

the international market, remains virtually incomprehensible to its own people.

Artistic expression in the Third World just doesn't come easily. The International Monetary Fund has imposed demanding budgets on developing nations, many of which had crippled economies to begin with. As a result, a country like Nigeria has little money left over for development of the arts.

Ajala was also concerned about "the promotion of arts for national glory, rather than for the general welfare" of the poverty-stricken residents of the shanty-towns that surround the larger Third World cities.

There was evidence at this seminar, however, of a strong current of interest in indigenous art among citizens of developing countries. A Kenyan student present at the lecture turned to the audience and confessed that, as educated and wellread as he was, he had never been to a theatrical event in his homeland. He had, however, seen many wonderful performances in the streets of his hometown. "Most of the time, I go down to see what's going on there, in the street [instead of attending conventional theatre]."

Ajala concluded his lecture by ruminating on the essence of art in the Third World: In the face of problems like hunger, starvation, the absence of social welfare and housing shortages, he remarked, art can "give life meaning and contribute to what it means to be human."

Art and urban ecology

by Paul Gazzola

In the entertainment section of last Sunday's *Toronto Star* there was a quarter page ad for Sergei Eisenstein's restored masterpiece, *Alexander Nevsky*. Besides the usual information — time, place, \$350.00 price tag for gala tickets — the ad stated both the beneficiaries (The Canadian Center for Advanced Film Studies, The Toronto Symphony) and the sponsor (BMW Canada Inc.) of the event. According to sociologist J. Allen Whitt, speaking at the conference, corporations are just as much beneficiaries of arts sponsorship as the groups they fund.

Speaking under the topic "Art and Urban Ecology," Whitt said, "Arts today are part of the urban growth machine." More and more trustees are sitting on art boards, as well as on business development boards. Why? Because just as old '60s songs proved themselves in selling everything from beer to toothpaste, corporations, like BMW Canada, are discovering the developmental usefulness of the traditional arts.

The ballet, opera and theatre do not bring just "people" downtown, but affluent people willing to spend money, said Whitt. With these kind of visitors, downtown development, both residential and commercial, is sure to follow. Areas are made more renewable and this benefits the corporations as employees then live close to where they work, increasing the chances of them remaining with the company. At the very least, arts sponsorship is good public relations.

Whitt made no judgement on art sponsorship by corporations and there is no denying that it provides much needed money for the arts. However, there is also no denying that the opera, ballet or play being presented is secondary to the money being made.

In keeping with the conference's aim to deal with as many topics as possible, the next section had nothing to do with development or the traditional arts. Titled "Parody and Performance" and centring on Lenny Bruce, Monty Python and the film *This is Spinal Tap*, it looked damn promising on paper.

Too bad.

Rhonda Hammer's "Where Theory Meet Praxis: This Is Spinal Tap as Metacommunication" was a disappointment. Her presentation consisted of showing a 24-minute montage of the 84-minute film. Except for a few general questions at the end of the session, there was no discussion. Anyone interested in reading her accompanying paper was instructed to send away to her department at the University of Windsor.

There are two problems with the laziness of Hammer's presentation. The first is it reduces the film to its most obvious jokes, the ones that a muzak-loving person would get. The second problem is related to the first: Hammer makes no attempt to make her audience aware of the different levels of satire we are told exist. Each viewer is left with his or her own perception, which can be very shallow depending on his or her knowledge of rock music in general and heavy metal in particular.

The next presentation started off with a name change. Joseph Kispal-Kovacs of York adjusted his title from "Python, Parody and Pleasure" to "Python, Parody, Pleasure and Post-Modernism." It wasn't a change for the better. What followed was a spewage of oversized words and terms that had very little pleasure or humour. It was the kind of overbearing lecture that Python would reduce to the ridiculous in a skit. Kispal-Kovacs also made the mistake of comparing the solo work of the group's members to Python's work. Since very few artists reached the same success and artistic heights accomplished by the group, that point is moot.

The section was made worthwhile by Ioan Davies' "Lenny Bruce: Hyperealism and the Death of Jewish Tragic Humour." Unlike the other two, Davies successfully combined his theories with examples of Bruce's work. The result was an entertaining, informative talk on the factors that gave rise to Bruce's tragic humour and how Bruce eventually became part of what he was ridiculing, leading to his own tragic end. Davies concluded that Bruce was "a man of his times, not a man ahead of his times." Davies also predicts the return of Jewish tragic humour as a response to today's comedy which he sees as "silly and socially complacent."

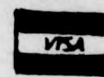
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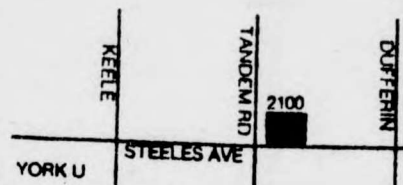
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