab projects. One experience that was particularly memorable for her was a four month tour with the Caravan Player Company in California. "We toured with horses and wagons around Marin county north of San Francisco, living in tents and doing plays." While the tour was not a huge success, Dyck remembers the quality of people she encountered was worthwhile. "The people I met were really super; very friendly." And the surrounding California countryside "was quite pretty."

In her present play, Dyck plays Sister Mary Hubert, the Mistress of Novices, trainer of new recruits. "She's kind of got the role book memorized," Dyck says of her character. "What she really wants to be Mother Superior, so there is a rivalry between them. She keeps the Mother Superior on her toes." She concedes there is a friendly rivalry between all the characters both on stage and off. "Everyone is important in the play; there is no star because the sisters are trying to raise money through a team effort."

Similarly, the team concept is adopted by the cast members as well, a level easily attained because the play is fun to perform. "I've never done a musical before," Dyck admits, "but I've never had so much fun in rehearsal." Dancing and singing in a play has led her to the happy conclusion that "musicals are just a riot!"

Because *Nunsense* is a play within a play, Dyck feels the confines of the Rice Theatre are "perfect" for the show. "The nuns are putting on a play at their school and they probably know everyone in attendance so everything happens on stage. At the beginning we come out and talk to the audience; we play off them and sit with them at some points; so the audience, whether they know it or not, are cast in the play. Our job is to keep them happy so we can raise money. I think there will be a sort of magic about it." Thus, the intimate atmosphere of the Rice stage should assist in inspiring such a playful mood.

The high spirit of the play is something Dyck hopes will be communicated, especially considering the seasonal weariness of February. "Who wants to see a depressing play in the middle of winter? We want to enter into the spirit of a fun time." In order to achieve this, Dyck admits the cast must expend a lot of energy. "If you don't, it all becomes cynical somehow. A goofy innocence is needed, but in the spirit of great fun."

Such an attitude spills over into Dyck's own unpartisan philosophy of theatre. "Basically I feel if you're not having a good time, what's the point? The audience doesn't pay to see you sweat and go through a lot of angst. I think there is something spiritual and moral about theatre, since you do it for peanuts."

It is apparent Dyck does not approach her art in a rigidly defined manner, preferring instead to remain impartial and receptive. "When I started out I was sort of drawn into things until I found a niche. If you're good you get work and if you're not you won't, so career objectives are sometimes futile. I just do it. I don't think about it. I have another life outside that is more important," says Dyck, referring to her husband and child. "It's death to take things too seriously — have fun!"

And fun is the operative word she hopes people will consider when watching *Nunsense*. "I hope people will enter into the warmth of the play — forget about winter — let down their guard a bit and have a good time."



Blue Rodeo will play Dinwoodie Saturday

# Blue Rodeo hit-and-run

by Tracy Rowan

You know an unknown band is worth checking out when members of a group like Hunters and Collectors (one of the most promising Australian acts around) tell you about them. This was the case for me last summer when, over a few brews, the Hunters and Collectors guys were raving about this new band they caught at the Horseshoe club in Toronto between their own shows.

That band was Blue Rodeo, one of the most original and exciting acts in Canada today. The band finishes its brief, 3-show Alberta stint at Dinwoodie Saturday night on what singer-songwriter Jim Cuddy terms "another hit-and-run tour".

Between the U of A show and a date at the Westward in Calgary on Thursday night, the quintet shares the bill with k.d. lang and some other country-type acts at the Olympic Eve Gala, playing to royalty and assorted big wigs. Unfortunately this prestigious performance will last only about 12 minutes.

"It should be very funny, I mean what kind of exhibit of music is that" offers Cuddy. When asked about this whole Olympic thing Cuddy expresses his reservations about it, likening Blue Rodeo to being just a cog in the big wheel of the Olympic mechanism. "There's just so much product identification with these Olympics" he adds.

Since the April 1987 release of the very

successful debut LP *Outskirts*, the band's been playing a number of these 'hit and run' tours which are generally quick weekend excursions to various cities across Canada. "According to Cuddy, this unusual style of touring has not only helped the album's promotion but also suits the band members' lifestyles. "Some of us have little kids and two of us still work day jobs" he states.

Blue Rodeo's dynamic live show reputation, which is well deserved, has helped the band land a recent record deal with Atlantic in the U.S., where *Outskirts* was released last Thursday. "Some of the border cities, like Detroit, know us well" says Cuddy, discussing some upcoming U.S. dates, including opening for Roy Orbison in Buffalo in March.

When asked about future recording plans, Cuddy simply states that the band is so tied up with various shows and the U.S. promotion aspect that it will be "when we feel like doing it." They aren't in a hurry because the Canadian release really didn't start happening until six months ago when "Try" really caught on.

With the band's success has come the inevitable labelling by music critics everywhere — but this doesn't really bother Cuddy. "I guess you could call us country-rock-jazz" he offers when questioned about his version. "There's an improvisational element there that other 'country-rock' bands don't really have, and that's one of the characteristics I like about this band."

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